

“WORDS OF TRUTH,”

Ecc. xii. 10.

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

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WORDS OF TRUTH.

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GOD'S KING.—No. VIII.

THE CHARACTER OF HIS REIGN.—Psalm lxxii.

IN the song of loves or delight, as Ps. xlv. is called, we have a description of the Lord's personal appearance on His return from heaven. In a Psalm for Solomon (lxxii.), which completes the prayers of David the Son of Jesse, we learn the character of Messiah's reign—a subject of immense importance for the earthly people who will enjoy the favour of His personal rule. In lxxi. we are made acquainted with their wishes, and in lxxii. we are taught how God will respond to them. Some of their circumstances, similar in measure to those through which the Lord Jesus has passed, are recounted in Ps. lxxi., of which *vv.* 1-3 are very similar to the three first verses of xxxi.; *vv.* 5 and 6, 10 and 11, and 12 correspond very closely to the utterances of the Lord Himself in xxii. 9 and 10, 8, 19, and *v.* 13 to the words of xl. 14. Their wish to be preserved in old age, preferred in lxxi. 9-18, will be granted most fully, as lxxii. 14 assures us. A new era, then, will have dawned upon this earth, on

which night has as yet only reigned, though *we* can now say, the night is far spent, and the day is at hand. Rom. xiii. 12.

Casting our eyes over this Psalm, we must own that a revolution will have taken place when that of which it speaks shall be fulfilled—a revolution like none that men have witnessed, a revolution such as the world most dreads, for judgment will have returned unto righteousness, and the reign of the true Solomon will indeed have commenced. God's people, God's poor, so long the object of men's contempt and hatred, will be the special subjects of the King's supervision and care. The poor and the needy, who have had so often to turn from judges and rulers on earth to invoke the aid and justice of the Almighty, will learn that the King in Zion will administer justice for them, and deal with them in righteousness. The helpless will find they have a judge to maintain their cause, and the once friendless will be so no longer.

When David penned these words this halcyon time had not arrived. Of his day, therefore, the psalm does not speak. He was the King, but he was not the King's Son. Whilst he lived, then, what he described could not be enjoyed, for the King's Son must be King, actually seated on the throne, and exercising the sovereignty which none but the monarch himself has authority to wield. No delegate deriving authority from the monarch, too old perhaps himself to discharge the duties of his office, could answer to the description here given, nor could David and Solomon together have fulfilled what the royal prophet has sketched out. One person, not two, is here before us as invested with supreme command; and, to fix the readers' eyes on the one whose rule is depicted, the limits of His kingdom are stated in *v.* 8, the boundaries first mentioned by God when He made a covenant with Abraham (Gen. xv. 18), and confirmed by Him when Israel entered into a covenant with Him at Sinai (Ex. xxiii. 31). Again mentioned after the wilderness journey was over (Josh. i. 4), for no failure on Israel's part could annul God's unconditional covenant with Abraham, the whole land was, however, never subdued till the reign of David, and two only of the kings who have reigned at Jerusalem could affirm, that this psalm states the limits of their dominions—viz., David and Solomon. If, then, the psalm has been fulfilled, Solomon is the only one to whom it could apply, for he was the King's son, and he reigned, as

1 Kings iv. 21 states, from the Euphrates to the southern extremity of Canaan. But he died, whereas of this king it is stated, "He shall live," v. 15; for death will not cut short His days, nor ever terminate His reign. Bright, indeed, was the commencement of Solomon's reign, and his name became ever after a synonym for those gifted with more than ordinary intelligence and acquired knowledge; but its end was very different. He began full of promise, like the dawn of a summer's day, with nothing on the horizon to portend the approach of the least cloud to dim the brightness of the sun; but, ere he breathed his last, lowering clouds, ominous of a coming storm, announced the break-up as near at hand of that empire, which David, under God, had formed, and Solomon had enjoyed.

Of whom then does this Psalm speak? No writer in the New Testament has quoted from it to cast the light of a fuller revelation on the words of the Holy Ghost by David. But, if we cannot turn to the New Testament for help, we can appeal to the Old, and there find confirmation of the thought, that Messiah, the Lord Jesus, is the One whose reign is here so beautifully described. To Abraham God had said just after the offering up of Isaac, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xxii. 18.) From Galatians iii. 16 we learn who the seed was, of whom the angel of Jehovah, who called to Abraham out of heaven, really spoke, "thy seed, which is Christ." To this promise our Psalm refers in the words, "men shall be blessed in him" (v. 17); the Holy Ghost by David taking up that record, and applying it directly to the Messiah, which Paul, centuries after, was permitted to explain. To the patriarch God had spoken of a seed; in this Psalm God speaks of a person, the King's son, whom the Holy Ghost in Galatians distinctly affirms to be the once humbled and crucified, but now risen and glorified One, the Lord Jesus Christ. As David then, referring thus to Genesis, connects the subject of his theme with the seed of Abraham, to whom the promise was given, Zechariah, another prophet, writing long after David's throne had been overturned, applies what is stated in verse 8 of our Psalm to the Lord Jesus, as Jerusalem's King. One sovereign, it is true, then reigned over all the country between the Euphrates and the river of Egypt; but, whereas David and Solomon had their throne at Jerusalem, and could speak of their kingdom as on this side of the

Euphrates, the King of Zechariah's day spoke of this same country as beyond the river to him, reversing the condition of things as they existed in David's time. God's word, however, cannot be broken ; so His unconditional covenant with Abraham will not be abrogated, as the son of Iddo reminds the returned remnant, retracing the boundaries of Messiah's Kingdom, and showing that by not one inch of ground, of which God spoke to Abraham, shall its area be diminished. (ix. 10.) So, though this Psalm is never quoted in the New Testament, the reference in it to Gen. xxii. 18, and the quotation from it in Zech. ix. 10, make it very clear about whom it was written. And since the Lord, though He has entered Jerusalem on the ass's colt as the King, has not yet occupied the throne in the manner here predicted, it is manifest that we have from the pen of David the Holy Spirit's description of events still future.

The question settled as to whom the Psalm refers, let us now turn for a little to examine of what it speaks. God's judgments and God's righteousness requested for the King's son, what will follow, on their being granted, form the subjects of this inspired composition. As a young monarch, Solomon had asked of God something similar to these petitions (1 Kings iii. 9), "and the speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing;" and riches, and wealth, and honour were granted to him likewise. How suited was his prayer, David's prayer for the King's son illustrates, whilst proving that, though entitled "For Solomon," it looked on to One beyond him. For Solomon did not plead for the fulfilment of David's request on his behalf, but asked, as we read, for himself for wisdom and intelligence, conscious of what he needed to govern God's people aright. For it was not a limited monarchy which David established, and Solomon inherited, but a monarchy absolute in its character, and in which all depended upon the King who sat on the throne executing judgment and justice for all Israel. David and Solomon being monarchs of this class, it is clear that He, too, must be absolute as king, when He reigns on earth, who can now sit on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens. When He reigns all will depend on Him, as of old when the Kings of Judah were faithful, the kingdom prospered, and hence we can understand why all David's desires centre in God's gifts to the King, who, receiving God's judgments and God's righteousness, will act as God

acts, and peace and order be the result—peace, not the effect of compromise with evil, but peace in righteousness, so little known, though surely often desired. Righteousness and judgment thus administered, the salvation of the needy, and the destruction of the oppressors, will attest to all the new character of the rule established by Divine power in Zion, which, so different from what history can speak of, will tend to make men fear God throughout all generations (5). Observe that this is the first effect of His reign, as stated in the Psalm. A righteous rule established, God will be feared as long as the sun and moon endure—a condition of things never known before. Then follow the beneficent results of His rule, and the place on earth which powers and authorities will accord to Him—God first, Himself next, for here, as Man, the King's Son, does He take His place and reign. Refreshing like the rain to the mown grass will His presence prove, a simile all can understand, reviving and reinvigorating what will have appeared as burnt up and withered; for Israel's hopes, which may have seemed vain, will then be fulfilled to the uttermost, His presence introducing and ensuring their blessing to all generations. To give rain is the Lord's prerogative, a standing witness in all ages that He and He alone is the Creator and true God. (Jer. xiv. 22.) Then, too, will it be proved that He alone can make that descend upon men, which answers to the softening reviving showers in the world of nature; added to this, the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. Every step that we take in this Psalm only brings out in bright relief the contrast of that day to all that has been before it, and greater surely will the contrast appear to those, who will have passed through the time of Jacob's trouble just previous to the Lord's millennial reign, having experienced the misery of being under a godless power, unchecked for a while in its career of lawlessness and opposition to all that is of God. Then peace, that blessing of which men have often promised themselves a continuance, but always have found that they could not ensure its permanence, will at last be established on this earth, to abide whilst times and seasons shall run their appointed course.

The King viewed here as Messiah, the limits of His kingdom are announced, whom all kings will serve, made God's first-born higher than the kings of the earth (Ps. lxxxix. 27); and those nomad, lawless tribes, whom no government has

yet tamed, inheriting the temper and disposition of their ancestor, Ishmael, will yield to Him obeisance, whilst His enemies will lick the dust. What problems in government will then be solved, but only by Him who is God's King. The unruly and turbulent who now so often baffle the best-intentioned monarchs, will find in Him a Ruler whose will must be obeyed; and again in the history of Israel will it be recorded, that to the one reigning at Jerusalem tribute and homage must be paid by the kings of the earth, all acknowledging His superiority, who will deliver the "needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper."

Let us stop here for a moment, and survey the scene presented to us. Satan will have attempted to establish a supreme power, to whom Kings will give allegiance, while the nations under their rule will wonder at its might. But after all, Satan's masterpiece as it will be, his last great effort before he shall be bound in the bottomless pit, will have results transient only in duration, and limited in extent. The boundaries of the Roman earth will mark the extent of that supremacy, which a power outside it (*i.e.* the King of the North) will refuse to admit. Here, however, all Kings shall fall down before the King's Son, all nations shall serve Him. And, whereas no deliverance will have been wrought by the Beast, full deliverance for those who want it will be obtained and maintained, by the protecting sceptre of the Christ of God. The poor and afflicted will rejoice in His delivering power; the weak ones and the orphans will experience the strength and shelter of His arm; and the needy, those having a wish which none else can satisfy, will be satiated never more to want. Death, too, for His own, will be abolished, and deceit and violence no longer succeed against them. Compare this, the settled order of things to be introduced by Him, with Psalm lxxix. 1-5. The blood of His servants so often spilt, will be spilt no more. Precious in His sight will be the blood of those of them then living upon earth. Peace, which the world under fallen man has never yet fully known; immunity for His people, too, on earth from man's oppression and Satan's restless activity, with all earthly powers paying homage to God's King ruling in righteousness, these are features of that day of blessedness and glory, which will abide, whilst sun and moon shall last, throughout all generations; for as all will rest for stability on the King, and "He," we read,

"shall live," a settled order of things will be established, such as has never yet been witnessed.

And then, what may appear to be stranger than all, will be seen the complete revolution of feeling in men's minds about the Lord Jesus Christ, for they will pray for His continuance (v. 15), against whom but a short time previous the Beast and his armies will have been arrayed to keep Him out of His Kingdom. The counsels of the rulers against the Lord and His Christ, first developed at the cross, will never succeed. God's purpose about His Son, in spite of all opposition, will be made good. "Men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed." And so surely will this be the case, that we have portrayed in this Psalm that time of blessedness, as if from the pen of an eye witness. The time of the restoring of all things will arrive, but not without the presence of the central figure and the pillar of it all, the Lord Jesus Christ; who, now in heaven, will return to earth for that era of blessedness and brightness to commence, in which the whole creation will be interested, for earth's fruitfulness will then return, at present restrained by man's sin. "There shall be (not 'a handful,' but) abundance of corn in the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." How many new things will in that day be seen? Where men now look not for fertility, there will it appear; and Christ's name, so often the subject of execration, shall be perpetuated, enduring for ever.

With these thoughts the Psalmist concludes. Beyond them his desires for the King's Son cannot go, and as on another occasion (2 Sam. vii.) he could only find vent for his feelings in worship, he here winds up with a doxology—"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen."

A fitting conclusion this to so wondrous a theme. The prayers of David the Son of Jesse being ended, the last tones of his lyre which fall on the ear are those of praise!

ON JOHN XVII.

THIS chapter is the most admirable in the Word, inasmuch as we are admitted to hear what the Lord says, not to His disciples, but to His Father. It does not properly contain instruction ; it is the heart of the Lord which is expressed openly to the Father.

The great truth that it contains is, that it places the disciples in His own position, as well towards the Father as towards the world ; and then, at the end of the chapter, it wishes us to be along with Him. In the first verses it lays the foundation of this new position. We can observe here, too, that in this gospel His death is only spoken of as a departure from this world (chap. xiii. 1, 2).

The Lord had received all power over all men to give eternal life to those whom the Father had given Him ; and this expression, that they are those whom the Father had given Him, we find frequently. His disciples are a precious present that the Father had made Him, and Jesus is charged with guarding them, saving them, and making them fit to present them to the Father in His house. Jesus always thinks of the glory of the Father, and never abandons the position of servant which He had taken.

Christ is the eternal life (1 John i). When one receives the word, one receives Christ, who is the life which is communicated to us by Christ when the word works in us through faith. Here the character of the life is the knowledge of the Father and of the Son. At *v.* 4 Christ has finished the necessary work, notwithstanding all the difficulties He had encountered on earth. In virtue of this work, He demands of the Father to be glorified with that glory which He had as God : and now He will possess that same eternal glory likewise as Man. He will return into His former glory as Man, in virtue of the work which He has done for us, with the view of having us likewise in the same glory along with Himself.

It is a wonderful thing that there should be a Man in heaven, in the presence of God, glorified—which Man is perfected in everything! This Man has been down here to pass through our trials, to know our difficulties, and to manifest to men all divine goodness. Such was one of His designs in coming on the earth ; and this fact inspires us with full confidence in His presence. He demands to be glorified because on earth He has no more to do : if He had not finished the work, He would not have been able to depart to go into the glory.

At *v.* 6 Jesus says that He has manifested the Father's name to His own; and this is what He has done during all His ministry, as we see in the gospels—for example, in the Lord's sermon. According to this revelation, we are introduced into the position of sons with the Father, as is expressed still more clearly to Mary Magdalene after His resurrection—"I ascend to my Father and to your Father."

It is beautiful to see that, notwithstanding the great feebleness, the incredulity, and the unbelief of His disciples, Jesus, in speaking to the Father, gives them the honour as if they had kept His word, and elsewhere as if they had persevered in all His afflictions. They had no doubt done so, but with what weakness and infirmity, which should have made them blush to hear these praises! But Jesus presents them to the Father according to His love, which was perfect, and acts so as not to see the defects in the loved objects. The Jews were fully expecting that Jehovah would give *some things* to the Messiah, but the disciples had known that the Father had given "*all things*" to the Son.

THE HEART'S OCCUPATION WITH CHRIST.

I HAVE lately much enjoyed reading of Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite—the precious faith of that blessed woman, whose whole heart was fashioned by God's revelation about David, though everything that was seen, belied it. But so it is still. Everything here gives the lie to God's revelation of the glory and preciousness of Jesus, and only in the simplicity of faith, and in singleness of devotion to Christ, can we walk away from the current of this world's thoughts in the liberty of the Spirit's manifestation of Jesus.

Connected with this the record of David's worthies was most heartsome to me in 1st Chronicles. "Their faces were as lions, and they were swift as roes upon the mountains." O that Christ had more of such helpers!

See, too, Amasai's magnificent answer to David—"Thine are we David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse," &c. When our joy is not full, it is because we are taken up with our poor miserable selves and not with this glorious son of David, or rather with David himself, for David is sweeter as a type than even Solomon. David, the Lord's anointed, rejected of man, in holes and dens of the earth, but fighting the Lord's battles, and the centre of attraction to every heart that sought God and His glory.

"THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY GHOST."

"THE grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion (fellowship, *κοινωνία*,) of the Holy Ghost, (be) with you all. Amen." 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

My impression as to this concluding desire of the Apostle is, that he had those who were *not* going on well in view. This may seem at first sight strange to some. But we shall find on examination that the desire that the "fellowship of the Holy Ghost" is not added where the saints were going on well; I mean in the epistles written by the Apostle.

He made this "fellowship of (the) Spirit," the ground of his desires for the Philippians (ch. ii. 1). And, as far as I know, these two are the only places where the expression is found in Scripture. My present object is but to draw attention to what is of importance—the difference between the "fellowship" and "unity" of the Spirit of God. Many are probably in the latter in an external way, who much need the former.

I believe this was the case with the Corinthians; for I find the Apostle desiring in his first epistle that they "*be perfectly joined together* (*καταρτίσω*,) in the same mind, and in the same judgment" (ch. i. 10.) The use of this word is remarkable; for it has the significance of the setting of a disjointed limb; to knit together again. I need hardly refer to the dislocated state in which they were at Corinth, yet, at the same time, they remained externally in unity; just as the unity of my human body would remain, even were a limb or limbs out of joint, or not in healthy articulation.

When we reach the close of the second epistle we find his desire again expressed by the words, "And this also we wish, your perfection," or rather, "your recovery from dislocation" (*κατάρσις*). Then he concludes with the desire, "The grace of the (not "our," as is frequently said) Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost (be) with you all. Amen."

The reason I take to be this: they were externally in the "unity of the Spirit;" but they *needed*, and had not amongst them that which he here prays that they might have—"the fellowship of the Holy Ghost."

This is the more remarkable when we examine his other epistles, where he concludes with the desire, as in Philip-

pians, "The grace of our Lord Jesus (be) with you all. Amen." He need not add that for the "fellowship of the Holy Ghost," for it was brightly seen in their midst in its precious workings. Where more fully!

So in 1 Thessalonians, where there was much of the vigour and freshness of divine life, he closes by "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (be) with you." So in the second epistle—desiring it for them "all." Yet in all (see also Philemon) he does not ask for what was there, only doing so in his second letter to the Corinthians, *just because it was not there!*

I think it will be found that there is a lesson here for us all. Many may be amongst us who may be—nay, are, doubtless—in the "*unity* of the Spirit" outwardly, but who need as much as those at Corinth to have the divine "*fellowship* of the Holy Ghost."

There may be also a similar distinction between the "Lord's Table" and the "Lord's Supper." But I do not dwell on this.

I conclude, therefore, that this desire is used with reference to those who are *not* going on well, and is omitted where the Apostle's heart can see the divine fellowship of the Spirit working in its freshness amongst His people.

THE SECOND COMING AND REIGN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE JEWISH REMNANT.

CHAPTER VII.

IN Rev. xii., the "man child" who is to "rule all nations with a rod of iron," embraces both Christ and the Church; the interval from His ascension to that of hers not being looked upon as time, and both taken as one event, of which His was the first fruits. The portion of the Church is to reign with Him over the nations in His heavenly glory, when the earth will be brought into ordered subjection in the "administration of the fulness of times"—the millennial kingdom. "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" says the apostle (1 Cor. vi.), when condemning "brother going to law with brother." "Ye have reigned as kings without us," again he says, when he finds the Corinthians going on in the world's way, "I would to God ye did reign" (in reality), he adds, "that we also might reign with you." This is, then, the portion of the Church. But she has a sweeter portion still than that of

judging the nations. She has the Bridegroom Himself as her heart's portion—the "Bright and the Morning Star."

When Christ asks for the heathen, according to the second Psalm, He will have His Church safely in the glory, and she will be joint-heir with Him, the Bride of the Lamb.

I might cite many passages in the Old Testament which show that where Christ is spoken of, there the Church is included as seen in Him. She herself is never spoken of. She was hidden in God's own counsels. Thus, when passages only true of Him are imported into the New Testament, we find them applied to the Church—as, for instance, this 2nd Psalm.

We may compare, with this thought in our minds, Isa. xlix. 6, where it applies to Christ only, with Acts xiii. 47, appropriated by Paul, in the New Testament for the Church. Also Isa. l. 8, 9, where Christ is before the mind of the Spirit, with Rom. viii. 33, 34, which is the portion of the saints. Compare also Isa. xlix. 8, with 2 Cor. vi. 2. And Eph. vi. 13-17, with Isa. lix. 17, &c. This will help us in understanding these "unsearchable riches of Christ."

How sweet then, that when we read of Him in the Old Testament, we find the Church's portion, as united to Him, bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh, by the Spirit sent down at Pentecost.

Then, as soon as this taking up of the Church occurs, the woman flees into the wilderness, the godly Jews become the objects of Satan's persecutions as well as of the Lord's dealings. The latter part of the day of sorrow is here presented during the "Great Tribulation"—the twelve hundred and sixty days (*v.* 6). There God has prepared her a place, and there He finds her in that "hour."

From verse 7 to 12 another vision is presented to account for the presence of Satan on earth, in this special season of his power, before his overthrow. He is presented to us, in the present interval, as in "Heavenly places"—not of course where God dwells, but in the created heavens. Consequently, if you and I have our spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, we have to wrestle with wicked spirits in heavenly places (Eph. vi. 12). If we are only combating the flesh in ourselves, we are not occupied with proper Christian conflict at all. And again, if you find a soul struggling for deliverance, that is not conflict. He must learn that he cannot fight; he needs

deliverance, not victory. When he surrenders, he is free, and then he finds he has "sin" in him to contend with; but there is power in Christ for victory, and he must use it and walk in the Spirit. The sense of his heavenly portion entails other conflict—true Christian conflict then, and Satan opposes his path.

But in this vision all that wrestling of the Church is past; Satan is cast down, and his place is no more found in heaven; this "war in heaven" clears the scene. Then rejoicing follows, and "woe to the inhabitants of earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Then the woman flees—the time of sorrow has come. She flees into the wilderness where she is sustained of God for a time, times, and half a time. This goes back to take up the thought of the sixth verse again, having accounted for the presence of the adversary on earth.

(To be continued.)

A CHIME.

"To me to live is Christ,
And to die is gain."
Be this my song and boast,
In spite of every pain.

Of work, of life below,
Till it reach its sea;
For source, and stream, and end,
Christ alone for me.

'Tis worth my while to bear
Din and battle strife;
Service and toil to seek—
Christ alone for life.

If body die, 'twere well,
Blessed Lord, for me;
Ended toil, I'd come
With Thyself to be.

I know not what to choose,
Blessed Lord, nor see;
Then let the Father fix
What is best for Thee!

Since I am wholly Thine,
"One spirit," Lord, with Thee;
Whate'er for Thee is best
Must be best for me.

"ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD."

THE difference, beloved, between God's dealings in Old Testament times, and God's dealings since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, ought to be very simply and clearly in our minds.

He took up a people in Israel—took them up for time; volunteered, if I may use the expression, to be their God and King: made a tabernacle among them, and took a land for Himself. But man, in Old Testament times, failed entirely, while God's purpose was to reveal Himself, and not only to reveal Himself, but to reveal Himself emphatically in a way that would tell man that he (man) was a sinner and nothing but a sinner in himself, an enemy to God in himself, found by God, and found in darkness—under the power of darkness.

Now, if we examine that question as bearing upon man, whether we take scriptural witnesses to try it by, or our own selves, as to what we were before the gospel reached our hearts, we find the same answer.

Saul of Tarsus was, I suppose we may say, one of the most remarkable men that ever lived on earth, if not the most remarkable, excepting Daniel. And his thought was that he could patronize God, and bring the energy of his character to help God in blotting the name of the Nazarene off the earth—a lie leading him—when the Lord, in gentleness, spoke to him from on high. And O what a discovery was made to his soul of the error he had been under, and the wrong estimate he had of himself!

If I put it home to you now, unless you can say you know the salvation of the Lord, and have known it from your infancy—quite possible with many—you will grant me that when you look at what you were in nature, it is not natural to the human mind (was not, and is not) to *begin with God*, and with God dealing in blessing with man a rebel against Himself. And even when some right thought may have got into the mind the difficulty is to take the place of saying, I am in nature prejudiced against God. What I want is reconciliation, my heart brought round to let God have the place belonging to Him, and to let Him act on the ground of His own glory, and of His own nature, and to admit that all in me, as descended from the first Adam, is ruined; that the only thing I have to give Him will just be my

sins, whether of action, or of mind, or of heart, in alienation from Him.

A passage in 2 Corinthians iv. gives us a very simple declaration on God's part about that, and shows what the gospel was, as stated by the apostle himself, and what the effect was on his own heart as an illustration of the power of it. There had been gross darkness covering these Corinthians, and he uses no soft language with regard to it, and attributes it to connection with him, as it really was, who was the "god of this world," and had blinding power over their heart and mind—their hearts estranged from God.

But before he presented the word to them God had done a great work; He had sent His Son into the world! That Son had stood in the land of Israel in the time of its desolation, when it was full of devils, lepers, sickness beyond measure, want of bread—their faces ground down by the Romans, the kingdom broken up into tetrarchies, and all the glory of God's kingdom, as set up in the time of Solomon, frittered away. The Lord stood there with the great thought whether Israel *could* be reconciled. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Was it reconciled? Were the Jews reconciled? Were the Gentiles reconciled? No; all was utterly powerless to bring about reconciliation. He was refused—went down to death—was raised again and taken to heaven, and then the wonderful work of God causes His glory that was in that Person to shine down into the heart of Saul, dispelling all the darkness, and giving him to know the unsearchableness of God's ways.

But God had done this work in contrast to Saul in his wisdom; the Jews, in their wisdom, could not get the grasp of the mind of God, but God could find the opportunity of showing forth what a God He was. Man in utter ruins, and God then comes in to show the "exceeding riches of his grace."

What was it which effected that in the heart of Saul, turning him into Paul? Just what is here in the end of this fifth chapter, and eighteenth verse—"He hath reconciled us to himself, and committed to us the ministry of reconciliation."

To what extent does this need of reconciliation go? Israel thought they had got a few outside things to do; and that was all. To what extent is the need of this? I am within the compass of the truth in saying that the first thing is, there is enmity of heart against the Person of God, and

dark suspicion of mind against Him. Where is the rest of your hearts, who are believers, found now, but in the thought that God has done a work for His own glory through the Person of His Son, in connection with the sin of the sinner, and that you bless Him that His thoughts are not like man's? Where has been the difficulty with many a young Christian? Just whether their mind gives to God the place God has taken as the Reconciler. If you have done so, the first person you begin with is God, and not yourself. What of all the doubts and uncertainties of badly taught Christians? They begin with themselves, and not with God, and think God requires some little thing, and put themselves in the place of being gods.

You find God always takes the initiative place in Scripture. Take Creation—no one advised Him to do it; nobody suggested to Him to put man in Eden—it *pleased* Him to do it. That which the Artificer produces becomes the expression of the Artificer.

When man had sinned, and the Deluge changed the face of the physical earth, who originated the thought of the rainbow, and that He would pledge Himself? Oh! what a reason! “Because man was a desperate sinner”—that there would be no Second Deluge, but that he would give fruitful seasons! What a reason! God chose to do what was right in His own eyes! and thus He chooses to send rain on the just and on the unjust! Look at all the vast control exercised by God that man attributes to chance. Who is governing everything? Who is the One who removes kings? Who put up Nebuchadnezzar and removed him, and settled the dynasties, in Daniel? Without Him not one sparrow falls to the ground; the hairs of the heads of His people are numbered; there is a speciality of government connected with everything. Why? Because He is God; and the ways of God to all, will be seen to be to His own praise and glory.

Ah! but, says man, this question of salvation—

Well, what about this question? I can more easily create another earth and another heaven than touch the question of the salvation of my ruined soul, ruined body, and ruined mind.

Set to work and create a new heaven; form a covenant with it, and rule it all to perfection, and then I will come and see what you will do as to salvation!

Nebuchadnezzar, a poor maniac taken from kingly power, turned out and wandering like a beast, was a feeble picture of what man is, whose heart has got away from God.

Go back to Eden and see how the works stand out. Adam is giving the credit to himself of being able to match God. "Adam, where art thou?" said the voice in the cool of the evening. Where was Adam? Hiding himself under a bush. Is that your answer to the God that knows everything? Is that your hiding-place? Why, God is under the bush too! What was that which hung about poor Adam in that day? He had made himself an apron, but not one that God thought a good one—not one of God's ordering. God did make him a coat afterwards.

Oh, the utter delusion sin brings in! Putting God down as nobody; man's back turned to Him, giving himself credit as a creature—there was the enmity of Adam against God. Enmity? Yes. The thought of God was, nothing good could come from any save Himself. He did not care how largely He gave; no creature mind can measure the expression of His love.

The serpent's suggestion was, God is niggardly! He kept from them the knowledge of good and evil, for it would be their destruction. Was that out of niggardliness of heart? Nay. He gave His only Son! That is one answer, and that Son gave Himself for us; there is another. There is no narrowness in God.

Till the soul has said we must begin with God, we do not know what He has done.

When Paul came to press this same reconciliation on man, he shows that God will not accredit the ways of man. His thought is to bring man, who had been a rebel, close to Him in glory, with a conscience unsullied in the brightness of the light of that glory. This must be God's doing. What was the point of Paul's argument with these Corinthians? What was the base of it all? Why the most stupendous thing which put God in a light that makes everybody that knows Him admit that they had no idea at all of the sort of person God is; for "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become God's righteousness in him."

There are two statements then; one as to what God *has done*. The other, *the object* with which He has done it.

What does the human mind think of that statement? I

have had to meet the infidel mind, and find the feelings of human nature cannot account for that statement. Where is justice in the statement that One who was sinless and knew no sin should be made a sin-bearer—where? In that description you give of Him bearing sin, how is it possible to transfer from one to another the judgment?

How do I meet that question, beloved friends? Simply thus—He has said, "My thoughts are not as your thoughts!" You do not like, poor sinner, to have nothing to give Me but your sins. You would give Me some of your substance—a little toil—but to give your sinful self as something entirely lost, you do not like. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" You do not believe that I would take such a thing as that. It is the only thing I can take, stamping reality on Myself and on you. You are a sinner, and are ruined, and if you give yourself to Me as a sinner, I am not ruined, and I have got resources. If you can blend your ruin with My glory you will find resources in Me by which I can fully meet your need! Would a poor prisoner in the dock call in question the justice of a free pardon? The justice, whatever it may be, when the royal prerogative of mercy is exercised. Do not talk about justice.

The mind of a simple Christian that knows God as the God of truth accepts it, and His word is, "Let God be true and every man a liar." I will just go in on this, that I am not competent to form one idea of what He can do or what He cannot. He has said it and He will make it good, if He has not done so already!

Ah! but He *has* made it good—"the cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it," tells me this. Did He drink the bitter portion as due to Himself? God forbid a thought so foolish; the One who did drink the cup was perfect, and His perfection was never so bright as on the cross with the light of God's countenance hidden from Him. *Whose* sins did He bear? Would the believer give it to the Jews, and say He bore their sins? Faith says they are mine; and if there had not been a single one on earth to be reconciled, turned, and brought to God to have all their sins blotted out except myself, He must have died for me or I could not be saved.

The apostle looks at that in all simplicity. It discovered to him just where the ruin was stamped on all connected with him, and brought him to see that God was God, and

when He acts He acts according to His own character. He knows no one can touch this question but Himself. The sinner acts in his character and thinks he can do something. God acts in His character.

But what was wanting in connection with this question of sin-bearing? Some one who could take and bear all the wrath that God would think right should be borne. Where could such be found? But One has done it. "He made him who knew no sin"—not merely Him who did no sin—but who knew no sin, and was holy, harmless, undefiled; He made Him the sin-bearer on the cross.

I do not receive a thing because reason can raise me to the level of it, but I receive it as the revelation of what God did, and as the exposition of His glory and of His thoughts of me as a sinner, and of what sin was in His presence. Is it not right when we look at that, that the mind should see and the heart understand that the human mind never could have had an idea of what sin was after that fashion? If I look upon Him as man, God was well pleased with Him. When I see Him forsaken all the time He was the sin-bearer, I get the measure of what sin is in God's sight that nothing else could give me an idea of.

If I look at the wicked, the miseries of heart of those not reconciled, ever learning in hell what sin is, and yet never having learnt it—at the judgment to come—and I know what it is to tremble at the thought of eternal fire—when I turn round to the cross I find there God manifest in the flesh, the One who is to be the Judge of quick and dead, taking the place of drinking the cup of wrath, and the light of God's countenance hidden from Him, and hear Him say, "It is finished," the burden has been borne; it is finished, my heart has rest there!

Now turn to the second thing—a wonderful thing—"that we might become the righteousness of God in him." What do you understand by Paul being the righteousness of God in Christ, of these Corinthians being the righteousness of God, of myself and every believer now being the righteousness of God in Christ? Just the contrast between God's action towards the Son of His love when on the cross, and His conduct to a poor sinner that draws near to God.

God gave to His Son to drink the cup of wrath that mercy's path might be opened by Him without any compromise, that you in Jerusalem who have dipped your hands in

His blood, that everyone who believes in Him may receive forgiveness of sins. His name is a pass for you out of enmity into God's favour, and into a welcome which it belongs to God to give.

The question is of being reconciled to *God*. Oh! to have that brought before one simply. Is God to have His own place? He has taken a place and will keep it, and I cannot help it; then let me give it to Him. Will God humble me, stain my pride? Yes, many a high-minded character has refused to go to Him through the blood of Christ, as ——— did. To go through the blood of another stains the pride of one's heart. It is a dire necessity. But it is better to go to heaven through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, than to hell without it! Better bow and to go to heaven, where God will give you all His delights, than to hell, where all is misery and anguish.

Neither does the grace stop without working in the heart something of astonishment and wonder that God's Son could come when we were without strength—come to seek the lost—those whom He could turn to His glory. Even the judgment of sin shows out His character. Is that the character of the Son of God, sending His word first to Jerusalem, where He was murdered? He never got more glory at a moment than at Pentecost, where mercy was shown to so many.

The heart surely says, well, I will go after Him. Then you must *give up self*! That Lord Jesus Christ who left the throne for me—who died for me. He is the Master I choose, the One to whom I go.

Let me call your attention to reconciliation. Paul saw the judgment-seat of Christ—not the great white throne where the wicked will stand—and the question comes out, what is it to the Christian? A question of blessedness. We pass into the family of God, where judgment is exercised. Would I not like to have God's judgment exercised upon me now? Is His love such that He will point out to His child what is inconsistent? Would *you* not like it? Would you *like* to have nothing more to say to Christ after He saves you until you meet Him in Glory? Or would you like to have Him to keep company with you all through the wilderness? Paul looked for his whole life to pass between Him and the Master. Was there any disturbance to his soul? Not the least. In my little course on earth there are truths

and difficulties which I cannot read ; surely I should *like* to have the thoughts of the Lord as to them.

Now turn to the eleventh verse. Are you made manifest as to what you were by nature and what you are now ? Paul says he had been so. What is my estimate of myself as to what I am in nature?—Awful ! But blessed be His name, through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ—"crucified together, dead together, buried together," is what faith bows to as God's grace in connection with everything of the old thing.

Come now to this verse—"If any man be in Christ (*he is*) a new creation ; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new, and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ"—a new creation ! "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works." (Ephesians ii. 10.) Could the heart that is of this new creation, and so connected with Christ, not make manifest this new creation ?

One sweet thing more—"All things are of God." Directly the heart has known that God has made him of that new creation there is intelligence to read God's will in everything ; a bright light shining behind the sorrows and the difficulties—*all are of Him !* Ah ! if all the children of God knew the power of God in that. If "*all things*" are of Him, then what is apart from Him ? Can you take up any trial and say, "There is no sweetness here ?" No, all things are of Him !

I feel anxious to get the souls I address to that point, to see what their understanding of God is—the glory of God, and the ways of God, expressed in this little sentence, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him."

I ask you to let this question go home to conscience and soul at the present time. Are you living in the power of what God has done for His own glory, finding that you are reconciled to Him in His glory, by that marvellous expression of grace ?

THE LIGHT FROM THE GLORY LEADS LIFE TO THE CROSS.

(Continued from page 8.)

WE shall now glance, for a little, at Paul's preaching. He himself, as one converted directly by contact with the glory, was truly the fitting one to proclaim that which he calls "my gospel"—"the gospel of the glory of the Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 4)—"the gospel of the glory of the blessed God" (1 Tim. i. 11) committed to his trust. We do not find this phase of the gospel of God brought out in the Acts. "The gospel of the grace of God" (ch. xx. 24) is there proclaimed; and, although the gospel of the glory truly brings in God's *grace* pre-eminently, yet we must not confound the preaching throughout the Acts with that brought out in Paul's epistles.

In Acts xiii. Paul *does* go beyond anything the other Apostles preached; yet even that chapter does not give us what Paul designates as "my gospel." Man is never told he is "dead in trespasses and sins" in the Acts; of course, historically, the gospel of the glory *was* proclaimed during the events recorded, but we shall not find it there. Until man is pronounced a lumberer of the ground, as *dead* before God; glory cannot be *for* him, although One in glory can be preached *to* him. "As is the heavenly, such *are* they also that *are* heavenly," is language we shall not find in the Acts. The highest phase of the gospel there proclaimed is as I have said, in ch. xiii, namely, justification from all things. This is more than forgiveness; but it is not "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God," though, of course, included in it.

Now, in Acts xiii., how do we find the Gospel brought out? Does Paul begin with Jesus bearing the believers' sins on the Cross? Nay. It is—"For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him (the 'Saviour Jesus') not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre." Is there a hint here of One bearing sins? Is it not rather the malice and wickedness of man in unailing goodness and grace on a malefactor's cross? Does Paul go on now to speak of that murdered One as He who "bore

our sins in his own body on the tree?" Nay; he could not use the word "our" till he had believers to address. His next words are—"But God raised him"—the spurned One—"from among the dead." What next do we read? What are the "glad tidings" he begins with?—"the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son (this fact is the foundation of all Paul's preaching), this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from among the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, *I will give you the sure mercies of David.*"

What were these "sure mercies?" Just what our blessed Lord questioned the poor earthly Jews concerning, in Matt. xxii.—"What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?" They could only think of Him as David's Son: they could not see Him as *God's Son*—One fit only for heaven and glory. Hence their puzzled minds. "They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord saith unto my Lord, *Sit thou on my right hand*, till I make thy enemies thy footstool." These things are "the sure mercies of David"—a rejected Messiah sitting as "Lord and Christ," at God's right hand in the glory.

David could comfort his heart, as we look at him as a type of the believing remnant chastened for their sin in common with the nation. "The child" born after the flesh must die. But will David be the loser after all? Nay; he can rise up, and eat and drink, to the astonishment of his servants; he can say, after he has "worshipped" the Lord, and returned to his own house to wait God's purposes, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." If David lost an heir "according to the flesh," he gained an Heir in the glory—One to whom, as his Lord, he would "go" in common with all the heavenly family. He would become a heavenly man; 1 Cor. xv. 49 will be true of David: he has sure and everlasting mercies of which Solomon was the pledge. These things Paul brings forth from "things new and old" as he draws out the desires of the new life of the very remnant David typified as he wept over his child.

Thus conscience is aroused in his believing hearers—quickened, perhaps, as he was uttering the words we have

already been considering. How are they to be associated with this *heavenly Saviour*? Are they not sinners—yes, and transgressors too? Had He remained *on earth* as a Deliverer from their enemies around, they *might* follow Him, and not feel their need of forgiveness and a purged conscience. Yes, and be quickened souls too. But as they gaze upon “the sure mercies” their sins sink them in despair—they are more in number than the hairs of their heads. How have they found this out? Are they gazing on a Christ suffering for sins, the *Just* for the unjust? No; they are looking at the Lord at the right hand of David’s Lord, and feel as David felt himself, *because* he could thus gaze “in spirit.” Flesh cannot enter where those “sure mercies” are viewed. *They want the cross now*, for they are “heavenly.” It is *sin* that troubles them, not merely a craving for temporal ease from the Roman yoke. Their eyes have seen the *Lord’s* salvation, because they hear with quickened hearts of a *Light* to lighten (reveal) the Gentiles, and the *Glory* of Thy (the Lord’s) people Israel.

Nothing makes the quickened one so anxious for the Sin-bearer on the cross as a sight of the Lord Jesus in the glory. It needs no trouble to lead him back thither, seeing he knows where to find it, even where he was viewing the despised and world-rejected One as a proof of his heart’s malice. How fitting the order in Acts xiii. Paul can bring forth the additional news with full power—“Be it known unto you *therefore*,” (on the grounds of these very “sure mercies,”) “men (and) brethren, that *through this man* is preached unto you the *forgiveness of sins*.” Yes, and more—“and in him, every one believing, *is* justified from all things from which ye could not be justified in the law of Moses.”

In chap. xvi., though we have not the order in which the glad tidings were brought out to the jailor at Philippi, yet does the language addressed to him as he utters the words—“Sirs, what must I do to be saved,” imply that a risen and heavenly Christ was first placed before his eyes—“Believe on the *Lord* Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” It was not—“Believe on Jesus who was nailed to the cross for sin:” it was His title as an exalted Christ which was first uttered by Paul and Silas—the One whom God had made both *Lord* and *Christ*.”

We often lose much by not observing the order in which the names of Jesus are placed. When a short account of

what the Apostles uttered is given us, we may be able to know whether they are fixing the eyes of their hearers on a risen Jesus or on a Messiah before He suffered, by carefully examining the order in which the titles of Christ occur. It is by no means the same thought to say, "Jesus Christ died for us," as to say, "Christ Jesus died for us." In the former expression the mind may be carried from our Lord on earth and on the cross as the sin-bearer, on to resurrection and glory. Whereas, in the latter expression, the minds of those to whom the words are addressed are carried from a risen and ascended Lord *back* to the cross.

For instance, in 1 Cor. xv., when Paul declares or teaches to his brethren at Corinth the Gospel, he says — "For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that *Christ* died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that *he* was buried, and that *he* rose again the third day according to the scriptures; and that *he* was seen of Cephas, and last of all *he* was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." His eye is on an ascended Christ. He is going to speak to them of resurrection and heaven and glory, and he fixes their eyes on Jesus up there, telling them *He was* the One who died and rose again. So, in the short account given us of the conversion of the Philippian jailor, the *Lord* Jesus Christ is the One who saves, and it is "the word of the Lord" which is spoken to him and all in his house.

In the 17th chapter we have Paul's preaching among the Greeks, at Athens. What is the order there? Does he lead their minds and consciences to the cross where the Sin-bearer bore sins? Nay. Here are hardened idolatrous Gentiles before him. Why not at once tell them of Him who bled and died for sinners such as they? Why not tell of the love of God in sending a Saviour who righteously satisfied the claims of justice about sin? Would not such preaching at once reach the consciences and hearts of any of those present who might need a Saviour? Ah! it was to find out the needy one—to lead such to that cross which they *must* see in order to ease their burdened consciences, that Paul does *not* thus speak of the cross first. And, as we shall see in the sequel, he was not allowed to go back to that peace-speaking place by the most of his hearers; although, by the very order they adopted, he had a severance made, and found out who were really anxious and wanted a heavenly place and a heavenly Christ.

Having spoken in language suitable to the kind of sinners he was addressing, having declared what God was as a Sovereign Ruler, he says—"Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at (overlooked), but now commandeth that all men everywhere should repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world (the habitable earth) in righteousness in [the person of] the man whom he hath ordained, affording proof to all, *in that he hath raised him from amongst the dead.* And when they heard of resurrection of dead [people], some mocked and others said, We will hear thee again concerning this." Some might say, "Why disturb their minds by fixing their thoughts on a risen One, when they must need the cross first?" Was it not out of place to startle people, like the Athenians, with a fact that must at once arouse their reasonings and perplex their minds as natural men? Surely Jesus as the Sinner-bearer could have been boldly proclaimed before leading the hearers on towards the glory? But such is not the order. Paul, it is true, is stopped ere he puts an exalted Jesus before his hearers. But he had said enough to sever the chaff from the wheat. Some became really anxious. To *them* he could preach Him who bore the sins of all believers. He drew out the anxious debtors of whom we have been speaking in our illustration. He gets the token that the conscience of some are in need of purgation. No doubt, when he again spoke to those who wanted to hear more of resurrection, he led them on to the presence of a God in light inaccessible. That God and that light must drive the soul either back to the cross, if quickened, or back to darkness as a hater of the light, if still possessing only nature—whether it be religious, intellectual feeling, or callous flesh.

A soul can be quickened without ever even hearing of the cross. The work on the cross is the foundation on which and by which *all* blessing can be given. But it is the Person of Jesus, as the Life, from which quickening comes: He gives life as One who died and rose again. When the anxious soul has found life by faith exercised towards Himself, as the One wanted—the One who *can* meet his need: when "the hem" is touched by the hand of faith—real faith—looking at Jesus anywhere, anyhow; the soul lives—

and for ever. Now the cross is consciously wanted by such an one, and peace follows just in proportion as that cross is seen to meet the various wants, as to sins, sin, the flesh, self, and man.

Peace is a large word. There is the peace of forgiveness (Luke vii. 50); the peace of justification from all things (Rom. v. 1); the peace of justification from sin by the crucifixion of the old man (Rom. vi.); the peace of seeing Him made sin who knew no sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v.); and the peace of being accepted in the Beloved, holy and without blame before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—"Love made perfect to us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world." Nothing but the cross can bring peace to him who has life eternal; but the cross can bring no peace save where that life is present in the soul. Hence God's order—resurrection and glory first proclaimed 'ere the want of conscience is satisfied, by leading the soul to the cross where He who is in the glory, has put away all against the believing sinner. I bring a soul first to the place where Christ is, and then—having thus searched him for a token of need, as the piercings of the living and powerful word pass through him, or the love of a Father's Son makes him long to have all impediments removed that he may reach His person—I open up where Christ *was* but is not now.

When the Son told out the love of God in the words—"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life," did he proclaim Himself as the One who was to become the Sin-bearer? Nay; it was His person, and God's love in sending Him as full of grace and truth, which He proclaimed. Any one who wanted his need supplied, as He stood before man, got it fully met. If a longing one but touched the "fringe of his garment" in faith, life eternal was the result. It was in resurrection, and knowing He was risen, that the need of conscience could be met. The one already quickened must look back at the spot where the Lamb of God died who beareth away the sin of the world; a living Jesus is preached, and where He *is* as He speaks to us, 'ere the soul—thus searched—is brought to see the cross of the Sin-bearer.

(To be continued.)

GOD'S KING.—No. IX.

THE EXTENT OF HIS DOMINIONS.—Psalm viii.

“ON His head were many crowns” or diadems (Rev. xix. 12). These words form part of the description of the Lord Jesus as John in vision saw Him, and as earth will one day behold Him, when arrayed in all the insignia of power with which His Father has invested Him; for no one crown, nor any one title, however exalted, can express all the dignities and the glories which belong to Him.

Seven diadems we learn that John saw on the Dragon's head (xii. 3), and ten diadems on the Beast's horns (xiii. 1); but these, whilst attempting to rival in power and glory God's King, fall short surely, even in number, of the glories which He has conferred on His Son. What the Dragon and the Beast possessed could be counted, but the glories and dignities which belong to Christ are unnumbered. Many diadems He will wear, John tells us; and He is worthy of them all, we must add.

In the Psalms already looked at, one of the glories which belong to Him, that of Messiah, King of Israel, has been considered. In the psalm before us we have another glory presented, that which is His as Son of Man; for the names by which He is known are not mere verbal designations, empty titles, but they each express something definite and distinctive. Christ, Lord, King, Son of Man—these are some of His titles in connection with His supremacy. “The Christ,” *i.e.*, the anointed one, connects Him with God's people, whether the earthly, Israel, of whom He is King, or a heavenly company, the Church, of which He is the Head (Eph. v. 23). “Lord” brings to our mind His relation to all intelligent creatures, whether unfallen, saved, or lost (Phil. ii. 10, 11). “King of Kings” denotes His superiority to all rulers amongst men; and “Son of Man” tells of His Headship over the universe, animate and inanimate.

At times in the world's history we have shadowed forth in certain people, placed in authority upon earth, something of the different official positions to be filled, and the dignities to be enjoyed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, David and Solomon were anointed kings over all Israel. Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold, was a king of kings (Dan. ii. 37). Adam was head over all creatures upon this globe; but Adam was neither anointed like David, nor a king of kings

like Nebuchadnezzar. In the Lord, however, all these glories and offices meet. What each of the above mentioned was, that He will be seen to be, and all centred in His person, of whom they were in this respect but shadows.

Again, to three men, and to three only, has God ever given dominion over the animals and men—viz., to Nebuchadnezzar, to Adam, and to the Lord Jesus Christ. Alike in this, they stand out, however, each one different from the other two. To Nebuchadnezzar God gave dominion over earth and air, for wherever the children of men dwelt, the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven were given into his hand (Dan. ii. 38), and he was made ruler over them all. With him was set up something new—the image which still stands. As head of it this Gentile monarch had this remarkable place in creation, connected, it would seem, with headship on earth. But great and remarkable as was the dominion given to Nebuchadnezzar, far exceeding that which any other monarch involved in Adam's fall has, or will enjoy, it was, compared with what God gave to Adam, restricted in extent, and limited in duration, though not conditional for its continuance throughout its allotted time on the obedience of the proud builder of Babylon (Jer. xxv. 11, 12, xxvii. 6, 7).

To Adam in the garden the Lord God gave the place of head over earth, air, and sea; for, besides earth and air, he had dominion over all in the sea (Gen. i. 28). Unrestricted, therefore, in extent, as regards earth, it was unlimited, also, as to duration, though conditional, as it afterwards appeared, for its continuance on his personal obedience to God's command. He fell, and no man after him has ever held such a place in creation as he, while in innocence, filled. For, what Gen. i. 28 describes is not the position given to men in relation to the rest of created beings upon this globe, but the special sphere accorded to Adam as head of this creation, "the type of him to come" (Rom. v. 14). A comparison of what God said to Adam, with His word to Noah and his sons after the flood, confirms this. Adam was to have dominion over all creatures, whilst for Noah and his sons, their fear only was to be placed on all animals on earth, in air, and sea; for we miss in the Divine communication to the patriarch and his sons the important words "and subdue it," part of the terms of the conveyance of supremacy over earth bestowed on our forefather Adam (Gen. i. 28, ix. 2). Now,

had the words addressed to Adam been intended for men after him, there would have been no need for Daniel to tell Nebuchadnezzar that the beasts and the birds were given into his hand ; nay, the prophet's communication would have been an insult to the king, as limiting man's dominion where God had not restricted it, for Daniel mentions nothing about the sea. Adam's place, then, in creation was peculiar to himself, which, when lost through the fall, none of his descendants could regain.

But since Adam enjoyed his place by virtue of a grant from God, and Nebuchadnezzar was invested with dominion by a fresh exercise of the Divine prerogative, the Son of Man has been appointed to wield the sceptre throughout the universe by a deed of the same validity—God's sovereign will recorded in the written word. And though the simple exercise of the Divine prerogative announced to the individual, as in the cases of Adam and Nebuchadnezzar, without any written communication about it, must always have been a sufficient warrant to fill the office of head on earth, God has been pleased to reveal for the instruction of His people, and of the world, His counsels concerning the Son of Man, that all may learn from Him, who is the One whom He delights to honour.

Comparing the grant to the Lord as Son of Man with those given respectively to Adam and to Nebuchadnezzar, whilst it has something in common with each, it differs from both. Unrestricted and unlimited it is, in this it resembles that given to Adam, but unconditional as to its continuance it also is, and in this it resembles that given to the Head of gold ; for over all creation is the Son of Man to be set, without limitation as to time, or conditions as to continuance.

Thus, as we pass each type in review, we have to say that the antitype far exceeds each and all in glory and greatness. David and Solomon reigned over all Israel. This the Lord will do ; but they never bore the title of King of kings. Again, Nebuchadnezzar could boast of a title sanctioned by God, which Adam had not ; but he must yield precedence to Adam in respect of the extent of his dominion on this earth. And Adam who had a place, which no fallen man had or will have, must give way before the Lord Jesus, when the greatness of their respective positions in the universe is compared ; for, by the light of the New Testament, we learn to read aright, and to give its full value to the statement of the

Psalmist—"Thou hast put all things under his feet." Of the Lord, then, the psalm speaks, and of Him alone; for whereas Adam only could boast of a supremacy resembling that herein described, though man, he was not the Son of Man; and, during the time he held his place as head of creation on earth, he could not have understood such a term. Thus, apart from the New Testament Scriptures, we can see that David was not writing of Adam, nor of the race in general; but with the New Testament writings before us we are taught to put a definite meaning on the language he used, and to discern a dominion and supremacy here hinted at, of the extent of which he was surely ignorant, as he sung, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things under his feet."

(*To be continued.*)

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"W. T."—Is the "heavenly calling" of Heb. iii. 1, wider in its aspect than the Church?

A.—The writer of Hebrews is addressing a peculiar remnant. They had been Jews (as living on earth, where those are who "sleep in the dust of the earth," *i.e.*, Jews scattered amongst the nations—Dan. xii. 2—who will by and by be gathered out of such a condition for millennial blessing), and had come in for all the blessings of a "heavenly calling." This calling is much wider in aspect than the "Assembly which is his (Christ's) body;" and takes in all the Old Testament saints, all of whom will have part in the *Father's Kingdom* (Matt. xiii). "The Bride, the Lamb's wife" will have a higher place in the glory, and we (alone), as "the Bride" in Spirit *now*, are "in Christ Jesus;" not merely "in Christ."

There are three normal aspects in which a person may be said to be a "believer" in Scripture.

1. As one who is earthly in hope—a millennial saint, for instance.
2. As one who awaits perfection (actual) in Christ, in a glorified body. This all the Old Testament saints will have (see Heb. xi. *passim*); as also those who may be slain during "the great tribulation." These receive a supplementary resurrection before Christ *appears* in glory.
3. As one who has lived on earth at any time from Pentecost till the rapture of the Church. Such an one, when sealed, is united to Christ above, and will (as being "in Christ Jesus") have a portion in the glory above those who are as in the Heavenly side of the Kingdom, in the new Jerusalem.

Hebrews, then, is directly addressed to those who had been brought out of Judaism into the Church; yet much of the Epistle will suit the condition of those who will be slain during the tribulation, and even in the millennial kingdom on earth. The believer in Hebrews is seen on earth, but as looking for Him who "shall appear" (*ἐφθίησεται*,

i.e., "be seen to the eye" apart from sin unto (els) *salvation*" (Heb. ix. 28).

Luke xxi. gives us *this* remnant; while Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., would include the millennial saints.

The words "holy" and "brethren" very likely refer to ch. ii. 11, 12.

David's words, "I shall go to him," &c. (2 Sam. xii.), are expressive of the thought that *he* would become a heavenly man, and thus a partaker of the "heavenly calling." The heir after the flesh has passed away, and is sure above. This would bring in "the sure mercies of David."

"M. C. H."—Would you give me the meaning of 1 Cor. xv. 29?

A.—It was as if the Apostle said, in view of this denial of the resurrection which had got in amongst the Corinthians, "Well, since the *object* in baptism is death—for we are baptized 'with a view' (els) to it—the very fact of our baptism marks us out for death. What fools you are, then, to have become Christians, if, when the initiatory ordinance points to death; there is no resurrection."

As in a "forlorn hope" men step forward to fill up the ranks of those cut down in death, so was the place of those who "are baptized (or 'over' *ὑπὲρ*) the dead;" thus filling up the places, as it were, of those, perhaps, who were martyred for Christ's sake. "Now (he goes on, as it were), if dead persons do not rise at all, it would be folly to own practically what our baptism implies."

Look at the scope of the chapter and the arguments of the Apostle against what was amongst them at Corinth, as well as at the objective character of baptism as having death in view, and you will see the force of the verse more distinctly.

THE EVENING AND THE MORNING.

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace: but now are they hid from thine eyes."—LUKE xix. 41, 42.

'If thou hadst known'! Unutterable love!

A Saviour's grace o'er mercies pass'd away:
The mournful grieving of the Holy Dove

That hovered still where peace still sought to stay;
"If thou hadst known"! The sinful nation slept
Her dark death slumber. JESUS watched, and wept.

If thou hadst bowed thine head, inclined thine ear
 To hear the gracious words that Jesus spake ;
 If thou hadst known Him when He came so near—
 The Hebrew Servant, bound for love's own sake ;
 Thine own Redeemer, Israel ! Son of God,
 Yea, Son of Man : " My Fellow," saith the Lord.

" *If thou hadst known* " ! O agony of grief !
 Love's patient labour vainly, vainly spent !
 Impending woe foreseen : Divine relief
 Refused, despised in Him the Father sent :
 " *If thou hadst known* " ! E'en *Zion* would not hear.
 'Twas nought to her that JESUS lingered near.

" *Hid from thine eyes* " ! Alas, alas for thee !
 Thy visitation's hour thou didst not know :
 Messiah thou hast nailed to the Tree :
 That shameful death his wages here below.
If thou hadst known what JESUS came to bring,
 Thou hadst not, Israel, crucified thy King:

" *Hid from thine eyes* " ! Too late, too late to learn
 His quenchless love who sought to save the lost !
 Too late ! Ah no ! He lives ! He will return—
 JESUS ! the SAME who died upon the Cross.
 Again His voice shall penetrate the tomb—
 Shall wake the dead : Death's driest tree shall bloom.

" *If thou hadst known* " ! We weep, but we rejoice,
 Lord Jesus Christ, Thy path of life to trace ;
 Thy scattered sheep shall hear their Shepherd's voice,
 Thine Israel's guilt shall magnify Thy grace—
 For oh, Thy Cross, man's everlasting shame,
 Records, o'er all, the LIFE-IMPARTER'S Name.

THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

Read Numb. xxxv.; Deut. xix.; Heb. vi.

THERE was an ordinance in Israel of old which seems to have a remarkable anti-type in the "Church of God" during the present interval, while Jesus remains in the heavens exercising His High Priestly office. I allude to that of the appointment of the Cities of Refuge for the slayer of blood.

Amongst the forty-eight cities of the Levites there were **six** cities to be marked off that the slayer might flee thither, and be safe from the avenger of blood. Three cities of refuge were to be appointed on the eastern side of Jordan; and three cities in the land of Canaan. They were for the "children of Israel," for the "Stranger," and for the "Sojourner;" that "everyone that killeth any person unawares may flee thither."—Numb. xxxv. 15.

Care was taken that the guilty man, whose crime was done wittingly, should not escape from the avenger of blood. He might have "fled for refuge" to one of these cities, and the Levites there, as in duty bound, may have received him; but the day came when he "stood before the congregation in judgment," and his cause was heard. If the act was done with premeditation, he was given up to the "avenger of blood," notwithstanding his having reached the refuge of the city which was appointed for this purpose.

But if the slayer had done the act in ignorance, and yet had shed the blood, the day came when the cause of the avenger was heard, and the congregation were to "deliver the slayer out of the hands of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the High Priest, which was anointed with the holy oil."

But there he should remain. "No satisfaction" whatever was to be taken for the life of the murderer—the wittingly guilty man (v. 31), who hated his neighbour in times past (Deut. xix. 11). And no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge (the man who did the deed without premeditation, and was unwittingly guilty). that he should *come again* to dwell in the land until the death of the High Priest; when that time came, and only then, might he return to the land of his possession (vv. 28, 31, 32).

To have gone back, supposing such could have been, was to defile the land with blood; for the land could not be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, unless by the blood

of him that shed it (v. 33). It would have amounted to saying that the blood of the slain was a matter of no consequence at all, and this would be to defile the land in which Jehovah dwelt.

The reception of the man thus guilty was the act of the Levites. This was a part of their service to Israel, to the stranger, or to him that sojourned amongst them, who slew his neighbour in time past.

We now turn to the New Testament. The Jews had slain their Messiah! The voice of "all the people," even when Pilate desired to let Him go, and took the bason, and washed his hands before them, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person," their voices answered, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. xxvii. 24, 25). The swollen tide of the evil of man's heart surrounded that cross, and the scenes which went before. None in that vast multitude but had his warning as to what he was doing. It was no unwitting murder on man's part. The law required two witnesses at least to establish the guilt of the accused (Deut. xix. 15). The chief priests and elders and the council, sought false witness against Jesus to put Him to death (Matt. xxvii. 60), but found none. Two false witnesses came at last with the tale that He had said, "I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days." But Jesus opened not His mouth.

It was striking—yet true—that God should have taken care that there should be two of the most impartial witnesses the world could produce to testify to the spotlessness of His Son! Judas, the betrayer, was the one; and Pilate, the judge, was the other! One who had known Him intimately, and had watched with the keen eye of lust, his previous Master; one who had the opportunity of knowing every turn of His spotless life and ways, and who had been treated as any other of His followers throughout his course by Jesus. For never by word, look or sign, had Jesus made a difference between him and the rest. Who could be better able then to tell forth the flaw—the hasty word—the slightest soil if such was there than he! And God chose the betrayer to be one of the two independent witnesses for His Son! When the betrayer saw that the unresisting Saviour was condemned, in his remorse, and in defiance it may be, he entered the holy place (*τῷ ναῷ*, used for that part of the temple where the glory had dwelt of old), and cast

down the pieces of silver, confessing—for despair speaks the truth—"I have betrayed the innocent blood."

The judge, too, after hearing all the accusers had to say, and warned by his wife, and by that conscience which told him he was about to burthen his soul with a useless crime—he was the other witness whom God chose to speak for the Son of His love! What more impartial witnesses could there be? The false disciple who sold his Master, and the unjust judge who condemned the guiltless were both the men to be chosen of God to proclaim that day and ever since that the condemned was a spotless man! Pilate took the water, and washed his hands, and said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person."

Messiah was led away to His cross: "As a sheep dumb before her shearers; so he opened not his mouth." On the way to the cross, He spake to the weeping daughters of Jerusalem, warning them of their fate and their children's. On the cross, he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). Willing in His grace not to hold them finally guilty of a witting murder in their hatred of Him. But they were guilty, and knowingly so, of the murder in hatred of a just Man—to go no further than this. The blood-money was used by the priests to purchase a field to bury "strangers" in. That field is called the field of blood unto this day (Matt. xxvii. 7, 8.) And thus the people are blood-guilty, and the land "defiled."

But God raised up His Son from out of the dead, and exalted Him to His own right hand in glory as Man. Those who had followed Him when here below were to await in Jerusalem the Holy Ghost to be sent down from heaven. And this was done. "The day of Pentecost was fully come," and the promised Paraclete was sent from heaven, and sitting on each, in cloven tongues, as of fire, He filled all the house where they were sitting, and formed the disciples into a habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22).

It is not my present purpose to trace out the constitution of this company of disciples, by the baptism of the Spirit into "one body," uniting them to the Lord in *heaven*. This is one aspect of the Church of God—a body united to its Head in heaven. the other aspect of it, being a habitation of God by His Spirit *on earth*—the "House of God." This "House," builded in the name of the murdered, but exalted

Jesus, was now the City of Refuge for the poor blood-guilty Jew. The avenger of blood was at his heels! Every moment was precious if he would escape and flee for refuge.

And now the Church in her Levite, or servant place, opens her gates for blood-guilty but repentant Israel. Peter cries, in his first sermon, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Even the "stranger" would find a place in this City of Refuge—the Church of God: those "afar off" would find a spot where the unwitting blood-guiltiness might find a pardon.

Thousands fled for refuge at that time. The land—defiled with blood—instead of being merely, as now, a place for the burial of "strangers," was the spot where this new and heavenly City of Refuge was to be found—where "strangers" might find shelter, life and peace. The Church of God was this. The High Priest who was anointed with the holy oil had gone on high into the heavenly sanctuary. As He swept into the heavens, the golden bells and pomegranates on the skirts of His garments were heard and seen in the testimony and fruits of the Spirit on earth in the Church—in the body of Christ. The Levite service of His people was active in welcoming the blood-guilty who repented of their sin to this place of security. Their priestly office was occupied in offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus, and in showing forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.*

The avenger of blood reached those who did not flee, and soon were the blood-guilty Jews swept away and scattered amongst the nations; but the Church of God remains—the habitation of God through the Spirit—the true City of Refuge to welcome the Jew, the stranger, and the sojourner, until Jesus as the true High Priest leaves His present place in the heavens; then Israel as a nation will return to the land of their possessions.† It remains a great "Aceldama," or "field of blood"—a place to bring strangers unto this day.

* The Apostle of the Gentiles touchingly alludes to the mercy he had obtained in his unwitting guilt, in having thus found a refuge from the avenger. He writes, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me power, that he has counted me faithful, appointing to ministry him who before was a blasphemer and persecutor, and an insolent overbearing (man); but *mercy* was shown me because I did it *ignorantly* in unbelief" (1 Tim. i. 12, 13—New Translation).

† I do not here enter on the cleansing of the land, till then "defiled by blood," or to the cleansing of the blood-guiltiness of the Jew, when he takes upon him (at least the godly remnant of them) the guilt of

Like the day when Moses pitched the tent outside the guilty camp of Israel (Ex. xxxiii.) the "Church of God" became the "tent of meeting," where those who sought the Lord might come. There Joshua remained.* Israel was judged and God was in His habitation . . . through the Spirit.

But I trace still this thought of the City of Refuge. If we turn to the Hebrews we shall find in that epistle that which presents Christ gone up as high priest into "heaven itself." Unlike Ephesians, which presents the Church "in Christ Jesus" in the heavenlies, it presents Christ in heaven for men (believers of course). The profession of Christianity is thus viewed as on earth; redemption being the starting point, Christians are journeying on, partakers of the heavenly calling, towards the rest which remains. But in keeping with the present priestly place of the Lord, do we not find the thought of the City of Refuge intermingling itself with the general thought of the writer? Christianity is there seen in its privileges as enjoyed in consequence of Christ's place in heaven, and the Holy Ghost's place on earth in the Church. I do not say that the doctrine of the Church is found in the epistle; it is only once named in passing, in chapter xii.—"The church of the first-born," &c.

But the external Church on earth is before the mind of the Spirit; the Hebrews who had professed Christianity being the primary thought in this new sphere of privilege and safety from the avenger of blood. Still, the day of reckoning would most surely come, and all unreality would find that "our God is a consuming fire." Therefore, the many warnings, and solemn searching words at which almost every quickened conscience has some time or other quailed. See chapters vi. and x.

To see the meaning of many thoughts in this and kindred scriptures in the epistles, requires that we should under-

his nation in the last days. Messiah has taken the place of the guilty, and answered for it in righteousness to the Lord. He has shed His precious blood for this, as also to purchase and cleanse the defilement of His (Emmanuel's) land. Deut. xxi. 1-9, gives what answers to the first mentioned as the type. Psal. li., Zech. xii. xiii.; Isa. liii., &c., show the guilt of His people purged through that same blood-shedding of Jesus.

* Moses is in this chapter and the previous one (Ex. xxxii. and xxxiii.), the type of a gracious Christ who goes down into the evil. Joshua—type of a heavenly Christ who remains apart from them, where those who sought the Lord should come.

stand the difference between the external Church in her responsible place on earth, and the Church—"His body," as in Christ Jesus in the heavenlies.

On the day of Pentecost both were co-terminous; the same number of disciples who were constituted into an habitation of God through the spirit" on earth, were in union with Christ in the heavenlies. These two thoughts remain still true. While the true Church—the body of Christ has remained—cared for by the Lord, and maintained in union with Him by the presence and power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven at Pentecost, the profession of it on earth has enlarged its proportions so as to be what is termed "Christendom," and this through the devices of the enemy and the failure of man.

The writer of Hebrews sees with the discerning eye of the Spirit the tendency to lapse into ordinances, and a ritual of the bygone system of Judaism; in fact, to return to the earthly order in which the "first man" had been tested by the Lord and found wanting, as in all else; he sees also the tendency in some to stand still in the "first principles of the oracles of God." And with these two thoughts before him, he would encourage one in which the latter would be found, on into "perfection," or full growth—the knowledge of a heavenly Christ, and all that follows. He would warn the former of the dangers of retrogression even in a little, lest after all it might end in apostacy—no reality being found in the soul that thus turned back to things that were of the past.

This state (in fact both), are before his mind when he pens the parenthesis which lies between ch. v. 11, and vi. 20. He was on the way in ch. v. 10, to unfold the glories of this Melchisedic, when the state of his hearers arises before his mind with solemn force, and recalls his pen—first to warn, and then to encourage (ch. vi.), rather than to unfold.

When the Lord gives us this example, He takes up the most solemn case that we could suppose in the early part of ch. vi. v. 4-8; that of the very highest character of privileges without life in the soul.

He writes, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened." Here let us mark that this "enlightening" may be found in souls where no life is; I mean life from the Lord. The mind may be filled in the clearest manner with the truths of Christianity, and the conscience never have been

reached—this, the only avenue into man's soul—the conscience which he received when he fell. Unless that has been pierced by the quickening power of the Word of God by the Spirit, knowledge but adds to the ruin of the soul.

Take a fish from the sea and raise it into the air of heaven, and you will find that it is death to it, while that same air of heaven is life to others. So the “things of the Spirit of God” may be found to be destruction and ruin to those who belong not to His sphere. Knowledge with life is a dangerous thing. Knowledge where there is none is fatal.

Then we read, “And have tasted of the heavenly gift.” Remark, too, here, that it is tasted *of* it. This is a very solemn case. Tasting a thing is not nearly so strong an expression as tasting *of* it. This “heavenly gift” would take in all the blessings consequent on the death and resurrection and ascension of the Lord, with the presence of the Holy Ghost and all that flowed from this contrasted with the earthly gifts and blessings known and enjoyed in Judaism.

“And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.” Surely, says some one, those are real saints! Nay; I may never have had communion with a person with whom I may be a partaker. The guests at dinner may partake of the viands, and yet have nothing more in common with the host and hostess to whom they belong. Persons have communion together personally when they themselves are in view; while they may be partakers of a loaf as well. Suppose they possessed the loaf jointly, and were partaking of it when a third person who had no proprietary rights in the loaf came up, and he partook with the others in the repast. Now, all would be partakers together, while only two would be sharers together of the loaf as possessing it, (*κοινωνος*).

Thus with the Holy Ghost's presence in the church, consequent on the exaltation of Christ as Man. All may partake of the blessings of His presence; yet, none but those in whom He dwells personally could be said to be in the fellowship or communion of the Spirit of God; while the latter would also, in common with all, be partakers of His presence and the blessings He sheds around.

“And have tasted the good Word of God.” It is not here tasting of it; but the spoken words of God having been tasted with discrimination—bearing the good news of what He is as Saviour and Blessor in contrast to all that went

before. These words being accompanied, too, with the "powers of the coming age;" those miracles, and wonders, and signs which God did to draw the attention of man to what His heart was ready to bestow by and with His Son.

What more had heaven to give when the best thing was given, and all things freely added to Christ? Surely nothing!

If then the heart was still stony ground. If Satan's power to blind man's eyes had still so strong a hold over the soul, the writer may add, "If they fall away (or, 'and falling away') to renew them again, with a view to (*eis*) repentance." If, having found a shelter from the avenger for the guilt of Messiah's blood who was the Son of God, in the city of refuge of His providing, they turned back again to the land where His blood was shed, and abandoned its shelter; as individuals (whoever may thus be guilty) they would thus take up the guilt of their nation—crucifying to *themselves* the Son of God! This the nation had done as a nation, and now the slayer who was accounted unwittingly guilty through the grace of Jesus, wittingly indorses the deed, and "does despite to the Spirit of grace." For him then there was no return as far as man could say. With God all things are possible.

He then draws the analogy in verses 7 and 8 between the heart of the faithful believer and the unfaithful professor, which bore nothing but thorns and briars, though heaven's showers were shed upon his heart. Verse 7 puts us in mind of the description of the land of Canaan, in Deut. xi. 11-12. The land "which drinketh water of the rain of heaven," as verse 8 does of the land of Egypt where all was toil.

In verses 8-12, the writer addresses them with a word of true encouragement, seeing, as he does, "the things that accompany salvation" amongst them. These were signs and indications of life being there. Their hearts may have forgotten what God would not forget—their work and labour of *love*—which He desired that he might see in the same diligence to the full assurance of *hope* to the end. And that they should not be slothful, but walk after those who through *faith* and patience inherited promises.

I do not dwell on His comforting and refreshing words, but pass on to mark some other features which seem to help us in enlarging upon the thoughts of the analogy of the "city of refuge" of old, and the assembly of God on earth now.

We read in verse 17, "Wherein God willing (counselling) more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed himself by an oath. That by two immutable things (God's counsel and His oath) in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

How small, how feeble is the saving faith which is owned and encouraged here? One who felt that judgment was at his heels, and but a single chance left of escape. His heart and conscience felt that Christ alone could be his hope for salvation now; hope other than in Him was cast aside. He runs to the city appointed for his refuge, and enters its precincts to breathe again in safety. But he desires to rest in Him alone who had pointed this way of escape and safety. He would not even rest in the carnal security that he had entered the city, and forget Him in whose name it had been built. His heart rises to the Lord as the heavenly intercessor of His people; and, as it were, his soul enters the heavenly sanctuary in hope, and his faith lays hold on the very horns (so to speak) of the golden altar within the holy place. Still higher mounts his hope as the anchor of his soul surely and stedfastly drops within the vail itself, whither the forerunner has entered: there he finds the "strong consolation" which God would give to all who would flee.

(To be continued, D. V.)

GOD'S KING—No. IX.

THE EXTENT OF HIS DOMINIONS.—Psalm viii.

(Concluded from page 38.)

A MILLENNIAL psalm it clearly is, and brings before us Israel lost in wonder, as they behold the development of God's counsels, and the display of His wisdom in thus exalting the Son of Man. "Jehovah, our Lord, how excellent (or glorious) is thy name in all the earth, who has set thy glory above the heavens." The heaven of heavens cannot contain God, as Solomon at a later date declared, yet God deigns to make this small globe—earth—the theatre for the display of His wisdom and power; and man, whose normal sphere is earth, He will place in the person of the Christ over all created things, the hierarchy of heaven included. In connection with this two points are specially brought up, viz., the principle on which God acts, and the great manifestation of it.

The principle on which He acts is this: He uses instruments, humanly speaking, inadequate to effect His mighty purposes in creation. Thus His wisdom and power are both displayed. Were He to act directly, in the greatness of His might, without the agency of any creature, all would behold His power, but His wisdom might not be developed. But He acts in wisdom as well as in power; for, taking up the feeblest creatures, and adapting them as instruments for the work that He has in hand, He thereby shows His knowledge of the suitability of the instrument, and His power in rightly making use of it. This He has done, and will do. The Psalm (2) speaks of the principle on which He acts; and the little children in the temple at Jerusalem

were an illustration of it (Matt. xxi. 16). The feeblest creatures He can and does use to effect His purpose of stilling the enemy and the avenger. "Our Lord," the remnant will say, acts thus; and the thoughts of their hearts have been prophetically announced, that souls, till the day of Christ's glory arrives, may be led to trust in God. Then the principle enunciated will receive its full and final manifestation by the Son of Man, as set over the works of God's hands, destroying all God's enemies.

This leads to the second point. Comparing man, as a creature, with the orbs of heaven, his insignificance and weakness become apparent; and the Psalmist might well say, "What is man (*Enosh*, mortal man), that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man (*Adam*), that thou visitest him? And thou hast made him a little lower than gods (*i. e.*, angels), and with glory and majesty thou crownest him." To whom these words are to be applied Heb. ii. 8 makes plain, pointing out, at the same time, how far the Psalm has yet received its fulfilment. The moon and the stars appointed to rule by night (Psalm cxxxvi. 9) are far greater than man—the lowest in rank of God's intelligent creatures—yet the Son of Man is to appear some day, set over all things, the director and ruler throughout the universe. Made lower than the angels, He will be seen placed above them. Their relation to man now, 2 Pet. ii. 11, sets forth; their present service to the saints Heb. i. 14 makes plain, and their former ministrations to the man Jesus Christ the evangelists recount (Matt. iv. 11, Mark i. 13, Luke xxii. 43). God's servants they have ever been and will be. Their status never alters. Ministering spirits they are (Ps. ciii. 20, 21) and will be, doing God's commandments now, and executioners of His judgments by and by (Matt. xiii. 41-49). Man's status, however, in the person of Christ does alter—and, through Him, that of all God's heavenly saints—for the better; for the future habitable world, we learn (Heb. ii. 5), is not put under angels, but under man; and the One who is to have the chief place in that economy, appointed thereto by God, is His own well-beloved Son, the Son of Man likewise, who, as man on earth, received the ministrations of angels, but as Son of Man in power and glory, will send them forth as His messengers to do His bidding. As yet these counsels of God are unfulfilled; but the fact of the Lord Jesus Christ having been crowned with

glory and honour, points Him out as the subject of this Psalm, and therefore the destined ruler of the universe.

Thus, as we read it, we learn what will be the thoughts of the godly remnant of the Jews on beholding the development before the world of the divine counsels about Christ, and we must surely own how different is God's written word from everything else. To read the thoughts of men's hearts when they are not expressed is the prerogative of God alone; and when the Lord did it, His disciples confessed that He must have come from God (John xvi. 19-31). Here, however, we have the thoughts that will arise in His people's hearts revealed ages beforehand. None could do this but He who forms the heart and knows the end from the beginning. What Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the Jews would do to Christ and His people, Psalm ii. beforehand announced; and the disciples, in Acts iv. 24-28, bore witness to the accuracy of that prophetic word. What this Psalm expresses will, in like manner, in its appointed time, be made good.

Reading Heb. ii. we are assured of this, being made acquainted by it with that which God has been pleased to communicate to us about the present position and glory of His Son, as well as the great gap in time between verses 6 and 7 of the Psalm. Writing for the earthly people the Psalmist enumerates the living creatures on earth, in air, and sea, as subjected to the sway of the Son of Man. Instructing heavenly saints, the Apostle acquaints us with the breadth of meaning, which lay concealed in those words. Angels elect and apostate, men lost and saved, saints above and saints on earth, all are to be under Christ's rule, as well as all living creatures and all created things. The joy of God's heavenly saints at this, the feelings of the elect angels at the mention of it, as well as that of all living creatures in heaven or earth, and under the earth, and the expression of the earthly people at beholding it, the word has beforehand announced (Rev. v., Ps. xcv.-xcviii.) What a place, then, in the universe has God assigned to Him, who received the ministration of angels in the wilderness when an hungered, and the support of an angel in the garden when in the agony!

But we have more particulars about the Lord Jesus Christ, and His fulfilment of this Psalm, than what Heb. ii. supplies; for both 1 Cor. xv. and Ephes. i. refer to it, the

former telling of the gradual accomplishment of God's mind about His Son, the latter of our special interest in it. The gradual accomplishment we say, for whilst 1 Cor. xv. declares the purpose for which He is to reign, viz., to put all enemies under His feet, and develops the order in which that will be effected, death being the last enemy whose power He will annul, Rev. xx, which reveals to us the exact duration of His millennial reign, acquaints us also with this fact, that not till after the close of His thousand years rule will Death and Hades be cast into the lake of fire. That done, He will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, God's purpose having been effected by the Son of Man, viz., the subjugation of all His enemies. Nothing then will escape His eye, or remain independent of His sceptre; and all that has held man captive the Lord will overthrow, who, as man, visited different regions of His extensive dominions; for in Hades, as well as on earth and in heaven, can the path of the Son of Man be traced (Ephes. iv. 9-10). On earth, where Adam was head, in other parts of the universe, where Adam's authority was unknown, will the Lord's power be felt, and God, by Him, be glorified. God will set Him over the work of His hands. But this, be it observed, is not mere exaltation above all created things, but the subjection of all things to Him, who was made a little lower than the angels, nothing being left that is not put under Christ, except Him by the fiat of whose will all this is to be effected. To resist the Lord Jesus, therefore, must end in complete discomfiture. And since men, as creatures, will exist for ever, sooner or later they must be subject to the lowly Son of Man, for God's purposes about Him will be fulfilled, however long they may be of accomplishment. Viewing, then, the world's opposition to God and to His Christ in the light furnished by the prophetic announcement of the divine plans, what can we say of it, how describe it, but as folly and madness in their intensest form, not to speak of the rebellious spirit it displays, and the mutinous character of its acts? Nothing can defeat the establishment of God's purpose; no power arrayed against the Lord can succeed; for the binding of Satan at the commencement of the millennium by angelic agency, and his final doom at the end of it, as well as the Lord's victory over death (Rev. xx. 1), tell us of powers greater than that of man, which must finally succumb to Christ.

When the Lord God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden as head upon earth, He brought to him all the animals for His creature to name, standing by as it were as a listener, to hear what the man, endowed by Him with intelligence, would call each one as it passed before him in review, thus manifesting His delight and satisfaction in the head which He had placed over that creation. With what delight, then, will he behold the Son of His love set over all the works of His hands! For Satan there is nothing in store but judgment final and everlasting. Not so for man, if he will hearken to God's message (2 Cor. v. 20, 21). Shall souls have their part for ever with Satan or with Christ? That is the question for those yet unconverted. The portion appointed for the devil Matt. xxv. 41 plainly sets forth. God's counsels about Christ, and those who believe on Him, in Ephes. i. 9-14 have been revealed. What they were once who shall be with Christ for ever, Ephes. ii. in no dubious language declares, thus pointing out the class, viewed morally, from which the Lord's "fellows" are drawn, and answering at once the question of a sin-convicted soul, can I ever hope to be with Him in whom all things are to be headed up, both things on earth and things in heaven?

As Messiah, King of the Jews, the Lord was crucified. Israel's King was rejected and cast out of the world, to return when He shall have received a dominion co-extensive only with the universe, and before whom, as their Lord and Judge, Pilate, Herod, and Caiphas must one day stand. "Your King," said Pilate, addressing the Jews, king of a territory very circumscribed and insignificant in comparison with that empire of whose Head he was a servant and representative. But a dominion more extensive than that of the Cæsars, and more enduring than that of any earthly dynasty, will be His who stood at that bar of judgment, and was sent therefrom to the cross. For a thousand years will He reign, and reign too for ever, even for ever and ever. How blessed will those be then, and are now, who have obtained in him a full, a rich, and an enduring inheritance!

**"THE LORD IS ABLE TO GIVE THEE MUCH
MORE THAN THIS."**

2 CHRON. XXV. 9.

It is not the Lord's way to restore to man that which he has forfeited through failure, unless He restores it in a

different character. We find this whether in the case of an individual or a nation.

For instance, one who has fed upon the sweet manna turns back again in heart to Egypt, desiring the flesh-pots and food of the Land of Bondage, thus leaving the manna which it loathes. But the soul in such a state finds no sense of rest. Surfeited with Egypt's food, he comes to himself. His spiritual tastes are once more revived; he is again convinced that "Bread from Heaven" alone can satisfy his hunger, and he returns to the manna. Still he will now find that he is not, as it were, on the same ground as before his failure. There is some difference since his restoration from what his experience was before that cause. Not that the heart and love of God are changed to him; but he does not, as it were, retrace his steps to the first hour of failure, and go on from the point at which his eye, being off Christ, turned to something of the world with a desire after it. But it learns God and itself in a new character, and this in order that God may be exalted and self humbled.

It is a solemn thought, I can never regain what I have lost! How important, therefore, to treasure the present character of blessing while it is mine.

But here grace comes in and abounds for the soul. In keeping with God's dispensational dealings from the very first, I learn that He never restores the ruined thing, but brings in a new, or a better. I also learn that He creates in my soul the necessity which my very failure has produced—the occasion for a new and more blessed manifestation of what He is in Himself than before.

His resources are inexhaustible. He is God and not man. My repeated failure only serving, as in the case of Israel's history, to bring to light what God is, and that *for me!*

Some one has remarked,* that after the children of Israel despised the manna, its taste was never the same again. At first it was like "wafers made with honey," and afterwards like "fresh oil." (Ex. xvi., Num. xi.)

I would just remark here what it was that preceded this notice of the change in the taste of the manna, in Num. xi. 5. "*We remember* the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." Was it not a *dangerous* retrospect? I do not believe we can be thus engaged, even for a moment,

* "Words of Truth," Vol. II. p. 56.

unless self-judgment is promptly exercised, without suffering from it. It should be ever "forgetting those things which are behind." If we allow our desires to go back to the domains of our old taskmaster, we too shall be led to imagine that the food we there sought after was eaten "freely," being blinded to the recollection of the vexation of spirit and cruel bondage that the prince of that land laid upon us, while we *earned* it.

Let us not tarry at such an occupation, or we shall loathe the mauna. "The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety," and "we are not ignorant of his devices." Lot's wife only "*looked back*." We are on slippery places, while our eyes look not right on, and our eyelids straight before us, *unto Jesus*, who is in the glory.

1872.

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"J. M. R." asks for the Scripture thought of the state of the soul of the believer after death, before the Lord comes: if those who "sleep in Jesus" see Him, or if they do not until body and soul are united?

A.—"*To die is gain*," says the apostle. (Phil. i. 21): Hence an advantage is had by the believer in the death of the body. If the separate state was a mere sleep of the soul, how could such language be used? Surely it would have been much more to be preferred if he were to remain and labour for his Lord in the body, than to lie in sleep while awaiting His return.

Again, in the same chapter, "to be *with Christ*" is the condition of the one whose body sleeps in the dust. This is "*far better*." The words "sleep in Jesus" do not give the force of 1 Thes. iv. 14. It is, "sleep *through* (the person of) Jesus." Death itself is ours, because Jesus has annulled it for us. We have died already in His person. When, therefore, the body dies, we are only said to be put asleep through Him. We pass out of the earthly tabernacle, and the result is, "present with the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 8.) We might freely render this verse—"We are confident, I say, and well pleased, rather to be abroad from the body, and to be at home with the Lord." Surely such a word or thought as this is incompatible with mere sleep; to be "at home;" to be thus with the Lord is indeed "*gain*." The believer, as already dead and risen, has death as his friend now.

As to seeing Jesus when we are out of the body, we read in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi.) that he "*saw Abraham afar off*," &c., and this language is used by the Lord in speaking of the separate state. Paul says, "Have I not *seen* the Lord?" Why then should his passage out of the body hinder his seeing Him? The Lord had to open the eyes of His disciples in order to know Jesus after He rose. Though our body could hinder our looking on a risen Jesus, would it need even a changed body in order that we should see Him now? Still the Lord has not thought fit to answer the question further. Rather, then, let us seek to have Himself and His coming before our souls, as their hope and joy.

CHRIST—GOD'S POWER ; GOD'S REST.

ACTS VIII. 1-25.

It is a striking fact which is found in this Scripture, and is true at all times, and in all places in the world, that the displays of God's power are always manifested in delivering from the active positive power of evil, which has been working beforehand. No matter what the circumstances may be, God's power is ever thus displayed. It is the coming in of God into a scene, where the power of evil and Satan are, to deliver from it.

Now this putting forth of power is not rest ; for God cannot rest where there is evil. The time will come when we shall enter the heavenly Jerusalem, and then we shall have rest ; because then the glory of God and the Lamb will be displayed in a scene, where nothing that worketh abomination or maketh a lie can ever possibly enter. This is rest. There will never be rest till then. The power we read of in this Scripture is not rest, for it is exercised in a scene where evil is. In the heavenly Jerusalem evil is for ever put away. In the Church we find lie-makers ; Ananias and Sapphira arise, and lie to the Holy Ghost. That is not rest. In the heavenly Jerusalem there will be no lie ; or, as it is expressed in other words, "There shall in no wise enter therein anything that defileth."

It is not a question whether there may not be joy where God's power is working. The power that overcame Satan in Samaria caused great joy in that city, but Simon Magus was there. It was power where evil was, giving joy, but not rest.

And then, too, we have the sorrowful side—that where God's power works, there is in man the principles and roots of decay. This is always true, whether we speak of the Church, which, alas ! is so striking an example of the decay of the power which is in this chapter, or whether we speak of the individual soul.

The power of God is working in a sphere of evil, and where the roots of decay are sapping the power that has been displayed. Thus, we see, it is not rest. We may get discouraged by the evil. That is all wrong. We are not to be "weary in well-doing," so that it becomes a question of patience in a scene of failure and decay, and of grace to overcome as the evil goes on. We see it thus all through the Word. Wherever God set up anything this principle

of decay appeared. God made this earth, and saw it "very good," and rested from His work, but man never entered into that rest. He sinned,—evil came in, and the rest was gone. Look, too, at all the distinct puttings forth of power, whether in Israel, or in Solomon, or in the Church, and all closes in evil.

We need, then, power to be applied to the evil, that we may overcome. It is never rest here, but overcoming evil to enter into God's rest. I do not deny that there may be seasons when the power of evil is less felt, God in His grace granting us refreshings by the way, just as the Ark in the wilderness went on one occasion a three days' march before the people to seek out a rest for them. There are these mercies in detail. So, in our chapter, after the persecutions, God gave His people a season of quietness, and in the next chapter we read, "Then had the Churches rest throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts ix). But these are seasons of occasional rest only. It is not rest in result. It is not the rest that remains for the people of God. Now what we need is the faith that overcomes in the scene of Satan's power, as we read in the Word so often of "Him that overcometh." We need a power superior to the evil through which we have to pass, as in the Psalms, "They go from strength to strength, till every one in Zion appeareth before God." The secret of this strength is in the heart living with Christ, and growing up into Him, who is above the power of evil which we have to overcome; entering into fellowship with the Father's delight in the Son, which is beyond all the range of the evil that is against us, and carrying this kind of rest through the conflict, however varying the circumstances may be.

Take Israel for an example of this. We know what they went through in the wilderness, learning themselves, and learning what the wilderness was, often murmuring and chastened of God, but under all they never lost the cloud, the token of God's presence, a guide at all times according to God's mind, a witness of God's power with them. It led them on all their way. It could not rest in the wilderness, but it wandered with them; and when, by their unbelief, they were turned back for thirty-eight years, the cloud turned back with them. It could not rest, but it never left

them, leading them by day and by night, until in the days of Solomon we find it taking up its abode in the Temple.

Now this is what we need—to have our hearts above the evil and the principles of decay, which are in ourselves, living with Christ, and carrying this rest, where God Himself rests, with us through the world.

There are two things in connection with this presented in our chapter. The disciples preach “Christ,” and those who believe have the Holy Ghost. I was very much struck with that verse in reading the chapter through—“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.” He “preached Christ.” It does not say he preached to poor sinners, though we know he did ; but the Spirit of God puts before us what is before all other objects. “He preached Christ” ; his primary object was not “sinners” but “Christ,” the delight of God before ever the world or evil was.

Let us see the sphere of blessing this opens out to us. The Gospel is the proclamation of One, who is God's own eternal delight, presented to us as an object for our hearts, the “Wisdom of God,” and the “Power of God.”

It is just as we carry the secret of the preciousness of Christ by faith through the wilderness, that our hearts will have an object superior to all the circumstances of sorrow and evil that we are in. In the wilderness we need God's wisdom to guide, and His power to overcome. Christ is both. This spirit of faith makes all the difference which we find in Israel on the one hand, and Caleb and Joshua on the other. They all went through the same trials, and were in the same sphere of evil, but the grapes of Eschol brought out the murmurings of the people ; they thought of the children of Anak, and were in their own sight as grasshoppers—they lacked faith to connect the power of God with themselves, so that it was only a question of what their enemies were, and what they were in their own sight ; whereas Caleb and Joshua, bringing in by faith God's power and love, found the report good, the grapes of Eschol strengthened their faith, they thought of God's promise to them, and said, “Let us go up at once and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it.” What were the walls of Jericho to faith, though they were builded up to heaven ? Because God was with them, they could not stand against the blast of ram's horns !

But it is well for us to remember also, that if God was with them, one Achan in that camp is detected, and the power is withdrawn. It is not that He forsakes them, but He teaches them that He cannot go on with evil. So it is with us. God will not go on with evil. We must have all brought to light. These inward exercises are humbling, but most profitable. We get broken down and humbled by them. God cannot fail, we know, but if I take a wrong way He will not go with me in it. I shall find that there is no strength. But I will suppose that the soul is walking with God ; and as Joshua and Caleb replied in faith, "If the Lord delight in us, he will bring us into this land and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey;" so with us, we find what God's thoughts about us are, in His delight in Christ, which lifts us above the evil we are passing through. Our strength is that the Lord has delighted in us, and is leading us on through all the evil, to bring us out of it all to Himself.

Now, what do we find that the testimony of Philip was? "He preached Christ unto them." That which the Holy Ghost ever ministers is Christ. Philip preached this wondrous fact of Christ : who was God's delight before ever the world was. We thus get at God's mind about Christ before ever the scene of evil began. It is Christ, the object of the Father's delight, and the world is only a scene come in, "by the bye"—an important thing it is true, because the platform on which God's eternal thoughts about Christ were to be displayed ; but we go back to God's counsels, and see His delight in Christ before ever the world or evil were.

Now all depends, dear friends, upon knowing this blessed object of the Father's delight, living in Christ as He is in the thoughts of God from all eternity, seeing Him "Set up from everlasting," God's eternal delight ! When I begin to look at myself, it is a perfect contrast to Christ ; but before ever evil was, this blessed object of the heart of God was. After the world is over, He will still be the delight of God's heart.

Our strength is in this blessed fact, that God has brought into our hearts One, who was a sufficient delight to Himself before ever the world was—equal with God, the "brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." This is the immense fact, that this blessed object of God's eternal satisfaction and delight has been revealed to us. It is

not a matter of great knowledge, which we can only find in the highest truths of the Word, such as the epistle to the Ephesians. We find it equally in the 2nd epistle of Timothy and in Titus, when the brightness of the Church had faded away. He speaks of "the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus." He connects us with Christ in the thoughts and purpose of God before the world or evil were. He can go back to eternity and connect us with Him, according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. John, too, in his epistle, speaks of having "fellowship with the Father and the Son" in that eternal life "which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us." In the gospel of John, too, we behold Him as the Word of God with God before there was a beginning, and then connected with us, "The life was the light of men." In His divine nature no doubt the light of angels and of all; but He was specially the light suited to man and adapted to man. When manifested in time He was the eternal Person serving us.

In Titus, too, we have "the hope of eternal life, which God, *that cannot lie, promised before the world began.*" That is promised us in Christ Jesus. This is not great knowledge, it is the testimony of Scripture to the Person of Christ as the centre and stay of our thoughts, lifting us out of the evil and failure in ourselves, and connecting us with Him, who was the eternal delight of the Father.

Turning now to His coming in time, for I can but present a hasty, and I am sure too, a feeble sketch of this glorious subject, we find ourselves in a world where evil has come in. However, before evil appeared on the scene of creation, its being framed by the Word of God was with reference to the manifestation of the Son of God, Adam himself was only the "image of him that was to come." Everything was made for Him, and bore witness to Him. "Abraham rejoiced to see "His day," and directly evil is manifested, there is the promise to the second Man—the seed of the woman who should overcome the evil, crush the serpent's head, and set its power aside.

This promise was not made to Adam at all, but to Christ, who was what Adam was not, the "seed of the woman." This is immense blessing to us that this Divine Person who was before the evil existed, has come into the scene of evil, has been manifested superior to it all. We have to be in

conflict with it, as we read in Romans, looking for the time when God shall "bruise Satan shortly under our feet;" and we know Christ shall put down evil by power, but in our own case we have not to wait for our blessing until that day. But when it comes we shall be with and like Himself who has gone through all the evil, and been morally superior to it, to deliver us from it, and who will, in the end, entirely set its power aside.

Mark another thing, He was not manifested till evil had run to its full head. Man had been tried every way. Without the law he proved lawless, and under the law a transgressor, so that all the evil of man, as responsible to God, had come out, lawless and law-breaking before Christ came. His hatred to God in rejecting Christ I do not speak of, but his condition as responsible to God, and all the evil of man had come to its head before Christ appeared. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." But when the evil had run on to its full head, God brought in an entirely new thing. "God was manifest in the flesh;" the eternally blessed object of God's delight was manifested in the midst of the evil, the perfect expression of good in the midst of evil, and as a Man come into the world. I see in Christ not only God's eternal delight before evil was, but I see Him come into the evil that I am in, the perfect expression of the good according to the mind of God.

There were Abrahams before, grace working in the hearts of men ; exhibitions of love and kindness from God ; but in Christ we find entirely another fact ; in the midst of the evil was that which expressed the mind of God. "God manifest in the flesh," "dwelling amongst us, full of grace and truth," and this directly when He was manifested. At His baptism, before He began His ministry, God says, what He never could have said before, *there* was a man (and much more than a man I grant), but there was a man, in whom He was well pleased ! There was not one thing in the world of which God could say, "I am well pleased," but of Christ. What a stay is this to the heart, exercised about good and evil ; and learning what there is in man, I see the good come where evil was, and God is well pleased in Him, and as taught of God I can say, if God is well pleased with Him, so am I ! What a stay this is to the heart !

If we look at saints we get heart-broken. Even where blessing is, we know the power of Satan can come in, and spoil it all ; but if I look at Christ my heart has rest, where God's heart has His. There is complete satisfaction in the object I am looking at, and how near me has He come ! He has dwelt amongst us, full of grace and truth, and in the evil I am. He has manifested the good that God can rest in. These things angels desire to look into. They learn what their God is, as manifested in the flesh,—“seen of angels,” as we read. This is rest for the heart taught of God. I can rest where God is resting.

But there is more than this. Christ has not only perfectly manifested God here in the scene of evil, but He has accomplished a work to deliver us from the evil altogether. We have the Person first, and the work next.

As to His Person, He has manifested a good that nothing can touch, that which was the expression of the mind of God, and this too in a Man tried in every possible way by all the power of Satan, and by drinking the cup of wrath ; but He went through all untouched by the evil. He is thus in Himself the centre of our hearts, giving them rest in divine good where evil cannot enter.

But then He has also accomplished a work for us, which takes us completely out of the sphere where the evil is. Man's hatred and sin brought Him to the Cross as regards means, but He came there by the “determined counsel and fore-knowledge of God.” He was made sin before God. He went through the wondrous question with God, brought out before God, and in His own Person.

In the Cross was manifested all God's righteousness against the evil, and perfect love above the evil too. All that God was in righteousness, in majesty, and in love came out, when He was “made sin for us.” It is the answer to everything that I can possibly find in the world or in my heart. Evil can never come out again as it did then. It will be displayed in the Man of sin, and gather in battle against the armies of heaven, to be destroyed by power, but it never can be displayed again as it was at the Cross. There is nothing in my heart that was not at the Cross. All the power of Satan, all the sin and hatred of man, all the wrath of God against sin came out there. Nothing more can come out than was found there ; and in Christ made sin, and bearing our sins, I behold the triumph of good over the power of evil. I go

to the Cross, and say, "It is all settled!" There stood Christ in my place as made sin for me, and I am made the righteousness of God in Him, and in doing it, He has perfectly glorified God about sin. The whole question of sin and of sin-bearing has been settled with God Himself in the Person of Christ, so that I can say, I am reconciled to God, because all that I am has been brought out and dealt with in the Person of His Son.

But not only is the question of sin settled in the Cross: God has raised Him from the dead, out of all the power of evil, all the sin and evil gone for us who believe, and this Blessed One beyond the scene of evil for ever in the glory of God. Before the evil was He was the eternal delight of God; when the evil was at its height, He came into it and manifested perfection unassailable by it; and now, by a work that has for ever glorified God about it, and put it away for all that believe, He has entered a sphere, and entered there for us in a life in which, through Him, we live to God, where evil cannot come. He is beyond the sorrow for ever; and though I am still in it, I can say I belong to One, I live in One—He being Himself my life—who is beyond the evil and the sorrow, at the right hand of God.

I can now see not only what God has done for man, but where He can bring man, for Christ has gone into heaven as Man, and for men. He has not forgotten to feel for me in the sorrow. Though He could say at the grave of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life," He could weep with them at the presence of death; but while I have His sympathy in the sorrow, by the power of the Holy Ghost I can also say, I am "quickened together with him, and raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." I can sit in peace at God's right hand in Him.

The disciples feared when He told them He was going away, that He would forget them. How graciously does He take away this fear by telling them, that so far from forgetting them in going to the Father, He was going to prepare a place for them. If He could no longer stay with them in the scene of evil, He would wash their defilement from their feet, that they might have a part with Him where He was going. We now belong to Him who is gone up to heaven. Our portion is with Him where He is, that in the ages to come, as well as now, unto angels, and princi-

palities, and powers, God might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us by Jesus Christ, and this is according to His eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He has left us here for a season to exhibit Him, to be as His epistle, "known and read of all men." But I can only exhibit Him so far as I know Him. All practical walk must spring from the heart's acquaintance with Himself. It is only as we know Him we can bear witness of Him. He would have us, even in this world, so acquainted with Him, that our knowledge of Him should answer to His knowledge of the Father, not in degree of course, for He had divine knowledge, but in character. He says in John x. 15, "I know my sheep and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father;" that is, that as He knew and confided in the Father's knowledge of Him as a Man on the earth, and knew and trusted in the Father, so He would have us to know and confide in Him, while hidden from our sight, walking in the consciousness that He knows us in all the love in which the Father knew Him, when He was upon earth.

This is what we are called to—entering into the consciousness of His delight in us, and the Father's delight in us in Him, the heart living with Him in heaven. He strengthens our hearts; draws our hearts up to Himself, while there is nothing we pass through down here into which His heart does not enter.

What do you mean by going to heaven? Every one that goes there will enter heaven as the travail of Christ's soul. They enter heaven as infinitely precious to God, not in themselves, but for Christ's sake, because they are the fruit of His soul travail; and in one sense they help to complete His joy. His heart is set upon having us with Himself. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there may ye be also." Just as a child whose happiness is the entire thought of his father and mother, who are planning his return home, so are we, only after a Divine and perfect love, the objects of the thoughts of the Father and the Son.

Oh, what an infinite blessing it is that we are in Him who is beyond all the evil, has gone through it all for us, and who in power will soon put down all the evil, and have nothing (I do not allude to the wretched souls who reject

this love) in heaven or earth that can jar with the blessedness of God's presence.

It is not only our own and individual blessings, but the Lord so counts upon our interest in Himself, that He wills that we should be with Him where He is, to behold His glory. What a blessed reflection that I shall see Him perfectly glorified, and shall dwell in the presence of God's glory as my home, entering into God's delight in Christ, the divine object of His own love for ever!

It was this dwelling in the glory of God which was so terrible to the thoughts of a Jew. At the Mount of Transfiguration, when the three disciples saw the cloud of God's presence, which was familiar to their thoughts as the Shekinah, they feared as they saw the glorified saints enter into it with Jesus. It was entirely a new thing for a Jew that man could enter that cloud. Moses had talked with it, but he had never entered into it.

And here we come to another thought—the power of the Holy Ghost to bring us into this position in Christ, and to keep us there, giving us liberty from evil by feeding our minds and hearts on this divine object. If, in conscious weakness and self-renunciation, we lean on Christ, His strength will lift us above all circumstances, as we read, "I can do all things," not in myself, "but through Christ strengthening me." No matter what evil comes against us, even if it be to suffer and die for Him, as many have done, we are, through Him, superior to the circumstances. As we see in Paul, where death is before him, he does not know which to choose, for as Christ was everything to him, it would be evidently gain to die, for he would be with Him, whereas in living, he served Christ; so, without troubling himself as to what the Emperor would do with him, he decides his own fate. Christ loved the Church, and as it was good for it that he should remain in the body, he knew that it should be so. (Phil. i.) We see him entirely above all that even death could present by way of terror on his spirit. In Christ, we can say even death is ours.

Thus the power, dear friends, over every circumstance depends on being near Christ. Having Him before us as the object of our hearts, in lowliness of mind, feeling, if He puts us in the lowest place, it is just the one where we should be, walking with Him, and looking for Him, going through the world with every motive different from what governs the

heart of the natural man, having our hearts fixed on Him, who has passed through the evil, and is beyond it for ever on the right hand of God.

May we, by the Holy Ghost, be continually feeding upon Him—"eating" Him, as Scripture puts it, so that our thoughts and feet may run in the current of His own mind!

"HE GIVETH HIS BELOVED SLEEP."

"AND he was in the hinder part of the ship asleep on a pillow" (Mark iv. 38). It might be that some kind hand had placed this pillow for Jesus. He had said on one occasion, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." And it is remarkable that Matthew (viii. 19-27) puts these words of Jesus just before His embarkation, though they were possibly uttered at another time. He had, therefore, somewhere to lay His head in that ship—soon to be tempest tossed. It may be that some loving hand arranged that pillow for Him, knowing that He was weary. It was evening when He entered the ship, probably after a long day's toil.

We may learn a lesson from that pillow. Jesus never asked for a comfort from any when He was down here. He *did* ask the poor Samaritan woman for a draught of water—not that He was seeking her care, but that He might draw out *her* need. Still, He gave opportunities to those who longed to show their love and attention to Him. He knew that Zaccheus desired to have Him in his house, and he accepted the hospitality, because it sprang from his heart. Sometimes we may not have it in our hand to give when we have it in our heart. No matter, He looks at the heart. Do not let us judge Him with man's judgment, and say—"I cannot do so and so; then why need I wish to do it."

It may be that the one who arranged that pillow (if such were the case) was gladdened afterwards to find that He had fallen asleep upon it. In any case, He accepted it then—yes; used it fully for Himself. It may be, too, that there was no one of all His disciples whose heart was open to give Him "the tribute money." If there had been one He might have allowed that one to do it unto Him; but a *fish* must be the giver. Doubtless, if there had been one *at the moment* who would have longed to give Him the money, He would

have sent Peter to such an one, and not to a fish. He displayed His lordship over creation in the act, of course; but would He not rather have had the need filled up from some loving heart which was looking for an opening to help? Could it be possible that, at that particular moment, not one on earth was longing to aid the Man of Sorrows? I say, "at that moment;" for it is not enough that life from God must be present in him who acts for Jesus: he must *also* be in a moral state of soul—in communion with God, ere Jesus will *ask* for his aid. The ravens fed Elijah. But if there is even a Sidonian widow, with nothing save a little oil and a handful of meal, she will have the blessedness of helping the servant of the Lord.

The Lord loves us to give to Him, but "a cheerful giver" is the one He wants. When He wanted the ass for His entry into Jerusalem, He knew well who really wished to give. There He sent, and *asked*. All that was needful to say was, "The Lord hath need of him." "*Straightway*" he would be sent. Perhaps the owners of that colt were anxiously waiting for some opportunity of service. If so, how it strengthened their faith to find that Jesus knew all about it.

In the case of the man with the pitcher of water (Luke xxii. 10) we see the same thing. The "good man" of that house may have been thinking of Jesus, and saying, "my room is a large one: how suitable it would be for the Lord and His disciples! How I wish He would eat the Passover at *my* house!" If so, how his heart must have leaped when the two disciples, Peter and John, came into his very house to tell him that the Master was coming! Little did the man with the pitcher know, what his carrying the pitcher signalled. Anything—everything, can be used by God to accomplish His purposes.

But to return. We may say that we cannot lay a pillow for the head of Jesus now. I think we can lay many for Him. Is not every believer now a member of His body? Many of those members need our pillows—so to say. The "Head" is in glory, and *as such*, He needs them not. But Saul could persecute *Him*—"Why persecutest thou *me*?" Every word of comfort, then; every act of kindness, every little succour towards a saint, because he belongs to Jesus, is an odour of a sweet smell—God-ward.

What mean the words—"And the house was filled with

the odour of the ointment?" (John xii.) Sooner or later, all will know what is done for, and to the Lord. The people on the house-top could know that something sweet was being offered below. Do not the angels know what is done to Jesus? We smell, as it were, the sweetness of Abraham's sacrifice, although no eye saw it, save that of Jehovah. (Gen. xxii.) Envious ones may have been attracted by the odour in that house, who would not own Mary's devotedness at all. They could not help smelling its sweet savour.

We cannot do too much for the Lord; and nothing is too little or insignificant for him to notice. Alas, how many are making pillows for their *own* comfort—beautiful pillows—provisions for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts. When we are thus occupied we have not large hearts towards the Lord. "The flesh" always narrows our hearts in divine love. When separation from self and the world is going on, there is room for enlargement in love and heavenly activities. (2 Cor. vi.)

I do not think that the Lord will be indifferent to our bodily needs, when we are occupied with His Son. He will send us a pillow when we need it; and if He does not, He will enable us to do without it, and, it may be, even to walk the sea without the ship at all. (Matt. xiv.) Faith can be independent of nature; but it never despises it. Suppose I find a footpath along the road when travelling in the Lord's work, I walk on it, and am thankful for it too; but if it is not there, I can take the centre of the road; yes, or even walk through the mud. The ascetic says, "I see the footpath, but I will walk in the mud." This "neglecting of the body" is only "voluntary humility;" but is in reality only "satisfying the flesh"—my own will. It is blessed to be above the need of the footpath, or even the road; for *faith can go where no marks of man are seen*. I might be pleasing the flesh within in doing without the pillow, or seeking one for my own comfort. Both would indicate a bad spiritual state. But if it be "Christ" I am occupied with, and my heart is engaged with Him, then He will guide my hands by His word and Spirit.

Let us not therefore judge by looking at outward actions—the hands of another. If we had looked at the one who was laying the pillow for Jesus (supposing it was the case); some Mary or other, "Oh! what waste of time," we might

exclaim ; yet it was for Him all the time. Can I say then that I am doing this or that for Jesus ? Then my *aim* is to glorify God. As I read the Word then I shall find out the *mind* of the Lord. "If any man's will be to do his will *he shall* know of the doctrine." Hence, if we see a Mary longing to please Him she loves, we are sure *also* to see such an one longing to be at His feet—in the Word—learning of Him. To hear a saint talking of pleasing God, and to find Him at the same time indifferent to *the truth*, is a contradiction. If I desire to please, I must *know* the will of Him whom I would please.

The disciples seemed to think that Jesus was not caring for them, because He slept. It does not seem as if *they* had laid that pillow for Him. They did not appear satisfied to have Him resting while they were troubled. They are unconfiding, because they do not *see* some open manifestations of His care. They are walking by sight. But He *was* caring for them while He was resting on the pillow, just as much as when He was awake. He would strengthen *their* faith, while *He* acknowledged the act of the one who laid the pillow for His head. So that His word could record that there was just once on earth that He had found a place where to lay His head amid the waves. He could sleep too, when others could not. He was doing His Father's will, though He had a perfect will Himself as man ; therefore waves and storms could not keep Him awake.

Can we, beloved, rest amid the waves of the world, and the winds that Satan may raise ? If a pillow be laid for us at such a time, can we rest quietly there ? We would rather have our pillow laid for us when all goes smoothly around, when our companions speak well of us, when they admire what we do amongst them. Ah, that is the time *we* like the pillow, and gladly repose thereon. But it was during the storm He, whose footsteps we are to follow, calmly slept—actually *slept*, and not merely lay there. Ah, there is but one Christ !

Is it not comforting too, to lay a pillow for some weary saint after his toil, when storms perhaps arise because of the trials of the way ? A pillow laid thus "shall in no wise lose its reward." Many a worker for Jesus now is left to rest on the open deck, as it were, because no hand provides a pillow, and then the Father has to come in (for "the earth is His," "and the fulness thereof,") and some "fish "

(as it were) is *forced* to aid out of the sea of the world, as with Him.

It is blessed to see that our Father can act outside His ordered way, when His child—some servant of the Lord—needs this. He is the "possessor of heaven and earth," still a raven *could* be used by our Father, but the members of the body of Christ are the ordered channel now. There is a difference however: the saint's privilege is to give *willingly*, while our Father may *compel* those "of the earth, earthy," to yield up what He needs. The "fish" and the "colt" were of the earth, yet the saint should be the vessel to bring them. If not, the Lord can send them Himself. (1 Kings xvii. 4.)

If we cannot have a "boat" to cross the sea, it will be a far more wondrous thing to pass over "walking on the water." The boat may manifest "grace;" but the passing over without it will display the "*glory* of His grace." "Eagles' wings" display His care in glory, (Exod. xix. 4; Deut. xxxii. 9-14; Psalms xvii. 8; Zeck. ii. 5-11.) They are truly a wondrous resting place for him who serves the Lord Christ; still, His exquisite care in grace is ever present also, "even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings."

We need the God of power as our *shield* (Gen. xv. 1) to go *before us* in grace: but "the Almighty God" must have us "walk *before*" Him, when He is to show forth His glory in and by us. (Gen. xvii. 1.) Then we fall on our faces and have need of a view of our full standing before God: our name is changed for a *heavenly* place, and "we are (consciously) the circumcision." (Gen. xvii. 3, 5, 15, 23; Phil. iii. 3.)

It is refreshing to go and *ask* a "pillow" from one saint that it may be laid for another, when we are *sure* he is longing to give it. It may turn out that when we ask, that we shall actually find the "pillow" a preparing. We find ourselves sent, as it were, to some "goodman of the house"—to some "owners" of the very thing needed by the Lord for His servant.

Are we then *able* to sleep when we have a pillow laid for us? "So he giveth his beloved sleep." (Ps. cxxvii. 2.) We are often found bustling about in some storm or other, raised up around us, when—if we only lay down on our "pillow"—it would all be rest. It would seem as if Jesus

was acting as a *man* when He slept—a perfect man. Had the disciples not disturbed Him, they would have had a *Father's* care through the storm. But their want of faith only brought out His act as *God*. Every difficulty is met by Jesus.

It is touching to look at the moral glory of Jesus. When He is interrupted by the disciples from the repose which He accepted, as intended by the one who laid that pillow (if such were the case), He allays their fears at once, yet rebukes them—"Why are ye fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" Though He used the opportunity given by His sleep, for their faith, yet they are thinking only of themselves; "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Could they doubt *His* care? He wanted to allow them to know what the care of *glory* was. They were not up to the order of things in which they might have walked. Well, He will let them have His care in *grace*:—"And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." They could not cast themselves "on eagles' wings;" they must therefore have the shelter of grace, as the "hen." They could not use as yet the glory of His grace. Yet they did afterwards, when He was in glory Himself.

When the Son acts as God alone, we can only *behold* His glory; but He desired that the disciples should share with Himself, as Man, the Father's power. Is it not wonderful then—we shall be sharers with Him of all His power as Man; God hath not only appointed us "to obtain *salvation* by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 9); but we are also called "to the obtaining of the *glory* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. ii. 14). Yet if we cannot, in our own walk, come up to the glory, Jesus will come down to us in grace. Still it is a wondrous privilege to be allowed to go asleep on our "pillow," and allow the God of power to act for us. We must not suppose that it underrates the grace to speak thus of the glory—they are but the two ends of the same rod: glory is the blossom of the rod, in risen power, which comes up from the soil of grace!

How perfectly can Jesus meet everything—settle every difficulty. He can accept the token of careful love, though in doing so, others think, it may be that He is forgetting them; He can strengthen faith, though flesh would hinder, as in the disciples; He can rebuke the want of confidence in

Himself, and then give rest to those who would not let him sleep. He can do all this still, for He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever" !

Oh, to know him better—to learn in our own consciousness, moment by moment, that "He doeth *all* things well." When we do not *see* Him acting, let us be sure that He is resting in His love.

THE SECOND COMING AND REIGN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE JEWISH REMNANT.

CHAPTER VIII.

"WHEN the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (*vv.* 13, 14).

This flight is referred to in Matt. xxiv. 16-22. Hosea refers to this in ch. ii. 14, &c., "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her," &c. This is the use that grace makes of her time of sorrow. In the Books of Psalms (see especially Book ii., Pss. xlii.-lxxii.) the Spirit of Christ enters into their sorrows as thus driven out of Jerusalem at that day. The Lord's heart is great enough to take up all our sorrows as Christians. But that is not all; He takes up the sorrows of His poor earthly people too in that day.

I suppose that in the close of His life He entered in grace into all these sorrows, and learned them in their intensity, as none could learn them but He. Thus He can speak a word in season to him that is weary. When we find Him rejected, and threatened to be stoned by the Jews at the close of chapter x. of John's Gospel, He crosses the Jordan, driven out from the Temple and Jerusalem; and thus He may have felt some of the sorrows of the godly ones at the time of the end, when, driven out of Jerusalem and across the Jordan, they are longing for their return "from the land of Jordan" and "the hill Mizar" (Ps. xlii). Here, in the second book (as has been remarked), they lose the covenant name of "Jehovah," but they learn "God" better in His uncovenanted mercies

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God," &c.

Thus, "the serpent cast water out of his mouth as a river" (not "flood"). That is a figure of peoples, impelled in a given direction against the Jewish people. The earth opens her mouth—i.e., some diversion of this attempt is effected—and this effort of the enemy is destroyed. And the dragon went to make war with the remnant of her seed who have the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus—Jews under the law, through whom the Lord Jesus is giving His testimony prophetically at that day to the world, as He gives to themselves by the same Spirit of prophecy to look out for those things which shall be theirs when the blessing comes.

The Books of Psalms give a voice to these testimonies and longings for the coming kingdom and earthly glory. The godly Jews are thus learning Christ in these very sorrows, for His Spirit is giving a voice to them in passing through the afflictions of that day.

And this is the difference between the Spirit of *prophecy*, and the enjoyment of our own things which the Holy Ghost gives us now, as the Spirit of *communion*. We read in Rev. xix. 10, that "the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." The Lord is thus giving a testimony to the world; for this He uses His people—the Jews. The Holy Ghost works by them, and in their hearts; causing them to look out prophetically for something not yet come. This is very different from our blessing, by the Holy Ghost given to us on believing, as a seal of redemption that is complete; and an earnest of our inheritance which is to come; leading us into the enjoyment of all, as the Spirit of *communion*. In the Psalms you find what may be termed the Spirit of prophecy.

It is a striking way in which the Jews learn Christ, in contrast with us (as Christians). We learn Christ without seeing Him. The Jew learns Him when He does see Him. "Thomas (type of the Jew), because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (the Church). He saw His wounds, and thrust his hand into His side before he said, "My Lord, and my God." Therefore, Peter could say, "Whom not having seen," ye love, &c. We know Him by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

(To be continued, D. V.)

THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

(Concluded from p. 49.)

WE have in 1 Kings i. and ii., passages which illustrate two cases. 1st, Fleeing to a place of refuge from judgment, and trusting the word of him who ruled in that day. 2nd, The resting in the fleeing merely, without confidence in the word. I refer to the cases of Adonijah and Joab, when Solomon came to the throne of David his father.

In 1 Kings i. we read of Adonijah's effort to obtain the kingdom in spite of the purpose of God, as David had sworn that Solomon should be king. But Solomon had been anointed by Zadok the priest (v. 39), and proclaimed king, as it was said, "Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom," (v. 46).

Adonijah's attempt having failed, "He arose and went and caught hold of the horns of the altar." Solomon was told this, and that he had also said these words (for even the "horns of the altar" were not to be a shelter for wilful guilt—see Exod. xxi. 12—14), "Let King Solomon swear unto me to-day, that he will not slay his servant with the sword." Adonijah trusted the word of the king, and was spared. [I only here note this case as an illustration, for afterwards Adonijah died for another sin.]

Now the case of Joab was similar, in the fact of his having fled to the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold of the horns of the altar. Solomon sent then to have him driven forth from thence, and he would not come. "And he said, Nay; but I will die here" (ii. 30); there was in his case no appeal to or confidence in the word of the King. And so King Solomon commanded that he should be slain at the very place where he had laid hold of the horns of the altar.

To apply these cases to illustrate what we have had before us, we see one man, as the judgment of his ways was swiftly overtaking him, fleeing to the altar for safety; yet, when about to be brought down from thence, he appeals to the pledged word of the King, and, resting on it, he is spared.

In the other case (Joab's) there was a defiant clinging to the altar, while no appeal to the King's word was made, and he is taken in the place of safety (as he thought), and judgment falls on him.

Alas! how many will in this case (as illustrating the insecurity of the greatest privileges where there is no faith

in Christ, or in the Word of God, found in the soul), find a parallel! The ruin of resting in anything short of direct, personal, confiding faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in God Himself, will be seen when judgment takes its course, and the day of privileges of this kind, as of grace, has passed away.

But how sweet the assurance to every soul who rests in Him alone, who answers the feeblest faith which He Himself bestows, and has "fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the fore runner is for us entered, (even) Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"W. M." seeks to know the meaning of Gen. ix. 4, Lev. xvii. 10-14, as to the prohibition to eat blood. Is the same command binding on Christians?

A.—The conference at Jerusalem (Acts xv.) settles for us the question of "abstaining from blood." It does not take up Lev. xvii. so much as the command to Noah as to this. The question to be settled was, could the Gentiles become Christians, without first becoming Jews? Amos ix. is cited for the sake of the words, "And all the Gentles upon whom my name is called." It is not that the prophecy was fulfilled, but that the name of the Lord could be called on them *as Gentiles*. Jerusalem herself gives up the title to impose the law on the nations, and the apostle of the circumcision uses the remarkable expression, "*We shall be saved even as they*" (v. 2), i.e. through *grace*; the manner in which a Gentile is dealt with, *mercy* being God's way, through grace, with the Jew (*cf.* Eph. ii. 4-8, &c.) When the "apostles, elders, and brethren," write their decision, in vv. 23-29, they embody in it those "necessary things," which were opportune and right for Christians to observe. 1st, The unity of the Godhead to be maintained, in contrast to the "idols" of the heathen. 2nd, That life belonged to Him, they were to abstain from "blood, and from things strangled." 3rd, The marriage tie was sacred, and to be kept pure. In fact they go back to what was right and ordered of God in creation, coupling it with those things I name; not as enacting new laws, but giving what was right to be observed in the midst of an evil world.

Thus, what was enacted in Gen. ix. 4, is held good in Christianity. I do not think therefore we are exempt, but bound, as in all things, to do the will of the Lord.

THE CHARACTERISTIC STATE OF THE CHRISTIAN.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS ii.

It is remarkable that that which constitutes the whole character, power, and place of a Christian, is the presence and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The foundation of it is the work of Christ, but the perfect condition is known when the "other Comforter" is sent down from heaven. The world does not know Him, nor see Him, but He dwells with us and in us. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you." (1 Cor. vi. 19.) "Ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 22.)

You therefore find a strong contrast between the state of Old Testament Saints and that of those in the New Testament. The ground of redemption must be the same as to their state; but there is a complete contrast. One of the distinct marks of the fall of the Church of God, is that Christians are carried back to Judaism. Of course Christianity sets its seal on Judaism in its place; but to think that the Father could be revealed in the Son, and that the Son died for us, and that He, as Man, should be now sitting on the right hand of God, and this make no difference in our conscious state of blessing, is quite impossible. Yet it is often forgotten, denied, or not really owned.

Man could not come to God in the Tabernacle; the way was not open. "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." Whereas, the Christian position is, "Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath constituted for us through the veil, that is to say his flesh." The whole state is opposed to the other. In Judaism man could not come to God; now, man in Christ is sitting in the glory of God. The Holy Ghost could not come till Christ went on high, and His presence is the principle of all this difference. "Ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. viii. 15.) "The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope (did), by the which we draw nigh unto God." (Heb. vii. 19.) This was not the moral law, but the old Jewish system could not exist; I do not say did not, but could not. The Jew sinned if he did not keep up the middle

wall of partition. The place and meaning of the "Church of God" is that it is broken down,—Jew and Gentile are all one. The whole character, standing, condition, state, is opposed to the other, every side you look at it, even as to individuals.

In the book of Hebrews we are shown that there was a veil unrent. Now it is rent. There were many sacrifices, now there is only one; because sin is put away for faith and for God. There were then many priests, now there is but one—"who ever liveth." They were ministering on earth, and could not go into the holiest; now He ministers in heaven. It is all contrast, and the whole book of Hebrews takes up these figures to show them entirely contrasted.

I would look now how it is the presence of the Holy Ghost which makes the difference. In the beginning of this chapter there is a passage of which use is often made, foreign to its meaning—"I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Paul determined not to know anything among heathen, but Jesus Christ, and Him in His lowest condition in man's eye. He will not have any philosophy, nothing of man's learning, speech, or wisdom. "We speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." He is not thinking of them as Christians then. To such he says, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery." Still they were in a carnal state, and he could not speak to them otherwise. I am obliged to speak to you as unto babes in Christ. He could not speak of the fulness of blessing which belonged to them. What a reproach! The moment I have you in your right place I speak in divine wisdom, but I will have no philosophy—no human wisdom. He would preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

It is very important to notice the difference he makes with Christians. He says, "I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it," they were walking in such a carnal way. How sad and wretched! People fancy there are only two classes of persons, unconverted and converted (of course a man has life or not). But there are "natural men," and "carnal" and "spiritual" Christians. It is a serious thing for all our souls. People

often boast of being carnal, and this is constantly quoted for it. It is very sad.

A perfect Christian all through Scripture is what you find in Phil. iii. One who understands not merely that Christ died for him—but that he has died with Christ, and got into His place; not only knowing that certain sins are forgiven, but that he has been taken out of the flesh, and put into Christ. There is no perfection recognised in Scripture but the character of God Himself, and our state as being risen with Christ. Paul's desire was to "win Christ," and apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Him. That was his idea—his object, "If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead." We are to be like Christ, conformed to His image, He is the first-born among many brethren. When I am like Christ in glory, I am perfect. I run on to that, says Paul: like a man in a long passage with a lamp at the end of it, he never reaches the lamp till he comes to the end, though he sees it all along. Paul had seen Christ in glory, and had the testimony that he is to be like Him—to bear the image of the heavenly. That is our perfection, but we have this life of the risen Christ now in this earthen vessel, and we wait for the redemption of the body.

The perfect Christian has his place now in Christ, by faith. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Thus I know, that I am "in Christ;" I am not merely a forgiven child of Adam, but an accepted child of God; accepted in the Beloved. The moment we have seen Christ on the cross, and know that the old man was crucified there, the cross becomes a testimony of the utter condemnation of the old man, as well as of our sins. Then comes the new. There is often a difficulty as to the "Three that bear record," ["record," "testimony," and "witness," are all used for one word (*v.v.* 6-11).] What are they the witness of? That God has given us eternal life: "He that hath the Son hath life." No natural man has life. It is not a question of a man being good or bad, but he has not got life. Where do I get the cleansing water? out of death. Where do I get the justifying? out of death. The Holy Ghost answers, Christ has died. The three witnesses come in and say the first man has nothing to say to God, and never will. If you are cleansed, if you are justified, if you have received the Holy Ghost, it is because death has come in, in Christ.

The only perfection is in resurrection ; but Christ breathed on the disciples, and gave them life, the life of Christ as risen from the dead, and the desires and thoughts of that new life know nothing but the Christ from whom they came. Christ wrought the foundation in His cross ; then "I am crucified with Christ," but Christ in me is a different thing, a totally new condition, and it involves death on all I had from Adam.

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory." Christ having died and risen again, now it is righteous of God to give me anything. God was planning glory for me before the foundation of the world. Faith has, and conscience has, the sense that all is "for our glory," "which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Very wise these Corinthians were. They had all sorts of wisdom, but they had not an inkling of this. With all the science men can boast of about the stars, and about beasts that lived before man existed, bring them to a thought of God, and you will find they have not got it, not one thought, not one atom of the glory of God's wisdom.

They can tell me that a stone was such a fish, or that they have found that a certain star is such a metal—very curious! But that is all, they are very sagacious in finding it out! Come to thoughts of God—that wall has as much sense of it, in one sense more, for it cannot darken the counsels of God, and they can !

There is nothing more despicable than the pretension of the man who sets up to understand science, when he knows nothing of God. Christ was the centre of all these glories, and they crucified Him. And do not the wise of the world despise Him still? You know they do; they see no beauty in Him, in whom God finds all His delight, that they should desire Him. They are of the world that crucified Him. It is just as when God came and asked Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?" He asks now "Where is my Son?" He was here in grace. What did He do to offend you? He raised the dead, cast out devils, healed the sick. What had you against Him? The only thing was, that God was revealed by Him, and they crucified the Lord of glory!

The natural man does not know anything about the counsels of God—the hidden wisdom ordained before the

world unto our glory; for had they known it, the apostle says they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." There comes in, the immense importance of the gift of the Spirit of God; it takes man out of his natural condition, and puts him into a condition to receive the revelations of the God of glory. It takes his mind, soul, heart out of the world, out of what eye hath seen—takes him out of that, and puts him into Christ.

When do we receive the Holy Ghost? Never until Man is in the glory. The Holy Ghost wrought from the beginning; moved on the face of the waters; inspired the prophets, and revealed truth. The immediate agent in all divine work was the Spirit of God; but the dwelling of the Spirit here was subsequent to the ascension of Christ. The Son created the world, but did not *come* till late in its history; the Spirit did everything good that ever was done, but He did not *come* to dwell here, till man (in Christ) was at the right hand of God. The Lord says distinctly, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you." Christ could not *dwell* with man; He had to work atonement and go away. Take Adam innocent, take Abraham—bright example of faith as he was—God dines with him, but could not dwell with him. The instant Israel is redeemed from Egypt, He says, I will dwell among the children of Israel. (Exodus xxix. 46.) He comes in the Shechinah and dwells with them. They forfeited their privileges, as we know. But the dwelling of God with man is the consequence of redemption. The consequence of redemption is that man is at the right hand of God, and the Holy Ghost has come down to dwell with men, *i.e.*, with Christians. As regards the state of men it makes all the difference. Man is quickened. Quite true; but for personal blessing the point we are considering now is, that the Holy Ghost dwells in the believer, because he is redeemed, and he has not got the Holy Ghost if he is not redeemed.

"Thou in thy mercy hast led forth a people which thou hast redeemed." (Ex. xv. 13.) Christ is the Redeemer. We are redeemed; raised with Him, and sitting with Him in heavenly places. That is where the Spirit of the Lord sets the Christian. Man is brought to God;—unredeemed? Im

possible ! But according to the perfect efficacy of redemption in Christ Jesus ; and He in heaven is the witness of it before God.

The coming of the Holy Ghost is the witness of two things ; that redemption is completed, and that man is in the glory of God. We get such a redemption, such a making good the title of glory for man, that the Son of man is in the glory, and the Holy Ghost can come and dwell in me. The blood of Christ has made me as white as snow. He died—"the just for the unjust," and we are made "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty;" and in the perfect sense of divine favour we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. When Stephen looked up, he saw the glory of God and Jesus. He did not say anything about the glory, but he said "I see the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Man has entered into glory as our Forerunner ; the Comforter has come, and gives us the consciousness that we shall be like Him and with Him for ever. Christ is not here, but the Holy Ghost is here because Christ is there, and He dwells in us ; the world cannot receive Him, He is not meant for the world. The world ought to have received Christ. The Holy Ghost is not seen—Christ was ; "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." He associates us, not with the world, but with a Christ who has gone out of the world.

God has revealed these things to us. There may be clear apprehension of them, or there may not ; but God has revealed them. "The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." We have received the Holy Ghost that we may know them ; we belong to heaven ; we are heirs of God ; and all was ordained to "our glory." "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God." Thus we have the Holy Ghost revealing them to us. "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, *communicating* spiritual things with spiritual." Many would say that the apostles received the things spiritually, but communicated them as men. "No," says the apostle, "they are revealed by the Spirit, and we communicate them in words taught by the Spirit, and they must be received spiritually—because they are spiritually discerned." All came from him just as pure as he had received it.

Then, again, I must have a mind capable of receiving the

thing revealed. Think of some of the things He reveals. If I see Moses and Elias in the same glory with Jesus, I say I am going to the Father's house; a child can go to where God dwells. What are you going to be there? What I am here—a son, a child with the Son for ever! He is the first-born among many brethren. We are going to sit on Christ's throne; we are to have a white stone given to us, with a name written thereon that none can know but he that received it. The Spirit does reveal these things. I am going to walk in white—by and by. Now, Christ has to wash my feet, having first purged my conscience. But I am going to walk on streets as pure as glass, I shall want no conscience there! Now I must be watching myself as closely as possible; shall I have to watch then? No, all will be joy there.

Thus I have these things revealed now. Christ is the centre and joy of all. To be with Him is the great thing; but the things we shall have then, are revealed now by the Spirit, through the Word of God. We shall be in the same glory as Christ, and like Him. Our blessing now is in the consciousness that we belong to that place. We have this so consciously because the Holy Ghost dwells in us; He has brought us to the knowledge of this place in Christ; we have the full revelation of the glory that is coming, though we now see through a glass darkly. There Christ will make us sit down, and will give us the best of the food of heaven. He has come to die, and to bear our sins. He was treated as a malefactor, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He has become our life, and has shewn us that we are heirs with Him. What is He heir to? Everything! and the Holy Ghost is given that we may know it. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." We thus have the love as well as the glory, as that to which we are heirs. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The Holy Ghost is groaning in our heart, and interceding for us. (Rom. viii. 26.) Christ has sympathy with the sorrow here. There is no place which He has not filled, and the Holy Ghost reveals it. I thus am supplied with the Spirit of Christ, the mind of Christ, in every condition I am in as a Christian.

Thus the Spirit of God gives the whole place and character to the Christian. If you look for fruit, it is "the fruit of the Spirit;" as regards walk, "if we live in the Spirit, let us

also walk in the Spirit"—it is the Spirit which characterizes him. You will find some that say that you received the Holy Ghost when you were born again. This is not the case. The Holy Ghost wrought in you ; but that was not receiving the Holy Ghost ; it was building the house, not living in it ! We cannot have the Holy Ghost *in us*, without having the blood of Christ *upon us*. When we are born of God, we are given a nature capable of enjoying the things of God. That is not the seal on the Christian, though important as to my state as a Christian. I was quickened when a sinner. God could not seal sin ; He seals believers after they are quickened. When I have been washed, the Holy Ghost can come and dwell in me. When a man is born of God, he is brought under the blood of sprinkling. Just as with Cornelius—his prayers and alms went up as a memorial before God ; Peter preaches to him, the Holy Ghost comes upon him as he heard, and thus he is sealed. "Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

The Lord give us to apprehend by faith the teaching of God's Spirit, that we may have the knowledge of our complete redemption. The Holy One dwells in us. Then says the apostle—"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." He makes us see the unspeakable value of the work of Christ, and tells us that we are going to be with Him for ever.

SOME THOUGHTS ON JOHN'S GOSPEL.*

CHAPTER I.

THE first three chapters are an introduction, because the things there mentioned happened before Jesus publicly commenced His ministry, which succeeded that of John Baptist ; see ch. iii. 24, where it is said that "John was not yet cast into prison." In the first chapter we have all the characters of Christ, except those connected with the church and with the Jews. The chief difference between this gospel and the other three consists in this, that the others present Christ to man, and therefore man's responsibility to receive Him. The result of this was that man has rejected Him. But the Holy Spirit in John presents to us Christ already rejected ; "the world was made by him and the world knew him not. He

* Translated from the Italian.

came unto his own," where God had prepared everything by means of the prophets, in order that he should be received, "and his own received him not." Then John commences where the other evangelists leave off.

The expression "Word" does not accurately express the original meaning, in which we have not only the *word* as expression and manifestation of what one thinks, but the very thoughts themselves. Christ is the "light of men," that is, man is the object of it, not angels. This light shines in the darkness; a thing materially impossible, because where light is, there cannot be darkness; but morally it is but too true in respect of man, since, though the light be before his eyes, he remains darkness. From this one can understand the necessity of another work, that of the Holy Spirit. Christ is still the life: and many think that eternal life is eternity, and others think it is a change in the state of the heart; but the life is Christ, which is communicated to men.

But if Israel does not know Him, then from the very start there is placed on the scene an elect family which has no registry on this earth, since they are born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man," but they are born of God, and God has provided for them grace upon grace and the fulness of the Father in the Son.

From v. 19 to 28, we have the testimony of John to the Jews. In v. 29 to 37, we have the first day, that is the ministry of John in bearing witness to the works of Jesus; and in gathering disciples to Jesus. These works are twofold, He takes away the sin of the world, and He baptizes with the Holy Spirit. It does not say He *will* take away and he *will* baptize, because it is not a question of time, but of the works themselves. Sin exists still in men who do not believe, and though for believers it exists no longer for them before God, yet in fact it is still in their mortal body. There is another passage analogous to this (2 Cor. v. 19) which is sometimes wrongly translated, and thus leads people astray. It should not be translated (as in the Italian version) "God has reconciled the world in Christ to Himself," as if the world were already reconciled, which is not true; but, "God was in Christ reconciling the world," that is, it was so treated from the character of Christ on earth, since the world would not be reconciled. We believers are now reconciled, but the world, that is, created things, is not so yet; but the work is done for this reconciliation. See Colossians i. 20 for the

reconciliation of all things, and for us Christians, *v.* 20, 21. This expression "Who taketh away the sin of the world," will have its complete fulfilment only in the new heavens and in the new earth.

The second work of Christ is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, come at Pentecost. Beautiful is the difference between the two ways that John speaks of Jesus as the Lamb of God : the first time in *v.* 29 he points Him out to his disciples and bears witness to Him, but none of his disciples follow Jesus ; while the second time he does not speak of Him ; but it is an exclamation, an admiration produced by his own delight in beholding Jesus ; and this produces more effect than the first time. His disciples follow Jesus. The same thing is always true of us still. When one enjoys the Lord in one's heart, more effect is produced on those who watch us, than can be produced by teaching : teaching must be accompanied by personal enjoyment. John was not jealous at seeing his disciples leave him to follow Jesus, because he was fully occupied with the greatness of the Lord, and if he thought of himself it was only to feel his great unworthiness, as he says of himself elsewhere, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Jesus alone has the right to have disciples round Him, and it is to Him alone we ought to direct souls. John had presented Jesus to his disciples as the Lamb of God, and they say they have found the Messiah, *v.* 41 ; connected with which we may observe that when divine communications are received, we only perceive what is adapted to our religious wants.

At *v.* 42, we see that the honour here put on Peter is entirely a personal one, "*Thou* art Simon the son of Jona : *thou* shalt . . ." and it does not extend to any one else. Nathanael's prejudice was very great, because he did not believe that anything good could come from that place, whence nevertheless the Christ came ; but Jesus knew his sincerity. This is an example which shows us that persons can be full of the greatest prejudices, and withal be sincere ; and this ought to encourage us to have patience with such souls when we meet them.

The fig tree (*v.* 50.) is always a figure of the nation, as the vine is of the people, looked at ecclesiastically. Nathanael represents the remnant at the end under the shadow of the nation ; they will be full of prejudices, but without guile. Nathanael confesses Jesus as "Son of God" and "King"—

the two titles we find in Psalm ii.; but Jesus reveals to him His other title, "Son of man," which is found in Psalm viii., in which title He will take possession in the millenium, when He will be glorified over all creation, and exercise lordship over all the works of God, and will have as a footstool all things beneath His feet. But though then He will be "Son of man," He will not cease to be "Son of God" and "King."

In the second part of the chapter we have two days. The first includes the ministry of John in gathering disciples. The second day includes the ministry of Jesus and that of His disciples, in gathering disciples to the end of the age; the disciples at the end being identified with those at the time of the Lord. In ch. ii., we have the third day.

THE SECOND COMING AND REIGN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(THE JEWISH REMNANT—Chapter viii.)

DID Rebecca ever see Isaac till the journey was past? No. Eliezer is sent across the desert, and in the journey he tells her all about Isaac. Then at the eventide, when she lifted up her eyes, she saw him, and alighted at once from off her camel, and put on her veil. The first sight of Isaac which she had was when he came out to meditate in the field at eventide. Then the marriage takes place—the espousals of Christ and the Church come.

This is not the case with the Jew. He never knows Christ until he sees Him, though his heart has been prepared through the exercises and sorrows of the way for this knowledge of Him. If we turn to a few passages at the close of Zechariah, we shall find this scene forecast by the prophetic Spirit, as to what will take place in the last days.

In chapter xi. you find the history of the Lord Jesus' rejection by His people. He is seen as having come into the midst of His people, when under the bondage of their enemies, during His own lifetime here on earth. He takes His two staves; the one He calls "Beauty," and the other "Bands," and He feeds the flock. Then in v. 8, He rejects the shepherds of His people, and they reject Him. This closed His dealing with the people, as a people, and is seen historically in Matt. xxii., xxiii. In Matt. v. He had come in announcing the beatitudes of those who were to enter

into the kingdom as then proposed; but it was refused. Then He enters Jerusalem for the last time, presenting Himself as her king, "meek and lowly, sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass" (ch. xxi). The nation, in all its distinctions, passes in review before Him till the close of chapter xxii. Then in xxiii. He pronounces the "woes," as he had begun with the "blessings" in chapter v. And here, as it were, He breaks His staff "Beauty." "And I took my staff, even beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people" (Zech. xi. 10). The aged patriarch Jacob had said, when pronouncing prophetically, in the blessing of his sons, the history of their descendants until the last days (Gen. xlix. 10), "The rod (sceptre)* shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the peoples (*i.e.*, the nations) be," &c. And when Shiloh came, he was offered the kingdom—"lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (Zech. ix. 9). This was refused. Had He been received, the gathering of the nations would, so to speak, have taken place. But Israel would not have her king; and God knew all.

Then we read, when it was broken, that the "poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord," v. 11. This alludes to the Lord's instruction to

* This word means the "Rod" or "Tribe,"—*i.e.*, the tribal character. Much effort has, it seems to me, been needlessly made to prove that the sceptre of royalty did not depart from this tribe until the coming of the Messiah, through not seeing that it is not the thought in the scripture spoken by the aged patriarch at all. The translators might as well have rendered the word "tribes," of vv. 16 and 28, as *sceptres*, where the same word as that in v. 10 is found, in its plural. No effort of the kind need have been made, if it had been rendered "rod" or "tribe," as Ps. xxiii. 4 does the same word. Ps. lxxiv. 2, *margin*, has "tribe" where the text has "rod," showing that the word is the same. The thought of Gen. xlix. 10 is, that Judah would remain a distinct and separate *tribe* until Shiloh came, unlike the other scattered tribes, which had at that time been long lost to man's sight. The royalty had long passed away when Jesus was born; and His reputed father was a carpenter. In fact, since the Babylonish captivity, there had been no sceptre in Judah. The remnant had returned from Babylon and rebuilt the temple and the city, but they remained "servants" of "kings," as Nehemiah had said and written—chapter ix. 36, 37. There was a governor under these kings, but no king. If once the import of Gen. xlix. 10 is seen, there is no difficulty.

them in Matt. xxiv., xxv. Next, His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. xxvi.) is seen as the sequel to the breaking of the first staff, "Beauty." "If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter, in the house of the Lord," v. 12, and Matt. xxvii. Thus He was sold, and numbered with the transgressors—He is crucified.

But again come forth the resources of God. He sets Him on high in glory, and sends down the Holy Ghost with the offer of pardon to Israel. (Acts ii.) First to the Jews who had slain Him; and Peter adds, when proclaiming the pardon of His murderers, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts ii. 36.) Again in ch. iii. 12, he offers to the "men of Israel" a fresh pardon for this their sin. God would unite the "brotherhood of Judah and Israel," if they would now repent. But no! The witnesses of this grace are cast into prison. (Acts iv.) In Acts v. 18, the twelve apostles are all put in the common prison. Stephen, then, in chapters vi., vii., sums up their sad history. They had refused every deliverer God had ever sent them, and they had always resisted the Holy Ghost. Stephen's testimony crowns (as his name implies) and closes their history, and he carries on high to the heart of Messiah, still yearning over His people, their answer to the offer of those "sure mercies of David," of which His hands were full, as He *stood* to receive His witness's spirit. He had done so till this moment—ready to come back to His rebellious people if they would repent.

"Then (says the prophetic Spirit, as He looked forward to that moment) I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel." (Zech. xi. 14.) This was done in Acts vii.

Verses 15-17, bring before us the Antichrist of the last days, when Jesus has again turned His hand upon the earthly people at this time of their tribulation.

Chap. xii. describes Jerusalem as a "burthensome stone," and "a cup of trembling" to all the nations. This she has ever been. The old Crusades were about her "holy places." The "Eastern Question" absorbed the attention of the

political world for years. But "the counsel of Jehovah standeth for ever," and "Jehovah bringeth the counsel of the heathen (the "Gentiles," or "nations") to nought" (Psalm xxxiii. 10, 11). He has said, "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine." (Lev. xxv.) None shall ever possess it but Himself.

The chapter leads us on to the touching scene—this interview between the true Joseph and his erring but then repentant brethren, before He settles them in peace, in their Goshen, in the glory of His kingdom. We read, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon."

"And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei (Simeon) apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart."

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness, &c." (Zech. xii. 10-14; xiii. 1).

All the various classes of the people are represented in this lovely scene. Repentance is an individual thing; it isolates the repentant souls; it is the undoing of man. The Lord is there before the souls of His people. The kings and prophets, the priests and the people, the parents and children, are on their faces before Him whom they pierced; for they take up the bloodguiltiness of their nation when they said of old, "His blood be on us, and on our children," as in the language of the fifty-first Psalm, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O Lord."

Then when they look upon the blessed One whom they pierced, and mourn, the cleansing water of the word will flow freely on the ground of His atonement, to wash away morally, the sin and uncleanness of their souls.

At last from the hearts of these repentant ones comes the

question, "What are these wounds in thy hands?" And He replies, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." And then the prophetic Spirit goes on to show how this wounding came about. The sword of Jehovah of Sabaoth had awaked against the man who was His fellow, thus enabling Him to turn His hand upon the little ones, and to bring them through the fires of tribulation, refining them as gold is refined, until He will say, "Ammi," "my people;" and they shall say, "Jehovah is my God." (Zech. xiii. 7-9.)

EXTRACTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

BELOVED BROTHER,—I was very glad to get your letter, and though I have let a long time slip without answering it, it was not want of interest in its contents, nor failure in thinking of you, but I have a plan of work which makes some letters, letters of leisure, where it is not necessity of answering, but just mutual interest in the work, and in the labourer.

We go on through the toils of service, where the good that is in Christ has to make its own way, and make itself effectual by divine strength in the midst of evil, and alienation from God, and as to testimony adapt itself to it. That was what was so beautiful in Christ. In *Heaven* all is good. God is there, and only goodness, and holiness, and nothing inconsistent with it. We cannot be simple or want simplicity *there*, for God fills everything, and we and all are what He would have us. It is an infinite "I am" of good. But Christ was something else. He was divine, good, and infinite, but good adapting itself, showing itself infinite in being always the same and *itself*, and yet adapting itself to all the wants, sorrows, miseries, sins, that were in this poor world. We get to God, get to the Father by it, because He has got to us. What a wonderful thought it is, to see Godhead emptying itself, thereby to prove itself love, as no angel could have known it—coming down as Man even unto death, and to be made sin, that I might learn what God is in death, where sin had brought me; and absolute obedience in man, in what disobedience had brought us unto; death, the way of life; the extreme of man in weakness where (as to this world) we ended, the place where God is revealed and triumphant, and the power of Satan destroyed.

But the Christian redeemed by this, and according to this,

has to be this good, express, walking in holiness, divine love in this world, by manifesting the life of Christ, and seeking the deliverance of souls. What a calling! and what a privilege! But, oh, how we do shrink into self-judgment if we compare ourselves with Him! We have to do it sometimes. God (as you speak in your letter) passes us through it when needed. We know there is no good thing in us, but to know the *working of evil*, which we always need at the beginning, and sometimes by the way, is *another* thing, overwhelming sometimes. I do not mean as doubting His love, but as occupying us with self-vileness, instead of with His blessed love and Himself. But it is really put away in Christ, and hence, when we have, in a certain sense (*i.e.*, as to the need of real uprightness of heart) adequately judged ourselves, all the flood of His grace flows in again, and we can think of Him and not of ourselves. There are no shallows then, but they are there, and there is still this danger (until long and deeply exercised) of having to go through it again. And it is a terrible thing to think of turning the eye off Christ, and on to what is vile, for self is vile. It is this that makes the "Fathers" in Christ. John had much to say additionally to the "children" and "young men" when he repeats his warnings, but to the "Fathers" he only says they have known Him that is from the beginning. *That was their characteristic existence.* How blessed it is! Oh! that we could walk so as to keep ourselves in the love of God. It is not knowing the Father, that was the children's place—the place of all—but Him that was from the beginning—Christ as manifested here.

I find the constant tendency, even of work for the Lord, and an *active mind*, ever is to take us out of the presence of God, and nature is instantly up. I don't mean evil in the common sense, but what is not of God, and the condition of my soul when God is there. There is a will and right the heart claims (not wilfully), instead of adoring reciprocity and lowliness, with confidence and trust of heart. For God present puts everything into its place—we in ours, and Himself in His place in our hearts, and what confidence that gives, and how self is gone in joy. Our great affair is to keep in His presence, and the diligent soul shall be made fat. He that seeks finds.

May the Lord give you and myself to labour on undistractedly. It is not, through grace, vain in the Lord. He

does not give me as (I am thankful to say) you, present encouragement, but I am content to be anything in His hand, and thankful to be anything. A servant is to serve where he is set, and I have been a good deal (and content to be it, though my heart might desire more direct work sometimes) a "hewer of wood" and "drawer of water" to the saints, but thankful to be allowed to be anything. The Lord be abundantly with you.—Affectionately yours in Christ, &c.

"IF WE SIN WILFULLY."

HEB. x. 26, 27.

IN seeking to understand the words of Holy Scripture, it is always helpful to bear in mind the general scope of the teaching of the particular book in which the words are found. And this is, perhaps, especially useful, and indeed necessary, in considering the *Epistles* in the New Testament. Some special circumstances or considerations led to the penning by the inspired apostles of each of them; and if a little simple and prayerful study is given to them, it is generally not difficult to gather, from the epistles themselves, the particular objects the Holy Spirit of God had in view in inditing them.

No two of them treat of exactly the same subjects, or from exactly the same point of view; and a careful comparison of the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews, will at once convince us that, not the latter, but the former, was intended to embody the precious instruction which is the more urgent need, of one seeking "Peace with God," whose *conscience*, awakened to a sense of guilt before God, craves to know what the provision is, which His grace has made for sinners *as such*; how He can be just, and the Justifier of the ungodly; and how the one who has learnt himself to be hopelessly lost—"without strength," a sinner by practice, as also an enemy by nature—how such an one can find salvation, justification, from God and before God, and *peace*.

To one who has thus learnt to see himself or herself as God sees and speaks of us, the truth of Rom. iii., iv., v., and viii., will prove of unspeakable preciousness. Shewing, first, how the *death* of Christ avails for "redemption," the perfect cancelling and blotting out of sins: how God can, upon the ground of that precious blood-shedding, "be *just* and the *justifier* of him that believeth in Jesus." Next,

that the *resurrection* of Christ was "for our justification;" for we see in it not only God putting His own seal upon the value, in *His* sight, of the work of the Cross, but now He has taken our substitute *out of* the place where our sins had brought Him, and given Him a new place in resurrection, to be the Head of a *new race*; every one of whom, (and it is true of every one who, taking the place of "guilty before God," trusts in the mighty work of redemption accomplished solely by Christ—every one such believer) is reckoned by God to belong to the Head of the new race, that is the Lord Jesus, in *righteousness* and *life*; just the same as by our natural birth we are connected with "the *first Adam*," who fell himself, and involved every one of his posterity in *condemnation* and *death*.

The first Adam was turned *out* for his disobedience, and became the head of a fallen and guilty race: "the last Adam" (i. Cor. xv.) was taken *in*, after accomplishing an obedience "even unto death," and became the Head of a new race, every one of whom has "*justification of life*." He is looked at as "in Christ Jesus;" for him "there is now *no condemnation*." Not only is he not condemned, but there is none for him: he is "*in Christ*," shares with Him His new position before God as the "accepted man;" and to condemn him, would be the same as condemning Christ!

Now my dear unknown reader, you are at this moment represented before God by one of these two heads. "In Adam" or "in Christ." There is nothing between. You are either reckoned to be in the position of one or the other—that is, *outside*, through your own sin; or *inside*, through Christ's work, which puts away sin. It is really very simple, for it is *God's* way of presenting it. It is no matter of *feeling*, which will be never two days alike, but of God's free and unchangeable grace, in which He meets every and any poor sinner who finds out his *true* condition as lost and undone, and simply looks away from hateful, sinful self, to "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" that great work, which is a "finished" work; declared so by the one who accomplished it (John xix. 30); and the witness of God given to it in that He raised Him from the dead—that work which is as complete and perfect as it *will be* in eternity—back to which all the redeemed will look as that through which they were saved, and which is presented to you too *to-day*, that you may even now rest your whole soul's confidence

upon it, and find "peace with God," as you *simply* rest in *its* perfect efficacy. Is it not that precious blood *alone* that cleanses from all sin? and has it not been shed long ago? If not of *perfect* value, it must remain imperfect for ever! You cannot finish the work. But if it *is* finished, and enough for *God* against whom the sin was, is it not enough for *you*? and is it not enough *to-day*?

"Well," you say, "it seems simple—if I could lay hold of that, I should be happy, and while I thus forget myself, except to *judge* and loathe myself, as a guilty sinner before God, and think of the work of Christ on the cross, I think—I *hope* I am saved; but what about to-morrow? Shall I not perhaps, be just as miserable again then?"

Well, if your peace to-day is based upon anything whatever in yourself, your *faith*, or anything else, it *may* be gone and lost to-morrow; but if your eyes are turned to *Christ* to-day, to find in *Him* all you need, to fill your heart, and purge your conscience, the question is, will *He* be any different to-morrow? Will His blood have lost its precious efficacy, or He have changed because *you* have? If I have been wrecked, and been tossing about in the water, till I despaired of life, and find myself now on a solid rock, I do not torture myself to find out whether I am *standing* firmly; but is the *rock* firm that I stand on? I tremble, for I very nearly escaped drowning; but the rock I have my feet on does not tremble, and so I fear not. And it is so as to salvation: my faith is weak and poor indeed, my feelings often worse; but He my Saviour never changes, and "*He is our peace.*" (Eph. ii.) "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed *on thee.*" (Isa. xxvi.) The true way of peace is, not to be examining and dwelling upon *our faith*, but the grace of Him who is the *object* of that faith.

And now for a word or two about the verses in Heb. x. This epistle is addressed to those who had been Jews, but who had believed in Jesus as their Messiah, and had come into persecution and trouble in consequence. They were thus in danger of "drawing back" from their confession of Christ, instead of holding fast the "beginning of their confidence stedfast unto the end." The apostle warns them against this in a most solemn manner, and not only exhorts them to be faithful in the position they *had* taken up, to hold fast the *confession* of their *hope* without wavering, but also to take up a more decided place outside that Jewish

system which *had* been set up and owned of God, but which was now disowned, and about to be abolished (until Israel's future restoration) by the destruction of their Temple, and Sanctuary, and City. *Before* this comes, and they are *compelled* to give up the Judaism they clung to, He exhorts them by the Holy Ghost (or rather *He* by the writer) to "go forth" unto Christ "without the camp bearing his reproach." This comes at the *end*, but at the beginning, he aims to impart more true and *exalted* thoughts of their Messiah, whom they were in danger of despising and slipping away from.

In the first chapter He proves, from their own ancient testimonies, the *divinity* of Messiah, His personal glory as above angels—a wonderful and difficult thing for the Jew to seize. In the second, His glorious *humanity* is the subject, and the various reasons of His humiliation. Then, in what follows, His excellent superiority to all the types that pointed to Him is unfolded, and towards the end of chapter ix., His *one* sacrifice and *once* entering the true sanctuary is contrasted with the high priest's yearly action on the "day of atonement." Man has *once* dying before him, and then, divine judgment. Christ was *once* offered, and now we look not for death and judgment, or for the next atonement day, with a renewed sacrifice, but for the re-appearing of the One whose one offering has purged our conscience.

In chapter x. 18, after the witness of the Holy Ghost that sins *are* put away, the apostle says, this being the case, the sacrifice neither need be, nor can be repeated.

But what if, after a soul has come to "the knowledge of the truth" about this *one* all-availing sacrifice, he "wilfully" turns his back upon it, and deliberately goes on in the "sin" the sacrifice was to put away?

We do not look for judgment, for it was borne by our substitute, and we look for *Him* to come again. But what does *he* look for who prefers the sin to the sacrifice which puts it away? There is but *one* sacrifice, and he turns his back on it—"treads under foot the Son of God"—certainly there remains no *more* sacrifice for sins—Christ will not suffer *again*, because he (the sinner) will not have His *first* coming. Then, of course, his sin remains, and judgment *must* come. He is reckoned an "adversary," and must look for not another sacrifice, but "a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and heat of fire which shall *devour* the adversaries." Such seems to be the simple but solemn import of this passage.

W. T.

A SERVANT FOR EVER.

LUKE XII. 35—41.

THESE verses, and indeed the whole chapter, show how the saints are viewed apart from this world. There was a scene around which was plotting against them, but there was something in it that they were not to fear, for all would be disclosed. He presses that they should have their treasure in heaven. It is not as people often say, "Where your heart is, there is your treasure," but, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." They were taken out of the world to serve in it; and He encourages them to have entire confidence in the care and love of God watching over them, and tells them that in God's mind and thought they were of value—of value to God. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." He is your Father—not a sparrow falls without His care. Are you not of more value than many sparrows? You must trust Him. For the present they were obliged to have their loins girded. This was not rest. They were to be tucked up ready for work and service; their lights burning, and they watching—ready for their Lord.

While that was their character in this world, there was a world that belonged to them—to the Father, and He was occupied with them about that world, though taking care of them through this. We have thus the constant abiding of His love. The Son of God has taken "the form of a servant," and He will never give it up. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, one with the Father, God over all, blessed for ever; but that gives the more force to His being a servant. He has had His ear pierced through with the awl at the door-post. The Hebrew servant, when he had served seven years, if he said, "I love my master, I love my wife, I love my children, I will not go out free," he became a servant for ever; his ear, the sign of obedience, was bored. That is what He has done, and it is His glory, outward humiliation, but divine glory and love.

Love always delights to serve; but selfishness to be served. He is love, and He delights to serve; but if He is to serve us, He must come down low, and He comes in a love that is above everything that hinders; and the more He humbles Himself, the more I can see a love that can only be of God! It is this that is so touching in His life. He sits weary

with His journey on the well, and says, If you could see—not, Who is it that is speaking to you? but, Who has come low enough to say, Give me to drink, you would have asked of Him, and He would have given you living water. He was a divine person sitting talking to her, and He was her servant. He says again—"I am among you as he that serveth." He was their only Master and Lord, but being above all, He has the privilege of taking the title of servant; and having refused to go out free, He has taken this place of serving love for ever. It is His glory, and has nothing to do with His Godhead, except to show His unutterable grace.

We find in Phil. ii. His coming down to take this place. "He made himself of no reputation," &c. He served God; served us too in grace. He took the place in willing love. "Lo I come to do thy will, O God." And He was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. He lays the form of the glory of Godhead aside (Godhead He never could lay aside), and thus we find His perfect, infinite love. Where should we have been if He had not taken the form of a servant? Lost for ever! But there was love enough in Him to come to this place. He goes to death, and there I find the power of divine love in His service. Nothing stopped it; Satan's power was there; man's bitter and base ingratitude, as He says in that beautiful fiftieth of Isaiah, "When I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?" He goes on: "Is my hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke, I dry up the sea," &c.

As Jehovah—God—He did as He pleased. He not only did miracles Himself; but what proved His divine power much more, He gave others power to do them. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father" (John xiv. 12). He is working in that perfectness of love in this world, and nothing stops it at all. "The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned." I have not ceased to be Jehovah, but I have taken the place of a servant, to take up every sorrow you are in. And see the return—men found it an occasion to reject Him! "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Nothing stopped Him—death did not stop Him. He came to die; and felt what it was to die as none of us can—for He has taken the

sting out of it. He came to be "made sin," and felt how dreadful it was—for He was holy. He came to bear the wrath, and felt what it was—for He knew His Father's love. Desertion was there, and betrayal, and the cup He had to drink was there—He felt it all; but in it all divine love was there to serve and go through it; to serve us wretched sinners.

There was the power of divine love, when everything was gone (for God had forsaken Him), except bitterness and death, Satan's power, and the wrath of God. There you get divine love, and service too. It is a divine power and a power of love to us—to His Father; but to us too, a power that carries Him through everything, when everything was against Him; divine love that made Him serve through it all, till it was finished. Then I adore the love that led Him to be made sin for me. There was the full testing of the love that carried Him through all.

It is deeply instructive, though very dreadful to see there what man is. What do I expect of my friends if I am on trial? At least that they will not forsake me. They all forsook Him, and fled! In a judge? I expect him to protect innocence. Pilate washes his hands of His blood and gives Him over to the people! In a priest, what do I expect? That he will intercede for the ignorant and for them that are out of the way. They urge the people, who cry, "Away with him, away with him!" Every man was the opposite of what was right, and that One man was not only right, but in divine love He was going through it all!

First, I get Him serving me in His life; then, when He served us in death, in spite of ourselves (for man was against Him), there He was alone, all forsook Him, and God hid His face from Him. He went into the desert (Mark vi.) and had no time to eat, but when the people come He ministers to them; "He could not be hid." If He is in agony on the cross, there is a poor thief to be attended to. He tells him, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." If He sits weary on a well, and a poor wretched woman comes, He waits on her. All through He takes the sorrows of human nature—weariness, hunger; but with a heart that never was weary when a service of love was to be performed. A Man who does not shrink from all the vileness and wretchedness of the world; a Man in all the perfection of holiness, carrying divine love to serve every need.

It was what was divine in a Man who took the lowest place, and there is nothing like it. It is most sweet and blessed to see it, and to see He had no will of His own in it. When they tell Him, "He whom thou lovest is sick," we should have thought He would have started off at once! No, He abode two days still where He was, He had no commandment from His Father. *We* see it was to show His Godhead. Still, as a servant, He had no word, and He did not stir. It seemed very hard. His home, if He had one on earth, was that house at Bethany! You never find Him going out of the place of servant, and He was never any thing but the perfection of love in it. That service He took, and performed, and finished, and now His service is over, and He is going to glory. (Luke xii.)

In John, where we find more the divine side than the servant's side, He shows that His going to the Father does not change His service, save the character of it. He is not serving among men, but He is serving His people up there. When He was going away, there came the thought that, now He is in the glory, His service is ended. That would not do for His heart. He says—In the glory I am not going to stop serving those poor things. Could His heart stop serving them? No, it could not! He is the Advocate, we find in the epistle of John, and that is not in the world. He does not take it up till He goes to heaven. How could a heavenly person know the sorrows, temptations, and trials of us, poor sinful beings? He comes down here, sinless of course; and, after being acknowledged by the Father, He is led of the Spirit to be tempted in the wilderness, because we were there. As soon as He has given the pattern of the place in which we are by redemption (Matt. iii. 16-17), He says—I must go *there*; and He is led by the Spirit (we are often led by other things) to be tempted of the devil. Now, He is going to glory, having so glorified God here as to have an earned place there, as well as having a rightful one there—an official place, as well as a moral one. The world will not have me. I cannot stay here with you. You cannot have rest here; it is polluted. I can serve, but not rest here. He must go up to God. I must go on serving. He says, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me." I cannot have a part with you in this sinful place, and I must fit you to have a part with me on high. Though we are washed so as to have part with Him, we pick up dirt by the way; but

He is our Advocate, and is still serving. He brings the heart to be humbled and broken at having dishonoured His name, and it is restored. His blood is on us, but He is still washing our feet. I must make you clean, according to my idea of cleanness. That is what he is doing now. It is blessed love, but it is service. Is He going to give up this satisfaction of His heart in serving us (it makes us adore Him)? He is not going to give it up, and never will. He is a Man, and a Man for ever (that is what we have in this chapter). He is more than that, for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

There is one thing new for God, and that He could only do: to come down a Man here. No angel could do it; but God could come down, acting in divine supremacy and love. I cannot *take* the form of a servant, for if I am not a rebellious sinner, I *am* a servant. (I may have got into rebellion as one—that is another thing.) A divine person can “take” on Him the form of a servant, and that is what He has done.

He says, “Let your loins be girded.” Here I am in the middle of a world that says, “To-morrow shall be as yesterday, and yet more abundant.” I am expecting Christ; the world goes on (He alone knows how long); but He will come as a thief in the night, and when they say, “Peace and safety, sudden destruction will come.” That is the character given it. “As in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man.” (There is sin, and still more now, but that is not the point.) I believe that—not that it is the portion of believers—then I must have my loins girded. I cannot go on loosely with a world that is not going on for ever. There ought to be a better motive: the heart drawn out to Him. O if it were that only. They go on saying, “To-morrow shall be as yesterday,” &c., and yet terror is in their hearts; for there is uncertainty—nothing to reckon on for a week, or a day, or a year. He calls all Christians to take their places with their lights burning—the distinct, unequivocal testimony of what they are, carrying their lights as servants, and not going on with a careless world that is going to judgment. You cannot say when it is coming. The saints will be with the Lord before then.

Can you say that is the first thing the Lord will do—take me up in the air, to be for ever with Himself? Can you

tell what day He is coming? Are you *ready* for Him? You do not know what hour He is coming. I believe it is hastening on rapidly. The saints were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven, and when they lost that, all the mischief came in. It is their character—not a bit of knowledge, that is stuck up as a chief thing, in teaching; but that is what *you are to be*. If you were constantly waiting for Him, would it not change you? Finding duties to do, and doing them—quite right—but would people be heaping up money or treasures when they know He is coming? They enjoy themselves while they can, and then comes death, and they hope it will be all right. If you are expecting the Lord, and ready to open to Him, it gives a character, "*Like unto men that wait for their Lord*"—like a man that has his hand on the lock of the door, "that when he knocketh they may open immediately."

The Lord keep us in that readiness of condition and heart as servants, waiting. That is our present condition when the Lord is not come. You cannot float down the stream of the world that is going to the ocean of judgment, you are to be looking for Him. If, by His first coming, I have been saved and justified, I look for him, that I may be where He is. Here we get what the believer's portion is who is waiting for Him.

Now, what follows? The characteristic of a person who has his ear open to the Lord, is *watching*. "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching." "He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat" (that is a figure), "and will come forth and serve them." I find Him serving then, in divine love, and still the same character. He comes and brings us to heaven—to His Father's house, "That where he is, there we may be also." While you were in that wicked world, He says, I was obliged to keep you on the watch, in a state of tension—diligent; with earnestness to keep the heart waiting for Him.

It is one of the greatest comforts to me that I shall not want my conscience in heaven. If I let it go to sleep for a moment now, there are temptations and snares; there, there is no evil, and the more my heart goes out, the more good it is! Here I dare not let it, but I must "Watch and pray." Do I need to do that in heaven? Full blessedness is, the Lord being there of course; and next, the saints being perfect, What does the heart desire that cares for the Lord's

people? That they should be just what Christ's heart would have them! That will be there, and He will see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Then there is after that this comfort, that my heart can go out—here it cannot—to God and the Lamb, and to the saints in measure too; but then, roam as it will, there is nothing to roam over but a Paradise where evil never comes, and it can never go wrong!

He comes then, and takes us up there, and what heaven can find there for the heart to feed on is spread on the table of God. You shall rest there and feed on it, He says, and I will gird myself and come forth and serve you. I am not going to give up my service of love. While I have the blessedness of feeding on what God has to give, I have the increased satisfaction that if I put a morsel of divine meat into my mouth, I receive it from the hand of love that brings it to me!

When He brings us there, all is turned round; here you must have your lights burning, and be watching. When I get my way, I must put you at ease, and make you happy. Then the Son shall be also subject. He was serving here. It was man's perfection to serve—the very thing the devil tried to get Him out of. If he had, it would have been doing His own will; but though He was a Son, He is subject after that. In the meanwhile He has been on His own throne; now He is on His Father's throne, our High Priest; but He will take His own throne, and power, and reign, bringing everything into subjection. Then it is not serving, but reigning; afterwards He gives up the kingdom in that sense to His Father, for everything is brought to order. In the Millennium it is a king reigning in righteousness; but then it is a new heavens and earth, wherein *dwells* righteousness.

Innocence dwelt in the first Paradise; sin dwells in the present earth; and then, in the new heavens and earth, it will be “wherein dwelleth righteousness.” He gives up the mediatorial kingdom, as it is called, to God, and takes His place as a Man, “the first-born of many brethren.” He never gives up a place, in which He can own us as associated with Himself in the blessedness of first-born of many brethren. As all was ruined in the first Adam, all shall be blessed in the Last. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Then I find myself enjoying everything that God can give to the objects of His

love, and enjoying it with Christ then at the Head—Son of God and Son of Man; we associated with all the blessedness, and He administering it to us, so that the heart can taste His love. And He does not just bring us there, but it is to all eternity. He has purchased us too dearly to give us up. His love will be in constant exercise towards us. It leads us to adore Him more than anything that can be thought of; but we can trust a love that never ceases in heaven.

You see here His heart going out to do it. Then you must have your lights burning. "Let your light (not your works) so shine before men," that they may know where your works come from, and "glorify your Father which is in heaven," that they may attribute them to God. I do whatever God tells me to do, and it is a testimony to Christ. People say, "That is what comes from a man being a Christian!" That there may be no uncertainty as to what we are, a well-trimmed lamp, the testimony of the life of Christ, that it may be manifested what I am, and what I am about—a pilgrim and a stranger, in a thousand different circumstances, the ordinary duties of life to perform, but one service, to be the epistle of Christ. I may be a carpenter, or a shoemaker, I must be a *Christian*. In various relationships, servants, masters, in eating or drinking, in our houses, wherever it is, I must be a Christian.

What characterized these servants was *waiting*, and they got the blessing. "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find so watching." Ah, beloved friends, are you watching, waiting for Christ practically? I cannot be watching, and going on in my own way. Are our lights burning, or have we slipped down to the ease, and the comforts of this world like other people? That is not having our loins girded, and it is not as a *doctrine* we are to have it only. He refers to serving (verse 43), but it is connected with another thing; it is the kingdom, the lower part. In my calling, I look up; in my reigning, it is looking down. It is better to look up than down. The watching person gets the Person he is watching for! The calling is better than the inheritance, "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." You get in Rev. iv. the elders sitting on thrones (seats they put in, for they thought it too much for us to be seated on "thrones" and crowned when He is there, but that it is); but when the nature of God is proclaimed, they leave their thrones, and that is the higher place. When they were on

their thrones they had their own glory; when they are prostrated, they adore His glory! So, in the transfiguration, the voice came out of the cloud (the cloud was always the sign of Jehovah's presence in Israel), and they went into the cloud, that was more than the kingdom. A voice came from the excellent glory, and where it came from, they went into. It was a great thing to be standing there on the mountain, but still greater to go into the cloud—the Father's house, and they were afraid. A wonderful thing that the ruling is for us (*v. 44*); but it is not the greatest thing. His love takes us into the enjoyment with Himself of every place He has,—not the Godhead of course,—but of everything He has received from the Father as Man. He, in divine love, gives it to us, not as the world gives. It gives liberally sometimes, but it *gives away*. Christ does not *give away*, He takes us where He is, and gives us what He has—His own peace, His glory!

It seemed strange to Peter that the Lord should wash his feet. But where should we be if He did not wash our feet? In one sense we ought to be ashamed; but where should we be? If He were not a servant now, we should have our feet dirty, poor creatures that we are! Then it will be fullness of joy, ~~and~~ ministering of God's table in heaven to us, and half the happiness would be lost if it were not that! How the Lord takes pains to assure us of His love, to persuade us of His love. "You are of more value than many sparrows." He says, do not fear, and then gives the strongest motive to serve Him. In the epistle of John He does not say we *ought* to love Him, because He first loved us—it is quite true, but He says, "we love him." Where there really is the sense of the Lord's love to us, there is the return of it.

If you hear a child saying—Oh! if you only knew my mother, her patience, her love, I am so tiresome, she never fails in affection, I cannot tell you what she is! I say, That child loves its mother; it has the sense of its mother's love in its soul, and that is love. It is the going back of the heart in the consciousness of the blessed love He has to us. The inflow of the love, with a new nature capable of receiving it, is the love. How sweet and blessed it is thus to see how He has come down; He has not loved us from on high. He never says to the poor sinner, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," till He had come to them.

He never called for confidence in His love, till He had come to them Himself, however vile they might be. It will surely make us adore Him ! A divine person come to be a servant, that our hearts may know His love, and He wants us to know it. Does the Father say, This is My Son whom you *ought* to love ? No, He tells *His* affection for Christ to lead us into it. Therefore, we are in fellowship with the Father. What is that ? It is having the same thoughts and joys in blessing ; the same feelings and affections in blessing.

Depend on it, if you get near to God, it will not make you think lightly of Him. If you get near to the greatest man in the country you will find out his foibles ; but being near to God will never give you want of respect to Him ; you find out what God is. It is not dangerous, as people often say, to be on the mount ; but to *have* been there. When Paul *got out* of the third heaven, he wanted the thorn in the flesh. Then there was a danger of his saying, no one but you, Paul, have been *there*. Everything is dangerous for the flesh to get hold of—law, gospel, and everything. Being near to God, never lets the flesh in. If the Spirit is the spring of our thoughts and feelings, He can never give us anything but thoughts of the Son. We are poor, feeble things, and He is infinite, there is that exception of course ; but if I look at Christ's death I say—Look at that obedience ; there is love to the Father, and giving up Himself, and love to us. Look at His devotedness, obedience, and self given up—love beaming through the agony of the Cross if ever it did ! Did not the Father delight in it ? To be sure He did ? Of course all our thoughts are poverty itself, but He brings His love down to us in grace, and then takes us up to the glory. We learn the power of His obedience when nothing stopped Him. He brought it to us in grace here ; washes our feet by the way, and then will serve us in glory up there.

The Lord give us to have our loins girded and our lights burning, that we may be found watching. Living in this town, or in any other, in our common, every-day life ; that we may be there with our loins girded and our lights burning, and we like men that wait for their Lord, that when He comes and knocks we may open to Him immediately. “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching.” “He shall gird himself and make them sit down to meat, and come forth and serve them.”

May the Lord's love and approbation be the things that govern us ; and not the things that fade away !

"JESUS OF NAZARETH PASSETH BY."

"AND they came to Jericho : and as He went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side begging.

"And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, (Thou) Son of David, have mercy on me.

"And many charged him that he should hold his peace : but he cried the more a great deal, (Thou) Son of David, have mercy on me.

"And Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, He calleth thee.

"And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto Him, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

"And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way ; thy faith hath made thee whole. ("Saved thee"—*margin*.) And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus in the way." (Mark x. 46-52.)

We frequently find in the Gospels incidents, which illustrate very fully the way in which a sinner lays hold of Christ. In this Scripture we have a lovely picture of a seeking Saviour and a seeking sinner, and how they met. In the Gospel of St. Luke we find the text that is at the head of this paper—which was (as it were) preached to this blind man. A very short sermon! "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by!" And Jesus never passed that way again! Bartimæus had come to the turning point of his history, and had that day passed he never would have had his eyes opened, for Jesus was then on His way to the Cross. And the difference between the Lord's journey on that day and now, is this: He was on His way to the Cross where He accomplished the work of redemption, shed His precious blood, died, and rose again ; and having finished His work there, He is now on His way to the judgment and the glory!

It is because of that judgment, which must come, that I would now urge on every unsaved soul who may read these words, that which we find so blessedly characterized

Bartimæus—that is *promptness*! The deep necessity of seizing the present moment, for it may never come again. How often moments like this, in the history of souls, are slighted, and they never return. "I shall have plenty of opportunities; people do not often die as young as I am." Such like excuses are pleaded by those who would procrastinate. But I would warn you. There is one sin more terrible than any in a man's history, and that is his *last*! Souls float on easily down the stream of time; they go quietly out of the world, perhaps without any fear of hell. Some are exercised, and for a time are in an agony of conviction, but the many slight the warning, the fond entreaty of the father, the mother, or the friend, as to the solemn eternity which lies beyond time; and it comes to a moment when God says, as it were, "Let him alone!" and his heart is hardened. It is a solemn, deeply solemn thing, this hardening of the heart. And the more solemn when we think of *God* doing so. We have an example of this in Pharaoh. God warned him in nine solemn judgments, and then, as it were, gave him one chance more. Pharaoh did not yield his will to God; he hardened his heart against God, and God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he went to destruction.

In the face of such a fact, I would press on every sinner the need of promptness in the matter of salvation. The Lord is long-suffering: He *waits* on His road to judgment; but at any moment the day of grace may have closed.

We find it more difficult now, than in the early days of the Church, to press the fact, that at any moment the Lord Jesus may come. The enemy of Christ and His people has succeeded in almost blotting out the hope of the Lord's coming—a truth held by all at the first. The Word of God describes it as, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the trumpet shall sound." So sudden will be the coming of the Lord for His own, and the transit of the blood-bought throng from earth and the grave, to the Father's house on high!

No figure of speech could give a more true idea of the sudden (to many, alas!), unexpected action, and yet Satan has almost succeeded in blotting out this truth. But for this also Scripture has prepared us. In Matt. xxiv. 48 we read—"The evil servant shall say in *his heart*, my lord delayeth his coming." From his *heart* comes the thought. He is not living as he would like his Lord to find him; his

heart is set on earthly things, and he does not desire his Lord to come. To cover what his heart says, he settles that there is much to be done before the Lord can return: the Jews have to be converted, and such like things. Treat all such theories as the voice of the evil servant. *Nothing* has to happen before Christ may come *for* His own; and with that event the day of grace closes for all who have listened to the message of salvation! The denial of this truth, which should have such power in the conscience of the sinner, is immense loss; but I press earnestly and affectionately on you, and say, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Will *you* allow Him to pass in the day of grace, and meet Him in the day of judgment for the first time—like Pharaoh?

We find three kinds of blindness in the world. There is physical blindness, like that of Bartimæus. His sightless eyeballs never gazed upon the light of the sun, as we may suppose. Then there is another kind of blindness—that of the mind, of which Scripture also speaks—soul blindness, which is of the god of this world. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not (we read), lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 4). Such see no beauty in Jesus to desire Him—fatal blindness, unless removed. The blinded one in such a case is "lost!" Then there is mental blindness, as we say, That man is an idiot.

Bartimæus was blind, but "He *heard* that Jesus passed by." God's resource for the blind sinner is the "hearing of faith." This was the avenue to his soul. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). Remark the little word "when" (v. 47). Bartimæus might have said—Here is a golden opportunity; I will get me a harvest to-day from this multitude. Perhaps crowds like this were not often to be seen on the roadside between Jericho and Jerusalem. The great multitude were following Jesus to-day; He had many followers, but few friends. He might reason thus—I will speak to Jesus some other time, and gather the silver coins to-day. Such an opportunity will not come again, and Jesus may be met at any time. But he did not reason thus. How many do so! I will give myself to my gains *now*—get rich; perhaps at some craft that is not as it should be; then I will retire. I wish

to be saved; but I must attend to other things now; then I will look after my soul.

But Bartimæus felt that the *present* was too great an opportunity to lose: it might never come again. "When" Jesus passed by he cried out; he was in earnest, and his promptness to use the moment was lovely to behold. It was his turning point! Saints and sinners have all their turning points. If he had missed his, the opportunity had never come again. We boldly say this; for Jesus never did pass by that way again. He was on His way for His last entry into the City of Solemnities—to Jerusalem, where after a few days He was crucified. He was on the road to the Cross that day. He is on His road to the Judgment now, and the Cross is past—His work there is done.

But a man with a need in his heart will be prompt, will be in earnest: and "when" Jesus was passing he cried out, "Son of David, have mercy on me"!

Have you, my reader, an unsatisfied need in your heart? This may meet the eyes of some whose hearts Christ has satisfied; but I speak to those whose hearts are still unsatisfied. Do such feel their need? Then cry out, and Jesus will stop; your cry of need will arrest His steps just where you are this moment. When was there a cry of need which He refused on earth? Will He refuse the cry of need now that He is in His glory? Will He not stay His steps, as it were, as on that day, and meet the need—fill the void of your heart?

"And Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called." In three of these gospels we have this tale told in a different way. In Matt. xx. 32, it is simply "*Jesus called.*" This is the sovereign call of mercy through grace. This belongs to God alone. Then in Mark x. 49, it is Jesus "*commanded him to be called.*" This shows the instrumental call; of the preacher, for instance. What a word for those who preach the gospel—for the ambassador of God's grace. In Luke xviii. 40, Jesus "*commanded him to be brought unto him.*" This was done by the earnest effectual guiding hands of others. It encourages the believing wife to bring her unbelieving husband under the sound of the Gospel: the parent to bring his child: the child the parent, if still unsaved. It is the earnest seeking guiding hand and heart of some soul, whose eyes have been opened, to bring those dear to him—others, to bear the word of His grace.

Oh the deadness of those who believe, in this service, The dead form in many places "the Gospel" becomes, through the inertness of Christians themselves. How often has the Lord answered the faith of those who have brought others to hear the word of Grace preached, in saving the souls of those who have been brought! It is sad, sad, indeed, to see the empty seats in many a meeting room, where an earnest preacher, who longs to bring souls to Christ, finds that his heart is chilled by the empty benches, and vacant listlessness of those who are there.

"But many charged him that he should hold his peace" (v. 48). They try to hinder his coming to Christ. The devil always finds ready instruments for this service. Those who labour beside one in the factory—in the counting-house, &c., are ready with their scoff for the anxious, seeking soul. But there are many ways of hindering besides the open taunt. I will tell you of one. Christians criticising the gospel that is preached. I remember reading of one case in point. A Christian lady brought her unconverted husband to hear a preaching of the gospel. The servant of the Lord who spoke that night, was 'no great preacher,' as people say. On their way home she remarked the failures—the poverty of the address; she was pulling the whole thing to pieces, but on turning to see why she got no response from her husband, it was to see the tears coursing down his cheeks. On asking him what was the matter, he replied—'Ah, I found Christ to-night in that preaching,' or such words. How condemning to her—for what she derided, was God's instrument in saving her husband's soul; she—a Christian too. It was God's quickening Word to the soul of her husband! O take care how you criticise the Word preached in the ears of the unsaved! Christians are often thus the greatest hinderers of the gospel, by their careless ways, their speech, their lack of wisdom.

In saying this it does not excuse the sinner in the least; he is responsible to come to Christ, and God will hold him so. He does not come, because his *will* is against God. In the judgment scene of Matt. xxv., it is the absence of good, not the commission of evil, for which the sentence is passed. "Ye did it not unto one of these my brethren, . . . ye did it not to me."

And "Jesus stood still"; and thus He waits on you in grace, because "He delighteth in mercy." And Bartimaus,

"casting away his garment, arose and came to Jesus." How many things are allowed to hinder the soul in coming to Jesus? Some garment or other, which must be cast aside.

Job was a righteous man—none like him in all the earth. And Job wrapped his garment closely around him, and it kept him from being fully in the presence of God in heart and conscience. He had to pass through deep trials—a history that fills forty-two chapters in the Bible, all concerning one man—before he would cast aside the garment of his own righteousness. Righteousness was really there, but he looked upon it as his own, and it obscured the grace which had really produced it in his ways. At the close of the book he cast it aside, and abhorred himself, repenting in dust and ashes. *Then* the Lord accepted Job!

Balaam had a garment too. He "loved the wages of unrighteousness," and he used the truth of God against the people of God. He said, "Let me die the death of the righteous;" but he never said, "Let me live the life of the righteous." His garment clung to him till it was too late.

The young Ruler too had one (Mark x.)—rich and ardent—whom "Jesus loved." He saw in him the traces of man as he once had come out of the hands of God, "very good." Much doubtless that was lovely in nature was found in him. But his "great possessions" were his garment. Jesus said to him "go and sell that thou hast"—cast aside the hindering garment, and he went away grieved. He could not part with his garment—he preferred it to Christ. An anxious sinner, with a need in his heart, never "went away grieved" from Jesus.

Herod too, had a secret garment; he loved his lusts. John Baptist preached and reproved him. For a time he gave up his sins; "He did many things, and heard him gladly." The garment was only laid aside for a time; by and by he wrapped himself in it—gave way to the desires of the flesh, and ended in beheading John, who had told him faithfully of his ways. Then at last he shook hands with Pilate in condemning Jesus, and in the solemn scene before the crucifixion when he spoke to Jesus (Luke xxiii.) "He answered him nothing." His time was over—his heart was hardened; Jesus had no word for him.

Do I address an indifferent soul like Gallio, "who cares for none of these things?" A garment of indifferentism may cover your heart like his. God has opened the very

heavens, and sent down its best treasure, that man might be blessed. O cast it not aside ; do not go on your way heedless of the call of mercy, and still reject the Saviour. You see I am pressing the sinner's responsibility upon you. If I were preaching the other side of the gospel, I would rather seek to unfold the heart of God, and show you His love in the gift of Christ : the perfectness too, of Jesus, in doing His Father's will ; but I am seeking rather to press your responsibility to come to Him—to receive Him—to cast from you whatever hinders your coming as a *lost* one to the Saviour's feet. You are "lost," "dead" ; your life is forfeited, but nothing is asked of you.

And Bartimæus, "casting away his garment, arose and came to Jesus." And Jesus answered, and said unto him, "What wilt thou that *I* should do unto thee?" Jesus expected nothing from him ; and all actions on your part also, as on his, would be working. But hear what Jesus says—"What *wilt* thou?" Have you a *desire*. He who came from heaven, died and rose, and went on high, waits (as it were) to serve the poor sinner, who comes as a suppliant to Him.

What is the request of Bartimæus? "Lord, that I might receive my sight." And Luke (ch. xviii.) tells us of the echoing reply from the heart of God. "Receive thy sight ; thy faith hath saved thee." Faint and tremulous was the request of faith, but clear and blessed the response of the Lord—the echo of heaven—"Receive thy sight ; thy faith *hath* saved thee." Not a doubt remains—his eyes are opened, and he *is* saved.

Have you, reader, a need to bring to Him? Will you trust Him, and God's heart will bless you to the full. It was so with the poor prodigal (Luke xv) ; he asked a servant's place, and the Father's heart exceeded all his expectations ; He kissed him and received him as a son. It was more than the echo of the desire : the answer of grace ever exceeds the request of faith. It was so with the thief on the Cross. He asked a place in the kingdom, but received one in Paradise that day!

And Bartimæus opened his eyes, and the first object before him was the Lord! The beauty of the Lord was before him—the object for eternity. What will the joy of the most blessed saint be throughout eternity? Surely the same object—Jesus! Jesus only! And "He followed Jesus

in the way." It was then the way to the Cross, now it is the path of rejection to the glory. He is on His way to the kingdom and glory. Then follow Jesus in the way; suffer with Him; true in heart to Him in the day of His rejection, and when He takes His place as "King of Kings," you shall reign with Him!

BROKEN TO PIECES.

IF I am walking with my Lord, as the treasure and resource of my heart, how can I have any large or valued possessions down here? And, more than this, I do not want them, for He is both my treasure and resource. We often say, and I doubt not at times truly, that we enjoy Him as our treasure and resource; and yet the moment a slice of part of our possessions here is taken away from us, the poverty of our portion in Him is made evident; and you will find, as you go on, that God in His grace takes us at our word,—may I say *His* word?—in our souls; and He says to us, "You said your treasure and resource were in my Son; well, be it so. Then surrender every other treasure and resource, and prove the great unbounded excellence of this." He only does it to make good in our souls the true desires of His Spirit in us. I am afraid (and yet not afraid) when I hear any one, even in prayer, expressing more than he has come up to, because I know if it be sincere, even in intention, God must establish it with the edge of the sword, and the agony of the Cross; the Cross is not only taken up, but the agony of it is bearing it all the way through.

Cultivate and cherish high desires, but be assured the more genuine they are the more you will be broken, to make room for the manifestations of them in living power. By all and every means have light in the pitcher, but the light is useless till the pitcher be broken to pieces. May you and I submit to be broken, that the true happy desires, which we at times have loved to give expression to, may find no impediments in our mortal body to their full manifestation, to the glory of our common Lord.

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"M. M."—What is the thought implied in the Holy Ghost as a Seal? Could a soul be sealed without knowing experimentally complete deliverance by death and resurrection?

A.—The thought seems to be that God puts a mark upon those who believe, as His, by the gift of the Holy Spirit of Promise (Eph. i. 14.), who is the earnest of their inheritance with Christ, over all things (creation, &c.) yet to come. This seal is the demonstration and earnest of their participation in that inheritance which Christ has purchased with His precious blood, and which He will take by power out of the hands of the enemy; that will be its redemption, the purchase having been made. This is when they look *forward*. Looking *back*, He is a seal of the perfection of the work in which they stand, and which was wrought by Christ on the Cross. In connection with the *inheritance*, as not yet possessed, the Spirit is here named the “Spirit of *promise*.” While in connection with life, and what we have *now* in Christ (ch. iv. 30), He is termed the “Holy Spirit of God,” the same Spirit most surely, but in a different connection of thought (ch. i.) being in connection with what they *have not* (ch. iv.) with what they *have*.

They had *heard* the word of truth; they had *believed* the gospel of their salvation; and they were *sealed*—having done so. It was not that they were sealed as sinners, but as believers. *By* hearing and believing, a person is quickened; *on* believing, he is sealed. God does not seal a sinner merely as such. That would be to seal him in his sins. He quickens a sinner; He seals a believer. These two actions never happen together, as far as I know; frequently there may be an interval of years between them. To speak in general terms, the moment a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, and receives *remission of sins*, he is sealed. He may not know deliverance, by death and resurrection, for long after this, and yet have the Spirit in him as a seal. Cornelius’ case is one in point. He was a “devout man,” and “one that feared God,” &c.; his soul really lived to God. But it needed that his conscience should be purged by the work of Christ, and this he had not yet known. Peter tells him—already a quickened soul—of Christ and His work; and the moment he names “remission of sins” (Acts x. 34), the Holy Ghost is given to him. He “set to his seal that God is true,” and God set to His seal on him that did so. There is always life in the soul first, before forgiveness of sins is really sought; then, when *it* is known, the gift of the Holy Ghost follows, and that soul is sealed. Deep lessons may be learned of his nature, and the experimental truth of death and resurrection may not be known for long after this. Even the experience of Rom. vii. 14-24 may be learned in a *modified* way after the Spirit has been given. However, the experience there given does not suppose this to be the case. Where free grace is preached, souls that have life find forgiveness, and then they are sealed. The complete deliverance may not yet be known, nor for long.

“J. W. P.”—What is the meaning of “the fearful,” as distinguished from “the unbelieving,” in Rev. xxi. 8? Is there not a solemn import attaching to the term?

A.—The term seems to be used in contrast with “him that overcometh” in v. 7. It might be translated “the cowardly.” While pure grace says, “I will give unto him that is athirst (and who but God could create this thirst for what he alone can give?) of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Yet the responsibility to overcome sin and the world that he may inherit “these things”—the eternal

blessedness of the new heavens and the new earth, &c., is thus expressed:—The “cowardly” or “fearful” who did not overcome—lacking confidence in the pure grace of God, who must ever be the giver—are found in *v. 8*. Thus we find the conqueror and the cowardly contrasted. How blessed to be able to say, “We are more than conquerors through him that loved us!”

IN TIME OF NEED.

“He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto the desired haven.” (*Psa. cvii. 29, 30.*)

I know, O Lord, though all around is dark,
I need not fear.

Rough are the waves that toss my little bark,
But Thou art near :

The stormy winds Thy word alone fulfil,
Their rage shall cease,

And when Thy voice shall give the charge, “Be still”—
All will be peace.

Yes ! I shall see (soon as this storm has passed
Across the soul),

That He who slumbers not, held every blast
In His control :

And though o’ershadowed by the present woe
My heart may quail—

Strong in the grace—the strength Thou dost bestow—
I shall prevail.

What though long-cherished hopes like autumn leaves
All scattered lie ?

Knowing Thy love divine, this scarcely grieves,
For spring is nigh.

New hopes, God-given, shall then unfold and bloom
In beauty bright,

Therefore, in hope-rejoicing, ’mid the gloom
I wait for light.

Thou precious Saviour, by whose life I live,
Lighten mine eyes.

Let me not miss the lessons Thou dost give;
O make me wise.

Keep me, while tempest-driven on life’s dark sea,
Close to Thy side;

There, anchored safely by sure hope in Thee,
Let me abide.

LORD JESUS CHRIST—my All—what can I lose,
Since Thou art mine ?

Guide me, Thou Best-beloved, my portion choose,
For I am Thine :

To the desired Haven let me come
In Thine own way;

There will be no more night in that bright home,
But endless day!

SANCTIFICATION BY THE TRUTH.

WHEN we look into the practical details of the epistles, and the more we do so, we find constantly—nay, invariably—that it is “the truth” which is used in the cultivation of Christian character, and as the sanction and spring of godly behaviour. The Lord having finished the work given Him to do, committed the keeping and the sanctifying of His people to the Father. He desired that they might be kept through the name of the Father, and that they might be sanctified by His truth. (John xvii.) This desire the Holy Ghost seems to act upon in the Epistles, for it is “the truth” which is there always used in the sanctification of the elect, or in the formation of Christian character.

We find all the apostles, who are the penmen of the Spirit in the Epistles, doing this; though it may be variously. We find “mercies,” “promises,” “hope,” “the grace that bringeth salvation,” “the law of liberty,” and other things of like kind, all serving to this end, all of them taken up by one apostle or another, and used for the sanctification—for the moral culture—of the children of God. And all these are parts of “the truth.” They connect themselves with Christianity, which is the truth. And so much is this the case in the Epistles to the Thessalonians, that there the Lord’s coming is employed as the instrument for forming or cherishing several *different* features of saintly character, as well as for the *general* cultivation of living practical Christianity in spirit, soul, and body. (See 1 Thes. i-v.)

In this way we see the desire of the Lord Jesus,—“Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth”—answered by the energy of the Spirit, when He comes in His day, to deal with the elect, and carry on their education, as I may speak.

There is no using of *law* to form Christian character. Could we indeed admit the thought that the Lord having ransomed us by Himself, and made us the Father’s by adoption and grace, could then after that commit us to Moses, to be kept and educated? What say our souls to such a thought? Are we prepared to admit that the Lord would do so? Nay; it is nowhere found that the Lord Jesus does such a thing. Rather the very opposite; for having recognised His finishing of His own work for the elect, and the having manifested the name of the Father to them, He commits them to the keeping of the Father, and

desires, as I have noticed already, their sanctification by the truth.

This is all in blessed consistent elevation of thought and will concerning His saints, and it is happy to see (but what we might surely know we should see) that the Spirit in this way effectuates the Son's desires, and works accordingly.

We see a fine vivid sample of this in 2 Cor. iii-v. In the first of these chapters, the apostle contemplates the soul, as I may speak, in the presence of *the law*, and then in the presence of *the truth*. As before the law the man has his face veiled. He does not affect to learn one single lesson there. The law had to expose and convict, to lay the sentence of death in man as a responsible moral agent. And it has answered its end in us, by leaving us before it in the sense of our utter hopelessness. This was its operation when it was announced at the beginning in the hearing of the camp of Israel, and this was its operation in an individual soul, as we see it drawn out before us in Romans vii. (See Exodus xx. 18-20; Deut. v. 22-29.)

It is as with a veiled face we are to listen to the law. We do not go to it to learn its lessons. We are before it, or in the presence of it, to be convicted, to find out that in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing. A veiled face becomes us there. We do not affect to have learnt lessons there. We simply take the sentence of death to ourselves. We do not answer God's end by the law, if we do more with it than that. We are to cry out, as we stand before it, "Let not God speak to us." Or, again, "O wretched man, that I am." But if I set myself before it to learn my lesson, so that I may go away, and do my duty accordingly, and that is all, I am misusing it, and not understanding the veiled face of Moses.

On the other hand, however, we see that in that chapter (2 Cor. iii.) the apostle, with an open, unveiled face, sets himself before the glory of the Lord, before Jesus in the gospel of the grace of God, before "the truth;" and there it is he learns his lessons as a saint of God, and a witness of Jesus. He makes it his aim and business so to stand before that glory, that he may take off the image or reflection of it, and be, as he speaks, a manifestation of "the truth."

It is *there* I find him *learning* his lessons, and not before the law. It is *there* I find him no longer as with a veiled face, but with an open face. And in the following chapters

(iv, v.) he lets us know what lessons he had learnt there, and how he was exercising himself in them. Having received mercy he fainted not ; neither did he walk in craftiness, but renounced the hidden things of dishonesty. The light of the glory which he had looked at had shone, and seated itself in him, and was breaking forth in many and many a way of moral strength and beauty. The image of the glory of the Lord was seen in him in many of its features. The life of Jesus was manifest in his body, and in his mortal flesh—the faith of Jesus, and the hope of Jesus. Did the Lord live for others? The apostle, through grace, was able to say, that he fainted not under labours, and services, if others got blessing. Death might work in him if only life thereby worked in them. There had been a joy set before Christ, we know, in the hope of which he met His cross—there was the same in its way and measure in the apostle by which he counted his afflictions light. He apprehended the truth of a future judgment-seat where all would be manifested ; and by that truth he was sanctified so as to aim at acceptability with the Lord. He knew the terror of the Lord, and by that truth he was sanctified to be an earnest-hearted witness to his fellow-sinners, that they might flee from the wrath to come. He knew the death of Christ for sinners ; and by that fact or truth he was sanctified into the condition of not living to himself but to Him that died for him, and rose again.

Surely here was one learning new and wondrous lessons, and exercising himself in them, as he stood, with open face, before the glory of the Lord ; or, as he was learning “the truth,” that he might be “sanctified” by it, and present a “manifestation” of it.

As to the flesh, he closes by telling us he knew “no man after” it. If he knew no man *after the flesh* how could he know *the law*? How could he use the law as the former of his character? The law was addressed to man in the flesh. It was made for man as man, a sinner ; man in the old creation. It had its connection with Israel, and told them of their duties as men in the flesh, in the place of moral independency and responsibility who were to stand, if they could, before God in the title of their flesh ; in the title of their own doings and righteousness. Such a state the apostle refuses to know. “Henceforth know we no man after the flesh,” he says. He was himself a new creation,

part of the new creation. He was in the system of redemption ; and *all* things there are “of God who hath reconciled us to himself.” This is what this man tells us, who, with open face was beholding the glory of the Lord.

Could such an one take himself back to the law, I again ask, to be educated there, and to have his character formed? Could such an one send the saints of God back to it? He could not, and he does not, nor do any of his fellow-apostles, the inspired penmen of the New Testament, the teachers of the Church of God who have God’s authority for doing so. They send me to “the mercies of God,” to “the promises,” “the exceeding great and precious promises,” to “the hope” which the gospel inspires, to “the grace which bringeth salvation,” to “the law of liberty,” and to the prospect of “the law of liberty,” and to the prospect of “the coming of the Lord.” (See Romans xii.; 2 Cor. vii.; 2 Peter i.; 1 John iv.; Titus ii.; James ii.; 1 Thess.) We are to learn our lessons from such masters as these, and not from Moses. We are to be sanctified by the truth, to cultivate the “righteousness and holiness of truth,” as having put on the new man; to be “led of the Spirit,” and that is, to come away from being “under the law.” (See Gal. v. 18.)

The Holy Ghost, through the apostles, thus answers the desire of the Lord, which He uttered before the Father ere He left us; “sanctify them by thy truth.” Having finished His work, He commits His people to the keeping and education of the Father; to His keeping of them through His name; to His sanctifying of them by His truth.

In the epistle to the Ephesians, we get another sample of this sanctification by the truth. The apostle is teaching the saints their high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He does this in the 1st and 3rd chapters very distinctly. Then he prays, or desires for them, that the Spirit may give them the understanding of all this—the apprehension and sense of this high calling—that they may know the glory of the life to which it points, the might of that resurrection—strength that is conducting them there, the length and depth and breadth and height of this glory; and also the surpassing, infinite, immeasurable love which lies at the root or spring-head of it all—“The love of Christ which passeth knowledge.”

This would be their sanctification. Sanctification by the truth, as one has said, is the Spirit linking the soul, in light

and power, with the great things of the call of God, giving us to know them, to accept them as ours, to have them fixed in their authority, by faith, in our hearts. Simple faith is the means; and simple faith is always best, for it lets God think for us.

THE OLD PROPHET OF BETHEL.

1 KINGS XIII.

THIS Chapter ushers in a solemn scene in Israel's history. What a contrast between the time when the people "blessed the king, and went into their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant and Israel his people" (ch. viii., ver. 66); and a now divided kingdom—one tribe only left to Judah—that Jehovah might still have a light before him in Jerusalem (ch. xi. 36). But worse than that, lest old associations should prove too strong, the powerful links of a common worship must be broken; something new must be established, not in opposition, but as a substitute. How artful the enemy! There is no attempt made to deny God or His power in dealing with man in past times; that was too manifest a thing, and would have offended the consciences of all; a counterfeit must be established—something that will do as well—thus expediency, ever Satan's way, comes in. "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Dan and Bethel are nearer, why not worship there?" Once off God's line, how low the fall! Instead of a temple, overlaid with gold, built of "costly stones, even great stones," the glory of the Lord filling the house, and priests, the sons of Levi, ministering—

"O, man, how hast thou proved
What in thy heart is found."

Two calves of gold are set up, with priests "of the lowest of the people." What a picture! But it speaks to us—these things are our ensample. "The house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15.) has now become, as far as its outward position and character in the world, no better than Israel with their false altar, calves, and priesthood.

But God, ever faithful to His people, never grows weary. A prophet appears on the scene to testify against this

wickedness, and tell of approaching judgment. He is sent by the word of the Lord to witness against the dreadful evil of Israel's position ; but, once his message was given, he was to eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the way he came. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," is ever the mind of God for those who would bear witness for Him. (2 Tim. *pass.*) We have described, by God Himself, the state of things around us. That which was once set up in such beauty in the earth, to be as rivers of living waters (John vii.) in a barren and a thirsty land, soon left its first estate, and became but a great house, filled with vessels—some to honour, some to dishonour. How are those who would be for God in the midst of it all to act? And who is a "man of God" but one who is standing for Him and His truth in the midst of that which has proved unfaithful to Him. "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour." "But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness," &c. ; "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." If the moral state of Israel was akin to that of the present day, "a form of godliness denying the power thereof," the call to the man of God is similar, and we would do well to lay to heart, 1st, whether we have taken this place; and 2nd, having taken it, are we living and walking in the power of it? We would all like to be thought men of God ; having in some little measure given up the world as far as outward things are concerned, there still remains a desire to be something, or to think oneself somebody, or to be thought of by others. Is it not the case? But to be indeed for Him, requires a total denial of the flesh—there is no room for it. God's word is imperative, if we would stand for Him. It will involve a breaking with all that man and nature holds dear ; there can be no bearing with an evil while God's testimony declares that it *cannot be borne* with. The prophet had a message to deliver, a testimony to make known. Yet, still to be separate, neither eat nor drink, nor return the way by which he came ; as long as it was a question of refusing the King, one openly ungodly, he is decided enough ; there could be no doubt as to this course in such a case ; how could he accept his invitation, how eat and drink with him?

But that is not all ; such an invitation did not thoroughly

test the heart—his conscience would have rebelled against so flagrant an act. Is he prepared to stand by God's word at all costs, at the risk of offending a brother prophet, to allow nothing whatever to interfere with what God at first told him. Such is the only right course—God “cannot deny himself.” “Try the spirits, whether they be of God.” He who is unfaithful in his testimony, will ever endeavour to have others—especially those whom God may be using as a testimony for Himself and His truth, to sanction his course. It was the case here. “There dwelt an old prophet in Bethel,” in the midst of apostate Israel, where a calf was substituted for the temple; there a prophet of God was found. It was a solemn place to be in; conscience gone, and the only desire to have others, whom God was using, to accredit him, and become mixed up with the corruptions, and sanction his place in its midst. Well may the apostle say “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” His soul was deadened by the corruptions around, insensible to truth—to all that a godly soul would hold precious; he hesitates not at a lie in order to conform the man of God to his ways. Once the soul allows the thinnest leaf as it were between itself and God, how soon it gives up all trust and dependence upon Him. It is off the ground of implicit subjection to His word, and on that of expediency, a ground so pleasing to man, but where the soul is at the mercy of all the craft and subtleties of Satan. There is no saying then the depths to which it may fall. “Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap; he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.” It was so here—“God is not mocked.” The man of God, he who should have taken God's part, destroys his testimony by leaving the path in which he had been set, sooner than refuse a brother prophet; he sacrifices the word of God, and judgment follows, as it ever will, surely, quickly, suddenly.* No after influence can ever call in question what God has made known to us as His will. “To obey is better than sacrifice,” “My grace is sufficient for thee.” No allowance can be made; the will of God is peremptory in these matters. May we thus deal

* It is not a question here of eternal salvation; that is secured to the child of God through the perfect work of Christ; but of the result of his walk, as a servant; as one who has been bought with a price, and was now called to serve Him who has called Him out of darkness into His marvellous light.

with ourselves, learning "to refuse the evil and choose the good." It is a plain and simple path to those who will do so. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Expediency—circumstances—friends—brethren, all vanish away when Christ, and Christ alone, is the one object before the heart. He will be as a lamp to our feet, a light to our path; He will make our way plain and clear, with no shadow of turning in our course, as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

TRUTH'S EXPRESSION.

I THINK that very often we are more careful to acquire spiritual ideas and feelings, than we are in seeing that nothing in our manner of life should hinder their growth and expression. Truly the light is sweet, but I must remember that if I do not protect it and use it, it is literally of no use to me.

What would be the gain of a man filling his garden with rare and valuable plants, if, from his neglect, he never derived any benefit from them; but, on the contrary, where he thought he had a treasury, when he looked again, he found his garden waste, and with the bitter, humbling feeling that what he had acquired he had lost by carelessness and inattention—not considering the tenderness and value of the plants. Better for him to have planted his garden with less valuable plants, and to have felt more dependent on it—for "much food is in the tillage of the poor" (Prov. xiii. 23)—than to have acquired with expense what through neglect he had lost.

Every spiritual idea or feeling suits the presence of the Lord, and in order to its expression down here, it must displace its contrary in us; for it has that which is contrary to it to contend against. If I do not allow the contrary one to give way, the then spiritual action is checked. It seeks expression to give bone and sinew to itself, and when I am in the expression I know its power. If my mind is carried into another line, I shall find all my toil go for nothing. "He that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes" (Hag. i. 6). Why? Because they were using God's gifts to them for their own glory, instead of using them for Him, and hence the man who made the most was practically the greatest loser!

It has often struck me how much one needs the "honest and good heart" (Luke viii. 15) in receiving the word of God—an honest and true purpose of heart to carry out into expression every idea communicated to one; to such, more would surely be given. I cannot be spiritual without becoming practically unworldly.

The life of Jesus in me *saps*, if I may so say, the principles of the world in me; so that they lose their influence on me almost imperceptibly, but yet very manifestly, and *then* I am enjoying the power in myself which displaced them. The beautiful plants are yielding to me their value and sweetness; they connect me with their own region and atmosphere, and the more at home I find myself *there*, the more quietly, and easily, because seeking nothing here, do I pass through the contrarieties of this evil scene. The Christian who can listen to, and enjoy for the moment, the beauties of the heavenly kingdom, and yet, in spirit seek this world, is worse than if he had never heard of them; for tastes awakened and never fed, must, if the experiment be repeated, decline, and ere long be utterly dormant.

Love the spiritual idea, and be prepared to give it expression, and you will have the joy, the light, and the strength of it in your soul; and better still, you will be given more, and the more you have, the more will you realise your place with your absent Lord.

SOME THOUGHTS ON JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER II.

IN the first part of this chapter we have a type of the marriage of the Messiah with His earthly people; and in the second part we have the judgment, which follows, by the Messiah Himself, for the purification of everything before He can reign. The vessels of purification which serve for the cleansing the filth, in order to their being brought nigh to God, will one day be filled with excellent wine, that is, with Millennial joy. Joy could not be known by Israel while they were under law, but the Messiah reserves for them the fullest joy under His reign.

From verses 13 to 17 we have the judgment. This market in the temple was established for the convenience of foreign Jews, that they might find there their offerings and the

exchange of their moneys. But Jesus, filled with zeal for the interests of His Father, purifies the temple by expelling from it all who profane it—a figure of what shall be when He comes in His glory. Then He will purge the kingdom of all the workers of iniquity, and afterwards He will reign. At verses 18-22 Jesus promises the Jews a sign of His divine authority, but such a sign as, when they have got it, will be too late for them; for they will have already put Him to death. He calls His body the temple of God—that of the Jews was no longer God's temple.

The last three verses belong more properly to the next chapter. Many are said to have believed in Jesus because of the miracles which He did. This faith was not the true faith, but a faith of human opinion which did not separate from the world, nor from the things of the world. This faith, resting only on the sight of the miracles, is worth nothing; the conscience is not touched. There is a faith which man can have of himself; it is not divine; it is not that which is the gift of God. Therefore the Lord does not trust them. They may be sincere, and have a true conviction, but Jesus does not see in them the work of God; and what is of man is worth nothing before God—sooner or later it disappears. This may be said of every conviction received from education, or in any other such way whatsoever; it is only what is in man and of man. Of this class are those described in Heb. vi. 4-6, 8. These people are more advanced; they have received all the blessings there are in the church; as it is said, "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, if it bear thorns and briars, will be burned," which means, that in these persons there was no internal change—their consciences were not affected; the work is purely external, and, therefore, they may fall away and never be restored.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER.

"THERE is a deliverance, a liberty wherewith Christ makes us free, which is other than forgiveness, and the joy that may accompany it, and which is often felt to be experimentally a mightier change than the first discovery of mercy and conversion to God. The Epistle to the Romans treats distinctly of these two things. First, propitiation and forgiveness of sins, justification from all that the first Adam produces, through Christ being delivered for our offences,

and raised again for our justification, and the blessed grace which has thus given us a portion with God, and given us to joy in Him. This closes with chapter v. 11.

“Then comes the state of the sinner, ‘By one man’s disobedience;’ what we are, and where we are—not guilt from what we have done. We are in the flesh. The quickening power of God does not deliver; it works the desire of holiness, and shows us the necessity of it, but the flesh works still. To this the law, which requires righteousness from us, directly applies. The remedy for this is not the same as for guilt and sins, though it be still Christ’s death. There it was Christ bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, making propitiation, purging us from them before God. But the remedy for the power of sin in us, our state as in the flesh before God, is, taking us out of it, our having been crucified with Christ. We have part in righteousness by having part in death. If we have part in death, we shall not live on. We are, by the Holy Ghost given to us, in Christ, not in the flesh. It is a new state and place, not the forgiveness of the sins of the old. As Israel not only escaped judgment by the blood on their door-posts when God was a judge, but were wholly out of Egypt at the Red Sea, where God was a deliverer; so we are not only secured from judgment, but out of the flesh, sin, and the world, when, through the work of Christ, we have received the Spirit through faith. We are not only born again, but have put off the old man, have been crucified with Christ, are dead, our life hid with Christ in God. The Christ who has become our life, the new I, which lives to God and to Him only, has died, and I reckon myself dead.

“It is a mistake to say, when we are ‘emptied of self’ we can thus live. It is as ‘alive from the dead’ that we yield ourselves to God as truly free. The doctrine of this is in Romans vi. The practical process by which we arrive at it is in chapter vii., an humbling process as it always is, though it may be modified by the knowledge of forgiveness under law, the first husband, where a state is discovered which (we are not in the flesh) is not subject to the law of God, nor can be. We discover then our state, what the flesh is, not guilt. I know that in me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth no good thing; then, through Divine teaching, that it is not me, but sin that dwells in me, but then that it is too strong for me, that I am captive to the law of sin in my members.

“This is clearly not the Christian state at all, but a renewed soul under law. It does not say that the flesh is in me, but that I am captive to it, sold under sin. I am there (though it be not me), and cannot get out. But this is my state under the first husband—law. Death dissolves the bond. I have died in Christ, have been crucified with Him, and power in the life of the risen Christ is now my portion, the flesh reckoned dead, and I alive *to God* in Christ.

“Consequently, it is not when brought to be empty of self I am filled with the Spirit, but when brought to find self or flesh wholly evil, and that I cannot get rid of it, or get the victory over it, when I have learned that I have no strength, as well as that I am ungodly (a point much harder to learn and more humbling), then I find I am delivered, having died in Christ to sin, and the flesh, and the law withal. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus—Christ risen—has made me free from the law of sin and death. I am not a slave or captive, but free. What the law could not do, being weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin (a sacrifice for sin), has condemned sin in the flesh—not forgiven it. But when it was condemned, death was; so that, while the condemnation has been carried out in Christ, it is for faith dead, since He is, and now the power of life in Him risen is that in which I live, dead to sin and alive to God, not in Adam or flesh at all, but in Christ.

“Now, being wholly free, I can yield myself to God as one alive from the dead. I reckon myself dead as regards the flesh, and alive in Christ only. I am not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God, given on cleansing by the blood, dwell in me, and if Christ be in me, the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

“Thus there is never any reason for ever even having an evil thought. Sin has no dominion over me. I am not debtor to the flesh, and being set free, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, am able, for Christ’s power is there, to hold the flesh for dead. There is no reason why one single thought in my mind should come from the flesh, or from anything but the life of Christ which is in me, in the power of the Spirit. There is no excuse if such do arise. There are two elements in this state—having put off the old man and put on the new, which, *after God*, is created in

righteousness and true holiness, and having the Holy Ghost dwelling in me. Hence God's way of acting, is my measure of good; Christ, God manifest in a man, being the expression and model of this. I have perfect liberty in Divine favour; loved as Christ was loved and knowing it, and may and ought to be occupied with what is revealed in Him, my affections being engaged there, and I filled with the Spirit. But as this is a state of dependence, diligent seeking of grace alone can keep us thus, and in fact in many things we all offend. But my normal state is not grieving the Spirit, and so in God's presence, being able to think of Him and not of self.

"No state here is the object of the saint; he is not alive in the world, and he looks having the life to be conformed to Christ in glory, and if he thinks of himself at all, it is only to judge himself. But I believe in complete deliverance from the law of sin which is in our members, that I am called to be filled with the Spirit, which would not allow thoughts from the flesh to arise in the mind, nor anything that would soil the conscience, but would make us live in the atmosphere of the Divine presence.

"The practical realizing this is by (2 Cor. iv.) always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and thus God helps us by delivering us to death by trial, that this may be fully made good. I allow, therefore, no captivity to sin, no dominion of it. Thus when hopeless as to getting the victory we find it to be ours in Christ, and then all has to come from the Spirit, and all in fulness of joy with God. But this is carried out first, by knowing when hopeless as to victory over the flesh, that we have died in Christ, and then by always bearing about His dying, death still working in us, that the life only of Jesus may be manifested. 'So that ye cannot do the things that ye would,' is utterly false. It should be, 'in order that ye may not do.' But there is complete deliverance from the whole power of sin, we reckoning ourselves dead, and undistracted enjoyment of Divine favour in the relationship in which Christ is.

"The only normal state of the Christian then is, unclouded fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, and the uninterrupted manifestation of the life of Jesus in his body; and when in God's presence not having to think of sin in himself, but freedom to think of God and what He is. He is divinely free through, and in Christ;

but he has no thought of a present state of perfection, or of purity (only the Spirit is ungrieved and has not to make him think of himself); for his only owned state is conformity to Christ in glory, God having wrought him for that self-same thing, in virtue of which he purifies himself even as He is pure; and if he does think of himself, has the consciousness of his not being as like Christ as he would desire, but is glad to have to think of Christ only. But purifying himself, is not consciousness that he is pure, his conversation is in heaven, his motives there, and hence necessarily if he thinks of himself, the consciousness of shortcoming, though he be not troubled by any present thought of sin, but is able to think of Christ, and a return to think of himself is already failure."

"THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY."

EPHESIANS III. 14-21.

It is blessed to see how the Apostle felt as to the delight of the Lord in these saints. What a blessed sense it is that a living God continually thinks of us to bless us, and that there is no thought of His that does not belong to us. "All things are for your sakes." How Paul's spirit lived with God! How he felt the way in which the thoughts of God were set upon these saints, and were to be so dwelt on by them, that God might have a return in thanksgiving. We thus find, that not only redemption has given us a place before God, but that He is always thinking of us. What a place that puts us in! How it makes us feel our own nothingness! It is the only thing that does make us feel it completely; but still, when we apprehend that God has these thoughts about us, it lifts us up into that confidence which *is* spiritual strength. This consciousness links our hearts with God. Do we really believe that? Surely we must feel how unworthy we are of it; but "All things are yours:" we are "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

The Apostle is desiring that they may enter consciously upon blessing (v. 16). "That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory," &c. He does not descend below His own glory in leading us into blessing. Here we are brought into the mind and thoughts of God to *enjoy* them, not only to His *eternal* counsels but to His *present* thoughts. And here the Apostle speaks of Christ as the Son, looking

for blessing in the saints. In his prayer in the first chapter he says, "The *God* of our Lord Jesus Christ," and wishes that they may know the hope of His calling. Here He looks for fellowship, and so it is *Father*, and prays that we may not only know, but that we may be strengthened with might by His Spirit, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. He looks for the soul to be brought into the present enjoyment of communion with the Father.

He takes the "riches of the glory" as the *measure* of what we are to enjoy. This is not like the first chapter. Being brought into the holiest, brought to God, the spring and source of all these thoughts, we ought to have the present enjoyment of it all. He would have us enjoy that into which He has brought us Himself. It is not merely life here, but strength in the inner man. Are our hearts looking for divine strength to be able to endure? It is not merely feeling, but a practical realisation by faith of the enjoyment of these thoughts, so that our hearts may be living there. We are not *there* yet. The Father and Son both dwell in us *here*. Until we get to our abode, if we are walking in His path, His words, He will dwell in us. Do not be merely contented with saying, "I am inside the door!" There is not a thought in the heart of God that is not for you. Well, we can understand how much we need to be strengthened with might by His Spirit to be able to enjoy it. He puts the two words together, "riches" and "glory," and, according to that, you are to be strengthened.

"Rooted and grounded in love." There the soul is settled; and if I look up to God I have this thought—Now I am the object of His love. The heart is brought into the consciousness of it. There is no vacillation here; the winds do not shake it, they only make it grow. That is the atmosphere it lives in, and by the love of the Father. This gives intelligence. You might not think it; but what gives real divine intelligence is being rooted and grounded in love.

The first "family" is the saints. When Christ dwells in my heart, I have His interests and thoughts as the result. What does He think of? His people. So do I. It gives us a longing desire in our hearts after His people. That is the first circle of divine affections in us. If I have Christ as the centre *in* me, everything is a part of His glory; but first come the brethren.

"The breadth, and length, and depth, and height." He

does not say what it is, but it is all God's glory. When I get to that it throws me into what dazzles me, so wide, so great, so vast is it; therefore, supposing I could see it all, it would dazzle me, so He brings us back to what is known—the *love of Christ*. There, in the middle of the glory, I find myself at home. I find I am the nearest friend to the centre of it all. Yet it is not a small thing this to which I get back, and which I am at home with—"it passes knowledge." In this very Person the fulness of the Godhead is, and therefore we are filled into all the fulness of God. The wideness of the glory is nothing like the God that is in the midst of it. The first thing is Christ dwelling in my heart by faith, and He being there I can then find all the saints in my heart as the immediate objects of His love. Then I find myself in the midst of all the divine glory, but I am at home in it, because Christ is there.

Mark the wonderful way in which He connects *us* with His glory. His thoughts first, and then He brings our thoughts into unison with His. We constantly use this verse with regard to prayer. It is all true. But that is not what He looks at here—it is the power *in* us, not *for* us. I am looking to God, who is able to do above all we ask or think. I may say I am not up to comprehend all this breadth, and length, and depth, and height. Yes; but this power works in *us*. The measure of strength is the measure of the glory. Supposing this power worked in us in this wonderful way, His glory would be manifested in us. We cannot bring out God's glory in the church unless we are strengthened in God's thought about us. There is no veil upon them at all, His glory shines into our hearts. Then comes the question, How far we realise this? The Apostle does not ask for knowledge here, but for strength, that the centre of all this may dwell in our hearts. It is that love of Christ that makes it all simple to us—it is the positive realisation of this blessedness. Do we realise how much God makes us the object of His thoughts? How His heart is set on us? If we thought more of it our hearts would be more set on Him, and looking to Him in everything we do. It would flow out naturally, it would not be an effort. If we were full of Christ, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth would speak.

The Lord give us to count on His love, which is perfect and infinite, and proved in the gift of His Son.

NOTES OF READINGS.

II CORINTHIANS I.

THE First Epistle to the Corinthians gives us gifts from an ascended Lord. The Second Epistle brings down the life of 1 Corinthians xv. into the path of a suffering Christ. 1 Corinthians follows the Lord up, enriching the Church. 2 Corinthians associates the Church with Christ going down to poverty. Chap. i. 3. at once presents God in suited relationships, as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." The deeper you go into the suffering the more you get the consolation. I am responsible to obey: my Father is responsible for the consequences of my obedience.

Verses 6, 7, seek to win the Corinthians for these associations of suffering and comfort—getting hold of the God of all comfort; v. 7 shows there is nothing merely apostolic in it; vv. 8, 9, they go deeper in obedience, even to death; and when all was apparently over with them, they only learn God in a still deeper character, as the God who raises the dead. There was no thought with Paul of getting out of the suffering, but rather of filling up "that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." (Col. i. 24.) "We were pressed out of measure"—into God which raiseth the dead. All this calls out prayer, thanksgiving, and sympathy. 2 Corinthians gives us the wonderful opportunity of connecting the sufferings and glories, before we go to glory, as we see them connected in Christ. The lesson learnt is that we should not trust in ourselves; and God accepts the vessel as "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort," and fills it with consolation. It is how God is found out by a saint, the companion of Christ, in tribulation.

1 Corinthians xv. is life victorious going out of the scene; 2 Corinthians is life victorious coming into it. It is the history of a life, possessed in Christ by the Holy Ghost, which in working itself out, makes everything tributary to itself. Afflictions work out glory—nothing ruffles. Even Satan is put under tribute with a thorn (ch. xii.) to keep this self quiet; to bring Paul to weakness. This is his fortune made, for "Christ was crucified through weakness," and with this the epistle closes.

It is the *pathway* to weakness, and the tributaries become

ground of glorying (ch. xii. 9). Everything is made tributary to the power of life. There is no *will* in the epistle; if will comes in, clearly God must break it.

Hence the important place the *ministry* has, that produces this state of life and power, in circumstances of death and weakness. God is presented at the beginning, with mercies and comfort; Christ at the close with sympathies for those associated with Him (Paul, etc.), the sympathies of the Christ with whom they were suffering. It is *His* sufferings that are in question—strange and incomplete, if we had not His sympathies, as at the close. At last Paul and Christ are together. This is how Christ reached weakness—"crucified" (ch. xiii. 4). Weakness of this kind is what we want. It is really weakness, because of the power of life.

Verse 12 is a great moral verse. You find them everywhere. We have had prayer and thanksgiving, now conscience comes in with the moral state, "simplicity and sincerity;" and their antagonistic things, "fleshly wisdom," and trusting in ourselves. Simplicity has a great place, a thing which is very rare. Are we cultivating these things, the materials for a walk according to God in such a world?

Conscience comes first, "the testimony of our conscience," though not the highest thing. If I walk in the Spirit conscience has nothing to say to me; if not, conscience catches me up, and I go down into conflict. It is well for conscience to have something to approve. I am not adequate as a source, to have my conversation in the world, except by the "grace of God." Grace is the spring of such a walk, producing it in reference to "the day of the Lord Jesus," the time of manifestation. The grace of God, the day of the Lord, everything is put beyond one's own measure. The first circle is a world to suffer in with Christ; the second, a walk to be maintained before man. Will it stand in the day of the Lord? A man or woman walking in the presence of God is at ease—simple—puts on nothing, but watches against lightness or lack of restraint. (J. G. B. said of Lady P., that she always made him feel that there was somebody more consciously present to her, than *he* was, when with her.)

V. 19—"For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you." When it comes to testimony it is the full glory of the person of the Son—not a suffering Christ.

V. 20—What He was to God as to the promises—the "*Yea and the Amen*," Then as to ourselves—"He which stablishes

us." It is a great relief to be taken out of the suffering into the status that satisfies God. Here you come to life in its proper state of enjoyment.

V. 24—"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand." The apostle steps aside to let faith have its link with God. Dominion coming into the Church destroys this.

ON GATHERING YOUNG CONVERTS IN THESE LAST DAYS.

I HAVE had much on my mind, the question of those converted coming out confessedly in the unity of the body; and truth naturally comes in. The two services in these days are distinct, though they meet in one point.

At the beginning, power was at the centre, and gathered into a *known* and sole *centre* or *unity*. If a person refused to come into it, he was still outside, and not owned as a Christian at all. Now, in Christendom, the unity of the body, and divine life and holiness being owned, the gathering into this is of persons already externally Christians—perhaps really—and who leave the present recognised, though false centres, and go "outside the camp."

In the meanwhile, a mass of persons, who are called Christians, *have not life at all—are not saved*, and they are evangelized to save their souls, pretty much without any reference to gathering at all. The question is, putting these things together.

We began by (being already Christians) meeting, leaving the camp, and then set about evangelizing with activity, and with pretty wide-spread blessing, which has extended over a pretty large part of the Continent. Since then considerable activity has existed in seeking souls, as in ———, and elsewhere, a good deal independently of our position in these last days, and the character of the Gospel had not much connection with it. Hence the work of gathering had to be superadded. Without saying there were none converted (at our first coming out and preaching) which did not come out, for I have known such; still, it generally took that character. We had reading meetings of all sorts of Christians, but one after another they came out, and others seeing it, were afraid to come, and they for some years dropped off. Since then they have been found

in various places. But where there was no mention of Church questions or principles, the kind of full Gospel I refer to made people come out. They could not stand the services they heard elsewhere, and the Gospel itself laid the basis. Besides, many got hold of these truths who did not come out. But this preaching of redemption and unity made a difficulty sometimes for those who felt deeply we were in the last days, at the kind of Gospel which knew nothing beyond a soul getting safe, and with little depth of action on the conscience, so as to make them look out for the right path; and this was often the case.

It was getting safe—an immense thing, I grant—the essential thing; and for my own part, I have never preached separation, or what are called “Brethren’s” principles, but sought to bring needed truth to the soul where it was. If any person hated sectarianism it was myself; but I have a deep feeling of a Christian’s being not of the world as Christ was not of this world, and that we are in “the last days.” For this very reason God allows all manner of activity for conversion, and I thank Him for it.

What I look for, dear brother, for myself is, that those who are separated and gathered show a life and detachment from the world, which is itself a testimony, otherwise the Gospel with them, will sink into the common stream; others will gather the fruits perhaps. It is a *choice of views*, not *separation to God*.

Next, that the Gospel act freely on consciences, and being “bought with a price,” and thereby being so utterly outside the camp oneself, that it may tell on those preached to. Then I believe our path is to bring to each soul the truth that soul needs, leaving the result to God.

Amongst the gathered ones, and in intercourse as God furnishes occasion, the truth of the Church and its manifestation on earth will come out, and the presence of the Holy Ghost, unbelief in which is the great cause of the state of the professing Church.

Not to gain numbers, but to profit souls, according to Christ’s own heart for them—this is the great point; and so God will gather, and gather the consciences and faith of souls, and these by grace firmly. If opposition is violent, Paul’s path at Ephesus may help to guide.

THE FATHER'S HEART—THE FATHER'S HOUSE.

LUKE XV.

ONE finds that there are many sincere souls who are not in the second condition of the prodigal—that is, when he had been kissed, and robed, and was in the house with the Father—they have not real peace with God. They are still lingering on the way; and if they know salvation is a real thing thus given, they are not living in the enjoyment of it. As to their state of mind they have not eaten of the fatted calf, nor have they got on the best robe; they are not living with the Father on the ground of what the Father has shown Himself to be.

It is striking the moment the Father comes, except the confession of the son, you hear of nothing about him—all is about the Father. From the time of his confession the whole scene is concerning the Father's mind, and the Father's will—what His heart is, and what His house can afford; and that is the true Christian state, and what the heart has to be brought to enjoy. I take up that special view now. *Many are sincere, yet are not on that ground, and the Lord shows us that this is so; we should ever cry "Abba Father," as having a conscious place with Him.*

There are two very distinct *states* in the prodigal; in the second he learns the expression of the *Father's* thoughts, and not of his own; and there he rests. You do not find judgment here, it is all grace. Judgment is a real true thing, and the Lord will lay hold of the conscience by it; but it is not the subject here, salutary as it is. Neither is it the side on which you find the blood presented to God, all true and important. It is that of the soul justifying God, and then the way it enters into the enjoyment of His grace. We never should lose sight of the other; but the side of the gospel here presented is not the judgment of God which is outstanding, and then God meeting it with propitiation through faith in His blood.

And we must not confound this with the government of God. He may be angry even with His own child. It is different from the manifestation of His nature, so that there is no possibility of allowing sin in His presence. In the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed, and the wrath of God is revealed, and that from heaven; not merely judgment and punishment; not merely dealing with man but, God

being perfectly revealed, and so you cannot have a single sin. Wrath is revealed against "all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men." In the holiness of His nature He rejects the sin, and in the righteousness of His nature He judges it. Hence, when we speak of Christian state we walk in the light, as He is in the light. It is not now certain conduct that has to be measured and dealt with. God has no measure of sin. He is a holy being, and there is positive rejection of all sin in His nature. Even in Paradise it is not now merely innocence; *it* came out previously; but man left that state, and then judgment comes on him, and he is to return to dust. It is dreadful enough to see that He chastens His own; but to find that people are shut out from the presence of the Lord for ever, from God's favour, is terrible! Here it is the grace which goes out to seek, and how the soul is brought back to enjoy the grace.

We have the whole Trinity in this chapter; the good Shepherd looks after the sheep; the Spirit seeks for a soul, and Grace receives it when it comes back; the activity of God in Christ, and then the Spirit; and, lastly, the way the soul is received by the Father. In the first two you do not get the whole truth; you do in the last. The Shepherd seeks His sheep; the sheep never lays its foot to the ground, it is wandering farther and farther away; the Lord comes and brings it home. The woman cares for the silver piece, seeks diligently, and when she finds it she rejoices over it—the simple power of grace bringing back what is lost.

Then, another thing—thank God, it is not new—a living principle all through, what runs through it all, that it is not *our* joy to get saved, but *God's* joy to save! The Pharisees and publicans murmured. It is a righteous principle, and some may have it in their hearts still, that people must be righteous for God. The Pharisee thinks he has righteousness for God. God says you are a whited sepulchre, full of uncleanness. The elder brother is the Pharisee in all ages, perfect selfishness, no entering into the Father's feelings; the most hateful thing that exists, no sense of sin, else he would know that he was a sinner; no sense of holiness, or of love; there is nothing more foreign to the mind of God than his state; it is thorough selfishness. "Thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends." When he says, "Child, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine," He refers to the Jews: the law, the

prophets, Christ Himself, the worship of God, the Word of God, all He had was theirs. The use they made of it was another thing; they had enough to take pride out of it, so as not to enter into the Father's heart, made known to the servants. "Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound." That ought to have touched his heart. He should have said, "If my father is happy it must be right;" but he objects to everything. The Father went out even to this Pharisee; nothing could win the self-righteous man; his heart is unwinnable by God! He had no sense of righteousness or holiness, or he would know perfectly well that if all that was in his heart was brought out, he would be ashamed of himself, and go and hide. The Pharisee has not thought of that; he is as hypocritical, as if God could not see its inside as well as its outside. But if man's righteousness was the way to God, why should He have given His Son?

The Lord here takes up the way in which the soul returns to God, and He chooses the case of one who had gone to excess of riot—eating husks with the swine. Many have not done that, but He takes this case to show that grace reaches it there, and that is God's delight—the joy of God, to bring him back and receive him. Remark this—the moment the soul has got hold of what God is, the grace of God has found entrance into the heart. It is not feeding on husks which is the worst thing; nor is there any real difference in people; some are upright and honest, others are sunk in debauchery; but as regards the heart there is not one bit of difference.

Suppose I was brought up among thieves and drunkards, I would be a thief and a drunkard. It is a great mercy to be separate; that is connected with circumstances. Here, in the first act of the young man, the whole thing was done. To turn his back on his father was doing his own will. Scripture says, there is "no difference" before God; there is in wickedness and vice, of course; but all have sought their own pleasure, and their own way. When he crossed the threshold he was in will as much a sinner as when with the swine. There are differences among men. Quite true. And man sows what he reaps. As regards his soul, the young man was as much a sinner then, as when eating the husks; but what is more, he was nearer the turn when there. The Lord says, "Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of

heaven before you." It is the principle of all men, everywhere, to say, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." We like our own will; we like to be free from God to do our own will. It is perfectly immaterial what it is; that is our history as men; we have "every one turned to his own way," and that brings these wretched fruits.

That is what you are, beloved friends. Some have come back; but looked at as children of Adam, you have your back upon God, and your face on your own flesh. You are neglecting God.

The Lord takes the case of one who has gone to excess. The point was, leaving his father's house, and his getting back there. The young man may not have been a thief, or the like, but he is always doing wrong, till he comes back, and never will be right until he comes back there. "If thou wilt return, saith the Lord, return unto me." (Jer. iv. 1.) How can I return in my sins? The only way is through Christ, of course. I can quite understand that question, both the effect and the way it works.

Now as to his return: "There arose a mighty famine in that land." Another thought as to the heart is, it never returns to God till there is a famine in the world. As long as people are in health, very rich and gay, they ruin themselves. When that is gone—when the natural pleasure is gone, what then has the heart? It has spent itself, and is going to die! "Thou fool!" that is all the Lord has to say to that! (Luke xii. 20). He had got to Satan's world, and the heart finds nothing there to satisfy it. You see those that can spend their substance; and there is a certain gaiety of nature which seems like happiness; but leave such only for a day, and you will find how their heart has its canker at the core. "There arose a mighty famine in that land, . . . and no man gave unto him." There is no *giving* in the devil's land; people find a famine there. Why are there so many concerts and crystal palaces? Because of the famine. They try to keep up their heart, to do without God; but it is all in vain; they cannot! They may get on merrily, but all these "artificers in brass and iron" are but efforts to make a city without God, and sufficiently pleasant to forget Him!

When the famine was there, he began to be in want. That never turns the heart to God. "And he joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his

fields to feed swine." Drinking and pleasure and excitement did not satisfy; "and no man gave unto him." When the heart is away from God, this want never turns it to Him; it turns to what satisfies the flesh. "He would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him;" a description of where he had got to, the sense of famine not bringing him to God at all.

"When he came to himself," there is a total change. He was like a mad man before; identified with the place where the famine was. The goodness of God comes to his heart, he says "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare?" not "I shall get it," or I would like to have it; or "How should I be received?" But the sense of goodness; and a want of another kind arising in his soul!—a sense of the blessedness of God! When the Holy Ghost works, there is always a want. 'I want more holiness,' 'more grace,' 'I want God.' He sees blessedness with God, and would give anything to be back with Him. 'The servants had bread to spare,' 'there is goodness with God.' Wherever there is a revelation of self, and man is conscious of his real state, there is always a sense of the goodness of God. He is in the frame of mind you find at times in souls—"Well, if I perish, I perish at the cross." It attracts him. Conscience is awakened; the heart is attracted; that is everything. He turned his back on his father, left God behind him; now his face is turned towards Him, and his heart too, and that is an immense thing! He has not peace yet; but it is an immense thing when God and the soul meet—when want of holiness, and want of love is created, and there is a revelation that has attracted the soul to God. All right in principle; but righteousness must be met, and that which characterizes him when he came to himself, that he thinks there is goodness, and abundance, and plenty there. He did not know that he would be let in, but there *was* the goodness there to be let in to! And then 'I am perishing,' 'I have got away from God, and I am perishing,' 'a man living without God.' Orthodox as the Pharisees were, they had not God. Nicodemus says, 'You must be a teacher come from God,' but the Lord says, 'You have not the principle which connects you with God; I cannot teach flesh; you must be born again.' God and the soul have met, the quickening power of God gives consciousness that he is perishing, and there is a distinct result, "I will

arise and go to my father," not "I will get better," "change my ways." He must change his ways; but that is not what is in his heart. "I will arise and go to my father." It is *want of God* that characterizes him. The sense of love, a total difference with the desire to mend myself; that is the work of the Spirit of God. The heart then says, "I will go," and then "I have sinned against heaven." Is that all the title you have to it? It is often a long while till our hearts say that; a long while before we give up and say, "I have no title;" and if so, How can I be there?

That was what the Lord was doing with the Syrophenician. She is of an accursed race; she came out of the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, of which the Lord said, they were so bad that, if the things done in Sodom and Gomorrah were done in them, they would not repent. He takes them as an example of hardness of heart and distance from God. She cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David," &c. He answered her that it was "not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs." He throws her back when she sought Him, with "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." "Truth Lord (she replied), yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." I have no title; I am a cur, a wretched dog; but the dogs eat of the crumbs from their master's table. There is goodness enough in God for those who have no title. Then Jesus answered, "Go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter."

It may be a long process before the soul comes to that point of full blessing. Without a holy nature we cannot enjoy Him; but you cannot make righteousness out of it; or your ground of acceptance out of it. The prodigal has nothing to say to the blessing till everything is spent. The pride of the human heart finds it very difficult to get there. Some things are fit for God, it says. Are you fit for God? I ask. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." There is something in you that is all wrong, totally wrong from beginning to end; you must come down; you have no title to anything whatever, and all depends on simple grace to those that are entitled to nothing but wrath.

Another thing, we have seen his heart brought to turn to God. His eyes were opened, and God had met him; he had not yet met God. He acknowledged his sins; all quite right; the consequence is he begins to reason how

he will be with God—how he will be when he meets Him. “Make me as one of thy hired servants.” What does that prove? That he had never met God at all. Lowliness, confession, is all right; but making terms shows he had not given up all hope in self, but thought he might have some small place, some little corner in heaven.

Can you pretend to be fit for His presence with all these rags?—every proof of having been in the far country? With his heart drawn to God, he confessed he was unworthy, yet still hoped. All proved he had not got to his father. The father had met him and touched his heart in grace, but he had not, in conscience, come to God at all! That is what I press. Here was a work of God, a sense of sin, of perishing, of bread in his father's house; but this thought, because he had not met God, was all wrong. He had no terms to make; it was reasoning how it would turn out when he came. Numbers of souls are sincere; they have seen the goodness of God, and yet only hope in a general way; they have not met God to find out what God's thoughts are. They are reasoning from *their* condition, partly fearing, partly hoping for a poor servant's place. All proves they have not met God, though God has met them. He had met that young man. All perfectly true; but he does not judge from what God was and had been. He had not given up so as to know what God was, when we were nothing but sin. He arose and came to his father.

Now, in a certain sense he disappears when the father comes in sight, and the whole blessing comes from, and is the result of, what the *father is* to this poor creature. All right his returning; but what is the effect of it? To bring him to his father in a condition totally unfit to go into the house. It would be a disgrace to have him in the house with those filthy rags—a perpetual dishonour. Then the elder brother might reproach and say, ‘Look at this wretch; is he fit to be in the house with you?’ The effect of all that is going on in our hearts is to bring us into God's presence *in our sins*! Did we not come in rags and nakedness the whole journey, just as he comes out of the far country? Until we submit to that, we never get peace. We are saying, “Make me a hired servant.” It is not self-righteousness, but reasoning from *our* thought as to what God will be. That is giving God the character of Judge. If He is our Judge, it is everlasting destruction to us.

Are there not hearts who may read this, right in purpose, thinking of their state and condition, and how it will turn out when they meet God? Why not confess you have not met Him yet? You have never known Him. Why not put yourself just in the state the Lord is insisting on? "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him." Now he comes to be kissed in his rags. He deals in absolute grace with him just as he was. The effect of this kind of experience is to bring me to Him in my rags, and to find Him loving me in my rags, in a condition unfit to be in the house.

But He did not bring him in in his rags, but "fell on his neck." The Father acted from His feelings, and the effect of the wretchedness of the son was to draw out the Father's love! That is what I learn in Christ. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The very essence of Christianity is that we have *not* to meet God as a Judge; and because we *could not*, He has come to meet us in grace. Sovereign grace has dealt with sinners, to show that God in love is greater than their sins! Simple but blessed, the footing we are on with God is not what we are for God, but what God is for us. He "commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." He does not look for righteousness; He will have the fruits of it afterwards; but the grace of God brings salvation. The very essence of Christianity (by which we too have to act in grace) is, not what God *finds*, but what God *brings*.

He is brought to confess what he is, but with the Father on his neck; and he does not then say, 'Make me a servant.' Why? Because he had met *his Father*, and He had acted as a Father. He could not say, when He was kissing him, 'Make me a servant;' it would be slighting grace! Ah! he had met his Father, and knew his position. How? By being with Him, and finding what his Father was for him.

Now, are you content, Reader, that your acceptance should depend on what God has done for you? Are you content to give up all title to His grace? If there is pride, and Adam still working, you will say, 'Must I not have this or that?' Try your hand at it, and see what it will come to. The Lord wants you to learn, that you will never think of saying, "Make me a servant." You will then have learned the Father's heart, and your relationship a son's place, because

you have found it in the Father's house. Thus, grace has gone out, and righteousness has gone in! "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." That which the father has to put on him is out of His own treasure—He had got his share, he had nothing of his own—it was that which was put on him when he came back, that when he went into the house he might be a witness of his Father's thought about him; that it is the father's joy to have him there in honour. We are made the righteousness of God in Him. There is where He brings us to; His own presence in the fulness of His own grace; and He puts the best robe on us, so that all may say, 'There is a son the father delights in.' There is nothing now about the son feeding on the fatted calf, but the father and servants. No doubt he did so; but this is the way He receives a person; it is His own delight to have him, and the greatest delight of God is Christ; and He puts that upon him. We thus have righteousness, and glory too, in due time.

Thus there is a total difference between God meeting the soul and the soul meeting God—meeting it in sinfulness, all the reasoning you find, characterises that state; how it may turn out, and the like. I may get on slowly, or get on quickly, but that is experience. You never find in Scripture, 'Being justified by experience, we have peace with God;' it is "by faith." Faith in what? In what has passed in my heart? Then I may doubt about my own heart, 'Surely it is not what I ought to be.' All that does go on in the heart; but it is not the Father's dealing with the son—not a bit. Experience was there, but experience led him home in his rags to the Father's presence—the rest is all what the Father is!

Are you content to be on that ground—a mere sinner—to be put by the Father's grace into the Father's house? It is Christ, of course, who is the best robe, as my righteousness. When He shall appear we shall be like Him. Then the soul sits down and enjoys all the Father has to give. Ah! you will find it hard, there is so much selfishness in the heart, to bow, to depend on what Christ is for you. Strange to say it, but you will. If you submit to God's righteousness you will then have true holiness, but never until you have the certainty of salvation. How can a child have filial affection if he has not a father? So, if I am born of God, I have a nature capable of enjoying Him. But if I

have not the sense of relationship, I cannot have peace. We have the Spirit of adoption, if we look up to God. Is there the consciousness that you look to a Father? Not a hope, but that your affections can go out on that footing, because you know Him as a Father. You cannot have blessed, holy affections which delight in Him as a Father until consciously in the position which that position entails. I do not say that you are not on the road. When first I am saved, all my affections go out, and I say, 'What a mercy!' But when I see a Christian resting too much upon what he was as a sinner, that is not a healthy state. I believe "the Lamb slain" will never be forgotten; but if only there, and not occupied in thinking of what He is, I will not get on. A soul that is in the Father's house, Is it not to grow up to know what the Father's heart is? I was outside, and He took me in to learn it there.

I would now ask you, Are you in the best robe? In Christ is your place. Is your heart there? Conscience must be cleansed, of course; but, Is your heart living in the affections which belong to that condition, or, are you uncertain? That is not a Christian state—though you may be on the way to it. Are you content to take your whole condition and blessing from what the Father is to you?

The Lord give you to see what you are, so that you may find you have a new place in Christ, and nothing to do with the old thing. The Father brings the son to His own heart and His own house.

THE MAN OF SORROWS: THE MAN OF PATIENCE: THE MAN OF JOY.

REV. iii. 7-22.

I DESIRE to bring before you some remarks connected with the peculiar character of this Scripture. This presents itself the more strikingly to my own mind, in reading the titles of our Lord in verse 7. In it is seen how marvellously the divine glory and the servant character of Christ is maintained throughout. Nowhere is it more strikingly brought out than in the power of the expression, "He that is holy," as belonging *exclusively* to one alone. The consciousness the Lord had in Himself of His divine glory in all His course down here—"The holy, harmless, and undefiled,"—enabled Him to take this title. Only as *divine* could He introduce

Himself as the "Holy and the true." He the centre of all the glory of God. Not kept inside the heavenly glory; but planted at a distance, and outside of heaven as *our* Redeemer: made the sun and centre of redemption glory, and whether in the Church, on the cross, or in the grave, divine glory shone through everything. In the grave He could not see corruption. He was always the One of whom it could be said that He was essentially the Holy One.

With reference to the next title—"He that is true," of Him only could that be said. This title brings out divine glory in a form that tested everything.

Then, in the third place, we find Him in the servant character—"He that hath the key of David." Not only having in His hand the key of David, and pledged to open the kingdom of David to Israel: not only a key to open all the glory of the world to come; but He has power to open and close all and everything. He opened John's sphere of service, and closed it when He permitted him to be sent to Patmos. He will open the kingdom to Israel; but this is more in application to Him in the servant character as the One who opens and closes *everything* according to His own purpose and will.

We see here how different is the estimate Christ's mind forms of things from that which ours forms. Looking at Philadelphia there is nothing very brilliant to the mind of man; but there was something peculiarly so to Christ's mind. He saw something very peculiar in connection with that state. You and I—if we had been there, should have bemoaned ourselves because of having but *little* strength and honour. But Christ's thoughts and God's thoughts are very unlike our thoughts: God sees not as man. "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." They had borne testimony to His name upon the earth. The works here are very different from those of the Ephesians (chapter ii. 1-7). They had labour and patience and intelligence of evil; very different in contrast with these is the "little strength," and the "not denying" Christ's name.

I cannot help thinking that there was, to His mind when He said this, a recalling of what He went through Himself whilst He was down here. He had kept the word of God, and never denied His name.

At Philadelphia it was a time of straitness, and difficulties were there. Some said they were Jews who were not so at all. But they were kept in quietness of soul. They had got a place for Christ, and did not deny His name. It was not a time for brilliant works. Many who would make a fair show in the flesh, would admire an apostle's work more than Christ's; because there was the display of power. (Christ suppressed the display of power.) Looking at *v.* 10, there is something very remarkable in this word—"because thou hast kept the word of my patience"—in connection with a time of difficulty and temptation. Christ may have locked the door (very possibly, on account of unfaithfulness), but if the door is shut, who has closed it? If only ajar, who closed it? Surely that One who has a right to challenge our hearts: that One who did all for God.

Ah, Christ is above all discipline, and His love nearer than all sorrow, when the heart is fresh, even if it lead to Patmos. Was He not near John in Patmos—and to Paul when bound as a prisoner on his way to Rome? Ah, yes; Christ was nearer to him than his chains: they only made him remark the more, Christ being there with that love. What were the soldiers and the chains when he heard Christ say "Be of good cheer, Paul" . . . for "I am with thee?" To God's eye the chains were no such wonderful things! For such a man as Paul, what were they? Paul had been the slave of Satan; bound in Satan's chains; he was the Lord's freeman now; and he must have a *little log* put to keep him steady. As if the Lord had said—"You have not known how to carry the cup with a steady hand, and I must come in, in discipline, and give a check to you, but that only shows out my love more brilliantly!"

Remark the difference between the babe and the young man in Christ. In the babe *there* is the flow of affection; in the young man the walk of self-judgment and subjectiveness, which you will not find in the babe—the young believer. But it is that subjection that is needed; we *must* learn to obey! The flow of affection is sweet, but it does not come up to the steadiness of—"Lo! I come to do thy will." Whether a happy path or not, it was ever obedience walking only in the path traced out by God, without a waver or turn.

What are all the mistakes of the church—all put together, if they but give occasion for the bringing out the sweetness

of Christ's love and the declaring of those names—"Holy and true?" "He that openeth, and no man shutteth; He that shutteth, and no man openeth"—giving them too in connection with the word of His patience—"Behold I come quickly."

Referring to *v.* 12; what a blessed thought it is, as one difficulty presses upon another—making us feed upon the word of God more diligently, that it may be treasured up in our hearts; what a thing it is, that God should make known to us of that city! Here, where everything is driving its sharp edge upon us, and if you have any good thing at all, it is by faith; that in the midst of all that tries our hearts, we can speak of this good Word of God and of Christ. I am in trying circumstances; but that is nothing. I am pressed down with trouble, but there is the City of God; and its name is—"He will provide peace!" This is its blessed name, and marks the fact that there will be no warfare there. I shall have to recount all His love when I get there, but I have it as a place in His presence *now*; He tells me it is the place where His eye has been looking ever since the day of Abraham. Will there be anything to bear there? Any of the sorrow which comes when the door is almost shut by reason of failure? No, *none*! How sweet that "new name" is to one's heart, in connection with Christ—"I will write upon him *my* new name." The name of that Christ who is now the Man of *patience*; once the Man of *sorrows*, and hereafter to be the Man of *joy*.

We get three very different displays of Christ. In Christ down here, a babe in a manger—despised, rejected, and acquainted with grief, you see the Man of *sorrows*. Yet, nowhere do I find such divine glory as at *His* cross. But when I think of what I have been taken out of by Him, through that cross, and where I have been brought by Him, the next thought comes—"Where is the Christ, whose death has done all this, *now*?" and the answer is, 'He is at the right hand of God; where—as the Man of *patience*, He has been quietly waiting for two thousand years, for the glory and the people—*His* glory and *His* people, as the meed of such service as His!'

If you and I have served, we are ready for our reward. But this Blessed One has been going on for nigh two thousand years of patience—not claiming it. But what has He been doing? Why, turning to us and saying 'I am

occupied with you in the glory (not the glory I have won)—I have an entrance into all your sorrows: Turn your eyes upward; open your hearts to Me; let Me see everything. As a shepherd, I am occupied with each sheep, binding up each wound; making right each rent in the fleece.’ He is now the Man of Patience, but soon to be the Man of Joy—“Anointed with the oil of joy and gladness above (His) fellows.” Most blessed to think of seeing the One who was emphatically the Man of Sorrows, anointed with the oil of joy! But it is well often to think of Him as the Man of Sorrows in connection with what we are passing through down here. Heap up—fill up all your sorrows till they reach so high that you can heap up no more; then turn and see Him whose heart broke in woe! Oh, talk of your sorrows if you can in the presence of His! Talk of all you have had of sorrow by the way, that has worn you down, and what will you say in the presence of One who says to you—“Was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow?” And He—the Man of Sorrows, is now at the right hand of God, sitting there as the Man of Patience for nigh two thousand years, and saying to each, ‘You and I have to do together—one with the other. Rob me not of my service, of my glory. Let me be occupied with you; let me serve you this little while.’ He will soon be the Man of Joy, as He was the Man of Sorrows and of Patience.

Is the thought of Christ’s joy sweet to your hearts? The new name, that in which He will be anointed with the oil of joy? Do you love to think there will be no face so beautiful, no face so bright as Christ’s? No heart so happy and so perfect in its joy, as the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ? All the glory then will be but the setting of that gem, and that new name of Christ will be upon you! Surely that ought to give you a little patience now, as you pass along the wilderness! Are your loins weary? Are you tired by the roughness of the way? Is all around tending to distract you? Christ says, “Be of good cheer.” ‘What are all those troubles? What are all your sorrows in the presence of my cross? Nothing! Your patience. What is it compared with mine, waiting for the glory, and stooping down to interest myself with all that interests you?’

Only “a little while” and you will soon be with Me, and I will write on you My new name—My name of joy. Christ’s heart is not fed with the externals of glory, but

it is fed with the joy of serving God. When *all* the children God has given Him are brought home, and the new name written on them, that will be Christ's joy.

Do you want comfort? I am sure you do; you want something to give you a little bit of courage; something to set you on the other side of the street? (The world has one side, and we ought to have the other.) Well, nothing can do it as much as the thought of His coming. There will then be joy enough in the morning, though there be sorrow now in the night. There will be fulness of joy in that morning when we see Him as He is, in fulness of joy for *evermore*.

I cannot see Him as the Man of Joy without the servant character coming out. He is the Seed of the woman (as God, all glory is His), but there is something else which nothing can fill save having the answer to the perfect *affections* of a perfect human heart! "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." This divine glory and the perfect servant character, are maintained unto the end.

NOTES OF READING.

2 CORINTHIANS ii. When we come to what is human in Paul (ver. 4), it is refreshing to see the character of it. It has such a colour and freshness from what is divine. It is love that would not put up with a spot. Whatever it was that produced heaviness in *v. 1*, there was a deeper sorrow in his heart here. Love that is in heaviness and exercise about the cause of the sorrow, is able to guide to the grace that leads to restoration. In chap. i. we find the heart following the perfect One in the path of suffering. In chap. ii. it is going out after the erring one in love and sorrow.

Ver. 10. "To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also," &c. Love that acted individually in previous verses delights in fellowship here. Ver. 2. How serious a false step! Satan is in close proximity to seize an advantage. All this, in chap ii., is but the flowing out of that stream of grace that we saw in chap. i. The Corinthians had been reluctant to put away. Now there was the fresh danger lest they should be slow to restore.

Ver. 14. The only man God can lead about in triumph is the man that keeps the sentence of death upon himself, lest Satan should triumph. The whole epistle gives us Paul led about in circumstances of humiliation, in weakness, and apparent defeat, to swell the triumph of Christ. The

servant-witness is nowhere—Christ is everything; everything sacrificed for Him. What brightens up the scene is a man upon earth, if there be but one in whom God can delight—be it a Moses, or Elijah, or major or minor prophet. Chap. i. is the pathway to the car of triumph of chap. ii. 14. It is the only path of such a triumphal progress for Christ.

Ver. 15. "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ"—that is, where one passes away from the mere revival element. God may use it, but no one could think it a sweet savour to God. Properly the gospel leaves nothing but these two extremes—saved or perishing. Christendom has brought in the intermediate. It is very important, as to the gospel, to think that the preaching of Christ should be unto death, but in any case a sweet savour of Christ unto God.

Ver. 17. The moral sense again. The word for "corrupt" brings in the thought of hire. Filthy lucre was already doing its work. The moment the flesh has reference to a man preaching, it can only get what man can give. It is very sad the influence it has. If we see the flesh in a servant of God unjudged, we should go on our knees, and not open a path to please him. "In the person of Christ" (v. 10), everything that is not brought to the point of the person gives Satan an advantage. He says you play into my hand, and have lost an opportunity for Christ. Either Christ or Satan gets the advantage. I go to the grace of God as the source of what is good. Approval is a most dangerous thing. In love we should be very slow to express it. So Paul goes right away in this epistle to "not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." Gift in the Church is a wonderful pedestal, if a man makes it so—a new opportunity for a fall. The rule of my action is, I do this "in the sight of God." God can take up such a man and use him for the glory of Christ.

Paul hides his authority here, acting in the name of Christ, because of moral correspondence of heart. There is the meekness and gentleness of Christ, yet the love that would not bear a spot. He wins them by what there was in Christ—His personal grace. Thus we have the exercises and activities of grace, when external and apostolic power and authority are gone. It is a wonderful inlet to Paul's heart and feelings. It is humbling to think of what one does not judge, what one covers up. It is never any good to cover up.

THE FAREWELL AND THE FINAL WORDS OF JESUS.

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

“And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up ; and a cloud received him out of their sight.” (Acts i. 7-9.)

“But rise, and stand upon thy feet : for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee ; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in me.” (Acts xxvi. 16-18.)

We have in these two sentences words of the deepest possible significance ; inasmuch as in the first, we have the farewell words of the Lord Jesus, pronounced in the hearing of His disciples, when for the last time His feet trod the earth after His resurrection, at the moment of His ascension, when He was passing away from the earth into His glory. The second passage recites His final words from heaven, uttered in the astonished ear of the persecutor Saul, when on his mission of destruction from Jerusalem to Damascus. His *farewell words on earth*, and His *final words from heaven*, are thus before us. His lips will speak no more thus until the day when He will not only speak from heaven, but appear Himself with power and great glory, to render unto every man according to his works.

We will look back a little to what is recorded of His sojourn on earth, before these *farewell* words were spoken ; for the most stupendous act that even the glory of God will display had then taken place. I refer to the Cross, and the work which Jesus accomplished there.

His presence on earth had put sinners into a place of deeper responsibility than ever they had been. Not that we are more guilty in nature ; but a fresh test had been presented to our hearts and consciences by the presence of God, in grace and lowliness on earth. And we must not do what our souls naturally would ; that is, put ourselves in a different position of responsibility than those with whom the Lord spoke, and amongst whom He walked

when here. We are apt to do this; to say, in our hearts at least, 'O, it was a parcel of poor Jews who rejected Him.' Nay, reader, it was you; it was I, who did so. Surely we cannot say that we are a different race from them. We are not of a different order of mankind than they. The poor Jews thought that they—because they had Abraham to their father—could boast and lord it over a poor Gentile, who was not the object of God's special dealings. He could do this, and yet he rejected the Son of God! How much more guilty was he then than those who were not so highly favoured? Far, far more! He should have known better, and yet he did what they did not; at least, many of them. So, in the present day of enlightenment, we find the same tendency to form a right judgment as to the conduct of others, and yet do the same thing ourselves. We would naturally reply to the question—'Should the Jews have received their Christ?'—and say, 'Most surely.' Then I would ask my reader, if still unsaved, a like question—'Should not you receive Him? You, who know that He has been here, and died, and rose, and wrought out the work of redemption on the Cross. Has He not accomplished all He came to do? Has He told you that His work is available for all? Then, I ask, what effect has it had upon you? Are you saved through it?' You reply, 'I hope so.' That is, you are still an unbeliever, if you would honestly avow it. You are still a rejector of Jesus. (I speak not of those who long to believe in Him; *they* do so already, did they but know it.) Every day and hour of unbelief in Him and His work in which you live, you live on as a rejector of Christ! 'Now,' I ask, 'are you not worse than the poor heathen who never heard of Him?' He has not believed; but he has not heard of Jesus. You have heard of Him—read of Him—called yourself by His name—a Christian—joined in the nominal worship of His name; yet you have still rejected Him—for if you had not done so, you would have known Him as your Saviour, and therefore would be a saved one! How solemn, then, to live on in unbelief—as a rejector of Jesus!

This, then, was the solemn state in which men were left when the Son of God came into this world. All then was changed. You might have broken through all that conscience dictated as right, and have thus been a sinner without

law; or you may have broken the law of God, and thus be a transgressor under it. You may have heard of the warnings of judgment (as the people did from John the Baptist), and your soul, if it trembled for a moment about a judgment to come, has passed on carelessly when you have forgotten it. But then, What think you of Christ? Have you not heard of God's best gift—of Jesus' agony—His bloody sweat—the cup of wrath—the cross of shame—the great cry—the death of Jesus—His precious blood-shedding—His cry, "It is finished"—His burial—His resurrection—His ascension? And you see nothing in Him to attract your heart—to win your affections—to cleanse your conscience; you are unmoved. Then, are you not a rejector of all this love and grace? Your heart is still possessed by the enemy. You are a blind sinner—blinded by the "god of this world," who "hath blinded the minds of those that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 4).

Now, when the Lord was here, in sending forth His disciples to preach (Matt. x), He said to them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This was a narrow mission, confined to a very small nation. How strange for a heart yearning over lost sinners in a world like this, to confine His grace and power to a little nation. And still more, they were to enquire, in the sphere of their labours, for those who were "worthy." To such was the message to come. Now this is not the Lord's dealing at present; were it so, we might well say, "Who then can be saved?" No: He was then exposing what was latent in men's hearts, and by the contrast, if no more, showing what was in the heart of God.

But all was rejected. Even Israel's "lost sheep" would not hear the Shepherd's voice. They saw no beauty in Jesus that they should desire Him. And they cast Him out, and crucified Him, "with wicked hands." They never saw Him more! Israel knew not the day of her visitation. How solemn those days of visitation! They come at times to every soul. God's voice is heard by the conscience, and the prickings of that inward voice responds to His, and owns that He has claims on the soul, earnest claims. That grace is offered and refused, and the day of visitation may thus pass for ever.

And He died and was buried, and the third day He rose again, and forty days (Acts i. 3) He was with His disciples after that; and then the day came when "He led them out as far as to Bethany," and to the "Mount called Olivet" (Acts i. 12), and conversed with them, having "opened their understandings;" and as His tread grew lighter and lighter, till He reached the summit of Olivet, He turns to them now for the last time, pronouncing those remarkable words—His farewell words to them. He turns round, as it were, while on the confines of the earth, and on the verge of heaven, and with a heart that had now learned by experience all the malice of man's heart, but was still unchanged (Who or what could change His!) and reverses the narrow mission of Matt. x.; for now God's heart was free to bless the vilest—to bless all. Just as in human things, a new enactment of man's laws—at times reverses, or repeals an old Act—so do His farewell words.

How blessed! Just picture Him, with the eye of the soul, as His last footfalls touched the world that had cast Him out, and the mighty floodgates of God's love had now been set free in righteousness through the blood of the cross, to overleap—nay, to flow freely, without a single check, from His inmost heart, down to the deepest abyss of sin and degradation in which sinners were. Just as He was about to "lift up his hands" and bless His disciples who were to be His witnesses, He pronounced those memorable words, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"!

Now there are three great concentric circles taken in by this sentence. Judæa was the spot, at the capital of which His blood had flowed. The guilt of His blood lay, as a crushing curse, on the heads of His murderers. There He begins, at the innermost circle, the centre of all. Men supposed that they were orthodox in their faith at Jerusalem. They had the Scriptures—the worship of God—the Fathers—and were the people whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ had come. Like the present day, they had what the enlightened parts of Christendom have; there too men can boast of their orthodoxy—as perhaps my reader does—and all the while their "faith" be dead. Jerusalem with its self-righteousness was the place of dead faith.

Then came Samaria. The Samaritans claimed to have

"our father Jacob," as the woman of Samaria said to the Lord at the well of Sychar. They were a mongrel race, half heathen, half Jews, who had mixed up the worship of Jehovah with idols, as we read, "They feared Jehovah, and served (or worshipped) their own gods" (2 Kings xvii. 33*.) They had what we might term corrupt faith.

And then at last—for Who shall limit His heart when once set free!—"and to the uttermost part of the earth." Wide as the whole race of sinners! If it could begin at the bloodstained city of Jerusalem, with its "dead faith;" and extend to Samaria and its abominations, and its "corrupt faith," it could and would flow on, in its mighty course to the uttermost part of the earth, where there was no faith at all! And what was to be the grand remedy for all this? What was to quicken the dead sinner—the orthodox person, whose faith was dead? What was to purify the heart in which a corrupted faith was found? Or to bring faith in God—in Christ, when there was no faith at all? *A risen Christ*, is the answer. One then about to ascend into the heavens, and to take His seat on high—having purged our sins. This was the remedy. "Ye shall be witnesses unto ME!"

His farewell words were spoken; His feet touched the earth for the last time, and the cloud received Him out of their sight, and nothing was now needed but the Holy Ghost from heaven, in order that wave after wave of the mighty ocean of His love might extend onwards and onwards, until He who is its source shall come down to dwell for ever amongst men, in the new heavens and in the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness! (Rev. xxi. 1-8.)

How terrible, that any should shut themselves out from that love! How solemn to continue in unbelief after all! How blessed too to find oneself borne on its mighty stream, onwards to its source,—to dwell in that love for ever!

Those who are familiar with the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles will know, that until the stoning of Stephen there was a slight pause, as it were, in the Lord's last offer to the Jews that Jesus would return, if they would now receive Him. The third chapter of Acts shows this very distinctly. Peter charges the "men of Israel" directly with

* The reader will do well to consult this whole chapter as to the origin of the Samaritans.

His murder. Ye "killed the Prince of life," he says. Yet, still, he adds, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that the times of refreshing may come (*ὅπως ἀν ἐλθῶσι καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως*, &c.) from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you," &c. This offer was finally refused at the stoning of Stephen. Until then, Jesus is seen as it were, standing, and ready to return. After that He is seated and expecting, until His enemies be made His footstool. (See epistle to the Hebrews *passim*.)

Saul of Tarsus is now chosen, to be the one in whom "the whole long-suffering" (for so 1 Tim. i. 16 should read) was to be displayed. The grace of Stephen's prayer—his patience, failed to reach the heart of Saul. He had "lived in all good conscience"—even when keeping the raiment of those who slew Stephen. He evidenced the truth of those words of Jesus: "The time cometh when he that killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John xvi. 2). And he could say, "Touching the righteousness that is in the law, blameless."

And here let me remark how, as far as conscience knows, a man may do this, really and sincerely; because he only judges by the outward acts which the law forbade; murder, theft, Sabbath breaking, and such like things. Yet because he has not broken these, he can go on—his soul not quickened, and honestly say, "touching the *righteousness* that is in the law blameless." The *holiness* of the tenth commandment had never awakened his dead soul. Command a fig-tree as it is about to shoot forth its leaves in spring, that it is not to bring forth fig leaves. How can it bring forth aught else, if it is to bring forth anything at all? But extend the command, and not only say, 'Thou shalt not bring forth fig-leaves outwardly; neither shalt thou have, inwardly, the sap and life that brings them forth'! Thus the tenth commandment forbids a desire *within* the heart, if the others forbid the overt actions that spring forth out of the heart of man. And so the law is "*holy*, just, and good," as well as righteous. Now, Saul had lived in all good conscience; he was blameless, touching the righteousness of the law. But he had also persecuted the church of God, and haled the followers of Jesus to prison and death, and he had resisted the Holy Ghost. Thus we have in him personally, the example and result of all God's dealings with men,

with conscience, law, Christ, and the Holy Ghost—all was of no avail. But “at mid-day, O King,” he says, “I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest,” &c.

Face to face in a moment of time were this tremendous sinner, yet outwardly blameless man, and the Saviour of sinners Himself! And in a moment Saul is a captive—to be henceforth a witness of this ascended Christ!

How sweet it is, reader, to discover (like Saul) what thou art! For when thou discoverest this, thou wilt also discover what Jesus is—what God is. The deeper the sense you have of your own ruin, even if your soul has been on the verge of despair, finding your only true, rightful place to be the hell of the damned for ever; the more truly you have bowed to this, and owned it in your inmost soul, the more fully will your confidence be in God. And why? Just because you have nothing else then to trust in but Him. When every prop on which your soul might rest has been removed, and when your soul has faced a righteous, holy God, with an eternity of bliss or woe before it, then you will have found that Christ is enough! Would that God might now engrave this word in indelible letters on the souls of those who read this; in ineffaceable letters, as it must be some day, if they would ever enjoy peace with God, or be saved!

What base, wretched hearts we have! and although we admit this as an article of our creed, how often we go on in that wretched uncertainty of soul, so painful to behold in some; questioning, hoping, fearing; thinking they believe at one moment, wondering if they do, at another; just as if *their* belief, or otherwise, was to be an object of faith! Suppose they did believe that they do believe, as they desire, what then? Would this make me sure that they were Christ's? Ah, no! The soul that could rest in this is but in a sad, dead state. Nay, I know that I am lost without Him; I have not a hope left in myself; I am shut up to sovereign grace—to sovereign mercy. I find too that He delights in mercy; that He takes pleasure in them that

hope in it; that Jesus, the Son of man, came to seek and to save the lost, and thus to seek and to save me, a lost one; that God poured out all His wrath upon Jesus; that Jesus bore it; that He died, and rose, and ascended on high; that I must meet Him; that He will be a Judge when the day of grace is past; that God holds Him up in His word and to my conscience, as the One who has satisfied all the requirements of His holiness, of His righteousness, of His love! God expresses His satisfaction in Jesus; tells me that He is so; that He can and will receive, pardon and bless for ever all who believe in Him.

‘Ah,’ says my wretched heart, ‘do I believe in Him; am I sure I do?’ Poor, self-righteous heart, Who asked you this? Did God? Nay, you want to make your faith your saviour—to make it the object before you, rather than Christ alone! If you did this successfully, I would say, You probably have not faith at all. And of another poor trembling one who said, ‘I know I only look to Christ; I know I believe in Him;’ I would say, You have the right kind of faith. The right kind of faith *never* makes me or anything in me its object, but turns away and looks at Christ alone, at that which God reveals. Yet the *effect* of faith will be to make me judge myself. A “but” or an “if” will *never* come as long as what God reveals is before the soul. The Lord be praised for it! ‘But,’ you say, ‘I do not feel my sins as you describe. I have never felt that my sins shut me out from God. I do not seem to have the exercises that others have. This is what distresses my soul.’ ‘Indeed!’ I say again. ‘You learn Christ as your Saviour without this exercise of conscience, and you murmur that God has not exercised you in another way.’ ‘Well, suppose it is so, it is but another proof of the desperate wickedness of your heart, that after God spending His Son for your sins, you have no sense or feeling that they are there! What deeper proof of your ruin? What more evidence do you need of the state of your soul? Yet within such a soul you seek to find something on which to rest. God forbid you should, my friend. If you did, I would dread still more that you were still unsaved.’

The Saviour of sinners such as you—such as Saul, and the sinner—you, Saul, are face to face. Rather, indeed, is the sinner, Saul, in his true attitude, fallen on his face in the dust. And there is the Saviour—glorious in His might,

with a heart yearning over this lost one. Saul is not yet "speechless"—that is reserved for the day of judgment and solemn scrutiny, yet to come. (See Matt. xxii.) In tenderest calmness Jesus reasons with the dread persecutor—"Why persecutest thou me?" "I am Jesus." Trembling and astonished, the persecutor lifts up his voice and replies to his captor, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and before three days are past—needful that he might learn the depths of evil in an hitherto unawakened soul—Jesus sends a fellow-disciple to tell the man that he was now to receive his sight, and to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Then he was as white as snow in God's sight; *all* his sins had been borne by this same Jesus; not one was forgotten. To find even *one* unborne would be eternal ruin to Saul. Yes, to my reader, to all! If Jesus has not already borne all your sins—my sins, in His own body on the accursed tree, we are lost, and lost for ever! There is no "hope" in this. No. It is a divinely solemn, yet blessed fact. Jesus has *either borne our sins*, when "once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. ix. 28), or He *has not*! If the former, all are gone, and gone for ever. If the latter, we are lost! "Without shedding of blood there is no remission;" and Jesus' blood has been shed, and never can be shed again. He can die no more; "death hath no dominion over him."

'What,' you say, 'all my sins; past, present, and future sins!' I ask, How many were past, present, and future, when He died under their heavy load? All, all were future; and if all, all were not then borne, not one can ever be borne now! If the smallest sin (so to speak), committed when you hung on your mother's breast were then forgotten, you are lost for ever! How blessed then, to know that all were borne, and consumed to ashes—never to rise again!*

The dread persecutor, now saved and blest, hears those calm words of grace to all, issue from the lips of Jesus from on high—His final words! Harken to them, O careless sinner! Harken, thou burdened one! Harken, rejector

* The reader will here distinguish between the sins being *borne*, and their being *forgiven*. They were borne on the Cross, or they never can be: a sin is not forgiven until committed; forgiveness is applied to the conscience, when life is there. One who finds through grace the former, never can and never will seek aught but the fatherly forgiveness of Him whose child he now is, and who laid His sins on the head of His Son on the cross.

of His blessed name! He never spake again from heaven, and never will, until His voice rends the tombs, and rifles them of their contents, and pronounces, "Come ye blessed," or, "Depart ye cursed:" the former in the happy ears of some, as the latter sink, as the death-knell of eternal doom, on the souls of others. Hearken—"I send thee to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and (from) the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in me." "In me"—the exalted, glorified Saviour!

Reader, does He mean this for you? or are you one whose description is not here? Is it not the same to have these words from Scripture, as from His own lips? Are they not as sure? He tells us that Scripture is the "mouth of God." Look up by faith into His blessed face, and hear Him say them for you—to you! He uses no harsh speeches; no threats of judgment to come; no hard words of condemnation. Nay, He is uttering His calm, last message still in your ears; will you refuse, and turn aside from His word, and only hear His next changeless sentence go forth when you find yourself amongst the wicked dead, to be raised in God's eternity, and cast into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone, which is the second death? (See Rev. xx.) What a moment of terror—"the terror of the Lord!" as the same apostle terms it. (2 Cor. v.) He waits till time has passed away—till "the thousand years (of millennial blessedness) are expired"—and then, in God's eternity, He raises the wicked dead for judgment. And what is raised in God's eternity can never cease to exist in time, for time has already passed away! Such is the answer of God to the words of men in these infidel days.*

Rather let it be your portion to say with the same man who learned these things for his own soul—words that seem to be the echo produced by the Spirit of God in his heart to those final words of Jesus, and written by the same Spirit for all who have this "faith in me"—"Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have redemption (through his blood), even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. i. 12-14).

* What a perfect answer to the false doctrines of annihilationism, and non-eternity of punishment so common at present!

SOME THOUGHTS ON JOHN'S GOSPEL.

JOHN iii.

BUT (supply "*but*,") amongst the many who had believed in Jesus, to whom nevertheless He did not commit Himself, there was one who had the sense of need in his soul. He was not satisfied with merely seeing, and then returning to his own works, as the rest had done. He felt the necessity of having his spiritual wants satisfied; and in this condition he comes to Jesus. And he comes too by night, for he had a presentiment that between Jesus and the world there was a vast gulf, and he does not wish to encounter the hostility of the world.

Although he had wants in his soul, nevertheless he went to Jesus with the same knowledge as the rest had. "We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man *can do these miracles that thou doest*, except God be with him." But the Lord stops him, and surprises him with a truth—the most simple, that to enter into the kingdom of heaven (God?) one must be born anew. Jesus gives him, in other words, this reason—'You are, with all your doctrine, a child of Adam, as to your state, like that of all men; I cannot instruct you, because the flesh cannot be instructed; the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit (of God); you "must be born anew."' And He puts Nicodemus and all the Jews on the same footing as the Gentiles—"Ye must." By works,—if you speak of being born anew, it is no more possible for a Jew than for a Gentile.

Here then we have the 'needs-be' of a new life. The first life of Adam will not do to enter into the kingdom, we need a new birth, a new life, according to God, and communicated by Him. This new life has feelings and affections totally different from the natural man. The new birth, or conversion, is not then an improvement of the natural man (Adam), but it is a new life. If men could go to heaven in their natural state they would be unhappy there, and would try to get out of it as quickly as they could, and to come back down here to this world of sin, because they would not have a nature capable of enjoying God and heaven. And by works men can find no pleasure in the company of Jesus; on the contrary, they hate Him, because their tastes, their inclinations are all opposed to those of Jesus. In heaven they would find none of those things that they love.

To be "born of the Spirit" is a communication of a new life; as it is said, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The water is the word of God, which detects and judges the carnal thoughts opposed to Christ, and introduces those of God by the revelation of Christ. (Comp. Eph. v. 26, John xv. 3—"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.")

The Lord speaks to Nicodemus of earthly things (v. 12), that is of things which refer to millennial blessings, things of which Nicodemus should have known, having been announced by the prophets, as we see in Ezekiel xxxvi. If then, they could not receive these earthly things that had been brought to them, how much less would they receive heavenly things which refer to the blessings and portion of Christians who are a heavenly people, and blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places!

From v. 11 to 13 we see that Jesus alone could reveal heavenly things. No one else had gone there and then returned, to tell of the things of heaven; but Jesus, while He was on earth, was at the same time always in heaven as God. How sweet it is to have the words of the very One who came from heaven, from the presence of God! Christ, having been rejected, has been lifted up from the earth, between heaven and earth, to draw men to Himself outside of this world (v. 14, and xii. 32, 33). There upon the Cross, love and justice have met. The first is fully free, and the second is perfectly satisfied. It is there upon the Cross that is verified what is said—Rom. v. 21, "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." If God had exercised His righteousness against man, the sinner would have been destroyed. In such a case God would not have been able to shew His love. And similarly, if God had only shewn His love in not punishing man, He would not have been just; but the Cross has fully satisfied these two attributes of God while saving man; grace reigns, but it is not without having respect to justice.

Verses 14-16 give us two aspects of the work of Christ. The first points out the necessity man had that the Son of man should die; the second shews us that God has given this Son of man who had need to die, and that He has given Him in the person of His own Son, because no other creature whatsoever could undertake this work. Each of these

verses ends with "whosoever believeth in him has everlasting life." A third aspect of this work is, that Jesus, by the offering of Himself, accomplished the will of God, by which will we are sanctified. This truth is found in Heb. x.

At v. 17 the Lord again insists on the truth, that God has given His own Son, in order to attract the more attention to a subject so important. This Son He has given to the world, and not only to Israel, and the "whosoever" is for all men, and not for Israel only. "He that believeth not is condemned," because it is not the question of a second law which man had whereby to be justified, seeing he did not keep the law—the first law. No! but now man is irremediately lost, and if He does not believe in Jesus, given by God for His salvation, he remains in his sins, and has nothing else to look for but the second death. He is now condemned, not only for his sins, but also for having rejected the Son of God.

The Lord then comes to speak of the light (vv. 19-21). That is one of two qualities essentially divine, love and light—God is love, God is light. God is not the truth; though He could not but speak the truth. God is not power, though He be powerful, &c., &c., but He is light and love. These two essential qualities go together, and they cannot be separated in the effect they produce in man, when they work on him. Love works in the heart, but this does not satisfy. Man likes to hear of the love of God, of pardon; but if the light does not reach his conscience he believes that God will treat his sin lightly as he himself would treat it. The light of God must shine in the conscience to make everything manifest; then the conscience, seeing its real state, is terrified; as we see in the case of Peter (Luke v). He says, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." The light of the glory of Christ had terrified him, and he discovered himself to be a sinner. Thus too we see the prodigal Son, and the woman of Samaria; the light of God had convicted them. But the light of God is never separated in the soul in which it shines, from a measure of confidence in the love. While Peter bids Jesus depart from, nevertheless, in his heart, he does not wish Him to depart, since he clung all the closer to Him. Apparent contradiction, because his heart attracts him to Jesus, but his conscience makes him feel how unfit he is to be in His presence. The true light can make him say—'Though I should die, let me die at the feet of Jesus.' The new life

desires this light, and can say with the Psalmist (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24), "Search me O God and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Thus the new life hates evil, and loves the light. It is a bad sign when a Christian has things to conceal; it is the cause of weakness. In connection with this the thought of the judgment seat of Christ is most important. The apostle Paul was continually manifested when thinking of the tribunal of Christ. This is a thought that would make us progress in holiness. The Christian should desire in his heart to be searched by God, to see if He finds in him any evil whereby he could be condemned, because when we live with evil manifested and judged, we enjoy communion with God more fully; and if we are sincere we will do this.

John bears testimony to Jesus (v. 27, &c.), puts Jesus before all, and puts himself after Him. His desire was that Jesus should increase, and he decrease. The bride of which he speaks is not properly the church nor Israel, but a general principle.

Verse 32, embraces in a single line the doctrine of the works of Christ described by the other evangelists. "He that believed in the Son hath eternal life," and hath "set to his seal that God is true." These latter words are the definition of faith. Thus if we believe in the Son of God we have eternal life; and perhaps this is presumption? No! it is simplicity, and wisdom, and obedience.

JEREMIAH AND THE TIMES.

I FEEL very much the character of this present time through which we are passing. The great powers that are destined to fill out the action of Christendom's closing day are practising themselves, each in its several sphere, with great earnestness and skill. These powers are the *Civil* and the *Ecclesiastical*.

I do not doubt, but that, for a season, the Ecclesiastical will prevail. The *woman* is to *ride*, for a while, and that is the symbol, as I surely judge, which signifies the *supremacy* of that which takes the place of the *Church*. And this present moment is marked by her efforts to mount the saddle. And she is so adroitly directing those efforts that I doubt not

success will soon attend them, and then the blood of the saints may flow afresh.

The Civil power, however, is not idle. The wondrous advance that is making every day in the cultivation of the world, is the proof of great skill and activity on its part. It is largely boasting and showing what it can do, and pledging what further it means to do.

At this moment each of these powers is abroad in the scene of action, and men's minds are divided between them. They are, in some sense, rivals, and opposed. There is the commercial energy and the religious energy—the one erecting its railroads, and exhibitions, and such like, the other its bishopricks, churches, ordinances, &c. The attention of the children of men is divided between them—but the saints who know the Cross of Christ as the relief of their conscience, and the ground of their separation from the world, are apart from both equally.

I doubt not but that the civil power will have to yield the supremacy for a time, and the woman will ride again; though her state and greatness will be but short, for the civil power will take offence, and remove her.

For between these powers there is at times confederacy, and then at times there is enmity.

If we, in God's grace, keep a good conscience towards Christ and the truth, we may count upon it that no inheritance or portion in the earth is worth us, as men speak, many years purchase. If we will consent to become whatever the times would make us, of course we shall go on. But I speak this, in the recollection that at any moment we may be carried up to meet the Lord. I follow simply what I judge the progress of things on the earth is to be.

I have been sensible lately how much the language and spirit of Jeremiah suits these times. He lived in the daily observation of evil and iniquity abominating and advancing in the scene around him, though it was called by God's name, and was indeed His place on the earth. The house of prayer had become a den of thieves. He knew, likewise, that the judgment of God was awaiting it all, but withal, he looked for sure and happy days in the distance which lay beyond the present corruption and the coming judgment.

He *mourned over it*—but he also *testified against it*. And like his Master (John vii. 7), he was hated for his testimony.

He was, however, full of faith and hope touching the

future—and therefore he laid out his money in the purchase of Hananeel's field (ch. xxxii). All this was beautiful—the present sorrow, the certainty of approaching judgment, and the hope of closing, crowning glory. This is a pattern for our spirit.

And I observe another feature of character or of power in the prophet. He was not to be seduced from the conclusions of faith, by occasional circumstances, or fair promising appearances. This is seen in ch. xxxvii.

The Chaldean army had broken up their camp at the walls of Jerusalem, because of the arrival of the Egyptian allies. But Jeremiah left the city, for he could not but hold the conclusion of faith that Jerusalem was doomed of God, by the flattering appearance of a moment like that.

This is a fine exhibition of a soul walking by the light of God, not only through *darkness*, but through darkness *that seemed to be light*—and with all this, he was a suffering witness.

All seems quiet around us at present, and even more than that, things are advancing and prospering as far as the accommodations of social life go. But the moral of the scene in the eye of faith is more serious than ever. The apostate powers of man are ripening themselves into their most abundant exhibition. There is somewhat of rivalry between them just for the present. The secular and the religious are apart as yet. Each has its respective votaries and worshippers. But confederacy is to succeed to rivalry, before long, I believe. The world must, even for its own ends, for a season, adopt religion, and then for that season, the woman will ride the Beast again, that *man's system* may grow solid as well as extended, and propose itself as the thing that has earned for itself a title to conform all and everything to itself.

Separation is the Christian's place and calling,—church separation,—separation because of heavenly citizenship, and oneness with an already risen, and ascended Christ. Abraham's was a very complete separation. It was twofold. He was separated from the *natural* associations of Mesopotamia "country, kindred, and father's house," and from the *moral* associations of Canaan, or its iniquities and idols.

May the Lord, in the thought of these solemn truths, be more real and near to us! May the prospect of His presence be more familiarly before us, and the hope of His glory be found lying more surely and certainly in the very midst of the affections and stirring of our hearts!

NOTES OF READINGS.

2 COR. iii.

WE now come to what produces an Epistle. Next to the preaching of the Gospel which gathers, we find this Epistle what God establishes in the way of direct ministry to those that are gathered. He cannot repeat what He did with Moses. Stone is changed for the heart, as the thing written on. The heart is a wonderful thing for good, or for evil. Looked on at the bad side (Matt. xv. 18, 19) there is nothing so bad; but here, where God has got the heart for Himself, "we have the mind of Christ." It will not satisfy God to have *one* man like Paul. He will produce others, and that is what makes an Epistle. It is more corporate than individual, it is the Spirit of the living God that writes. The law was written on unimpressible material. God wrote on stone, Jesus on the earth, the Spirit on the heart. God wrote what He claimed on the stone, and Moses broke it. Jesus wrote on the earth (John viii), the first time convicting; at the second grace comes in as Himself, needing to go down into it. "Except a corn of wheat fall into *the ground* and die." The Son of man must be three days and three nights in the heart of *the earth*." Out of that womb of death, life comes. Now God, through the Spirit, writes "Christ" from the place where He is, on the heart, producing Christ in us. What will God form on the fact that such an One is in such a place? Whatever Christ is now, presents to God the characteristics that He uses to form the Epistle.

There are three things that characterize the ministry of the New Testament—*life* in His own title, *righteousness*, and God's answer in *glory*. God is no longer claiming from man, but He finds the elements of a *ministry to us* in what Christ is before Him, as *life* and *righteousness*, which He must crown with *glory*. There are three things which man is under, *sin*, *death*, and *condemnation*, which Christ takes up, glorifies God in, and is glorified at His right hand, from whence God ministers Him to us, as *life*, *righteousness*, and the *glory* that excels, three things man could never touch. It is a wonderful thing to have a man up in glory who has supplied to God what He required, not merely what the sinner needs. What can God do with Him but crown Him with glory and honour? Sin, death, and judgment all met on this side—*life*, *righteousness*, and *glory* all active on that

side, to produce this Epistle of Christ, known and read of all men, in us.

Do we sit under this ministry? It is everything to keep the heart as a writing-table. People do not generally understand what is practical, until they come to connect it with themselves. The last verses do this. The effect of life from life, righteousness from righteousness, and glory from glory, is liberty; and what gives liberty secures conforming power and correspondence. This is the proper present Church ministry—important, because you get it nowhere else. The correspondence, which is *moral* now, includes also the full perfection of it when we meet Him in the glory, even as to the *body* (chap. v); and God is not merely pledged to do it, but it is His delight.

(*To be continued.*)

THE WORD OF LIFE.

1 JOHN i. ii. 1, 2.

THE first book which John wrote had a very distinguished character, as revealing *eternal* life: letting the light of eternal life shine out more clearly. The other Gospels give details. John speaks little of the Cross even, but takes Him back to His own place there (in his Gospel), as he takes Him up here again, as that *eternal* life. His was the blessed privilege of writing the *Gospel* of the life. John cannot get beyond *Him*. Everything else is little compared with the giving of that *eternal* life! Creation is put under limitation, but God is infinite. How could finite comprehend infinite? What is all creation—all the history of the world compared with this—with *who* and *what* He is, who has life and incorruptibility to give away?

God prohibited making any *image* of God; but He presented Himself to us in the face of Jesus His Son, so perfectly, so identically, so completely one with Himself, that the Son could say—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father!" Wonder of wonders! In a *Man* was presented down here all that could delight the Father! To think that my feet tread the earth that His feet trod, who came out from the Father! How very *close* He comes to man, leaving them without excuse. Man weaves his own web, and cares nothing for Him!

I turn to my youth. If God had dealt with *me* according to my thought of Him these ——— years, without a thought

of that eternal life, or of my separation from it, where should I be? yet without excuse at all. For He has sent forth the proclamation of Himself. Not that Paul or John or Peter could add to Him; but they tell of the yearning of His heart over them, and of His work to bring them into communion with the eternal life! Hardy sinners made nothing of it, though round about Him. They had not an ear for that word from His own lips, "I *give* them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out my Father's hand;" or "He that believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life." John's word goes beyond—"That eternal life, that was with the Father, and was *manifested unto us*." This life has been given to us, and can be occupied with the Father and the Son. What then is my first thought? I find that his Father is my Father. If in heaven I am challenged with the question, "Who are you!" I say, "I am one to whom it has been *given* to be a *son*," and I pass on.

Remark three things. *Man* is always occupied with himself; *God* always begins with Himself. *John* begins with a certain person revealing *the Father*! I ask him 'What have you in yourself John?' 'Nothing of myself; but I have seen and handled *the Word*!' 'Nothing in myself, beyond myself in the Father and the Son, and there is the rest of my heart!' In that one Man sitting at God's right hand, God's perfect rest is there! He never failed in anything He undertook to do, and God rests in Him!

Life and forgiveness I would not separate; but they are often learned separately. If the spring ceases not to rise, channels shall not cease to be filled.

Do you know Christ as your life—the joy of your heart—that your joy may be full? What a solemn and blessed truth that the once devil-possessed soul may *know* that *that* life is its life! I can date the time when it was put in me; but not the date of the eternity of the life given to my once dead and stony soul.

"We have seen and heard." One cannot hear for another man; but my confidence is in Him who has looked into my heart—my confidence is *all* in Him. It is thus an individual thing; eternal life filling my soul; flowing forth in me from Him. A characteristic of this life is light. The "Light of Life" is what made God manifest, Satan

manifest, sin manifest ! But how was this done ? It showed that His thoughts are *not* our thoughts, nor are His ways as our ways. Man cast off God, and gave himself up to Satan. Satan delights to pull down, God to construct : Satan to destroy, God to save ! If you have this *life*, is your walk according to it ? Your feet tread on this world. Paul's did. Paul's walk in it was very different after he saw Him ! If light comes in it discovers darkness : if the blood cleanses, the blood is not put before life, but brought in to give an eternally cleansed conscience. Then, as to the action of this life, what He likes, it will do—I will do ; what He does not like I will not do. Then He guards. "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves ;" but we can say, 'Not a cloud above, not a spot within !'

"IN THE CLOUDY AND DARK DAY."

1 COR. i. 10.

Divided, now !
 The chiselled stones ! All joined together then,
 The Corner-stone, whom builders disallow,
 Made Chief at last : when Jesus comes again !

Divided, now !
 The blood-bought sheep, far scattered o'er the plain,
 Care-furrows deep on many a shepherd's brow,
 One flock, at last : when Jesus comes again !

Divided, now !
 The Lots, the Abrams, winning diverse gain :
 Let pilgrim-souls their strangership avow !
 One Land at last : when Jesus comes again !

Divided, now !
 E'en David's friend shrinks back from David's pain :
 He dare not yet His changeless claims allow.
 Will Saul ? At last : when Jesus comes again !

Divided, now !
 The Church of God ; one Church with Christ to reign
 And yet the glory round His thorn-pierced brow
 Is her's at last : when Jesus comes again !

ROMANS, COLOSSIANS, EPHESIANS.

THERE are two great subjects treated of in Scripture in connection with man's relationship with God—Purpose in God, and Responsibility in man; the former in the second Man—the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This purpose was established before the foundation of the world. (See 2 Tim. i. 9, 10; Titus i. 2, 3; Prov. viii.; 1 Cor. ii. 7.) Many passages refer to details of this. Ephesians especially fully develops it. But God did not begin with this, nor with the Second Adam, in whom these promises were to be accomplished; but with the first, placed in responsibility before God, and in blessings dependent on faithfulness in his position.

Christianity begins when this question of responsibility is closed. I do not mean, of course, that Christians are not responsible. But their responsibility is that of children of God, redeemed by grace from the condition of ruin in which man was fallen. Individuals withal have to pass through in their own souls experimentally the results of this condition of responsibility; but it is not, in Christianity, to ascertain whether they can meet judgment, but to arrive at the clear discovery that they cannot, that they are guilty, lost. To have judgment realized in their consciences that "there is none righteous, no, not one;" every mouth being stopped, and all the world guilty before God; that they cannot themselves get out of this condition, but that Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost; that "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

I do not now enter into the details of this redemption, nor of what the purpose connected with it is. I only refer to it now to show that it is when the divine development as to the first man's responsibility is closed, and man viewed as guilty and lost under it, that Christianity begins. The question of responsibility was gone through in the first Adam. First, he failed being innocent; then displayed his lawlessness in corruption and violence, bringing in the flood; then under law broke it; and when (all this being already true) God came into the world in goodness, the full character of sin was developed in enmity against God, by the rejection of the blessed Lord. This closed the probation of man. Now, says the Lord, is the judgment of this world. Hence we read, "He appeared once in the end of the world (the

consummation of ages), to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and "these things . . . are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Christianity then comes when the question of man's standing in responsibility is closed, not only as being a sinner, but when God having tried all means of recovery, saying, "I have yet one Son," had tried them in vain as regards the discovery of good in the first Adam, or his recovery as such. He is already guilty and lost, and proved so.

Besides his state of innocence, inalienable life for ever, and responsibility, were attached to the two trees in the garden; but man took the wrong road in connection with responsibility, and forfeited life. The question was again raised as to both, in the law; but satisfying responsibility was put before life. "This do and thou shalt live." Christ meets our responsibility in bearing the consequence of it, our sins, and being made sin in that place, perfectly glorified God, and becomes our life (of which more hereafter). Thus and thus only the two are reconciled for sinful man—life and responsibility.

Now, from the beginning, the coming of Christ was intimated, in the judgment pronounced on Satan; and then, when God began to deal with man in the new world, when it had wholly departed from Him into idolatry—in the promise of the seed in whom the nations should be blessed, to Abraham, called out from it. But the promise was never fulfilled till Christ came, and He being rejected, though the promised seed had come, the result of purpose was not fulfilled; but the ground of it was laid according to grace abounding over sin, and righteousness—Christ having perfectly glorified God as made sin, and gone as Man into glory according to divine righteousness, so that man's being there was the demonstration of righteousness. Thus propitiation for sins was made, which met the responsibility, and the ground laid for the accomplishment of purpose, and then the Holy Ghost comes down on earth, the witness of these things, and the present power of that Christianity in which through grace we enjoy them.

Hence we have the responsibility and state owned and demonstrated, and man met in it in grace; and the purpose revealed and ourselves associated with Christ in it; but the old creation and the first Adam state judged and lying in

wickedness and alienation from God ; and the new creation, connected with the Second Adam, raised and glorified, revealed ; while as to life we are brought into it, with the Holy Ghost dwelling in us.

Now the Gospels give us Christ come into the old creation, and in diverse characters, His passing into death as so coming, and all giving the resurrection, which is the essential beginning of the new as to man in every respect, *e.g.*, life and acceptance, not all, His ascension. There is this difference in them, that while the three first (Matt., Mark, and Luke) give to us His rejection historically, and in prophetic testimony, more or less, what was to take the place of His presence ; in the first (Matt.) as Man, and according to promise, that is in the first creation, and in Israel ; the last of the four (John) being the revelation of His Person, that the Word was God, precedes all dispensation and creation itself, and begins by the world He had created not knowing Him, and His own rejecting Him, and then unfolds His Person, and what was proper to Himself and His service, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, when He had gone to the Father.

All this is assumed in the Epistles, and in Paul's and John's—our being in the ascended Christ ; in Paul's also the doctrine of the " Assembly," and the purposes connected with it. This leads me to our immediate subject:—

Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, does not enter on the ground of the new creation, but treats of man on this earth as a responsible being, only in one word as an abstract doctrine shewing him as he will be, and that only personally : " Whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here alone (ch. viii.) *purpose* comes in, and only as to the state of individuals ; God's sovereignty is asserted in chapter ix, but only to give God title to let in the Gentiles, in contrast with a national election claimed by the Jews.

But the purposes of God, or the new creation which is in purpose, are not in view. Man is a responsible creature in this world, dealt with as such, though in the end glorified. This responsibility is met by the work of Christ, and the coincident fact of having life in Him. With this the great fact of present Christianity is recognized—the Holy Ghost down here. By this we know that we are in Christ, but as down here. It is the believer's state down here in virtue of

the Holy Ghost coming here. He sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts; but all this is my state down here, not the new creation. Its being so indeed gives it such value, though from other scriptures I know all this involves a part in the new creation. But I am saved in hope, I rejoice in hope of the glory, I am a joint heir with Christ as a son, but my present place is suffering with Him. Though promising thus personally the glory, likeness to Christ according to the purpose of God, the Epistle treats the question of the divine ground of righteousness and the standing of a Christian in this world, through the removal of sin. This it does in a double way, having respect first to the *conduct*, and then to the *state* of man as a child of Adam. Rom. i. 18, to v. 11, treats of his conduct, and the perfect grace that has met his case. Every mouth is stopped, and all the world guilty before God. But God has set Christ forth a propitiation, through faith in His blood, whether for remission of past sins (as to which God had shewn His forbearance in the times passed before Christ's work); or now to justify him that believes in Jesus. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." So that by faith we have peace with God, stand in present favour, and rejoice in hope of the glory. Yea, rejoice in tribulation as working good; yea, joy in God Himself through Christ, through whom we have thus received a perfect reconciliation.

But in all this, through knowing God's love by the Holy Ghost given to us, we have our personal standing before God here; it is not new creation, though the life we have belongs to it. But the Epistle meets the whole question of our personal relationship to God. First, Christ is a propitiation through faith in His blood, and being risen again, the ground of our justification is shown to be perfect, and being justified by faith we have peace with God. God imputes no sin to the believer, Christ having been delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

Then, from the 12th verse of chap. v., the Apostle takes up our state. Adam, by his obedience, has brought all connected with him into the condition of sinners; Christ, by His obedience, all connected with Him into that of righteousness.

But with this another truth is connected. If it be by one Man's obedience, we may live on as we like, and be righteous by Christ's obedience, says the world. But I have

this righteousness by having part in His death ; the having part in it is the very profession of Christianity ; but death is not living on ! Thus delivery from the state and power of sin is by death, and our death is in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Romans, even in the first part, recognizes the Christian's personal state on earth ; the Holy Ghost is given to us, we are in Christ, live in Christ. The assembly itself also is assumed in the hortatory part (chap. xii.) What is treated of, this state being assumed, is the divine way of grace as to it. Meeting our responsibility by bearing our sins I have already spoken of. The second part treats, we have seen, of our state.

But if we are alive in Christ, and Christ is in us, it is Christ who is risen and even is glorified, and who has died. Such a Christ being our life, we are esteemed dead, for He who is our life, our true *I*, has died, and that is valid and effectual for faith. It is the profession of our common Christianity : we are baptized to it.

But in its effect (save the statement in viii. of the effect of God's being for us) this is not pursued beyond death ; so that Christ risen, being our life, we are set free. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin, and the Spirit is life, because of righteousness." Christ is looked at as our life, but we are not viewed as risen with Him. He has been a propitiatory victim, and delivered for our offences, and died to sin once, all alone. He is not looked at as gone down into our place, and Himself and we raised up together. In this case He is not life to us, but a dead Man raised up, and that involves not merely life in Him but a new estate into which He is entered, and involves a new creation, though it may be, and is, considered apart.

But in fact He has died to this creation, and been raised to be, as Man, head of the new creation, and head of the body. There is, however, in Roman teaching, deliverance, for He has died. Hence, not only we live in Him, but "our old man is crucified with him," but we are still alive in this world with Christ's life—"the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus ;" but dead to sin in it, and to the law. Risen *with* Christ *involves* the purposes of God, Christ being viewed as the object of those purposes, and the power which brings them about, and hence we are associated with Him in them, and hence it leads on to our union in the church with Him. Not but that Christ is viewed as risen in the Epistle to the

Romans. We find it thus in the first part, where it is applied to our justification, our clearance from guilt. But this is the acceptance of the victim; if not risen, I am yet in my sins. In the second, we are stated "to be (married) to another," even Christ, that is raised from the dead. But we are not raised with Him. This introduces by the power of God at the next step into the new creation, as a state of things, and into the assembly. Christ, our life, or living in Him, is another thing from Christ viewed as a dead Man raised, yet it is a risen Man who is our life.

But being alive in Christ, that is not all, but we are alive in Him who was crucified, and we have died with Him, and that frees from the old man and from the law. Thus we are baptized to Christ's death, buried with Him by baptism unto death; but called upon, therefore, only to walk in newness of life, for we are here in this creation as to our place. "We know that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed," for "He that has died (which is our state through the cross) is justified from sin." You cannot charge a dead man with evil lusts and a wicked will. "Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall (also) live with him." Thus we are distinctly reckoned as dead; but living with Him is spoken of as a consequence of this, not as a state we are in. Christ died unto sin once, and now lives to God. His *death* is essentially identical with His *dying to sin*. "In that he died, he died unto sin once;" so we are to reckon ourselves "dead to sin" (for we are physically alive here), and "alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

A living Christ is our life here; but we are not looked at as raised up with Him. It is still the same responsible man, but all sins put away, one who will be like Him in resurrection, who is not to serve sin; it will not have dominion over him; it is not to reign in his mortal body; for there he yet is; but being set free to yield himself to God as alive from the dead, and his members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Freed from sin by Christ being our life, and sin in the flesh condemned in Christ, a sacrifice for sin, and we, He having died, reckoning ourselves dead.

But everlasting life is the end, salvation is in hope, but we have fruit unto holiness here, sin in the flesh condemned in Christ's sacrifice; and that being in death, and available for us, we see the condemnation gone, and ourselves dead to

sin. The great point is that *we have died*. Only it is in the cross, where sin in the flesh was condemned, and are now alive in Christ, called to walk accordingly here; not put, according to purpose, in Christ in the new creation.

This death is then applied to the question of the law. Now the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives. But we have died, consequently have ceased to be under it. We are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that we should be to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead. Still we are looked at as here, but married to Christ, who is raised, but not we raised with Him. We are delivered from the law, having died in that which we were held. And then the state of the renewed soul under the first husband is given at the end of the chapter, where our death in Christ is not known; not the power of life in Him who is raised, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in us giving energy according to Christ's place to this life.

Then the whole truth is summed up in the three first verses of the eighth chapter, the effect on the walk of the man down here in the fourth verse, which is man's responsibility as such, but the spring and power of the walk quite different, as are its effects (end of fourth and fifth) with the judgment of man's condition when in the flesh.

But we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if the Spirit of God dwell in us, our place and standing are not in the flesh before God. But note, the Spirit is come down here; it is still man down here, but in Christ and in the Spirit, and that by His Spirit dwelling in him, but that is down here. If he have not the Spirit, he is not Christ's; but if Christ be in him, for now it is Christ in him, and not he in Christ (compare John xiv. 20), the body is dead, a mere lifeless instrument of service; if it lives, it is a spring of sin only, flesh; it is Christ being in me, who did die, because of it dead. It is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness, for that is what is looked for in this world, and that is what is found in the fruit of the Spirit, the fruit of righteousness, which is by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Still we are here, sons of God indeed, and so heirs—joint heirs with Christ—but not in the new creation, but in the suffering one, and suffering with it, though that suffering be not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in us.

But we suffer, having the Spirit, as taking up these

sorrows according to God, and expressing them by groans produced by the Holy Ghost, and understood by God as those of His own Spirit, though in our hearts, even when we do not know what to ask for. Just as Christ here could groan in sympathy with a suffering creation, and even Himself, in the days of His flesh, offer up His petitions with strong crying and tears, only not imperfect as we are, in it. The Spirit is the power of life, the Spirit gives us consciousness of sonship and our joint inheritance with Christ, and the Spirit groans in our hearts, we being such in the sense of all that is around us, we being joined to it as to our body, Christ our life in the inner man, and the Spirit dwelling in us. We are saved in hope, and know our place in the glory to be revealed, and hence feel the sorrow of our actual position, according to the Spirit of God, according to God Himself. We are sons and know it, but the sons of God are yet to be manifested. For the responsible man triumphantly asks, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" and knows that nothing can separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Everything works together in this poor world for the good of those who love God. Hence the exhortation of the Epistle is to present—we being thus here—our bodies a living sacrifice (*i.e.*, not in actual death, as Christ).

In Ephesians they are sent forth from God to manifest the divine character on earth. Here they are set forth as actually subsisting men on the earth only set free, and to offer themselves to God as a living sacrifice. It is the responsible man justified and set free, with a new life in Christ to live to God, reckoning himself dead to sin, as having been baptized to Christ's death, as having died with Him.

The Epistle to the Colossians goes further still: the believer, indeed, is not seen sitting in heavenly places in Christ. A hope is laid up for him in heaven, and he is to set his affections on things above, where Christ sits at God's right hand, not on things on the earth. But he is not only dead with Christ, but risen with Him; he is dead, and his life hid with Christ in God. When Christ appears he will appear with Him.

And here it is of moment to notice two distinct aspects of man's state, taken up in these epistles. He is viewed as

living in sins and the indulgence of evil, and he is viewed as dead in sins. It is one and the same state; if he is alive in the sins, he is dead toward God. In the former case death must come in to deliver, for there is no mending of the flesh; in the latter it is a new creation.

Romans takes up the former view, Ephesians the latter. The new creation is wholly the purpose of God. The former, living in sins, is connected with responsibility; the latter has the second Adam risen and glorified for its centre. The former deals with man as he is; only life is found in the Second Man, and so death for the first; for the Second has died and is risen, and become the believer's life. Colossians practically takes in both as to the state of man; only it does not put him in heavenly places, nor speak of a new creation, it is only we "risen with Christ." Hence, also, the "one body" is alluded to, and they are warned against not holding the Head, but the doctrine of the body is in no way developed, nor the purpose of God revealed.

It is important to notice that the death is always the same, for it is Christ's death. Death there was death. He died, and therein died to sin once. That death, ours by faith, is the only death spoken of. His death as a person who had been alive in this world *was* His death to sin. We are dead with Him in Colossians, dead with Him in Romans. It is death to sin, in Him and in us; only He had none, and we do not literally die, but appropriate His death through grace.

But in Colossians we are looked at as having lived in sins (ii. 12, iii. 7). This coincides with Romans. But (ii. 12, iii. 1) we are also risen with Him, and we are also viewed as having been dead in sins (ii. 13), which so far coincides with Ephesians, only it does not go so far—not seating us in heavenly places; nor, as I have said, develop the doctrine of the body, nor the purpose of God. But the being risen with Christ takes the believer himself into a new state. It is not merely life in Christ. Christ having come down and borne his sins, coming into his place of death, the sins having been put away and forgiven, he is raised with Him, and thus enters on a new sphere of existence. He has done with all the elements or principles of this world; he is not to walk as one alive in this world subject to ordinances, as in a religion suited to the flesh; but have his affections on things above, where Christ sits; he is dead, and his life is hid

there, for Christ is his life, though he be not sitting there as yet himself. Hence he has put off the old man and put on the new, and this is renewed in knowledge—has his knowledge according to a wholly new sphere of existence, after the image of Him that created him.

Here "new man" is not exactly the same as in Ephesians. There it is new in kind and nature—*καίως*; here *νεος*; that is, he starts afresh, as just born with this, but renewed in knowledge is *ανακαινωω*, a wholly new kind. In Colossians we are not spoken of as dead to sin nor law; but ourselves dead and risen; that is, more definitely associated with Christ in the matter. It looks onward, and not backward, as Romans does. The death is always Christ's own death, but in Romans it is viewed as delivering us as in this world from sin in the flesh and law; in Colossians as associating us with Christ in death and resurrection. We are not dead to anything in Colossians, as living here, though by Christ; but have died from one system and begun (*νεος*) another. We are not alive in the world, nor manifested, nor sitting in heavenly places. Our life is hid above with Christ, and our heart and hopes are to follow after.

Hence, too, we have indeed the purposed reconciling of all things as to their state, but not the place in which all things are brought into one in Christ. Only the now accomplished part of the mystery is noted, Christ in you (Gentiles) the hope of glory; not the crown of glory here to Jews, as He will be; but in the Gentiles and the glory a hope.

In Romans, then, we have the believer alive in Christ in this world; but dead with Christ (vi. 8); and being so dead, dead to sin, as Christ died actually to sin, and is alive to God, and being dead—dead to law also; for law has power over a man as long as he lives—we are to live in newness of life; and shall be in likeness of Christ's resurrection. He is viewed as a man in his responsibility, as forgiven and justified (this to v. 11), rejoicing in the hope of glory, in tribulations, and in God Himself; and as regards state and sin in the flesh and law, he has died and is free. There is no condemnation for him; sin in the flesh was condemned in the sacrifice of Christ. This is all negative, save that he is free, and has the Spirit of God dwelling in him. He looks for the redemption of the body, the quickening of his mortal body; for he is yet in this world the responsible man, only he is now to walk in newness of life.

In Colossians he is risen with Christ, and as such has a hope laid up for him in heaven ; he has died, as in Romans, but is risen with Christ. The rudiments of this world—not only philosophy (which is the wandering of the old man's mind), but any religiousness which supposes a man alive in the flesh—is passed for him. He is not alive in this world ; but, being risen also with Christ, has his life hid up there with Him.

But another element comes in ; not responsibility, nor living and walking in sins ; but, as towards God, dead in sins, which precludes the question of responsibility ; but God has quickened him together with Christ, having forgiven him all trespasses.

Remark, too, that in Colossians we have no mention of the Spirit. Once it is said, “your love in the Spirit” as a fact ; but in the doctrinal part it is not spoken of. It is life. We lived in sins, but have died ; we are risen also, and, as dead in sins, have been quickened with Christ. We are not to be subject to ordinances as if we were alive in this world ; we are dead with Christ from all its principles. Christ is said to be in us, which is by His Spirit ; but not the Holy Ghost as a Person given to us. That is a seal and an earnest to us here. In Colossians we are dead and risen with Christ. Christ is our life.

Another expression may be noticed. This is connected with our having in Christ all that was shadowed out in figures in the law. The body was of Christ, and we are complete in Him ; *i.e.*, in Christ risen. The expression, “circumcision of Christ,” is similar to “we live by the faith of the Son of God,” “have the faith of God,” “the body is of Christ.” It is what characterises the thing spoken of. It is not Jewish circumcision, the sign of putting off the old man, but the reality of it in Christ, namely, in His death, being buried with Him in baptism. What is put off is the body of the flesh, the body of sin destroyed, planted in baptism in the likeness of His death, our old man crucified with him. Christ after the flesh, as Gentiles, we have never known ; Christ risen we put on. We have nothing to do with Christ as to coming to God, till the Cross. There He draws all men. As alive, we can go back and feed on the bread that came down from heaven. We have no justification in the Colossians, but a new state ; only that that state being resurrection with Christ, all sins have been forgiven through

what preceded. The old man is put off, the new man put on. In Romans the body is dead, the Spirit life in us down here.

In Ephesians we have purpose fully as to ourselves, as to Christ and His place as head *over* all things, and *to* the body. Hence we are only looked at as dead in sins, and there is a new creation. It begins after showing the relationship with God and the Father in which we are placed in Christ, and God's purpose to gather all things together in Him, our joint heirship with Him, and the earnest of the Spirit till we have the inheritance. That is, after showing our calling and inheritance, and dealing for it with Christ, known first as dead, but raised from death, and set at God's right hand, far above all principalities and powers, and given to be Head over all things to the assembly, the fulness of Him that fills all in all. And us also, once dead in sins, quickened and raised by the same power from that state together with Christ, Jew and Gentile also together, alike by nature children of wrath, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. Not, as often remarked, *with* Him yet, but *in* Him, for this is operation of power for the accomplishment of purpose, not purpose itself. We are God's workmanship created again in Christ Jesus.

This is simpler than Romans or Colossians, because it is wholly and simply a new creation and our actual state with new life, and flesh is not in question at all. God is showing the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus ; only, of course, redemption and forgiveness come in. But, as I have said, there is no death to sin. I am not at all looked at as a living man here. The fact is recognised that we once walked in them, but we have put off the old man and put on the new, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. In Colossians we are only renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created us. We are not born, have not died, but being dead in sins have been created in Christ Jesus—God's workmanship. Hence, as to conduct, having put off the old man and put on the new, and having been sealed with the Holy Spirit of God for the day of redemption, we are called to be imitators of God as dear children, and show God's character as Christ did, not to present, as from where we are as in Romans, our bodies a living sacrifice to God as our intelligent service,

but to give ourselves up in love as Christ gave Himself for us to God a sacrifice and offering. We are to walk in love, one essential name of God manifested in Christ, and walk as children of light; and if unable, Christ, who was the light of the world, will enlighten us.

Remark the perfectness of affection presented in chap. v. We may look up in affection or look down. The higher the object, if we look up, the nobler the affection. Here it is *to God Himself*; if we look down, the more unworthy the greater the love. So Christ *for us*; and Him we are to follow.

The *subjective* measure of our path is the truth as it is in Jesus, namely, the having put off the old man, which corrupts itself according to the deceitful lusts, and the having put on the new man, created after God; and not grieving the Holy Ghost. The *objective* measure, the blessed Lord, Christ manifesting God in this world as love and light. Only remark that we are said to be light in the Lord, not love; though we are to walk in it. For we have the purity of the divine nature in the new man, and as born of God, cannot sin. But love, after all, is sovereign goodness in God. Thus the Ephesians has nothing to do with the doctrine of Romans, that God justifies the ungodly; nor with death to the old man, learned in the death of Christ, by him who felt (as born of God) its power and bitterness, though this be recognised in that we have put off the old man; but with the new creation, and the purpose of God revealed to those who have part in it.

Romans deals with the old thing, only we have life in Christ. Ephesians reveals the new, and sets us in Christ by the same power which raised Him from the dead and sets Him at God's own right hand. Hence we are sitting in heavenly places, and there is union.

Colossian does touch on Roman ground, only sins are looked on as wholly gone when the divine action begins in Colossians, as is true of the old man in Ephesians; "having forgiven you all trespasses;" whereas their putting away is positively treated in Romans. But it does speak of putting off the body of the flesh, having died with Christ, and adds, "risen with him," which leads to "the body," and puts in a new place, but not in heaven, but that place looked to; and when this is treated of we are looked at as dead in sins, not dying or having died to sin, but dead in them. But heavenly

things are a matter of expectation, as newness of life here was in Romans. There is not new creation which involves God's purposes, in which nothing old is, and so new creation, and the full purpose as to our acquired place, our place in Christ, though not yet with Him.

The Colossian is renewed in knowledge (*avakawow*) after the image of Him that created him; the Ephesian created after God in righteousness and true holiness, and renewed (*avareow*) in the spirit of his mind, made fresh and new continually.

Galatians and 2 Corinthians require a few observations.

And first, of the latter, in the fourth and fifth chapters, we have the two points of death to sin and dead in sins referred to, confirming the explanation given. The former is the reducing the death to sin to practice.

Col. iii. is God's view of all Christians: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Hence He will not recognize a Christian to be alive in this world at all. He has members upon earth, his life is hid with Christ in God, he walked in evil practices *when* he lived in them.

Rom. vi. is faith's acceptance of this; a man recognizes himself to be dead.

2 Cor. iv., he realizes it, always bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in his body, and nothing else. There was the constant application of the cross, of the dying of Jesus, so as not to allow sin in his flesh to stir at all. He held the cross to it, and there is a realization of this in which all link with the world and the will of nature is broken, and confidence is in Him that raises the dead, so that death working in a man, the sentence of death in himself, not to trust self, the life of Christ only lives, and thinks, and works in him. Death was applied to all that was nature in Paul, so that only the life of Christ in him worked in others. It was much to say, but Paul could say it of himself, and God put him to the test to see if it was made good. He was delivered to death that only the life of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal flesh.

We must compare 2 Cor. i. to understand this properly. (See *vv.*, 8, 9.) Only chap. iv. comments on and explains what is there historically stated. This was death, the

sentence of death realized in always bearing about the dying and suffering in the flesh, ceasing from sin; only being thorough in his path, it was for Jesus' sake he was delivered to death. There was no flesh or lust at work, and the dying of Jesus borne about in what would have been the seat of sin, prevented the motions of them. I repeat, it was a great deal to say, but so it was. Christ was perfect in never allowing sin to enter; we practically, as far as may be in us, in never letting our will and lusts move when sin in the flesh is there, by applying His dying to hinder its even stirring. The Lord grant we may do it constantly! In chap. v. we judge that all were dead. If we live, then we belong, as we have seen in Ephesians, to a new creation (*vv.* 16, 17). This belongs to a wholly new creation; it is not, "he is;" but, "a new creation." Thus much 2 Cor. affords us.

A word now on Galatians. The comparison of Gal. ii. 19-21 and Rom. vi. is full of interest, and clears up the operation of law and our being crucified with Christ much. In Rom. vii. we read, "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." The law brought death on my conscience, for it is a ministration of death, and a ministration of condemnation. But in Rom. vii. we have not the man delivered (save the last verse), but the process by which the soul learns what the flesh is, and our need of deliverance. Sin in the flesh is there, and the law comes and forbids it in its first movements, in lust. It brings death on the conscience; sin rose up alive, which was dormant in indifference, nothing being done which affected the natural conscience; but "thou shalt not lust" brought in death. Then comes the experience under law—'no good in me'—then 'it is not me'—then 'it is too strong for me,' and then deliverance. The law of the Spirit of life in Him, and sin in the flesh condemned in His sacrifice. In a word, the process of discovery of sin and its power in us, and the deliverance through Christ.

In Galatians, in contrast with legalists, we have the matter viewed from the Christian point of view. In that very work of the law which Romans owned, brought in death, that death is viewed as a sentence judicially executed on me. I am dead to it, by being dead. But if it had been the direct application of the law to oneself, it would have been condemnation as well as death. Still the apostle gives it its

full effect—he “by law was dead to law.” The law had judicially killed him. But that was as alive in the flesh. But how was this really done? Christ had been crucified; he had been crucified with Him, nevertheless lived, but not he, the killed Saul, but Christ lived in him. Thus the law had killed him; he did not exist any more; but the condemnation did not come in with the death, because it was really in Christ’s death; it had taken place so that the condemnation was all gone, taken by another, and he dead by that which effected it, and Christ now lived in him. This death the law itself could effect and did; at least it did in the conscience of the renewed man, only it was done in the crucifixion of Christ, that the condemnation might not accompany it. For death is always *my* death, but it is thus deliverance from flesh.

There is another word in the Galatians we may notice, vi. 14, 15. This leads us not to the new creation exactly, but that that alone was of any value. He gloried not in a worldly religion, what the world and self could recognise as done in the flesh; he gloried only in the cross. This is the shame of it more than death, though death it was, but a death of shame by which the world was put out; that which morally was all his glory, but made an end of every worldly glory. All that was glorious for him was the world’s deepest shame, and where he had been crucified to the world, looked down at it from that which closed all connection with it. ‘Dead to the world’ is not a scriptural expression simply as such, only we are not, having died to its principles in Christ, recognised as being alive in it. But it is not like sin, or the law, which, as far as we are concerned, have ceased to exist for us if we have died. They are either in us ending in death, or that which has ceased to exist for me altogether if I have died. Not so the world. I have done with it, but have to remain in it and be kept from the evil, and overcome it, as Christ did, as dead to its principles. It never was “I;” sin, or the flesh was, and the law ceased to exist for me when I died, for it had power over me as long as I lived only. We have died to the world’s rudiments, its principles, which were in us; still having died, I do not reckon myself alive in it. Death is always *our* death, and that only, whatever it makes us dead to, and that is always in the cross, and we are dead to all He died to there, for we were crucified with Him. But one thing this passage shews,

that there is only the alternative—either fleshly ceremony and legal righteousness, which is none, or a new creation.

One thing remains to consider—the types which relate to this. If we look at the history of Israel up to the Red Sea, it is in itself entirely complete, for we have actual judgment on one hand, and complete deliverance on the other; death and judgment on the one hand, and salvation by them on the other, *i.e.*, death and judgment for man in rebellion, or in Christ—delivering by them. When we come to experimental application, the state we get into by faith in this redemption, we must go further, and take in the Wilderness and Jordan and what followed. In this aspect the Red Sea begins the Christian course. The blood of the passover had met God's eye as righteous Judge, and His love can freely and righteously deliver, and they are delivered at the Red Sea. Christ's death and resurrection are a perfect redemption and deliverance. "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." God has "borne them on eagles' wings, and brought them" to Himself. It is, in a word, redemption, making us thus strangers and pilgrims indeed in this world, bringing us to God Himself. The wilderness thus becomes the place where God exercises men, and brings out what is in their heart. (See Deut. viii. 2, 3, and 15, 16.)

Another part of Christian life (Canaan) is added to this, which, though not at the same moment perhaps in exercise, yet is part of the same life, for the Christian is always in the wilderness, and always in heavenly places in Christ. That is, whoever has the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him. His intelligent realization is another thing; his enjoyment of it in faithful carrying out still another; but both are his place. He is sitting in heavenly places in Christ, he is walking on this earth as a pilgrim in the wilderness.

I proceed to consider the type of Jordan and what follows. Jordan is death, and still Christ's going down into it, but it is not God's rod smiting the sea, so that what was judgment was salvation: there there was no Ark. In Jordan in this passage of death the Ark goes first, or man could not pass; not defence and salvation and deliverance *from* their Egypt condition, their coming *out* free, but their going *in* to the

place of promise. It is the same death of Christ, but going down before His sheep, so that having taken away its power wholly, they should pass over dry shod; there was no barring river—the waters were gone—but an entrance into Canaan. But an entrance into Canaan, not for rest, but *for* conflict as the Lord's Host, in the good fight of faith against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places.

The Ark there is the efficient cause; that is, Christ going into death, but we going down there with Him, though after Him, so that it is not His being delivered for my offences, wounded for my transgressions, nor even deliverance from bondage. Sin in the flesh condemned on the cross, and I free as to a divinely given title by redemption; but I have gone through death with Him, and am come up out of Jordan into the heavenly places; not Christ dead for what I was, but my dying with Him, yet in His death.

Then I eat the old corn of the land, the manna. Christ as food for my pilgrimage and my wants, is not the character He has now, but Christ the food that belongs to the heavenly places. I sit there as to my title and standing without combat, and then combat to put my foot on and possess all. There it is that I am circumcised; that is, I have put off the body of the flesh. The rudiments of the world are done with, the reproach of Egypt is rolled away. Our *πολιτευμα* (citizenship) is in heaven; but this does not hinder my running on to attain Christ and the resurrection from among the dead, but the contrary.

The Jordan then gives us death *with* Christ, and coming up out of it, resurrection with Him, as we find it in Colossians. This introduces us into the heavenly condition personally. Then where they were, they were circumcised, which does not belong to wilderness condition. There the heart and flesh are tested as down here, for flesh is in us. But once passed the Jordan—dead and risen in Christ—there is circumcision—the putting off the body of the flesh; we have done with Adam, and have put on Christ. It is “the circumcision of Christ,” because it is the true force of that typical rite as we possess it in Him. We have put off the old man and put on the new. Then we eat the old corn of the land, do not recognise ourselves in this world, nor know any man after the flesh. Then we eat the passover; recognize, being circumcised (dead with Christ and that realized), the full force of His death as full of deliverance as well as

forgiveness, the close of all connection with Egypt, as Christ in death. Not now as blood on the door-posts, but as death to all the old scene, as seen of God.

Both the Red Sea and Jordan are Christ's death, but one is deliverance by sins put away and sin condemned in His death; the other our dying and resurrection with Him. Ephesian teaching, though connected with this, as to the having put off the old man and put on the new, which is the experimental part of it; that is, our state before God and our sitting in heavenly places in Christ is not found in the types. That is a wholly new creation when we were dead. There is no type of that. The types give the experimental knowledge of the redemption and deliverance of man.

2 Cor. iv. 10, 11 give us the practical carrying out of this (compare i. 8, 9). Verses 14-18 take Ephesian ground. Death is simply death and Christ's death, of which it is expressly said, "*In that he died, he died to sin once.*"

I may add another point which comes before us as regards death, both doctrinally and in the experience of the Apostle. In itself death is always simply our being dead with Christ. Its application or effect may vary. It always applies to our relationship with God in nature. But this may be sinful nature in me, so as to be death to sin, or to the law, which was God's measure of conduct or rule of life for us as alive as children of Adam. This death too closes; or it may apply to the principles of the world, the system that Satan has formed for the scene of the natural life's development and satisfaction without God. Of these we have spoken—and these are the material points, because these are either contrary to God, or that which applying to man alive in the flesh, brought in death and condemnation; because as God's law it must be such to sinners when brought to bear upon them.

But Christianity is connected with a power, brought into this world of sin, and not belonging to it at all, the power of the Spirit of God, which, besides freeing us from the power of evil as dead in Christ to sin and alive to God, associates us with Christ in the new creation, whether as revealing it in hope, or as setting us in it in Him. "If any man be in Christ (it is) a new creation." There is one to which as such he belongs. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God, who has recon-

ciled us to himself." God has "wrought us," for our "house which is from heaven." "We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained."

Now the old creation has a double aspect. Nature as God made it, and natural relationships which as His own creation God maintains the obligation of, and sustains as good, or on the other hand as fallen and in an evil state. Of this last I have spoken. We are delivered from the power of the evil that is in it. But while he who condemns creation in itself, and the relationships God Himself formed, as marriage, parental authority, or the like; or resists what He has established in the midst of evil as authorities to repress it, is an enemy of God, and is led by spiritual evil; yet, supposing power, and gift, and calling from God, a person may live out of all these, by the power which connects him with the new creation. The being in the natural relationships of God's old creation is not evil. It is very evil to say so. I do not speak of authorities now—it involves other questions; but of natural relationships.

But a man may, as a special vessel of the power of the new creation, be disconnected with the natural relationships of the old. Paul knew no man after the flesh. Not that he did not need daily, grace, diligence, and even a thorn in the flesh, as others might; but that there was positive power in which he lived above the whole scene through which he moved. He did not merely live as a Christian, keeping his body under, and we may say in a general and very full sense, out of the evil which corrupted the old creation; but, as to human relationships, out of the old creation as to his course and walk. He was before the world exclusively as a minister of God. But this is a question of power, and even of gift. It is not unconnected with deadness to the whole scene around; but still it is a matter of power and service. It was for the gospel's sake, to carry out the activities of God's love more undistractedly in the midst of the evil; insisting carefully on the other as established of God, being good. A man may live to God in them, acting up to them as of God, though, the power of evil having come in, he has to sit loose to them (1 Cor. vii. 29). He may in a legal way dread them, as not free to God; or he may, as outside of them, if really free, have nothing to say to them, yet recognise them in their place, because he is free.

The Lord says, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" in His service, John ii. 4, and goes down (12), He and His mother, and His disciples; and on the cross owns her when His service was accomplished, and commits her to the care of the disciple He loved. He could shew that He could appreciate the beauty of the lilies of the field, love the young man who ran up to Him as lovely in character; though He could not occupy Himself with lilies, and detected the sinful root which governed the young man's heart. He could take up children and bless them, though fully recognising they needed One come to save that which was lost. He could recognize, in a word, what was in nature of God, and manifest what was sin in it, because He was perfectly free from all evil, and it had no power whatever over Him; subject to Mary and Joseph, though conscious He was the Son of the Father. If we have such a place, it must of course be as dead, because sin is in us; but as free, though watchful, because Christ is our life.

Hence we can rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with those that weep, without a human cause save in others for joy or weeping, but in divine and gracious sympathy. But we must be wholly with Christ to do it truly, yet man to feel it truly as He was. Only in us this supposes us dead to self, for in us self is selfishness. I am "free from all," says the apostle, "that I may be the servant of all."

But this is not Gilgal nor circumcision. That rolls away the reproach of Egypt, puts away the body of the flesh, and deals with sin in ourselves. It needs this that there may be the free activity of God's love, not hindered by it; but there is more in it, the free power of the new creation, based on the cross of Christ; and we being such as we are, and where we are, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies, and delivered to death, too, to test and keep it thorough and effectual, and this where the free power is, and the call of God to it, in having the sentence of death in ourselves, the practical power of the cross, the dying of the Lord Jesus. The first power of this respects sin and the flesh, and the rudiments of the world (compare 1 Peter iv. 1-3, connected with iii. 18), but where this calling and free power is, may go on to being loose from all that might impede its exercise. Where this is not, the attempt to take it up is only Monksery, which may be sincere, and will prove that we are

not free, but slaves; sometimes with disastrous effects. Where that power is, it is indeed blessed, and the freest, fullest service. If we are in the relationship God owns and approves, the duty attaches to us which belongs to us, according to God, with the affections too, only as to self, our own state of soul, the passage quoted from 1 Cor. vii. 29 is our guide. As to mere natural objects sought, they turn us away; self is then the centre; enjoyed as of God when free, and not sought; God is owned in them. Honey could not be in a sacrifice; on the top of the rod, while pressing on doing "one thing," it may lighten the eyes. But we must be as the true Gideonites—lap the water with our tongue, as a dog lappeth, and not stoop down on our knees to drink. The times too are straitened.

J. N. D.

JONATHAN, ITTAI, AND MEPHIBOSHETH.

FAITH IN A VICTORIOUS CHRIST; LOVE FOR A REJECTED CHRIST; AND HOPE IN A RETURNING CHRIST.

"And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David; and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

"And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

"And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." (1 Samuel xviii. 1-4.)

"Then said the king to Ittai, the Gittite, wherefore goest thou with us? return unto thy place, and abide with the king, for thou art a stranger, and also an exile. Whereas, thou camest (but) yesterday, should I this day make thee to go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.

"And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also shall thy servant be.

"And David said to Ittai, Go, and pass over." (2 Samuel xv. 19-22.)

"And Mephibosheth, the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.

"And it came to pass, when he had come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?"

"And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me; for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king, because thy servant is lame.

"And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God; do therefore what is good in thine eye.

"For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king; yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right, therefore, have I yet to cry any more unto the king?"

"And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

"And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house." (2 Samuel xix. 24-30.)

There are three men in the above passages of scripture whose histories stand out with more or less prominence, during the early days, as well as the reign, and the restoration of David, King of Israel. There are others, too, in other scriptures, whose names are found amongst the "worthies," or "mighty men" of the king; but these three teach us their own special lesson in the connection in which we would now view them.

They may be looked at as affording types, with their deep instruction for our souls; or they may be viewed as individuals, and their history, whether long or short, may give us details of deepest profit. But I would now look at them simply in the light of an illustration of Faith, Love, and Hope.

Jonathan presents, as thus viewed—*Faith that strips itself for a victorious Christ*; Ittai—*Love that follows a rejected Christ*; and Mephibosheth—*Hope that waits for a returning Christ*!

All three may, and they will, be found practically in the actions and heart of the devoted Christian. Indeed, we find this, in the New Testament, fully and strikingly presented to us in the devoted Apostle of the Gentiles—Paul, who occupies a most peculiar place in the present period, or interval, which is known by the name of Christianity: the peculiar parenthesis, as we may term it, which lies between the first and the second advents of our Lord.

It has a very different character than all which went before, and from all that will come after: as an interval it

stands alone in all God's ways. Jesus, rejected by the world and His own people, and cast out as a malefactor, has gone on high to the right hand of God. There He remains as Man until "His enemies be made his footstool," and then He will come forth from the heavens with power and great glory to take to Him His great power and reign for a thousand years. Meanwhile, the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven, dwells with His people, as the other Comforter, who would abide with them for ever.

Paul, the apostle, introduced the peculiar characteristics of this period, and became in his own person, as well as in his teaching, the great exemplar and representative man of the interval, of whom it could be said (and of no other) "Be ye followers (imitators) together of me." This, too, without any qualification whatsoever. And while Christ is the true and only model for us, it is remarkable and blessed to find that in the peculiar line of truth presented in Phil. iii., where this is said, Paul is the very one by whom the Spirit of God could and would with wisdom say the words cited above.

The reason is plain. Redemption had set this "chief of sinners" free, to be for ever after the bondsman of Jesus. In one moment he was arrested in his dread career of sin, and brought captive to his Saviour's feet, thenceforth to run for the goal for which he pressed day after day—complete likeness to Christ, his Lord, in the bright scene of glory from which his Lord had spoken to him, and for which he was redeemed. All things, then, were dross and dung for the excellency of His knowledge. But he ran *to obtain* the full result of all; day by day he pressed towards the mark of the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus.

Now Jesus never ran *to obtain* anything which could make Him more perfect than He was. He ran the race from its beginning to its ending, as the author and finisher of faith, most surely. In this He is our great example. But the moment it became a question of running to obtain, the Spirit took up a vessel, and emptied it out of self and all; displaced this by the Christ he had seen in glory on the day of his conversion, and gave complete perfection, in likeness to Him in glory, as a goal for Paul to attain. Paul, then, rightly and fitly, by the Spirit can say, "Brethren, be followers together of me." "I run to 'obtain'; do you the same'!"

In Him, then, we find the living picture of all that these

three illustrate, combined in Himself, in this Epistle to the Philippians. Not only have we the "Faith that strips itself for a victorious Christ" (ch. iii. 7-9), and the "Love that follows a rejected Christ" (ch. i. 20), but we also find the "Hope that waits for a returning Christ," characterising Him as a heavenly citizen, who waited for his Lord; all then that remained of his condition while here below would drop off, and he be changed by the mighty hand of this returning Saviour from the glory (ch. iii. 20, 21).

Let us examine them shortly. The solemn day of Israel's trial had come under the king of their choice. Saul, with the Philistines, headed by their champion, Goliath of Gath—Satan's man, armed with his coat of mail, was there, terrifying the poor trembling Hosts of Israel. Man's man—Saul, was there too, and with the people he was "dismayed and greatly afraid." (1 Sam. xvii. 11.) God's man, too, the eighth son of Jesse, despised by his brethren, and but a stripling, was "feeding his father's sheep at Bethlehem" (v. 15). In his retirement he had learned to slay the lion and the bear with the strength of God. He had not sought to do this; but when the time had come in the path of duty, he did it in the strength of God; and no man seemed to have known it. If with "the Lord" they were but things of nought, so were they to the lovely faith of this blessed type of the true David himself. What or who, then, was this Philistine, before whom the armies of the living God were, alas, trembling?

I do not dwell on this exquisite scene—thank God now familiar to so many. Israel, like captive sinners, were in the power of the strong man armed; none dared to move unless at his bidding. But a stronger than he had come, and took from him the armour in which he trusted, and divided the spoils! David chose him five stones of the brook; the weakness of man, which five typifies, passing through the waters of death, was the instrument to destroy this mighty captor. With a sling and a stone David *pre-vailed* over the Philistine (v. 50) and slew him, and there was no sword in his hand. Mark the lovely word "*pre-vailed*." How it reminds of that other scene—other than the battle-field of Elah—when the elders told John, whose tears were falling on the crystal floor of heaven itself, (strange that heaven should have witnessed tears, and that tears fell on its very floor!), when the elder said to the

weeping seer, "Weep not; behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath *prevailed* to open the book," &c. How sweet the word! It was not by power, but by apparent defeat, for the cross was the "weakness of God;" yet there was strength displayed, as we sometimes sing—

"By weakness and defeat
He won the meed and crown;
He trod our foes beneath His feet,
By being trodden down."

Satan was vanquished in his last stronghold. Jesus entered into that prison house; but only to burst its bars asunder, and annul its power for ever! He went down that "He might destroy [the power of] him that had the power of death—that is the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Thus He prevailed. "But there was no sword in the hand of David" (1 Sam. xvii. 50). And "he ran and stood on the Philistine, and took *his sword*, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith." Then he returned with the spoils of his victory, the strong man's armour in which he trusted, the sword of the enemy, and his head in his hand.

Like the risen Jesus, triumphing over the whole domain of death, taking for His people, into His own hands, the power of death—that terrible foe!—and the "bruised head" of their mighty enemy.

At this moment, as David returned, we learn how it went with Jonathan. He (like Saul and the rest of Israel) was sharing the common results of deliverance from their common foe. Perhaps uncared for, and regarded with jealous looks by others, he passes on. Saul, like the Pharisee, Simon (Luke vii.), knew him not as the Lord's anointed; while the need of a broken-hearted woman of the city learned him as a Saviour! How deeply we feel—yea, are taught to feel this—that need alone, felt and owned by conscience before God, learns Him. Just as the need of the soul is learned, as page after page of its history now lies open before the opened eye of the once-blinded sinner, so does page after page of the tender mercies of His heart unfold themselves to our soul's consciousness.

But to return. Jonathan—yea, all Israel, as the people of God, were David's object in ch. xvii., and now (ch. xviii.) David becomes his. He beholds him with the tokens of his

victory in his hand, and his soul was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul! Touching history of that moment! The victor, not the victory, absorbed his heart!

What a picture of the risen Christ does this scene present! as He pointed to the wounds in His hands and His side on the evening of His resurrection; and the disciples' hearts were glad when they saw their Lord!

But another action characterised Jonathan. His heart was ravished with David as he stood before him. His faith saw in him the future King of Israel. And Jonathan stripped himself of his robe, his garments, his sword, his girdle—all were surrendered with a willing heart to David. All that made him honourable in the eyes of men, as the son of the King (his robe); all that surrounded him (his garments); his sword, for he was now a captive to the love that filled his heart. When a man surrenders his sword, it implies this. And his girdle; his service, too, was all at the disposal of him whom he loved. This was faith.

Is my reader prepared for this? Alas! how many there are who find, for the soul's everlasting joy and salvation, the victorious work of the Lord Jesus Christ (and surely we would wish their number was an hundredfold)! They learn their utter powerlessness to deliver themselves from the enemy, and they learn to bow to the victory of Jesus as their Saviour. Then comes the first bright moment of the soul's history, when the liberty wherewith He sets His people free is taken into the heart like cold water to the thirsty soul, and Jesus is truly precious. He stands before their souls as the peerless One. But when they find that Jesus looks for their hearts to be entirely His; He, who was *fully* for them in self-surrendering love on the cross, looks for them now to be *fully* for Him, and that this involves the surrender of that which makes them of repute in the world. Then their admiration wanes, alas! But what did Jonathan at this lovely moment? *All* was surrendered, and the heart was glad to do it to show its love. Yea, the actions were doubtless not thought of for the moment; for, where true love is, the heart is but too happy thus to bestow its all, and thinks not of what it gives its object.

How sad when we think of Jonathan's fate after this precious moment! How bright to think of Paul's, after his

long and chequered career in his Master's service. The first moment when his captor spoke to him, arresting him in his work of destruction, and made him His captive bondsman for ever after; that moment at which, he writes, he had counted all things loss for Christ. The long and trying years of service and sorrow for his Master had not cooled this first love of his devoted heart; and the same faith that stripped itself in his early days of discipleship for his victorious Lord, was fresh and bright to the end, when in the prison at Rome, he writes those words, "*I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him!*"

Does the eye of one who is but a sinner still, rest on these words? If so, I desire a word with you. God asks nothing, nor will he receive anything from you but your sins! Strange that this is the very first thing the sinner is called upon to surrender to Him. Ten thousand times ten thousand they may be. Well, Is not the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ enough to answer for them to God? Surely it is. *Has* it not answered Him, and presented to Him that which has met all the righteous claims of God? It has set Him so free in righteousness to bless you; so that were you the vilest sinner that ever trod this earth, He can, and will, in all the perfection of His grace, pardon you, and cleanse you, and give you a place in His love, and His house with Jesus for ever!

But the human heart refuses this. It is humbling to the proud heart of man to find that he can give nothing to God but his sins; to find that God will receive *them* from him, and blot *them* out with the precious blood of Jesus. But this needs a humble and a contrite heart—a soul sensible of its own complete and hopeless ruin. It is then, when the heart submits to this, that God meets it with fulness of pardon and grace. As long as there remains in the soul of the sinner one lingering thought that there is even the capability of receiving and enjoying with grateful heart this grace of God, it has not come to the end of all hope in self, and as long as this is so, faith in God and the fullness of His grace is unknown.

How sweet, then, for the sinner to find himself at the deepest spot of ruin, and to discover that his total condemnation is met by the sovereign grace of God, and then all is free. Has my reader reached that trysting-place with

God? Has he found that the cross of the Lord Jesus, where his total ruin speaks with an eloquence far beyond what human language can express, is the spot where the living grace of that God whom he there finds, flows out to him in righteousness, to save, to pardon, and to bless?

Just as David, single-handed and alone, vanquished the mighty enemy at that day, and Jonathan's full heart, bowed to the victory which he had accomplished, so has the powerless sinner but to bow in simple, unquestioning faith to the mighty victory of the greater than David—Jesus, Son of David, Son of God, and enter upon the spoils and fruits of the triumph of his Lord.

And if this faith be thine, it will go on (as Jonathan's at the moment of which we speak) to strip itself, and lay itself—its all, at the feet of the Conqueror, thenceforth to be the bondsmen of such a Master and Lord.

Reader, have you the "Faith that strips itself for a victorious Saviour?"

But we now turn to another picture. David, at the revolt of Absalom his son, in passing forth from Jerusalem, a rejected king. A usurper occupies his throne.

And is not this the day of the rejection of Jesus? A usurper fills the throne of the world as its prince. Satan is entitled "The prince of the world." He received this title for the first time when he had (apparently) driven the true prince out of it (*cf.* Jno. xiv. 30).

A sorrowful scene, yet full of tenderest associations, presents itself to us in 2 Sam. xv. David is passing forth from Jerusalem, leaving the throne in possession of his rebel son. His counsellor, Ahithophel, had sold him by his treachery. David might then, in spirit, say, "Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up (his) heel against me." (Ps. xl. 9.) How much more deeply, yea, in its depths, might Jesus say those words, and feel them in all their intensity (Jno. xiii. 18), when about to pass through Jerusalem (Jno. xv.-xvii.) on His way across "the brook Kedron" (Jno. xviii. 1; and 2 Sam. xv. 23) to His passion, His cross, His grave!

At this moment Ittai the Gittite appears. (2 Sam. xv. 19.) He was but a stranger and an exile; he had come but yesterday. And David owns this, and gives him the opportunity to return. He would not *command* the affection of others,

and involve them in his own rejection ; he would value it and accept it when it came in all its freshness from the heart of one who was devoted to him.

And Jesus looks not for the forced services and forced discipleship of any whom He has served and saved. He, too, would test the hearts of those who follow Him in the day of His rejection, when a usurper fills His throne.

"Should I this day (said David to Ittai) make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee." It was a critical moment in his career. He "might have had opportunity to have returned." He might have lived on, in ease and quietness at Jerusalem, having shown his willingness to go with the king. He might have enjoyed a character for devotedness which cost him but little. But this did not meet what his heart desired. David was rejected—and would he not share this rejection with him whom he loved? Mark his reply. "And Ittai answered the king, and said, (As) the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be"! No other place would suit his devoted heart.

One can almost picture to oneself this lovely scene. The mournful refusal of the king to force the identity of others with his trouble. The earnest words of Ittai, as they two stood and talked together. How then refuse such devotedness? No, David would not: the test was applied to his heart, and he stood firm. "And David said to Ittai, Go, and pass over." It was enough! Too many words would but spoil the scene. It illustrates in the most lovely way the love that follows a rejected Christ.

How like the response of heart to His own words when He speaks of His rejection and death (John xii. 26), "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, ('in death or in life,' may we not say?) there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

Look now at the Ittai of the New Testament, as we may say—Paul, the prisoner of Jesus, in his prison-house at Rome. There he sat—the sufficiency of Christ filling his heart; and his appearance before Nero fast approaching, of which death seemed the issue, for his rejected Master. He writes, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope,

that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain!"

Has my reader the "Love that follows a rejected Christ"?

"The hope that waits for a returning Christ" we find touchingly illustrated in Mephibosheth. The days of the king's exile had passed by. No doubt they were slow and full of mourning to him who waited for his return to his throne. At last the day of reckoning had come, and judgment had overtaken Absalom (chap. xviii.) the usurper; while Ahithophel had, like Judas, hanged himself (ch. xvii). The king would now render to each their due. Amongst the others came Mephibosheth to meet the king. While he was absent, Mephibosheth was like a man who waited for his own Lord (*cf.* Luke xii. 36). He had "neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed, until the day he came again in peace" (2 Sam. xix. 24). His heart went with David, though his feet were lame, and he could not walk. Some may have said that all this appearance of mourning was feigned, judging from the outward appearance, for Mephibosheth had stayed at Jerusalem. But "man looketh (and generally faultily) on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." How true, if this was so, in their judgment of him, as of his master of old, when he was chosen king (see 1 Sam. xvi. 7), "As with his master, so with his servant." And David himself asks him, "Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?" But we read his pleading answer feelingly—for appearances were against him (like many another that had met the same), and he felt it ill to plead his own cause with the one he truly loved, when appearances spoke differently. (See *vv.* 26-28.) Again, David's words were but barbed arrows in his devoted follower's heart.

Are there not times when the Lord's servants have to feel these things too—when no eye but His who knows their inmost heart can tell what is there, in spite of all that speaks with eloquence, as it would appear, against them—yea, when even their Lord Himself seems to throw them back from Him? But oh, what tenderness is His in this seeming harshness of His ways! It was but to reach

through the failures, to the true spot in their hearts, only known to Him, when even the servant himself hardly dares to assert his affection for his Master—all looks so contrary. But when He does so, it is but to remove that which clouded the bright spot of which *He* is aware, and which His own grace had produced or placed there, that He may take them more into His confidence, and fill their hearts with His love more than ever! How Peter learned this, when the Lord so probed his heart, that he was “grieved,” and then he was forced to appeal to “Him who knew all things,” to find that real affection for Him which was in his heart, which none else could see but Jesus; and surely appearances were against him when, with curses and oaths, he denied Him in Pilate’s hall!

The test was applied to Ittai’s love, when David wished him well, and told him to return; and he refused. David, and David’s path of rejection was Ittai’s, and he would have no other. Now comes the testing of Mephibosheth’s hope. Did he await David’s return that he might gain thereby? Was the land his object, or the blessings he would then receive?

“And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.” And Mephibosheth’s heart withstood the test. He wanted only the king, and his grateful heart found object enough in his lord. “And Mephibosheth said, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace to his own house.”

David and David’s rights were all his thought. It was not for the advantage he would most surely have when the king returned to his own, which he sought. His mourning was ended, and the reality that he was not only “*like* a man who waited for his lord,” but was so proved. David had returned, and this was enough; till then he felt that Jerusalem was not his home.

And so Paul could say, “For our citizenship (πολιτευμα) is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able ever to subdue all things to himself,” (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

Reader, have you the “Faith that waits for an absent but returning Christ”?

SOME THOUGHTS ON JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER IV.

JESUS Himself did not baptize, because He was presented as the Messiah to the Jews; and knowing that He was rejected, and that He must take His true character as Saviour-God, He did not baptize for a thing that should pass away. His disciples baptized, but with the baptism of John. As a prophet, Jesus followed the same preaching as John. He preached that the kingdom was near. Our Evangelist, John, has given us the ministry of Jesus, exercised in *Jerusalem*, while the others give us that which He fulfilled in *Galilee*.

Jesus leaves Judea because the Jews would not receive Him—His heart aggrieved at seeing their rejection of Him. He leaves, therefore, in pure righteousness, this place of religious pride, to betake Himself among the “poor of the flock,” and passes through Samaria, where He presents Himself simply as the Saviour of sinners. It is there He commences His public ministry, as we have said. Remark now, it is observed, that Sychar was near the possession of Jacob, which shows that the Samaritans were in the territory of Israel, though they had a false worship in opposition to that which was offered at Jerusalem. The Jews were right in keeping aloof from them, not wishing to mix with the Samaritans, because it was according to the mind of God to testify against the false worship, and in favour of the truth that God had committed to their trust. But Jesus could visit Samaria, because He was on the ground of grace towards all men indiscriminately.

Jesus arrives at the well, wearied every way; and there we see in Him the real Man, undergoing all human weakness. And precisely in these circumstances, and at the very well, He meets with a poor sinner—the Samaritan woman who had been familiar with the passions of this world; for truly sin is the companion of man. She, in consequence of her conduct, was isolated from the society of this world—she was ashamed of being found with the other women. The sixth hour corresponds with our noon, and the evening was the ordinary time of the women going to draw the water. Jesus (marvellous to say!) is found in the same external circumstances. He had been driven away by the Jews, and still more isolated than the woman in this world, not because of sin, but because of His holiness and faithfulness. And

thus these two persons, who were, as it were, the two extremes, are found in the same place, drawn there at this hour by such different motives.

Then, indeed, He who had created the water abases Himself to the point of seeking a little water from this woman. "If thou knewest the gift of God!" If she knew that God is not there as on Mount Sinai, surrounded with thunderings and with fire, Jesus is here the gift of God, and God is a giver, and such for the greatest of sinners. In Jesus God gives, not demands, as He did with the law. It is not a question of what man is, or of what he should be. Jesus brings with Him all that is needful for man. It is only sinners who are found in company with the Saviour. "If thou knewest thou wouldst have asked of him." That is, if she had known that God had come down so low to meet men, she would then have had confidence and liberty to ask Him anything! The knowledge of Jesus produces this confidence, because by nature sin has made us distrustful of God. Water is eternal life by the Holy Spirit. Water for Israel, in the wilderness, is only a figure of that which we have who believe.

But the poor woman is full of her misery, and knows not how to lift herself above it. Such is the natural man who understands not the things of the Spirit. This is the way always, so that Jesus is obliged to take another way with her—that is to say, by her conscience, which every man has. And when the conscience is convicted, then the spiritual intelligence comes into existence. The woman replies, "I have no husband," which words, in confessing one part of the truth, hides another part of it. Jesus touches her conscience. Such is the power of the Word of God, which strikes the conscience, penetrates into it, exposes the evil there, and the effect is that one knows that God has been there. The Word of God is a two-edged sword that penetrates deeply into the soul, and nothing can resist it.

The woman then perceives that He is a prophet. But still she seeks to avoid the effect of this question, and wishes to reason on worship. This opposition affords opportunity to Jesus to reveal the new relationship established between God and man. From henceforth God sets everything aside not only the *false* worship on their mountain, but also the *true* at Jerusalem, with which God had proved if the flesh—the natural man—could worship God with forms and outward

ceremonies. But all was in vain. And now that God is fully revealed in His Son, it is necessary that worshippers be adapted to His own nature. God is a Spirit and must be worshipped in Spirit and in truth. It is necessary, therefore, that worshippers worship Him according to what He is. The Father Himself seeketh such worshippers: if He puts on one side this new worship needful for God, on the other the grace of the Father seeks the worshippers.

It appears she had wants in her soul; and when once the conscience was convicted by the Word of God, she recognises Christ as a prophet, and Jesus says, "I, that speak unto thee, am he." If a soul can truly say I need Christ, then we can answer him with certainty you have Him; because, when God touches the heart, it is a proof that God is there to work this.

At this point the woman leaves her waterpot, symbol of the object of her pre-occupation before knowing Christ; but after having known Him, the waterpot no longer comes into her mind. Other things far greater occupy her mind and heart. And when the eternal things of God are the object of the heart, terrestrial things are no longer anything, or at best but accessories. She leaves the waterpot and goes to preach; and, full of Christ, she fears not to speak to all. "He told me all that ever I did." She is no longer ashamed to confess her past sins, for she has been in the presence of the Judge, and He has not remembered them to her.

The Lord had come, as we have said, tired in body and grieved in soul, to the well; but then He is comforted and refreshed with a food that the disciples themselves knew not yet. They did not yet know the secret that Jesus carried within Himself. The conversation with this woman was to Him a sign that the fields were white to harvest, notwithstanding His rejection. The secret meat of Christ is the salvation of the souls—that He found in the path of perfect obedience to His Father. The disciples had looked upon Samaria, not as a country ripe for harvest, but rather as an impure place.

How marvellous is the conduct of Jesus with this poor sinner. He has stooped so low, in order to inspire confidence and liberty in our hearts. He asked a little favour from the woman, in order that she, and we too, might be able to receive from His hands His gifts. He wished to drink a

little of our water in order to invite us to drink of His living fountain, as He had once done to Abraham, from whom He was pleased to accept a little of his kid, to eat at the door of his tent, with a view of revealing to him His own eternal counsels (Gen. xxiii). He accepted a sojourn of two days amongst the Samaritans in order to taste the joy of the harvest.

Let us recapitulate this most precious subject. The Lord had presented to the woman the privileges of eternal life, according to the power of the Holy Spirit. He had announced that God gave and did not exact, and that the water which He gave would be a fountain of water springing up to eternal life. He had shown that, to know that God has come down so low, inspires confidence in the heart, but the carnal man understands not spiritual things, and the restless woman cares not to be freed from her toil. Then the Lord works that which we need. In His love He makes His word penetrate into her conscience, saying to her, "Go call thy husband." The word convicted her conscience, and makes her feel that God knows all, and that she is now found in His presence. The woman understands that Christ was a prophet, because He brought the Word of God, which thoroughly exposed her.

Observe, that spiritual intelligence is formed through the conscience. Although there were wants in her heart, yet she was quite in a maze, as, is the case with many souls. Speaking of external religious things, of the mountain and of Jerusalem, of worship true and false, the Lord makes her feel that it is not a question of any external worship, but that God had revealed Himself, and that therefore there was the necessity of spiritual worship; and further, that the Father in His grace, was seeking worshippers. This leads the woman to say that the Messiah, who was to come, would teach her everything. Then Christ fully reveals Himself.

Spiritual intelligence enters into man by the word—God is recognised by the word. The need of Christ is there seen where His name is known, and He fully reveals Himself. But He who has spoken from the beginning is this very Christ: and if the conscience has been convicted, He will be revealed; and the soul, freed from its anxiety, will receive power. The woman has gone to tell of Christ in the city, and has forgotten her waterpot.

The Samaritans, after having had Jesus with them for two days, tell the woman, "We have heard from himself and know," etc. They had digested the word from the Lord, and they were not contented with only hearing it only. And this is an important thing. The Word must be digested in the heart. As natural food, the Word becomes part of ourselves, and becomes our power and our life. Otherwise if it be but heard, it becomes a matter of memory, and not of power and of life.

The country of which He speaks (verse 44) is Judea. After two days so happily spent in Samaria, He goes into Galilee, where He finds, therefore, a faith inferior to that of the Samaritans. They receive Him only because of the things they had *seen* Him do in Jerusalem; and Jesus says to them, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The Samaritans had believed Jesus on His own word, but the Galileans believed on Him for the works.

Moreover, this kind of faith lowers the dignity of the Lord, or rather fails to apprehend Him in His true dignity. The Samaritans own Him as "the Saviour of the world;" the Galilean nobleman but partly believes in Him as able to cure his sick child.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

CHRIST, in His death, bore all the wrath that I deserved. In a word, He bore death for everything, for judgment was on everything. His Cross is that by which, through Him, all things are alone reconcilable to God, whether things in heaven or things on earth; all in me the contrary to God is judged there, and through it only am I reconcilable to God. It is not my sins merely, but everything under judgment from which the Cross frees me. People will admit that nothing but the Cross could free them from their sins, and place them in reconciliation with God; but everything here is under judgment, and there is no *other way* for everything else to be reconciled but in the same way as I—a sinner, have been. If everything here is reconcilable through the Cross, it is evident that everything needed reconciliation; and no reconciliation could be effected but through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which you and I ought to say, "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. vi. 14.) Nay, make it our boast, "God forbid that I

should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is evident that the apostle is not here speaking of his sins. He is speaking of all the things under judgment; and he is glorying before God in his own position through it—not grieving that he has to give up the world, or trying to keep as much of it as he can without losing the peace of his conscience, but that he is absolutely severed from it all through the cross of Christ; the world crucified to him and he unto the world.

If you felt that judgment was on everything, you would like to be relieved from it; you know what a relief it is to you to put the Cross between you and your sins, or rather to know that God has done so. Now, you would not revert to your sins—you would not neutralise the efficacy of the Cross and return to the responsibility of your sins. You rejoice that it has for ever, in God's sight, severed you from your sins. You glory in it, and rightly so, for it is God's doing, and you glorify Him as you exult in it and enjoy it.

Now, if you could feel about everything in the world as you do about your sins, you would rejoice that by His same cross, "by him I say," you are crucified to the world, and the world to you, as it is through it only, through Him, there is reconciliation for everything contrary to God.

It determines the question at once between what is of man and what is divine. *Everything* connected with the first Adam, or with which he was connected, is judged in the death of Christ; all the judged things stand on one side of His death; all the unjudged things on the other side. When His life has reached us, or we have reached it, and everything according to God, am I sorry *then* to lose anything judged in His death? Nay, I am rejoiced, when loyal in heart to Him, to find that in the same moment, and by the same act, I am freed from my sins and all around me not of God, which is under judgment. Everything not *reconciled* through the cross, by Him who bore it, is under judgment. How cheering to my heart to realize that I am through the cross of Christ entirely out of it, "and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

It is important to see *all* that the Cross embraces, and that the death of Christ separates me from everything here unto Himself. His death alone connects me with anything here. I remember Him in His death, and announce

it till He comes. What else does the scene tell me of? It *required* His death to effect reconciliation for me and for everything that I see. Could this very earth be reconciled without His death? We know it could not! Can I look at it, or admire it, without recalling the price of reconciliation—or rather, is not every article on earth, as it were, labelled with it? His death is the only agreeable association, solemn and momentous as it is, that you can have on earth. Everything else that you see, and yourself, alas! *required* it. You are in the place and scene for it, and you ought to be thankful that it has secured you in God's sight absolutely, as a new man, entirely apart from the scene, though while in it, this is your only association—your only admissible contact with it, for if you had not His death how should you find a place of escape from it; and, therefore, it (His death) becomes the true and most grateful remembrance of your heart towards Him, while you are *on* the earth. You do not like to remember Him in any other place here; you like to remember Him where He ended everything against God—everything of the old man—and brought in everything according to the heart of God. Is it not simple? Is it not natural?

You cannot go too much into the haunts of men seeking for the silver piece, but you must go there as a widow of this world, (not as a worldling—"of the world," but as Christ,) sweeping the house, and seeking diligently for the silver piece. The evangelist is not *for* the world, he is *for* the Church, but *to* the world.

THE MAN OF GOD.

Unrecognised, alone,
He sojourned here, the Prophet sent of God;
The hope of Israel came unto His own,
His own received Him not.

There was not found on earth
One single spot her Ruler might possess;
E'en Bethlehem discredited His birth,
Reproached His lowliness.

He sought for hearts that dared
To entertain a Stranger in the land,
Drew to Himself "the little ones" prepared
Beneath Jehovah's hand.

He, instant to discern,
Omnipotent the will of God to do,
Obedience through His sufferings would learn
The faithful One and true.

He took no praise of men—
 Eternal object of the Father's love—
 His holy course was far beyond their ken,
 His body was alone.

Homeless, except on high,
 They saw the Heir in servant guise descend;
 They cast Him out. He knew that He must die,
 Love's all of wealth to spend.

* * * * *

"JESUS!" would He expose
 His people's state, from God so far removed?
 No! in Himself enduring all the woes,
 He wept; they stood unmoved.

He told not out the grief
 Of His pure spirit into mortal ear;
 The Father's bosom most was His relief
 When trouble drew most near.

The Father's will He made
 His daily food, Man, living by God's word;
 Dependant always, still He watched and prayed,
 And from the depths was heard.

Right, onward to the cross,
 Unceasing witness to the truth He bore;
 There with all shame, all agony and loss,
 The cup, His cup, ran o'er.

'Twas there God made Him "sin:"
 'Twas there the just One took the robber's place;
 There, o'er Death's mounting waves came broadly in
 God's ocean tide of grace.

Through weakness crucified,
 He bore the wrath of God, His God alone;
 Now nevermore the judgment flames divide
 God's favour from His own.

In Hades' deepest gloom
 Three days and nights among the dead He lay;
 The Father's glory raised Him from the tomb,
 Lord of the perfect day.

* * * * *

One Spirit with the Lord,
 Baptized His yoke, His pilgrim path to share;
 Ours be His patience, till His call be heard,
 To meet Him in the air.

We shall behold His face!
 Changed to His perfect likeness we shall be.
 Oh, God! to praise the glory of Thy grace,
 Where all things are of Thee!

THE SANCTUARY, THE LAVER, AND THE
PEOPLE OF THE LORD.

JOHN xiii. 1-20; 31-38.

IN the tenth chapter of John the Lord is presented to us as the Shepherd, leading out of the Jewish things, and, by dying, bringing His people into the new place, obtaining the flock, the sheep, for Himself; securing them in a blessed enclosure, where they are characterised as going in and out, and finding pasture. He is seen, of course, as laying down His life, that He might have these sheep.

In the eleventh chapter He is represented as "the resurrection," not only as laying down His life, and obtaining the sheep, but as "the resurrection and life" Himself, with power in Him to raise His own from the dead.

In the twelfth chapter (I just mention these leading points in the chapters) we find something far more blessed. He is there represented as the "corn of wheat" that "falls into the ground and dies," that it may bear much fruit. His own are really there associated with Him; seen as the very fruit of this precious grain that has fallen into the ground. It has borne fruit, the corn of wheat *itself*, and they are seen as part of that very corn—part of its preciousness and beauty. It falls into the ground and dies alone, but it does not come up to be alone; it comes up bearing fruit.

It seems to me that in this thirteenth chapter the Lord is bearing all this in mind. He is here seen with His eye on the sanctuary, and on the things of God—the precious things of God. He is here the mighty High Priest, the Eleazar with the javelin in His hand. His first thought is *God*, His next, the *things* of God.

What He is presenting is plainly what is going on now. The hour is come that He should depart out of the world unto the Father. It was *either* the world *or* the Father with Him. It was where the Father was that marked the place where He was going, and which also marked His own in a very peculiar way, not only as His sheep, but as His in a divine, peculiar way. It gives us the value of the fact, not only that they *belong* to Him, but that the very perfection of the *grain itself* is seen upon those who are His in this world.

He goes up on high, and takes His place between the sanctuary and the world, where His own are. He is seen

as the *laver*, which stands between the sanctuary and the brazen altar, and which is approached after the brazen altar has done its work. He is looking at them with all the results of that upon them most truly, but they are still in the world. He says, 'You are bathed, you are perfectly washed.' But then He is leaving them here, and He puts Himself as guardian over them, and as guardian, too, of the sanctuary, and not only over them. He says, 'I have bathed you,' but it is a question of *service* here. And thus He stands with a drawn sword, saying, 'Are you for God or for the adversaries?' I cannot allow you to enter there until you have not only been bathed, but until you have submitted your feet to my care—until you have submitted your walk to me. 'Do you desire to enter there?' 'Not until you have washed your feet.' But, you say, 'The work has been finished!' 'Yes, so it has, but there is your *walk*.'

How blessed it is to see the Lord thus with His eye upon the Most Holy, and His eye upon us! There may be nothing of this world about us—nothing of these selfish thoughts. You are not to go in there with these. He must look after the sanctuary. He must guard the things of God; and what is more, He must care for *you*. He cannot disconnect in their thoughts that sanctuary and His poor people down here. He cannot be satisfied without having them in there.

But, you say, 'Have not I a *right* to be in there?' Of course you have. But you have also a right first to have your feet in His hands, that you may go in there with priestly garments, with priestly walk, and with priestly discernment. How blessed it is to know, however careless you and I may be in this way, as to God's requirements, that here is One who stands with His sword drawn, and will not let anything enter in that is not fit for God's presence.

There is a twofold aspect of this. The *place* is so beautiful, so fitted for His own; and then they are so fitted for *it*! That is how He cares for them. It is those who are already washed that, by His priestly care, He looks after in this way. And what is so blessed in it all is, interested as the Lord is in us, He is still more interested in the sanctuary. If His interest took the form of mere love and graciousness it would lose sight of what God's truth is, and it would lose sight of those for whom God has done everything, and shown them that they are really part of that corn of wheat that has come up and borne fruit,

And the Lord says all this; sets it before us, beloved friends, as our example. He says, if we call Him Lord and Master, He has given us an example that we should do as He has done, and that the servant is not greater than his Lord. You see *service* comes in—*service*. And, as He says elsewhere, though we are not greater, it is enough that we be *as*. That is to say, that we have the same place given to us that is given to Him—that place of service that is between the sanctuary and those who are “His own”—those who have received from God’s hands all the benefits of that altar. You and I have the privilege offered to us of standing as servants there, between that sanctuary and those who have come to the altar—of standing in the way of those who would seek to pass that laver, without submitting themselves, and everything connected with their walk, to the hands of that Lord whom that laver typified.

How one sees it is so! See Moses, who comes forth from the presence of God with the Tables of the Law in his hand, and finds things as they were. Mark his holy zeal according to the presence of God—according to what he had seen there—what it was to him to come out from that presence, and see things as they really were down here. Mark his zeal for the tabernacle, that it should be taken away and put outside of that which was so contrary to it, so that those who went out to it should go in a manner suited to the One who dwelt there.

The Lord presents Himself here as the blessed Kohathite bearing the vessels of the sanctuary—every one of them blessed because they belong to it. And He puts us into the same place as those who have to bear the burdens of the sanctuary. Do you know what it is to bear the burdens of the sanctuary? Oh, you say, I have plenty of burdens to bear! Yes; but do you know what it is to bear the burdens of the *sanctuary*? Do you know what it is to cover it up from the rude gaze of the world?

You say, Oh, I do not know such an one! I cannot get on with him! Well, you have lost an opportunity of bearing the burdens of the sanctuary. It is one thing to detect flesh in any one; but is not the *vessel* beautiful? Wherever it has got practically, wherever its feet are, it may not be submitting them to the washing of that blessed One. Still, do you know how to be like Him, always ready? He never takes His eye off the saint. He is always ready. The

moment you take your eye off the *saint*, and get your eye on the *people*, you have lost the sense of what God has made them, and consequently you are not fitted to deal with them as those who have got at heart the testimony of the Lord—the claims of God. Having lost your ground you come down, and show perhaps a sentimental care for them, but you will find you have lost your true place.

It is a question here, too, not only of the Lord's priestly service, but of *ours*. For you know how it is said of the seed of Aaron, that they were not to have any blemish; if they had, they were not to come nigh to offer—a question it was of *offering*, not of *eating*. It is a question of your being *used*. And surely we see it in the Lord himself. What was it with Him? You say, Well, He had a few precious things, and He knew what it was to spread His wing over them, and protect them. And so He did, but He had His eye always on high whilst He did so. He never took his eye from that place that He knew so well. Never!

If He went into the temple, He said, as it were, *This* the temple! *This* the house of prayer! I know better than that! His priestly eye discerned it at once, and He did not shrink to denounce it.

Nor did His love to His own—precious as they were to Him, but only precious in a divine way—shut His eyes to what they were. Do you think He could have allowed his love to be blind to their defects—blind to their faults?

And then, in the end of the chapter, He presents Himself to them as going away. He says, You cannot follow me now; you shall seek me, and you shall not find me, for you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow me afterwards. He is showing that our love here, one for another, is in connection with going where they could not follow Him then, but where we can follow Him now. Unless we know what it is to have followed Him, gone with Him where He is gone now, how can we know the sort of love to display one to another? It is a question of going inside the veil. When we get there we see the sort of place it is; we see what is suited to it; we know the character of love that is worthy of the place.

Peter had no thought of God's love, of God's glory, of God's place. His love to the Lord was such as to actually blind Him to what God's glory claimed. What could be more subtle? It was his love which led him to be really devoted, and yet his eyes were closed to that character of

devotedness that was needed. He did not know what it was to put his feet into the Lord's hand.

Surely it is a wonderful thing to submit our feet, our walk, into His hands; our feet being, of course, looked at as that with which we walk on this earth. Do we know what it is to have the Lord Jesus really wash our feet?—to handle them as one who has got God's interest at heart? He will not for a moment forego *His* claims, however much he may compassionate *us* in our need.

And we, too, are called thus to be priests inside; as He says, our joy is connected with this—with our doing these things. But how little we know what it is to regard one another in connection with God, and so we lose sight of that wondrous beauty that the Lord has put upon His people! How little fitted we are in that way to bear the burdens of His people! Do you know anything of what it is thus to bear the burdens of others as having fixed your eye upon that which is precious and perfect, because it is part of Him? To bear them in *that* sense?—not merely bearing them as far as sympathy goes, but because they are vessels of the sanctuary? Do I know what it is to be a Kohathite? If we lose the sense in our own souls of what the Lord has *made* His people; if we lose sight of the sanctuary, we *must* lose sight of what the vessels are; our estimate of them must be according to the sanctuary. Can we, whatever the enemy comes in to do, lose sight of the fact that the only ones fit to adorn that sanctuary are those whom Christ has taken up as His own? Would the Lord be ashamed of His own? Could the Lord do a work for His people that would do any less than make them answer to the brightness of the sanctuary itself?—that would not put upon them the brightness and the perfectness of the Being who was going to bring them there where He was Himself—who was going to introduce them to it? Let an accuser, a Balaam, say what He likes. No, says the Lord, They are *mine*, and I will not hear a word against them.

Of course, if there is a refusal of the heart to submit its walk to the Lord, then He will deal with it; but still He looks upon us in our *preciousness*, and it is one thing to look upon a saint because he is precious, and another thing because he has flesh. I go to deal with a saint, not because he has *failed*, but because he is *perfect*. Otherwise our care for each other will become a sort of twilight thing. But

if we are in the light, if we have submitted our feet, our walk, to that Blessed One, how jealous we are to be first for that sanctuary, and next for those whom He has made fit to be in it; and if there is flesh in any way working, rather to help them away from it, by showing them the beauty of what they are called to. How interestedly we should then learn to look at them, instead of regarding them as that which is a trouble to us, we should find they would make us learn the activity of the priestly place in which He has set us.

And as to our walk, He lets us know, however little *we* may think about anything, *He* thinks about it. He cannot trust you to get through it, however small, but you must put your feet into His hands, and then He will pass you through in such a way that it shall be worthy of the sanctuary. And if you are thus jealous of the walk of others, surely you will be more jealous of your own.

May the Lord lead us to think more of this! May He make us know what it is to be a Moses, an Eleazar—what it is to guard the sanctuary—what a thing it is to have God's truth in our hands! In Moses it was the sense of the truth—it was the sense of the importance of the testimony—it was because his soul was so connected with the sanctuary that he never could grow lax in his care of the people. Lose the truth and you must lose the care—you must lose the love.

May He give us, whatever form things are taking here, to remember that we are standing to guard the sanctuary—to keep our eyes on those precious things that belong to it, so that our love and care, one for the other, may be really divine.

"REPENTANCE."

REPENTANCE is a familiar word. Would that its true import were as well known! Yet right certain is it that unless the sinner repents he will inevitably perish eternally. This is as true as the words of Christ can make it, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii. 3.) Tremendous fact! One's heart deeply sympathises with many honest souls in their difficulties about repentance, and would fain help them a little from that Word, which, if received by simple faith, removes a host of difficulties.

In seeking to do so I will just refer to one of the books of the Word of God, and take up the case of one soul that

experienced genuine repentance. We shall find it in Job xl. and xlii. It will serve to bring out very clearly what repentance is—its order, and of what it is the blessed consequence. Job, as is well known to most who have read the book of Job, was seeking to justify himself—to extol and hold fast his own righteousness. Take one or two passages: Chap. xxvii. 6, "My righteousness I hold fast, and I will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live." Again, "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity." Here, undoubtedly, Job had not yet learnt the great lesson; his heart was not yet humbled nor broken down. With him it was still "my righteousness" and "my integrity." Himself was the great theme with him thus far. That will never do before God. The light of His presence must destroy all our pretensions to goodness and righteousness—our place before Him is "prostration," low in His presence. Oh, how important for the sinner to know this! The unsullied light of that presence reveals to the conscience the true condition of things, as we shall see that it did in Job's case ere we close.

At the close of the controversy between Job and his friends, Job was still seeking to justify himself, and no answer being found in the mouths of Job's opponents, Elihu's anger was kindled. We read: "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram. Against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God." (Chap. xxxii. 1, 2.) How solemnly true is this of man in general! An insubjection to God, and an exaltation and justification of self is what characterises man in general. Job justified himself rather than God. He had not yet learnt that all his righteousnesses were as filthy rags, and that he was vile before God. In chaps. xxxviii., xxxix., and xl., the Lord Himself answered Job; and this proved effectual in opening his eyes to see his true condition, which laid him low in the dust before him. Here I would notice what produced this wonderful change in Job. From one who could speak of his own righteousness, he became prostrated in the presence of God, crying out because of his own personal vileness. It was the reception into his soul of that Word which made known the light of the nature of Him who spake it; which made known to Job, in true

and solemn character, the depravity of his own nature, and the rebellion of his own heart against God. It was not a preparatory work on the part of Job, but the result of the entrance of that Word which gives light—the nature of God—and exhibits the darkness of man's nature.

God had taken Job in hand, and addressed him personally, and consequently all his self-righteousness fell to the ground. The stronghold of his legal heart was broken in upon and demolished. The Word, quick and powerful, against which no legal fortress can stand; penetrated Job's heart, laying bare its secret springs—opening up to him the corrupt fountains of his nature, spreading its depravity before him.

This was undoubtedly that which produced his repentance. The Word of God received into the soul, ministering light, discovering all the darkness and sin which reigns there, in view of what God is, as the One who is essentially light. Hence there is a work of self-judgment effected, which prostrates the soul before God, and leads it to cast itself upon his mercy.

It is very blessed to notice this with Job: "Then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further." (Chap. xl. 1-5.) And again, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Chap. xlii. 5, 6.) Here God's end was so far reached. Job had learnt himself—he was humbled—the blessed fruit of the work of God in him. He was brought to repentance—that is, to form a correct judgment of himself in the light of God's presence, and His heart-searching, soul-subduing word. God's truth had done its work with Job. He had received its unerring testimony, and the blessed result was "repentance toward God." He owns himself vile. He abhors himself, and repents in dust and ashes. What a moment for Job! He was pregnant with deep importance. His self-righteousness was gone, and the spirit of self-vindication—making way for that healthy and divinely wrought exercise of soul, in the light, under a sense of sin, called repentance. Blessed work of God! The deeper the better, most surely!

Now Job becomes a blessed subject of the fulness of God's bounty and grace. God, with an unsparing hand, heaps

rich blessings upon him, and he is blessed. This is so with every soul that has repented—that divine work in the soul, which is never known apart from the quickening operations of God’s blessed Spirit. The fulness of God’s Christ is the blessed portion of such. All things are theirs in Christ.

Repentance, then, is no human preliminary ; it is no preparatory work on the part of the sinner to conversion, but rather the result of the reception of the testimony of God—which is faith—and the quickening of the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost, which ever accompanies true faith.

It is the natural order of God’s most blessed work with and in the soul of the sinner. The word is applied and received. If this reception is real, it is life eternal to the soul, and, as a consequence, repentance is wrought—that holy recognition of the righteous judgment of God upon all pertaining to the old man in us, which ends in the renewed and delivered soul rising up and breathing the atmosphere of the new creation, where all things are of God. Many have put repentance before faith, as a human preparatory work, simply because souls have not been brought into peace immediately. Now, undoubtedly, peace may not be had before the work of repentance is wrought; and the deeper the work of the latter, the more profound will be the former. Yet in every case where the work is real, the hearty reception of the Word (I do not say the full testimony of God as to accomplished redemption) must come first. God’s solemn testimony with respect to man’s state, as in the case of Job, must be received; and when fully and simply received, it is life to the soul, which results in a perfect abhorrence of self, and the renunciation of all self-righteousness, and the confession of personal vileness. “Behold, I am vile,” is the solemn consciousness of the soul.

Then peace with God is the result of knowing that “Jesus was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification”—that the work is finished, and redemption an accomplished fact, and the Accomplisher Himself seated in brightest majesty at the right hand of the throne of God. Hence the need of preaching a full gospel—that is, the testimony that God has given with respect to man, and that which He has given of His Son—once in death, but now raised and glorified, which, when simply believed, is life and peace.

NOTES OF READINGS.

2 COR. iii. iv.

WHAT is the rule of God's action to me? *Christ!* Very well, then I am as happy as can be! I do not think any saint gets on until he sees that God will not depart from *Christ* as the *rule* of His action—the cross as to a sinner, the glory as to a saint, the two centres from which God will act, and no other, gathering a poor sinner to one, and a saint to the other. The Holy Ghost is the power either way, but in a different character, overcoming the enmity of the heart that refuses Christ, and the descending power to connect with Him where He is. Sufficiency for such a ministry can only be met by God Himself, as to the enmity of the sinner, or conforming the saint to what Christ is in glory. How can we faint?

As to the new covenant in 1 and 2 Corinthians, the blood is the common footing of all God's actings with regard to it, and ways with us (1 Cor. xi. 25). There are two uses of the blood. One is, that it shuts God out where I am; the other is, that it opens heaven where God is. The scriptural use of the word covenant does not necessarily suppose two parties binding themselves, though it may be the conventional use of covenant, and sometimes three parties are concerned. In Genesis there is no second party. The moment God spoke He bound Himself. He might have done it without saying anything to anybody; but He says it, and binds Himself by Himself to Himself. It is a circle. The nature of a covenant is, "God is one." He may take up Abraham by *promise*. The blood is the ground of it, on which God can carry out everything He said. It is contained in the first promise of God, which was not properly promise, because to Satan, but rather covenant.

The new covenant implies there has been another, when you get on prophetic ground. It is new, because it is associated with Christ, this new Man, now not only in purpose, as in Gen. iii., but in actual fulfilment. The new covenant, by and by, will take its character from the Mediator. Christ, where He is, gives it its character for us, and God is enabled to open out His purposes in connection with the Christ who is there—opening out life, righteousness, and glory to us. God is able here to carry out what was in His purpose in Genesis. He cannot act towards us without the blood. It is a new covenant, not because of a

Mediator in new circumstances, but because connected with a new Man in a new place. The principle is in the Old Testament, but not the application. Paul applies it first to the supper in 1 Corinthians, then to the ministry in 2 Corinthians. The end of Hebrews is an important link, "The God of peace," &c. It shews His connection with "the blood of the everlasting covenant."

In creation God created light to shine upon a man, but now He says 'In that man is my glory.' God who gave light to man upon earth, now gives that light to shine in upon the heart of a poor ruined man. It is a wonderful thing to *receive* mercy, instead of God *claiming* righteousness as He did by Moses. The glory follows the handwriting, takes possession of the vessel,—away go the hidden things, all that is unsuited to it is expelled and removed. God's order is life and liberty, and then the vessel is seized by the glory which expels all that was natural to us before. We let ourselves escape, because we do not come into close dealing with God. We are not turned inside out, until we are,—as the glory fills us, away go these things. The world cannot get on without craftiness, a saint cannot get on with God with it (v. 2).

The "manifestation of the truth" is in contrast to the veil. It is ministerial, but also characterising the ministry. Satan is always near where God is acting (v. 4). We find what we are familiar with in Eden very often repeated. God says, 'I am going to shine,' and Satan says, 'Then I must blind.' It was so at Pentecost. In creation the man and women are *driven* out. In the Church, God is nearer; man is brought into closer intimacy, Satan spoils again, and the man and woman are *carried* out dead. We are brought into liberty that never takes a liberty. Life does not take a liberty, it is in liberty. Could you take a liberty in heaven? It is the flesh that takes liberty, because it is never in liberty. Satan takes advantage of unjudged flesh, and God must judge. Ananias and Saphira walked in craftiness, and were carried out dead.

This ministry necessarily brings everything down to death. In Adam we learn life and death; in Christ death and life. Christ wraps everything round Himself in the power of life, and carries it down to death to disentangle the life. In the measure in which we fail in this, the life is entangled. Romans viii. 37 is just 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11. The high pressure

of life puts everything down into death (v. 10), "always bearing about in the body," &c., is what the life does, and it is internal and personal (v. 11); "for we which live are always delivered unto death," &c., is external and relative. Stephen illustrates it. His body is the vessel of the manifestation of the life of Jesus, only the "mortal flesh" gone under the stones, "knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus." Dying (*νεκρωσις*) characterised the Lord's life here. He carried everything He found around Him into the place of death and judgment, in the power of the life that is now communicated to us, and enable us to go down to death in the same way. It is using life to go to death. Ps. cxvi. gives the same lesson, and breathes the same spirit of faith, however different the circumstances.

Verse 15. "For all things are for your sakes;" we had persons, now the ministry gives us things. It is the power of God taking the creature down to death, and God raising out of the dead to glory. Life in the body is to carry us down to death in the path of obedience, forcing its way down, not stopt by anything, and making everything tributary to itself. God works by the afflictions, for this surpassing glory.

Chap. v. Everything above is "not made with hands." "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." How is it to be got rid of? Morally, it was judged at the Cross; physically, when we drop it and are changed.

Verse 14. The Holy Ghost goes to the rule of God's action to produce the motive for my conduct. The Cross is first the close of man's own history, by his forcing God into the place of judge, and God's close of it under His judgment. The history of man in the flesh is over. If One Man has risen up from out of the judgment, all behind is left under it. "We know no man after the flesh," because we know a Man in resurrection. The new Man in the new place judges all else as old. It only remained for God to reconcile His creatures.

We said that life, righteousness, and glory were the three characteristics of the ministry. We have had life; now, at the end of chap. v., righteousness; and glory is in and out everywhere. The circle is complete.

Chap. vi. gives us what hinders this life. "Now is the accepted time," &c., applies to the place Christ is in. It is analogous to Eph. iv.—the gifts there, the ministry here. The Holy Ghost borrows that part of the prophecy in Is. xlix.,

"I have heard *Thee*," for this "Thee" that we do not know after the flesh. What is true now of it is, that He has been rejected; the thing that is suspended is, "Yet shall I be glorious." "Now is the accepted time" for the ministry to take effect. To have the heart straitened is receiving the grace in vain.

The ministry is still the subject now, as forming the ministers themselves, and in its separating power; what is external tending to produce what is internal; then leading to superiority over circumstances—this victorious character, "as poor, yet making many rich," &c. It is the power of life from a risen Christ.

The introduction of the Holy Ghost is as varied as that of the Son. Joel ii., being connected with the Holy Ghost, must come into the Acts, but never would contain what we find in "the promise of the Father." Here (v. 6) He characterises the minister as "kindness," &c.

The way Paul arrives at enlargement is by subjugation of the flesh, and being filled with the Holy Ghost. The way to be enlarged is, "Be ye not unequally yoked." A saint would never get into trouble if he kept things asunder; but we come in with our shadings, and put Christ and Belial together. It is very beautiful to see how the Holy Ghost never lets the people off the ground of grace: "I will be their God," &c. On that He grounds the "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate," &c. They know Christ—they know Belial; they know light—they know darkness. Christ breaks the "concord," "agreement," "fellowship," that the devil is always seeking.

Chap. vii. brings them to the laver: "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves;" cleanse yourself by the promises. "I will receive you" is the promise. These concords, &c., spring from filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

It has been a parenthesis from chapters ii. 14 to verse 5. Now we get narrative again. Saints must be dealt with in the light of the grace, and according to what the grace has made them. It is the power to deliver, and deals not merely with the external—what a man puts on—but with what he is.

These two things are important—the laver, and the place where grace puts a man. If you find him between these, he must be melted. It is wretched work to extinguish a man. Let him extinguish himself by all means.

How can you sin if you think of your body being the temple of the Holy Ghost? 'But I have done it.' 'Then separate yourself and cleanse yourself.' If one is driven away, he has lost the fear of God and the sense of holiness. What a hold putting yourself in connection with grace gives you on others. These Corinthians extinguished themselves, and are fit to deal with others. "In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." The Apostle brings them out of the state of 1st Corinthians by the grace of 2nd Corinthians.

Chap. vi. is the power of life applied to the straitened state of the Corinthians; chap. vii., the restoring of their state—to their restoring the one that did the wrong. It was only when they had been brought out of their straitened condition that they were fit to deal with others.

SOME THOUGHTS ON JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER V.

IN this chapter we have the power of Christ to give life; and further, the responsibility of man to receive Christ, in order to have life.

There remained still in Israel some remnant of blessing, according to the 103rd Psalm, "Who healeth all thy diseases." The Pool of Bethesda was a proof of this. It was a testimony to the grace and to the power of God for Israel, in its state of ruin. This pool is a figure of the law; it was indeed a means of recovery, but required strength in the man to throw himself in. And the man was there for many years with disease, which had taken the strength from him, so that this pool for him was a useless remedy. Such is the case of a man in the face of the law. But Jesus comes and brings strength with him. He has no need of the pool, He is the Maker of everything. Here the instruction goes no further with the infirmity of the man, but we know from elsewhere, that we were not only diseased, but also dead and rebellious. With all this Christ has done everything that was needful for us.

This day was the Sabbath, and the Jews accuse Him of having worked this on the Sabbath day. But the answer of Jesus is most precious for us sinners. How can I and

my Father have rest, while man is in misery and in sin? No; we cannot rest, because we love man. In these words we also see the oneness of Jesus with the Father. Man is in misery and without strength; he cannot, and has not to work for his salvation. God it is who works. Jesus does not allow Himself to be moved from His path of love because of the hatred of man. He works, and will work, until He has finished the work. When the Christian has life, he can and ought to work; but before that he cannot, and all he does is useless.

Our first day of the week, the Lord's day, is very different from the Sabbath; it is the spiritual rest with which we begin, after that the work is finished, and it is the figure of the rest eternal, but in its heavenly part; while the Jewish Sabbath is a figure of the millennial rest on earth.

At verses 21, 22 we have two modes whereby Jesus is honoured. The Lord Jesus, coming into this world, abased Himself always lower and lower. First, He laid aside his glory and became a man. Then He was an obedient man, even into death; and, lastly, to that of the cross, the most infamous death; so that a Roman writer has said that the word *cross* should never be found in the same sentence with a Roman citizen. Thus, from the highest glory He descended to the most infamous humiliation; and therefore God has highly exalted Him, as man, above every creature, so that every knee shall bow before Him. This truth we have elsewhere.

He is honoured by those whom He has quickened. All those whom He has quickened, truly converted, honour him in this world, and their desire is to honour Him always more. This is the first way in which Jesus is honoured; the second will be in the judgment that has been committed to Him.

As to the quickening, this He does in company with the Father, but as to the judgment the Father has committed it to Jesus, in order that by it He may be honoured by the wicked—by all those who in this world would not honour Him. Thus both good and bad must know Him; the first now, the others afterwards, at the judgment. This is a sweet thing for the believer, a terrible thing for the world. Let the reader ask himself whether he belongs to the life or to the judgment.

(To be continued.)

"HE KNOWS."

I KNOW not what may befall me—
God spreads a mist before mine eyes;
At every step in my onward path
He maketh new scenes to rise;
And every joy He sends me
Comes with a sudden and strange surprise.

I see not a step before me,
As I tread on another year,
But the past is still in God's keeping,
The future His mercy will clear;
And what looks dark in the distance
May brighten as it grows near.

It may be the bitter future
Is less bitter than I think;
The Lord may sweeten the waters
Before I come to drink—
Or, if Marah must be Marah,
He will stand Himself by the brink.

It may be He is keeping,
For the coming of my feet,
Some gift of such rare blessedness—
Some joy so strangely sweet—
That my lips will only tremble
The thanks they cannot speak.

O blessed, happy ignorance!
'Tis better not to know,
It keeps me so still in the tender arms
That will not let me go;
It hushes my soul to rest
On the bosom that loves me so.

And so I go on not knowing,
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light—
I'd rather walk with Him by faith
Than go alone by sight.

My heart shrinks back from the trials
The future may disclose,
Yet I never had a sorrow
But what the dear Lord chose;
So I force the coming tears back
With the whispered word, "He knows."

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