

A
VOICE
TO
THE FAITHFUL.

“He that striveth for the mastery is temperate
in all things.”—1 Cor. ix. 25.

VOL. XIV.

LONDON GOSPEL TRACT DEPOT,
PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

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A Voice to the Faithful.

THE SHIPWRECK AND THE MAN OF FAITH.

DIFFICULTIES, where there are resources, are but opportunities for the skilful use of them. If I know the mind of the Lord, if I am acting and walking in keeping with His word, the greater the difficulty which confronts me, and the greater the opposition presented to me, the greater and more evident will be the Lord's interference on my behalf. As there are no lack of resources in Him, consequently the difficulties and opposition become, to the man of faith, opportunities for the display of His power, and way of effecting deliverance. There is one thing necessary for the man of God in any time of difficulty—namely, the knowledge of His mind *at the time*. This knowledge

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is acquired only by nearness to Himself; and this is not reached at the very moment it is needed, but by a previous walk of habitual singleness of eye, and true devotedness of heart.

It is remarkable and deeply interesting, while very searching, the condition of soul or state of the person to whom the Lord will make known His mind in a critical moment. The Lord does not tell His mind to every one. "Shall I hide [He says] from Abraham the thing which I do? For *I know him*, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord," &c., &c. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." "I call you not servants, but friends, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." There is a certain condition of soul, not suddenly acquired, which fits one for being the depositary of the Lord's mind in a crisis. This state or preparation is not confined to prominent teachers or laborious servants. Alas! it sometimes happens that some even among them, are not ready or prepared

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for the Lord's mind in a day of trouble and confusion. The Simeons and Annas of another day portray the moral characteristics of those who receive light from the Lord as to the true course when all the old is breaking up. Simeon and Anna embody one great sentiment, the "upper springs and the nether springs." Christ Himself, the one thought and object of the heart, while God's house on earth is the one sphere of interest; and the proclaiming of His name to all that will hear—the one work. Surely to such in any day is the way of the Lord made known. Let no one then be discouraged. (See Is. lviii. 6-12.) When does the light break forth as the morning? When shall the Lord guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought? When shalt thou be called, The repairer of the breach, and The restorer of paths to dwell in? When unworldly and unselfish, in true self-sacrificing love you serve others. It is no new thing to state that a man cannot have faith in God if he be not faithful in his own walk and manner of life.

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If a man does not act in the exercise of love to his brother (see 1 John iii. 17-22), he cannot in confidence of heart turn to God to help him. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask we receive of him," &c. It is here that discouragement and fear intrude in a trying time. One has not been habitually proceeding in simple dependence on God in one's daily routine; and hence, when some special difficulty occurs, one is found unprepared. "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses, and if in the land of peace then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" The man of faith rises as the life-buoy in proportion as the waters of difficulty increase; he is above them, because his eye and heart are set on Him who is above them. But in order to do this at a very great juncture, he must be in the habitual

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practice of faith in God ; and if he be, he must be for God here, and separate from the world. Otherwise, though he may be rescued as Lot was, he will not find himself out of the reach of the brimstone and the fire, as Abram was, because he was separate before the crisis came, and he knew the mind of the Lord in it.

The man of faith not only sees nothing but God, but everything that he might have counted on is against him, to discourage his faith. There are no props to faith in the moment of real faith. Thus Abram learned, and thus the scripture is fulfilled, which said, "Abram believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." It is in the hopelessness of everything here and of everything necessary too, that faith reigns. Thus it was with Paul in the shipwreck in Acts xxvii. He had nothing to support his faith ; on the contrary he was opposed, and for a moment defeated by every natural or visible influence. The master and owner of the vessel—the one with the greatest

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interest in it, and to whom the safety of the ship was of the most importance—the one whom self-interest thoroughly controlled, opposed him; and not only so, the majority of the passengers opposed him because the haven was not commodious to winter in; and finally the counsel of self-interest and expediency was confirmed and assured even by Providence, for “the south wind blew softly.” Does the man of faith droop or become discouraged because all these influences carry the day against him? Nay; *then it is* that he most implicitly counts on God, and though it might appear that he is overcome for a moment, he is enabled to come forth with the marvellous and gracious assurance—“God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.” The man of faith is like Eleazer the son of Dodo in another day,—“One of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away. He arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary and

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his hand clave unto the sword, and the Lord wrought a great victory that day, and the people returned after him only to spoil." (2 Sam. xxiii. 10-11.) Thus Paul learned at that time—graduated as I might say in the school of God, how in simple dependence on God he could be enabled to surmount all opposition of the most influential character, and do without any apparent means in the most trying circumstances, and yet secure the most perfect safety for all them that sail with him; he could say "there shall not a hair fall from the head of any of you." And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land.

Well then in any moral shipwreck all we require is simple faith in God; and the more we are opposed by the best influences here, the more we must keep our eyes on God only, because the less the probabilities are, the more distinctly the succour and relief will be of God. "Jehovah-Jireh—in the mount of the Lord it will be seen." But we must remember that faith in God is not, as I might say, of a sudden growth. If I

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am loving the Lord's appearing, I am walking separate from everything that is unsuited to Him. The bride is "all-glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold:" and I am sure, that when we do not taste the cheer of faith in a day of distress, it is because we have not been practically holding on by the Lord step by step in our daily life, both with regard to our own affairs and in His concerns. For generally we find the practice ground of faith is in our own circumstances, in order that as skilled archers we may take our place in the house of the Lord and in His army.

"FAITHFUL MEN."

2 Timothy ii. 2.

"MOREOVER it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." (1 Cor. iv. 2.) Israel had been the unrighteous steward of God on the earth. (Luke xvi.) Paul in his last writing before his departure, his heart broken with the failure he beheld, and the desertion he

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experienced, specially charged his beloved Timothy in view of these last days, that the truth he had heard of him should be committed to *faithful* men, who should be able to teach other faithful men also.

Thus the Spirit of God had in view a line of witnesses possessing moral and spiritual qualifications for maintaining the testimony of God. As we read in Hebrews xiii. 7, "Remember your leaders who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith [or fidelity] follow." So Paul could say (1 Cor. vii. 25), "I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." Timothy himself had this qualification, as we shall find, and the Spirit of God signified in the apostolic charge he received, that the Lord would have a chain of "faithful men" who should be both depositaries and expositors of Paul's doctrine, the faith of God's elect and the truth according to godliness.

There are two characteristic epithets which we meet with frequently in Paul's

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writings, and which when connected, as now and again they are, speak volumes for those whom they distinguish. They are the terms "faithful" and "beloved." These two words, like two competent witnesses to character, establish a solid title for those to whom the Holy Ghost has attached them.

Comparing 1 Corinthians vii. 25, and 1 Timothy i. 12, with 2 Peter iii. 15, we see them to have been Paul's distinction. And from other scriptures (1 Cor. iv. 17; Eph. vi. 21; Col. i. 7, iv. 7, 9, and 2 Tim. i. 2), we find they also distinguished respectively Timothy, Tychicus, Epaphras, and Onesimus; four Gentile believers whom Paul associated with himself in his service to the assembly of God. There are others whose fidelity is recorded, as Silvanus and Antipas, but of whom the word "beloved" is not used; while on the other hand, significantly enough, Barnabas is "beloved," but nowhere termed "faithful." Surely this is pregnant with instruction for our souls. "Beloved" marks the place these servants of the Lord enjoyed in

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the affections of the saints while the other word is more distinctly Godward, though also bringing in their relations to their brethren.

Coming down to our own day and the present experiences of the assembly of God, may we not ask whether what has grieved the Spirit of God *all along the church's history*, and which every true heart finds occasion to mourn over this moment, has not been mainly due to the forfeiture of the epithet of “faithful” by those leaders whom God would otherwise have used in maintenance of the truth which is according to godliness, all that pertains to Christ and the church, and which constitutes the present testimony of God upon earth?

That coincident with this there has always been a lamentable degree of general failure among the saints, he that runs may read, and every godly one will confess it for himself. And because this ought to be far more widely accepted than it is, we need to be reminded of the prevalent unheavenliness and unsteadfastness, and of the many cases

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in which the houses or families, or businesses, or certain habits, of believers, bring a reproach upon the testimony they have professed and the position they have accepted.

But this being admitted, yet it must be acknowledged that what has wrought the greatest havoc in the assembly of God is that those who have long and deservedly been addressed as "Beloved" have, as to faithfulness, made shipwreck; and, alas! may we not add? have in some cases intrenched upon that place which is only rightly filled by the person of the Holy Ghost, present in the name and authority of Christ. Be it that such may rightly be beloved still, yet who does not see that *outward demonstrations* of affection in such a case would indicate that faithfulness to God and to His testimony, and the "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace" were of no sort of consequence? Surely it is not only to disturb the well-ordered balance of scripture, but actually *to provoke the Lord to jealousy!* And in all solemnity it be-

“ FAITHFUL MEN.”

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comes us to ask ourselves, “ Are we stronger than he ?” (1 Cor. x. 22.)

Must we not all, on reflection, confess that there has been grievous and general default in giving Christ His place in the assembly “ as a Son over his own house ” ? so little sense prevailing generally of what a magnificent and matchless reality that presence is maintained in the power and plenitude of the Holy Ghost here in His own person, and what an absolute subjection the Lord’s authority claims from us. How deplorably have we all failed in this ! And the Lord has permitted us to prove that “ confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.” (Prov. xxv. 19.) Nor can any remedy be found but in a real and intensely practical turning afresh to Him with fidelity of heart, and in holy and unfeigned allegiance to His blessed name and person ! If ardent adulation given where faithfulness has become wanting, only tempts us to return acrimony and acerbity, we have need to call to mind the word, “ If ye bite and devour one

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another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." And again, "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God!" Let it be observed, too, that neither in the assertion of dogmatic truths, nor in the pressing abstract principles will any recovery be found but in *the getting back to the Master's feet!*

It should be the comfort of each of us to remember that He who loved the church and gave Himself for it, can never fail in that ever faithful, changeless love to every member of His body; that He delights to touch our hearts with a renewed sense of it; and loves to make known His own mind to those who really look to Him! Certain leaders may fail us, as when did they not? but "the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." We can never hope to be relieved of the necessity for trying the spirits, but the Lord will ever have His "faithful men," to whom His saints can look up. (1 Thess. v. 12, 13.) We can never hope to be relieved from proving all things, that we may "hold fast that

“FAITHFUL MEN.”

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which is good ;” but the unimpaired word of God in all its priceless value, the Holy Ghost will never cease to minister in every opened ear for the glory of Christ. Exercise of conscience and heart by the saints generally, with diligent feeding upon the rich pastures of the word, and not less real subjection to the Lord’s authority in the assembly, will quicken the judgment and discernment of the saints as to *who are* and *who are not* “faithful men,” for “them that honour me I will honour,” saith the Lord. It is our business to *know* them and to *esteem* them, and to be at peace among ourselves. (1 Thess. v. 12, 13.)

If divided judgment should lead to deeper reverence for the word, and the failure of shepherds should cast the sheep more upon the Lord Himself owning the common sin ; and if the general declension should humble us in self-judgment, so that unworldliness be revived and devotedness to Christ become more marked, then shall also the bonds of unity be drawn closer, and the corporate testimony be a fitter answer

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to the deep desire of His heart. But if He have not His place and authority restored and recognised, shall He not be as One whose words are, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; *if any man* hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me"? Failure there is and there will be (both the 'widespread and increasing laxity that is, alas, so marked, and the specific unfaithfulness alluded to) for the shadows are lengthening to their extreme declension; and true testimony may in consequence become more and more individual in its character, but wherever there be found those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, and who are really turning to Him with what scripture calls *purpose of heart*, His faithful love changeless as Himself, will richly requite those who think upon His name! Whatever the declension, and how general-soever the failure, those who are "faithful," and go on with Him who is "THE faithful and the true," will still occupy themselves with

A WORD ON THE BODY OF CHRIST. 17

the church because so much an object of the affections of His blessed heart, being His body, His bride! And the aggravated failure of the testimony will only bring out into brighter and more beautiful relief in such a day of unreality, the persevering devotedness of those whose sole desire is to spend and be spent for that which is supremely dear to Him. Thus, happily, will the Spirit of God ever find both a path and a province for God's "faithful men."

W. R.
D.

A WORD ON THE BODY OF CHRIST.

ONE body and one Spirit! Truths how simply stated, yet how much ignored, and even when owned, how little in their fulness understood! One body—the body of Christ; He the Head, His people the members, which together with Him, when viewed in this connection, make up what scripture calls *the Christ*. (1 Cor. xii. 12; Ephes. iii. 4.)

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One body ! Then denominationalism must be wrong, and independency must be quite out of the current of God's thoughts. For one body speaks of union, and membership. There is but one which God owns, and those forming it are members one of another (Rom. xii. 5 ; Eph. iv. 25), being members of Christ's body (Eph. v. 30), and have all been baptised into one body in the power of the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. xii. 13.) Do we view the body in its local character ? There is but one, and to it all true Christians in any place belong, whether they know it or not. If we view it in its general character, the truth is the same. There is but one body, and to it all true Christians on earth belong, and from it none, thank God, can ever break away, however from wilfulness or ignorance they may disown it.

Now is this truth one to be held in theory only ? No. It is a most practical one, and a helpful one in the ecclesiastical confusion around us. Nothing is more catholic than this truth of

A WORD ON THE BODY OF CHRIST. 19

the body of Christ, yet nothing more readily provokes the charge of exclusiveness against those who acknowledge it, and act upon it; since, to such as understand not the truth in question, the attempt to maintain it practically, seems to give to that charge currency and support. On the other hand it is not surely too much to assert that in the practical carrying of it out in accordance with scripture, Christians, all of us indeed, if not kept are liable to break down.

One body and one Spirit. These truths are now in some measure owned. God in His grace by the teaching of the Holy Ghost through His servants in these last days, has brought them out afresh from the word in which they had lain practically unnoticed for so long.

But no formative truth is recovered without a struggle, and it may be that God's people will be tested, to see if they have really learnt the one in question. There is but one body, as there is but one Spirit, and the body viewed either locally or generally is always regarded in the word as complete, though,

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if we speak of the body of Christ in its fullest character, including as that does all the saints from Pentecost to the rapture, it is not yet completed.

The body viewed locally is regarded as always complete, with its full complement of members, hence it is competent for action, and fully provided with all its parts for its increase. All that is requisite as to members it surely has. But although in the disordered state of the assembly of God, all the members of the body cannot be got together for action, nor all its parts be got to work harmoniously for its increase, the Lord has provided for this state of things by the promise of Matthew xviii. 20, of His presence in the midst of two or three gathered unto His name. Have we not proved the value of such a word, and His faithfulness to it?

But if He provides for the disordered state of the assembly locally, has He left the assembly at large to shift for itself? That surely would be unlike the character of such a Head, of Him who loved the assembly and gave Himself

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for it. Is evil then to pass unchecked, not to be inquired into and dealt with, because the question raised cannot be decided by the body viewed in its local character? Such a conclusion must not be allowed for a moment. If the question be concerning the true character of the local assembly, instead of merely that of any member of it, is it to go unsolved, because by the very nature of the case the body viewed locally cannot be judge in its own cause? Why is it that when the body is treated of in its local and general characters, members and joints and bands are mentioned, whereas, when the body in its universal character is introduced, these are unnoticed? (See 1 Cor. xii. 27; Rom. xii. 5; Eph. iv. 16; Col. ii. 19, compared with Eph. i. 23; Col. i. 18.) In heaven no such action as has now to take place will be needed, and the increase of the whole body will have been attained. But here on earth it is different. The members, the parts of the body, are requisite, and they are provided.

Surely if we bear this in mind, we

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shall not allow language to rise to the lips, and to flow from the pen, such as Who is able to look into the condition of a local assembly? the state of which calls for it. The body viewed in its general character is responsible to do this. Responsibility, not ability, is the real question to be raised. And if we have learnt, as we surely have, that when the whole local assembly cannot be got together for action, the Lord is with those who care for His glory, and ratifies their judgment, shall we not find it equally true where the question raised is the condition of a local assembly, and not that of certain members of it? The responsibilities of the body viewed in its general character are to be acknowledged and responded to. C. E. S.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

HOW HELPED AND HINDERED IN A DAY OF DIFFICULTY.

IN our own circumstances, and in the church, there is a "needs be" for straits, or the trying of our faith. To

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this end "tribulation worketh patience," and we are to count it all joy when we fall into divers trials, because the trying of our faith worketh patience, or endurance; and in the church, there must be heresies that they which are approved may be made manifest. Straits then are to be expected and looked for; as, in the circle of the year the winter is looked for. The ant not only provides for the winter, but also knows what are its resources or helps at such time, and what its hindrances. Now this is just our wisdom—even to ascertain what are our helps and hindrances in our winter or strait. It is said of the ant that it displays its wisdom by providing in summer for the winter. This teaches us that it is the joy and confidence we have in the Lord in the bright day or the summer, which we are to use and call up afresh to our hearts in the dark day, or the winter. In a word that we are to be supplied with the good things of summer in the depth of winter. The same Lord is to comfort and sustain our hearts in the dark day, as He had done

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mounted each and all these hindrances, he is not discouraged, his sure resource is in God, and he can at the most trying moment testify, "the Lord stood with me and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion;" an example and a witness to us that however hindered and unsupported by man, the solitary saint dependent on the Lord, will be supported by Him.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"DISCIPLINE in the assembly," (Nov. "Voice"). It was not intended to refer to the question of majorities in that paper. The desire was to point out that each person who took part in the things of the sanctuary or in the assembly, should be near the Lord in so doing; that is, he should be in his priestly character, for otherwise he would not be spiritual; and this in order to prevent the interference of men who will be prominent in church matters, though as to the rule and habit of their lives they are immersed in the world.

“HIS OWN” AND THE “FATHER’S HOUSE.”

VERY definitely does the apostle Peter instruct us in his first epistle that the Old Testament prophets searched their own communications by the Spirit of Christ, to learn what He signified in their testimony to the sufferings of Christ and the resulting glories. Moreover it was revealed to them that their ministry of Christ was not for themselves but for us !

In that wonderful Psalm lxi. teeming with such testimony, are found two verses (8 and 9) which prophetically indicate what would be His relation to the nation, and to the temple of God—those two things which we might say were conjointly before Him, and embraced the range of His interests in His coming as Messiah, namely, the people and the place. They run thus, “I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children.

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For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up ; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me."

The fulfilment of the prophecy meets us at the opening of John's gospel. (Chaps. i. and ii.) In the former we read, "He came unto *his own*, and *his own* received him not." In the latter we find, on His first visit to Jerusalem after entering upon His ministry, He immediately goes into *the Temple*, only to discover that its desecrated condition was an infamy !

Be it remarked that God has always connected people and place. Innocent man had an unsullied paradise which "the Lord God planted ;" fallen man a cursed earth. Man in providential favour got it upon a new and improved tenure ; the curse modified, seasons assured to him, &c. A typically redeemed people got Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. Becoming rebellious and idolatrous, they forfeit Palestine for a time, and are carried captive into strange countries. The two tribes restored, they recover Jerusalem,

and the Temple is again theirs. Messiah, subject of unnumbered prophecies and promises, comes into their midst. Are their arms and their hearts open to Him, and do their lips welcome with joyful acclamation His advent in Jehovah's name? Alas! He comes *to them*, “His own,” and they receive Him not! He is a stranger to His brethren, and an alien to His mother's children! Again, He comes to *the Temple*, “My Father's house,” saying as it were, Oh! Jehovah, I have loved the habitation (or beauty) of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth, or the place of the tabernacle of thy glory! And what a sight meets His holy gaze! Can this be the temple of Jehovah, the house of the Father? And can these covetous and profane traffickers, typical of Israel's deep demoralisation, who have intruded within its precincts only to violate its sanctity for filthy lucre; can these be indeed “His own”—those who should have been, like Simeon, waiting for the consolation of Israel, or like Anna, looking

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for redemption in Jerusalem? Well might His disciples remember, as they gazed with rapt astonishment upon the striking scene that followed (when in holy indignation He made a lash and drove forth the offenders) that the pen of the psalmist had predicted this when he wrote "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up!" But who would essay to recount the sorrows of His heart as He thus found neither in "His own," nor in His "Father's house," one single moral feature forming an answer to His presentation to Israel, the people of God's purpose and choice? No language could more touchingly portray it than His own words, no less significant than solemn, in which, apostrophising Jerusalem, He says (Luke xiii. 34, 35), "How often would I have gathered *thy* children;" (not now "His own"—see Heb. ii. 13, 14) "as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not!" And so in the next verse, "Behold *your* house" (not now "my Father's,") "is left unto you desolate," &c.

How clearly then is it manifest that in

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John i. and ii. (as also in Luke xiii.), that the nation is looked at as reprobate, and the Temple as a scandal, its fitting sequel! But moving on just twelve chapters we find the blessed One in view of His return to His Father, supper being come, and thus the cross anticipated, signifying an entirely new departure, chapter xiii. 1 coming in to supersede for a time chapter i. 11, and xiv. 2 to supersede in like manner chapter ii. 16—the very same words being used in each case in an entirely new signification. The heavenly “His own” are now revealed in distinct terms—objects of a peculiar love and that to the uttermost—and the “Father’s house” *in heaven* opened to them; their distinctive “place” there being prepared by Him who was then to enter it *for* them, but only in anticipation of the longed-for moment when He will enter it afresh *with* them, triumphant in glory together, that *where He is*, “His own” may be also!

And may we not say that these two things are what His heart has been set upon ever since—this new “His own”

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objects of His deep desire and tender solicitude, in connection with the *new scene* for which He is now educating them, which although entered in His own person, lacks the presence of those whom, in the wondrous, changeless love of His own heart, He has made essential to His joy for ever, and whom He longs to bring thither in consummated glory?

May we through grace more fully apprehend what it is to be "His own," that we may more deftly and more habitually express it to His eye in this day of His refusal by Israel and the world. And may we also be so distinctly assured of our only true place being that prepared for us by Him in the "Father's house"—that relinquishing every lesser, lower thing, we may press on in the current of His mind, being formed, attracted and encouraged by that cheering word of promise which His faithful love ever ministers to a heart responsive to His.

W. R.
D.

WARNINGS TO ISRAEL, INSTRUCTIONS FOR US.

A GREAT deal of unsatisfactory teaching from the word arises from the lack of intelligence as to dispensational truth. Hence distinguishing features of Judaism have been made the model for ecclesiastical arrangements amongst Christians; and the spirit in which Israel were exhorted to deal with the enemies of God, has been, how often, and how sadly, imitated by those who profess to be disciples of the meek and lowly One—the Lord Jesus Christ. In our day we are more familiar with the former of these mistakes, since ritualistic practices are openly justified by a reference to Old Testament scripture. In the days of our forefathers men were painfully familiar with the other, when the extermination of those, whether truly or not, called heretics, was vindicated by appeals to God's commands to His earthly people Israel. In any interpre-

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tation then of scripture it is needful to keep in mind dispensational teaching, if we would profit aright by the living and abiding word of God.

Such a caution the intelligent reader will agree is necessary when studying Deuteronomy xiii. Neglecting or ignoring it, when reading the Old Testament, we shall be in danger either of repeating the mistakes of our forefathers, and so of acting in a spirit foreign to Christianity; or of regarding the Mosaic legislation as something which only concerned the nation of Israel, forgetful that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. iii. 15-17.)

The book of Deuteronomy views Israel as about to enter the land of their inheritance. On that point there was no uncertainty, for the Lord had covenanted with Moses and with them unconditionally at Sinai, after the making

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of the golden calf, to bring them into it. (Ex. xxxiv. 10–27.) Their continuance in Canaan was the doubtful point, depending as it would on their obedience to God's law. Very busy therefore would the enemy be to entrap them: and to make the Lord dispossess them in righteousness. Idolatry was practised among them. The spirit of it had never been purged out, though they alone were distinguished by the high honour of knowing and worshipping the one true God. Now to this favour was attached the responsibility of maintaining the truth of one God in opposition to the nations around them. Insidiously then, and persistently would the enemy work to undermine this truth. Firmly were they to repel all his attempts. And to put them thoroughly on their guard, the Lord in this chapter instanced three different ways whereby they might be taken unawares.

A prophet, or a dreamer of dreams might arise giving them a sign or a wonder which would really come to pass. Signs and wonders have charac-

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terised the ways of God in the past. He shewed them in the land of Egypt. (Ps. cv. 27.) The Lord too wrought them (Acts ii. 22), and apostles likewise. (Acts iv. 30 ; xiv. 3 ; Rom. xv. 19.) As God had acted, so the enemy might act, imitating in order the better to ensnare the people who were to be assailed by the temptation. The sign, or wonder would come to pass, and under cover of it that prophet or dreamer of dreams would seek to withdraw them from the worship of God. But they were not to hearken to him for one moment, and that prophet was to die. For the Lord their God would thus prove them, to know whether they loved Him with all their heart, and with all their soul. Most unexpectedly might they be tested, but steadfastness to the truth was to characterise them. No doctrine could be right which would draw them away from the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt and from the house of bondage.

Now such a snare was most insidious, for it was hidden under the manifestation

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of real power. It was not the deception of a conjuror. The sign, or wonder came to pass, yet that prophet or dreamer was not sent to them by God. Looking at the display of power they might have thought that he was God's messenger. Remembering the divine word which he was endeavouring to make them disobey and repudiate, it was clear whose emissary he really was. They were therefore to test him by the unerring standard of the divine word. Did he bring to them the word of God? Did he exhort them to keep His commands, or to break them? A child might have answered the question, when the reference was to be made to the clear and unswerving standard of the law. And none who kept to it, with the divine warning in their remembrance, would be carried away by the wonders wrought before their eyes.

A display of power is most attractive, but it is apt to turn the eye on man, when he is the agent, and away from God. Hence the danger of it, a danger to which all of us are more or less

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exposed, and against which all should be on their guard. Power such as Israel might expect we do not look for, namely, the fulfilment of signs or wonders. Still, are not souls in danger of being ensnared by the power of a teacher, or preacher, or writer? He speaks with such power, one sometimes hears. But what of that if it be not in accordance with the teaching of the word? The sign produced has come to pass, Israel might say, and say with truth, yet that was not to accredit the prophet as really a messenger from Jehovah. They were to test the doctrine by the written word, and not by the power the prophet displayed. God might, as He has done, confirm the word by signs following, but power exercised, did not necessarily accredit the doctrine. The revelation God gave Israel in the law was to teach them from whence came the power. So with us. By the written word must all professed labourers be judged, and the very babes in Christ are responsible to do this, and competent for it as well. (1 John ii. 18-26.) Alas, have we not to

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confess the great weakness amongst God's people in this matter? How readily do they take up what is false from the lack of proving all by the word! A smart saying, a pretty simile, a reputation for piety in the speaker, how will such suffice to give currency to statements, or teaching, which should be rejected by the hearers, or readers. There is natural power, and there is the power of the Spirit of God. How often is the former mistaken for the latter! Is there not the danger of leaning on gifted men, instead of profiting by the teaching they are raised up of God to communicate, and judging it all, as those who have an unction from the Holy One should judge it, by the only standard of revealed truth, the written word of God, remembering too that quotations from scripture, or references to it, however numerous they may be, are of themselves no indication of the scriptural character of the teaching. Has the teacher, or speaker used the word aright, is the real question? What liturgy more profusely abounds with reference

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to scripture than that of the Anglican establishment? but that does not make it scriptural. Scriptural teaching, and teaching abounding in quotations from scripture, are by no means of necessity synonymous.

A second danger to which Israel might be exposed, was one arising out of natural relationship or friendship. Against such Moses proceeded to warn them. If a man's brother, the son of his mother, or his son, or his daughter, or the wife of his bosom, or his friend who might be as his own soul, should entice him secretly to idolatry, such an one, whoever it was, was not to be spared. In secret had the wicked person worked, in the most public manner was he to be dealt with, and the nearest of kin, or the one who naturally loved that person the best, might be forced to take the initiative in killing the seducer, to be followed in that work by all the people. "Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt

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surely kill him ; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death." (Deut. xiii. 8, 9.) But why this unsparing dealing with the offender ? Why this renunciation as some might call it, of the ties of nature ? "Because," is the answer, "he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." (Ver. 10.) No claims of friendship or of nature were to compete, for one moment, with Jehovah's claims on them, for they were His redeemed people. How well the tribe of Levi understood that, and acted on it before this law was given ! (Ex. xxxii. 27 ; Deut. xxxiii. 9.) Well would it have been for Solomon and Judah had he remembered, and obeyed this commandment. (1 Kings xi. 1-4.)

Do we not need to remember this principle, and to act upon it ? Ties of friendship, however close, and of whatever duration, are not for one moment to come between us and obedience to God's word. When the Lord's mother, and His brethren came to hinder Him

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in His work, He would not hearken to them, nor stop to go out even to speak to them. (Mark iii. 31-35.) Barnabas allowed ties of nature to sway him in reference to God's work, but that is not recorded by the historian as redounding to the honour of that servant and apostle of Christ. (Acts xv. 36-39.) Paul who repudiated such a principle was commended by the brethren to the grace of God. Of any commendation of Barnabas, who went with Mark to his native country Cyprus, the word is ominously silent. The application of this is too obvious to need enlarging upon, but the teaching of this chapter shews us the necessity of being reminded of it. Faithfulness to the Lord in accordance with the word should never be relegated to a second place in our thoughts, nor should natural ties be allowed to compete with it. (Matt. x. 37.) If redeemed by the blood of Christ, no one, however close or dear, should be allowed to divert us from obedience to the word.

The third danger against which Israel

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were warned, was the forgetfulness or denial of corporate responsibility. If they heard a report of any city in their land turning to idolatry, inquiry was to be made, and a diligent investigation to take place. If the report was true, unsparing judgment was to be executed, every living thing in it was to be destroyed, its spoil was to be burnt and the place itself was to abide as a monument of divine vengeance carried out by the people of the Lord. (Deut. xiii. 16, 17.) We need in reading directions like these to remember dispensational differences, for we are not commanded thus to execute judgment, yet there is teaching in it for us.

Each one in Israel was concerned with the sin of the city. Those who dwelt in the portion of Asher were not to be indifferent to the sin of idolatry in Simeon. Investigation, and dealing with the guilty ones, if the charge was established, was incumbent upon all, and from this responsibility none could shake himself free. The standard to judge by was the written word, and guidance for

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action was also provided therein. Surely in the days of Phinehas they all understood this, and in making investigation about the altar east of Jordan, Phinehas, and those with him, acted in accordance with the teaching of this very chapter. And the wisdom of its directions became apparent. Investigation was enjoined, and they made it, and were satisfied. For undue haste which would precipitate matters was to be avoided: though where the guilt was established, no leniency was to be shewn.

Of corporate responsibility Israel were therefore to be reminded. Such a principle then is not a new one, though the circumstances connected with the maintenance of it may vary. No one in Israel could rightly plead exemption from its claims, for they were each and all part of the nation. No Christian can plead exemption from the duty of acknowledging such a responsibility, and of discharging it when requisite, for we are all members of one body, the body of Christ. Had any in Israel been disposed to have been indifferent to it, how cal-

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culated was the word to rouse them! They were to act judicially for the Lord their God. (Ver. 16.) His honour, His truth demanded it. Must not that be cared for still?

Corporate responsibility rests on Christians as much as it did on Israel. Are we all fully alive to this? The teaching of 1 Corinthians xii. shews how closely all Christians are bound together as the body of Christ and the church of God. In the days of Barak the trans-Jordanic tribes ignored this responsibility. Dan too, and Asher, would not acknowledge it, and Meroz was cursed for refusing to co-operate in the work of God carried on by Barak and Deborah. Never since that day has the remissness of those tribes, or the sin of Meroz been suffered to sink into oblivion. But for all that we have to do in this matter, the word must be our guide what to maintain, and how to act in the maintaining of it. And if the Lord encouraged Israel to be faithful (Deut. xiii. 17, 18), will He be indifferent to His people now if they are faithful?

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Times are changed, some may say. Yes, but truth abides, and principles inculcated in Deuteronomy are applicable still. Christians not less than Israel have need to beware of being ensnared by displays of power; of being enticed into disobedience by ties of nature or of friendship; and of neglecting their duty connected with corporate responsibility.

C. E. S.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

“THE GOOD FIGS VERY GOOD AND THE EVIL VERY EVIL.”—JER. XXIV.

THE one immutable law of good and evil is progress; each by its very existence demands and promotes increase. The good becomes very good, and the evil very evil. Hence it is a most serious question whether I am engaged with that which is really good, or with that which is evil in God's judgment.

In the passage in Jeremiah, the words at the head of this paper were applied, not to some particular works, or mere

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conduct, but to the course adopted by each. Those who were good adopted and adhered to the path approved of by God, and those who did not bow to his ways were evil, very evil. It is the *principle* which I speak of here, and it is important to seize it. That I am "good" when I follow and adhere to that which God marks out for me, however small and humiliating it may be in the eyes of man; and that it is "evil" when I, contrary to God's counsel, cleave to things now inhibited, because of man's failure, refused and forbidden.

In the day of Israel's captivity those who recognised the ruin of Israel, accepted the captivity, and they were good, very good. "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Like these good figs so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good." "For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land, and I will build them and not pull them down, and I will

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but if the wrong course be not at once renounced and repented of, it will increase, according to its evil, to more ungodliness, for as the good is brought out into distinctness, there will be less excuse for the wrong one, and the folly shall be "made manifest unto all," though the leaders may not repent but wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

In conclusion, may we be warned and encouraged to refuse any course which is not of God; may we have such simple faith in Him, that we can, like the faithful in Israel in that day, accept the place of confessed weakness, without place or name on the earth, confident in heart that the Lord is sufficient for us, and that though there be no bread in the ship, nothing to minister to or prop up the man or his resources, the Lord is adequate for every exigency. To advocate and adhere to the use of human means, in any way whatever, with respect to service or position, is giving the first man a place, and is like the Israelites, who refused to accept the

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captivity ; while if we accept and acknowledge that we have no power but of God, that we are captives among men, and our strength only as we are upheld and led by the Spirit of God, He will enable us, though diminished in the eyes of men, to maintain His name in the midst of our enemies, so that there may still be a bright testimony for Him on the earth, even as there was in Babylon the Great.

“TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH.”

THE closing battle rages fierce,
To Thee, O Lord, we cry ;
For many a saint feels weak and faint,
And fast the arrows fly.

Thy still small voice, thrice blessed Lord,
From the glory where Thou art,
Comes down through the air in accents clear,
To cheer each loyal heart.

Thy well-known voice, harmonious, sweet,
Above the tumult swells,

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As at eventide o'er the country wide,
The sound of distant bells.

“ My power and might are thine, faint heart,
Say, why art Thou cast down ?
Yet hold thou fast what in grace thou hast,
That no man take thy crown.

“ Him will I make that overcomes
And stems the advancing flood,
A pillar of might, with glory dight,
In the temple of my God.

“ On him shall the blest Name divine,
And my new name be graven ;
And the city's name, Jerusalem,
That cometh down from heaven.”

Then may each saint his courage take
From Thee, victorious Lord ;
And still hold fast, to the very last,
Thine own most sacred word.

For yet a few short hours of toil,
And the conflict will be o'er ;
And echoing cries of triumph rise
From the glory-lighted shore.

THE BLESSINGS WHICH ARE ONLY KNOWN AS THE BODY OF CHRIST IS KNOWN.

EVERY truth or revelation of God's mind can only be enjoyed as we are in the relation or position in which it contemplates us. The revelation of the law viewed man as still responsible. The revelation of grace regarded man as undone in himself, but God had laid help upon One that was mighty, His own arm had brought salvation. As it is all grace now, we have only to ascertain the nature and extent of the gifts, and whatever they confer upon us we have thankfully to receive, but we cannot in any wise alter them, or divert them from the special blessing or position which they were designed to bestow. This is plain and self-evident. If a gift is simply individual, then it can be enjoyed by one soul, however solitary or secluded he might be; but if, on the other hand, there are gifts or truths which belong to the church, and are

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essentially connected with that structure, then surely those gifts can only be enjoyed, or the truth respecting them known, by those in the circle and position in which the gifts are conferred, because they are appointed peculiarly of God, for a certain position and relation, and unless the believer accepts and enters on the peculiar relation or position to which a gift is attached, he cannot receive it, for if he could, in any position or relation, then the gift has not been peculiarly designed for some special one. Now there are individual blessings and there are corporate blessings. The individual might enjoy in faith all the blessings which are strictly individual, and yet, constituted as he is by grace, he would not be satisfied in heart, because the gifts or blessings secured and destined for him in the church are not known to him, and could not be enjoyed because he does not see the church, the body of Christ.

It is instructive to note the measure of blessing which may be known and enjoyed while one still is ignorant of

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the true constitution of the church of God.

The believer assured of forgiveness in the fulness of acceptance in Christ, in peace with God, crying, Abba Father, as high as state could place him, would be deprived of the blessings peculiar to the church if he did not know the mystery of God. I do not think he would be perfectly happy, though as a son, and as one of Christ's brethren, he would have the unspeakable delight of relationship, and as he was walking holily, the comfort and solace of Christ's sympathy and succour along the road; yet though his state was the highest, there would be a lack of something, for he really had not answered to his calling until he enters into and enjoys his place in the body of Christ. A mere theoretic knowledge of the church would not suffice, because that knowledge would not acquire for him the gifts or blessings peculiar to the church, and appointed to those in their places there, that is, accepting by faith that they belong to the body of Christ, baptised

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by one Spirit into one body. An individual believer confining grace to his own personal benefit may have bright and happy conceptions of the grace given to him, but he must be defective in his testimony, and in the manner of it, so long as he is ignorant of his responsibilities as belonging to the body of Christ. Doubtless the conscientious man is sure to be busy and devoted, but if he does not understand the constitution of the church, and his relation to it, the manner and course of his work must betray his ignorance and deficiency. Where could a soul learn his true responsibility to other believers but in the church, where he finds we are members one of another. The whole body can be honoured or afflicted by one member. This responsibility, and privilege too, could never be known but in the church; quite true, a man might be very kind and useful to his neighbour, and very zealous for his soul's good, but he never could understand the nature and effect of this great bond, the unity of the Spirit, by whom all the members

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are baptised into one body, if he did not, by faith, see how grace had set him in it. It would not be enough to try and satisfy himself with the greatness of his state as a son, crying Abba, Father. That is a grace peculiar to him individually, but there are others quite distinct, belonging to him in the church, or corporately. No amount of zealous interest about souls, or constant care, could supply in any degree the peculiar privilege and responsibility which invest the soul when it has learned that it is in this new and wondrous bond—the mighty power stretching northward, and southward, eastward and westward, to hold together in one the whole of the members of the body of Christ. It is vain for the most devoted man to substitute any machinery of zeal or service for it, though I admit sorrowfully that sometimes we see those ignorant of this great bond more attached to saints, and heartily seeking their welfare, than those who have real faith and enjoyment too in this great truth or gift of grace.

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Again, the most separate and self-denying individual, however happy in his spirit and walk, could not effectually sever himself from the contribution which body and mind would offer to him in a religious way, so long as he was ignorant of the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He would not be able to eclipse and supersede the attractiveness of forms and feelings to the devout soul, unless he knew and had entered into the great eternal glory of the greater than Solomon, when like the queen of Sheba, there would be no more spirit in him ; the human element would in no way contribute, but as a servant.

True, I sing with the Spirit and I sing with the understanding also. The great point to settle is, which is the greater, the Spirit or the understanding. If the Spirit rule my mind and body, all right and well, but if I allow my mind and body to be contributories, I am treating them as a source, and not as servants to the Spirit of God. When I

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have learned the gain of being in the body of Christ, I cannot travel outside of it. Both in circumcision and baptism I am set free of my standing as Adam, the responsible man before God and man. Christ is everything and in all. My great study now is to know Christ better, to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, the wisdom of God. Again, as an individual, however heavenly in my aspiration, or Christ-like in my walk, as far as my light is, yet I cannot know and ascertain that I am seated in heavenly places now, but as I am in the church, or corporately, for it is a corporate grace; we are all raised up together, and we are all made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Nothing indicates or betrays more the small apprehension there is on every hand of being in the church—of understanding the mystery, as the little sense there is that heaven is our real place, and that earth is not our place. The individual, however longing and pining

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for this place of unclouded serenity, can never lay hold of it as his *now*, until he finds himself by God's grace in the body of Christ, and then he will find that there is a place common to ALL believers, and that is a heavenly place, and the practical effect of this truth or gift of grace would be that he refuse the earth as not his place, and therefore he would be here simply a pilgrim and a stranger, not merely separating from the company and countenance of the world, but refusing its things, save those that were necessary for food and warmth.

Lastly, if I do not know the place to which the power of Christ now raises me in company with all believers, I cannot know the power, which is also a gift common and peculiar to the church as the body of Christ. A man might die a martyr, and yet, as far as I see, not enjoy this power—the heavenly power peculiar to the church. Many have died as martyrs in the power of Christ to go to heaven, rejoicing in the Lord, who knew not, and never were

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exercised as to keeping "the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace," and this is the first circle of duty assigned to the one endowed with the power which has raised us to heaven, and as from heaven. I believe it is of the greatest importance to look into these things, and ascertain whether we are really by faith in the church, which is His body, seeing the great privileges, advantages, and duties which flow from it. One may betray or even feel a defect, and yet not be able to discover its source. Surely no greater things could be given to us, and none we more often need and disclose our lack of, and yet they are the peculiar and distinctly assigned gifts of the grace of our God, the same grace which laid hold of us when sunk in distance from God, and in the darkness of death, and therefore it is all ours, awaiting our acceptance by faith. May it be even so.

MEN OF UNDERSTANDING.

1 Chronicles xii.

Among those who were gathered to David at Ziglag, were characters full of deep instruction for present times. The centre of that despised company, and the light and beauty of that exiled spot, the *rejected man* of that day, mean in appearance and contemned, was a type of the blessed Living One on high, who is the Rejected Man of this day of boasted resources and might, the motto of which is, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." The first thought therefore that presents itself, as we meditate over this scripture, is concerning a truth now well nigh practically obsolete, namely, a *rejected Lord* ! Alas, how little thought of even ! And as to the few who once owned it, or it may be now *doctrinally own it*, what are they corporately and individually, with some bright exceptions, but a testimony to how little it formed them ?

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Now with regard to these Gadites, and men of Issachar, it is interesting and blessed to see that the combination of their characteristics supply us with that *state of soul* in the saints now, which alone can act suitably to our Lord Jesus Christ in the day of His rejection.

The first notable feature in the sons of Gad is that they were a *separated* company, they had *gone out*, not *come in*; how important to see that this is the very responsibility of the saint to-day, in order to his being a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use. (Compare 1 Chron. xii. 8, with 2 Tim. ii. 21.) May the Lord give us understanding to see that *communion* is a greater thing in His eyes than *usefulness*, and that communion is the alone divine spring of all usefulness and service suitable to God; how blessed, how pleasing to Him, to find a separated company like the sons of Gad, or a sanctified vessel, whose purest joy and deepest delight, is suitability to His person, to Himself; then further, it is

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said of these separated sons of Gad, that they were men of might, men of war, they could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains; how blessed to see that in their separation was found, *strength, courage, skill, boldness, alacrity*; these are the qualities of a *separated* heart to Christ, and His person is worthy of them all.

But further, how solemn to observe that ere any of these qualities are found in exercise, Jordan must be crossed, and that when it had overflowed all its banks (ver. 15); so that these sons of Gad, separated unto David, filled with *strength, courage, skill, boldness* and *alacrity*, must pass, as it were, through death, ere they could serve. And beloved reader, is it not so to-day? "If any man serve me, let him follow me." In very truth, herein is that which gives scope for all true devotedness to the Lord, death must be known practically, as *passed and carried by us*. (See 2 Cor. iv. 10.) And so it has ever been, whether

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in type in other days, or in the power of the Holy Ghost in life and reality to-day—death in the power of life, is the secret of all true following Christ, as well as the secret of all true acting for Christ—Elisha's newly acquired mantle of power received from the one to whom he separated himself (see 2 Kings ii. 2–14), leads him, ere he uses it, to the same spot as these lion-faced sons of Gad. Oh, how deeply solemn and yet how true may the saints be more really impressed with the reality of it! Jordan alone could open the door for me to reach my Lord in His separated sphere in heaven; Jordan alone can open the door for me to follow Him in suitability to His rejection on earth; and Jordan alone can give to those qualities before spoken of, that subduedness and mellowness so in keeping with vessels of the Christ, devoted to Him in every turn of the heart, but efficient for Him as death in the power of life is working in them.

Lastly, it will be found, that what characterised the men of Issachar,

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marks the saint of to-day, according to whether He is a son of Gad or not; that is to say, if you are not a son of Gad, you cannot be a man of Issachar; if you are not separated to David, with the qualities of such, but accepting Jordan, *when its banks were overflown too*, as the only path wherein to follow David, you cannot have "understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do." And so it is true now, that no one can know the Lord's mind as to the saints, who is not suitable to the true David. What can be more excellent, *first Christ, then His own*, and the only way to know the mind of our Lord about His interests on earth, is to be truly devoted to Himself, in communion with Him, and walking in His path, as we follow on through the desert of this world.

Thus it is evident that nothing can please the Lord in this the day of His rejection and shame among men, but a *remnant* wholly separated to Himself, and because so, empowered, in communion with Him by the Holy Ghost,

LEPROSY IN A HOUSE.

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their alone strength, courage, skill, boldness, and alacrity, to walk His path down here, accepting death, *His death*, as the only door out of all visible things, to Himself, whether for rest and enjoyment with Him on high, or for true-hearted following below. May the Lord in rich grace, find and call out such a remnant in these days.

W. T. T.

LEPROSY IN A HOUSE.

IN Leviticus xi. 36, we have set forth in type that there is something on earth which cannot be defiled, as the water in a pit or fountain was not defiled by the carcase of an unclean animal falling into it. The water in the fountain or pit is typical of the Holy Ghost. (John iv. 10.) But we have also set forth in that same verse of Leviticus that man can contract defilement, just as the one who touched the dead carcase in the water became thereby unclean. For there is that evil thing in man called sin, which

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readily answers to evil from without. So man may morally get defiled by uncleanness outside of him, just as the person who touched the carcase of the unclean beast became ceremonially unclean. In the chapters which follow (xii.-xv.) we have described various ways in which, through the actings of man's nature he became unclean, teaching us something further, that the *working* of the flesh morally in man defiles him. Thus the spiritual teaching flows on in a regular order. There is that in man by which he contracts defilement, and there is that in him which, if it works, defiles him. In a word, he has in him a nature which is only evil, and the working of that nature will defile him. (Matt. xv. 18.) Hence the law relative to leprosy is introduced in this part of the book. Of leprosy in man, his garments, and house does the law treat. The disease was found only in man, or in what was connected with him, and not in any beast. In man it was a working in his flesh deeper than the skin, hence it aptly illustrates the working of

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the flesh within us. What it was really in a house it is difficult to say, but the teaching for us, founded on leprosy in the house is not difficult to seize. To that let us turn.

If the owner suspected the presence of that disease, his duty was to apprise the priest of it, who thereupon ordered the house to be cleared, that all that had been in it should not be made unclean. After that he inspected it. If the plague was in sight deeper than the wall, that is, not simply on the surface, the priest shut up the house seven days. Visiting it on the seventh day, if the plague had spread, he ordered the infected stones to be taken out, and cast into an unclean place without the city, had the walls scraped, new stones put in the place of the old ones, and the house replastered. Should the plague re-appear after that, there was nothing for it but to break down the house, and to carry out the stones, timber, and mortar, to an unclean place without the camp. But should the plague have been stopped, then the offerings ap-

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pointed for the first day's cleansing of the leper, were to be taken for the house, and duly dealt with—after that the house was clean. Such is an outline of the law.

Now there are three points to be noticed, the house, the leprosy, and the priest. The house was in the land, and the plague in it was a direct infliction from the Lord. "When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house in the land of your possession." (Lev. xiv. 34.) Having had already (chap. xiii.) leprosy in the individual treated of, the plague in the house would seem to typify corporate evil, that is, evil allowed in an assembly, which ought to have been judged. For the assembly viewed locally is God's dwelling place in the place where it is; God's temple, as 1 Corinthians iii. 16 distinctly teaches; and the stones of the house are the individuals who form that local assembly. What the leprosy really was which infected a material house, it is

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not easy to say : but, viewing the house in its typical character, we understand by the leprosy inside it, the allowed deep-seated working of the flesh, of which an individual in the assembly might be the subject. And by the priest, who in his full character typifies the Lord Jesus, we understand the general company of disciples empowered to act for Him, as John xx. 22 shews us, composed of all Christians, not locally connected with the assembly in question, for the priest was outside the house, and he went in to examine its state.

Advised by the owner of the house of the suspicious appearance on the walls, the priest went to examine into the matter. It was his concern, and his duty, though he had no personal connection with that house. Seeing the plague, in sight deeper than the wall, he shut up the house seven days for the plague was really there. And whilst the house was shut up, any one who entered it, or ate in it, or lay in it, was thereby rendered unclean. Personal

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identification with a leprous house made the individual unclean. Till the priest had shut it up that would not have been the case. The mere suspicion of the owner would not have been sufficient. But after due inspection, the plague being clearly discernible, the house thereupon shut up, any one who entered it became at once unclean. May there not be cases analogous to this in church matters? Would it be wise, would it be right, when an assembly is properly viewed as infected with leprosy, for any individual to have intercourse with them as if nothing were amiss?

The house shut up, at the end of the week the priest re-appeared. If the plague had spread, fresh measures were required. The diseased stones had to be removed at his command, and the house thoroughly cleansed. If the plague had not spread, it would seem that the priest had to do nothing more. If it had, he was to act. In the former case the plague had ceased working, a state of the house analogous to that of the leprous man in whom the disease had

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all turned white, and he was clean. There may be cases, where the simple calling attention by the assembly from without to the state of any local assembly would suffice to check the evil at work, by the assembly in question clearing itself of it. But if such an effect had not been produced ; if, through blindness or wilfulness, the local assembly still harboured the evil, it would be like the house in which the priest still found the disease at work ; and in that case as the priest commanded the diseased stones to be taken out, the assembly in general would surely be warranted in insisting on a proper dealing with the offenders.

If by that the evil was stayed, well and good. But if, after all that was done the plague was still working, what resource would there be but to act as the priest was to act ? He ordered the demolition of the house. Saints must disown the local assembly as really that of God.

But what care, what patience, what firmness were manifested ! Care and

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wisdom in investigating the truth of the report. Patience in waiting to see whether the disease would spread or not. Firmness in removing the diseased stones, and finally demolishing the house, for leprosy could not be allowed to go on unchecked in the land. Were Israel to be more careful than Christians? "Know ye not," says the apostle to the Corinthians "that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" The disease might be in only one or more stones; but the whole house was unclean as long as the disease was allowed to be working in any stone. The house free from the presence of the disease, the appointed offerings were to be taken, and duly dealt with. These offerings were typical of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, as brought home in power by the Holy Ghost to the consciences and hearts of the saints who had been mixed up with the evil. Nothing less than His atoning death could meet the necessities of the case, and of that they would need to be reminded. A ministry that does this in such a case

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will be a ministry really of God in the power of the Spirit, and will be greatly blessed; and the wisdom of it will be discerned by the spiritually minded in that assembly. C. E. S.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE SECRET OF OUR STRENGTH.

“SKIN for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life.” According as anything approaches in value to one’s life, so is it tenaciously grasped, and persistently retained. The sure evidence that the truth we have learned is of real value to us is the tenacity and inviolability with which we hold to it. If I believe it is the mind of God revealed to me, it must be dearer to me than my natural life which is in itself terminable, which the other is not. The very fact of the warning, “Hold that fast which thou hast,” shews that there would be an attempt to deprive the saints of the truth they had received.

In our warfare the devil always aims

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that which is good?" It is a truth of the greatest value that if I walk in obedience to His word, He will uphold me with all His power. "If a man love me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.) In a word, just as I keep close to Him, He will keep close to me and make my cause His own; so that I am not to be occupied with opposition, but in truth and holiness to cleave unto the Lord, and then it shall be, "No man hath been able to stand before God unto this day, one man of you shall chase a thousand for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you as he has promised you." (Josh. xxiii. 9, 10.)

The lack of power or support can always be traced to some departure or turning aside on our part. In everything we shall find that true separation or Nazariteship, ensures the present and parental care and protection of our God—"Come out from among them and be ye separate," &c. (2 Cor. vi. 17.)

A TIMOTHY,
OR
A SERVANT FOR THE LAST
DAYS.

A MAN must be prepared and morally fit for the service he would render. Before Timothy was charged with the mind of the Lord respecting his course and service in the last times, he was characterised by 'devoted attachment to the interests of Christ. Paul writes of him, "I have no man like minded who will naturally [like a relation] care for your state, for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." This was the grace or trait which qualified him for service in the last days. The true servant has two great traits in his character: one, he loves what the Lord loves; the other, he refuses and wars against every opposition or enemy. The first could not be supported in a world of evil without the second. The more I love, the more I resist whatever

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assails those I love, and guard them from every harm. But I am the lover *first* before I am the soldier. This Timothy was pre-eminently. There was no man like-minded to him in Paul's time. The true lover in a place of hostility must be a soldier : but then he is one, not because fighting is natural or ready to him : but in order that he may protect those on whom his heart is set ; because they are Christ's. Here the most enlightened men in Ephesus failed. They were ready for battle. They resisted the incursion of the enemy ;—" of them who say they are apostles and are not ;" but they had lost their first love, and with it, their first works. It is of all importance for a servant in a day of evil, and that in the place where it should never enter, that he should be able to confront and resist it, not merely as one who opposes to antagonists, in the spirit that " all is fair in war," but as one who like a father bears great love to (it might be) the greatest of his opposers, as David to Absalom ; and therefore while he utterly

and rigorously condemned him; nay, opposed him unto the sword, yet it was not so much to slay him as to ensure the safety of his kingdom and people. Joab failed because he was the soldier without being the lover. The servant true to the heart and interests of Christ is the Timothy; the one who can understand the right course of action, when evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, and when the saints will not endure sound doctrine.

In order to be a Timothy for the last days, one must have learned as Timothy had done. We have seen that he was the fit one to be entrusted with the Lord's mind because of his simple devotion to Him. Now in Paul's first letter to Timothy he instructs him on the subjects and duties which should occupy his attention at Ephesus, when things were in order before the break up spoken of in the Second Epistle. If a servant knows not the true order, and his duty in that order, he will not be able to act with a view to the true order

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when things are out of order, for if he does not know what is the true, he at best is only combating the things or acts which pain his own conscience. His conscience is the standard for his acts, and not his knowledge of the only true divine order which he had learned previous to his conflict with disorder; so he does not merely attack the evil or prescribe for its symptoms. He sees how each inconsistency is an inroad on the true order, but he is not merely occupied in correcting them, or with the removing of this or that, for he cannot be satisfied with anything short of the divine order. If a fine house had fallen into ruin, or if a garden is overgrown with weeds, and if I am bound to adhere to the pristine order with regard to each, I am not satisfied with building up the one, in any way, or clearing out and tilling the other. What I want and seek first is information as to what the house or the garden *was originally*, for thus only can I have a true idea of the mind of the one who built the one and laid out the other. Unless I know this

I cannot estimate the ruin that has taken place, and though I make but small way in clearing away the rubbish as in Nehemiah's time, and find that a restoration of the whole is impracticable, still as a true servant I keep ever before me the order and character according to God ; and therefore, however great the ruin, I accept nothing that is unsuitable to Him.

Let us now see the chief subjects by which the apostle prepares Timothy. First he warns him of the doctrines which occupy the mind with fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than God's dispensation which is in faith. This is its one great characteristic—faith ; and hence the end of the commandment has three marks. Love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and unfeigned faith. Thus all human inventions or devices are disposed of.

Now as to the law which came from God.* Paul “treats the produce of

* See “Synopsis” vol. v., page 155.

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human imaginations as mere fables, but the law was of God and could be made useful if rightly employed. It was of great service to condemn, to judge evil, to slay—to shew the judgment of God against every wrong thing forbidden by the gospel which revealed the glory of the blessed God.” Again, “the use of the law is explained in verses 8–13. The apostle in a certain sense lowers it here, while acknowledging its utility in its place as the weapon of righteousness for condemnation, and contrasts it with the gospel which is connected with the glory of God Himself, which this gospel proclaims, as the law is connected with the wickedness which it condemns.”

This is the first great lesson for a Timothy or a servant in the last times. If he does not understand the grand contrast between the law and the gospel; if he knows not the greatness of the latter, he can never see the divine place which the other holds in relation to it. Note, he must war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. “The loss of a good conscience

opens the door to Satan because it deprives us of communion with God."

Timothy being instructed in the gospel, he is next directed as to the church's duty and place in relation to the world. "I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. For kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (Chap. ii. 14.) The principle is grace. Next man individually is spoken of. Prayer is to characterise him, and modest apparel women.

Next chapter iii. The care of the church in bishops and deacons. Then the church itself as the house of God, and how to behave in it. It is the pillar and ground of truth of which the mystery of godliness is the living centre of the whole. Timothy the servant having been instructed in these great

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general truths that are essential as testimony before the world, is next warned of the deep errors which should spring up. (Chap. iv.) Details of which my reader will find a good unfolding of in "Synopsis," page 173.

Now in 2 Timothy we find the servant who had been instructed so fully, both as to the gospel and as to the church, as it was for God on earth, is now, in times of disorder and confusion, first exhorted "not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, or of me his prisoner." (2 Tim. i. 8.) The gospel is again insisted on, not now so much in its greatness as the gospel of the blessed God, as in its power. Timothy is now to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, for Christ hath "abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel." Next he was to hold fast the form of sound words, which he had heard from the apostle. The words were now to be preserved inviolable; remembering too "that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in us." Thus in-

structed, the servant was to confront the difficulties of the times, and the turning away from Paul of all in Asia, consequently he is exhorted to be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus;" he must come out in the threefold qualities of a soldier, a wrestler, and a husbandman. He is to insist on the right thing first. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." But when evil principles—canker, are tolerated in the assembly,—then he must purge himself from the vessels to dishonour, and follow righteousness, peace, charity, with them who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Still he must take care that the soldier-trait—that of opposing evil should not exceed the higher one of love. Can we comprehend the feelings and exercises of this servant under such a new and sadly altered state of things? and yet worse, perilous times were to come, and he is the one chosen of the Lord as the fit one to cope with, and act for Him in them. There are two things which this

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servant of the Lord must observe for himself in these times. One to follow Paul, his doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, &c. And secondly, the scriptures—all the inspired writings—which are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” And then towards the saints, he is unflinchingly to maintain the truth. “Preach the word : be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” The Lord in His mercy fit His servants for these last times. Amen.

SPIRITUAL AND CARNAL.

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Gal. v. 25), is a scripture which, it is to be feared, is but little understood. And this because what constitutes *spirituality* is not clearly seen. Nothing is more practical. Everything merely theoretical, mystical, or visionary, is totally at variance with its character. Christ was wholly spiritual. Naturally I am wholly carnal. But when born of God I live, or have life, in the Spirit. It is true of every believer, as the Lord said, “Because I live ye shall live also.”

Living in the Spirit, like walking in the light, is our divine standing as born of, and brought to, God in full, cloudless favour, according to His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. The Holy Ghost has been given unto us. With Him have we been anointed and sealed who is the earnest in our hearts. (2 Cor. i. 21, 22.) This is all of absolute and sovereign grace. And when under-

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stood we see the force of the apostle's word, "Walk in the Spirit;" again, "if ye be led of the Spirit;" also, "he that soweth to the Spirit." (Gal. v. 16-18; vi. 8.) Now our answer to this is our spirituality, and the measure of our response the exact degree to which we have attained. Spiritual intelligence then is not exactly the same thing; neither is spiritual gift. For a clear spiritual comprehension of things there may be and the gift of a teacher too, coupled with little of conscience, and less of heart for Christ, and then necessarily a low state spiritually. Unless the will be broken and there be practical subjection to Christ; "casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"—you cannot have spirituality, for it has no atmosphere in which to flourish.

In a word spirituality is an intensely practical thing, and recognising this we see that the power to grasp and communicate truth falls far short of it.

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Being born of God, indwelt of the Holy Ghost, and having the mind of Christ, normal christian state, we surely possess that spiritual sense or intelligence which is inseparably connected with the new nature. But beyond these things which the apostle terms living in the Spirit, he exhorts us *to walk* in the Spirit. In other words, he presses spirituality upon the churches of Galatia, and mourns the lack of it in the church at Corinth. In writing to the latter (1 Cor. iii. 1), his spirit was oppressed with this, their unspiritual condition, although he distinctly recognises how enriched they were "in all word [of doctrine], and all knowledge." (*New Trans.*) Consequently though they were truly believers, and hence were not natural men, they were *carnal* instead of spiritual. Paul had in chapter ii. opened up in a remarkable way the subject of revelation. Things hid from Old Testament saints are now revealed "by the Spirit." Spiritual things are communicated by spiritual means, and discerned by the spiritual (man) who is himself discerned

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of none. That was the new character of divine revelation, or rather its new phase, speaking abstractedly. It was what God had wrought. And as to themselves they were in everything enriched in Christ Jesus in all word and all knowledge ; it was made specially true of them. Chapters i. and ii. clearly establish these two things : yet when we come to chapter iii. we find the apostle labouring under the difficulty arising from this fact, that despite the wondrous character of their calling, and the revelation according to it, and notwithstanding the remarkable dowry they had received, enriched and adorned with every spiritual gift, they were so defective in grace, so carnal as men, and in Christ such babes, that he could not speak unto them as unto spiritual, but had to feed them with the spoon-meat which is alone suited both for infancy and for sickness. He has to grapple with their divisions in chapter i., their emulation and strife in chapter ii., their hero-worship in chapter iii., and a host of other things in the chap-

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ters which follow—all different phases of their carnality; this was their practical state, and thus Satan had made the assembly to appear to be his playground. Surely it has a solemn voice for us in this day. Not only are there divisions, emulations, strifes, and the like everywhere prevalent around us, but they are beginning to characterise us also, and is it not carnality? Magnificent the character of our calling; wonderful the revelation answering to it; singularly blessed the endowment of gift amongst us, and God is now proving that while He has so marvellously enriched us, our state has been that of the carnal who walk as men! This, alas, has been the practical answer which, while boasting of our privileges, we have made to His peculiar grace!

To return. Walking in the light (1 John i. 7), is our standing as also is living in the Spirit. The practical thing is found in the next chapter, walking as Christ walked, and this is also that walking in the Spirit which in Ephesians v. 2 is termed walking “in love, as

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Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Thus in John the two things, standing and state, are walking in light and walking as Christ walked ; while in Paul the same two things are living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit—the latter being further expressed as walking in love. Walking in *light*, then, finds its expression practically by our walking in *love* (the two things which express God's nature), which latter is as Christ walked, and this again is walking in the Spirit to which we are exhorted. Thus spirituality is divine life manifested in us while yet in sinful bodies, in the energy of the Spirit of God after the pattern of Christ ; the object before the soul being that glorified Man after whom He is modelling us, and in whose steps He is conducting us ; and the issue is that fruit of an ungrieved Spirit wrought out in the saints which is love, joy, peace, &c. We need scarcely remark that no Old Testament saint is spoken of in the

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word as spiritual, nor is the subject mooted, for it is not until the two natures of the believer are brought out in Christianity that the question could be raised; not that none were spiritual, but it was an unwritten thing so long as the christian calling was unknown. Saints now and again use the word as though its opposite were *temporal* (just as the Upper House of Parliament is said to be composed of lords temporal and spiritual) but this is foreign to scripture usage where its correlative is always *carnal*, fleshly, the will and actings of the flesh. If we walk as men we are carnal; if as Christ walked we walk in the Spirit and are spiritual. We might speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and be carnal all the while, walking as men. But if spiritual, we have divine love, for love is of God's nature, and we walk in love as Christ also has loved us. Accordingly the first thing named in Galatians v. 22 is love. And as the things referred to in the early chapters of 1

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Corinthians bring out carnality in its many-facedness, so also do this and the following verse shew us what spirituality is ; in fine, bringing forth practically the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ! What a beautiful cluster of ripe and precious fruit, which as His saints we are privileged to grow for Christ to the refreshment of His spirit, and the joy of His heart even now.

May He so break our hearts before Himself that there may be real self-judgment as to our carnality ; but, through His grace, the enlightening of our eyes, and a little reviving in our bondage !

W. R.

D.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

WHAT IS TEMPTING THE SPIRIT OF
THE LORD ?

THE evil first occurring in the church was not only the most vicious, but because the chief, one that is ever recur-

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ring, Satan ever seeking an opportunity to do the worst. When we know the manner and intent of this chief evil, we are watchful, and prepared, in faith, to resist it. The evil, in whatever form it may shew itself, has the one uniform design, namely to slight, or tempt, the Spirit of the Lord; to call in question and ignore His presence in the church. To contravene the authority and claims of God has been the great aim of Satan from the beginning. Whatever was the chief or most important thing with God at any time, this it is that man has been urged to disown or to spoil. In the garden of Eden the word of God is daringly perverted, and Eve is induced to do the very thing which was strictly forbidden of God. Note that it was not openly to Adam the serpent addressed himself, but to Eve, the easier way to succeed.

In like manner, when fire came down from God to consume the sacrifice, Aaron's sons offered strange fire; they procured fire for themselves, as if their fire was as good as God's fire, the most

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the Spirit of God—"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. iv. 29, 30.) Again, in the way one acts as to others, "He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit." (1 Thess. iv. 8.)

OUR NEW PLACE.

Our resurrection with Christ, and being put in Him as at the right hand of God, associates us with Him in all that in which God has been perfectly glorified. All that God Himself is, has been glorified in Christ's work. Glory, majesty, righteousness, love; all He is, and Christ is set at His right hand as man according to all this, and in virtue of its having been displayed in Him; and we, forgiven and redeemed by that which has done it, are quickened together with

Him in virtue of it, and are by divine power, sitting in heavenly places in Him where all this is displayed, in His being there in rewarding righteousness. So that we are thus the display of it too, made the righteousness of God in Him, as God shews the exceeding riches of His grace also in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. This puts us in a most glorious place in, and through, and finally with Christ, and also to His glory. God is now, in what He is, perfectly revealed, and we are the expression of this in glory in, and with Christ. It is a wonderful place, and makes us nothing indeed. J. N. D.

“YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD.”

My life's with Christ in heaven,
 'Tis hid with Christ in God ;
 There, where hath soar'd no pinion,
 No creature-foot hath trod ;
 Divine repose and treasure,

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Beyond all thought or measure,
Where Christ is hid in God.

In the bright sanctuary
My life is hid in God ;
The earthen vessel, weary,
Turns to its lowly sod.
My day in shade declineth,
But O, what lustre shineth
Where Christ is hid in God !

High in the very highest
My life is hid in God ;
Loudly may roar the tempest,
And wake the swelling flood :
Though earth rock to its centre,
No storm can ever enter
Where Christ is hid in God.

Till Christ come forth from heaven,
My life is hid in God ;
To Him all power is given,
He'll wield His mighty rod ;
His saints his image wearing—
His might and splendour sharing—
Who shall withstand th' appearing
When Christ comes out from God ?

JOHN'S GOSPEL.

INTRODUCTION.

JOHN'S gospel has a special character, which has struck the minds of all Christians who have given it a little attention, even though they have not always clearly understood what it was that produced this effect. Not only does John strike the mind, but he engages the heart in a way not to be found in the other parts of the holy Book. The reason of this is, that the gospel by John presents the Person of the Son of God—the Son of God in a place of such lowliness, that He can say in it: “Give me to drink.” This attracts the heart, if the heart be not altogether hardened. If Paul teaches us how a man can be presented to God, John presents God to man. His subject is God, and eternal life in a man, in the gospel; in the Epistle the apostle follows out the same truth, giving us this life reproduced in those who possess it in Christ. I speak only of the great matters of importance which characterise these books, for

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F

THOUGHTS ON LUKE.

Chapter xxiii. 40--43.

I HAVE been thinking of our being exercised and learning here, and the thief going straight to Paradise. There seems to me to be a defining of flesh and spirit in the process that goes on. We have our fruit unto holiness. In going through the world as redeemed, we find much that is not of God in us—not of the new nature. God humbles us and proves us to know what is in our hearts ; flesh and the new nature are spiritually or experimentally defined (besides God's constant and loving care in grace, who withdraws not His eyes from the righteous). The world is a desert ; the manna (Christ), our all, our only food. The water out of the rock our drink, only in us a well of water. We taste of the grapes of Eshcol, are taken with the Lord through it into the land. Now redemption being common to all, was not this defined in the thief ? Did he not know that flesh and all it produced was only to condemnation ? It

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was a wholly judged flesh. Was not the world crucified to him? Was not as to the desire of his heart (not in a full knowledge but as to his state) Christ in the glory of His kingdom everything? the manna—a humbled Christ, his soul's whole food? Flesh was judged in himself, the world crucified, and he to it. Were not his desires perfect, even when pain might have made him think of relief, to be remembered in the day of glory? full lowliness, and yet full confidence in *Christ*, and in Christ's heart, and that in the fullest perception of his own sinfulness, absorbed by Christ in the midst of pain and shame. To be remembered on the gibbet, for flesh, was of all things unpalatable: but Christ was all. I am not now speaking of the proofs of conversion and faith, which are most striking, but of the thoroughness of that work in forming his soul in the separation of it out of the flesh to God, with Christ as all before it, which is wrought progressively in us. The world and the flesh were on the cross,

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and the cross on them crucified with all their affections and lusts in the condition of his soul, and Christ everything; what was to come, as far as he knew it; and full confidence in Christ. What more, save greater knowledge, could I have if I had come to the end of my career?

What is a right state of holiness but a reflex and reproduction in the heart, of the objective excellency of Christ, subjectively changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord, purifying ourselves as He is pure? Here there is more knowledge through the Holy Ghost and progress fruit unto holiness. Christ sanctified Himself that we may be sanctified through the truth. Flesh—the first Adam, and Christ—the last, defined in our souls; and the one judged and crucified, the other experimentally formed, Christ being all. And though with less knowledge, and not knowing Christ glorified by the Holy Ghost, what was the state of the thief but that the world and flesh were fully defined and

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crucified, and Christ all to his heart, and manifested so ? And in this Christ finds His comfort. To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise ; his title, Christ's perfect work ; but Christ in his heart by grace to the exclusion by the cross, of flesh and the world, and all three most clearly defined. Stephen shews it on the bright side, with the Holy Ghost and Christ in glory ; just like Christ on the cross, and death too being his portion in it ; more full, but not more true than the thief, as to the inwrought sanctified condition of his soul. And here we see the difference. Christ in glory revealed, and the Holy Ghost bringing us in likeness to Him on the cross, as to flesh and the world, with full apprehension of what is heavenly before us, and so abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, saying "Receive," as knowing where He is ; not "remember," as only looking on to the kingdom, Christ at the same time telling him he should not wait for it ; but the moral condition produced is essentially the same as to the state, as to the world

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and the flesh on the negative side, and Christ, as to His person at least, and that crucified, all on the positive, producing the other. The work thus wrought progressively in us, and virtually when we believe was, if with less knowledge (that difference being great objectively), wrought in him ; the cross realised, and as to the world and flesh, though not by the glory revealed ; but the revelation of the glory produces that as its effect now, as to this world, though with brighter insight into the glory. The thief did not reflect Christ in the calmness of his soul as Stephen did ; but the water was purified for Christ to delight in, and have with Him as that which flowed from Himself into the heart of the thief. It is lovely to think of.

J. N. D.

EYE-SALVE.

Revelation iii. 18.

In the symbolic language of scripture nothing is more clear than the use and meaning of such terms as light and

darkness, sight and blindness. Light expresses truth, candour, uprightness, intelligence, the very nature and presence of God. Darkness expresses moral evil, that which loveth and maketh a lie, crookedness and deceit, ignorance and depravity, the nature and ways of men blinded by Satan. The application of the terms referred to, and others of a kindred character, is probably more general than any other in the word of God. Alike do Old Testament writers, the Lord Himself, and the writers of the New Testament, uniformly and abundantly use this language. No organ of the body so much as the eye, and no faculty so much as sight, is employed in explaining or enforcing divine things. In a word, the eye is the window of the soul.

If this be recognised, we cannot fail to observe the peculiar fitness of the Lord's word to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, a closing word, as we may say, to the professing body on earth—"anoint thine eyes with eye-salve *that thou mayest see.*" We have

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but to look around to observe into what Egyptian darkness that professing body is plunged. In the Old Testament we read "His eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men" (Ps. xi. 4); here in the New, and three times over in this one book, we read of His eyes being as a flame of fire! Can the professing body bear His searching gaze? *Can we*, who, as much as any, form part of it? Shall we reply, "Master, thus saying, thou reproachest us also"? Shall we, like the Pharisees, say unto Him, "Are we blind also?" Let us hear His own words, for they are surely as suited, in a way, to us as to them, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin, but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." Solemn word for us truly! How often have we with self-complacency thanked God that we are not as other men, comparing ourselves with them to their disadvantage! Thus—but they do not see the One body, nor the Lord's coming! they have never seen separation and the heavenly calling! all in the dark as to dispensational

truth ! not at all clear as to prophecy ! not up to Ephesian truth ! only see men as trees walking ! Are *we* up to these things ? Do *we* see them ? If so, will it not be bound to express itself manifestly in the family, in the business, in the assembly ? Can we happily—before the eyes which are as a flame of fire !—appeal to these circles in which we move, as our witnesses ? Are our families and our houses unmistakably for the Lord ? Are our situations filled or our businesses conducted in the fear of God ? Are we in the assembly in all things subject to Christ ? Or are we saying with a satisfied air, “ We see, we see,” while failure and declension is written upon our course in each of these arenas ? Surely in our personal relations, whether in the home or the business circle, our principles and our ways should be the practical enthroning of Christ. Alas, how we fail ! And as to the assembly, what scathing evidences are arising everywhere of departure in one way or another, in lesser or greater measure, from divine principles, yea,

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even in some cases, from plain, scriptural precepts. Wonderful has been the truth recovered and communicated. *Apparently* it was apprehended and appropriated in power. But when a crisis comes, then comes the testing. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart," said one, "that I might not sin against thee." How different this to the saying, "We see." Nothing could be more Laodicean than this pride of knowledge while the heart is barren because the word is not hid there, and the Lord is practically dethroned and outside. Surely we need, when come together as gathered saints, to guard most sedulously against every relinquishment of scriptural order and procedure, cultivating a quick and acute sensibility as to what is due to Christ, which as a delicate perfume emits its fragrance all around His adorable person! But if the word of God has not its practical validity, the authority of Christ will be undermined if not subverted, and a thousand things will go wrong. Laxity will bring in its train coldness and in-

difference, and these will take the place of the invigorating energy and healing unction of an ungrieved Spirit. Only when Christ has *His* place, has everything else *its* place. Where every heart is a casket of the word, and a throne for Christ, it is surely well. Nothing is so fruitful in evil—whether as to doctrine or to practice—as the *heart* getting away from Him. If He be not enshrined in its deepest affections, the soul becomes paralysed, just as all nature would be without the sun, and thus the prey of every evil while knowing it not. It is heart-acquaintance with Christ, and not head-knowledge, which is the safeguard. The apostle prayed for the Ephesians, that the eyes of *their heart* should be enlightened. And he exhorted them, “Wake up thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and *the Christ* shall shine upon thee.” We may safely affirm then that the only effectual eye-salve for the saint of God is that “holy anointing oil” of Exodus xxx., which was compounded after the art of the apothecary of myrrh and cinnamon;

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calamus, cassia and oil-olive. In other words, that "unction from the holy one," by whom alone Christ is habitually and profoundly apprehended and installed before the eyes of the saints, and instated with honour and affection in their hearts. Nothing is more clear than the fact that Laodicea has *no heart for Christ*. What wonder there is no moral perception of what is suited to Him, no divine judgment of what is comely before God or estimable in His sight? If the Holy Ghost be a quenched or a grieved Spirit, our eyes lack the eye-salve, Christ loses His place in the heart, and the state of the assembly becomes the deplorable expression, not of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, but of whence we are fallen, and of the crying need there is that we repent and do the first works (Rev. ii. 5), lest we be characterised rather by Ephesian failure than Ephesian truth!

If there have been a real dereliction of what becometh saints separated to Christ, and in assemblies departure from

divine principles no less patent than painful, the word of God losing its commanding place before the soul, the authority of the Head over the members virtually set at nought, and genuine subjection to Him a thing of the past, is it any marvel that where spiritual perception so little obtains differences of judgment should so largely prevail? The apostle prayed for the Philippian saints that they might discern (judge and approve) the things that are more excellent. What can more clearly indicate a low state of spirituality than the not being able to distinguish the things that differ, or to prove the spirits whether they are of God? So little divine discernment by an instinctive spiritual perception of what is or is not of God! The truly spiritual man has his judgment formed and established in the light of God's presence by that word which discerneth the thoughts and intents of the heart, and he accordingly discerneth all things who is himself discerned of none. But never is that the case save where the Spirit of God ha

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reverentially rendered to Him the honour which is His due, thus getting His own definite place as the only power for discernment, for it is He alone who searcheth all things, yea, "even the depths of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10-16.) Apart from that "holy anointing oil," the ointment of the sanctuary, there can be no such spiritual perception. "It is holy, and it shall be holy unto you." And may we not say, it would be far more venial to be confessing we are Laodicea than with Laodicean arrogance asserting we are Philadelphia? The Lord Himself bring us into deep exercise of soul as to these things, preserving us from saying in the pride of *our* hearts, "We see, we see," while lacking true spiritual discernment of what is nearest to *His* heart, our very condition being a louder witness against us than our bitterest enemy! "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong

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meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Heb. v. 12-14.)

W. R.

D.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THERE MUST BE HERESIES.

To the question, Why is evil permitted? I believe the true answer is, That the greater good may be declared. It is very interesting to note that for every evil expressed, there is a good manifested to supersede it. That is, the one great purpose with God is to bring out the good. Hence, whenever evil intrudes and forces its way, He makes this inroad only a fresh occasion for setting forth the good, so that the evil becomes a foil for the good. The good becomes more distinct by the very distinctness of the evil.

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to own and manifest those who are approved of Him ; and all those who are in concert with Him will also be manifested ; their rod will blossom and bud, and bring forth almonds. Blessed be God, He will prepare a table for the approved in the presence of their enemies ; He will anoint their head with oil, their cup will run over.

Now we get in the church also various shades of man's perverseness, opposing or running counter to the mind of the Lord. From the weakness of Peter and Barnabas, down to the defection of "all that are in Asia," and of Demas, the hatred of Alexander, the blasphemy of Hymeneus and Philetus. Each of these in their varied ways only gave an occasion for the approved to become manifest ; so that we find the apostle more distinctly succoured of the Lord, in the day of the greatest outward decline than ever before ; and he was manifested more than ever as His servant in faithfulness and truth.

The Lord give unto each of us to walk in such true self-judgment, rebuk-

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ing the smallest working of unbelief and self-consideration, so that we may not yield when the testing time comes, for surely it must come, and then the unrebuked weakness betrays us: however strong the chain may be in every link but one, it will fail then, if the pressure be great, proving there must have been a flaw allowed, or we should not fail in the day of trial; while the man of true and faithful purpose, will only come out the brighter because of a test, like the diligent well-prepared youth from his examination.

FRAGMENT.

WHAT a difference between the rest of God in creation and in the rest that remains! There is no doubt God was glorified as a Creator, and all was very good, but as we know, was fallible and is fallen. It was the responsible creature, not the purpose and full effect of the heart of God. But God's rest that remains will be, when the full love and purpose of His heart has its effect ac-

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complished, and that before Him, and He sees those before Him who, partakers of the divine nature, He knows enter into it. There is fellowship, and His Son centre and head of it all, is fully glorified according to His purpose ; the One in whom and by whom all His counsels in glory are made good, and He Himself displayed, the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, and in the nearer place, first-born among many brethren, and Head of the body, the church ; the Head of the new thing in which God is perfectly glorified, satisfied, and for ever. And we enter into this rest, holy and without blame before Him in love ; satisfied too that Christ the Son, put to shame for us, is perfectly glorified, and that all the saints are what He would have them, perfectly to His glory. Our hearts satisfied and knowing that we are perfectly to His glory, by His own grace, to the praise of His glory. It is a perfect rest, where we shall be free to think only of Him and think together.

J. N. D.

JOHN'S GOSPEL.

AFTER the short sketch of the gospel already given, we will enter upon the detail of the different chapters.

Chapter i. The first chapter presents the Lord's person to us in all its positive aspects—what He is in Himself—not in His relative characters. We do not find Him here as the Christ, nor as Head of the church, nor as High Priest ; that is what He was or is in relationship with men down here, whether Jews or Christians ; He is presented to us personally ; His work also is set before us.

The chapter begins with the divine and eternal existence of the person of Jesus, the Son of God, with that which He is in His very nature, so to speak. Genesis begins with the creation, and the Old Testament gives us the history of responsible man upon the earth, which is the sphere of this responsibility ; John begins with that which preceded creation ; he begins everything anew here, in the person of Him who is become the Second man, the last Adam.

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It is not here: "In the beginning God *created*;" but: "In the beginning *was* the Word." All is founded upon the non-created existence of Him who created all things: at the beginning of all things, He was there, without any beginning. "In the beginning was the Word," is the formal expression of the truth that the Word had no beginning. But there is more in this remarkable passage: the Word was personally distinct, "the Word was with God;" but it was not distinct in its nature, "the Word was God." Thus we have the eternal existence, the distinct personal character, and the identity of the nature of the Word; and all this existed in eternity. The personal distinctness of the Word was not, as people have been pleased to say, a thing which had a beginning. "In the beginning the Word was with God." (Ver. 2.) His personality is eternal as His nature. This is the great and glorious basis of the doctrine of the gospel of our eternal joy, what the Saviour is in Himself, His nature and His person.

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Now comes what He is in His attributes, being already what we have just noticed. First of all, He created all things, and here we come to the beginning of Genesis. We have to do with Him in that which He *is*, in His nature; the world is but that which He has made. All things were made by Him, and there is nothing created of which He is not the Creator. All that subsists, subsists by Him. He *was* ($\eta\upsilon$); all that began to exist ($\epsilon\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron$) began "by Him." He was the Creator of all beings. (Compare Heb. i. 2-10.)

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MEN are attracted towards one who devotes all the energies of his life to the attainment of one settled purpose. They admire it, for there is a kind of tacit acknowledgment in many a sober mind among them that it is better than the butterfly occupation in which they are engaged. And if such a man seeks to be a statesman, a soldier, or a sailor, he will make everything else subservient

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to this one great idea of his life. Governed by one fixed principle, to which he ever returns, he is like the magnetic needle that ever points to the pole. Only at rest in himself when he is governed by it, and ever restless and disturbed in any other occupation. Now we are in difficult times, and we do well sometimes to pause and ask ourselves if we Christians are such men as I have spoken of, working in the quiet energy and confidence of the Spirit of God? Restlessness is manifest all around us, and God has lately tested us and will test us, to seek to manifest to ourselves and to others whether we have received, and are held in the quiet power of that "*which cannot be shaken.*" (Heb. xii. 28, 29.) What then is the *life* object, before which everything else, yea, even the troubles of the assembly (Phil. iv. 6), will obtain their rightful value as hindering or ministering thereto? What is the pole star, the guiding star of our way? I know I shall be answered readily by many—"Christ and the church." Well I say, "blessed if it is

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so, but I candidly confess that the reply is often so flippantly made that we do well to examine if it be really so in truth. In these days especially (as always) the teacher and the taught *must* turn to the word; we must take heed *what* we hear and *how* we hear. (Luke viii. 18; Mark iv. 24.)

The Lord has Himself left us in what He has done for us, a blessed example of a man of purpose. As the man Christ Jesus He has passed on before us, leaving us the example that we should follow in His steps, and so shew forth here "the virtues of him who has called us from darkness into his marvellous light!" How often, as we have traced His path, have we in adoring fervour exclaimed, "Nothing turned Him aside!" No, neither the rejection of Israel, nor His own house, nor the turning aside of many from following Him, nor the meeting at the final hour with all the power of the enemy, nor even the forsaking of God—nothing moved Him from it! "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." This ever

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governed Him. And if this was so in the past, may we not say that He, Christ Himself, is *in the present*, the only model (and only perfect example, as He must ever be) of a "Man of purpose" for to-day? How do we imitate Him as to this? A few thoughts may not be out of place as we ponder His *present* occupation, for it is clear that we must be in fellowship with Him to-day as to this, if we too would be "men of purpose."

"On this rock," He says, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. xvi.) Here we hear for the first time of what is His purpose and present occupation, which only began when He had Himself laid its foundation in His death. (1 Cor. iii. 11.) This occupation of the Lord is further developed in other places (John xiii. and Ephesians v. 25-32), for not only is He to-day building the church, but He is preparing her, by the washing of water by the word, for that glorious day, when completed, He shall present her "to Himself a glorious church, not having

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spot or wrinkle or any such thing." In our infirmities, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." If we sin, "He is our advocate," and we also are called to like occupation, "prayer and supplication for all saints" (Eph. vi. 18), as well as to wash each other's feet from defilement. (John xiii.)

1 Chronicles xxii. is a blessed word of encouragement. Solomon means "peace," and he is the builder of the Lord's house. He and the men of purpose (God's purpose) work together, and on a divine pattern. So whatever may be the discouragements (for to-day we do not lack the presence of Sanballat without and Shemaiah within (see Neh. vi. 9-14), yet any and every workman (rightly feeble in himself) may take courage. If he is working with Solomon, and in subjection to that one master mind, which is God's, what has *he* to fear? Solomon's temple might be razed to its foundation, but of *this* building (Eph. ii. 21) He has said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it!"

The Lord builds, and for the first

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time in John xx. (peace having been made) He says, "Peace unto you." Thenceforward he builds. Not a stone was laid in the building in the day of Matthew xvi., though the material, the "living stones" were there, manifested by a God-taught confession of Him such as Peter's—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

To Solomon, then, it is said (see ver. 15), "Moreover there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work." Is any feeling discouraged? feeling lonely? Pause, my beloved fellow workman! Are *you* working with Solomon and at the same edifice? Then remember that "There are workmen *with thee* in abundance" (for you are working with Him). And who will be discouraged since naught can let God's building? It goes on to-day furnished and supplied "with all manner of cunning men for every manner of work." Nor is material lacking for the use of every willing hearted workman. (See

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ver. 16.) “Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number.” What then is lacking? Ah! we only want to be “men of purpose.” Listen to what comes next, and may the Lord give to thee, my reader, and to me grace and faith to *act* upon it, “Arise, therefore and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.”

And Solomon was only building an earthly house, a footstool for the Holy One of Israel, but the Lord is now building for Himself *His* assembly, and all the magnificence and glory that were found in Solomon’s temple will be as naught to it. Oh! blessed day, daily drawing nigh, when he shall present her to Himself a glorious assembly, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, when God’s habitation shall be set up without sound of hammer or axe, and when from the tear-stained faces of His people, and of those who now labour with Him and for Him (Rom. xvi. 15; 2 Tim. i. 4; Phil. iii. 15, and Jer. ix. 1)—no angel, nor archangel, but God Himself will wipe away

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every tear; His delight fulfilled to dwell among and with us, and to be known of us as *our God*. And this will be our eternal state, that one blessed day whose sun knows no setting, for as in the city, dwelling place of God and the Lamb, "there is no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it" (Rev. xxi.), so in the day of eternity, "And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign to the ages of ages." (Rev. xxii.)

Now what does the apostle Paul say, himself among the greatest of workmen, one too who knew more intimately than any since (read 2 Cor. xi. 23-30), all the trials found by those who would seek to serve Christ by serving and being spent for those who are His? "Wherefore my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, *unmoveable*, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.)

May we then each be found to be

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“men of purpose,” *Christ’s* purpose, in these days, wherein the shipwreck (1 Tim. i. 18–20) is manifest all around us, but when such men, the men of faith, will thereby be more distinctly manifested. Those that would discourage and hinder are not forgotten. They were found in every past day that required *faith*. Witness the day of Caleb (Num. xiii. 32, 33; xiv. 1–9), the day when Israel advanced to take possession (Deut. xx. 3–8), the day of Gideon (Jud. vii. 37), and the day of Nehemiah (Neh. vi. 9–14), and many others that might be named. The word is, “Is any faint-hearted? Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return.” Such men tend to cause “their brethren’s heart to faint, as well as their heart.” But are *you*, beloved reader, working with the true Solomon? who, having loved His own, is still occupied on high for them. Are you seeking to present every man “perfect in Christ Jesus?” (Col. i. 27–29.) Then fear not. We shall probably be disturbed in this work. The troubles of the assembly in her time

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state (she will know no other) and the individual trials and oppositions as we have said, to be expected if we seek to follow Him, these will all make demands more or less pressing upon us, but I see no reason to falter. There is the one settled purpose, the Lord's work at the present hour, and is it ours? Like the needle, trembling as the waves strike the ship, but ever returning to its true work, may you and I be found obeying the exhortation of 1 Chronicles xxii., "Arise therefore and be doing, and the Lord be with thee." H. C. A.

 THE HOUSE OF GOD.

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism."
(Eph. iv. 5.)

Few things can be of higher interest or of deeper moment to us than the corporate relations of God with those who are really or professedly His people. These being of a varied character, very different terms are used to distinguish them, as the house of God, the body of Christ, the unity of the Spirit and the

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new creation. It is the first of these which occupies us at the moment. Our inquiry is, What is the house of God spoken of in the New Testament? It need scarcely be observed that this term marks a distinct phase of the church or assembly of God. Before looking at it in the teaching of the apostles, we may remark that we have in this expression one of the most ancient metaphors found in scripture. Jacob, the exiled wanderer from his father's house, having the earth for his couch, the heavens for his canopy, and only a few stones for his pillow, dreamt of the mystic ladder set up on the earth but reaching to heaven (reminding us, surely, of Christ the foundation and Christ the top-stone), and heard the voice of Jehovah confirming to him the promises made to his fathers. On awaking he exclaims, "Surely the Lord is in *this place*—this is none other but the *house of God*, and this is the gate of heaven!" So he set up a pillar for God there, erected of the stones on which his head had rested, and, anointing it, called it Bethel, say-

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ing, this stone shall be God's house !
(Gen. xxviii.)

In the cool of the day God had walked in Eden, and centuries later one walked with Him who had this testimony before he was translated that he pleased God. Still lower in the history of the race, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord," and from the first recorded altar, that which he built on the typically new earth, there ascended to Jehovah that which He accepted as a savour of rest; while lower down the stream of time, Abraham enjoyed His confidence, and was called "the friend of God." Yet for twenty centuries the house of God is an unbreathed word. Jacob the houseless, homeless fugitive, but withal possessed of the birthright, journeying from Beersheba to Padan-aram, seeing in vision that wondrous type of the Son of man (John i. 51), with the angels of God ascending and descending thereon, gives by the Holy Ghost the first utterance to this divine thought. As yet, however, it was but a metaphor. His descendants must go

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down into Egypt, and from greatness sink down into slavery to man and forgetfulness of God (as it were, "having no hope and without God in the world"), and there experience a divine deliverance, the typical drama of sin and redemption being thus enacted, ere form and substance could be imparted to the thought of God's heart—this new revelation of His purpose—that He would dwell among His people ! So turning to Exodus xv. we find the first note in the triumphant song of Moses—type of a risen Christ leading the praises of the assembly—is, "Jehovah is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation : he is my God, and *I will prepare him an habitation.*" We cannot but connect this with the words of a later prophet (David in Ps. xxii.), in which a kindred strain is taken up from the horns of the unicorns, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren : in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." Moses, in his song, prophesied of the material house of God—tabernacle and temple, to be pitched or erected

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by man; David in his psalm, of the spiritual house in which, celebrating a greater triumph, a sweeter note should be struck by the risen Christ in the midst of His saints as the first thought of His heart after achieving that victory which the Red Sea prefigured. We have seen how the material House was metaphorically alluded to, and its character indicated in that which, set up on earth, reached to heaven; and how the foundations of it were laid, as it might be said, in the anticipated death and resurrection of Christ, typically set forth in the Red Sea, eliciting from Moses and Miriam those brilliant snatches of song which celebrated with triumphant praise the victory achieved and the results assured, with the certainty, and in the language, of inspiration and of faith. That this was an indication of the purpose of God to dwell among His people is clearly deducible from the inspiration which gave birth to Moses' song; from the fact of God's approval of Moses' pitching the tabernacle outside the camp, attested by

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His descending in the cloudy pillar, and talking at the door with him, as a man speaketh unto his friend (Ex. xxxiii.); and by His express statement in an earlier chapter (xxix. 42-46), closing with these words, "And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, *that I may dwell among them; I am the Lord their God.*"

Were we to follow this branch of the subject, we should call attention to that striking scene just alluded to, when Moses, fresh from the heavenly courts, and horrified at the people's sin, took his own tent, as it would appear (the tent of meeting, and house of God in embryo), and set it up far² off outside the defiled camp, thus connecting its locality, not with the people or their works (good or bad; alas, just proved to be as bad as bad could be), but with Christ and His one offering for sin outside the gate! We should refer to the constructed tabernacle according to the

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heavenly pattern, beautifully wrought in embroidery and needlework, depicting Christ within and without. We should go on to the temple erected in the land as a marvellous and majestic structure, "exceeding magnifical;" that which David had first thought to build after he had established his kingdom, saying, "Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed: I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." "For the Lord hath chosen Zion: he hath desired it for his habitation." (Ps. cxxxii.) We should tell of its glory when erected by Solomon; of its desolation at the captivity; and of its being the uppermost thought of the true-hearted remnant in their return from Babylon under Ezra. We should point to God's thoughts about it impressively brought out in the expostulation of His prophet Haggai; and should dwell on the significant words of the sorrowing Malachi, with which the Old Testament closes; es-

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pecially upon these, "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to *his temple*." We should indicate how this met its preliminary fulfilment when the Lord Himself having the Baptist as His forerunner, came into the temple and with unwonted severity drove out the mercenary traders who were profaning it, refusing toleration to their turning His Father's house into a house of merchandise and a den of thieves! And while remembering its close in the Lord's words as He left it for the last time, "behold *your* house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. xxiii. 38), fulfilled in the destruction of city and temple under Titus, we should not forget that the same temple (for scripture, preserving its identity throughout, knows only *one*), will be rebuilt by apostate Jews, and made the shrine of idolatry, but will be perfectly purged and re-constructed, according to the divine pattern by Ezekiel, in whose prophecies the Spirit of God seems lovingly to linger over its final

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form, lasting a thousand years, until, in the new heavens and new earth, the eternal state is ushered in with the words—"Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Rev. xxi. 3.)

Leaving now its material form (a thing, if properly understood, totally extraneous and foreign to the very spirit and character of Christianity proper), we have to learn from the New Testament how God has kept up the divine thought of a House for Himself during the time that the material House is desolate because of the nation having refused Him in the person of Christ who is now hid in God. It was not until they had thus been proved to be "a wicked and adulterous generation," given up as reprobate, and He had "left them, and departed" (Matt. xvi. 4), that this is made known to the little group of disciples He had gathered around Himself. The two questions, "Whom do *men* say that I, the Son of

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man, am?" and "Whom say ye that I am?" bring these two things into juxtaposition—the dishonouring thoughts of unbelieving man, and the blessed thoughts which God poured out from His own heart in revelation to Peter, who confessed Him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God." "On this rock," (the confession of the glory of His own name) said He, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Herein is the first breathing of the *entirely new character* of the house of God, the foot of the ladder to be planted upon that solid rock which was the sure foundation of the divine superstructure that was to follow, and against which the power of Satan should be exerted in vain, for all that of which Christ should be the builder, should endure for eternity. We are reminded here of a verse in Ezra (chap. iii. 10), which speaks of the joy of the returned captives when they beheld the foundations of the Lord's house laid. (1.) The builders laid the foundation. (2.) They set the priests in their apparel.

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(3.) They praised the Lord with trumpets and with cymbals. (4.) All was according to the ordinance of David, king of Israel. Lovely picture of what belongs to the spiritual house of God.

(1.) "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Paul as a wise master-builder exults in the solidity and unity of the foundation.

(2.) The spiritual house has its priesthood; every divinely-built stone is a priest. In the psalm already quoted, David says, "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness," and the Lord replies, "I will also clothe her priests with salvation;" thus going beyond the psalmist's loftiest thought. But the Spirit of God carries us higher still in the purely christian strain, "Unto him that loveth us and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us a kingdom of priests unto God and his Father," &c. (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

(3.) It is the scene in which assembled worshippers sound the high praises of God. Not the worship expressed by pealing trumpets and clashing cymbals,

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but that which rises from hearts made melodious before God for eternity; qualified of Him to worship in the beauty of holiness, in spirit and in truth. (4.) And all according to the will and word of Him who is the true David—both Son and High Priest over the house of God, to ordain everything for His glory!

When was anything like this really seen on earth? We must go back to Pentecost; for every new revelation, as we all know, has its most marked features at its birth; before man has manipulated and corrupted it. In Acts ii. we find the Spirit of God sent down from heaven; Christ having received from the Father the promised Holy Ghost, shed Him forth. *He filled the house*—"all the house where they were sitting." The word refers, doubtless, to the building in which they were assembled, but it was significant of the greater and spiritual reality—the advent of the Spirit of God from a glorified Christ on high, to occupy for Him the spiritual house of God, the church which

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Christ had pledged Himself to build, now constituted the habitation of God because of His Spirit dwelling therein. Three things characteristically mark it on the divine side. It is the house of *God*—suited to His character (“holiness becometh thine house for ever”); designed for testimony to Him, and for His worship and glory! It is the building of *Christ*; that new structure, of which, when He spoke, not one stone was laid—that entirely future thing, which, said He, “I will build,” on that entirely new foundation of the confession of Him as Son of God, who in grace and humiliation termed Himself on the same occasion, Son of man! It is the dwelling place of the *Holy Ghost*. Emphatically His tenancy of the house gives it its character. So long as He occupies it, and only so long, is it the house of God; after that it is Babylon! Again, three other things characterise it as to its human relations—the confession of *one Lord*, the Lordship of Christ, that is “all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord;”

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the profession of *one faith*, the christian system, as distinguished from that of works as Judaism, and the many faiths of idolatry; and the observance of *one baptism*, that of water, giving admission within the precincts of the House as a matter of privilege and not of obedience.

It remains to examine of what the House is *composed*; what are its specific *functions*; and what is its present *condition*. According to the purpose of its divine architect and builder, the House was to be of *materials entirely good*; and, "fitly framed together," it "groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. ii.), a building worthy of its blessed design, and of its divine foundation. The Lord Himself is the builder; yet instrumentally His servants have from the very foundation been engaged in the work. Paul was a *wise* master-builder; would that all had been as wise as he in discerning what were sound materials, and what was good workmanship! Peter, who also speaks of the House, terms the foundation "a living stone," and the saints built upon

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it "living stones" also! Both these apostles had here before them the *divine* ideal of the house of God, and wrote accordingly—the House as built at Pentecost when order and beauty and durability marked the structure as it grew up under the hand of God; each stone like those of the temple in Solomon's day, being silently added (comely and shapely in form and beauty) to the holy edifice that God was raising. (1 Kings vi. 7.)

The *functions* of the house of God we have already a little touched upon. Those who compose it according to the divine aspect constitute a priesthood, for every believer is a priest, and their functions are *Godward*, to offer by Christ "the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name;" and *manward*, "to do good and to communicate, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Thus Paul in the Hebrews. Peter likewise in his first Epistle describes this spiritual house as a holy and a royal priesthood,

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In the former aspect, offering up "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," and in the latter, shewing forth "the excellencies of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light." This priestly ministration Godward and manward, long since pointed out by others, is in each case marked with the same precision and force. Here it may be further remarked that in every well-regulated house there is seen *authority* in those who have the ordering of it; *provision* for the needs of it; and *subjection and order* throughout it, while the privileges accruing to its inmates when adequately appreciated, find expression in recognised *duties and responsibilities* readily fulfilled. The spiritual house forms no exception. God has thought of all this, and in the offices which pertain to the House in its divinely established order, and in the instruction to be found in His word, we see how well organised, and how efficient a witness for Himself, would it have been had its pristine integrity been maintained. The

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first of these offices was the bishop, overseer or elder; different terms for the same thing. They had apostolic appointment (either direct or by deputy) and in each city where they were appointed there was more than one. They had to lead, to guide, to order the local assembly; submission to their rule was submission to God in God's house. Gift they might have or they might not; it was not essential, but neither was it superfluous; it pertained to the body and not to the house *per se*. Deacons, also, were appointed by the apostles (see Acts vi.) ; they addressed themselves to the material and pecuniary matters of the assembly; their office, like that of the bishop, was locally restricted; they had to provide for the poor, and fulfil similar duties committed to their charge. Nothing was unthought of or uncared-for by Him whose house it was, and who had connected His own glory with it. The social, moral and spiritual qualifications for these respective offices are most distinctly mapped out in the first Epistle to Timothy and

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in that to Titus, each of which persons Paul commissioned to act for him in such appointments. In the former, too, he instructs his beloved son in the faith, how he ought to behave himself "in the house of God, which is the church of the *living God*" (connecting Paul's teaching with Peter's confession and Christ's building, Matt. xvi. 16-18), the pillar and ground of the truth !

As to the *present condition* of the house of God, little need be said of what must be palpable to every spiritual mind. The House is in ruins, a miserable and unsightly wreck. Instead of being the pillar and ground of the truth, it has become, as the great professing system upon earth, the receptacle of every heresy which men have dared to connect with the holy name of Christ ! And being mainly made up of mere professors, of those who have a name to live while they are dead, "the work of an evangelist" has now to be done as much within as without the house of God. If we reflect on what it would have been had each stone been for beauty

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and for preciousness as of gold, or of silver, or a gem, and "fitly framed together," as all of Christ's building undoubtedly is; and compare with this the hideous disfigurement of the structure arising from inter-building with such priceless stones, the wood, the hay, and the stubble which now constitute the mass of the building but only add weakness to the fabric, we may see occasion for the deepest humiliation and confession before God, because of the damage which man's bad building has done to the fair edifice which should have been a striking and undeniable testimony for Him upon earth. (1 Cor. iii.)

I only add two remarks. (1) That while officially-appointed bishops and deacons have passed away with the apostles who alone, so far as scripture teaches, were empowered to ordain them, there are generally to be found in local assemblies those who addict themselves to the rendering these services to the saints, and are approved of God therein. And our yielding submission and honour to such is thus set morally

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upon a much higher ground than when, as in apostolic days, it was an imposed requirement. (2) That no extent of ruin, how sad and how general soever it may be, that has overtaken the house of God, exonerates the saints who are "living stones" in the fabric from observing every divine characteristic of that spiritual building in which, although "Ichabod" may be written over its portals, the Holy Ghost still deigns to dwell. We have to remember that every believer upon earth forms a part of it; that all that is for God in this world is found within it, and great as its failure has been (as everything committed to man without exception has failed) it has nevertheless preserved to us the inestimable boon of the uncorrupted word of God: whereas outside it, there is only that world which lieth in the wicked one, of which Satan is the god, and wherein he reigns as its prince. A form of godliness denying the power thereof, in these last days undeniably characterises the house of God, because of its being so overwhelmingly com-

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posed of those who have no peace with Him. But this in no wise diminishes the express obligation of every believer to maintain within it that holiness which becometh His house *for ever!* “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God. . . . If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.) “Judgment,” says Peter, “must begin at the house of God.” It has become as a great house with vessels unto dishonour in it, and evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, but nevertheless there remains to every vessel unto honour, the obligation and the privilege of purging himself from everything unsuited to Him whose House it is, being found without quitting the House, associated with those in it who call on the Lord out of a pure heart? (2 Tim. ii. 20–23.) How little do the saints *as a whole* apprehend the privilege, and how much less do they recognise the responsibility, of constituting God’s house upon the earth!

W. R.

D.

JOHN'S GOSPEL.

Chapter i. 4-14.

THE second quality found in Him is that "in Him was life." (Ver. 4.) This cannot be said of any creature; many have life, but they have it not in themselves. Christ becomes our life, but it is He who is it in us. "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." This is a very momentous truth, as regards Himself, as regards us, and as regards the life that we possess as Christians.

But more: this life is "the light of men," a word of immense value for us. God Himself is light, and it is the divine light as life, which is expressed in the word to men. It is not the light of angels, though God be light for all, for He is light in Himself, but as it is here relative, adapted to other beings, it is not here the light of angels; His delights were in the sons of men.

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come light. (Eph. v. 8.) It is never said that we are love. God is sovereign in His love; without doubt, it is His nature, in communion, goodness, and mercy, but free. We are made partakers of this nature, and we walk in love, as the love has been manifested in Jesus, because He is our life; but it is in obedience that we walk thus, it is a duty, a joyful duty, and easy if we are walking joyfully with God, and stronger than the evil; but not free, having its source in us. We cannot say that we are supreme love, a source from which love springs; but the new man is holy in himself; he is this, although this be, in our case, connected with an object.

J. N. D.

THE BODY OF CHRIST.

“One body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.”

Ephesians iv. 4.

THE first interesting point about that aspect of the church of God which is termed in scripture “the body of Christ,” is that it was *Himself as glorified* who

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on a post-pentecostal day gave the earliest disclosure that His saints should hold towards Him the relation of being "members of his body." "This is a great mystery," said he who received the revelation, "but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Eph. v.)

But us look at the occasion on which it was given. Stephen, first stone, as it were, of the divine superstructure that began at Pentecost, like Abel, first recorded man of faith, died a martyr's death. In the steps of his Master he resisted unto blood! One was standing by, who, consenting unto his death, kept the raiment of them that slew him. This "young man" Saul, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, was a chosen vessel of His sovereign mercy to the Gentiles, and received the revelation of the whole mystery in one word, *Me*. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?" It disclosed the cardinal fact, than which nothing concerning the church could be more momentous, that the saints he assailed were virtually part of "the

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Christ;" so that persecuting them he was attacking Him, for they were the members of His body on earth. (Compare Acts ix. 4, with 1 Cor. xii. 12.) Converted and commissioned for service, he now goes forth preaching "Jesus, that he is *the Son of God*." And here we come to another point of interest. This Paul, rising phoenix-like from the ashes of Stephen (the latter seeing in the opened heavens the glory of God and Jesus, the Son of man standing at the right hand of God, and the former hearing the voice of the Son of God) goes forth as *the only witness* of this new truth, this eternal verity, that the saints constitute Christ's body! For though this truth was revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the power of the Spirit, yet we do not find that any but he testified of that mystery which consists in Jews and Gentiles being "joint heirs and a joint body and joint partakers of His promise in Christ Jesus by the glad-tidings" of which he was become minister. (Eph. iii.) Filling up that which is behind of the tribula-

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tions of Christ in his flesh, for Christ's body, which is the assembly: of which, says he, *I* (emphatically) became minister, according to the *dispensation of God*—"the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been made manifest to his saints." (Col. i.) This "mystery," a term never applied to the house of God, is the revelation of the church in its transcendent aspect as the body of Christ; the saints which in the house of God are living stones, being now seen as His very members on earth. This is the grand topic of the Pauline epistles, and, as remarked, is in the canon of scripture witnessed of by the great apostle of the Gentiles exclusively.

The term "body of Christ" fittingly and forcibly expresses that eternal fact which saints were now to learn in respect to Christ and the church, of Him and them constituting one living, corporate *unity*. In other words—life in union with a supreme Head from which all its energies flow, perfecting the action and symmetry of all its members.

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We cannot fail to see that only the figure of a body, articulate and complete, could adequately set forth this divine reality. Another and co-ordinate figure is used in respect to those who are *members* of the body, namely, the bride or wife. (Eph. v.; Rev. xix., xxi.) Here the leading thought is *relationship*; a holy relationship but so endearing, so intimate, so real, that as he that is joined to a wife is one flesh, so "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." It is the fruit of that unselfish and untiring love that the many waters could not quench nor the floods drown, and a spring, too, of responsive affection in its object which carries the heart onward to His return, for "the Spirit and the bride say, Come."

As the leading characteristic of the House is that the Spirit of God *dwells in it*, so the great thought of the Body is that every member is in *living, eternal union* by the Holy Ghost with the exalted Head in glory. "For even as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body, being

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many, are one body, so also is the Christ. For in the power of one Spirit are we all baptized into *one body*, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.)

The term 'body of Christ,' suggests an interesting line of thought to be traced in Psalm cxxxix., if that scripture be allowably taken as, in part at least, the language of the Lord Jesus prophetically. (See vers. 13-16.) "Thou hast possessed my reins ; thou hast covered me in my *mother's womb*"—have we not here the body of His humiliation ? "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the *earth*;"—may not this be referred to His resurrection body ? And then, "Thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect : and in *thy book* all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them," may surely be applied to His mystical body, the

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church. Shall we not bow our heads in wonder and in worship, as in the midst of these verses we pause to hear Him saying, "I will praise thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works: and that my soul knoweth right well."

Returning now to 1 Corinthians xii. 13, it will be well to mark three things. (1) That the Holy Ghost is never said to dwell in the Body, but in the House. (2) That He did not, nor does He, Himself baptise, but saints were baptised *with* the Holy Ghost. (3) That this baptism was at Pentecost, when, by the sovereign act of Christ, the saints were incorporated into one Body, each of them receiving from Him the Holy Ghost as an indwelling Spirit, according to the word, "The same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." (John i. 33.) Saints are now brought into the same character of blessing and the same corporate standing by personal reception of the earnest of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost the Comforter. But observe that this is God's act in anointing and sealing

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with the Holy Ghost each believer as His own property and for His own glory, on or after his exercising faith in His Son (see 2 Cor. i. 21-22 and Eph. i. 13, 14); while Christ's baptising was His one action, applying at one time to all the congregated believers at Jerusalem, according to the promise of the Father and in the power of one Spirit. Every saint of God previously a living unit then became (as we also now, when we get the Holy Ghost) a living *member* in the body of Christ; henceforth eternally in union with Him (in life and righteousness now and in glory by-and-by) of which the Holy Ghost is witness and earnest to each, as dwelling in Him. Every believer, then, possessing the Holy Ghost is an articulated member in the body, whether he know it or not. Those who listened to Peter at Pentecost, repented and were baptised, which brought them into the house of God; subsequently they received the Holy Ghost, and were thus brought into union with Christ in glory and incorpo-

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rated into His body on earth; albeit the latter was not yet revealed. So also Philip's converts in Samaria believed and were baptised, coming thus into the House: afterwards by the hands of Peter and John they received the Holy Ghost, and became thereby members of the one Body before it was yet known or declared. We have seen how baptism with water brings into the house of God, and baptism with the Spirit into the body of Christ. The Lord's supper connects itself in scripture with the latter. One baptism (that of water) once for all unto the death of Christ, marks the privileged entrance into the house of God. The Lord's supper, "often" or continually partaken of, marks the constant and ever-renewed communion in His death of those who are one with Him as members of His body. And in partaking of this together, the saints express in the unity of the one loaf their membership with Him and with one another, and announce His death in its wonderful significance and value, until He come!

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This brings us to the third thing—one hope of our calling! The one Hope is the suited sequence of one Body and one Spirit. The one Body has one Spirit to animate and energise it, to minister of its supplies from its Head in glory, and to administer His gifts to it; while also it has the one hope of its calling to cheer it in its path on earth until it be fulfilled in His coming. And as saint after saint falls out of the ranks, being put to sleep by Him until morning breaks, the Body, still augmented by every newly-sealed believer, holds on, and is ever viewed fully on earth, up to His return to receive us for ever to Himself.

Lastly, a word may be added as to *the gifts*. As offices (bishops and deacons) belong to the organisation of the House, so the gifts of the ascended Head (another thing entirely) are distinctly to the Body. Offices are local and are for control, for serving tables and the like; while the others are spiritual gifts specially “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the

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ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ : till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 12, 13.) Every gift is in the Body, and of Christ's grace to the Body, though (as in the case of the evangelist) its exercise may be in the house of God or in the world at large. Romans xii. presents, it is said, seven distinct gifts all in the Body ; but whose action is not restricted to it, as for instance the last, shewing mercy with cheerfulness. Gifts are there treated in a general way, and more as to the character of their exercise than as to their distinction and purpose. In 1 Corinthians xii. on the contrary, we have the subject elaborately presented. There we find the diversity of the gifts when the church was formed, including those of a demonstrative character which were for a sign in the early days of the testimony, and which have passed away, namely, miracles, healings and tongues ; their administration by one Spirit as He

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will ; and all with the object of edification or profit to the assembly—that Body which, how-many-soever its members, was one Body, tempered together by God, and every member set in it by Him, as it pleased Him. They were thus the body of Christ, and members in particular ; each one responsible to fill his own distinctive place, and to fulfil his special functions, for the symmetry and welfare of the Body—none being able to say of another, “ I have no need of thee.” All were to have the same care for one another ; one pained, all suffering : one glorified, all rejoicing ! Again in Ephesians iv. we have the Body, and in the next chapter the bride also. In the former the gifts of the ascended Christ are blessedly presented. Apostles and prophets form the foundation (chap. ii. 20), and though (as is common to foundations) they have passed out of sight, their value and service none the less continue in those ecclesiastical and prophetic scriptures which provide instruction for the present as well as an unfolding of the glory and

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blessing which await us in the future. As to the rest, evangelists, pastors and teachers, they abide and are to abide, till we all come, &c., "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And be it remarked, these instructions never came out until the church in its character as the vessel of testimony on earth was marred in man's hands, and as the house of God's presence had fallen into ruins. Blessed be His name, the Lord's faithful and devoted love can never fail to His body and His bride. He "loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 25-27.)

Such is the body of Christ—ever lovely and beautiful to His eye, and adorned with every abiding gift as a grace conferred by the Head in glory; every member, too, a vessel in which

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the Holy Ghost delights to manifest that spiritual energy which pertains to His dwelling in each saint as a temple of His own presence.

May He, the Man in glory, the Christ of God, give us better to know in responsibility and to enjoy in blessedness, what it is to be His members on earth, even to be His BODY! "This mystery is great." (Eph. v. 32.) [*New Trans.*]

W. R.

D.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPIRITUAL MINISTRY AND CARNAL.

In the believer there is the natural mind, and there is the spiritual, or "the mind of Christ." Now it is as each is addressed that the ministry is spiritual or carnal. When Christ in His divine realities is simply the theme in the mind of the speaker, the ministry is spiritual, but when man, or his acceptance of the subject, is the attempt or desire before the mind, it is not so.

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of being sons in full liberty before the Father, who hath sealed Him as personally the Son of God, perfect in everything. This was the sign given to John the Baptist, who opened his mouth to bear witness that Jesus was the Son of God. John saw clearly that Jesus was a glorious Person, whose shoe-latchet he was not worthy to unloose, and he felt that it was not his place to baptise this Person. But the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Jesus is a clear heavenly testimony, shewing who Jesus was, as to His person, as Son of God. John saw and bore witness that He was the Son of God Himself in this world. It is very precious for us (although it is no question of personal glory in us, but of sovereign grace) to think that if ascended into glory, He has baptised us with the Holy Ghost, as a witness that we are sons, and giving us the consciousness of it, He, the Eternal Son, received Himself first of all as man down here—this same testimony, the seal and unction of the Spirit, which enables us to cry, “Abba, Father!” It

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is the foretaste of the truth that He which sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one. (Heb. ii. 11.)

J. N. D.

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Ephesians iv. 3.

For those who have followed the foregoing papers on the house of God and the body of Christ, little need be added on the unity of the Spirit. The term expresses what was set up by God at Pentecost, and which has ever since been maintained by the Holy Ghost. The death of Christ to “gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad,” as Caiaphas prophesied, was the divine basis for it, and this unity is, as far as it goes, an accomplishment of that word, though the full fruition of it is still future. This seems to be in character with Peter’s testimony in Acts ii. 38. “Ye shall receive the promise of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you

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and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Also with what the Lord had Himself said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one *flock* and one shepherd." (John x. 16.)

The unity of the Spirit, though the term is not used there, is beautifully depicted in a few touches in the record of pentecostal days given in Acts, for the saints are there seen of one accord, in one place, and it is expressly said they "were of one heart and of one soul." Such was the effect of the Holy Ghost's presence and action on those "Jerusalem sinners" who had believed, in contrast with the clamour of factions and sects outside; Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and the like, all bitterly opposed to each other. And if for a moment we compare things now, what do we see on every side but sects and parties, divisions and subdivisions, subdiversified *ad nauseam*, and be it observed among those who are not only in

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the house of God but are of the body of Christ? Nor is it any marvel (seeing that the church of God does not know herself as God's house nor as the body of Christ), that there is no expression generally of "the unity of the Spirit," either sought or found; every sense of it being apparently lost except amongst a few who, in these last days, have been awakened to go back and recover the truth of the divine ground of the One body to be occupied by the saints of God. They only can give intelligent expression to "the unity of the Spirit," as it were an *ecclesia in ecclesia*. For unless these aspects of the church of God be apprehended, there cannot possibly be spiritual power for giving a faithful and lively representation of that which the Holy Ghost would produce as suited to the relations of Christ to His saints corporately. This is "the unity of the Spirit."

It is not without interest either, that scripture never speaks in distinct terms of the church of Christ, though it is a phrase common in theology, but of the

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church of God ; and this probably to keep before us in a vivid and salient way that, when looked at as the Body, Christ is Himself an integral part of it. Nor does scripture actually speak of the unity of the Body, any more than it does of its being rent or divided, as we have sometimes heard ; and the reason is obvious for the Body is itself an unity, and always an unbroken unity. But “the unity of the Spirit” is spoken of, and as a practical thing to be expressed by those who form the Body, the Holy Ghost gathering the saints together to the presence of Christ to manifest it outwardly, and it is here that responsibility of a corporate character is distinctly pressed. We are not called upon to re-build the house of God, for it is irreparably ruined : nor to form or reform the body of Christ, for it is eternally intact and unimpaired. But we are required on our own part as a matter of constant and loving endeavour—being in opposition to the whole religious current that is sweeping by—to keep *this unity in the uniting bond of*

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peace, indicating the practical means of observing that with which the name of the Holy Ghost is distinctively connected, because it can only be displayed by His power working in us for the glory of Christ—owning, that is, what is due to His person.

It is in connection with this, also, that reception has its place. The Lord's table is the outward sign of the One body in the unity of the Spirit. Saints take their place there because it is their place, they being in the Body : but never before probably have they had any part in practically keeping "the unity of the Spirit." Accordingly when we own their place, we do not receive them into the house of God, nor into the body of Christ (for the former was by baptism with water, and the latter by reception of the Holy Ghost, both of which may have been years before), but among the remnant-company who are endeavouring to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace," the ground of whose gathering is the One body. Thus also

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in discipline. We do not, even in the last extremity, put away from the house of God, for we cannot dis-baptise; nor from the body of Christ, for, it is equally clear, we cannot annul the gift of the Holy Ghost; but from *among ourselves*, the little remnant who through grace practically recognise the ground of the One body as that on which the Spirit of God gathers the saints together. This being understood, clears up such questions as are sometimes asked as to where saints are put who are put away. They are in fact put back where they were; relegated to whence they came; but neither put out of the Body nor of the House, as is evident.

Three remarks may be added as to gifts. (1) The sphere of their exercise is now mainly (not exclusively) the house of God. (2) They belong to the body of Christ, being His gifts as ascended Head in glory to His body for its growth and blessing until He come. (3) They have also an important relation to "the unity of the Spirit," for

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their exercise, though in personal responsibility to Christ should be in happy communion with those who endeavour to maintain this unity "in the uniting bond of peace." It need scarcely be observed that if there be strifes and jealousies, or distance and dis-affection between the gifted, or their gifts be exercised without deference to their brethren, and without their confidence and fellowship, "the unity of the Spirit" will be seriously violated. The degree to which sorrow and damage have befallen the testimony through this cause need not be dwelt upon.

Finally, many unconverted persons are in the House, and many converted persons who are in the Body have never learned the true character of the House though necessarily in it, while many who are in the House and in the Body (as all are who have the Holy Ghost) know nothing of practically keeping the Spirit's unity. But looking to Ephesians iv. we see how clearly and in what divine order these circles are drawn. First we have Christ Himself subjec-

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tively, for who can fail to discern Him in verse 2? Only by walking as He walked do we walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. (2) We have the unity of the Spirit, the practical answer to the truth of the One Body. (3) The body of Christ. (4) The house of God. (5) The one God and Father of all, or universal Fatherhood of God as Creator! Our true relation to these concentric circles of blessing, constitutes our vocation which can never really be worthily fulfilled unless they be understood and recognised.

The Lord give us to see them intelligently in His word, and so to apprehend them by His Spirit, that we may, for His glory, both observe and enjoy them, following, with chastened hearts, "after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." (Rom. xiv. 19.)

W. R.

D.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

INDEPENDENCY.

THERE is a great sameness in man. It has been said, "History repeats itself." The nature of the human race is one and the same, and it betrays itself in a like way when in contact with similar circumstances. Surely every conscientious disciple knows well that in some particular tendency of his nature is he mostly in danger. True, he may have so learned his frailty, and so truly have repented of it, that he dreads to trust himself, and shrinks from it, as a burnt child from the fire; but he does so because it is fire to him, and he knows his safety is only in the Lord. It is not that it never recurs, for the thing that hath been he finds is the thing that is, but he has learned the wretchedness of his flesh, and the security there is from it in the Lord; so that, when walking with Him, there is nothing he is so safe from as his peculiar snare, because he is in the light, where he not only sees

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as it was felt by their own consciences. They assuredly meant well, but they were independent, because they were prescribing what was suitable for God, instead of consulting His word, and adhering simply and solely to it ; and if they had done so, there could not have been the numerous sects now in existence. Many of them seem to have done service and good to souls in their day, but the effect of their independency has in every instance survived their service, so that mischief is now the record of their memories, and not good. What is a Wesleyan, or a Quaker, but a record of mischief, and the posterity of independency ? No matter how good the character of the act done by the best of men for God, if it be not according to His word and Spirit, that act is not only an abomination to Him, but if it takes effect, and obtains followers, it becomes a weed in the church which will never be extirpated. Hence, in the LAST times, Paul's teaching and the scriptures are our only guide. The readiness of man to use his own mind

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with regard to the things of God, renders it now more than ever necessary that there should be close and unvarying adherence to the word of God; and if a man has not the authority of this for any action, or any course which he may adopt, however good he be personally, he is *independent*, he travelled outside the mind of the Lord, and he laid the foundation of a lasting shame, and a stumbling-block to the saints of God.

THE EVENING AND THE MORNING.

THE rosy streaks through the deep blue
 Tremble and fade,
 Turning with many a varying hue
 From light to shade;
 With stealthy hand as wane the evening
 glows,
 O'er the broad plain the night her mantle
 throws.

The larks, who lead fair nature's song
 From joyful throats,
 In upper air their strain prolong
 In dying notes;
 Sound melts away as shade succeeds to light,
 Silence comes hand in hand with sable night.

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Thus in our life's declining tale
 As time runs by,
Nature's bright crimson tints grow pale,
 And voices die;
A canopy of darkness o'er our heaven
 spreads,
And death-like shadows close upon our
 heads.

But from the east horizon-line
 Another Sun
Soon shall arise, and far outshine
 The setting one;
Christ the bright glory of that day shall be,
Coming in all the Father's majesty.

Quick to salute this orb shall wake
 A full-toned choir;
Harps of ethereal mould and make,
 And tongues of fire;
No shade shall fall on that radiant throng
No note be wanting in the Morning Song.

Then in untiring praise shall sound
 The swelling chant;
Each minstrel's head with iris crown'd
 And amaranth:
Wave upon wave of light and harmony
Throughout unmeasured space shall cir-
 cling fly.

JOHN'S GOSPEL.

Chapter i. 35-51.

BUT if down here a divine testimony has been given that Jesus was the Son of God, His title as Lamb of God is that which characterises Him. John the Baptist's heart recognises Him already as such, for the witness he bears here is not a witness borne in preaching. He saw Jesus walking along before him, and his heart, full of this deep truth, calls out, "Behold the Lamb of God!" He had already announced Him in that character, and no one had followed Jesus; but now that which came from His heart in grace touched the hearts of others; two of John's disciples hear him and follow the Lord. Thus Jesus begins to gather His disciples. He accepts the position of being a centre for the assembling of His own. The two disciples had received the word of God from John the Baptist's mouth; but neither John nor any one of the prophets had ever taken the place of being a

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presented to us under the fig-tree becomes thus the means of revealing the Messiah in His connection with Israel, and then of revealing His glory as the Son of man, whom all the highest creatures should serve, and who should be the object of their service as the means of established relationship between the heavens and the earth.

We should remark here, as we have observed, the second day of testimony: the first day is in verse 35, the second in verse 42. It is not the historical character of the gospel, but the testimony borne to Jesus by John the Baptist first of all, and then His own testimony. In the first case, He takes John the Baptist's place; in the second, we have the manifestation of Himself, a testimony which goes on from the time of His service upon earth until the accomplishing of Psalm viii. Looked at already as rejected of the Jews and unknown to the world. (Chap. i. 10, 11.) He takes, from this time, the title of the Son of man, the title by which He constantly calls Himself, although He

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could not take the position itself until He had passed through death. These are the two days of testimony borne to Christ as having come into this world which are developed in the supremacy which He possesses over all things presented here in its nature only. The heavenly position of the Lord is but little the subject of the teaching of John's gospel: allusion is made to it indeed, but that is all.

J. N. D.

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It is wonderful the wise way the blessed God takes care that we should not be able to do without Him; one in one way, and another in another way. There is a tone about one walking in dependence which cannot be imitated nor acquired any other way. The Holy One walked ever in dependence with regard to Himself, and therefore was always ready to consider and claim for the Father in things of men.

K 2

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to be overcome, prejudices to be left, or interests hard to sacrifice were concerned in the question. Man's reason judged rightly enough according to the proofs given, but the rest of his nature was not aroused. But the Lord knew man, He knew, with divine intelligence, what was in him. There was no lack of sincerity, perhaps, in this case, but that which He found amongst men was nothing but a conclusion, a human conviction, which had no power over man's will, nor against his passions, nor against the wiles of the prince of this world. Jesus "did not trust himself to them." There must be a divine work and a divine nature if man is to enjoy communion with God, and walk in a divine path in crossing the world.

J. N. D.

THE PATH OF FAITH AS TYPIFIED IN HEBREWS XI.

FIVE persons are in this chapter most prominently set forth, namely: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses;

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and five distinct phases which ought to mark the path of the believer may be discerned in that which is recorded concerning these patriarchs. After the first three verses, which shew what a reality faith is, and that thereby a good report was obtained by these elders, and that by faith and not by geological experience, the formation of the world is understood, Abel is presented to us as the *first* of these five persons ; “ By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts : and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.” This answers to the *first* phase of faith in the life of the believer, for as Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof, so the believer comes to God by faith in the work of Christ ; and as Abel presented the lamb, so the believer presents by faith the Lamb of God as the ground for his acceptance by God. It is not said that the testimony was given *to* Abel, but it is stated that God testified of his *gifts* ;

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so it is not for the believer to be looking for or depending upon the action of the Spirit in himself, but rather in faith simply to receive the testimony that God has given to the gift, the Lamb of God, and which the believer by faith presents. We are not told in what special way (whether by fire coming down and consuming it, or otherwise) Jehovah testified to Abel's gifts, but that there was a testimony given to the gift by which Abel obtained witness or testimony (for it is the same word in the original) that he himself was righteous. So when man had rejected and crucified Christ, God raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And as the testimony of Jehovah to the lamb which Abel offered, was the proof to Abel of his being righteous, so, not the experience (however blessed it may be when God graciously gives it) of the Spirit

being in the believer, but the testimony to Christ Himself, the Lamb of God, is the proof to the believer whereby he obtains witness that he himself is reckoned righteous in God's sight. The fact of Christ being at the right hand of God becomes by the Spirit a demonstration to the world of righteousness. (John xvi.) There was no righteousness from the hands of man to the blessed Lord when He was in this world; the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put Him to death, and found none (Mark xiv. 55); and although many bore false witness against Him, their witness agreed not together. A great crowd had but recently hailed Him as the King of Israel that came in the name of the Lord (John xii. 13), and the Pharisees had been troubled at (to use their own expression) the world going after Him; but notwithstanding the testimony to Him as Son of God, in raising Lazarus from the dead, as Son of David, in riding into Jerusalem, and as Son of man, when the Greeks desired to see

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Him (John xi. and xii.), notwithstanding the multitudes that had been blessed by Him outside Jerusalem (Mark viii. 19, 20), and the great multitudes which had followed Him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judæa, and from beyond Jordan (Mark iv. 25) not a voice was raised against the unrighteousness or wickedness of man. A warning voice there was indeed through the dream of another to Pilate, and a testimony given to him to have nothing to do with that righteous Man, but at the judgment-seat there was but one cry, "Crucify him, crucify him." But when the full measure of man's unrighteousness and wickedness had been filled up by the crucifixion of Christ, then the righteousness of God was manifested in Christ being set at God's own right hand in the heavenlies. When the Spirit is come he will convince the world "of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more."

If we desire to see righteousness, we must look at the right hand of the majesty on high, and never expect to

see it either in ourselves or others, save so far as we have light from Him who is light; then judgment is formed, not according to our thoughts, but according to the thoughts of Him who judges righteously. To be righteous or act righteously we must have discernment of a mind and way higher than our own. God had in the garden said to Adam, concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and had declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. And Abel, in offering up the lamb, identified himself with death, and the shedding of the blood. So, we can say, "He died the just for the unjust to bring us to God;" "without shedding of blood there is no remission;" and "He made peace by the blood of his cross." Cain, on the contrary, brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to Jehovah; he brought, doubtless, the best of the fruit. but he brought that upon which *his own* work and labour had been bestowed.

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He was a tiller of the ground, and he brought the fruit upon which a curse had been pronounced because of man (Gen. iii. 17), and offered it to God, shewing an utter ignorance of the way of approaching God. Where there is faith there is a perception of that which is according to God's mind; but the natural man, even though he gives his body to be burnt and all his goods to feed the poor (1 Cor. xiii.), has no perception as to that which is acceptable in God's sight. The next step to misjudging what is acceptable to God, is to be entirely wrong as to his neighbour, and we read in 1 John iii. 12, that Cain slew his brother Abel, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Many at the present day are offended at peace being preached through the work of Christ alone, and on the principle of faith in Him apart from law or our own works, but we do not read of any record of Abel except his faith and gifts. Cain's offering had cost him toil and labour, but Abel's had cost him nothing, he had had no part

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in its production, with him there had been no sweat of the face as there had been with Cain. Abel's offering then answers to the *first* phase in the believer's life, and which is ever followed by more or less of hatred from the religious natural man, which Cain was ; for however evil his course might be, he, as well as Abel, brought an offering to Jehovah.

The *second* phase in this path of faith is that which is recorded concerning Enoch. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death ; and was not found, because God had translated him : for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." It is one thing to be clear about the offering of Christ, and that we are righteous before God on account of it, it is another thing to have the testimony, before we are caught up, that we please God.

At the commencement of John xiv. the Lord tells His disciples that He will come again and receive them unto Himself ; that where He is, there they

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may be also. But in verses 21, 23 of the same chapter, He does not speak of them collectively, but gives a promise of an earlier manifestation of Himself unto the one that loves Him, and then speaks of His Father and Himself taking up their abode with such a one. In these verses obedience is the proof of love. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." And again : "If a man love me he will keep my word [not words] and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." What so precious as love, even as regards the earthly side ? In Cant. viii. it is written, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it ; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." And in Revelation ii. 4, after all that could be stated in favour of Ephesus, the Lord says, "Nevertheless I have against

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thee, because thou hast left thy first love." If poor fallen man can prize it, what must it be to Him who is it, and whose eye discerns every pulsation of it, and every departure from it! He says to Ephesus in the next verse, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen." That assembly had once reached to a great height, and though there were remaining "works, and labour, and patience, and no bearing those who were evil, and discernment of those who falsely claimed to be apostles, and enduring, and going through things for his name's sake, and not fainting," yet there was to the Lord a *fall* from that high and blessed place which was once theirs. His love sought to bring them to their first works, but the spring for full blessedness was gone.

There is a marked difference between verses 21 and 23 of John xiv. In verse 21, the manifestation of the Lord is consequent upon having His *commandments* and keeping them, but in verse 23 the Father and Son coming and

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making their abode with the disciple is consequent upon keeping the *word*; this latter is the whole testimony of the scriptures, whilst the former is more special in its character. A babe in Christ is not acquainted with the *word*, and does not understand the scope of it to the same extent as the young man or father, nevertheless the obedience of the babe to the simple *command* will elicit the manifest approval of the One who loves it, and this is in accordance with verse 21. But where there is obedience to the full testimony of God, as His will is more known and understood, there, instead of the manifestation of verse 21, the Father and Son make their abode with the obedient one; and, as in natural things there is a freshness in the joy of receiving a visit from and seeing one who loves and is beloved. But this deepens into a more quiet though fuller enjoyment of the presence of such, where, instead of a visit there is the continued abiding in the same dwelling, and the taking counsel with, and profiting by, the grace and wisdom

of those who are ever at hand to be spoken to and consulted. So, blessed as the manifestation of verse 21 may be, there is the deeper though more quiet blessing from the abiding promised in verse 23. Many dear children of God in their writings have referred to and longed for the past manifestations of verse 21, and even doubted their own blessing because these manifestations were no longer given; but had they been less occupied with themselves and their own portion, and learned through the word more of Him, who is thus pleased to reveal Himself, there would have been the consciousness of the continued presence of both the Father and the Son; and instead of vain regret following upon heavenly blessing, there would have been the constant enjoyment of continued blessing without losing, in any way, the remembrance of past favour. However, whether it be verse 21 or 23, such manifestation or abiding is a proof, to the disciple, that through grace there is in him both love and obedience; and thus before the coming to His own

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spoken of in the first few verses of the chapter, the obedient believer has the testimony that he pleases God. Are there those who are clear as to the first phase (Abel's), and who are content to go on with but little of the second (Enoch's) ?

With Noah we have the *third* phase, namely, condemnation of the world. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house ; by the which *he condemned the world*, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." If, as in the case of Enoch, the believer has the testimony that he pleases God, condemnation of the world must follow, not however from finding fault with it or its systems, but by being occupied with the One who not only blesses by the manifestation which has been mentioned, but who also saves, as Noah in type was saved, from the wrath to come. (Rom. v. 9 ; 1 Thess. i. 10.) We do not read of Noah being occupied with evil, but we do of his being a preacher

of righteousness and building an ark; he set forth the way of escape for any who would listen, and occupied himself with that which alone could save from the coming judgment. So as regards this third phase, the believer's mind is not filled with, or carried away through, the failure of saints or the evil state of things in the world, but whilst giving a testimony according to the measure given to him, he goes on with that which delivers from the world, and we learn from Philippians iv. that God will then be *with him*; there it is written, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be *with you*." A. P.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

**“HE IS NOT HERE.” “HE
WAS TAKEN UP.”**

(Matt. xxviii. 6 ; Acts i. 2.)

THE above great realities are the truths to which the Holy Ghost would give special prominence in a day like this. The Christ is hidden in the heavens, His work finished and completed, the earth the scene of His rejection and murder, inhabited by the descendants and generation of those who cast Him out—the course of the age all downward in its ripening progress for judgment. To the faith and affection of the new man the words of the angel are most significant, for they close for it the scene here ; not only is all the bad under judgment in Adam, but all that was beautiful on earth has terminated in His death, whose life was taken from the earth. The more I meditate on this the more impressed I am with our *general insensibility*. Oh ! how little it seems to affect any of us, that “He is not here.” If we were under the

commanding power of this stupendous reality, it would operate upon us, as it seems to me, in a twofold way, namely—

1st. It would affect *us* in the place where He was, but is not. The scene of His rejection and refusal could never be a home or rest to us ; His absence leaves a blank in this world for the heart that knows Him. The generation of His murderers are in power, and another is on the throne of this world. True, we are here, though He is not ; still let it never be forgotten that we are here *as sent by Him, and from Him, and for Him*—“As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”

2nd. It would affect *the place* in respect of us ; its brightest scenes and days would be clouded and tarnished by the absence of our Lord.

Alas ! how little it is so ; and yet how well we understand it in our own path and history below. How well we can enter into the blank and desolation which the heart is made conscious of, in the brightest day on earth if we have lost

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from the home circle a beloved object—what is it all to a widowed heart? Can any alleviation be found in the place where our Saviour is not?

May the Lord make His absence such a reality to His beloved people that nothing can comfort their hearts save the presence of the Holy Ghost, whose blessed mission it is to testify of Christ the Glorified One. It is this truth which gives tone and character to the true path and witness of the saint to-day; in the absence of his Lord, and in the dark night of this world, he seeks to pass on without an interest here save Christ's; what part can such an one take in the projects and schemes, the policies or politics of the age? No citizen of the world is he, but a stranger here—ready, it is true, to be used by all, but absolutely refusing to be made part of the order of things. Alas, alas! how sorrowfully evidential it is on every side that this peculiar and separate path is either lost sight of or abandoned by the saints to-day; the Demas spirit rules with an iron sway, and increasingly

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so. Hearts refuse and resent the truths which spoil their hopes and prospects here below, which are now, as it was in another day, advantages and rest this side Jordan. (See Num. xxxii. 1-5.)

The second scripture of our subject is that which inaugurates and endears our new home to us. “He was taken up.” This assures me where He is, as the other tells me where He is not. Heaven is now His home, and, blessed for ever be His name, it is the home of His own now and for ever. When He was upon earth, heaven was opened *upon Him*; now that He is in heaven, it is opened *for us*; “our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens.” Another has most blessedly written, “Heaven is the metropolis of Christianity, Rome and Jerusalem must have no place with Paul, except as to bearing with the one in affection, and being ready, when he might, to evangelize the other.” It is very blessed to meditate on the fact that “He was taken up.” It defines our present home on high, where He is, and it *positively* defines

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our path and ways below, as the words "He is not here" *negatively* indicate them; for our path and ways on earth are to be characterised by our home and place with Christ in heaven. "He was taken up"—and so have the hearts and affections of those who have tasted His love, been taken up along with Him, and the day is coming when they themselves, too, shall be taken up ("caught up," 1 Thess. iv.), and thus be ever with the Lord. This it is they wait for now; they wait for Him to whom they are united in glory; the place where He is, their present home and rest; the place where He is not, the scene of their trial and pilgrimage, yet trodden with uncomplaining heart and unwearied feet—Himself in spiritual manifestation with them, the Comforter present in their bodies, assuring their hearts of Himself, testifying of Him, taking of the things of Christ and shewing them unto you, glorifying Him. What a path! What a mission! What a calling! How miserably short of it are we, His people of to-day, distracted and diverted on

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every side. Lord, close our eyes and ears to things and sounds where Thou art not, and open and fix them on Thyself where Thou art for Thy name's sake.

W. T. T.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

“ THAT THEY MAY BE ALL ONE.”

THE surest proof of real devotedness to Christ is when the heart studies and clings to the desires of His heart. To do a service or a kindness is the delight of any friend, but to study the mind of another, however superior to oneself, until one has acquired some certain idea of the leading desires there, in order to devote oneself to the promotion and accomplishment of them, is the act of unselfish devotedness. Here Mary altogether surpassed Martha. The general character of zealous service is that one is much cumbered, earnestly promoting what he thinks is the best work ; he has consulted his own mind, and not, in reality, the Lord's mind.

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it is no question of the kingdom, it is eternal life, such as Jesus, come from heaven, could reveal it to us. This second subject supposes the cross: it is no longer the Lord Jesus presented in His character of Messiah, but in that of Son of Man, and with it the love which God had for the world. It is not His intention as to the kingdom, and the promises connected with that kingdom, but the plans far higher and more vast; heavenly, too, in their character, in which God reveals what He is. Jesus, rejected as the Messiah, dies, and enters into glory as the Son of Man who has suffered. No doubt this new birth is necessary, subjectively, even to enable us to see the *kingdom* and enjoy our place in it; *à fortiori* then is it necessary, in order to enjoy heavenly things in God's presence. This passage, however, speaks of the new birth, and does not treat the question of heavenly glory, for this the cross must be brought in also.

Let us remark that this whole passage in its two parts, supposes a new order

of things, where grace was acting, and that not limited to the Jews. An entirely new thing was being brought in ; the kingdom was not established in glory, but founded and received in the person of the King, demanding a new nature in man that he might see it, and extending itself to every one whom grace could reach. We have here, morally and subjectively, a new thing, only in the first part of the teaching we have neither heavenly things nor eternal life, and in the second, we have not got the kingdom.

J. N. D.

THE PATH OF FAITH AS TYPIFIED IN HEBREWS XI.

(Continued from page 305.)

It is sometimes needful and helpful to shew the evil state of the world, and that which is in it ; in iii. 18, 19 of the epistle just referred to, 2 Timothy iii., iv., 1 John ii. 16, and many other portions point them out distinctly, yet to have God as the God of peace with us,

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we must go on with the things mentioned in Philippians iv. 8, 9. Any one who learns this truth must go through much sorrow, for not only will he find the flesh in himself seeking to occupy him with that which is unlovely, but Satan, the world, and even many believers themselves, will seek to engross him with the evil side of things.

We find from Philippians i. how Paul carried out in practice what, in Philippians iv., he impressed upon others in doctrine; how from his prison he encourages the Philippians, who probably were distressed and discouraged at the apostle of the Gentiles being in bonds. When he makes mention of these bonds it is not as regretting them, but as having been used for the furtherance of the gospel through the conversion of his guards. Again, in the same chapter, when he alludes to those who preached Christ even of envy and strife, of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to his bonds, the blessed apostle rejoices in the loveliness of the subject of their preaching, how-

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ever unlovely the characters of the preachers themselves might be, and is persuaded that all will, through the prayer of that assembly and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, be used for blessing to him in his whole course whilst here below. The work is always liable to be hindered or stopped when the minds of the Lord's servants become occupied with those things which are contrary to those mentioned in Philip-
pians iv. 8. To deal with evil and unlovely things, or go through them, may be necessary, but the mind itself is to be set on things above. (Col. iii. 2.)
Condemnation of the world ever accom-
panies a decided path, but, as with Noah, not by being occupied with the evil, but by building that which saves from it. We shall none of us know, whilst in this world, the full effect of a separated walk upon the consciences of others. (1 Pet. ii. 12.)

The *fourth* phase in the path of faith is Abraham's, he came out of everything. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should

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after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went." Other acts of faith are in the same chapter recorded of him, but separation is the first named. By faith Noah condemned the world, and by faith Abraham went out from all that most held him in it. How often do we find Christians who condemn that in which they remain! Their intelligence is far beyond their walk; they can point out the inconsistencies and evils of the system in which they remain almost as clearly as those who have separated from it, but there is no power to go out from it. Some are hindered because, though conscious that they ought to leave the evil, they are not willing to take the *first* step until they can see where they will eventually be led. But this is not the path of faith. Abraham went out *not knowing whither he went*. Sarah is mentioned, but, valuable type as she surely is, we may view her as being one with her husband, holding a blessed place, too, as an example to all worthy to be called her daughters (1

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Pet. iii. 6); but Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, named in the three verses which immediately precede the mention of Moses, point, in type, to that knowledge of future events which those only who have taken the fourth step really have.

It will be noticed that all three speak of *future events*. Jacob is shewn to do so from Genesis xlviii., xlix.; Isaac and Joseph from the chapter itself, "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning *things to come*. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of *the departing of the children of Israel*, and gave commandment concerning his bones." If the conversation or the writings of those mixed up with the systems of men be noted or examined, it will be found that none are really clear as to prophecy, or future events; not only do they differ greatly amongst themselves, but very palpable errors on these points are manifest in all. Sepa-

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ration (the fourth phase) must take place before they can be clear as to future events. If the Lord will spue that which marks Laodicea out of His mouth, those who know it will not continue in company or fellowship with that about which the Lord has so clearly foretold. It is folly for believers to talk about understanding these things, and not to act in accordance with such knowledge. They may indeed acknowledge them in theory, but they do not know them by faith. Where there is faith works must follow, though not such as the natural mind either understands or approves. (James ii. 21, 25.)

The *fifth* phase in the believer's life is the becoming a leader of God's people, *not in Egypt but in the wilderness*. Moses typifies this: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt for he had

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respect unto the recompense of the reward." The wisdom of this world would have suggested to him to have remained in that which, to the natural mind, was the place of power, and through such favourable and providential circumstances to have ameliorated the condition of his brethren. His position might have enabled him to have effected this, and to have procured for him their thanks. His giving up the world's glory was followed by their misunderstanding him, and his becoming an exile in the land of Midian; but it was also followed by the passage of the Red Sea, and the destruction of Pharaoh's chariots and host. Faith will lead the believer to do the very thing that seems most to close the door against obtaining the object that has been laid upon his heart, but faith does that which is according to God's mind in the minutest details as much as in the (to man's mind) most important affairs. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." The being faithful in some act, may to the

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natural mind make the object sought after appear much harder, or even impossible, to be obtained; but faith believes God, and does that which is discerned to be according to His will, however much the way seems thereby stopped.

We have an instance of this in Abraham's offering up his son Isaac, whose death to the natural mind rendered it impossible that the promises to Abraham should be fulfilled, for of that son it had been said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," but Abraham accounted "that God could raise him up, even from the dead: from whence also he received him in a figure." Faith leads the person who has it to act according to the mind of God; and the believer is not affected by looking to the consequences of the act itself, he believes that God is (verse 6), and does that which he discerns to be according to God's mind. He knows that without faith it is impossible to please God. Moses forsook everything which in a natural way gave him power or influ-

ence with men, and then by faith forsook Egypt itself, and Jehovah honoured him; and we read that "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them." Again that "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned." Thus we have five principal phases which mark the believer's life as viewed in the wilderness: first, the offering (Abel); secondly, walk (Enoch); thirdly, condemnation of the world (Noah); fourthly, separation (Abraham); and lastly, leading God's people *not in Egypt, but in the wilderness* (Moses). Although the measure may be very small indeed, yet all those who are led through the first four phases will, according to their measure, be leaders. A captain as well as a colonel may have to lead into action, but the former must be content to follow in the presence of the latter; so believers can only lead according to the place God gives them. "Obey

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them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves'' occurs in the last chapter of this epistle, the neglect of which precept has caused much sorrow amongst saints and brought much dishonour upon the name of Christ at the present day. We must bear in mind that the path thus marked out is in an epistle which does not take us out of the wilderness, for as regards the truth of the one body, no particular member can be a leader. It may be essential for the body that the eye should see clearly which way the body should go, and the little finger may be used to remove the dust that obscures the vision of the former. Nevertheless neither eye nor little finger can be called the leader of the body, the heart may have as much to do with the action of the body as the eye; each member acts according to the one spirit, and as part of the body. In this path of faith all is of Christ, whether Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, or Moses, or any of the cloud of witnesses afterwards mentioned or referred to, Christ is the beginner and

ender of their faith. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith." (Heb. xii. 2.) However different and distinct from each other the actings of these elders might be; it was the Lord Himself who was the spring and strength of all.

In Enoch we have a type of the translation of the saints (1 Thess. iv.); and in Noah of the Jewish remnant being carried through the great tribulation. But the object of these remarks is to point out the moral rather than any dispensational teaching. We do not find the church or the one body in Hebrews, and yet in a figure we may trace it in this very chapter, for as soon as the apostle mentions the faith of one (Rahab) who was a Gentile, and outside the special line of blessing, he can no longer individualise, and although in verse 32 he mentions a few special names, he more and more passes away from individuals to the general faithfulness of the whole body of those who had been chosen as witnesses for the truth upon the earth, and in addi-

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tion to this, refers in the last verse, to "some better thing" than anything that the patriarchs of old possessed. A. P.

EVIL RESISTED AND OVERRULED
IS UNDEFILING.

THE question is being raised by many at the present moment as to how far one is personally involved in complicity with evil while remaining *positionally* in fellowship with those whose state is evil. The answer to this, as to all others affecting the glory of the Lord and the welfare of His saints, is to be gathered from the word and the divine principles of holiness and truth laid down in it.

Evil will, we know, exist in the millennium, but it will not be manifested in open hostility to the authority of Christ, who will keep down all that would oppose itself to it. Every one, whether true or false, will own and bow to His authority, and hence, despite the *state of some*, the state of the kingdom will be characterised by righteousness

and peace. There will be no *overt acts* of insubjection to the King's authority, although the elements are there which will, in the end, break out into action and bring those who rebel under final judgment.

Now if we turn to the saints gathered to the name of the Lord, on the ground of the one assembly of God, we find that there is no such *direct* action of divine power as will be exercised in the millennium, but the responsibility to maintain holiness and truth is imposed upon those thus gathered, who have to answer practically in dependence upon the power of the Holy Ghost, and in subjection to Christ, keeping themselves clear of all *overt* evil by putting an unrepentant offender out, when his sin has been duly proved, or going out themselves from any who, though professedly gathered to the Lord's name, adopt the sin by refusing or neglecting to judge the guilty person.

But saints may get into a bad state, and may individually lose the power of discerning the Lord's mind, and thus

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some may be found in ostensible fellowship, who may refuse a judgment of the Holy Ghost through the assembly, although externally bowing to it. It is bad to be in a bad state, and either those who are so must judge themselves or God will judge them, but they do not give character to the *corporate* thing so long as there is power in exercise to do right *corporately*, and keep opposers subject, *in act*, to the Holy Ghost's authority. The state may be lamentably bad, and may, unless restored by the Lord's mercy, work to an issue so that the whole lump may become leavened; but it is not so leavened while corporate action is maintained to deal with overt acts as they arise. A careful perusal of 2 Corinthians will shew this.

What then is the path of those who desire to be right in such a state of things? Clearly not to give up and abandon what God still owns and controls, but to labour in all love and patience to "lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees, and to

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make straight paths for their feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." Individual rejection of every thing contrary to the word and Spirit of Christ, and refusing to have fellowship with any that are not subject to Him, nor walking in His ways, are what have to be carefully maintained ; but being clear or not, of complicity with evil, depends not upon the state of *certain individuals* with whom one is ecclesiastically associated, however bad that state may be, but on that of the corporate thing which if right will always judge *overt acts* and maintain its place as an assembly of God by refusal of all *manifested evil*. If, on the other hand, the corporate thing adopts evil, either wilfully or by neglecting to judge it, then the path of those who desire to be only where Christ is and can be, is very clear, "Come out from among them and be ye separate," &c.

May the Lord give clear-sightedness and wisdom, as well as dependence on Himself, in these evil days, that we may not miss His path. J. G. H.

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a clear testimony. The world may be given up politically, as it is in many instances, but the things of the world are sought after for comfort in the world. I need not add more ; but I thank God that there is a way, and one the most gratifying to the heart, to rise up and triumph for the Lord, even in an evil day like this.

May He lead many of us heartily to do so.

 OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION.

CRUSHED by an adverse world of sin,
 Dull grief, and heavy care ;—
 Then glows the treasury within,
 Celestial bright and fair.

From shaken flowers sweet odours fly,
 When tempests sweep the dell ;
 And the deep purple Tyrian dye
 Drops from a bruised shell.

O God ! how wondrous is Thy way
 The wisdom surely Thine !
 'Tis from a breaking vase of clay
 That rays of glory shine !

J O H N'S G O S P E L.

Chapter iii.—*Continued.*

THE first thing the Lord does in stopping Nicodemus short is to tell him that it was not teaching he wanted, but a new birth entirely. This had its effect, for Nicodemus talked of nothing but of being taught in the state in which he was as a child of the kingdom after the flesh. We will look a little into the detail of this ; but before doing this it is important to understand, first of all, that the Lord speaks of two kinds of blessing here, that is, of heavenly glory, and of the kingdom according to the promises, although according to its aspect at that very time. We may say that He presents them, as far as His person is concerned, in their spiritual character. On the one hand, the king despised and the Man from heaven meeting with the cross ; but on the other hand, the new birth and life-giving power, the Son of man, the love of God, and consequently what

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born of the flesh is flesh, has this nature ; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, that is, corresponds to the divine nature which is its source. But then the question could not be confined to the Jews ; if any one had this nature he was fit for the kingdom. It was not a question of a people already chosen of God, but of a nature suitable to God.

Two things are brought to light when these principles have been laid down. First of all, the necessity of this new birth in order to enjoy the promises made to the Jews for the earth ; and secondly, that this work was of God, who communicated this new nature. God could communicate it to whom He would, and this opened the door to the Gentiles. Nicodemus, as Jesus said, ought not to have been astonished to hear that the Jews must be born again ; the prophets had announced this (see Ezek. xxxvi. 24-28), and Nicodemus, as a master or teacher in Israel, ought to have known it. The wind, too, blew where it listed (ver. 8) ; so was the operation of the Spirit. It was a work

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of God, and thus could be accomplished in any one.

There were still the heavenly things to be spoken of. If Nicodemus did not understand the earthly things of Israel's blessings, how would he understand if the Lord were to speak to him of heavenly things? Now no one ascended to heaven so as to be able to bring word of what was there, and what was necessary to be able to enjoy it. Christ was the only one who could do this, who had descended from heaven, who spoke of what He knew, and bore witness to what He had seen—not the Messiah, for in that title He was in connection with the earth—but the Son of man who, as to His divine nature, was in heaven.

THE POSITION AND PATH OF SEPARATION TO GOD.

I HAVE made a distinction between the *position* and *path* of separation, and I believe, rightly; and I am confirmed

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in this by observation, for I see clearly at this moment that many "take the ground," as it is called, who have no sense whatever, nor have they been, in ever so little a degree, exercised in the solemn consequences of it, or of that which may be called the *path* and *ways* of separated people; nor is this surprising, when we remember with sorrow, that there are those who teach and lead others, who have never as yet *even allowed* that a *path* and *ways* practically of *distinct separateness* are the inevitable consequences of the position. The wile of the enemy at the present time seems to be in blinding the eyes of saints so effectually as to render them obtuse to a "*manner of life*" suitable to what the apostle calls "*my doctrine*." Now I believe it is only due to the Lord, and the interests of His blessed testimony, fully to admit the possibility in many instances of an *uneven* pressing of the "*manner of life*," and by this I mean that it may be, there has not been an equal prominence given to the producing power, namely, "*my*

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doctrine." I am also free to own that perhaps the state and condition of souls has not been enough taken account of, and that in every case it must be the *heart* before the *feet*; this must be increasingly felt to be a point of the deepest moment; yet fully admitting all that might be demanded on these heads, it is now very manifest that there are those whose objections and refusal of the path and ways of separation spring from a source and origin far deeper than that recited. For example, when the habits and principles of the world are appealed to as the guide and director of those who have professedly, at least, taken an outside position, when it is said that we must order our homes and families according to our station in life, that we must dress, for example, according to our position in society, is it not evident that the "manner of life" is rudely severed from "my doctrine"? Now it is of no use to urge a general inconsistency, I am willing sorrowfully to admit this, but the sad part in reality is, an avowed *principle of worldliness*,

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which is fast making those who contend for it, while ecclesiastically holding on by the position of separation, a reproach and a byword ; and when I say a principle of worldliness I mean a line of conduct drawn from the *spirit* and ways of this age, instead of that flowing from the position of full and complete blessedness in which the grace of God has set us. It does often seem to one as if the *cross* in its breadth and magnitude was not apprehended. It is boasted in and truly as the ground of forgiveness, but how little is it seen as the end of man and of the world morally before God. How little is it looked at as that “whereby *the world* is crucified to me and I to the world” ! If as a saint now I am truly laid hold upon by Christ, what is my position ? Do I not date the birth of my new history from the risen One ? Am I not part of the “much fruit” which results from the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying ? Am I not united to Christ the glorified Man ? Is not all this a great fact which faith ac-

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cepts to-day ? But if so, are there no ways, habits of life, practice suitable thereto ?

If it be pressed that because "our citizenship is in the heavens" it is not here, but that on the contrary pilgrim ways and manners, unworldliness in *spirit* and in *fact* should mark all our relationships on earth ; are we to be held up as extreme persons ? Alas, for that testimony which would amount to little better than a correct creed, in boasting of Paul's doctrine, while adopting the world's spirit, ways and habits in the manner of life.

It is not attempted to be denied that good cause may have been given by some in their ignorance and indiscretion to fear the introduction of visionary and imaginative notions, laying hold in fanciful power upon morbid minds, and thus really injuring the truth of God ; yet this is very different from the decided opposition to every kind of practical separation, now offered by those who on the contrary maintain *as a principle*, that it is the duty of

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every Christian to keep their worldly status and to make it the guide of their ways and habits of life. All who plead for heavenly-mindedness and unworldliness in this respect being branded by some as ascetic, by others as transcendental; while the true cause of the dislike is, it is feared, to be found in the fact that such are determined to keep the world, and that a species of antinomianism is fast laying hold of souls, under the wings of which, credit for a correct ecclesiastical position is both claimed and enjoyed, while all that surrounded those so claiming it, in their previous life and associations, are not only maintained, but contended for, and justified as suitable to their class and rank and the requirements and so-called proprieties of the age.

Now it is fully admitted that there are differences of relationship, or our natural relationships in the world; there are husband and wife, parent and child, servant and master, and these are all God ordered and to be divinely maintained by the saints. No question is

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raised as to the continuance of these relationships, nor can they be done violence to without the condemnation of the word of the Lord ; the absence of natural affection is one of the marks of the last days, and any who manifest it are ungodly and unspiritual. But this is not the *real* question, but the *motive* and directing power in which they are to be maintained ; and he who, although strenuously advocating orthodoxy, imports into his responsibilities in respect of such relationships, either the spirit or ways of the age, is a worldling at heart. The Lord Jesus Christ, the risen and glorified One, is the only true wisdom, motive and power of the saint, for these as for all else. In Him the saint of to-day is “a *new creation*,” and “as many as shall walk by this rule, peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.” May the Lord open the eyes of His saints to see the vastness of the field of blessing into which His grace has introduced them, that as separated to God *positionally*, the character, ways and habits of it *practically*,

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may be recognised and joyfully adopted
more and more amongst us for His
name's sake. W. T. T.

W. T. T.

TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE
WAY HE SHOULD GO.

As to the question of the education of children, one must not shrink from setting forth the truth, however self-condemned by it as to one's own practice. We begin with the fact that the children are the Lord's property, and they are to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The Lord should be consulted and respected in every stage and branch of their education. Hannah placed Samuel in the house of the Lord and dressed him in keeping with that place. He was connected with God's place on earth from the very start, and from infancy ordered and educated in consonance with it. This is not so easily carried out in practice now. If I have but a faint and imperfect idea of God's place now,

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I cannot go beyond it in the training and education of my child. I have first to see what is my duty. Next I cannot go beyond my own light and apprehension of what is due to the Lord. I may be very clear as to the broad fact that my child should be trained and brought up for the Lord; but if I have feeble and imperfect ideas of being for the Lord myself, I cannot exceed them in the education of my child. The first great difficulty in bringing up a child for the Lord is the small measure in which I am myself for the Lord. There are the two spheres, as I might say; the church, or God's place, and the world with its god. I am naturally belonging to the latter, and my child naturally adopts and imbibes my worldly ideas and feelings. If I have not renounced my worldly sentiments and ways very distinctly, and replaced them with divine ones genuinely, my child will, to my surprise, grow up the imitator and reflection of my badly suppressed worldliness; and will, I have no doubt,

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disclose and betray the secret worldliness of my heart in broad and simple lines. The child is more susceptible of what suits him naturally; he has a powerful affinity for it, and there is at once an attraction for the worldly element, which the thin veil of profession does not conceal from the child. There is, as it appears to me, necessarily a double education going on; I am seeking, according to my sincerity, to be less of the world and more of Christ in myself, and I am endeavouring to counteract in the bud the springing up of worldliness in my child, and to touch his conscience about it, as being not of God, but of the world. Now the whole order and aim of one's own education, if brought up in the world, is changed; and I have another standard before my mind. The Lord Jesus Christ, as far as I know Him, is my standard. I train my child that he may be healthy in body, and may have his mind rightly exercised. Everything that would conduce to render his body strong, and his mind clear and useful, I should observe.

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The mind is nearly as much an instrument as the body; the great difference is that the mind is coloured by the heart and conscience, and if there be not the latter to influence, the mind is too independent and freethinking. Hence, the great aim in education is to awaken the conscience as to what is due to God; and at the same time to draw out the heart. I feel assured that parents do not make it their study to promote these two growths. They expect that teaching hymns and verses will (they know not how) help the conscience of the child; and very often there is no thought of the conscience before the mind of the parent, but simply that it is the duty of the christian parent to teach his or her child the word of God; and the heart is left to learn for itself, as it best may, from the love it receives. I believe if the conscience were more sedulously exercised, as to what is right and wrong before God, and the heart let out by the careful and touching way it was encouraged and ministered to, that the body and mind would

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become disciplined channels for use when grace comes. The better use they were turned to, the more useful they would be; a child thus educated would, when quickened by the Holy Ghost, and led into real knowledge of God; find his conscience enlightened by a new and spiritual power. In the same way the heart would be led by the Spirit into the perfect and eternal love of God, in addition to or in support of mere natural affection, so that the heart and conscience would be under a new and divine ordering, both according to the divine nature, and the power of the Holy Ghost; and hence the vessel in mind and body would become expressive of the grace of Christ and subservient to Him in all things.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

OUR CENTRE CHARACTERISES
EVERYTHING.

THE greatest object to the mind is its centre. That is the point from which

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every action springs, and to which all actions turn. If self be my greatest object, everything I do refers and relates to it; whether it be in physics or in ethics. This is evident enough in the unconverted man, even when religious; that is, answering to a natural conscience, as in the case of Cain. His centre was himself, and hence, when he would be accepted by God, he sought it in a way commendatory to himself in bringing the fruits, not only of his own labour, but of the earth which had been cursed by God on man's account. If myself be my greatest object, everything I do, and every judgment I form must be with reference to myself. I am the central point in connection with everything. Here the natural man necessarily must be, he cannot have any object greater than himself. However affectionate he may be in the relations of life, or however attached to any object, he makes himself the centre and judges and acts with reference to himself in all his likings and services.

Now when a soul is converted, there