

A
VOICE
TO
THE FAITHFUL.

“He that striveth for the mastery is temperate
in all things,”—(1 COR. IX. 25.)

VOL. XX,

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A Voice to the Faithful.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE call of Abram, which is only fully obeyed when his father was dead. (Acts vii. 4.) The promises of a great nation, and that all families of the earth should be blessed in him, are given to him. Lot accompanies him, they come into the land of Canaan; it is promised to Abram's seed. He builds an altar to the Lord, who appeared to him, and sojourns in the land of promise as in a strange land. Pressed by famine, he goes down to Egypt, where he denies his wife, and is enriched. Pharaoh is plagued on her account, and sends him away.

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land, are renewed to him. The Philistines had part of the land ; he dwells with them, and denies his wife. He becomes great, the Lord blessing him. The Philistines had stopped the wells of his father : there is "contention" and "hatred." He retreats and finds "room ;" and at last went up to Beersheba, where the Lord appeared to him, and blessed him ; and he had his tent and his altar. Esau intermarries with the Hittites, to Isaac and Rebecca's grief.

CHAPTER XXVII.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

Jacob becomes a fugitive and a wanderer from the land of promise. The Lord God of his fathers reveals Himself to him, in the dream of the ladder between heaven and earth, and

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LIFE AS PRESENTED IN SCRIPTURE.

I HAVE doubted sometimes if it be sufficiently seen that, when life is spoken of in scripture, it is presented to us as a moral state into which one is brought through faith (the just shall live by faith), to which the nature begotten in the believer of the Spirit by the word necessarily answers. This moral state is formed by, and dependent on the way in which God is pleased to reveal Himself. The contrasts in which life is presented to us in the word may serve to the elucidation of this. I think the mistake has been made of viewing life too much according to natural ideas, as a sort of deposit in the believer—though indeed there be a seed of God in him—but in viewing it in this way the moral character and import of life appears to me in measure lost.

Two or three passages will shew the

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contrasts to which I have referred. In Psalm cxxxiii. 3 life for evermore is the explanation of "the blessing," and it is identified with Zion, and therefore with all the moral force of Zion. "There he commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." In Daniel xii. 2 eternal life is contrasted with shame and everlasting contempt ; in Matthew xxv. 46 with everlasting punishment ; in John v. 24 with a state of death, and so too in Romans vi. 23. These passages are of moment, not exactly as describing what life is, but as shewing it to us in contrast either with death as a moral state in the present, or with shame, contempt, and punishment in the future.

I may here notice the moral sequence which we find in Romans vi. 22. It begins with liberation from sin and bondage to God, it goes on to fruit unto holiness, and the climax is eternal life ; there is evidently a moral progression here, though it doubtless ends in glory. And this brings me to another point, namely, the kind of persons who

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are spoken of as passing into life, of whose course down here life may be regarded as the consummation. In Matthew xxv. 46 it is the righteous. In Romans ii. 7 it is those who, by patient continuance in good works, seek for glory, honour, incorruptibility.

Now I think it will be evident that life thus regarded could not be viewed as existing, so far at least as man's participation in it is concerned, until the necessary conditions should be there according to God. I do not of course intend to give always to life, as presented in the word, precisely the same force. This must be ascertained from the particular context in which it stands. Hence, in the Old Testament, it doubtless refers to a state of blessing to be enjoyed on the earth under Christ, when the law is written in the heart; while in the New it is *in* the Son of God, Christ Jesus, carrying with it relationship and inheritance in Him, and is the fulfilment of God's eternal purpose.

Now for the display of life it is plain

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from scripture that two conditions were necessary ; the first was the manifestation of life, of and according to God, in a man, the sphere of it being properly in glory, and this in One who is a quickening Spirit, the second Man, out of heaven ; the other was the removal of sin from before God, and that in such a way as that the glory of God might come in where the full power of sin had been ; and with this was the condemnation of the state of the first man. Now in the incarnation of the Son of God, the first condition was, in measure, fulfilled, and the second pledged. He was the living bread come down from heaven, and the bread that He would give was His flesh, which He would give for the life of the world.

I will endeavour to trace a little the way in which eternal life is developed in the writings of the apostle John. In John xvii. 3 its character and privilege are described by Jesus Himself as the knowing the Father as the only true God, and Jesus Christ

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His sent One. This indicates at once its moral character, and renders it manifestly inseparable from the Son. Now what was necessary as from God was really present when the Father was manifested in the Son, become man; but there yet remained to be accomplished the setting aside of the flesh that man might be wrought for the blessing; and to this I suppose the Lord refers in speaking of the brazen serpent in John iii. Nevertheless in the manifestation of the Son there was something far in advance of all that had ever been before. Light had come in as to the portion which the grace of God had in reserve for man. In John iii. the Lord speaks of eternal life through the giving of God's Son as the witness and expression of God's love to the world, and it is into the enjoyment and joy of this love that the believer in the Son is brought. This is eternal life, and is far beyond any question of kingdom. In John iv. the worship of God as Father is spoken of, the result of the living water in the

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believer ; it springs up unto everlasting life. Thus we have God known in His love, and worshipped as Father in Spirit and in truth. In chapter v. it is the effect of hearing the voice of the Son of God, and there is the consequent passage from death unto life. Here, as I have before shewn, it is an entire change as regards the state of things in which a soul lives morally. In chapter vi. the Son of God incarnate is presented as the Bread of life—the bread of God—and the way of life for man was to eat of this bread ; all the grace of God was seen in the form in which the life was presented to man. At the same time He would give His flesh for the life of the world, and His death of necessity became the test of faith. Except they ate His flesh and drank His blood they had no life in them, and the Lord warns them that His words must not be understood in a carnal sense, for they were spirit and life. The true secret underneath all was that the Father was drawing souls to the Son ; and in an incarnate and

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crucified Christ faith has a portion given and enjoyed in communion with the Father and the Son. And this is eternal life, which for us will find its completion in resurrection at the last day.

I think the passages cited shew that the idea of life, in the first revelation of it in scripture, is a moral order of things into which the believer enters through grace, where wholly new objects are presented to him, which he is capable of enjoying in virtue of a new nature implanted in him. And the same thing is evident in the First Epistle of John, where the believer is viewed as being in life, enjoying the knowledge of the Father and the Son—born of God that he may enjoy it—having confidence with God, knowing the love of God, into the enjoyment of which he is introduced, and delivered from fear because love is made perfect with us, “in that, as He is, so are we in this world.” And, in chapter v., the apostle reverts to the fact of the eternal life being in the Son, and ends with the expression, “He is the true God and eternal life ;”

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that is, that eternal life means a new order of things, so far as man is concerned, true only in the Son, and in believers as abiding in Him. The boundaries of the land of Israel's inheritance might be limited, and there might be a limit to the subsistence which the land could afford ; to Christ there can be no limit ; the extent and area for blessing, so to speak, and the power to maintain those blessed are illimitable. In the writings of Paul, life is viewed rather as a display in the future, in which God's eternal purpose for man's glory will find its accomplishment. It was promised in Christ before the world was ; it is now brought to light by our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has annulled death ; and grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus, though the apostle recognises the present power of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and exhorts Timothy to grasp eternal life, yet he speaks in general of eternal life as the consummation of the believer's course, but which

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is at the same time the fruit of God's eternal purpose. It is all the difference between a state of life in Christ in glory, and a state of life in blessing on the earth under Christ. The apostle Paul, speaking of life more in display, connects it with Christ in His present position in glory, rather than, as is the case with John, with the Son become man.

There is another point, in connection with what I have said, of considerable importance, and that is, that life, as to man's participation in it, is in scripture commonly linked with faith. The necessity and fact of new birth is constantly spoken of in the word, and in Peter the gospel is said to be the word by which it is produced; but it still remains true that faith is the way of life, and this is of the highest moment, because, though a soul may not in believing be very intelligent as to the import and moral bearing of faith, it really means the receiving of Christ, and the consequent renunciation of self and the world. What is

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done administratively in the putting off the old man and putting on the new, is really effectuated morally in faith in Christ crucified and risen. A soul is thus committed to Christ, in principle owning that, as to its own condition, it is lost; and having thus been drawn of the Father to the Son, the Spirit is received, the power and witness of the state of life and blessing in Christ, into which it is brought. My impression is that it is in this way life is presented in scripture; not so much as a deposit in the believer, though indeed Christ lives in him in the power of the Spirit, but as a state of blessing, whether in Christ in glory, or under Christ on the earth, into which a believer, conscious of his own state of ruin by nature, is through grace brought, and for which he is wrought by the power of God.

May the Lord give us to know the greatness of the blessing.

F. E. R.



“HE THAT SEEKETH,
FINDETH.”

NATURALLY no man labours for a thing without expecting to reap the fruits of his labour ; and divinely, “In all labour there is profit ” for what we seek, we find. There is nothing to which the Spirit leads us to aspire, that we shall not reach. All this is plain enough. On the other hand, we see many who suffer for a right position who do not expect anything from it, but they reap what they sowed ; their hearts were really on something else ; their profession was but a cover, and hence they have been even deceived themselves until the reaping came. All our present gain depends on the measure of our faith. No sacrifice nor surrender acquires anything for me without faith. When I surrender or suffer, counting on God, which is faith, I am sure to reap in joy. But when I

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suffer for even a right thing, because it is enjoined, in order that I may be able to enjoy my own things with an easy conscience, there is no gain from it; indeed, the gain is not sought.

When a man surrenders for God, he is ever like the children of the captivity, fatter and fairer than those who did not suffer. There is no greater hindrance to the testimony in the present day than the saint who has suffered for the heavenly position, but yet evidently has never enjoyed the blessedness of that position.

There has ever been a tendency in souls, according to their appreciation of truth, to follow in the steps of those who practically commend it. They see that it is the right thing, but if they have not faith, while they suffer loss in following even at a distance, it will be found eventually that their hearts are not in the path; and they have gained nothing, and really do not expect anything from it, though approving of it.

In the long run every one discloses the great object of his heart. It is re-

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markable how opportunity arises to retreat from an advanced position, and if this opportunity be accepted, the dominant desire and purpose of the heart is gratified. It can be seen in every one's course. The accepting of the opportunity necessarily indicates the leading desire of the heart. Lot, when he separates from Abraham, betrays at once where his heart is. "The green fields" suited him, he embraces the opportunity and drops out of the path of faith. He had no doubt suffered at first for the step he had taken in company with Abraham ; but it is evident that he did not consider this step paramount ; that is, that nothing could exceed the ground he now had entered on. Surely if he had faith in God, and that God was leading him on, as Abram had, he must in his heart know that there was something to be reached better than "green fields." The man who could put up with "green fields " betrayed the secret of his heart. God looks upon the heart. A man who had sown wheat in his field would not be

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satisfied with any lesser grain. We sow what we really desire to reap. I mean that the heart cannot be truly satisfied with anything short of its real desire. This must be so when the desire is of the Spirit of God.

We see a very remarkable contrast in the history of Abraham. He had come out to God, he counted on God ; he was rewarded openly. He not only rescued Lot, but a table was prepared for him in the presence of his enemies. Melchisedec met him and blessed him. The deep desire of his heart was gratified. How could “goods” or earthly gifts be enough for a heart that in faith counted on God, and expected from Him. Surely Abraham was a man of like passions with us, but God looked upon the heart. He knew what he really sought in all his variations ; and to it he comes, as we all do.

We can deceive our fellows, and we can deceive our own hearts, but God knows our hearts, and the thing that detains us, is the real object of the heart. Thus in Gideon’s day 9,700

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were found out at the water, while only 300 practically declared that "the water,"—natural advantage, could not detain them. They reaped as they sowed; they had a glorious campaign. We do not, as a rule, deliberately sow to something below our profession. The profession is retained, as with Lot, or with the 9,700, while all the time their hearts are on a much lower thing than their profession, but they eventually reap what they sow. It is very sad the way one is beguiled and self-deceived in accepting the heavenly position when the heart is really far from it; and, whenever this is the case, there is sure to be an exposure of the real desire. Where the heart rests, there is its treasure; "where the treasure is, there will the heart be also." Thus many have essayed to build (Luke xiv. 28), without counting the cost. There is a good profession, but the real nature of the new construction has not been fully taken into account. There is an enduring for a little while, but in the

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time of temptation, there is a falling away.

If Christ be the one Object of my heart, nothing here will divert me from Him. Like the faithful dog, if I have lost Him for a moment, neither fear nor favour will prevent me from seeking Him—and I shall find Him; “They that seek me early shall find me.” There is no greater cheer to the saint than that God looketh on the heart, and that He satisfieth the desire of every living thing. We may have to pass through deep exercises and sufferings before the desire of the heart be reached, but it surely comes. Moses desired to deliver his people out of the land of Egypt, and he eventually did so. The desire in my heart toward the Lord shall be gratified, though it may take years before I am qualified for it. I require to be fitted for the post that I seek. The very interruption or hindrances in my path are used by the Lord to prepare me for what I desire. When I am led by the Spirit of God, I am led to desire what is in keeping with

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His will and purpose at the moment. If my heart is set on Christ, I long to be in concert with Him in His interests. The church, His body, must necessarily be my concern, and in proportion as my heart is true to Him, so shall I reap in joy, though I may have sown in tears, that is, when there was very little prospect of my reaping ; hence it is ever of faith.

It is very interesting, as time advances, to mark the way every one reaps as he sows. It is not always easy to tell what a man is sowing, but we see what he sowed when we see the harvest. In the present day, as with the church at first, there was an acceptance generally of the assembly of God. All bore the same profession, but in course of time it was manifested that some had turned away, whilst others were more and more devoted. Often the first are last, and the last first. Peter fails, but Peter's heart is true, and he eventually follows the Lord to death, as he had desired. God always gives us, though we have

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to wait for it, what we value. May we be more exercised to ascertain what we value.

There is at least one great mark that we walk by faith ; and that is, that we are not carried away by counterfeits or substitutes. As we are led of God, our hearts are set on the same object as His. Be it the land, the temple, or the church, the man of God in his day, as he is true, has but one beacon of delight before his heart, and that necessarily is that which is paramount with God, at the time. And he cannot forget it. He can say, “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth ; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.” If I really seek it, I shall find it.

The church, the body of Christ, is the paramount object on earth with God in this day ; and the great question is, are we seeking it ? I mean, is our heart so set on it that nothing here can divert us from it, so that, like the

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crusaders, we must, as it were, journey on until we see Jerusalem? It is a great joy to the soul, when, in spite of all the confusion and distraction here, one is no more hindered than Daniel was when in Babylon, and in imminent danger, "his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." Jerusalem was doubtless a waste at the time, but his heart was there; he was led of God; he sowed in tears, and eventually he reaped in joy. What he sought, he found. Could any one be rewarded more openly than he was? He had sown in tears, but he reaped in joy. The great desire of his heart was answered in the emancipation in measure of his people.

It is not so much what my engagements are, which indicates what my heart is set on; the real indication is, that no matter what is offered me, nothing can displace the object of my heart; and if Christ, for His own sake,

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is my Object, then the church is my object because it is His. When I am drawn to Christ for my own gain, as at first, the church is not before my heart, but when every question about myself is set at rest, and when His pleasure and interests become dear to me because He is, then the church must be paramount with me, because it is so with Him. And though I might not know myself how much it is an object to me, much less give any evidence of it to others, yet what I seek I shall find. In every dispensation, as we have seen, whatever the heart desired for God as well as from Him, was at length enjoyed.

Nothing is more striking in the history of souls, than the marvellous way in which the desire of heart after the Lord is met. Very often a desire which appeared to lie dormant for years, is revived and satisfied. It must be borne in mind, as I have remarked, that though we make the Lord the necessary object of our hearts, it is as we become bound to Him, and in

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His confidence, that His interests are our interests ; and this was ever so in every dispensation. The blessed God treasures up, as I might say, our best desires after Him. As we read in Jeremiah ii. 2, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." And again in Hosea ii. 14, "I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her." Your brightest aspirations will be realised. Doubtless Jacob at his end, when he worshipped God, entered into the great reality of what he had but a glimmer of at Bethel. And surely Paul, as we see in 2 Timothy, corroborates this truth for us in the most encouraging way. He had lived to see defection where he had laboured much. All in Asia had turned away from him ; men whom he had counted on had lapsed into grievous error. Alexander, possibly once a friend, had done him much evil ; he had greatly withstood his words.

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Demas, once a fellow-worker, had forsaken him. At his first answer no man stood with him, but all forsook him, so that if he had looked round him, this was the most unpromising moment in his christian course. There was apparently no hope from any side except from the faithfulness of a Timothy and a Mark. And yet, surely, there never was a moment in which he was more assured that he was the Lord's servant, that he was standing for Him almost alone, amidst the crash of all external testimony; for he writes, “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” Surely he had reached the desire of his heart to be here so fully and entirely for the Lord, that he could stand, though unsupported by any of His people. And hence we find there is unbounded confidence in the Lord respecting the maintenance of the truth,

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when, as to appearances, it was well-nigh extinguished. There is a moral grandeur about Paul as the servant in 2 Timothy, his last words, as it were, which is only surpassed by our Lord in His darkest hour on this earth. The thoughts of many hearts were revealed at that moment; forsaken indeed, the Lord was, but was there ever a greater moment in His wondrous history? God was now glorified in a Man; everything according to the heart of God was accomplished, the desires of His own heart fully reached. When all looked so utterly cheerless, and to the natural eye all hope was gone, the day of glory had dawned, and the light of God's love bursts forth with all its brilliancy, on every heart open to receive it.

May it greatly encourage our hearts to follow the faith of those who have gone before, who, whatever the difficulties and disappointments they had to encounter, at length reached the desire of their heart. What they sought they found.

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CHAPTER XXXI.

DIRECTED by an angel in a dream to return to the land, Jacob steals away unknown to Laban. Hotly pursued by Laban, God intervenes to protect him. The heap and pillar of Galeed and Mizpah, are a witness between them for peace:

CHAPTER XXXII.

On the way, the hosts of God meet him, further proof of providential care. But he fears Esau, and seeks to appease him by presents, and sends all on before him over the ford of Jabbok. Left alone, an angel (Hosea xii. 4) wrestles with him until daybreak. He is reduced to weakness, and finds it the place of power and victory, receives the name Israel (prince of God), and is blessed, but without the revelation of the name of God.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

His meeting with Esau. Jacob pretends to follow him to Seir. Back

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in the land, he seeks to settle himself at Shalem of Shechem, and buys a field, building an altar in the name of the God of Israel.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Dinah is dishonoured by Shechem : Simeon and Levi slay the Shechemites.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Jacob is recalled to Bethel, whence he had started, and where the faithful God had appeared to him in his distress, that had been with him all the way. Strange gods must now be put away. He builds an altar, and there God reveals Himself to him by His name Almighty, and talks with him, confirming the promises to him and his seed. Rachel dies giving birth to Benjamin, the son of her sorrow, but of his father's right hand. The death of Isaac.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Esau establishes himself in power in Seir. The Edomites his descendants. The sons of Seir and line of kings in Edom, before there are any in Israel.

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CHAPTER XXXVII.

Joseph hated of his brethren, for his father's love to him, dreams of their subjection to him. Moved with envy, they sell him into Egypt, and deceive Jacob as though he were dead.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Judah's sin: Pharez and Zarah (Matt. i. 3) born to him of Tamar.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Joseph is bought by Potiphar. God is with him, and he prospers. Faithful in temptation, he is falsely accused and imprisoned.

CHAPTER XL.

He becomes the interpreter of the dreams of Pharaoh's servants.

CHAPTER XLI.

He interprets the dreams by which God shews Pharaoh what He is about to do. Thus Joseph is delivered out of his afflictions, and made governor over the land of Egypt. He gets the name of "saviour of the world," and receives a wife of the Egyptians, of whom are born Manasseh and Ephraim.

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CHAPTER XLII.

His brothers, pressed by famine, come to buy corn in Egypt, and bow down to Joseph. He speaks roughly to them, and requires Simeon as a pledge of Benjamin being brought to him. They are convicted in conscience of their sin against Joseph, and recognise God's hand upon them.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Judah becoming surety for Benjamin, Jacob sends him with them to buy food the second time. Joseph entertains them.

CHAPTER XLIV.

His stratagem to detain them, and test them as to Benjamin. They recognise that God had found out their iniquity. Judah fulfils his pledge as to Benjamin.

CHAPTER XLV.

Joseph makes himself known to his brethren, and sends them to bring Jacob and their households to Egypt.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Jacob halts on the border of the

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land, and offers sacrifices to the God of Isaac. As such God reveals Himself to him in a vision, and encourages him, by the promise to be with him, and make of him a great nation, and to bring him back. The meeting with Joseph.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Goshen appointed to them as their dwelling. Jacob is introduced to Pharaoh, and blesses him as the greater. Joseph buys all the land for Pharaoh from the inhabitants for food.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Jacob, when dying, adopts and blesses both the sons of Joseph, setting the younger before the elder. The double portion of the eldest, the birth-right (1 Chron. v. 12) is given to Joseph.

CHAPTER XLIX.

The history of Israel in Jacob's prophecy, in view of the last days.

REUBEN, SIMEON and LEVI—failure in responsibility, corruption and violence. JUDAH—the purpose of God in its tribal place, and royal line, till

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Messiah come, to whom the gathering of the peoples shall be. Meanwhile there is in ZEBULUN—affinity with the world in commerce. ISSACHAR—subjection to it for ease. DAN—judges his people, but Satanic power and treachery are manifested. Faith waits for the salvation of the Lord: all the rest is the consequent blessing.

GAD—there is victory instead of defeat. ASHER—abundance. NAPH-TALI — liberty and goodly words. JOSEPH—who was separate from his brethren, is the shepherd and stone of Israel, and there is fulness of blessing, even above that which is earthly. BENJAMIN — irresistible power on earth.

The death of Jacob.

CHAPTER L.

His burial with his fathers. The fears of Joseph's brethren set at rest by his grace. Joseph, when dying, makes mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gives commandment concerning his bones.

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“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth ALONE, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.”—John xii. 24.

It is one thing to enjoy in peace with God the fruit of the work of Christ for us, but quite another to begin in any measure to enter into the way the love of Christ is engaged in it. Yet it is just this that gives its special character to our blessing as Christians, and enhances the enjoyment of it infinitely. Take the word *alone* in this central verse, that is like the pivot upon which all Christianity turns ; and what a revelation it is of the springs and motives in the heart of Christ of what He came into the world to accomplish. Have we thought of it thus ? It tells that He who was the perfect object of the Father's love in the place He took as man, felt alone in that place, and that His heart went out to take others up into it with Himself, even though to do so He must go through death, to enter into it in a wholly new way in resurrec-

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tion. How much is often contained in a single word of scripture, making us conscious of unfathomable depths below what is expressed ! And so it is here.

But thus we are led into the thoughts of God and what occupies Him, instead of being taken up with our own blessing only to cramp and limit the apprehension of it. Nor was what is thus in such touching words presented to us, any afterthought of sin and consequent need of ours. In a wonderful passage where we might have little looked to find it, in the Book of Proverbs (chap. viii.), we are let into the knowledge of our place in the divine thoughts and counsels before ever the earth was. We are carried back into the past eternity, where infinitely sufficing to each other, Wisdom was with Jehovah, the Son with the Father : “ the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . . When he appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by him, as one brought up with him,

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and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." What perfect mutuality of divine joy, but in which the Son was absolutely *alone* with the Father, none else to know, much less to enter into it. Yet we are given to understand what occupied their thoughts in this communion. "Before him, rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth [while as yet He had not made the earth]; and my delights were with the sons of men." Who could have conceived it, that in the ineffable joy of such divine communion, we should find the intimation of our place in the comprehension of the purposes of God as the objects of His delight. Still remained the question; How, and by whom, these wondrous counsels were to find their fulfilment. Once again (if only once) in the Old Testament the veil of the eternal past is lifted, that the volume of the book may disclose the words, "Then said I, Lo I come; I delight to do thy will, O God." In and from the everlasting glory He had with the Father, the Son of God gave

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Himself to the work. And in the body prepared for Him (as the Holy Ghost interprets, "mine ear hast thou digged," of the Psalm) we see Him in the Gospels enter the lowly path of the accomplishment of the divine will. In the first public steps of it He goes to identify Himself with those who by grace, taking sinful man's only true place in the confession of their sins, are thereby declared to be the saints, the excellent of the earth, in whom was all His delight, according to Psalm xvi. For Him it was but fulfilling righteousness, carrying out the will in infinite grace, He had come to do. How significant that at that moment the heavens (now presented, if for the first time, with a worthy object upon earth) were opened to Him, and the Holy Ghost descends in the form of a dove, and abode upon Him, with a voice from heaven, which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. But why that voice? It altered in nothing the place He had with the Father to declare it thus? Was it not that the

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Father would have others enter into His thoughts about His Son, that if in ever so feeble measure He should become to us what He was to the Father, His beloved Son our Saviour, and ours too the perfect object of *His* pleasure?

But what rest to turn from our poor thoughts of Him, to see that path open out under the eye and heart of the only One who could enter into it; "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." The Gospels present to us the path of Jesus according to the Father's appreciation of all its varied perfection—one solitary track of light across the darkness of this world, alone as He was, in the very perfection of it.

At the opening of His ministry in John, with the woman of Samaria, we see the blessed principle of it. The disciples had left Him, in want of rest and drink and food. He had had none, and they return and find Him wonderfully refreshed and satisfied, if the sources of it were too deep for them to enter into: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of . . . my

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meat* is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

In chapter v., finding the resource of His heart, in presence of the already surging enmity of men, in His known place in the Father's love (ver. 20), and in the communion of every thought that belonged to it, we find that He acts with divine title, but as suited to the place He has taken on earth, not as an independent source of power, but in dependence upon the Father, so as in everything to be the expression of the Father. "The Son can do nothing from himself but what he seeth the Father do ; for whatsoever things he doeth these also doeth the Son likewise ;" adding even as to His sense and judgment of things. "As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just ; because I *seek not my own will*, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Again, in John vi., He *lived* on account of the Father. (Ver. 1.) How total

* He says nothing of His drink, connected as that would be with the yet deeper springs of His life in communion with His Father.

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the contrast to our poor miserable independence and self-seeking !

The more with adoring hearts we contemplate Him, the more we must feel how utterly alone He was in such a path, as Man amongst men, the motive, object, and whole principle of it, the absolute opposite of every other man's. Nothing that governs the human heart naturally ever entered into His. And what governed, and gave its whole character to His life, never for a moment affected ours.

“He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory [such are we]; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him”—such the blessed Lord. Again, “I honour my Father and seek not my own glory.” (Chap. viii. 49, 50.) In lowliness, purity, devotedness, total absence of self-love, obedience, separation to God, grace and faithfulness to men, in every aspect of what He was, He shines out in contrast with all He found in man here. There was no one that He could

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raise to His own level as Man, walking here before God. *He was alone.*

But if thus alone and isolated amongst men, by His very perfection as Man, He could say, "He that sent me is with me ; the Father hath not left me alone ; for I do always those things that please him." (John viii.) The blessed consciousness of the Father's presence was the perfect light and joy in which He walked amid the deep surrounding gloom : sustained by the sense that if men knew Him not, there was One that did, and to whom He could give even new ground for His delight in Him. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." Only in the exercise of divine power could He do this, but as ever using His power only in obedience—"This commandment have I received of my Father." In His case the prince of this world might come, but in vain, he had nothing in Him—"But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment,

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even so I do." (John xiv. 30, 31.) Love and obedience made up all that life from the deepest springs of it within, to the minutest detail of it outwardly.

No wonder that a voice from the excellent glory proclaims again in the hearing of the chosen witnesses what He is to the Father, if unknown and rejected of men :—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It was on the Mount of Transfiguration. None could have disputed His title to take, in sight of all His proved perfection, perfect object of the Father's delight, His place then and there in that glory. But He must have been *alone* in it. And it was not for that He had become a Man. He comes down to die. The precious word that we are considering declares His object in so doing. If Greeks desire to see Him, was it not an anticipation of the glory of the kingdom, when the Gentiles should be blessed with Israel? But He puts it from Him now. Something lay nearer to His heart. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth

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alone." There were those whom first He would take up into association with Himself—an object dearer than the glory of the kingdom—that when He reigns (and in all else) they may share His position. They had been given Him out of the world. They had been drawn to Him by the Father; He would give them eternal life, and bring them into all His own place in that life as risen Man, and raise them up at the last day of that dispensation to have them with Himself for ever. How little they knew—how little we can enter into—what that involved for Him! He must die, not only to meet the necessities of their ruined condition according to the glory of God, but to make that new place and state for man in divine righteousness in that glory, in which He could have them with Himself, and thus be no longer alone, according to the yearning and purpose of His love.

It was too much for their poor hearts to learn it, not able to rise above Jewish hopes. "The hour cometh, yea,

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is now come that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me *alone*”—deserted even by the little company gathered round Him in such privileged nearness on earth. It must be so. No man could follow Him whither He went till Jordan's depths were dry. Into those depths of divine judgment due to sin, He must pass alone, that death with Him, divested of all fear for us, might be known to faith as but the wondrous passage to life with Him in the power of His resurrection.

But still, for a moment, if His own whom He loved to the end, were scattered from Him, He could say, “Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” Gethsemane, with all its unutterable weight of woe, was but the anticipation of what yet lay before Him, and was passed through in the unclouded sense of that presence with Him still, that had been His light, His joy, His all, in despisal, rejection, desertion and betrayal, in the accumulated sorrow that pressed around and upon Him in His path of life. J. A. T.

(*To be continued.*)

THE ASSEMBLY : ITS PRIVILEGES & RESPONSIBILITIES.

PAUL writes to Timothy, "in order that thou mayest know how one ought to conduct oneself in the house of God, which is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth." It is therefore very important that we should have a true apprehension of our privileges and responsibilities in the assembly. Every believer is a living stone of Christ's building, though he may not for years, nay, for all his lifetime here, know that he is a living stone.

I propose therefore to trace from the beginning, the steps by which one scripturally reaches to a correct knowledge of what one's conduct must be in God's house.

When a soul is in peace, brought to God, sealed by the Spirit of God, and walking in liberty, he, as it were, naturally looks for God's dwelling-place here. The greatest, and the peculiar favour to a redeemed people was declared in the words, "I will dwell

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among them." In the song of Moses we find the first thought of the soul assured of redemption, was to prepare Him a habitation. We can easily conceive how readily the redeemed soul looks out for God's dwelling-place on the earth, where he himself is in redemption. It is important to see that I must be restful as to my own place with God ; I must know that I am individually a temple of the Holy Ghost, before I can step on to an entirely new and distinct interest—even the collective temple. Surely Israel could never have thought of a habitation for God until they were very assuredly free from the Egyptian. Hence it will be found that when there is not real understanding of the house of God, and a sense of entering into it, or rather of being of it, the reason is that the soul is not free from the question of sin in one form or other. Thus it is easy to see how impossible it is for one with only the measure of evangelical light abroad to be able to move on in his soul to this

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step—namely, that he, as a believer, is a living stone in this spiritual house.

But the believer, walking in the liberty of the Holy Ghost, learns that he is a living stone, that is, that he is part of the structure which Christ builds ; and hence of the assembly on earth, which is the habitation of God through the Spirit. This is an entirely new experience. Consequent on redemption he knows that he is a new being ; he knows he is “ of one ” with Him that “ sanctifieth ; ” he is one of His companions, and through grace made so, for He is not ashamed to call us brethren. This is so new, and so distinct from anything known, while one is breaking forth from the “ grave clothes,” to enjoy the liberty where-with Christ has made us free, that it is learning Christ in quite a new way. I find now that I am a companion of Christ my Saviour—a wonderful day this—and yet it is so, for I am a living stone ; of His very nature, in His life. The more I am with Him (however small I am), and know that

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I am His, and qualified to keep company with Him, the more I seek it. It is entirely new. I am a living stone, I am outside this world ; I belong to the Son of God ; and “ who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? ” No one can ever act or behave himself rightly if he is not true to his nature ; and no one can understand the assembly as God’s dwelling-place, if he has not learned the nature of his origin, even that he is a living stone. Thus it is that we become intelligent, as to our being builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit ; I mean as to the order in which the light has come.

We read in 1 Peter ii. of the spiritual house formed of living stones, a holy priesthood, the consecrated company, offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. The order in scripture, as far as I see, is that the assembly is the house of God, and known as such, before the assembly as the body of Christ

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is apprehended. While on the other hand, from the way the truth of the house is presented in Ephesians ii., it would appear that no one could fully apprehend the nature of the house, but as he saw it from heaven or from his heavenly position. I suppose we cannot see anything belonging to God on the earth correctly, but as we see it from above. It is evident that we have to apprehend the assembly in its twofold character, as the house of God and as the body of Christ, before we can arrive at any full knowledge of its privileges and responsibilities.

The descent of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii.) formed the first disciples into the habitation of God. No one can enter the assembly really, but in the Spirit; and no one can be in it without being, as we read in Hebrews vi., a partaker of the Holy Ghost; not as a recipient, but sharing in His presence. It must be clear to the spiritual mind, that as each component part of the new structure is of Christ as a stone is of the rock, "all of one," so none

but Christ could place me in this ground, or keep me in it. I am not at all referring to human instrumentality in these remarks. Thus we have reached another important step, namely, that Christ is the One who places and keeps us in this new structure. Next, seeing that it is only by the Holy Ghost I can enter into the great reality of being a living stone, and thus of Christ's building, there is now another step, even that it is by the Holy Spirit that we are all baptised into one body. This is quite a different idea from being a living stone, and being builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. I am not insisting on the order of experience, but rather on the order of revelation.

We have now seen that each believer is a living stone, a component part of the structure that Christ builds, and is here on earth in the habitation of God through the Spirit, but growing unto a holy temple in the Lord ; that it is the Holy Spirit who leads us to know and

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enter on this new position ; and also that it is by the Holy Ghost we are united to one another, as well as to Christ the Head in heaven. As we comprehend the nature of our new being, the better shall we be able to understand how we are, at one and the same time, the house of God on earth, and the body of Christ. It is evident that up to 1 Corinthians i.-x. it is the house aspect, while in chapter xii. it is the body aspect. In the house aspect, it is clear that we have to do with men, and our testimony to them ; while as to the body, it is, as it were, exclusively the leading and rule of the Spirit of God, like a perfect musician, directing every note in harmony with the mind of the Lord, to the glory of God, and the welfare of the church, the body of Christ.

Now that we have some idea of the assembly's constitution, let us dwell a little on its privileges and responsibilities. The first and unchanging privilege is, that the Holy Ghost dwells in the house. He remains because it is the habitation of God through the

Spirit, so that every one sealed by the Spirit has ability or sensibility to be cognisant of this great fact. Every one walking in the Spirit knows that He dwells there. How great is the cheer to the heart of the one who knows that his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, that he is connected with an assembly where the self-same Spirit dwells. What an intercourse and support this must be! The individual temple and the collective temple of the Holy Spirit. He passes, as it were, from the private temple to the public one. How well one can see that if a saint is walking in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost in himself privately, he is necessarily led by Him in the assembly—the house of God. There can be no greater sense of power than is known in this interchange. Led of, and helped by the Spirit of God in my own circle, in my own individuality, I pass also into the assembly of God, where I find the same One leading and helping there, for Christ's interests in the whole church. The One dwelling

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in the assembly, in the circle of God's interests on the earth, is the One who rules and determines respecting all my own interests, and He it is, blessed be His name ! who makes known to me, in either circle, the mind and ways and heart of my Lord and Saviour. I grow in the knowledge of the Lord as He is to myself individually, and also as to His mind and ways in the assembly. But more than this, by the Holy Spirit I know my union with Christ the Head in heaven, and with all His own on earth. I am in the unity of the Spirit, and the mystery of the gospel.

Individually I enjoy association with Him where He is ; a member of His body, I learn His interest and love for the church which is His body. I know the Lord, not only privately for myself, as I have said, but I know Him in the great sphere of His own interests. It is truly great gain to know Him in my own circle ; how He cares and feels for me, but in the assembly I know Him in the circle of His heart's deepest and largest interests, at this present time.

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Thus it is the highest privilege to know Him in the assembly. It is to the assembly that His gifts are given for the perfecting of the saints. From Him, the ascended Head, come down the gifts qualified to effect this perfecting, "until 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." These gifts are in the assembly, and all are exercised in relation to it! even the evangelist works for the assembly. If I were not in the assembly I could not know this great privilege—that all the gifts from the Head are there, and for the benefit, nay, for the perfecting of the saints.

Evidently the Lord is revealed and made known in a fuller and larger way in the assembly, than He is to any one individually apart from the assembly. Indeed, the knowledge of the Lord to the individual, subserves to the profit of the assembly. The Spirit is given to every man to profit. It is very encouraging and edifying when I ap-

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prehend that I am in the assembly where the Lord, as Head of the church, calls out and qualifies persons to edify the saints ; and that though I may not have received a special gift, yet that I am where all the gifts are. The assembly is the pillar and base of the truth. Any truth, that there is, is found there. I speak now of the privilege of being in a place where the Lord unfolds all His mind for the benefit of His own, through vessels chosen by Himself. We see it very plainly in the Acts. How everything new was opened out in the assembly. And the light and knowledge given to the apostles, were developed or confirmed in the assembly, so that when the mystery was communicated to Paul, it was made known by writings even to the whole assembly : “ but now is made manifest, and by prophetic scriptures, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.” (Rom. xvi. 26.) It is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in

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the power of the Spirit. The assembly is the sphere where all light is concentrated. Just as the two disciples going to Emmaus, at once directed their steps to Jerusalem, where they were assured of the resurrection of Jesus.

Now with all these vast privileges, let us ascertain the nature of our responsibilities. My first and greatest responsibility on finding myself in the assembly, in the day of failure, is to be assured in my conscience by the word, that I am not in fellowship at the Lord's table with any one called a brother, who dishonours the name of the Lord ; because as met to His name, I cannot be true to what I profess, if I knowingly break bread with such an one. "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever." Our Lord's first entry as a servant into the temple was marked by this : "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." True it is, if everything were in order, this would not necessarily occur to one ; but when vessels to dishonour are suffered in the house of God, no one in the Spirit can

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be blind to them ; and for even conscience' sake they must be repudiated. If things had been preserved in divine order, the first responsibility in connection with the assembly would have been "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." We come together to worship, having fellowship one with another, because we are in the light. We are then properly in the holy places, now with a rent veil. This is our aspect toward our God and Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. But beside this, we are the royal priesthood, and we have "to shew forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light." The one is our aspect to man, edification and care for each other ; while in the other, what Christ is to God—the basis of all blessing, more especially engages us. These, I apprehend, are the two great responsibilities of the assembly walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

Where disorder occurs which is so

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grave as to affect the name of Christ, the responsibility of the assembly is plain enough, even to charge themselves individually with the sin that has been manifested, and then in solemn conclave, to clear themselves of the guilt which they have accepted as their own, by excommunicating the person who brought the guilt on them, and thus stopping the leaven. It is the duty of the pastors and overseers, in tender solicitude and care of souls, to check and stop leaven ; but when it is not judged and put an end to by all pastoral efforts to arouse the conscience, then the elders having conferred among themselves, are bound to bring the matter before the assembly, in order that they, accepting the guilt, may, in the presence and with the sanction of the Lord, put away from among them the guilty person. Many an evil would be stifled in the bud if there were more pastoral care and godly oversight. For when an evil has not gained mastery of the conscience, care and oversight may be used in stopping it. When

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the conscience is defiled, there is no hope of stopping it but by putting the person away, because there is nothing to act on. The Corinthians all round were not walking with a good conscience, hence the leaven was working. I cannot with a good conscience connive at high-handed unholiness. The conscience is often sooner defiled by bad conduct than by bad doctrine. I may not have spiritual light to see the bad doctrine, yet where bad doctrine is accepted by an assembly, there is no course for the godly in that company but to purge themselves from the vessels to dishonour. I may always hope to arouse the saints to moral evil, because the conscience must be dead indeed, when it is insensible to bad conduct. But when an assembly accepts bad doctrine—"gangrene"—there is really no conscience before God. They feed on ashes, a deceived heart has led them astray, there is no hope for that company; so much so that the godly have no option but to separate from them.

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BUT deeper depths lay before Him. That presence must be withdrawn from Him, when He who knew no sin had to be made sin for us. All other character of sorrow was distanced now. He was to be *alone*, as He never was before. This is what filled that dreadful cup, the last crucial test, that if it shewed out on the one hand what man was in sin, on the other, brought out the absolute perfection of man in obedience and devotedness. He who only knew divine love as infinitely the object of it, was now to know the forsaking of God—in His very perfection. He shrank from it, "Father; if it be possible let this cup pass from me." In presenting the sorrow before the Father in communion, it only made more intolerable the thought of passing

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out of that communion into the experience of being abandoned of God. Yet He gives Himself to the full accomplishment of the divine will—"Not my will but thine be done."

He had tasted what it was to be alone to the full—He came, and there was no man; He called, and there was none to answer; He looked for comforters, and found none—but it was ever with God before: now, He was to be alone and without Him.

No heart can enter into what that forsaking was to Him; He entered into and endured it that we might never. For Him it served only to bring out fresh aspects of His perfection, as He was never more perfectly the object of His Father's delight. From Gethsemane He turns away to face it: "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?"

The realisation of the total change of His position from this point, alone brings out what sin is. We know what that change was, as far as it can ever be known, by the expression of His sense

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of it in the cry : “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ”

But what unwavering confidence in God, even when forsaken ! “ *My God.* ” No cloud upon that, no hesitation in owning and confessing it, even when He has to add that He had forsaken Him. Nay, He vindicates God even in doing it, “ For thou art holy,” in the moment when He contrasts Himself with all that ever trusted in Him before and were delivered, He the only One whose trust was perfect and yet abandoned. What perfection ! Who can estimate it ?

We must pass on from what is beyond all thought, but that must linger in the memory of our hearts for ever, where all divine love was expressed to us in His drinking that dreadful cup, to some of the glorious results. He was—oh how infinitely !—*alone*, but accomplishing in it all that was needed to make good the whole glory of God in holiness and righteousness and majesty against sin, and in love to the sinner. So that there, where we find

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the only measure of what sin is, we find the work that has put it away for ever, and closed for faith the history and existence of the man that sinned. Thus God was glorified, and salvation is ours who believe in Him. But it is the character of that salvation, as satisfying the heart of Christ, and not the mere fact of it, that occupies us now. And this comes out as we see Him raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and now glorified in God, to be alone no longer in this His, for man, new place. The psalm prepares us for it. First, full, precious announcement of it through Mary of Magdala, as He forbids her attempt to renew her relations with Him as Messiah after the flesh, on the ground of far richer ones that He was about to introduce. "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father." In anticipation of that moment when He was to take His full counselled place as man in the glory of God, He sends her to the disciples with the revelation of it, "I ascend unto my Father and your

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Father, unto my God and your God.” All the place He was about to take, as man, with God and with the Father, He has won in divine righteousness for us.

Alone in the impenetrable darkness—He is no longer alone in the light into which He has entered; alone in the unfathomable sorrow, He is not alone in the joy. His first thought in coming out of the darkness and sorrow into the light and joy, to declare our association with Him in it, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.” For it is not only that in joy He sings: it was no new thing to Him to be in light and joy before the Father, and that too as man, though for a moment all had been totally eclipsed in darkness. But then He was alone. Now on the ground of redemption He enters into man’s place in a new way in which He can have us associated with Him: in the midst of the assembly He sings. The song suits us; His place is ours; in it He will

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never be alone again. Do we thus sing? How can we ever cease to sing? Alas! that our poor hearts should take up so feebly the note of such a redemption, leading into such consequences for us!

But when we examine more closely the character of the association into which we have been brought, in the light of the word, we find it is both individual and corporate; there is what is possessed and known now, and what lies yet before us.

John's writings do not carry us beyond what is individual in our association with Christ. But this is largely developed on the precious side of eternal life, the divine nature and relationship of children we have been brought into, to be displayed in us as a present thing, and carried on into the glory. In Paul the association is traced to the full height of Christ's position in the heavenly glory now, brought out as the fruit of God's eternal counsels, and presented in all its individual and corporate aspects, present

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and to come, save that with him eternal life is always the full state, yet future. The starting-point of all is the Son of man ascending up, where He was before indeed, but now as man on the ground of redemption so gloriously accomplished. "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." This is the more remarkable in John, as the ascension is not historically found there; and the general subject is the manifestation of eternal life, in Him as the revealer of the Father here on earth, and now in those who are His; not taking Him or us to heaven save in an exceptional way. But another thing was needed that this life should be possessed in its full christian character of known relationship, liberty, and power; namely, that the Holy Ghost should dwell in us. This great fact depended on the exaltation of Jesus in glory; "the Holy Ghost was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified." Thus, as, ever founded on the work of the cross, in which God had been so glorified, we have already in the Gospel

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of John the two great truths that constitute and characterise Christianity—*though not carrying us beyond the individual believer's place and state; namely, Jesus ascended and glorified, and, consequent upon this, the coming of the Holy Ghost to dwell in us.* Indeed, there is no such development in scripture of this last truth as in the Gospel of John, in the way of promise, so intimately and necessarily bound up as His presence in the believer is with the present enjoyment of eternal life. Thus, if we find in the Epistle that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son, God dwelling in us by His Spirit is the power of the manifestation of the essential traits of that life in love and obedience (1 John iii. 24, iv. 12), and the merest babe in that life possesses Him. (1 John ii. 27.)

Now let us return from these great principles to notice, in the light of them, what is connected with the first announcement of our association with the ascended Christ. For before He

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takes His full place, as such, it has pleased the wisdom of God to present Him to us on earth for forty days, after having accomplished all that entitled Him perfectly to man's place in glory according to the counsels of God. Surely it was to bring near to our eyes and hearts, in that risen Man, what was morally suited to the place—ever Himself perfectly so, as we have seen, but necessarily by His very perfection alone in it, until the corn of wheat fell into the ground and died. But here we are permitted to see in the risen One the manifestation of a new place and state for man, that we have part in—of the Son of God in power, past death and the judgment of God, and the power of Satan, of death to sin and life to God. Lest dazzled by the greatness and glory of the new position when possessed in Him in power by the Holy Ghost, we should fail to trace and become acquainted with the moral traits, condition, and perfection of the blessedness of it, before He enters into it, these are dis-

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played before us for a little moment in the risen Christ.

We behold the One that gave Himself for us, with adoring affections, and know that "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one ;" that all that He is we are now, "as he is so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) For this Epistle is but the moral continuation in us of that wonderful scene of John xx. 17-23. In keeping with the position in which the Lord was thus manifested, we see Him breathe on the disciples, and say, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." In figure this looks on to the gift of the Holy Ghost when Jesus should be glorified, till then it was in fact connected with life, as the power of it in its new condition, in Christ risen. He had come that they might have life ; this breathing was that they might have it more abundantly (John x. 10), have it in the risen Christ, a condition in which it never existed before, with an accession of power never before connected with it. Hence

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it is not "receive ye life," nor the "Holy Spirit," but "Holy Spirit," as the breath of the life in power of the risen Son. It was a transition state of things, man manifested morally fit for the full place of God's counsels, but not yet in it, not yet glorified, but already taking His place as head of a new spiritual race, in the power of the life in which He rose, the last Adam, a quickening Spirit. He is no longer alone—first character of our association with Him, the blessed one of the family of God, "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren; saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren." His Father our Father, His God our God.

But there is another. Through Paul, the full light of the glory in which He has now taken His place, falls upon our hearts—we look up and see Him in His full position, and learn that all that position is ours. The transition state of things of the forty days has passed away, but only that man in

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Christ may take His full place in glory, and send down the Holy Ghost to dwell in the believer, from which the Spirit, as the power of life, cannot now be separated, although the truths can be looked at separately. (Rom. viii. 1-13 ; 14, &c.) In Ephesians we find this place presented as the fruit of the eternal counsels of God : chapter ii. giving us the work in time that has so far accomplished them. From a scene of death, where all men were found alike by sin, and where Christ came for the glory of God and in love to the sinner, God has come in and quickened us together with Him, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Him. All the place of Christ, therefore, opens out before us in chapter i., and we are seen in Him holy and without blame, and in love before the eye and heart of God, and in relationship as sons, and this as the eternal thought of God about us—not one thing that Christ was before Him as man in the counsels of eternity that we are not in Him—the sons of

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men, with whom were His delights, now revealed and set in their place as such.

The words of Ephesians ii. lead us on into another element of this association, that gives a very intimate character to it. It is no longer merely as individuals we are thus blessed; we were "quickened *together* with Christ." This fully involves the union with Him in this wonderful position of all who are His, from Pentecost till He comes. From the common death in which we were found, we are looked at as quickened together by one mighty act of divine power, as out of the grave of Christ, raised together, and set in the whole position of Christ in the heavenlies, thus forming His body the church, the fulness of Him that fills all in all with the glory and power of redemption. It was a mystery of love and glory hid from all other ages, hid in God, but now revealed to us that we may know and enjoy this marvellous position of union with Christ.

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Nor is it merely what will be true of us when Christ takes His place in power as Head over all things, according to the counsels of Ephesians i. For in every other passage where the body is spoken of, it is the existing company on earth at any given moment since Pentecost, before that day. But, as if this were not enough, and lest we should fail to seize all the nearness and blessedness such a relationship to Christ involves, another aspect of it is given us in Ephesians v., where we find that His body is His spouse—the church He loved and gave Himself for, and still serves in that love, till love is satisfied in presenting it to Himself in glory. True, we await the day of the glorious espousals (Rev. xix.), but meanwhile, the Spirit is the power of our enjoyment of the relationship and of the production of the answering affections of the bride: “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.”

Surely, “this mystery is a great one.” But it is revealed that we may know the Church’s place in the heart

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of Christ, and walk here with the unutterably wonderful knowledge that with all saints we are united to Christ glorified at the right hand of God.

What depths of His heart that precious word, "It abideth alone," has disclosed to us ! Alone no longer now, nor ever again, as having the family of God identified with Him in life, nature, and relationship, set consciously and in power by the Holy Ghost in His own place in that life as the risen Man with the Father and God ; and I have dwelt much upon this because of its primary importance, establishing the soul in the unclouded light of our individual place and relationships. But the mystery of the Church's union with Him had to be added to all this to give us the full place of our association with Him in heavenly glory, according to the counsels of the heart of God. These both are present aspects of our association. There remains what is future. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied, but when and how ? "Father, I will that

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they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John xvii. 24.) What a thought that He has loved us for nothing short of that—to be His own companions in the everlasting glory! Nothing less than this will satisfy Him, and He comes—we know not the moment—to receive us thus to be with Himself. And when He appears we know we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Perfectly conformed to His image, He will be seen as the firstborn among many brethren; and displaying us in His glory, the glory that has been given Him (John xvii. 22, 23), the world will know that the Father sent the Son and loved us as He loved Him.

What love it is, past all our thought, that has chosen and sought and redeemed us for such present and eternal associations with Himself, revealed now that we may know our place in His heart. But with what proper effect, if

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it be not to lead us to seek practical nearness of heart to Him as a present thing? Shall He seek our company, and that for ever, and we not in some little and deepening measure care for above everything, and seek His?

May the effect of the marvellous place we have been brought into, and the love revealed in it, and known to our hearts by faith, be to make our life one of more simple realised nearness to the Lord, leading us to watch diligently against all that would practically dissociate us in the springs of it from Him. Thus only in the power of an ungrieved Spirit shall we enjoy now what is our eternal blessedness; till we see His face, and know no more to hinder the realisation of it for ever.

J. A. T.

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IF there were no moral distance between God and man there would be only one side to everything, and that would be God's side. But see-

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ing that sin, man's will, works in opposition to God, and that therefore His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways, there follows, to our sorrow, man's side to everything, as well as God's side. The unceasing intrusion of the carnal mind, man's will, even in the most true-hearted, is the cause of the difference in judgment which alienates the greatest friends.

It is a great help to every one desiring to have God's judgment about any matter to know that there is surely a rival one, man's judgment ; and that until the latter, which always addresses one's common sense, is rejected, there cannot be a clear apprehension of God's judgment.

Satan proposed to man another object beside God, and set him up as a rival to God ; he says to Eve, "ye shall be as gods." Eve beguiled by Satan not only rejects God's judgment but adopts one of her own, influenced by the advantages which she thought would accrue to herself. Man's judgment is ever of this character ;

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his own immediate advantage is the ideal of it, and natural sense at once adopts it. The great thing for us to apprehend or bear in mind is that the divergence of judgment arises from the difference of object. Every judgment savours either of the things of God or of the things of man. But continually there is such an admixture of the things of God, or connection with His name, that one is beguiled into self-consideration under the guise of seeking God's glory. We must subject our minds to scripture in order that every thing in them may be laid bare.

In Eve we learn how the principle of difference originated ; that principle works in every one of us. Conceal it as we may, our own advantage or exaltation is ever present to us ; so much so, that Paul, after being in the third heaven required a thorn in the flesh, lest he should be puffed up above measure. We must start with admitting that the principle which governed Eve is undying in us.

Now, see how it works in Cain and

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Abel at the beginning. The sense of distance from God may have been common to both. The mode of removing it betrayed the difference of judgment. On Cain's side the thought was, how he would commend himself to God; while on Abel's side it was, what God would require. Cain sought to do a right thing, and laboured for it as far as toil was concerned, far more than Abel. It must be borne in mind that as a rule, when God is avowedly the object, while oneself is really so, there is a great deal more actual toil and loss, than when it is simply for God. The right thing is the easiest to be done.

One habitually walking with God, and in the moment of great favour from Him, like Abraham, after receiving the sign of the righteousness which he had being yet uncircumcised can so think of himself as to overlook all God's purposes, and say, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" No measure of light or walk preserves from making ourselves an object unless God is simply before our hearts. One

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can hardly understand how Abraham could have ventured to commend Ishmael at such a moment, and yet it discloses to us how self-love will, as it were, never forget self.

Isaac, gifted with a blessing from God, essays to confer it on the wrong man ; his judgment was perverted because he did eat of his son's venison. It is sad to contemplate how one may be hindered in the service of the Lord by the influence of a favour.

Jacob in the height of his prosperity, on his return to Canaan, thinks for himself and not for God, and settles at Shalem. No progress, no revival in the truth preserves one from the tendency to seek one's own side instead of God's.

Moses, in the very act of smiting the rock, thinks of himself more than of God. It is very sad that a servant of God, in the exercise of His power in the greatest way, should think of himself rather than of God. One cannot but be sorry for Moses. He was tried and vexed by the continued

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unbelief of the people, and he was in a measure indignant, as we might say, for the Lord's sake, but it was not simply for the Lord, and when we fail in the highest service we always bring on ourselves the severest retribution. The sin of the priest was in degree greater than the sin of one of the common people; at least, a larger offering was required for it. The lesson to be learned in all these examples is the readiness of the flesh to intrude in the most sacred moments in order to obtain a place for itself; and it is thus that often our greatest services are marred by the effort in conjunction with them to obtain credit or distinction for ourselves.

No one ever stood out faithfully for the Lord, but the enemy has plotted against him, and has endeavoured, by either offence or flattery, to provoke him to think of himself, and thus to spoil the testimony. The more important the issue with regard to the testimony at any time, the greater the efforts of the devil to divert a

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faithful witness from his course. What an attempt there was to make our blessed Lord think of Himself by the chief priests, by Pilate, and by the one who struck Him on the face ! Beautiful to see how no personality could induce Him to swerve from His allegiance to God. Paul for a moment thought of himself when the High Priest ordered that he should be smitten on the mouth, but through grace he recovered himself, and fully owned that he had offended. Who does not in some way offend when he thinks of himself ? I have never known an instance when I have made myself prominent, socially even, without being grieved and humbled.

Seeing then that at no time are we safe from self-consideration, nay, that it is the unceasing object of the enemy to compromise and discredit the servant, even though he cannot hinder his work, let us ascertain how the truth, God's side, is hindered, and in a measure frustrated in this day by man's side.

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We get in Psalm lxxiii. a practical illustration of the way in which man's side takes the lead of God's side. The Psalmist looks at everything at first with relation to himself, and he is reduced almost to despair, until he goes into the sanctuary and sees God's side, and then he himself gets no place, but God becomes the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever. Elijah is only thinking of himself when he exclaims, "I only am left." There is no possibility of seeing God's side while man's side is in the ascendant. Hence the first step ever in learning and apprehending God's side touching anything, is the setting aside of man in absolute repudiation. The more distinctly the new ground, that which is of God, is presented to us, the more absolutely is man ignored.

Peter, to whom the greatest light had been imparted, so that he sees in the lowly Jesus the Son of God, a light entirely outside and apart from flesh and blood, in real natural affec-

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tion for the Lord, cannot bear to hear of His death, but rebuking Him says, "God be favourable to thee, Lord; this shall in no wise be unto thee." Surely if there ever was a natural sentiment to be commended, this was one. Peter's heart could not bear that the one so dear to them, and so great as He was, should die. He did not understand how necessary it was in the counsels of God that He should die; yet the Lord answers him in the severest way, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thy mind is not on the things that are of God, but on the things that are of men." Man must disappear. Old things must pass away, all must be of God; and no one can see God's side now unless he has accepted in faith, and maintains in practice that the man that was, has no place before God. Surely the treasure is in the earthen vessel that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. Hence a new creation comes in; the old man is

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ended in His death who bore its judgment. The old man has been crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be abolished. He who knew no sin, was made sin for us. If you would spare the life of man even in Christ, you savour of the things that be of man: We get here then a clue to the rise and progress of all the opposition to God's side, until it culminates in Laodicea, when the new creation is specially refused—the appalling characteristic of the closing days of the church on earth.

The more God is before the soul, the less can man, as he is naturally, be found there. In all times, before the death of Christ, when God appeared to a man he was made to feel that he had no standing in God's glory. God's glory repelled man. "Jesus Christ and him crucified," is the only way to arrive at the wisdom of God. There is a Man in the presence of God, but He was crucified for the man here, so that as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear

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the image of the heavenly. The first man is of the earth, earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven. The Corinthians, with all their spiritual gifts—"They came behind in no gift"—did not bear about in the body the dying of Jesus; did not see that the cross was the termination before God judicially of the man they indulged; consequently, socially, and publicly, in the church and in the world, they were, with all their gifts, no testimony to the Lord, and they had to be warned that they should stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one might receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

What had reduced the church at Corinth to such a state but simply that they savoured not of the things of God, but of the things of man? Hence the apostle sets forth to them in the end how a man in Christ was received in heaven, and there in the greatest intimacy was not sensible of any impediment from his own body.

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Why did the apostle stand in doubt of the Galatians? They had begun well. They had begun in the Spirit, but they were seeking to be made perfect in the flesh. They fail in a different way from the Corinthians. The Galatians were seeking perfection through the law; placing themselves under legal rule. The Corinthians indulged themselves. Each of them savoured of the things of men. Each of them had adopted man's side, and not God's.

It is amazing that men should be so presumptuous as to accept the truth that Christ died on our account here, that nothing less could turn away the wrath of God from us, and then in the face of this to assume and claim to live either according to the tastes and pleasures, or the righteousness of the man here for whom Christ died. The Christian in the truth can say, what was gain to me I count but loss . . . "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his

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sufferings." "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

But more, even when the saint had steered clear both of carnal indulgence and of legalism, there is still the most dangerous form in which he savours of the things of man. I refer to the form in which the flesh seeks a place in Colossians. There it is neither self-indulgence nor is it legalism, but it is the attempt after you have known liberty, free from the care of sin and death, to make the flesh religious—a contributor to the Christian. This is most specious ;—the side of man in its most insidious form because it so commends itself to human judgment—a form of carnality so ensnaring that it does not shew itself until a soul is in the assured blessing and liberty of the gospel, and then, with carnal effort it works man's side to the highest degree, unless God's side be clearly seen. It is

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most helpful to see that we cannot be clear of the Colossian snare unless we know the mystery of the church. If one obtains, the other must go. The mind and body are addressed and acknowledged. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col. ii. 8.)

The old man as to carnal lusts is not before the mind as in Galatians. Here the snare is from philosophy and vain deceit after the rudiments of the world. The secret design is to elevate the man, as it is said farther on "vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind," and this in conjunction with "Touch not, taste not, handle not;" restrictions though they be, yet they indicate the existence of the man to be restricted instead of seeing that it is in no wise after the rudiments of the world, but after Christ. If the rudiments are to be abrogated, surely there is no place for the development of the man of this

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world. It is only the true and positive maintenance of God's side, "the mystery in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," that can preserve the Christian from this last and greatest effort to retain the old self.

If Christ be in me—my life—He supplants the natural man. Hence it is said, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." And whatever we do now, we do in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord, giving thanks to God the Father by him."

According to the mystery, we are members of the body of Christ—now the exalted Man, "the heavenly;" and according to this calling, we are entirely a new order. We are according to God—that is, His side; and as we are true to it, we are in the testimony, that is, we express in walk and conversation here the Man of God's pleasure in the presence of the man who has come short of the glory of

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God. Why did "all that are in Asia" turn away from Paul, except that they could not bear the demand of being heavenly men—on God's side? They formed a side that would suit man. They did not renounce the work of Christ, and the benefits of the gospel, but they turned away from "the mystery of the gospel," as set forth and inculcated by the apostle Paul; and thus to this day, it is not wholly God's side, but a certain measure of the truth which will allow some place for the first man; and thus God's side is disregarded or declared untenable: man's measure of it is accepted and often only acceptable. God's side is now fully accomplished in our Lord Jesus Christ, the exalted Man in heaven, so that for us it is, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

DIVINE TESTIMONY

THE directions for the making and use of the silver trumpets, immediately follow those which relate either to the movement or resting of the camp of Israel, according as the cloud was taken up or tarried. Whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, then they journeyed ; and for whatever time it abode upon the tabernacle, then they abode in their tents and journeyed not. Further, "At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed ; they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses." (Num. ix. 23.) This is more than the eyes of the tribes of Israel being engaged with the movement or rest of the cloud. It was the direct communication of the mind of the Lord *by the hand of Moses*. In chapter vii. 89, Moses went into the tabernacle and heard the voice of One

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speaking to him from off the mercy-seat. This was His special privilege according to Exodus xxv. 22. "There I will meet with *thee*, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." Aaron could not thus approach. (Lev. xv. 2.) It was the special privilege of Moses, who thus became a type, so far as type could speak, of Christ as Apostle of our profession, and Son over God's house.

To have this special direction by words spoken from off the mercy-seat, was an unspeakable blessing. "He sheweth *his words* unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation." These communications flowed, at the moment we are considering, from this apostolic office of Moses, and great as was the favour of such a mode of the ministry of God's mind, it was further enhanced by the Lord's provision for the public utterance of His testimony by means of the trumpets

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of silver. Another has spoken of silver as that which represents God's immutableness in grace. It is that which lays the foundation, and brings out the topstone, and secures everything according to the holy nature of God, which loves to bless. It is a wilderness metal, and is not found in the structure of the temple, or in the heavenly Jerusalem. It is thus connected also with *the ways* of God in which He acts for His people's blessing. (Comp. Ps. xii. 6 ; Mal. iii. 3.) We are now speaking of the dispensational manner of these ways ; the silver trumpets were connected with them, in that they were the means of *publicly* communicating the mind of God by those who were in communion with it at the various times which called for their use—principally for the calling of assemblies and the journeying of the camp. Thus the communications given to Moses apostolically could be proclaimed to the furthest borders of the camp.

Who can estimate the blessing of those that keep His testimonies and

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seek Him with the whole heart? (Ps. cxix. 2.) Those testimonies we now have, both as to the communion of saints in the assembly, and as to the order to be observed in the house of God, in all its varied services during its sojourn in the wilderness. Apostles acting by direct commission from Christ have carried out His apostolic office, by which the church has received the communications of the mind of God and of the Father's grace and love, with all the needed directions for communion and walk. Public testimony, too, has been given, both by preaching and the written word—first, to make known the special revelation of the mind of God as to the saints, consequent on Christ having entered into the glory and given communications from thence, and secondly, that of which there was no counterpart in Israel's history—the flowing forth of God's grace in the gospel preached to every creature which is under heaven. Israel was a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. When the trumpets sounded for the

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movement of their hosts, Moses said, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee." Now, reconciliation is preached by the cross to enemies, for the enmity has been slain thereby. Public testimony as to the first is thus described by the apostle in Romans xvi. 25, 26—" *The preaching* [lit., the heralding] of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by *prophetic scriptures*, according to the *commandment* of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." Of this purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, Paul calls himself an appointed herald as well as an apostle. (2 Tim. i. 11.) He was also appointed herald and apostle of a salvation which was addressed to *all* men. (1 Tim. ii. 7.) Paul, as a pattern of the whole long-suffering of God, was thus the herald of a gospel which not only met the

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guilt of man, but brought with it the revelation of the eternal counsels of God, and of the Father's grace established in the glorified Man, the Son of God, at His right hand. Paul's apostleship and preaching of the gospel were from that glory. How he heralded it forth we learn from Romans xv. 19. "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God ; so that from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum I have fulfilled the gospel of Christ ;" and again, when before Cæsar's tribunal—"That by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear." Do we realise in this present time how this blessed gospel came forth from Christ in glory, from Himself, the Mercy-seat, where all the glory of God was and is seated, apostolically given to Paul, and by him the preaching fully made known, as well as communicated to us by the prophetic writings? Is it this gospel of the glory of the blessed God thus given and communicated, that commands our

fellowship, and that we preach as He gives grace ?

In 1 John i. 3, we see how these apostolic communications, by means of prophetic writings, are immediately made known to the saints at every period of the dispensation. "That which *we* have seen and heard declare *we* unto *you*"—the transmission of the testimony from the apostle to ourselves is direct. He is speaking of the fellowship with the Father and the Son, into which the saints are brought, with the apostles who had seen and heard. *They* had gazed upon His glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father. *They* had heard His words. The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, was unfolding God to *them* in this blessed character of Father. He spoke as from the Father, as from heaven, though He was on earth the sent One from the Father. We may note this word "sent" in John's gospel, it is the word from which "apostle" is derived. As the sent One He says, "I have given unto them the words

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which thou gavest me they have believed that thou didst send me." Eighteen hundred years and more, cannot obliterate this direct connection between the apostolic office in its deepest and fullest communications and the feeblest saint ; they are secured in that verse—" *We* declare unto *you*, that you may have fellowship with *us*."

For the public utterance as well as communication of the testimony, Christ ascended on high, gave gifts unto men. They are to continue—though the church as the responsible witness for Christ on earth has failed—until we all arrive at a perfect man at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Thus we can count on His faithfulness who gave them unto the end.

A further consideration claims our attention here, namely, the manner in which the proclamation of the testimony of God was to be rendered.

The silver trumpets were to be blown by the priests, that is, the proclamation was made by those who were in communion with His mind.

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And *we* are not to be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is, having the knowledge of it in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; for the Lord has a pathway for His people at all times, and His faithfulness abides. So, in the history of Israel, moments of distress were contemplated as well as days of gladness and solemnity, but the utterance of God's thoughts as to His people, by those who were in His secret, was to accompany both, with the result that God would remember. What strength it must give to the servant of God at all times, to know that the testimony he renders is God's, and will be for a memorial before Him. He will vindicate its utterance, and He who has the key of David can open the door for it when all is in weakness.

As to the public body, it may have to be said as of Israel, "My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me, so I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in *their own* counsels." (Ps.

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lxxxi. 11, 12.) Paul foretells it in 2 Timothy iv. 3. "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." He knew well what the testimony was, in all the heights and depths of unfathomable love and riches of grace which it revealed, as well as the glory from which it came, and to which it led; and it engaged all the interests of his soul, both in its communication and utterance. Hence he charges Timothy, in view of public failure and of his own departure—"Preach the word;" and again, "Do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry."

How blessed to ponder the immutability of the ways of grace of Him who never left Himself without a witness! But for this grace, the lamp of testimony would have gone out in the house of God in the days of Eli; then, sovereign grace "ordained a lamp for mine anointed" in Zion, and made the

horn of David to bud *there*. All is secured in Christ. He is *ever* within the sanctuary. As the true Aaron, He orders the pure candlestick from the evening *unto the morning* before the Lord continually. (Lev. xxiv. 3.) Note, it is *Aaron* here, and thus the lamp of testimony is *maintained* by Him, for the priestly family had failed (chap. x.), yet in its original form, the service of the candlestick was given to Aaron and his sons. (Ex. xxvii. 21.) How little we estimate the privilege of keeping the charge of the Lord, in any of the services which are under the hand of Christ our Lord! If *we* slight it, He maintains everything as the faithful and true Witness.

The testimony is given by Christ from within as Apostle, not in the character of servant, but in the glory of His Person as Son over the house of God. Even on earth He spoke as from within—"Whatsoever I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." As High Priest, He orders the lamp during the night from evening to

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morning, and sets the twelve loaves, perfect ministry and sustainment in man, in order before the Lord. All is in His hands. He can revive His work at any moment, and in the midst of the years make known ; and who that has entered into the mind of the Lord, but must unfeignedly bless Him if He gives us to be of the testimony, which in the immutability of His grace He causes to be heralded. For a testimony is the testifying, at any moment, to what His mind is, as revealed in His word. We may well crave the anointed ear, that we may both receive and be of the testimony which He gives at the close. He maintains it. It is not in us to do so, though the church is set as the pillar and ground of the truth ; and if any whom He makes of His testimony at any moment are unfaithful, He who orders the pure candlestick will maintain the light by means of others. Surely His testimony is, "I come quickly," and collaterally with this, what the assembly is in His eyes who is coming

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for us to present it to Himself, even as the lamp which He lights shews the beauty of the candlestick of beaten work, according to the pattern *seen in the mount*. Further, and connected therewith, is the testimony of the Father's house, and our portion there in the Father's love as sons—brought there as the righteousness of God in Him.

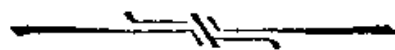
We may ask two closing questions. First, as to any who blow the trumpets—Do we desire by them to cause the saints to be in communication with the thoughts of Him who has entered into glory and is coming again—testimonies from Himself, and not from our own theories and systems of teaching? Secondly, as to our reception of them as saints. Can we say, "*Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart*"? (Ps. cxix. 111.)

I need scarcely say that, while speaking of the testimony given at the close, I fully recognise the whole scope of the revelation of God, I understand

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that what has been called "Present Testimony" amongst us, is the action of the Holy Ghost in applying the truths, communicated by Him in "prophetic writings," according to the *present* need of the church, and for the Lord's glory in it.

T. H. R.



"TAKE BOW AND ARROWS."

2 KINGS XIII. 15.

THE object in drawing attention to this narrative is found in the fact which many of us doubtless deplore, of how often occasions are given to us when the Lord might be glorified and His people greatly served, but owing to our state of heart, we are either unable to take advantage of them at all, or only partially, and not according to the full mind of the Lord by the Spirit.

The great point which strikes us in reading this account of the visit of the king of Israel to the dying prophet, is the unreadiness of king Joash for a

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moment of special blessing, special privilege, an occasion which faith could have used for the advantage of God's people, and thereby for God's glory: It was well that the king should feel what a loss Elisha's death would be, and when the activities of God's grace and power through him were remembered, this would of course be specially so.

With the man of God, visions of God's deliverances were bright before his soul (and this is ever a marked feature in a man of God at the present day as then).

Elisha knew that evil should not always triumph, that God would accomplish His own plans and fulfil His word of promise. The tears fall from the eyes of Joash as he looks at the prophet, as sorrow too filled the hearts of the disciples, the eleven who accompanied with the blessed Lord as He says, “ But because I have said these things, sorrow hath filled your heart.” There was no one to say, “ Whither goest thou ? ” His blessed heart was full of the gain it would be to them.

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So also with the Ephesian elders in Acts xx., when they knew that they would not see the apostle's face again as they accompanied him to the ship ; we have it recorded, "They all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him ; sorrowing *most* of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more." Paul had spoken of what would come in after his decease, and the provision to meet it, in "God and the word of his grace ;" but they were more affected by the knowledge that this would be the last time they would see him, than by what he had told them should come in after he was taken away.

When Joash sees the prophet in his dying state, he exclaims, "O, my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," language which Elisha himself used as Elijah was taken to heaven in a chariot and horses of fire.

But what a difference we see in the state, in the condition of the two men. They use the same language, the very

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self-same words, but with the one faith had set his heart in motion, he is lifted above the mere elevation of nature ; as his shoulders are preparing for the mantle of Elijah, his soul is fired with a holy zeal to fill if possible his master's place on earth.

He had travelled with him from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, from Jericho to Jordan ; but great as these places were in their mystic history, and with that which might operate on an Israelite's heart, they will not detain him who has a settled purpose not to be parted from God's man for that day.

Elijah had said, “ Tarry here,” &c. ; Elisha's answer is, “ As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave *thee*.” The sons of the prophets intrude both at Bethel and Jericho with their question, “ Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day ? ” His reply forbids any other to be ventured ; *they* could not enter into the thoughts that filled Elisha's soul, as he replies, “ Yea, I

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know it, hold ye your peace." To have made such his confidants at such a moment, would have been unsuitable, he could not disclose his heart to them, they felt not as he what a loss would be occasioned by Elijah's removal, no visions of the glory of God's grace were before their souls.

Thus Elisha was tested, which brought out his moral fitness for the mantle of his master. Elijah's "Tarry here," or the "Knowest thou," of the sons of the prophets, will not make him relinquish his heart's object, that which he was set upon, hard though it might be to obtain.

On the other hand, king Joash was quite unready for such a moment which was given him to use, unready for such advantages ; and the man of God is disappointed, his soul is angered, at the unbelief and the sloth of the king.

We may mark, that in the case of Elisha, things are cast in his path which might deter him or divide his attention. In the case of the king, it is otherwise, he is encouraged and

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aided, so that his faith, if such there be, should be strengthened to seek great things from the God of Israel.

The bow and arrows are brought, the window is opened *eastward*, according to the direction of the prophet.

The hand of the king is upon the bow, but more than this, Elisha's hand is upon the king's hand; that hand that had carried God's blessing with it to the king and people alike.

Alas! with the king there seemed to be hardly any faith, little correspondence, little sympathy with that dying man's feelings, as the man of God touched his hand. But the arrow speeds from the bow, and it is interpreted—how significantly!—“And he said, the arrow of the Lord's deliverance;” it was saying, God will not cease to care for His people; *I* may pass off the scene, *God* remains, and will be with you for good; and he likewise adds, “The arrow of deliverance from Syria,” &c.

What inspiring words, how they should have kindled in the breast of Joash feelings of praise and worship!

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how his heart should thus have been rendered strong, and his hands nerved, so that he might have exclaimed in the language of David, "Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight."

But instead of this, when the arrows are taken independently of the prophet, and the word given for the king to shoot, three times only does he do so; this raises the wrath of the man of God.

This is very fine. Our hearts may well ponder this feeling of the man of God—namely, his being thus grieved at the want of energy manifested, the little faith in the God of Israel.

Surely there was that which would have completely lifted the king up, and given him to know what God could do for His people. The sequel, upon which I do not enter, shews that only three victories the king had, according to the number of times he had shot the arrows. To us a lesson is taught, of the necessity of being in communion with the Lord, and under the guidance of His Spirit, to profit by

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that which He may give us through His chosen servants, as also to use the circumstances of our passage through the wilderness and the history of the church of God, as occasions for the exercise of faith in what God delights to be and to do for His people. E. R.



THE GREATEST SERVICE.

THE greatest service is to stand openly for God when the opposition is at its height. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." To stand for God when there is no one to help, when every one is opposing, manifests my dependence and confidence in God, as well as that I am so led by His Spirit in true devotedness, that the more I see Him assailed, and His name dishonoured, the more I must lose sight of every one and stand for Him. I know also in whom I have believed, and I can endure "as seeing

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him who is invisible." The more I see Him slighted by His own, the more I feel that I must stand for Him, even if it be single-handed.

It is remarkable in the history of God's servants how this trait appears very soon in their course. Enoch seems to have been in a very lonely separate path, and doubtless it was a great day for him as a servant, when he pronounced: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment against all; and to convict all the ungodly of them of all their works of ungodliness, which they have wrought ungodlily, and of all the hard (things) which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Noah adopted a very singular and isolated path when he first began to build the ark, and he had reached his greatest service, when he, with his family, stepped into the ark; he only for God in the whole earth. When a servant is well supported by his fellows, it is easy for him to be bold and decided; but when he is left, not only

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all alone, but every one opposed to him, to stand forth and declare for God, requires the devotedness of a true heart, and this is the greatest service, for it is so appropriate.

Joseph not only learnt in his own personal circumstances when entirely alone and abandoned, how through God he was enabled to stand with unfaltering integrity, but alone and unsupported, to declare the mind of God before the king of Egypt. His devotedness had an opportunity for its expression.

Still more is this exemplified in Moses. Early indeed, in the ark of bulrushes, a lonely suffering life was foreshadowed, and yet what a day it was, "when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not." Alone he acted for God, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a

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season." Devotedness always does the greatest service. In the beginning of his course he learned the characteristic of the greatest service, namely, to stand for God, alone and unsupported, in the face of universal opposition. It is a great thing for the man of God when he really has known the solitude of light, which he only enters on, when entirely excluded from intercourse with man, and then sees and becomes acquainted with the Son of God. There is never a full and true sense of the vanity of all human things, and the greatness of the personal company of our Lord Jesus Christ, until this solitude has been known. And assuredly the greatest service is, when one is able to count on God, and act for Him, as thus known to oneself, in the teeth of all opposition; expulsion from man is not the same thing as opposition from him, but the one prepares us for the other.

What a time it was for Moses when he faced the whole of Israel, when he came down from the mount and saw

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them wholly given to idolatry. He thought of no one but God; he feared not the wrath of man; he stood for God in a new unprecedented way, without any direction, but simply from the devotedness of his heart. When he had stood singly and openly for the Lord, then he could afford to stand in the gate of the camp, and say, "Who is on the LORD'S side?"

No one can apprehend the greatness of such a moment, if he has never experienced it. What a moment when one man can confront his fellows, every one so dear to him, in unperturbed decision, his heart swayed and sustained by the power of God! God's glory is before him, and he so realises His presence, though invisible, that man, however visible and active, is as nothing.

It is an unequalled moment when one has the Lord so fully and exclusively before one, that one thinks only for Him, and acts in this devotedness. Then one learns, "Thou hast girded me with strength unto the

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battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.”

I desire to convey that it is at such a moment one is made personally acquainted with the sufficiency of God, when one's own incompetence is patent. I suppose to every one of us there is given an opportunity of rendering the greatest service, even to declare in some new and distinct way, one's purpose to follow the Lord fully. Thus Caleb separates himself from his fellow-labourers, or explorers in the land, and in presence of the unbelieving congregation, declares, “If God delight in us, he will surely bring us in.” Surely it is most pleasing to the Lord, the devotedness which declares for Him when all are turning away from Him, and to arise as a light in the darkness. A very small light shews in a time of darkness, but it is very singular, and yet it is but simple faithfulness in a time of unfaithfulness.

It is interesting and helpful to note that the opportunity for this devotedness cannot be foreseen, as if one

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could be ready for it. Suddenly and unexpectedly the opportunity offers; like an eclipse the sun goes down at noon-day. It is then that the real purpose of the heart towards God is disclosed. The opportunity is given on purpose to call it forth. The true heart is never unprepared.

This was very marked in the woman in Mark xiv. The state of things at the moment at once evoked the desire of her heart to honour the Lord. She does not appear to have consulted anyone. Her act is the ready offspring of her devoted heart. In whatever degree she had heard or noticed the prevailing opposition to her Lord, we cannot say, but as the dark storm was rising, she, out of her own heart, without any suggestion, draws from her little store the best thing she has, and fearlessly and happily anoints Him with the precious ointment before all present. Most seasonable indeed! Singularly pleasing to Him! There is at least one who will expend her best on Him at the very moment when the hour of

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darkness was setting in. Hence, "wherever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this also that this woman hath done, shall be told for a memorial of her."

It is not the opportunity which should be before one's mind, but the cultivation of that devotedness to the Lord, which would be able in a very distinct way to act for Him, when the opportunity occurred. Love delights in the opportunity to express its devotedness. You will always find that where it is, there is neither an imitation of what others have done, nor is there looking for countenance or support from others, but a course of action quite original and singular, yet eminently effective, not only in answering to the heart's devotion, but for the glory of the Lord, and the service of His people generally.

When Daniel knew that the writing was signed (Dan. vi. 10), his true heart adopted a course that eminently testified of his devotedness to God and to His interests. Thus, in the present

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day, when many feel the darkness is thickening, and the truth has fallen in the streets, there is an opportunity for the devoted heart in a very distinct and peculiar way (conspicuous to all whom it may interest) to shew its devotedness to the Lord.

When David visited his brethren at his father's request, he had not in any way foreseen that he would have to confront Goliath—the terror of his people—but he was equal for the occasion, not because he was prepared for it, but because he so counted on God, that he could act for Him, and His people in the emergency.

There is ever the tendency to blame others, or bemoan the state of things, when one is not devoted enough oneself to strike a blow or make a surrender which will fill the house with the odour of the service.

The more I see failure all around me, and deficiency of true godly action, the more it is my special care and duty, like a Caleb or a Daniel, to set forth what devotedness only could set forth

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at such a time. There is something peculiarly lovely about devotedness. It has a way of its own, and, however unique, it is the most excellent service. The greatest service is evidently the one most needed at the time. The falling away of others does not dishearten the one truly devoted. Gideon's great army is reduced from 32,000 to 300, but he is as valiant as ever; he does not spend his time lamenting over the great defection, but he says, "As I do, so shall ye do." "The greatest among you is he that serveth," not he who can give a withering description of our falling away, and the errors which have crept in, and the laxity which is tolerated; but who, while seeing that everything is most deplorable, can come in, in some new distinct way, and act for the Lord, which, like Samuel's prayer (1 Sam. vii.), will obtain from the Lord a marked intervention and relief from the enemy.

We see how our blessed Lord, in a perfect way, always rendered the

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greatest service (because the most necessary) at every crisis ; and simply because of His devotedness to God as a man. He will bear hunger because of His devotedness. He alone can make a scourge of small cords and drive all the mercenary company out of the temple. In the darkest hour when He said, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness," He then, pre-eminently, effects the greatest service. In devotedness both to God and to man, He goes into the death of judgment !

We learn from His ways that though He could see the utter ruin and failure around, He does not content Himself with seeing things in their desperate condition. No ! He is the very one who uses the present misery as an opportunity, in His devotedness, to do the most effective service. I have never known complainers really devoted. No one would like to see a defect in his brother if he really felt that he was to remove it.

We never find Paul more confident in God, and more vigorous in main-

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taining the truth, than he is in 2 Timothy, when the defection of saints, and the difficult times of the last days are before him. Is a man to see his house on fire, but instead of using every effort to save some of it (at such a crisis the measure of his ability would come out), to fold his arms casting the blame on some one, or reprehending the mode by which some have checked the flames?

To him who is most interested, and hence most devoted, there is now a wonderful opportunity of rendering the greatest service. May each of us, while wide awake to all the error and laxity around us, not try to excuse ourselves, as not having caused it, but may the very desperation of things as they appear to us, be only a fresh incentive and opportunity for us to come forth in true devotedness to the Lord, to do the greatest service, which will redound to His glory and to the blessing of His people.

FAITH AMID THE RUINS.

(Read Nehemiah viii.)

THE chapter which stands at the head of this paper, furnishes a profoundly interesting study for the Christian, and one eminently calculated to cheer and strengthen the heart in the midst of the most discouraging circumstances. It illustrates, in a very striking way, a principle of the very last possible importance: namely, that whatever may be the actual condition of the professed people of God, at any given time, it is the privilege of the individual believer, or of any number of believers—feeling and owning the failure and ruin—to enjoy as deep communion and as elevated worship as ever was known in the very brightest days of the dispensation. Nay more, it shews us a company of people, in the midst of ruin and desolation, in the face of contempt and ridicule, keeping a feast which had never been observed since the days of Joshua.

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Let us look a little closely at the edifying narrative. "And all the people gathered themselves together *as one man* into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses, *which the Lord had commanded to Israel*. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and *all that could hear with understanding*, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate, from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law." (Vers. 1-3.)

Here, then, is a scene worthy of our deepest attention. The whole congregation of returned captives assemble themselves to hear the precious word of God. True, they were but a poor feeble remnant, very different indeed from the great congregation that clustered round Solomon at the dedi-

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cation of the temple. But the word of God was the same as ever. No change there. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." The divine standard is immutable and imperishable. Its voice was as clear and distinct in the days of Ezra as in those of Solomon, David, Joshua, or Moses. "The word of the Lord endureth for ever." Circumstances cannot touch it. "The changes and chances of this mortal life" cannot affect it. It stands like a rock amid the ocean, against which the waves dash themselves in impotency, and leave it in its own divine and eternal stability.

Now there is something, at once interesting and edifying, in seeing a feeble and despised company of people, under such depressing circumstances, assemble to hear the precious word of God. The occasion is full of the deepest interest and instruction, and claims the serious attention of every member of the church of God.

"And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people : (for he was

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above all the people ;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God : and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands : and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord, with their faces to the ground. . . . So they read in the book, in the law of God, *distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.*”—A fine model for all who stand up to read the scriptures in public.

And now mark the blessed effect of the distinct and intelligible reading of the word of God. “And Nehemiah, which is the governor, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God : mourn not, nor weep. *For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.*”

It told upon their hearts, in living power, and prepared them morally for the comfort and consolation which grace had in store for them. They were

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broken down under the mighty action of the word of God, and were then in a right condition of soul to taste the sweetness of divine mercy, and enjoy some of the very highest privileges of the dispensation. True, the nation was smashed to pieces; but God's word was not smashed. It spoke, in its own heavenly accents, and with its own divine authority. It is, like its Author, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." It was the same, amid the ruins of Jerusalem, in the days of Ezra, as amid the glories of the days of Solomon, or the victories of Joshua.

No doubt, the circumstances of the people were very different; but that only made the word of God more precious. Their very weakness, their depression, their desolation, the heaps of ruins that surrounded them, the many and various evidences of departed glory which met their view on all hands—all these things, together with the sense of their own fallen and humiliating condition, would just tend to enhance the value of "The book

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the law of God." It is in the days of darkness and confusion we prove the real value of divine revelation, because then it is we want clear light and infallible guidance. It is when conflicting opinions fall on the ear, we learn the unspeakable value of competent authority.

Thus it was with the weeping remnant in the days of Ezra. The word of God was powerful and precious. It broke their hearts and bound them up. It wounded and made them whole. It was everything to them. Harken to the words of comfort and consolation that fell on their opened and attentive ears. "Then he said to them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry, for *the joy of the Lord is your strength*. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace for the day is holy, neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way to eat and to drink, and to send portions,

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and to make great mirth, *because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.*" (Vers. 10-12.)

Here lay the secret of their joy and gladness. "They understood the words." These had gone right home to their hearts. They were words of divine power—words of comfort and consolation—words suited to their need, coming direct from the living God to their poor broken hearts, filling them to overflowing and causing them to think lovingly of those for whom nothing was prepared and send them portions.

How lovely is all this! How full of encouragement for all who find themselves in the midst of the ruins of the professing church! True, it was very different from the great congregation that assembled to witness the dedication of Solomon's temple; very different from the victorious host that clustered round Joshua the son of Nun, on the banks of the Jordan. There certainly was not the same display of power and glory; but there was a most precious

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display of divine grace. To find a poor, despised, feeble remnant filled to overflowing with the joy of the Lord, tells a wonderful tale as to the eternal stability of the grace of God. We may well question if deeper joy was ever known in the brightest days of the nation's history. There was no pretension, no assumption, no effort to be anything, no setting themselves up in any way. They were before God in the truth and reality of their condition, and He was with them in the truth and reality of His most precious grace. They took their true place, even the place of confession and self-judgment, and there God could meet them and bless them according to the love of His heart, and according to the stability of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There was no limit to their blessing, when they bowed before God in true repentance.

This is a point of immense moral importance. It demands the serious attention of the whole church of God. I am persuaded we all need to take it

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to heart. I question if we realise, as we ought, the true condition of things—the utter ruin of the professing church and our individual participation therein. I believe if we fully entered into the real state of the whole church of God, as it appears under the eye of Christ, we should present a very different aspect, and have a very different tale to tell. If we felt and owned our true condition—if we were before our God, in brokenness of spirit and lowliness of mind, confessing our failures and unfaithfulness, individually and collectively, I believe He would graciously grant us showers of blessing, and use us for the spread of His precious truth and the blessing of His beloved people. May we not gather this from the study of our subject? I am assured we may. Let us ponder the following record: “And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even *to understand the words of the law.* And they

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found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month. And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth into the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, *as it is written*. So the people went forth and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths : *for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun, unto that day, had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness.* Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, *he read in the book of the law of God.* And they kept the feast seven days ;

and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly according to the manner." (Vers. 13-18.)

Can aught be more lovely or more encouraging than this? Here we have what we may call the magnificent result of simple-hearted, lowly obedience. There was no pretension, no assumption, no setting up to be anything, no effort to be a testimony. They simply acted on the authority of the law of Jehovah; and the result was the celebration of the feast of tabernacles, which had never been heard of since the days of Joshua. It is most striking to find this feeble, weeping remnant connected with the brilliant days of Joshua. In Hezekiah's day, we read that there had not been such a passover kept since the days of Solomon. Then, in Josiah's day, when the nation was on the eve of complete dissolution, we read that there had not been such a passover kept since the days of Samuel the prophet. The lower we descend in the nation's history, the richer was the display of grace, and the brighter the

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flashes of faith. Thus it was reserved for the broken-hearted and despised remnant in Ezra's days, to observe a solemnity which had lain in oblivion from the days of Joshua the son of Nun.

C. H. M.



“TO OFFER” AND “TO OFFER UP.”

Is there not a difference between the two Greek words *ἀναφέρω* and *προσφέρω*, which is not always kept distinct? There was the bringing of an offering or gift, and there was the offering up of that gift or offering as a sacrifice. The two actions are distinct: the latter would be a priestly act, whereas the former would be the act of any one presenting a gift or offering.

Let us see how the New Testament bears out this distinction. The word *ἀναφέρω* clearly conveys the thought of ascending in the following:

Matt. xvii. 1	}	Jesus <i>bringeth up</i> Peter,
Mark ix. 2		
	}	James and John into an high mountain.

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Luke xxiv. 51. Jesus was *carried up* into heaven.

All the other occurrences of the word refer to sacrifices, and in the Authorised Version the word ‘up’ is added, except in two places :

Heb. vii. 27. The high priest *offers up* sacrifices.

27. Jesus *offered up* Himself.

xiii. 15. “*Let us offer* [up] the sacrifice of praise.”

Jas. ii. 21. “When he had *offered* [up] Isaac.”

1 Pet. ii. 5. “*To offer up* spiritual sacrifices.”

Would not Hebrews xiii. 15 and James ii. 21 be rather improved by the word ‘up’ being added ? We do not simply offer or present our praises, but we offer them up, knowing that they are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, according to 1 Peter ii. 5. Abraham also did not simply present Isaac, but in purpose he offered him up as a sacrifice, receiving him back from death in a figure. (Heb. xi. 19.) We shall see that προσφέρω is also used

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of the offering of Isaac by Abraham. There are two passages besides the above, in which the sense is 'to bear,' or 'bear away' (which the lexicons give also as the signification of the word):

Heb. ix. 28. "Christ was once offered *to bear* the sins of many."

1 Pet. ii. 24. "His own self *bare* our sins."

If we now turn to the other word (*προσφέρω*) we find it is a bringing *to*, or presenting. Thus in Matthew ii. 11, the wise men *presented* unto Jesus gifts; and in many places it is translated *brought*. In other passages 'offer' is used, where there is no thought of a sacrifice: as in Luke xxiii. 36, they *offered* our Lord vinegar; and in Acts viii. 18, Simon *offered* the apostles money.

Then in the Epistle to the Hebrews there are a number of places where it refers to the bringing of gifts and sacrifices, and the question is, will it always bear the signification of the presentation of the sacrifices, or the presentation of the blood within the tabernacle, rather than of offering up? The principal are—

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Heb. ix. 7. “Blood, which he *offered* for himself.”

14. Christ “*offered* himself without spot to God.”

25. “Nor yet that he *should offer* himself often.”

28. “Christ was once *offered* to bear the sins of many.”

x. 12. “After he *had offered* one sacrifice for sins.”

xi. 4. “By faith Abel *offered* unto God.”

17. “Abraham *offered* up Isaac offered up his only begotten son.”

The last two are the only passages where the Authorised Version has added the word ‘up.’ Both things are true of Abraham : he gave up, or presented his son, and, as we have seen, he also offered him up as a sacrifice. Who can say what passed through the mind of Abraham in his long journey with his son until “the third day,” when he offered him up ?

If we turn to the Septuagint, we

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find the same two words used of the same offering—one being the act of the persons who brought the offering, and the other the act of the priest. Thus in Leviticus ii. 14, 16, if any one would *offer* (προσφέρω) a sacrifice of first fruits . . . the priest should *offer up* (ἀναφέρω) the memorial of it. Again, Leviticus iii. 9, 11. One shall *bring* (or offer, προσφέρω) of the peace-offering, a burnt sacrifice to the Lord . . . the priest shall *offer up* (ἀναφέρω) these on the altar.

Now if the above distinction is true—though one word may seem to run into the other—let us contemplate how our blessed Lord presented Himself as a sacrifice without spot to God—as in the garden of Gethsemane; but to accomplish redemption there must be the actual offering up of the sacrifice; and thus we have in Hebrews vii. 27: “this he did once when he offered up himself,” being in this act both priest and victim. Notice also, that in Hebrews ix. 28, *both* words occur in the same sentence: “Christ was once *offered* to bear the sins of many.”—M.

SEPARATION : ITS SCOPE AND ITS RESULTS.

IN a world of evil, every godly soul admits that there must be separation, though there is much difference of opinion as to the extent or measure of it.

We shall be unable to apprehend the extent of true separation unless we see that it is not our sense about things, but as they are to God. True separation is severing oneself from everything that is not for God. The word is used ten times in the New Testament, as expressing the most distinct departure from one order of things for another. Hence it is the word used for *severing* the wicked from the just, and for a shepherd *dividing* his sheep from the goats ; the separation is most absolute in its character. I am severed from one line of things to be connected with a line morally and intelligently different.

The separation, therefore, is determined or defined by the position with relation to God to which I am called. I can never apprehend the measure or

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scope of the separation until I comprehend my calling—my relation to God. Hence we shall find that the separation in a former dispensation would not be the measure of the separation in the present one ; and here many are led astray. They accept and practise a separation which was enjoined on those in a less near relation to God than we are. This, I trust, we shall understand better further on.

Abraham was the first called to definite separation. Plainly Noah in the ark presented a sample of a people wholly separate to God. Abram is told to separate himself from three circles ; his country, his kindred, and his father's house : "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." Here we have the first and cardinal principles of all separation. No separation can be less than this. It becomes stricter or more exacting as our relation to God becomes closer. According to this call, a Christian cannot be a politician, nor mixed up in

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family interests, nor personal consequence. If we study the history of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we shall see that their sorrows and reverses were almost always to be attributed to their departure from this separation. Abraham jealously preserved Isaac from family association, and yet Isaac afterwards approved of Jacob finding a home from which he himself was carefully separated. Thus we see that laxity in separation is ever a mark of moral declension.

Now when we come to Israel under the law, we find a separation of a very different order ; and yet one much severer and more exacting. Israel were God's redeemed people, in figure brought nigh to God, and given Canaan by God ; so they were God's people in God's land, and hence, the separation which characterised Abraham who was called out of the world, did not describe the separation enjoined on them, among whom God dwelt. We must bear in mind, when we speak of separation from the world, that the

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separation enjoined on Abraham must in principle for ever continue. But another order of separation is incumbent when we are God's people, and He dwells in our midst. (Lev. xx. 25, 26.) For the congregation generally, there was separation from three orders of uncleanness. As to food—"The grossness which swallows down things as they are, or the lack of quiet firmness, rendered unclean. An animal, to be clean, must be that which at the same time chews the cud and divides the hoof. Of birds, the carnivorous night birds, and those which cannot be tamed are forbidden; creeping things also, whatever grovelled and trailed itself on the earth. In general, there was to be in their eating the discernment of what was clean."

Secondly, "We have the judgment of God fallen on that which would have been, for unfallen man, joy and blessing. The birth of a man, connected now with sin, renders unclean; that of a woman, in whom was the transgression, being deceived still more so."

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Thirdly, Leprosy is sin, acting in the flesh. Thus then as becoming the congregation of God, there was a threefold separation. In food—what you take in ; weakness, leading into sin ; and thirdly, the activity of sin in the flesh.

When we comprehend the measure of this separation, we shall begin to apprehend the nature of the separateness to which we are called. Now, as I have said, I do not see that we can consider that the separation enjoined on Abraham is abrogated because we have accepted the separation proper to the congregation of God. I see that Abraham's separation was from the world, while the separation of the congregation is that which is due to, and required by, the presence of God dwelling among them.

There is also the separation enjoined on the priests (Lev. xxi.), which is in addition to the other two we have referred to, because all saints are now priests, and it is evident that the nearer we come to God, and the higher our privileges, the more we are called

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to be separate from everything unsuited to our high calling before Him.

There are therefore three measures of separation incumbent on every saint now, as we have seen. But before we try to apply them practically to ourselves, I must add that there is another measure which is only exceptional; I refer now to the Nazarite. The separation of the Nazarite was freely and voluntarily adopted, but being adopted, it was irrevocably binding. A man devoted wholly to the Lord's service would necessarily be of this exceptional character, and he would be required to practise a separation to which other saints are not called. Blessed indeed to be a Nazarite, but to be one I must pursue a course of self-surrender which would be incompatible with a family man, with the natural and righteous claims of his family resting on him.

The words, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing," embrace the first three measures

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of separation which we have considered, and which combined, form the extent of our separation.

Let us now see what would be the result of this separation, and seek to arrive at the manner of life which would be produced thereby.

It must be admitted at the start, that we are not of this world. There is no idea of godly separation unless one refuses to be connected with the government of this world, as being a citizen of it, and thus interested and responsible for its order. Many have seen this, and have come out from their country, though not so many from the influence of their kindred, and still fewer from their father's house, or that personal self-consequence which adheres to each of us as our very life. This form I may call external separation, one visible to all men, like Moses "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." In fact, the man who does not reach up to external separation, will make but

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little advance in the other two. It is important to bear in mind, that while many accept separation from their country, they are hindered and baulked in a life of dependence on God as heavenly pilgrims, because they are not free from kindred influences, and all ideas of personal consequence. It may be said, Am I to close my door to my relations? Certainly not; but scripture plainly says, Get thee out from thy kindred, which evidently is more than "my house," which verily is a part of myself. The intent of scripture is that I am to free myself of them, I am to get out from them. Again, it may be asked here, Am I not to visit them? Certainly, as a servant of Christ, ready to render any service. If you really have got out of them, you are building again the things which you destroyed, if you seek to renew or retain your old place there. Let every one be honest with himself, and he will see that in keeping up with his kindred, he is fostering the carnal tendencies of his nature, and though

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separate from his country he is not separate from himself. On the other hand, when one walks up to the measure of this separation, he finds that in this life of dependence on God he is richly blessed. God is his shield and his exceeding great reward. As we see with Abraham, a man may be very wealthy in this separation, but his wealth does not give him any position among men. And when he serves, as we see in Abraham, his wealth and comforts are all surrendered, and he goes forth by night with his servants, depending on God for support and success ; so that wealth in itself is not a hindrance to this separation, nor to service. But we see that wealth is not to obtain position for us here, nor to be a means of ministering to our personal consequence. All this externally, while internally, before God, wealth inherited or acquired, in no way helps us, but on the contrary, because that as by it we could the more minister to our tastes, we hold it in fear and holy watchfulness, lest it might

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hinder our congregational and priestly separation. In fact, I believe the truly separate find more responsibility than pleasure in their wealth, and seek rather to retire from what they can afford, or are used to, on the one hand, that they might be less conspicuous, and on the other, that they may have more to give away, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation for the time to come.

When the external separation is maintained, then the internal separation is easy and acceptable ; when our food is clean—nothing listened to nor appropriated, which has not the two divine marks of well-considered thought and a firmly indicated purpose ; secondly the conscience on guard, because of the weakness of one's nature ; and thirdly, we fear the flesh, and its readiness to burst forth into activity ; and thus we grow in priestly separation where all is of God.

The more we enter into this full separation and taste the good of it, the better we shall comprehend it and

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approve of it. If with Israel, a man was unclean ("If a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcase of an unclean beast, or a carcase of unclean cattle, or the carcase of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him ; he also shall be unclean, and be guilty." Lev. v. 2) and guilty, though it be hidden from him, because he touched the carcase of an unclean beast ; how constantly must we suffer, and be hindered in spirit, because of worldly association. The hindrance and consequent depression, we shall only know, the better we know the joy of being in His presence. (See Num. xix. 16.) "Whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days." What a life of caution should ours be ! May our hearts be bowed before the Lord, because we are so little sensitive of defilement ! We lose in two ways from lack of separation. First, that we are not in our true priestly place in the presence of God,

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ministering to Him, and secondly, that we are not a distinct and peculiar people, declared in the very strictness of our separation unto God.

There is no one who receives such marked and special favour from God as the separate one. There is an open manifestation of His favour. "I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 18.) But if so great be the open manifestation of His pleasure in the separate one, how much more in private, in His own presence, does He reward those who seek Him out! "The pure in heart shall see God." "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." How blessed God's reason for not hiding from Abraham "that 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, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Gen. xviii. 19.)

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“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Is. lxvii. 15.) There can be no doubt of the acceptableness of the separate one to the blessed God, and concurrent with this, great gain to oneself individually ; there can be no more effectual way of testifying to the truth, than by separation from everything not of God. To one’s own family and acquaintance on every side, nothing tells like separation from their worldly habits and dress. If my habits and dress correspond with the world’s, am I not governed by the world ? Whereas, in reality, I should be as coming from God, a pattern in everything, even in my dress, to every one in the world. You may, as has often been said, denounce everything with which you are connected to any degree, but it is only when you separate from it that

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your testimony is clear and conclusive. And in a day of religious laxity, I can never persuade any one of his loss because of his laxity, if I in any way connive at it or continue in it. When Isaac left Gerar, then the king followed him, and declared that God was with him. There is no way that I can declare so effectually my disapproval of a man's course, as to have no fellowship with him, though I am not to account him as an enemy, but to admonish him as a brother. Corinth is an example to us, how the most highly gifted can be blinded morally in every circle (in the assembly, and in the world) because of association with the world, in the confidence of the flesh--relying on their own wisdom.

The form of Satanic opposition of which we are *most* warned, is that of Balaam, where invitation to join them is the bait which conceals the deadly hook. The man who has overcome the Pharaoh aspect of Satan's opposition, and the Amalek aspect, may fall under the Balaam aspect of it. One is flattered

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and deceived by the desire expressed to have one's company. The more distinct our refusal of it, the more we “avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away,” the more are we in the power, and under the control of divine wisdom.



“THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY.”

- “ FROM the golden fields of India,
Laden with a costly freight,
From the distant land of Sheba,
Came a queen, in royal state.
- “ Eagerly she gazeth onward
Toward the city of the king,
Earnestly she presses forward,
Homage, with her gifts, to bring.
- “ Solomon, in all his splendour,
Shines at length before her eyes,
And her heart with glad surrender
Ceases Sheba's gems to prize.
- “ Spices lose their sweetest fragrance,
Precious stones of lustrous hue
Pale before the light and radiance
Of the scene disclosed to view.
- “ ‘ Face to face mine eyes behold thee
Seated on thy golden throne ;
Ah! the half hath not been told me
Of thy worth, for thou alone

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- “ ‘ Far exceedest all in beauty,
Glory, majesty, and state ;
Would it were my bounden duty
At thy feet to stand and wait.
- “ ‘ There to hear thy words of wisdom,
There to serve thee, if I might,
Happy slave in such a kingdom,
Bondage changed to pure delight.
- “ ‘ Nevermore thy fame shall slumber
Live for ever, blessed king !
Had I harps in countless number,
To thy praise I'd tune each string.’

* * * * *

- “ Lord, this story wakes the yearning
To adore Thee face to face ;
Sets mine inmost soul a-burning
To behold Thy power and grace.
- “ Knowledge of transcendent order,
Aspirations pure and true,
Here on earth, scarce touch the border
Of Thy robe of heavenly blue.
- “ Angels worship at Thy pleasure,
Saints in light Thy praise repeat ;
Homage, though sublime in measure,
Only rises to Thy feet.
- “ Ah ! throughout the wide creation,
Fairest treasures, rich with fame,
In the dust must yield oblation
To the glory of Thy name.”

From the French.

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EXODUS.

CHAPTER I.

THE children of Israel grow and multiply in Egypt, in spite of oppression by a king that knew not Joseph : they are reduced to hard bondage. Pharaoh's attempt to destroy the male children frustrated by the godliness of the midwives.

CHAPTER II.

Moses is born, and hid by the faith of his parents : when cast out he is providentially preserved and brought up by Pharaoh's daughter. Come to years, he refuses to be called her son, and identifies himself with the afflicted people of God. He avenges one that suffered wrong, but his brethren refuse his intervention, and he forsook Egypt. A stranger in Midian, he receives Zipporah to wife, to whom is born Gershom. The time of the promise

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draws nigh, and God looks upon and hears the groaning of the oppressed people.

CHAPTER III.

After forty years at the backside of the desert, God reveals Himself to Moses in the bush that burned and was not consumed, as come down to deliver them : the rejected Moses to be the deliverer. He was to announce that the I AM, whose name for ever was the Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, had sent him to bring them up out of the affliction of Egypt unto Canaan.

CHAPTER IV.

Signs to accredit Moses thus sent : the rod, that having assumed the form of the serpent, is taken again into Moses' hand as the rod of divine power (vers. 17, 20) ; his hand becomes leprous and is healed ; the water becomes blood. Moses thinks of himself and raises difficulties ; the Lord associates Aaron with him, who should

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come out to meet him in the wilderness. But all that is of the flesh must be subjected to the sentence of death in the Lord's servant : Moses' son had not been circumcised till now.

CHAPTER V.

The Lord's demand that Pharaoh should let His people go to hold a feast to Him in the wilderness. Pharaoh's contemptuous refusal, and increased oppression of the people.

CHAPTER VI.

The revelation to Moses of the new name of JEHOVAH, by which God enters into relationship with the people, and of the full purpose of God—(1), to bring them out from the bondage of Egypt ; (2), to take them to Himself ; and (3), to bring them into the land.

Moses and Aaron's place in the genealogy, as of the tribe of Levi, and family of Kohath.

CHAPTER VII.

The purpose of the Lord as to

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Pharaoh and Egypt. Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh: the magicians perform the signs, and Pharaoh's heart is hardened. (Ver. 13, Heb.) The plague (1) of the waters turned into blood.

CHAPTER VIII.

The plague (2) of frogs: Pharaoh promises to let them go, but on respite hardens his heart. The plague (3) of lice out of the dust: the magicians unable to produce life warn him that it is the finger of God. The plague (4) of flies, and division (Heb. "redemption") between Israel and the Egyptians: Pharaoh's attempt at compromise — they should sacrifice in Egypt.

CHAPTER IX.

The plague (5) of murrain upon beasts; of (6) blains upon man and beast, the magicians included. The Lord hardens Pharaoh's heart. He is warned of the purpose of the Lord in raising him up to shew His power and make His name known in all the earth. The plague (7) of hail, and destruction

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of all that was left in the field regardless of the word of the Lord—Goshen excepted.

CHAPTER X.

Pharaoh's renewed attempts at compromise ; would let the men go, but seeks to retain his hold on them by wives and little ones. The plague (8) of locusts, that eat up all that the hail left, and (9) of three days' darkness that might be felt. He would let them go, but hold their flocks and herds : Moses' decision that not a hoof should be left behind.

CHAPTER XI.

The warning of the last plague (10).

CHAPTER XII.

God executes judgment on Egypt, taking the firstborn as representative of the people. The blood of the lamb, presented to the eye of God outside their houses, shuts out God as judge, securing Israel ; inside, they feed in peace on the flesh of the lamb roast

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with fire, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, all in readiness to leave Egypt. Pharaoh thrusts them out: they spoil the Egyptians.

The ordinance of the passover—not a bone of it should be broken: no uncircumcised person to eat of it.

CHAPTER XIII.

The sanctification to Jehovah of the firstborn of man and beast in Israel; the firstborn males of beasts to be sacrificed to Him, of children to be redeemed.

No leaven to be eaten or seen with them for the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread—memorial of their deliverance from the house of bondage.

God leads the people by the round-about way of the wilderness, as unfit so soon to be tested by war: the bones of Joseph are carried with them: Jehovah goes before to lead them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

CHAPTER XIV.

Pharaoh and his host pursue Israel,

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and overtake them encamping by the Red Sea. The people's unbelief would have again preferred to have been let alone to serve the Egyptians. God manifests Himself as their Deliverer; they had but to stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah. At the lifting up of Moses's rod the waters are divided, and Israel find their deliverance in that which was the total destruction of the enemy's power: they see the Egyptians, who had essayed to follow them, dead on the sea shore, and believe Jehovah.

CHAPTER XV.

The Song of redemption. They celebrate, first, the glorious power of Jehovah in their deliverance (ver. 12); secondly, He had brought them to Himself (ver. 13); thirdly, He would bring them in and plant them in the mountain of His inheritance; with the refrain of Miriam and the women—Jehovah hath triumphed gloriously.

Redemption leads into the wilderness. They find no water, and are

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proved at the bitter waters of Marah: there is a tree, that being cast in, makes them sweet. Obedience is the principle of blessing under Jehovah's government. At Elim there are wells and palm trees.

CHAPTER XVI.

They soon forget His works, and murmur against Jehovah. He answers in grace, and brought quails in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full: the manna, "bread of heaven," fell upon the dew—their food till they reached Canaan. In connexion with the manna (John vi. 31–63), the rest of Sabbath for the people is instituted. A pot of manna is laid up before Jehovah.

CHAPTER XVII.

They tempt the Lord at Massah and Meribah, when there was no water. Still in grace, from the smitten rock the waters ran in the dry places like a river: then there is conflict—Amalek opposes. While Moses' hand with the rod of God is upheld by Aaron and

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Hur, Israel under Joshua prevails. The altar of Jehovah nissi records the oath of Jehovah for war with Amalek, until his final destruction.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Moses is joined by his wife and sons : Jethro, his father-in-law, rejoices in all Jehovah's goodness to Israel, and confesses Him as above all gods : he takes sacrifices for God, and the elders of Israel eat with him before God. At Jethro's counsel Moses appoints subordinate rulers and judges over Israel.

CHAPTER XIX.

Sinai is reached. The covenant of the law ; faithfulness to which is proposed to, and accepted by the people, as the condition of their relationship with Jehovah. The preparation of the people. Bounds set about the mount that it might not be approached. Jehovah came down upon it in fire, and there was darkness and tempest and the voice of a trumpet ; and Moses and the people trembled.

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CHAPTER XX.

The law is given, that requires righteousness as the condition of life, from man that is a sinner and without strength to perform it, God remaining unrevealed. (Ver. 21.) In the first four commandments is summed up man's duty to God: the sabbath, having been instituted (chap. xvi.), in connection with Him who is the bread of life (the only way to the rest of God), is now put on the legal ground of works done as God's were in creation. The last six give his duty towards his neighbour.

The people entreat that the word should not be spoken to them any more thus directly, and Moses takes the place of mediator.

A way of access is opened by an altar of earth, wherever Jehovah should record His name. But man's *work* in nature that would only pollute, and his *order* of steps to go up to it only to expose his nakedness, are alike forbidden.

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

THE question has been asked lately, What is the unity of the Spirit which we are exhorted to keep (Eph. iv.), and what relation has it to "the one body"? Before endeavouring to gather up from the Word that which will furnish us with a reply to this question, it will be well to see how far the use of certain phrases, current among us, but not to be found in scripture, tends to obscure any truth we may be considering. I refer, as in connection with our subject, to the term oneness of the body, an expression very commonly employed, but one the application of which is very uncertain, as might indeed be expected for the reason stated, namely, that it is not used in the word. Some would make it signify the same thing as "the one body," while others use it as an equivalent for the "unity of the Spirit," and hence it is not surprising that confusion of thought should be produced,

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and the mind of the Spirit missed, when sought to be reached or communicated by adopting it.

Now if we are willing to submit to have our thoughts formed by those expressions which the Spirit of God uses, and no other, it is wonderful how difficulties disappear which no amount of argument or reasoning will serve to clear up.

The word of God uses the term "one body" to express that unity which the Spirit produces when, as it is said, "by one Spirit we have been all baptised into one body." The articulation of the members of the body, one with the other, and with the Head, is the result of His operation and is therefore *perfect*, is effected *once for all*, and so can never be annulled by any power from without or by any default of the members themselves. It is produced and preserved by divine power, and its maintenance in its integrity is consequently in no sense or degree committed to, or dependent upon, the responsibility of those who compose it ;

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“for as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.” Such a unity consequently establishes for each member the same eternal security which is involved in the Head.

But not only have we all been baptised “by one Spirit into one body,” but it is added, “and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” Here we see that the body, so formed, is *animated* and *energised* as well as formed by the Spirit ; and it is upon His unhindered operation in this character that the preservation of the *harmony* of each with the Head (and as a consequence one with the other) depends. This, I believe, is what is expressed in Ephesians iv. by “the unity of the Spirit,” and with this our responsibility is connected, for we are exhorted to endeavour to keep this “unity in the bond of peace.” This may be, and, alas ! is, often disturbed by our failure to act in communion with the Head ; the completeness of the body, never.

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It is evident, if this be so, that the "unity of the Spirit" and "the one body," are not convertible terms, since the latter refers simply to an accomplished fact ; while the former involves, in addition, a certain moral element, upon the *keeping* of which depends the maintenance of the unity.

J. G. H.

"ABIDE IN ME," THE POWER
FOR FRUIT-BEARING.

JOHN XV.

Two things are seen in the Lord : "Life" and "Fruit." They were ever in Him where (here on earth) death and sterility, through sin, lay over everything. But in all the work of laying the foundation, in all the work of atonement, which was the bringing in of life, the Lord Jesus was alone ; but that being done, He connects us with Himself in the bringing forth of fruit

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to God. This shews the perfection of His work.

Israel, in Psalm lxxx., was the vine brought out of Egypt, and planted to bear fruit for God. Here we see redemption was the necessary preliminary for fruit, as it is now. If one is not a Christian there can be no fruit. As to Israel, we know what was the end, for it is told us by Himself, who, walking on earth, sought, during those three years, the fruit—but found none. “ Nothing but leaves,” for the husbandmen said among themselves, “ this is the heir, come let us kill him and let us seize on his inheritance,” and this they did.

But though Israel was a fruitless vine, Jesus on earth was bringing to God all the desired precious fruits, and from Him, as Man, every one was good in its season ! “ This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased,” testified of this. Moreover, His own words declared it also : “ I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.” No longer Israel was the fruit-bearer,

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He takes this place Himself. It was all over as to fruit from Israel nationally, and the Gentiles never had been the vine ; but in grace He connects all the disciples with Himself (not with Israel) as fruitful branches.

The only proof of life in John xv. is this *fruit*, it is the only proof of a living connection with Him. A man may make a profession of being Christ's and of being livingly united to Him. The test of this profession would be *fruit*. (Ver. 5.) Every child of God bears fruit now to God : it is his proper normal condition. It is not here the *quantity* of fruit that is in question, but whether there is any fruit at all as the proof of discipleship. (Ver. 8.) The Father, who is the Husbandman, takes away (as Judas) "every branch that beareth *not* fruit." The husbandman only nourishes and cherishes the fruit-bearing branches, and as the Father cared for Him on earth, so now He cares for them. Wonderful thought for us !

The only power for fruit is *abiding*

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in Christ. Two things, always ever in perfection in Him, will therefore mark a Christian, as abiding in Christ : first, *dependence* (see Ps. xvi., and the record of the Lord's life, as contained in the Gospels, to trace Him thus as a man on earth) ; second, *obedience* (see Philippians ii. and Psalm xxii. for this). Dependence turns to God in everything ; and obedience follows His mind and will, as expressed by His word, and this at *whatever cost*. Such is what abiding in Him means.

“ Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall.” This is what Christ ever was and *is* to God, and it is what Christians are as Christ's, and as abiding in Him, God sees Christ in *them* (see 2 Cor. ii. 15), and in that way fruit is not occasional but continuous. May the Spirit exercise us aright as to this, that it may be continuous with us.

It is very encouraging to see that all the desire of the Father, as the Husbandman, is to aid the fruitful branches

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to produce "*more fruit.*" All the purging is to this end, and no trial can approach the child of God but there is this distinct object which God has in allowing it.

In chapter xiv. He had spoken of another Comforter to abide with them for ever. The Holy Ghost being come is the forerunner of the fruit in chapter xv. He is the "well," already referred to in Genesis xlix. 22, and John iv., v. As Christ is always one with the Spirit—the Well; so the branch, drawing its supply from Christ, gets the power for fruit-bearing. And it is the Holy Spirit in the Christian, that will lead him (if subject) into the two things which so characterised the life of the Lord as a man: namely, "*dependence*" and "*obedience*" in the daily path on earth, these being the proofs of our abiding in Christ. (John xv. 5.)

H. C. A.



THE CHURCH AT THE CLOSE.

It is both interesting and helpful to know what the church will be at the close—its condition when the Lord comes. There is much to distress and to discourage the servant, if his eye rest on the state of the assembly, as it presents itself to the eye of man. But if I know that the saints will assuredly answer to the Lord's heart when He comes, I am not only encouraged but stimulated to be in that condition now which will be at the close, and which I am, the nearer in heart I am to the close.

First, let us learn from scripture the character of the close of every testimony.

It appears to me that each was marked in a threefold way. The testimony was expressed most emphatically. There was very little to arrest man, but there was singular devotedness to God.

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Jacob is the close of the call to Abraham. At his close, he, a feeble old man—nothing in the eyes of man—leaning on his staff, worships God; and he blesses Joseph's sons, while he declares that he has no tie to the earth. "And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem." (Gen. xlviii. 7.) Here at this close, the great characteristics of the call are expressed in the most distinct way. There is truly little for man to see, but where the enemy had been most successful he is now most worsted. Jacob whose whole course was characterised by selfishness, is now unselfish; he worships God and blesses man. It is very cheering to see at the close the pleasure of the Lord prospering more than ever; the enemy utterly confounded while the heart ascends to God in true homage, and turns to man to bless him. It would be an immense

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gain to us were we to believe assuredly that this is the course and ordering of God for us at this present time. Surely, if we find at the weakest moment—at the close of each testimony—that it is the will of God that the same characteristics of the testimony which marked the beginning should be maintained in special lustre at the close, we can truly reckon on His grace to help us to the brightness of the close wherever we are.

Let us look at 1 Samuel vii. Samuel is the last of the judges. That period of testimony now closes. Samuel in a very marked way corroborates what I have advanced. He makes no appearance before man as Samson and others had done. His power is in prayer, absolute dependence on God, the distinctive trait of that period, the one which had been so grievously surrendered is dominant now. “And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord.” (Ver. 5.) The Lord gets His true place, and then the enemy is not only discomfited, but “the hand of the Lord

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was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel." Ebenezer records, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

Thus we find that two things ever mark the close, the Lord getting His true place, and the enemy silenced; while as a third, man, the instrument, makes no appearance. It is plain that wherever God is held in His true place the enemy must be in abeyance. It is not merely that he is resisted; the great value of resisting the devil is that he flees from us. It is of deep importance that we should see that, if the Lord is rightly before our hearts, the enemy is overcome. Many, like king Saul, can attack Amalek and do good battle, but they are found wanting if Agag, the real power of the enemy, survive. There may have been the most sweeping excision of the vile and refuse, all that offends against good morals and natural sensibility; but the power of the enemy is unbroken—Agag still lives—and then, as in king Saul's case, the Lord has not been truly honoured. It is a very simple proposi-

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tion. When the Lord is in His place, the enemy is baffled; of course he rages, but our part is to stand, "and having done all to stand." The man of God need not occupy himself with the enemy, but he may rest assured that if the Lord is rightly in His place, the enemy is confounded; it is not that he disappears altogether, but he is at bay. The point of interest to us is that the heart—true to the Lord when the declension is general (that is, when the professing people, as in Israel in one day, and in Christendom now, is marked with indifference or self-approbation)—finds that it is according to God's established order to restore His people to the enjoyment of their relation to Him when He is simply before us: "She shall sing there as in the days of her youth."

Look at Simeon and Anna in the temple, Simeon with the child in his arms is set free from natural or Jewish prepossession. The Lord is in His true place, and everything else gives way; he can depart—Anna remains, but so

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earnest for the Lord, that unhinderedly she speaks of Him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. It is most cheering to the heart to see that the Lord does not leave Himself without witness. If in creation, how much more in the things of Christ. Thus Mary Magdalene was the bright close to the Lord's time on earth. She was not one to attract or to make an impression on men, but the Lord had His place fully in her heart, and hence all obstacles, and all the obstructions that the enemy could interpose were overcome, and she finds what each of us finds—"she shall bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace her;" and thus blessed, she becomes a channel of blessing to the disciples. The way of God ever remains the same: "But cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day. For the Lord hath driven out before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day." (Josh. xxiii. 8, 9.) The darker the day and the more

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violent the enemy, the greater the deliverance and the prosperity if the Lord be the absolute Object of our hearts—a great encouragement, blessed be His name !

Let us now look at the church at the close. There are, I might say, four aspects in which its history as the church militant closes. Its aspect to Christ, which, of course, is the greatest, is described in Revelation xxii. 17. Its aspect on the earth, as set forth in the four last churches. (Rev. ii. and iii.) Its aspect as to the ministry of the word, as set forth in 2 Timothy ; and, lastly, its aspect as set forth of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew xxv. We will begin with the last.

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them : but the wise took oil in their vessels with their

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lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a great cry made, Behold, the bridegroom ! go ye out to meet him." (Matt. xxv. 1-6.) The kingdom of heaven is the rule of God on the earth in the absence of the king, and the similitude under which it is described here refers to Christendom ; but referring to the beginning of its history, where the great mark was that the virgins took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. Subsequently they all slumbered and slept ; thus it was in the dark ages ; and finally, before the close, a cry was heard in the darkest hour, at midnight, " Go ye out to meet him." This is the last phase of the kingdom of heaven in its relation to the Lord. The kingdom of heaven, as described in Matthew xiii., remains the same. The mustard tree is the same as ever before men, and the church, the treasure in the field, as much as ever so ; but there is, in addition, a new phase of the professing people. There has been a cry :

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“Behold, the bridegroom!” and there is a renewing of the testimony visible to all, a general awakening in Christendom to the coming of the Lord. The wise, the real — had oil in their vessels, and go forth to meet Him. It is here individual responsibility. This is the aspect of the kingdom with reference to the Lord, but publicly manifested up to the close.

Next, the ministry of the word to the close. This is set forth in 2 Timothy, especially in the last two chapters, though the exhortations to Timothy in the first two chapters, were given in view of the difficult times in the last two, concurrently with Paul’s own isolated suffering position at the moment. The servant is to insist on the truth to the end. “Thou hast fully known my doctrine.” He is to make full proof of his ministry, “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

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shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.) The greater the turning away from the truth, the more diligently must the servant preserve it. He has to confront the enemy who attempts to obtain in a natural way what the man of God sets forth as "all of God ;" against him are arrayed those who are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth." The truth is the object of the attack. Moses persisted until the enemy was confounded. It is not enough to stand on guard, or skirmish with the foe, as king Saul with Amalek, but the servant must, like Moses, go on until the enemy is defeated, and God vindicated ; and this will surely happen when there is faithfulness. "But they shall proceed no further : for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was." (2 Tim. iii. 9.)

Thirdly : the aspect in the house of God on the earth. There are four

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assemblies out of the seven in Revelation ii. and iii. which run down to the close. Thyatira represents Romanism ; Sardis, Protestantism ; Philadelphia, the recovery of the truth ; and Laodicea, the boastful humanising of everything divine, emanating possibly out of Sardis ; when the truth is not fully sought after, there is an attempt to supply its place with man's acquisitions, leaving Christ, "the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God " outside. All those who are led to maintain the truth (doubtless restored when the cry was made) are opposed by them who say that they are Jews. That is, that those who assume to have an hereditary position here as God's people, are the great hinderers to the truth. But the word of encouragement is, "Behold, I come quickly : hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Now the effort of the enemy will be not to deprive us of the mere fundamental truths, but of the crown—the finish of all. This is his aim ; he must be over-

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come in his aim, no lesser victory will avail. The coming of the Lord quickly is full cheer for the heart on the one hand, and on the other, the complete defeat of the enemy follows, and then the rewards shall be in keeping with the zeal and purpose of heart and labour here.

Lastly: the aspect of the church as it is to Christ Himself. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.) Jesus has announced Himself as "the bright and morning star." He had been announced as the morning Star to Thyatira, but in addition to that He is now "bright"—nearer at hand. He is greeted by the Spirit and the bride with "Come." The Spirit has no interest here but His, and necessarily supports everything He proposes, and He remains on the earth until the church is taken away. But not only does the Spirit say "Come," but those whose heart

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towards Him is that of the bride, say "Come." Absorbing affection to Himself is their one, simple characteristic. They have no hindrances—their affection to the Bridegroom has secured for them complete dominion over every obstacle: they love the Lord. These saints (for surely a unit could not be the bride, though a unit might have the affection of the bride) are in full concert with the Holy Ghost still on the earth, and thus master of the position, answer to the heart and purpose of the Lord. The ministry of the word is effectual here, and from these saints it is ministered to all—"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." They hold fast that they have, and no man takes their crown. They, blessed be God, are here ready and waiting for their Lord in full response to His heart. He, blessed for ever, will be greeted by the saints, ready and waiting for Him. Characteristically the Eve will be here.

Of course, all the saints will be caught up to meet Him, the sleeping as well as

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the waking ; but I believe there will be, according to this passage, those on the earth who have in the depth of their hearts invited Him to come. May each of us be found more like them now, and not deceived nor hindered by the enemy : so as to content ourselves in a day like this with isolation and inactivity.

 FRAGMENT.

THE place of blessing is the place of judgment.

It depends upon the soul's real apprehension of the truth God gives us, and a small bit of truth possessed in the soul is worth ten thousand times an immense quantity of truth which is not possessed. It is not the amount, it is the truth we really have got hold of in our souls. We do not go and talk about it, and say, "I have got this, and I have got that," but we live in the blessed quiet possession of it ; and if we do not, it is that we have not got it in possession. P. A. H.

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EXODUS.

CHAPTER XXI.

ORDINANCES IN VIEW OF THEIR ENTERING INTO THE LAND. The Hebrew servant : to be free the seventh year, but, if given a wife by his master, *the wife and children to be the master's ;* or, if for love of master, wife, and children, he refuses to go out free, his ear to be bored through (compare Ps. xl. 6 ; Isa. l. 5) in token that he becomes a servant for ever. As to the taking of life and injury—life for life, eye for eye, &c.

CHAPTER XXII.

As to theft or damage, and restitution, &c. : the witch and idolater to be destroyed : warning against the oppression of the stranger, widow, or orphan, or Jehovah's poor, by way of usury or pledge. Of respect towards judge and

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ruler ; of Jehovah's rights to the first-fruits : as holy men to Jehovah.

CHAPTER XXIII.

As to slander and false witness ; against partiality or bribery to pervert judgment. The land to lie fallow every seventh year. The three general feasts of the year—of unleavened bread, first-fruits, and ingathering, at which all the men were to appear before Jehovah. The angel of Jehovah should go before them to keep them in the way and bring them into the land : in subjection to him, for Jehovah's name was in him, He would be against their enemies and cut off the Canaanites. Their idols to be utterly overthrown : serving Jehovah their God, He would bless their supplies and none should be sick or barren ; the Canaanites would be driven out gradually before the increase of Israel : no covenant to be made with them lest they should lead Israel to sin against Jehovah.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The covenant is inaugurated with

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blood—the penalty of death on disobedience. Moses and Aaron and the elders of Israel go up and see the God of Israel manifested in glory. Moses alone draws near where the cloud of Jehovah's glory abode on Sinai, and was in the mount forty days.

CHAPTER XXV.

The pattern of things in the heavens, for the sanctuary and its vessels where Jehovah would dwell among His people, the place of His throne. (Ezek. xliii. 7.) First: the parts in which He more immediately manifested Himself; the ark of shittim-wood overlaid with pure gold, with the golden mercy-seat above it (Rom. iii. 25), and covering cherubim with faces towards it, and the law within (Ps. xl. 8): the table of shew-bread of the same materials: the golden candlestick, with its seven lamps to give light over against it. (Rev. iv. 5 ; v. 6.)

CHAPTER XXVI.

The structure of the tabernacle itself: ten curtains for the tabernacle of

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fine-twined linen, blue, purple, and scarlet, with cherubim of artistic work, with their loops of blue, and clasps of gold; eleven curtains of goats'-hair for the tent over the tabernacle, with clasps of brass, and a covering of rams' skins dyed red, and of badgers' skins above: wooden boards and bars overlaid with gold and resting in sockets of silver (compare chap. xxx. 12-16); the veil (Heb. x. 20) of the same materials and work as the curtains of the tabernacle, to divide between the holy place and the most holy, hung by hooks of gold upon four pillars overlaid with gold in sockets of silver; the curtain for the entrance, of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen embroidered, hung by hooks of gold, upon five pillars overlaid with gold, resting in sockets of brass.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The things connected with the people's approach: the altar of burnt-offering with its vessels of brass; the court of the tabernacle with its hangings of fine-twined linen, and pillars resting

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in sockets of brass, their hooks and connecting rods of silver; the curtain for the entrance, of blue, purple and scarlet and fine-twined linen embroidered.

Pure olive oil beaten to be supplied for the lamp, to cause it to burn continually through the night outside the veil, ordered by the priesthood.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ordinances for the establishment of the priesthood. The garments of glory and beauty for the high priest: the ephod of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine-twined linen of artistic work, with girdle of the same; and two onyx stones engraven with the names of the children of Israel according to their birth, that the high priest might bear them before Jehovah on his shoulders for a memorial; with this was to be connected inseparably by chains and rings of gold and laces of blue, the breastplate of judgment, of the same material and work as the ephod, with precious stones set in gold in it, engraven with their

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names according to their tribes, to enfold within it the Urim (light) and Thummim (perfection), that thus he might bear them upon his heart when he went into the sanctuary before Jehovah continually ; the robe of the ephod all of blue, with pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, and bells of gold between them on its skirts, that the sound of the high priest might be heard when he went into the sanctuary and came out ; the turban of fine linen with plate of fine gold, fastened to it with lace of blue in front, engraven with Holiness to Jehovah, that he may bear the iniquity of their holy things, and they be accepted before Jehovah ; the embroidered coat (vest) of fine linen. For Aaron's sons, coats (vests), girdles, bonnets (head-tires), and breeches (chap. xx. 26) of fine linen.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The ceremonial of consecration (see Lev. viii.), with which is connected the cleansing of the altar of burnt-offering

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by making atonement for it, and anointing it to sanctify it; the altar to be most holy, and everything touching it holy. The morning and evening lamb to be offered on it for a continual burnt-offering with its drink-offering, at the door of the tent of meeting, that Jehovah would sanctify by His glory (as also the altar and the priests, ver. 44) dwelling in the midst of Israel to be Jehovah their God—the purpose for which He had brought them out of Egypt.

CHAPTER XXX.

The altar of shittim wood overlaid with gold, whereon the priest should burn sweet incense morning and evening when dressing and lighting the lamps—a continual incense before Jehovah; atonement to be made for it every year with the blood of the sin-offering on the day of atonement. (Lev. xvi. 18.) A half-shekel of silver for every man for atonement-money on the occasion of numbering the people, as an offering to Jehovah, appointed for

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the service of the tabernacle. The laver of brass to stand between the tabernacle and the brazen altar, to hold water for the priests to wash their hands and their feet when they went into the tabernacle, or offered burnt-offerings. The holy anointing-oil, to anoint the tabernacle and all that was therein, as also the brazen altar and laver on the consecration of the priests, and the priests themselves—not to be poured upon man's flesh or any strange thing, nor copied. The sweet incense and its composition, to be placed before the testimony and to be holy unto Jehovah—not to be copied.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Bezaleel and Aholiab gifted for the construction of the tabernacle and its vessels.

The sabbath to be kept holy to the Lord as a sign of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel for ever. The law engraven with the finger of God upon tables of stone, is committed to Moses.

WHAT ISRAEL OUGHT TO DO.

THERE are three aspects of Christ to the church, up to the close of its history here, which, I believe, indicate what we should do. I refer now to the aspect to Philadelphia—"He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." (Rev. iii. 7.) Again, that to Laodicea (ver. 14), "The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Lastly (Rev. xxii. 16), "I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and the morning star."

It is evident that according to the aspect in which the Lord appears, He influences those near Him. His aspect must affect me if I am near Him. It is very gracious of Him to tell us the aspects in which He will be up to the close, so that we may be able to overcome, because provided by Him for the difficulties of the time.

The aspect to Philadelphia fits and

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qualifies the saint for Christ's company. First—He that is holy, He that is true. As I am near Him I am necessarily holy and true. Two cannot walk together unless they be agreed. I must not touch the unclean thing if I would be near Him that is holy, and I must be doing truth to be able to be in the light of His presence. Then as I am thus fitted for Him by association with Himself, He makes me know that He has the key of David—He openeth and no man shutteth. Thus there is moral strength individually, separation from what is unholy and untrue, because of the effect of His known presence, and active power to frustrate all the opposition of the enemy.

The Lord assures the heart by this aspect that as you are morally like Him, so shall you have an open door and no man can shut it. In this aspect I am taught that it is only *His* holiness and truth I am to have, no less would fit me for Him, and to no less would He vouchsafe the assurance of His support.

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This is, then, the first and abiding counsel for the church to the end. Set your heart on Him as He is in His nature, with reference to everything. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Be as He is morally, in separation from evil in the scene of evil, and He will make you to surmount every impediment in your path.

Holiness and truth are rewarded even now with a great manifestation of His power. Surely nothing could indicate to any believer, in this evil day, more plainly what He ought to do, than the light conveyed by this aspect. One is made to feel how very gracious of the Lord to tell us of the aspect in which He does appear to earnest souls to the very end.

Now this aspect was to carry saints in faithfulness to the Lord, as delivered from Thyatira and Sardis ; the former, the body, the church, without the Head ; and the latter, the Saviour without His body the church.

But in addition to these, Laodicea would rise up to be a terrible over-

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whelming flood, a phase of corruption always working, but now taking a definite lead. In Romanism and Protestantism there was avowedly a formal acknowledgment of God ; and though man was given a prominence, it was as assuming Christ's place. Laodicea, on the contrary, is like Antichrist, who asserts that he is God—"shewing himself to be God." The Pope assumes to be the vicar of Christ. The phase of evil presented in Laodicea is simple independence of God. "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." It is not the assumption of the prerogatives of Christ, but a declaration of possessing so much independently of Christ that "I have need of nothing." It is not apostasy, or a simple rejection of Christianity, but it is the appropriation of everything in the christian religion, in order to make man the central figure and not Christ. He is outside. There had been varied attempts to place man in this prominence from the beginning of Christianity, but the church never had

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assumed a definite position, and had boasted in this position until Laodicea, and it is from this we have to be preserved. It is here; we cannot get out of the place of it; but though one have to travel through the Pontine marsh, one can be preserved from its baneful malaria. The Lord therefore appears in the aspect which only can preserve us from this phase of corruption in the church.

If we look at the place given to man by the Corinthians, the Galatians, and the Colossians, we shall be in some way prepared for the final phase in Laodicea. With the Corinthians, man was indulged, gratified; they were reigning as kings. The doctrine obtained there that the body would not rise. They had to be reminded that they had avowed fellowship of the death of Christ at the Lord's table. With the Galatians, on the other hand, the snare was that they might glory in their flesh. "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh?" They were legal; man's

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righteousness was aimed at. The design was to give man a place ; while with the Colossians the snare was to use man as a contributor to the Christian. Man, the natural man, in mind and body, was to contribute to Christianity. The mind and body are properly under Christ's control, and for His service. But there is a very great difference between being merely a servant and being a contributor. The latter is in the place of superiority. "The borrower is servant to the lender." The idea is that by services and bodily exercise Christianity can be promoted, and this necessarily gives man a very prominent place. This expands or grows into Romanism, that spurious sanctity which while imposing great restrictions—not to marry or to eat meat—in reality exalts the man that can bow to such restrictions. Only a few monks and nuns could arrive at this self-culture, and they necessarily obtained a place of rule and honour. In this review the great thing impressed on one's mind is the varied, determined, and

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insidious way in which the natural man seeks to be acknowledged ; and then we begin to understand the importance of the apostle's exhortation to Timothy, when, referring to this, he said, " If thou keep the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ."

Now when we come to the closing phase of the church on the earth, all former checks or modifications have disappeared, and there is an open and undisguised assertion of what the assembly possesses in itself. It is not mere assumption, but a plain, unqualified assertion of its own sufficiency. " I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." It is not easy for any one, with a spark of Christianity, to join in such a statement, and yet the effort of many to arrive at an order of things where one could make this assertion is continually seen. The assertion embodies an ideal for which many work. The widespread and extending confidence in one's own resources in christian matters is pain-

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fully manifested and declared. As in the flood there was the destruction of all flesh, there is an attempt by the enemy, through avowed Christians, to submerge all Christianity in a deluge of human resources, and nothing can preserve us from this prevailing spirit but the Lord Himself—Himself the power, His death the ark. It is the final phase. Once the assembly is committed to this independence, within a step of Babylon—it cannot be tolerated here any longer. Its history closes. It is spued out of Christ's mouth. That some really escape out of this deluge of human ascendancy in the church, is evident from the words, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent." While those who have learned Christ in His aspect to Philadelphia, are in life and ways suited to Him, and upheld here by Him, though they are subjected to so great a force of the enemy that they are exhorted: "I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." Now, they

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are preserved from the influence of Laodicea, because, as near the Lord, they know the aspect in which He appears to the angel of the church in Laodicea. The aspect which saves out of it necessarily preserves from it. But there is a great difference between being preserved from it and saved out of it. In the former, I am moving on in vigour, like one preserved from an epidemic; in the latter, I am at best only a convalescent. I am shaking off the disease, while the one preserved from it can pursue his course in unabated strength.

Let us now consider the aspect in which the Lord appears to Laodicea. "The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." The effect of this aspect would be to establish that He is exclusively what is stable and true—unalterably so. "The Amen, the faithful and true witness." Whatever testimony was defective or had failed, His never! In the midst of every defection the heart can rally round

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Him—unchanging in verity, faithful and true in testimony, and the beginning of the creation of God, so that nothing prior to Him could be admitted or owned. Now, one preserved by this aspect would be able to stand firm against the seductive influences and the carnal acquisitions of Laodicea. Those, few or many, who had learned the Lord as to His nature and power—the holy and the true, and having the key of David—would be so shielded and strengthened by Him in His aspect to Laodicea, that, as it is said, “the righteous shall hold on his way,” so would it be with them; so encouraged by the prospect of the Lord’s coming that they would wax valiant in the fight, and then becoming definitely occupied with the Lord’s last aspect—the bright, the morning star—they would, in suitability to Him—the bride in company with the Holy Ghost, respond to Him, and bid Him to come; and not this only, but seek to arouse all the saints on every hand to be ready to receive Him. The convalescents, those de-

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livered out of Laodicea, would hardly be looking for Him, too much occupied with their own deliverance, and really learning the Lord in the first elements of Christianity.

Well, then, the Israel of God in this day, should cleave to the Lord in the aspect in which He appears to the end to earnest souls, and be so cheered up by the prospect of His coming, as to brave all opposition : " Let no one take thy crown ;" preserved by the Lord confirming their souls as to His exclusive verity, faithful and true testimony, and as to their being only and solely God's creation ; and thus prepared by the very conflict to be as the bride in character, in company with the Holy Spirit, to receive Him ; hence, full of all His interests, diligently seeking to promote the prosperity of all saints, as well as evangelizing diligently — " whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." May each of us be thus found on the Lord's side.

A GOOD MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE first great quality in any servant is to please his master. It is impossible to please any one of superior intelligence unless his mind is known. Hence the first thing for Christ's servant is to know His mind. Thus Mary had chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.

The servant begins with learning his Lord's mind. I suppose, as a rule, the servant is not rightly devoted until he is called of the Lord to serve Him. I mean by called, not that he is converted or enlightened, but that the Lord has led him to see the line of service for which He has gifted him, and which ever after will give a character to his service—the terms, as I might say, of his commission. I think many a one has been like Samson when the Spirit of the Lord began to move him—"And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and

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Eshtaol" (Judg. xiii. 25); but I do not call this "called." When called as I use the word, the Lord reveals to His servant some distinct line of work, and a gift is conferred. The Lord appearing to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush, and the bush not consumed, describes what I mean by being called. He is not only a servant, but fitted for a service by the Lord Himself, who has revealed Himself in that light to His servant, which is the base of all his future work.

Of course, much may be superadded to it, but the way the Lord presents Himself to His servant assures the servant of the character of the service he is to render, and the grace he is to receive in it. As it was said to Saul of Tarsus, that he should be "a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." It is Christ's gift which determines the line of my services and whether in the gospel or in the church, I am gifted by Him, and the nearer I am to Him, and

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the more I am His servant, the more closely do I adhere to His calling.

Perhaps there is nothing which has more tended to disorganisation than the attempt at times to act in a different capacity or gift from the one in which the Lord has called, as commonly seen in Christendom. The evangelist trying to take the pastor's place because he has settled down in some locality, as if, because he has the gift of an evangelist, he must also have that of a pastor, which is far from being the case, though it is true that the same man may be a pastor and an evangelist. A servant's power is necessarily in the line of his gift. How could any one "open their eyes" unless he were gifted of God, and this power is often very manifest in the evangelist when there is very little knowledge of the word, or of the pastor's duties. I say all this to prove that a servant begins with the knowledge of his Master's call, and what He would have him do ; if he does not, he is not approved of the Lord, but, on the contrary, he is

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like an officious servant doing what is not required—a tax instead of a service ; but as he is upright the Lord leads him to see his mistake.

The relation between master and servant is not understood unless the latter knows what his master wishes him to do. Hence our Lord says in John xii., “If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am there shall also my servant be.” If I am not following Him to death I cannot serve Him, and unless I am with Him I cannot understand His pleasure. It is of all importance that the servant should be in concert with His Master.

First, then, we have seen that each servant is gifted of the Lord according to His own will ; next, that in order to be a good servant he must know the Lord’s mind as to His interests in general, “nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching which thou hast fully followed up.” In the assembly it is necessary for each servant that would be approved, to know his place and duty in carrying out

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the object and purpose of the Lord. A good servant is not one working the clay and fashioning the bricks, studying scripture and writing tracts only—both necessary and useful—but he is a builder, a bricklayer, according to the counsel which has been entrusted to him, a steward of the mysteries of God. The word is given to him to edify, but it is not enough to have the material by which he can build, he surely must apprehend and know the form of the structure which he is enjoined to build. Nothing can be more senseless than attempting to build without any idea of the sort of structure to be erected. A builder together with God knows the nature of the structure on which he is employed. He has some idea of the assembly as it is in the mind of God ; he also has attained to the practical effect of it, and then, according to the grace given to him, he edifies the body of Christ.

Now there are many gifted men ; the Lord, the Head in heaven, has not forgotten the need of the assembly on the earth, though very many of them

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have no plan before them. They are like bricklayers continually piling up bricks, but with no idea of the counsel of God, or His object in the church, and hence they can have no true idea of edification. There never was anything to equal it among men ; as a multitude of builders, many of them zealously at work, but without any design or apprehension of what was ultimately to be arrived at. Surely no servant can be a co-worker of God if he does not know the work in which He is engaged and in which He calls His servants to co-operate.

Moses was kept forty days in the mount where there was nothing to distract him, and where everything was in its perfect beauty and order, and all that he might learn to make the tabernacle according to the pattern shewn unto him in the mount. Nothing that was not according to the true could be recognised. After the same manner the temple was built according to the pleasure of God. However often afterwards it was thrown down or defaced, there was no other form for it but the

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one given of God. The great cause of division among Christians is the vain presumption of a pious man with a leading mind now and again to shape the assembly after an order which his own conscience approves, without simply submitting to the word of God, and entering into His mind about the assembly. His word directs, as it was in the case of the tabernacle and temple. Surely if there was no room left for man's ingenuity or taste in either of them how much less could there be with the assembly, whether we look at it as the house of God on earth or as the body of Christ. While I do not expect or suggest the restoration of the assembly on the earth in its original order, yet I see that in a day of ruin there is nothing more encouraging to the servant than to see the assembly as it is in the mind of God.

Now the good servant knows the work entrusted to him. The truth given to him is a trust, and as he himself practically has fully followed it, so is he able and qualified to lead on

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others. He is ever to be an example of believers: "in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." (1 Tim. iv. 12.) The Lord's interests are his interests. If Moses spent forty days in the mount in order to have his mind filled with heavenly things themselves, the good servant loves to be abstracted from everything in order that he may be the better able to grasp and enter into the perfect and beautiful counsel of God in the assembly; he longs to grow into deeper acquaintance with it, and he consciously shares in each discovery, so that in speaking of it to others it is ever as some great gain to himself in which all saints now have a part, though, alas! many do not know it.

With the good servant the highest circle of Christ's interests is ever the object of his heart, because it is the Lord's object—not that he always speaks of it—but as the Lord is before me as His servant, His chief interest is ever before my heart. Yet the true servant seeks souls, and thinks of them and ministers to them according as he

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knows their need. How this is exemplified in the apostle Paul! The truth suited to a Felix would not suit king Agrippa; but, though the good servant would make himself all things to all men, he cannot forbear, he goes on with God's work,—building according to God's mind, though he, like Noah in another day, is building what few understand, and the mass regard as a splendid impossibility.

If it be his own paramount interest, he is ever seeking to lead souls into it. In fact, all his teaching from the gospel up has this golden vein in it, so that the saint who has learned from him in the earlier stages is daily more ready for the full truth. It is ever the subject in advance with him, and the one on which he has most to say, because it is the one where his heart is most, and the more he sees, the more there is to see; while, on the contrary, when a servant declines or has not learned his Lord's great circle of interest, he seldom rises higher in his teaching than the conduct or manner

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of life enjoined in Romans. Very often it is only that measure of conduct which is approved by man. Good conduct, so that there is no reproach, and good works, in which an answer to faith is manifest, describe the whole scope of their teaching. You may search in vain in the writings and discourses of the teachers in Christendom for any light about the church of God. There is an acceptance generally by them of the Lord's coming, and that all saints will be gathered to Him, that we are all united together in heaven; but nowhere that I know of do they apprehend the true nature of the assembly; and it is very remarkable and a warning voice to us all, that any who have slipped away from the line of separation originally accepted, however pious and zealous of good works, have lost all the light they once had about the church, so that if you were to challenge any of them to speak of the church they could not do so, and this is the unfailing mark of every one who halts or slips away. Whether a Mark

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or a Barnabas, no matter the eminence to which he had attained in truth, when declension sets in, the truth of the church becomes to him a dead letter and as if it had never existed.

I have known some eminent servants who had surrendered largely for the Lord's service, to say they were so tried with church troubles that they would devote themselves to the gospel. No one could make such a statement, and practically follow it up, who had not in his own soul lost the true nature of his relationship to Christ as a member of His body, the church. I have remarked in every division in my time, that those who were right held to the church and still had light, while the seceders, however eminent or excellent, never dwell on the subject, certainly never give forth anything fresh on it, though they may call it church truth to define or describe their own position with regard to system, &c. What I have now said refers to those who have left the path of separation incumbent on the church in an evil day.

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But apart from this extreme course the servant may be so affected by personal interests that he is not freshly and happily in the line of the Spirit ; he is absorbed in his own mercies, he has gone down on his knees to drink the water. You cannot have Christ's interests paramount if your own are ; nay, you will find, and it is deeply affecting, that though you may not perceive any particular lack in your ministry or your hearers either, yet most surely when anything—the provision for your family, their education, your health or the health of your family—is paramount, the church has lost its place in your heart, and you cannot minister about it with the freshness of a good servant. Very often you become more levitical when you are less priestly. Every one priestly must be levitical. One might retort, that every servant is bound to consider for his family, &c., that God had so ordained it. I quite admit that a servant can in no wise overlook the claim his family has on him. I merely state that the church,

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Christ's interest, ought to be paramount with him, and if it were he would pitch his tent where service called him, and not merely where advantages for his family called him, and then God would take care of his family. Do we see a man who goes to a place for any personal consideration ever led out in much service to the assembly? Many a gifted man falls into the shade because of the motive which has led him to his present abode, while there are many instances of the Lord using a man in His service where he was following his lawful calling. He has been found there and used there.

Doubtless there are others, like Elijah, who are disappointed because of the break up, and are asleep in the desert under a juniper tree. The good servant must be, like Joshua, able to lead the people of God to a successful issue ; but, in full view of the darkest day, have Christ the living Stone so before your heart, that you can say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

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EXODUS.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE people in Moses' absence forfeit all title to the promises, on the conditions they had accepted, by idolatry. Aaron makes for them a molten calf to be their God. Jehovah warns Moses of it while yet with Him in the Mount, and proposes to consume them in His wrath, and make of Moses a great nation ; his disinterested intercession for them, on the grounds of Jehovah's glory that would be compromised with the Egyptians, and the unconditional promises made to the fathers.

On his way down, seeing the calf and the dancing, he breaks the tables of stone, the covenant being already broken. The sons of Levi consecrate themselves at the word of Moses, every man upon his son and his brother. The next day Moses goes up if possible to make atonement, and, failing this,

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asks to be blotted out of Jehovah's book. Jehovah spares in present government, but places each under final responsibility for his own sin.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Moses is commanded to lead up the people to the land, with an angel to go before him, for Jehovah will not go in the midst of the stiff-necked people lest He consume them. The people mourn and strip themselves of their ornaments at the word of Jehovah. Moses takes the tabernacle ("tent") and pitches it afar off from the camp, where individually Jehovah might be sought and makes His presence known in the cloudy pillar. To His faithful servant (Num. xii. 7, 8) He reveals Himself in an intimacy never known before, and he asks to know His ways (Heb. and Ps. ciii. 7), and to have His presence, in which he is accepted in grace, but to see His glory cannot be—no man could see His face and live. But He will reveal the name of His relationship with Israel and the sove-

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reignty in which He can bless, His glory passing by while Moses is hid in the cleft of the rock.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Moses presents himself before Jehovah ; He proclaims what He is, as manifested in His ways of mercy, long-suffering, goodness, and truth with the people, by no means clearing the guilty—the principles of the government under which He places them.* Moses seizes upon the revelation so far of what *God is*, to plead that He should go among them because of what the people *were* (compare ver. 9 and chap. xxxiii. 5), pardoning their iniquity and taking them for His inheritance. Upon the mediation of Moses, Jehovah makes a covenant anew with him and Israel, characterised by separation from the Canaanites whom He would drive out, and consecration to Jehovah ; they were to observe the

* Not the full revelation of grace as in the gospel.

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feasts, the consecration of the first-fruits of nature, and the prohibition of leaven and what was contrary to nature, the ten words being re-written by Jehovah on the tables of stone.

Moses descends the Mount after forty days, reflecting in his face, unknown to himself, the partial manifestation of the glory he had been in presence of ; the people cannot bear it, connected as it still was with legal claim upon them (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9), and he puts a veil on his face, which he takes off when he goes in before Jehovah.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The sabbath is appointed in connection with this renewal of Jehovah's relationship with the people. The materials for the construction of the tabernacle and its vessels are accepted as the offering of willing hearts unto Jehovah, according to what each possessed ; and suited wisdom of heart and skill is manifested for the work in those whom God calls to it, Bezaleel

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and Aholiab, and others associated with them.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The voluntary offerings of the people are delivered to the workmen and found more than sufficient, so that they had to be restrained from bringing. The tabernacle is made.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The ark and mercy-seat, the table and its vessels, the candlestick and its lamps, the incense altar, the anointing oil and incense, are made.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The altar of burnt-offering, laver of brass, and court of the tabernacle, are made. The sum of the offerings of the people.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The garments of glory and beauty, and linen garments of the priesthood are made. The work was finished: Moses sees that all was as Jehovah commanded, and blesses the people.

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CHAPTER XL.

The tabernacle is set up at the command of Jehovah on the first day of the first month, and all set in their places, the whole to be anointed with oil on the consecration of Aaron. (Lev. viii. 10–12.) Jehovah's glory fills the tabernacle, and in the cloud upon it by day, and pillar of fire by night, His presence becomes the guide of His people through all their journeyings.

“GOD WITH US.”

MATTHEW II.

It is a very significant fact, that the test of every one and everything is Christ: doctrines do not test in the same way as the Person to whom, no doubt, all the doctrines of scripture relate.

The great question now, as in the days when the Lord Jesus was here, is, “What think ye of Christ?” Thus it is that here where we have the record of

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His advent into this world, all classes are manifested in their true character in relation to Him. In this Gospel He is presented as Son of Abraham, Son of David, Messiah the King : hence it is in this connection all through this Gospel we ever find Him, and the presentation of the truths found in the gospel are ever set forth in this connection. There was a spot on earth—the place of privilege and blessing—a favoured place, the city of the great King. “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Sion.” Now it was to that spot every eye was turned, wherever expectation was alive in any true heart, it was from thence its hope sprung ; hence it is that we find these wise men coming from the far East to Jerusalem, with the language of affection and earnestness, saying, “Where is he that is born king of the Jews ? for we have seen his star in the East and are come to worship him.” Thus were their hearts moved by His birth, it is the King of Israel they come to seek, all about Him has a claim upon them,

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they leave their own and distant country, guided by His star, if only they can reach Him ; this is the first class or company whom His advent into this world brings as it were to the front. It is a lovely picture this for faith to look upon, oh how Christ can engross heart and mind ! Does He command ours ? How much would we go through if only we might reach Him ? Then observe their attitude on arriving at the place where He was—"they fell down and worshipped him"—

"Jesus is worthy to receive
Honour and power divine"—

is in reality the language of their willing hearts ; how blessed to see faith at its goal, enjoying the prize ! Is it not lovely to see how His Person having won their affections, commanded their adoration, and opened their treasures ! They had nothing too costly to withhold from Him, precious as were their gifts—"gold and frankincense and myrrh"—He was far more precious still. Oh what a sight

for faith, child though He was here, an infant of days as to His humanity, yet He as such was their all ! He had but just come, yet it was Himself who had come and was there before them. It is lovely to trace in the scriptures how His Person ever addressed the faith and affection of which He was the object ; here it was in the first moments of His birth ; later on, as we know, in the close of His days on earth, and in the face of the hostility and hatred which beset Him, there was found a Mary who would expend on Him what the Holy Ghost was pleased to call "very costly"—and as she placed it on His body, perfumed the house with its odour. Oh, how at the beginning and at the end Christ was all to faith, whether in the Magi or in a Mary, it found in Him its satisfying portion, and the hatred and violence which marked both the scenes to which we have called attention, could not hinder it in its devotion and affection to Him. Is it so, may I ask affectionately, with us ?

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I would not leave this beautiful scene without a word on another subject—truly the centre of all we have had before us. Let me ask you to think, who is this wonderful child, whose advent seems to touch and test all hearts? Who but Emmanuel, God with us! He was none less than God manifest in flesh; the mighty God was there. Oh what grace and love, that He who was “in the beginning with God,” was God, should thus come down to become man; most affecting it is to dwell in thought on circumstances in which He is here found as having become Man: a little child, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger—lowliness, poverty, and rejection, are all found in His birth: well may we sing

“Rich in glory, Thou didst stoop,
 Thence is all Thy people’s hope;
 Thou wast poor, that we might be
 Rich in glory, Lord, with Thee.”

Again, it is striking to note how from the first moment of His advent

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He was a sufferer ; in different ways and at different times He was such. Oh how it does appeal to and attract the heart ! it is a suffering, sorrowing Christ which does this ; in His humiliation He wins, in His glory He satisfies ; His humiliation and His glory are the two great powers which work upon our hearts. Then see how Israel suffers too in connection with Him. “In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not”—oh what an expression of suffering and death, “they are not” ! What a sense of desolation these words carry with them !

Thus we have looked at, in this first class, the faith and affection which found its all in Himself, and expended it all on Him, and we have also looked at who He was, the Object of such faith and love.

We must now look at the second class we find here, whom His Person and presence brings out. We find

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then a striking contrast to the Magi in the king (Herod) and all Jerusalem with him ; Herod is a sad character, full of pride, vanity, and worldly lust ; besides he is a foreign king who is here seen usurping the allegiance of Messiah's people, while He the true king, owned by the Gentiles as represented by these wise men, is cast out and refused, His own people being entirely indifferent to Him. Oh what a sight is here presented in the distress and trouble which His advent brought upon Herod and all Jerusalem ! I need hardly dwell upon the *moral* state here presented : may I ask you how far you suppose things and people now are changed ? Is there any more heart now than then for Christ ? Alas ! the answer is but too distinctly stamped upon the vast scene of profession around, where there is no more room for Jesus now than on the morning of His birth.

But suffer me to bring this question nearer to our own doors, and to ask, How it is with us in relation to Him ?

Another has so truly said, that what marked the man who then had possession of the throne of Jerusalem, was "victorious love of the world." Now how far are we free from a like influence? Is it not this we have to watch against on every side? Oh the inroads and encroachments it has made in our midst; we are looking at a moment when Christ was "an exile in Egypt and then a Nazarene in the earth;" what is He now, may I ask? And what are we in relation to Him and as His disciples in this world that thus hated and rejected Him, and that hates and rejects Him still? Oh, be assured, this is the question of questions, *now* as *then* Christ determines everything. How much there is in that name Emmanuel, and what power there is in it to set aside present things: these are surely some of the thoughts the Holy Ghost would press on our souls as we dwell upon this precious page in His history upon earth.

But there is another class represented

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here, to which I would earnestly call your attention for a little. These scribes are a miserable company; they were conversant with the prophetic scriptures which told of Messiah's birth, when appealed to, they reply at once, but having said this, we have said all; information they had, but no more; they could tell of His coming who was Jehovah's Shepherd King, to come out of Bethlehem, the house of bread, but their hearts had no interest whatever in Himself. Oh what a picture of a heart unmoved were they, no cravings and longings and yearnings were theirs, which nothing and no one but Jesus could meet and satisfy; no desire to see or hear this wondrous stranger-child had they; if they wished for a reputation for clearness as to the prophetic word, it was theirs; if they desired to make capital out of their knowledge of the sacred writings, none could dispute their claims; but no more than this could be said of them—"like lifeless finger-boards they point along a road in which they neither lead

nor follow ;” the *place* of the birth of Jesus, and the character of Him who was coming, they can announce, and then settle down into an indifference in which Christ is unnoticed and unknown. Alas ! these scribes of other days are but the prototypes and precursors of those of a like class in this day—hearts where there is neither welcome nor room for Christ, any more than in the inn at Bethlehem.

Oh how all this speaks to our hearts this day ! I press it earnestly upon every conscience and heart ; let us each take it to ourselves, as to how we stand in respect of Christ, What is He to us ? What is He worth ? These and such-like as to Himself are *the questions* of the moment.

There is one word of very deep and precious blessedness in the first chapter of this Gospel, and having looked at it a little we shall close our meditations for the present: the word to which I refer is “Emmanuel,” which being interpreted is “God with us.” (Matt. i. 23.) What an announcement for

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any who had heart for it is in such words ; and what an unfolding of the heart of God too ! Oh the living grace that would indeed come down and tabernacle among men, so that they should know in very truth “ God with us ; ” and not only this, but God among men in the circumstances we have already had before us, and meeting with such a reception at their hands, coming to His own and His own receiving Him not. Oh what grace and goodness ! Then again, think of the power of that name Emmanuel, think of its *attractive* power, think of its *displacing* power ; has it such with us ? We who know it now in all the endearment which the name of Jesus brings with it to our poor hearts ? If, indeed, we have heard His blessed voice, is He not able and worthy to make room for Himself, whoever and whatever else would have to stand aside ? May the Lord, by His Spirit, so minister Christ to each one of us that nothing else will be of any value comparatively in our eyes, that our

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testimony in *word* and *act* may be as to Him, the true wisdom in these words.

“It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.” May this be our testimony both in word and deed for His sake.

W. T. T.

“THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT.”

GOD'S WORDS SUPERIOR TO MAN'S
DEFINITIONS.

I WOULD always urge upon myself, and as God enabled me, upon the attention too of my brethren, the wisdom of keeping, as far as may be, to the very

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words of scripture. We have seen lately the evils introduced through printing *our* definitions of *the words of scripture*, definitions of points that the word does *not* define, but the habit is commoner still. It creeps into meetings for Bible reading and edification, and some one gives a definition not found in the word, which sets the ball of discord rolling through the meeting at once. Challenges and counter-challenges arise, and edification is at an end. Alas, that this should be so general.

I take it that we only help the saints and only edify one another, as we are enabled to draw attention to *the word itself*. The first time that I find it suggested to man to *define* the word that God had spoken, that suggestion came from Satan. "Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" That is, "Define to me what He said to you, give me *your* impression of it." The devil did not want the *very words* of God. To have given him them, would

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have been to have used the “Sword of the Spirit.” Had this been his reception, he must have fled. And Satan well knows that he is powerless against the naked word of God, and against any who use it in faith. But he is able to gain his point if we give him *our* definitions. And Eve did not repeat in Genesis iii. 2, 3, the simple word of God about it in chapter ii. 16, 17, she gave her *definition*. May the Lord lead us to shrink from defining, and cause us to cleave to *His own words*.

Eve so readily fell into the snare because the suggestion of Satan exalted *her*. It supposed such a competency in her, so thorough an acquaintance with the mind of God, that she could give better in her own words, and much more clearly, the meaning of the words of God. If not, why did she alter His words? To be able to define points clearly, exalts *us*, and fosters the wretched pride of the natural heart. But can the finite fully grasp that which is infinite? I can only

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know as He teaches me, and that teaching is “*not* in the words which the wisdom of man teacheth, but [in words] which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” (1 Cor. ii. 13.) Two things appear to me to be very simple. First, It is not necessary to define what the word of God does not define, the word is complete without it. And secondly, While I may insist on it with all my might, yet if I add to or take from that simple word, I *am* giving a human definition.

It is surely from “defining” what scripture does *not* define, but which the human mind pronounces as “*reasonable*,” or to be “*clearly implied*” in the texts, that many schisms (and “sects” too) have arisen in the church of God. Not only is it most important for me to be satisfied with the word *as it is written*, if I would grow, but I must not take it out of the connection in which it stands, and try to make it fit in somewhere else. That is, I must (as is commonly said) receive it in harmony with the *context*, or subject

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matter of the chapter or book in which it is found. He who placed it there knew its place ; I must be content to learn its meaning just where it is found, and from Him. Reference Bibles are often most injurious to this learning. God must be the Teacher, whatever the instrument.

H. C. A.

 TITLE AND POSSESSION.

THE Spirit's leading is a new thing to us ; as the Lord said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." The Holy Spirit is the power ; as He acts, there is power, and each act of His is quite new to us and unknown before. He acts always according to Christ, not as man would act, He necessarily acts apart from the natural man, for the natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God ; nay, more, "the Spirit [lusteth] against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to

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the other ; so that ye may not do the things that ye would." The Spirit's leading is contrary to the flesh. If the flesh were to have its way, the Spirit would be hindered ; but when the Spirit leads, the flesh is opposed and refused. Hence, in every leading of the Spirit, He not only proposes a new course to us, but He overcomes that which resists Him.

In our blessed Lord there was nothing to resist the Spirit of God. He suffered from Satan, the power of evil. We, on the contrary, resist the Holy Spirit at every turn, and He therefore not only presents the new course to us, but He overcomes the flesh which would prevent or molest. He would not propose to us, nor lead us into any blessing without at the same time subjugating the flesh which would mar it. He could not allow the natural man to be a hindrance where He was displaying to us the grace of our God. He could not permit the rival power to be unchecked and unsubdued. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the

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deeds of the body, ye shall live." When the Spirit conducts me into anything, He not only delights me with the blessing of it, but He does not suffer my flesh, which would hinder my enjoyment, to remain in force and unrebuked ; nay, on the contrary, when He leads me into any blessing, He is not only the One to make me enjoy it, but He takes care that the enjoyment must not be disturbed, for He rebukes the flesh which would do so. It is plain that He must overcome all natural obstruction before He could lead me into any new thing—like Stephen looking up into heaven ; but he is not satisfied with extricating me from the thralldom of darkness, that is, He is not satisfied with leading Stephen to heaven, but He makes Stephen know that he is superior to everything here ; he had in spirit overcome all when he looked up into heaven. This is the principle in Joshua iii. The very fact, that the Israelites were over Jordan, was a guarantee that they should overcome every foe—every hindrance to posses-

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sion. "Hereby shall ye know that the living God is among you."

But more than this ; having crossed over, their first act was circumcision, consequently Gilgal—rolling away the reproach of Egypt before possession was entered on. First led over, the power which leads me over assures me that no power shall prevent my possessing—I have the right, I am sure of my title—but as I am in power, I must circumcise, I must sensibly be free of the power of the flesh before possession. This is Gilgal. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth . . . seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds ; and have put on the new which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." The more the Spirit assures me of my right and title, the more Gilgal is known to be the door to possession, otherwise every advance would (because more glorious) be less enjoyable from the allowed presence of the old man. If the Spirit could lead me into the greatest things without any addi-

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tional check to the flesh, then its interference would be the more felt, the higher I went. Whereas the higher He leads, the more I am in the divine region, the sphere of eternal life, the more am I apart morally from the flesh ; He cannot tolerate it, and the more He leads, the more He excludes, abrogates it. There must be a cutting off of it before possession. I am first led into the light and sphere of the blessing, I know that it is my right through grace, but before I enjoy it—that is, before I am in practical possession of it, I am detached from what would mar or prevent my enjoyment or possession. I am made sensible that I am set free of the old, by the power which imparts to me the new.

When Elisha received the spirit from Elijah, he first tore up his own clothes and then he took up the mantle of Elijah which had fallen from him. First he had the sense of right, and then he surrenders to possess. The new power frees him from the old thing, and then invests him with the

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new : that is, possession. I am led by the Spirit to my right, and then His action is to remove or displace in order to confer. If I were trying to reach heaven, it would be effort. The Spirit's leading assures me of my right and title, but it is of deep importance to know, that He leads me from the worldliness that hinders me from enjoying my right. Before Peter leaves the ship to go to Jesus, he is assured of his right to go, but he must leave the ship to enjoy his right, that is possession ; and then he gains much more than he surrendered. He desired to be with his Lord, he was given right and power to go to Him, but he must give up the ship in order to enjoy the Lord's company, and then he gained a power and a protection beyond what any ship could render him.

The Spirit's leading is ever to assure me first of my right and title ; as " the Lord said to Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and south-

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ward, and eastward, and westward : for all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." (Gen. xiii. 14, 15.) He sees, and as he had faith he was assured of his title ; but he has no possession yet: Many souls are hindered because, while wishing to possess, they are not as yet assured of their title, and it is here where legality comes in. Legality is working for a thing which you value, but to which you are not assuredly entitled ; you have not the sense of right to it, but you know you desire it. As a fact, you often desire it the more, because you are not sure of your right to it. While, on the other hand, often those assured of their right, and able with eloquence and force from the word to prove their title, rest in the prospect only : they do not go on to possession. If the former are legal, the latter are worldly.

Now, those in possession, as I have tried to shew, are always separated from the obstacle which would have prevented or obstructed their possession. The legal, as I may designate

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those who are longing to attain without the certainty of right or title, however earnest or devoted, never advance, because they are not in the leading of the Spirit. The christian calling is a law to them instead of a right. Under law, every demand on me exposed my incompetence ; under grace, because in the Spirit, every demand on me is only to manifest the power given to me. Now, in the Spirit, I am first assured of my title ; but title is not everything, though it leads to everything and belongs to every Christian. It is in possession that I am confirmed in my title. Abraham had not the former, though he had the latter. I cannot possess without breaking away from that which would hinder my possession. Many therefore enjoy title, and love to expatiate on it, who have not yet actually possessed that to which they are entitled. They have begun well ; “ who did hinder ? ” The evil heart of unbelief.

Every step of christian progress is contested by the enemy, and there is

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no real gain but in relinquishing that which holds me back. Practically, "this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting;" that is, the obstruction must be surmounted, that which the enemy would use to hinder me must be abrogated—morally, death to myself. Every act of grace demands an abnegation corresponding to what it confers. If it be forgiveness of my sins, there is necessarily repentance, and a turning away from them. If it be liberty, there is a real *Marah*—a steady purpose not to minister to that man, from whom I am delivered; approach to God in the holiest is known in an absolute separation from everything not according to it. If it be the heavenly position, there is a distinct renunciation of everything incompatible with it.

Now each of these truths may have been really received, but the possession of what they confer is in every instance missed when there is not a surrender of myself corresponding with the grace given me. True, the grace is of God,

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but the enemy does everything to hinder, and when one has begun right, he will try to turn him aside in some way. The only way to succeed is by death—to surrender that by which he can hold me, for the Spirit leads me to the enjoyment of my title. Hence, “we who live, are alway delivered unto death:” but this is only true of one who is always “bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body.”

In Colossians we are regarded as being “risen with Christ;” the title to heavenly places is clear, but in order to enjoy the title, there must be the real Gilgal; there must be the absolute setting aside of the old man. There is no possession in Colossians. There is, as in Joshua v., the qualifying for it. The title is unquestionable: in the type they are over Jordan, but they are not in possession. That which obstructs possession must be denied. A man cannot enjoy earthly things and heavenly things; as he

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really is in possession of the latter, he is distanced from the former, for he must leave earth for heaven, and that very markedly. Even before possession, your mind is "set on things above, not on things on the earth." When I have a clear sense of grace, I can dwell on my title ; but if I decline to surrender myself, I do not possess. The balloon has the power to ascend, but the grappling irons must be all removed before it can go. The tendency of dwelling on title apart from possession, is turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, while every measure of possession establishes the grace which confers it.

FRAGMENT.

WHAT a contrast between that kind of negative life, with the head just above water, which says, I am alive, so I ought to be thankful, and this positive joyful life, which goes out in active energy after Christ ! But in order to this, the staff of confidence in self must be snapped. J. N. D

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER.

IN the temple stood a Stranger,
As the Feast was nearly done—
Words of import everlasting
Spoken by th' eternal Son—
“Come to Me and drink,” said Jesus,
“Where the living waters run.”

* * * *

Like a torrent, full, impetuous,
Bond nor barrier can stay,
Came the Holy Ghost from heaven,
From that Stranger—far away.
O the power, the mighty wonders,
Of that Pentecostal day !

Still the boundless river floweth,
What shall stop the rushing tide ?
From the highest point in heaven
Fresh the living waters glide;
Source transparent, none can measure !
'Tis in Jesus glorified.

Thirsty souls have drunk that river,
Nevermore to thirst again ;
Sources then of life and healing
In a world of death and pain ;
Channels of that living water
In a desert without rain.

E. L. B.

PROMISE SUBSTANTIATED AND GOD REVEALED IN GRACE,

LUKE IV. 14-32.

WE have had before us, in Matthew ii., the first advent of our blessed Lord ; and how all men, all classes of people, stood tested by it, and in relation to Him. In the scripture above, the Holy Ghost brings before us the two great consequent effects of His presence on earth, namely, the Christ in His own blessed Person, *substantiating promise*, and God in Him, here on earth, manifested and revealed in all His grace. On these two themes let us dwell for a little.

First, then, as to how all promise met and was fulfilled in Christ ; it is blessed to see that He presents Himself in their synagogue at Nazareth as the very One in whom the words of Isaiah lxi. were fulfilled : “ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he

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hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." How blessed ! He stood before them there as Jehovah's anointed Preacher, as Jehovah's sent Healer of broken hearts, He presents Himself before their very eyes as the fulfilment in this of their own prophet ; the omission, too, of the last clause of verse 2 of this prophecy makes the grace presented in Himself all the more striking, for surely the day of vengeance *will* come ; but it was not *then*. He who came as Saviour *will* come again as Judge, but that time has not as yet run round ; but *now*, as when He was on earth, it was saving grace and goodness which was reflected in Him in all His ways and dealings with men. How little we think of the exact character of this world in His eye, when He was in it. What did He find in the favoured land—Jehovah's land ? He found death,

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devils, disease, sorrow, misery, and wretchedness on every hand. He did not, blessed be His name, stand at a distance, but entered into all the wretchedness and sorrow as none else but Himself could do, measured it all and gauged it all, as only He could. How we are made to feel that we live too far away from human wretchedness to know it in all its reality, but how blessed to know there was One who in grace came into the midst of it, walked through it, as another has most blessedly expressed it: "bringing every grace in God down into man, and taking every sorrow in man up into God."

Now all God's previous dealings with men, kept man at a distance in his sins, and shut God in, holy and righteous, into Himself; darkness and distance describe this period of dealing and testing—claims unmet and demands not discharged were the sad features of that dispensation. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ"—that is, "That which not having actu-

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ally been in being before [that is, in the world] now begins to be so," [ἐγένετο]. How blessed is all this to dwell upon, what moral glories surround His path on earth in every part of it, as another has sung :

“ We love Thy footprints here to trace,
 The moral beauty and the grace
 Of all thy walk of love :
 Dear memories !—but would we detain
 Thee here below for any gain
 Thy company would prove ?”

We have, then, in this precious scripture, how promise was fulfilled in His Person—it was so in *fact*, and He Himself announces it: “This day is this scripture *fulfilled* in your ears.” But there is a testimony even from them, for they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. Blessed for ever be His name ! there was no cause for surprise or wonder in that. Alas ! we often may well be surprised at the ungracious words and works which so often characterise us ; but He was the living

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contrast to us in everything, in Him the perfection of manhood was found, and found, too, in perfection, as another has so blessedly expressed it: "The hand that struck the chord found all in tune: all answered to the mind of Him whose thoughts of grace and holiness, of goodness, yet of judgment of evil, whose fulness of blessing in goodness were sounds of sweetness to every wearied ear, and found in Christ their only expression, every element, every faculty in His humanity, responded to the impulse which the divine will gave to it, and then ceased in a tranquillity in which self had no place."

But observe, further, how that it was in His *Person* promise was fulfilled, and there is in this fact a charm of especial sweetness to the heart, it was not the *quality* of grace that shone on one and another here on earth in their wretchedness and misery, but here He Himself, in Person, was found—the mighty God who became Man, so that He and He alone could say, in reply to

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the question “Who art thou?” Absolutely what I say unto you—He *was* what He said. Oh the moral beauty and glory of such an utterance as that! But now mark how all this is met. The announcement that promise was fulfilled in His Person, calls forth the contemptuous utterance: “Is not this Joseph’s son?” Their hearts were veiled so as to be unable to see who was there, garbed as He was, in lowly mien; His lowliness offended their pride, and they refused Him; but can grace be turned aside by all the folly and evil of man? Never! it has its purposes which it accomplishes in His time, and to this the blessed Lord gives utterance in these words that follow, namely, “Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none

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of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian." That is, reject grace and Christ as you may, He will still have objects of divine favour; yet this awakes, if possible, deeper animosity, and as at first they hated and rejected Him, so here they are ready to resort to *violence* and force, to thrust the blessed One out of the city, and even led Him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong.

Oh what a picture of man, of humanity, we have here! how exposed and by Himself, too, who was God revealed in flesh! and this as law never could expose; it did condemn for what was there found as meriting condemnation, it dealt in all its severity with the "what hast thou done" of man; but He who came as Saviour, and to accomplish salvation, tested the roots of man's moral status, and brought to light, as He alone could, the "where art thou" of man. Oh how blessed to see Him, wherever we see Him, exposing by His perfectness that which

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He was about to end on the cross in His own precious death !

But we must turn now to chapter v., and dwell for a little on the second point, which I have spoken of already and which is there found. In this chapter, then, we find the revelation of Jehovah in a Man, as in chapter iv. we have seen how that promise was fulfilled in Him. It is the great subject throughout the chapter, though set forth in various ways. The first great instance of this is in verses 1-11 : it is Jehovah revealed in this blessed Man to Peter's *conscience*, the circumstances all lend their weight to the fact. Peter had been called ere this, he had companied with the Lord and seen His ways, yet, as to Peter's conscience, he had never been face to face, so to speak, with God ; but now the moment for it has arrived, and Peter, in the most favourable circumstances that man could find himself surrounded by, privileged to place his boat at the service of the Lord of glory—makes a never-to-be-forgotten discovery. The

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blessed One, having taught the people out of the ship, directs Peter to launch out into the deep, and let down the nets for a draught. Peter does so, evidently doubting the use of further toil after a night of fruitless labour. (Verse 5.) This done, the nets inclosed the treasures of the deep; He who *created* them, *controlled* them and *commanded* them according to His sovereign pleasure; so great was the take that the net brake, the filled ships began to sink, the power and presence of Jehovah in a Man were there, and Peter's conscience breaks down in His presence with "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." What a moment of light it was! It is written, "God is light"—here is the great proof of it in the conscience of Peter.

The Lord has His own way of conducting us all into this solitude; in that light we see light, as Peter did, he found out that he was "*a sinful man*"—roots and springs and sources of moral darkness all were there uncovered. And so it is with us, it is

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in the presence of God alone we learn what we are, and knowledge of self is not reached save there. The revelation of God to us can alone give the sense that we are unfit for His presence. This has ever been the case. (See Isa. vi. ; Dan. x. 8.)

But observe further here, it was not simply Jehovah revealed to Peter's conscience, *but in grace*, and hence the blessed words "Fear not." In very truth, the One who awakened the conscience can alone meet its thus disclosed needs. It is from Himself who created the earthquake in the conscience, that the sounds of mercy come. The prison at Philippi, later on when, redemption being completed, Christ was on high in the glory of God, affords the same instruction. There the physical earthquake which shook the foundations of the dungeon was His power in nature, as the moral earthquake which shook the jailer (who was in reality the prisoner) was His power in conscience yet in grace ! How blessed ! and His voice of mercy through His own servants, afflicted

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and bruised and beaten as they were, was as distinctly His acting in grace as here—"Do thyself no harm for we are all here;" and "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Blessed words! The first to express the divine compassion that never overlooks human misery, the second to proclaim that grace which is rich and full and free.

Ere we pass from this blessed picture, just observe the effect as here presented to us in verse 11: "And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him." He had captivated their hearts for Himself. He had so fully filled their souls that all on earth was left behind for Him—true, they did not know Him beyond earth for the moment, and hence after His death, when as they thought all was gone for them, when their *sight* could no longer behold Him, they returned to their fishing. (See John xxi. 3.) Yet that does not alter the fact now stated, that at this time, as far as it went, all is forsaken for

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Himself. Is it any different thing now? What can take the heart out of present things but a glorified Christ? Who could say, "I count all things but loss," but he in whose heart the Saviour in glory had been revealed? How blessed when a double discovery is thus made: the vileness of oneself from which it is a relief to retire, and the perfectness of Jesus who becomes the soul's eternal portion and stay.

In the next instance, recorded in verses 12–15, we have Jehovah revealed in His cleansing power. How blessed to see in every case that *He is*, as well as that *He reveals*, Jehovah. The healing of a leper was Jehovah's work alone. But mark this, whilst His power was recognised, His goodness or willingness to help was not assured to the diseased. Now see verse 12, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The way the Lord meets this is so precious, He not only says He is willing, but touches Him—it will be borne in mind that to touch a

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leper made him who so acted unclean in the midst of Israel, and, as such, outside the camp was his place. But observe the contrast here : before their eyes was One who, though Man, was a divine Person, One who could touch a leper and not be defiled, One who had come in all His grace to remove that very defilement, One in whom was all the willingness of mercy and goodness, and One who had all power as God. Well may we sing,

“ Whose love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end.”

How blessed to just sit down and dwell in adoring delight on all the perfections and glories of Christ, to find our food and freshness in thus, by faith, taking Him into our souls, the very bread of God that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.

There is one other point here of exceeding beauty and blessedness, on which it is a delight to dwell. Observe verse 16, how fully and perfectly He

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maintains His place of entire and perfect dependence as Man before God, and that, too, in the hour of His fame and greatness among men. Oh how precious that verse: "He withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed"—that is, He was at that time waiting, occupied with prayer; what a sight for angels and for men! let the power exercised be ever so great, and manifestly the power of God—divine power—still He is, as ever, the dependent Man. How blessed!

I will, ere bringing these thoughts to a close, here transcribe a few words of another, which are both food and solace to the heart in these weary days, and amid the heat and strife of the desert scene, now so near its end, and suggested by these scenes and events on which our hearts have been dwelling—"If I open the Old Testament anywhere, the Gospels, the Epistles, what different atmosphere I find myself in at once. In the Old: ways, dealings, government, man—though man and the world governed by God

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—piety, no doubt, but piety in that scene ; and even in the Gospels and Epistles the difference is quite as great—in certain respects more important. In the Epistles (so the Acts) one active to gather—souls devoted to Christ, valuing Him and His work above all—power shewn more than in Christ on earth, as He promised—it is gathering, then caring power. I get back, though now in the power of the Holy Ghost, and grace in a saving, gathering way, to man, and it soon fails. But in the Gospels I find a centre where my mind reposes, which is itself—always itself, and nothing like it—moves through a discordant scene, attracting to itself through grace (what no apostle did or could do) and shining in its own perfection unaltered and unalterable in all circumstances.”

What comfort and rest of heart to sit at His feet, to hear His voice, amid all the tumultuous waves and billows of present sorrows and siftings ! May He, who alone can effect it for us, bring us there and keep us there,

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giving us so to taste the joys of His company and presence, that nothing around in the world *without*, and nothing in the far more insidious world *within*, may tempt us to leave our sweet retreat. W. T. T.

THE LAW OF THE WAR.

“AND the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of beast, thou, and Eleazer the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation : and divide the prey into two parts ; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation : and levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war which went out to battle : one soul of five hundred, both of the persons and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep : take it of their half, and give it unto Eleazer the priest, for an heave offering of the Lord. And of the

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children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord." (Num. xxxi. 25-30.) The principle here is, that the gain of one is to be a benefit to all. The gain of those who went to battle was to be shared alike with those who did not go to the battle; so it is now; "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit." Every gift and every acquisition is for the common good. "He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack." Everything gained in light and knowledge by any one now, is the common property of the whole church. But while the one who labours, and acquires in waiting on the Lord, shares fully and freely with all saints, yet his share, though equal to the share of those who did not fight for it, obtains for him a relation to the Lord that their share does not. He

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who went to the war gave one out of five hundred to the priest, while they who did not go to the war gave one out of every fifty to the Levites. The latter gave ten times more, but reached no higher than the Levites ; while those who had laboured for the whole, retained a larger portion and rose to the highest, even to the priest. Thus we learn two things from the law of the war : one, that every gain, however gained, is the common property of all. That is, all the light and knowledge acquired in conflict, and in study of the word is the common property of the church ; yet he who labours, is led into a nearness to God, as represented by the tribute to the priest, into which the one who only shares in another's labour is not ; the latter does not turn them to the same account. "In all labour there is profit." The one who waits on the Lord and learns from Him is surely bound to share fully what he gets with all the saints ; yet in his labour, he has been drawn to the Lord in a way beyond the one who

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shares with him in his acquisition ; though it has an effect on the latter, and he is drawn into service of some kind or other. As truth becomes our own, as we have laboured to possess it, our hearts have been drawn into communion with the Lord ; while, when we have adopted the labours of others, though it be a real sensible gain, it results in an outward service, good and necessary in its way, but not so reliable as that which comes from within with God. If I come from within with God, I shall serve rightly.

Martha feels she must do something for the Lord, and she acts from her own feelings. Mary studies Him, and gains what shall not be taken away from her. The way a Mary has learned His mind, will move a Martha to service. Martha is truly devoted, but it is the external which occupies her. Things around affect and test this service. Lot follows Abraham, and for a while seems to prosper equally with Abraham, but in a crisis he betrays that he has not learned God for him-

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self, and hence acts in a worldly way. External service can be acquired where there is not soul exercise with God. Mark followed Paul and Barnabas, and was doubtless very useful to them as their minister, but when a crisis occurred, then he went back to Jerusalem. No matter the length of service or the prosperity in it, sooner or later will be disclosed the measure of one's faith, or in other words, where one is with God.

The opening out of truth is very pleasing to the heart, but if there be no exercise as to the appropriation of it, the teaching, the labour of another, does not lead to more than a Levitical order of service, which is often abandoned when great opposition is encountered, and a once brilliant course suddenly terminates, as with a Lot or a Mark.

With the natural man, the finest sentiment which he enunciates is often the one of which he is practically most deficient; and if divine sentiments, however beautiful, are enjoyed without

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exercise, that is, without a renunciation of their contraries in the maintenance of their own reality, there is sure to be, in the time of temptation, a falling away, a notable defection, exposing the painful fact, that while there was much outward service, there was really no communion with the Lord in connection with it. There is no communion without conflict, and conflict leads to communion. When there is not exercise and communion, all the beautiful and commendable exterior which had been derived from sharing in the labours of others, dies away like a blossom, and they fall to their level, and betray how little their hearts had been delivered from the world.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
THE HOUSE AND THE BODY.

IN order to understand the difference between the house of God and the body of Christ, we must see when and

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how each began. In Matthew xiv. 10, we read, "And he sent and beheaded John in the prison." There is evidently a great crisis here in our Lord's course, and consequently He then leads His disciples into scenes and experiences which would fit them for the new structure which He would build here, where He was now in anticipation rejected. It is interesting to group together all He presented to His disciples, from Matthew xiv. 10 to xvi. 18. He goes into the desert, feeds the poor of the flock who seek Him. The disciples are in the ship, but He is walking on the water above all winds and waves. The man of faith leaves the ship and joins Him on the water. Thus far as to the power of evil from outside, where He is rejected; while in chapter xv. He sets forth that all evil in man springs from within. Man's own heart is the corrupt source, and therefore from within a man is defiled.

Now in corroboration of this, "A woman of Canaan . . . cried unto

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him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David ; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Here we have the power of evil inside, but by simple faith in His grace the devil is gone out of her daughter. Thus the same blessed One who has power over all the evil outside, and can lead us in triumph over it, can also free us, by His power, from the power of evil in us. If Stephen knew the former, Paul in 2 Corinthians xii. knew the latter.

On this follows the second feeding of the multitude. If the first was administrative, and in spite of all adverse power, the second is to the needy, and is complete in its sufficiency. "They did all eat, and were filled : and they took up of the broken (meat) that was left seven baskets full."

After all this, when the disciples were at the other side they had forgotten to take bread. "Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned

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among themselves, saying, it is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many baskets ye took up?" The Lord does not give them any bread, but He reminds them of the miracles they had lately witnessed, teaching, as I judge, that they must find all in Him now, and thus they are prepared for the announcement consequent on the confession of Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." His rejection as foreshadowed in the execution of John, induced Him to disclose what He would do. He would not leave the earth without any manifestation of His interest here. He would build an entirely new structure on Himself—the Rock. (See Deut. xxxii. 18.) The

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foundation is divine—entirely outside of man, and the material of the same order. Living stones, we are built up a spiritual house. It is important to bear in mind that our Lord uses the words, “My assembly,” because an assembly of God’s people on the earth was nothing new, as we read in the Old Testament, and in Acts vii. 38, “the church in the wilderness.” The new structure is Christ’s, and the building with living stones is exclusively His work.

Once we see the circumstances under which it originated, we shall be able to get some idea of the Lord’s purpose. It is, as it were, the fortress here, in an enemy’s land, in which He propounds and signifies His pleasure in relation to things here ; and every living stone, a component part of that structure, is His representative here to do His will. Hence the discipline and order are determined by His presence—“that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God,”

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where the Spirit is dwelling—gathered to “my name there am I.” (See Num. x. 3.) He is “Son over God’s house,” and He could not desert the congregation that was true to His name. Romanists avowedly and audaciously superseded Him in appointing a sovereign Pontiff, and every denomination of Christendom has done so morally, when any rule is accepted but His. There is a habitation of God on the earth where Christ has been rejected, and all His are embraced in it, and each one in it is bound to maintain His name and word in the scene of His rejection.

We have the house described prophetically in Revelation ii. and iii. down to its end. It is deeply interesting to grasp the phase which it presents on the earth at the close. I do not now refer to what it is there in the Lord’s eye, but to what it is as the house of God in the eyes of men; what is the aspect or appearance of it at the end of its history. There is Romanism in which alone the idea of one indivisible church is maintained.

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There is Protestantism, which is weak, because, though right in a measure at its start, it does not go on to perfection. It is ever in the weakness of infancy. There is, thirdly, a distinct revival of the truth as it was at the beginning, which has reached believers far and wide, but the opposition to it is so great from those "who say they are Jews and are not," that the only cheer is the immediate advent of the Lord. Lastly, there is such a measure of self-reliance and confidence in the professing church in its own resources, that there is an open and distinct assertion, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." When this obtains, the Lord is intentionally excluded from His assembly, and hence its history terminates.

Now, while this is the appearance of the house of God in human eyes, there is another aspect in which it is seen by the Lord, and that is as set forth in 2 Timothy ii. 21. While the assembly is the habitation of God by the Spirit,

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there must be always power, as there is faithfulness to maintain His house, or part of it at least, fit for Himself. "Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever." The man of God purges himself from the vessels to dishonour, and not merely from their teachings and ways. Thus the faithful hold on for Him here to the end; and they, in company with the Spirit, not only invite Him to come back, in true loyalty of heart to Him, but they labour on all sides with saints and sinners, to have all His own ready for Him.

When the church is set aside, the great resisting force here now, the Holy Ghost, will no longer be dwelling here: "He who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." Thus ends the history of the habitation of God, through the Spirit, on the earth.

Now, though every living stone in the house is a member of the body of Christ, yet the body is very different from the house. The first notice we

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get of the body is given in our Lord's words to Saul of Tarsus: "Why persecutest thou me?" That this should be the first intimation of the central object in the counsels of God is very affecting. Jesus had been rejected here in His humiliation both by Jew and Gentile. By wicked hands they had crucified and slain Him. But also when He was offered from glory by the apostles and Stephen, the Jews declared in the stoning of Stephen, "we will not have this man to reign over us." Now when the Christians were persecuted here by the Jews, the Lord no longer forbears, but while in grace opening the eyes of Saul to Himself in the glory of God, He at the same time discloses the momentous truth—that which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world, that the saints now are an integral part of Himself—members of His body; He, the "Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." (Col. ii. 19.)

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Now this defines the intimate relation in which we stand to Christ and to one another. It is only by the Holy Ghost that we could be in this great and eternal bond. Thus in the body we are made sensible of the resources we have in Christ, and as His members what He is to each and to all of them. In this mystery "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and all in the full delight of His heart, for He "loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify it, purifying it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present the church to himself glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 25-27.) As in the house we are builded together to be the habitation of God, in the place of Christ's rejection, and are to set forth as a royal priesthood His virtues here, so as being His body, our resources are infinite. Like a great clock, all the springs of action are within; each necessary and contributing

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to the other ; so with the church ; it is called to be the visible house of God here, "the pillar and ground of the truth," and at the same time it is in the closest relationship to Christ Himself, so that there is no lack of resource or power to do His pleasure here. Each individual Christian, not only is a living stone of Christ's building, against which all the power of evil here shall not prevail, but he, as a member of Christ's body, has unbounded supplies in common with his brethren, to fulfil all His pleasure here, and indeed for ever ; as it is said, "Unto him be glory in the church in Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." (Eph. iii. 21.) As the hands of the clock tell the true time, while the internal machinery works in order and concert, so does the house on earth set forth the pleasure of the Lord, according as the saints are in the unity of the Spirit, in simple and unerring concert with that unity ; no power lacking when each holds the Head, and when this concert is un-

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hindered. The looker on, as in the case of the clock, can only see the hands, and thus the time of day; but every saint instructed in this great truth, knows that he is working, in concert with all the members, from the Head, and that each is dependent on all the rest, as the largest spring or wheel is on the smallest, and *vice versâ*. The testimony or faithfulness to the Lord is visibly expressed in and through the house on earth, while the virtues of each member of the body, derived from the exalted Head in heaven, all contribute and co-operate, as there is concert in the Spirit to maintain the testimony clearly, and to the glory of God.

May each of us understand in the light of the Spirit our great responsibility, and as we see it, be assured that in the Spirit we have full power to discharge it for the Lord's sake.



HEADINGS OF CHAPTERS.

LEVITICUS.

CHAPTER I.

JEHOVAH speaks out of the tabernacle to Moses, ordering all that is connected with approach to Him as dwelling there.

The burnt-offering: a male of the herd or flock, or a fowl, presented at the door of the tabernacle; the priests sprinkle the blood, and lay the parts into which it is divided in order upon the altar, where it is wholly consumed as an offering of sweet savour to Jehovah; the offerer identified with the perfect acceptableness of the offering.

CHAPTER II.

The meat (or food) offering of fine flour mingled or anointed with oil and frankincense poured thereon—**MOST HOLY**—the memorial of it, and *all* the frankincense consumed upon the altar as a sweet savour to Jehovah; the

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remainder of it is Aaron's and his sons'. Leaven and honey are forbidden in offerings consumed on the altar for a sweet savour ; the special meat-offering therefore of the two wave-loaves of Pentecost, baken with leaven (chap. xxiii. 17), is excluded from the sweet savour offerings ; but not that of the sheaf of first-fruits. (Chap. xxiii. 10. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 20.) The salt of the covenant not to be lacking in any offering.

CHAPTER III.

The peace-offering, of the herd or flock, or a goat, killed at the door of the tabernacle, the offerer being identified with it ; the priests sprinkle the blood ; the fat of the inwards is taken for an offering of sweet savour—the food of the offering made by fire to Jehovah. All the fat is Jehovah's, and is forbidden to the people, as well as the blood, by a perpetual statute.

CHAPTER IV.

☞ The sin-offering, in the case of sin against natural conscience, of the priest

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or the whole congregation ; a young bullock, upon which the priest lays his hand, or in the case of the congregation, the elders, the victim thus becoming identified with the sin ; the blood is sprinkled seven times before the veil, and put upon the altar of sweet incense, and the body of the victim is burned* in a clean place without the camp (Heb. xiii. 11, 12), the fat being consumed on the altar of burnt-offering. In the case of the sin of the ruler, a male kid of the goats is the sin-offering, and the blood is put upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, the fat being consumed upon it ; or in that of one of the common people, a female kid treated in the same way.

CHAPTER V.

The trespass-offering, in things become evil by ordinance (vers. 1-13), a female lamb or kid for a sin-offering ; or if too poor for that, two turtle doves or young pigeons, one for a sin-offering,

* Another word from that used of the sweet savour offerings (chaps. i.-iii.), and so always.

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and the other for a burnt-offering ; or if that were still beyond his means, the tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin-offering, a memorial of it to be consumed on the altar as with offerings made by fire, the remnant, the priest's, as a meat-offering.

Verses 14-19. The trespass-offering is wrongs done to Jehovah in His holy things, a ram according to Moses' estimation for the offering, with restitution, and a fifth part added, to be given to the priest.

CHAPTER VI. 1-7.

In wrongs done to one's neighbour, restitution with a fifth part added, with the trespass-offering of a ram.

CHAPTER VI. 8.

The law of the burnt-offering : to be perpetually burning on the altar, with the fat of the peace-offerings consumed upon it ; the ashes to be carried forth by the priest in his linen garments to a clean place outside the camp.

Verse 14. The law of the meat-offering,

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to be offered by the sons of Aaron before the altar ; that which remains after the memorial of it has been consumed as a sweet savour to Jehovah, to be eaten by the males of the priestly family in the holy place, in the court of the tabernacle, with unleavened bread : it is *most holy*, as the sin and trespass-offering : all that touch the offerings made by fire are holy. The special meat-offering of the consecration of the priest is to be wholly consumed.

Verse 24. The law of the sin-offering : killed where the burnt-offering is killed, *most holy* ; the priest that offers it for sin shall eat it in the holy place, save when the blood is brought within the tabernacle, in which case it is to be burnt in the fire, and no part eaten : whatever touches it is holy.

CHAPTER VII.

The law of the trespass-offering, the same as for the sin-offering : the males among the priests to eat thereof.

The priest that offers the burnt-

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offering is to have the skin of the victim.

Verse 11. The law of the peace-offering: leavened bread offered with the unleavened cakes, one of which is the priest's that sprinkles the blood; if for a thanksgiving, the flesh must be eaten the same day that it is offered; if a vow or voluntary offering, part may be eaten the second day, but anything remaining of it to the third day must be burnt, to be eaten the third day would be an abomination; none that have uncleanness or touch an unclean thing may eat of it; the wave-breast and heave-shoulder are Aaron's and his sons; the priest that offers the blood and the fat having the right shoulder for his part.

CHAPTER VIII.

The consecration of the priests: Aaron and his sons washed with water. Aaron clothed with the garments of glory and beauty, the tabernacle and all within it is anointed and sanctified, also the altar and laver without, and

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Aaron, and all without blood. When his sons are associated with him and clothed, they lay their hands upon the bullock for the sin-offering; with its blood the altar is purified from sin and sanctified, the fat consumed upon it, and the body of the victim burned without the camp: next, they lay their hands upon the ram for the burnt-offering, and upon the ram of consecration, the blood of which is put upon Aaron's ear, thumb and toe, as upon that of his sons; they are also sprinkled with it and the anointing oil, Aaron and his garments, and his sons and their garments with him. (Compare as to order, Ex. xxix. 21.) The flesh of the ram of consecration is treated as a peace-offering with an accompanying meat-offering, its fat and part of the unleavened cakes, &c., being put upon Aaron and his sons' hands, waved before Jehovah and consumed as a sweet savour, the breast given to Moses, and the priests boil and eat the flesh with the remainder of the bread of consecration at the tabernacle door,

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not departing from it until the seven days of their consecration were completed.

CHAPTER IX.

The offerings of Aaron thus consecrated the eighth day : for himself a young calf for a sin-offering, and a ram for the burnt-offering, with peace offerings and meat-offering ; for the people a goat for the sin-offering, with burnt-offering, meat-offering and peace-offering. Aaron having finished the sacrifices, blesses the people. Moses and Aaron go into the tabernacle, and coming out bless the people ; the glory of Jehovah appears, and the acceptance of the burnt-offering is manifested by fire from before Him that consumes it : the people worship.

CHAPTER X.

The failure of the priesthood ; Nadab and Abihu offer strange fire, and are cut off. Aaron and his sons are forbidden what would excite the flesh in its sorrows or joys in connection

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with the sanctuary, and that they might discern between the holy and unholy, unclean and clean, and teach Israel the statutes of Jehovah. They fail to eat the sin-offering for the people in the holy place, burning it without the camp, although the blood had not been brought into the sanctuary.

CHAPTER XI.

The discernment of what was clean and might be eaten : of beasts, those that both part the hoof and chew the cud ; of fish, those that have fins and scales ; of birds, the carnivorous and night birds, also those that creep on the earth are forbidden, also of creeping things, those that crawl upon the belly or have many feet.

CHAPTER XII.

The purification of women upon child-birth—seven days unclean for a male, fourteen for a female child, with thirty-three and thirty-six days of purifying afterwards respectively,

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during which she was excluded from the sanctuary ; afterwards she was to bring a burnt-offering and sin-offering for atonement, and she should be clean.

“THE ONE WHO IS COMING.”

LUKE XII. 13, 14.

It is interesting and instructive to see how the blessed truth of the Lord's coming is presented in the Gospels. I treat now of the Lord's coming in its widest sense, not restricting my thoughts to that part of it which we call the rapture of the saints raised or changed ; *that* was *received* and *communicated* by Paul as a special revelation in connection with the hopes of that of which he was the minister. (Col. i. 24, 25.)

I would suggest as to whether in the Gospels the coming does not derive its character and subject from the object of the Spirit in each Gospel : for instance, in the Gospel of Matthew, is it not, the coming of the King, the

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Messiah, in harmony with the object of that presentation of Christ? Then, in Mark, is it not the Lord or Master of the servants who comes, even Himself, who it is said “Is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house *and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work*, and commanded the porter to watch”?

Then again in Luke, as in the passage before us, it is *moral* and *general*, bearing on the state of heart of each one in view of His return, the attitude of expectancy and watching which His approach would create in the hearts of His own. While, in John, it is the Son of the Father, the Son of the bosom, coming to discharge the debt of love He still owes to His Father and to the children of His love, in taking them to Himself and welcoming them into His Father's house, His joy and theirs meeting in this that He has His own for ever with Himself. But in this passage in Luke, it is very instructive to see how the way is prepared for intro-

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ducing the coming of the Lord. There are two great hindrances here that are dealt with by the Lord in a twofold way, and which it will be very profitable for our souls to contemplate a little. I speak now of what I believe few are strangers to, viz. *care* and *fear*—two of the commonest influences at work to weigh down the hearts of God's saints. I believe the two are closely allied to each other; that is to say, whatever causes anxiety, or care, is that concerning which we generally have most fear; whatever settles on the heart, becoming a pressure or weight there, produces fear in connection with it. There is a care which it is right to have, a godly, proper, prayerful concern, which if we are without, we should be little better than sticks or stones; but to have what the Holy Ghost calls cares (*μεριμνα*) resting on the spirit, coming in between the soul and God, is destructive of all true spiritual growth and progress in the knowledge of God. If we have God between us and such

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things, they are not then burdening the soul, for then they are but new opportunities to lean on Him, fresh reasons for turning to Him. Trial is that which comes sooner or later to us all ; in one sense we are never truly proved till we have been under fire. The Lord's charge to His disciples was, “Pray that ye enter not into temptation ;” that is, pray that when the moment of trial comes, it may be an occasion to you to turn *to* God, instead of turning *from* God. We know well that is the moment when so many have turned away from Him, the test made manifest where they were. If the soul is really dependent and cast upon God, the testing-time is its harvest of faith. How blessed to have God between us and every care ! Observe verse 30, “And your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.” Just think of that, your need and your Father's knowledge of it ! Oh what a resource to the heart ! But there is a snare here, which we do well to be guarded

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against. We must never suppose that our need is the *measure* of our Father's care or ability. It is the *occasion*, not the *measure*. The only true measure of His love is the Son of His bosom, whom He so freely gave in His love for sinners.

Whilst it is our delight to own how fully and graciously He knows and meets all our need, yet let us remember that there are motives and springs in His heart, of which our need is but the occasion of display. It is the Lord's object to keep us up in His grace. Cares drag the soul down, our Father *knows*. What a rest, so that we may leave *time, ways, means, everything* to Him.

Let us see how He meets the *fears*. His own words are "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" that is, it is the delight of your Father's heart to be a Father to you; it is His *good pleasure* to do so. How blessed to think it is here the same word as that which sounded in His

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voice from the opened heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom is all my good pleasure.” Is it not blessed beyond all expression to know that in thus ministering to His own, He is gratifying His own heart? The sense of this in our poor hearts dissipates every fear, but it does more, for not only do we cease to fear when it is so, but we can afford to act in the spirit and truth of His own words which follow, namely, “Sell that ye have and give alms,” &c. Mark the words *sell* and *give*. It is the very opposite to the spirit of the day, which is *buy* and *get*! It is wonderful how easily saints fall under the power of the spirit of the age, and many there are who never find it out, until the storm comes with its desolation and scatters everything to the winds, as it were. Oh the reality of a *possession*, outside the reach of death, that insatiable archer, who selects the widest circle of blessings (as men speak) on earth, as the target at which he may shoot all his arrows!

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Let us ask our hearts, *what* and *where* is our *treasure*? The Lord says that where the treasure is there the heart is also. May the Lord give us the joy of knowing Christ as our treasure, and heaven as the place where our treasure is; this and this alone can set us free from present things. The sense of Christ's absence thus becomes our affliction. The place where He is not could thus never be an agreeable place to us; nothing but His presence can fill the void His absence creates. Thus we *watch*, not merely *wait*, for Him, and we watch through the long dreary hours of the far-spent night for Himself, the alone treasure of our hearts.

Alas, how little it is so with us! Alas, how little the ways and manners of pilgrims, and strangers, and watchers are seen in His beloved saints! How His heart must grieve to see His own so little in company with His affection and His love, and it is solemn to think that the poor world that lies in the wicked one, has too much cause to say

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something like this: "We hear it loudly asserted, and a position claimed because of it, but we fail to see it in practice, and they are but few and far between who look like unto men that wait for their Lord." May we take this more to heart, with exercised conscience and heart, may His word find such a place in our souls as to awaken us from our seeming sleep, to go forth in *conscience* and *affection*, and meet the One who hath said,

"SURELY I COME QUICKLY."

W. T. T.

PRESENT TESTIMONY.

PRESENTLY the whole universe shall bow to the claims and own the title of the Lord Jesus as set over all things by the will of the Father. But it is given to me, a Christian, by means of a body, which in itself is but dust and ashes, to proclaim *now* who He is and what He is. Dust and ashes which

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can *never* be annihilated, whatever they may do to it on earth, and which will exist on and on and on until it is brought into the full day of glory, when all this universe will do homage to Him to whom this body belongs, and who has cared for it and watched over it through all the changes of its place and substance.

It is immense grace that this body can witness for Christ *where Christ is disowned*. Angels have not such a privilege as this. It will be easy for all to witness to Him when all around is in subjection to Him, but He will never forget that which went up to Him in feebleness from the trials and exercises of the *wilderness*. *How precious is this in His sight. Who will measure?*

This world is, since the fall and since the cross especially, the scene of the display of Satan's power and sway; but, by means of my body, I own another Lord, and in his very presence, too, who *hates* the Lord I own. Satan's power is *only* displayed

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in heaven or on earth (never in hell). *From heaven* he will presently be cast out (Rev. xii.) to exercise his power still more manifestly over men on the earth. And *from the earth* he will soon after be seized and bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years! (Rev. xx.) And thence his journey is swift to the *eternal* lake of fire. (Ver. 10.)

It is JESUS who says (and how fully He proves it in these dealings with the enemy), "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." Power that manifests itself *even now*, in a Christian's "body of humiliation."

Do I think enough of what it will be to Him and to me to look back from that state in which I shall be with Him in my glorified body, without any opposition, and where all around will be owning Him and proclaiming Him "worthy," to look back to *this* little moment when, spite of the opposition of Satan and self and the world, *I owned Him?*

H. C. A.

THE WORD OF CHRIST AND THE PEACE OF CHRIST.

IF there is one thing more than another that the saints of God require exhorting to in these last days, it is found in Col. iii. 16 : "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns, spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God."

The apostle, by the Spirit of God, exhorts that the word of *Christ* may dwell in us richly. Mark the term, "the word of *Christ*." In John xiv. 21 there is a special blessing on the one who "hath my commandments and keepeth them;" a special manifestation to him of the Father and the Son. "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." (Ver. 23.)

The obedient one knows this holy fellowship and communion with the

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Father and the Son. Surely this loving obedience to the word dwelling richly in Christ, gave Him that peace in which He ever walked; and is it not so that the believer now has the peace of Christ presiding in his heart, "to the which ye are called in one body." If this word of Christ dwells in me, the Person of Christ is treasured up through His word; for without the word there is no communion. If this word of Christ dwells in me richly, I become formed by it, and exhibit it in my ways and conversation. The word is often well known, and even eloquently and fluently expounded, but this may be intellectual, and not the word fed upon.

It is to this peace of Christ that we are called in one body, and it is not obtained unless the word of Christ dwell in us richly. Then in all wisdom we admonish and teach one another, and spiritual songs and melody of heart rise to the Lord—the whole body in harmony and peace giving thanks to

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Him who alone is worthy of it all. So that whatsoever we do in word or in deed we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

FOR CHRIST.

FIRST we learn through grace how Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. Until the heart is deeply assured of His love in giving Himself for me, I am not free, or ready either, to serve Him—to be here for Him. The real cause of the little devotedness in service is because of an imperfect apprehension of His work for us. If I am not perfectly at rest about my own concerns for time and eternity, how can I freely and happily devote myself to the interests of another?

There is a great deal of occupation with Christ's work for us, which passes for devotedness to Himself. Christ may be so far made an object, but when examined into, it will be found that

He Himself is not *the* object to many of us ; the devotedness is because of His service for us, and not because He is everything to the heart. Surely many deceive themselves in thinking that because they are greatly occupied with Christ's work for them they are therefore here for Him.

According to the measure of His love known to me, so is He my object. I trust we shall see this as we trace the effect of apprehending His work.

When the sinner learns that through faith in the blood of Christ, he is for ever safe from the Judge, his delight is in his escape. Christ is before his heart as his Saviour, and so far Christ is his object. The fear of the Judge was the night of heaviness to the soul, while the certainty of escape is the dayspring from on high which has visited him. The greater the assurance of his escape, the more is he occupied with the Saviour as to His death and suffering ; he enters into it with heartfelt repentance ; he eats "with bitter herbs." At this stage he may be very

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earnest and useful, like an Apollos of another day, yet he cannot be fully for the Lord, because his own heart is not at rest. As one who has escaped the perils of the deep, he labours to extend to others the measure of security which he has reached. This is the most he can do. What is before him is the danger of those in the water, and the measure of safety to which he himself has reached. The Lord's interests do not yet engross him. It could not be. To share with his fellows his own escape is necessarily his aim and desire, the full measure of his work. And though his work is often singularly blessed, we cannot call it absolutely for Christ, because man's need is before him more than Christ. His service to man would not be less, but of a far deeper character, if Christ's interests were the primary object, "Make the tree good and its fruit good." I cannot in my service exceed the measure in which I am served. "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" "Of thine own have we given thee."

I am first a receiver, in order to be a giver.

Now when the believer is justified, when he has "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," there is a very marked advance in his thought about Him. . He is the object of delight to his heart. The "new song" is in his mouth. The Lord's victory over death is before him. He sings, "The Lord has triumphed gloriously," and then, and not until then, springs up a desire for His glory here. "The Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." (Exodus xv. 2.) This is a great advance upon the assurance of escape, and produces an entirely new kind of fruit. This is the right and true beginning of one here for Christ. The Lord's glory is in the foreground. I know that it will be contended that often when earnest servants reach this stage they are not so useful as evangelists as they were. I admit this may be said if they

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are judged by the outward result of their work, but surely no one can serve man less because he serves the Lord more. The fact that the Lord's glory is made more prominent now, has led some to conclude and assert, that progress in truth has not helped but hindered the evangelist. This statement I can quite account for. The Christian, when he makes Christ's glory prominent, is debarred from using human means and efforts in preaching the gospel which he had adopted and advocated when the sinner's gain was paramount with him; but be assured that the sinner's gain is not less truly before the heart of a servant because the glory of the Saviour is paramount. Nothing can be plainer according to divine principles than that as "every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from above," so the higher the source and object of any service the better and greater it must be. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." There may be less appearance in the eyes of man,

FOR CHRIST.

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but doubtless there is really more true work done, because it is "not by power, or by might, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

But though the soul at peace is set upon exalting the Lord on the earth as a due acknowledgment of His service unto death, this does not, as I apprehend, fully express being here for Christ. I admit that the true beginning of one here for Christ is the purpose of heart to see Him honoured here, because "the Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation." But when one learns that Christ has been rejected from the earth, and that He is now "at the right hand of God"—in heavenly places—this beginning, though the only true one, is too limited, and does not embrace the whole—what the term "for Christ" involves. I have no doubt that the first fruit of the heart at peace is to honour the Lord in this place, the scene of His service for us (like the woman in the Pharisee's house anointing His feet), and hence this stage is ever

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marked with surrender for the Lord's sake, like Jonathan stripping himself to magnify David ; and this I believe is done now in the most efficient way when we present our bodies a living sacrifice. This, I say, is the right beginning ; but seeing that Christ is rejected, and that He is gone to another place, even "heaven itself," the Christian who has thus rightly begun, necessarily finds that to be "for Christ" involves two things : one, dissociation from the scene of His rejection, though still in it ; and the other, association with Him in the place where He is. This evidently leads to more than a purpose to exalt Him here. This purpose must ever remain, and is fulfilled in "the habitation of God through the Spirit ;" but if I am here for Christ where He is not, and where He has been rejected, it is not enough for me to honour Him in God's house, the assembly of the living God ; I must manifest Him according to the grace given me, with regard to the position which He now holds as exalted Man in

heaven. I must be the expression of Him as the heavenly Man in the scene where He is the rejected One ; and I must be here according to His mind and pleasure. Thus I am led into the knowledge of the mystery, and I rejoice that I am a member of His body, the church, and through grace qualified according to my measure to manifest Him in His heavenly beauty.

Now before I reach this, while I am *educating* for it, a new exercise, and one of the most unexpected kind, occupies me. It is that though I have peace with God through the blood of the cross, yet I find that there is sin in me. It is when a Christian seeks to approach God that he finds that sin is in him ; like the prodigal son, he is sensible of his unfitness, though reconciled. How many a year, and how much of one's spiritual course here is spent in learning that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Most of the pious sentiments which elicit approval on every hand are

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the utterances of souls seeking and longing for liberty. You will find that such utterances generally spring from some fresh sense of Christ's grace to themselves, some fresh experience, generally described in the Psalms—something as to His loving-kindness or His mercy—a manifestation of His care and love. This is all right and proper, and a side, blessed be His name, which is better known each day, and which must ever remain, because the outgoings of His heart; but to be here for Him is quite different. I never lose anything which grace has given me. Justification is not weakened because I advance, nay, the sense of it is largely increased, but to walk in faith daily, I have to drink death—Marah—and this is bitter, until I see that Christ has been in death for me, and then Marah becomes sweet. It is sweeter to my renewed nature to deny myself than to gratify myself.

Now, though walking in this dependence, I am often occupied with the opposition here—the Amalek, and though it is a true and blessed ex-

perience to be borne above the power of the enemy by the succour and sympathy of Christ, and while there is much blessing to me in it, and the grace of it is very interesting to detail, yet it is not "for Christ." I must learn that "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "The Son of man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Christ is my life. I am in an entirely new sphere ; I can not only reckon myself dead unto sin, but also dead with Christ to the rudiments of the world. I am in Christ, who is my life, in the place where He is, and once I have been in company with Him there, I understand something of the wonderful nature of the mystery, and I am empowered as a member of His body to be here for Him, according to His pleasure. And while I am surely enjoying in a fuller and a deeper way all He has done for me, and all He is to me, the one great characteristic of my life, words, and

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ways, is devotedness to His concerns and glory ; I am “virtuous” (see Prov. xii. 4, and xxxi. 10), entirely faithful to Christ. Then all my resources I derive from Him where He is, to maintain for Him here, where I am. A true servant is not insensible to his own personal gain from his Lord, but he, while occupying the place where He was rejected, makes it his one paramount business to express Him according to his ability in the lustre and power in which He is at the right hand of God. The more he does it, the more will he exasperate the power of the enemy who led on man to reject the Son of God come down here in grace, but with this unspeakable comfort, that the more faithfully he stands for Him—his Lord—here, the more He supports him by His unbounded power, and thus he gains by being here for Him.

May we all know more of this gain.
Amen.



HEADINGS OF CHAPTERS.

LEVITICUS.

CHAPTER XIII.

Leprosy ; the principles on which the priest is to discern as to it : in the person ; if it is deeper than the skin and raw flesh appears, he is unclean ; when the disease covers the whole skin and it is all turned white, having ceased to be active, he is clean ; if it spread in any form he is unclean, and is to take his place as such outside the camp : in a garment, if it spread, or being washed is not changed in colour, it is unclean, and shall be burnt ; if changed after washing, the spotted piece is to be torn out, and if it does not spread again, after a second washing it is clean.

CHAPTER XIV.

The purification of the leper in whom the disease has been arrested, in order to have part in the privileges of the camp ; the basis of it laid in the

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two birds, one of which is killed in an earthen vessel over running water, the living bird being dipped in its blood, which is sprinkled upon him who is to be cleansed, and the priest pronounces him clean, letting go the live bird in the open field ; he must also wash in water, and having shaved off all his hair he is fit to enter the camp, but remaining abroad out of his tent seven days ; the seventh day he washes in water, and on the eighth day there are the sacrifices connected with his taking his place in the full enjoyment of relationship with Jehovah ; first, the trespass-offering, the blood of which is applied to the ear, the hand and the foot, with which is connected the oil sprinkled seven times before Jehovah, and applied where the blood of the trespass-offering had been applied, the remnant of it being poured on his head ; next, the sin-offering and burnt-offering, and finally the meat-offering. On the suspicion of leprosy in a house when come into the land, the priest shuts it up seven days ; if the plague

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is spread, the stones affected are to be removed, and others put in their place ; if it still spreads the house is unclean, and to be broken down ; if the plague does not spread further the priest shall pronounce it clean, the two birds for its cleansing being treated as in the case of the leprous person.

CHAPTER XV.

Uncleanness by the issues of the flesh in man and woman, and of those who come in contact with them : in running issues, seven days after it ceases they wash in water and are clean, and on the eighth day two doves or pigeons are offered for sin-offering and burnt-offering to make atonement.

CHAPTER XVI.

The day of atonement, on the tenth of the seventh month, for the sanctuary (see ver. 16), because of its place among a people who defiled it ; and for the sins of the people. (Ver. 30.) On the failure of the priesthood, access is debarred to Aaron to the holy of holies,

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save on this day (see Heb. ix. 8); he puts on the linen garments, and enters with sweet incense, and the blood of the bullock of the sin-offering for himself and his house which is sprinkled upon and before the mercy-seat (Rom. iii. 25): for the people there are two goats for the sin-offering; the blood of the one upon which Jehovah's lot fell is treated as that of the bullock for the priestly house, and atonement having been made for the sanctuary and the altar of incense (Ex. xxx. 10), he confesses the sins of the people over the live goat's head (Rom. iv. 25), which bears them upon it unto a land not inhabited: putting off the linen clothes, and washing with water in the holy place, he comes out and offers the ram for the burnt-offering for himself, and that for the people; the fat of the sin-offering being consumed upon the altar, the bodies of the victims are wholly burnt without the camp, and whoever has had to do with them or the scape-goat, washes his clothes and bathes before he comes into the camp.

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It is a sabbath of rest in which to afflict their souls, when atonement is made for all their sins once a year.

CHAPTER XVII.

The blood of any beast that is killed is to be brought to the tabernacle door to offer an offering to Jehovah, and the fat consumed on the altar: they are to sacrifice to demons no more. The life of the flesh is in the blood, and it is given them upon the altar to make atonement, and is therefore forbidden to be eaten.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The statutes and judgments of Jehovah are to guide them, in doing which they should live. The marriage of those who are next of kin is forbidden, and what is uncomely in nature, and contrary to nature—the abominable customs of the inhabitants by which the land was defiled.

CHAPTER XIX.

To be holy, for Jehovah was holy—

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the principle of many directions for the conduct of the people in that which was due to Jehovah, and in their relationships with one another.

CHAPTER XX.

To be separate from evil, idolatry and corruption, and to keep His statutes as those whom Jehovah had separated to Himself.

CHAPTER XXI.

What became priests according to their place of special nearness to Jehovah as offering the offerings made by fire and the bread of their God: with any blemish they must not approach to do so, though they may eat of the holy things.

CHAPTER XXII.

Unclean they must abstain from them who of their households may partake. The offerings themselves must be without blemish.



POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY.

IN these last days, the closing days of the church's history, a little consideration of the relation of these to one another may not be out of place, for when we consider the perfection of the revelation, the greatness and blessedness of the Christian calling, there is always an inclination to seek for, indeed a desire for a perfect expression here on earth corresponding thereto. This, one may say, is natural, because the soul is not only conscious of the truth, but also of the power of it, and, if itself subject to the truth, it looks for the fruit of a like subjection in others. This is well, and more or less the hope of every child of God seeking really His glory, for the natural desire of the saved soul is "Thy will be done." But while this is so, it is well to inquire, in the present condition of the church, what prospect there is of any such expression being attained to here on earth.

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Now the first thing is the apprehension of what the church is in itself, its heavenly nature and calling—a large subject, too large to enter upon here—then the manifestations of the Holy Spirit's power in the church, when first set up in its perfection and glory and power, as shewn in Acts ii., *et seq.*, for it is to this that those who speak of power and authority turn. Then the ruin, utter and irremediable ruin of the church here below presses upon the soul, and the deeper this is felt and apprehended, the clearer will the way be seen, “How thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God.” The ruin has come in, and we are in the midst of it. And here let me say there are, as it were, two ruins, both linked together, and yet essentially distinct, namely, the ruin of man as such, and the ruin of the church as a corporate, light-bearing testimony here on earth. The former is not the subject before us; Romans vii. gives us the way of its discovery, and the way of blessing with regard to it. The latter,

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that is, the ruin of the church, is all important as to understanding the present position and the basis of any corporate testimony, as well as the individual believer's walk and responsibility in the midst of the ruins. I do not purpose to discuss the position of the church at the beginning—our business being with His mind and our pathway in the midst of its ruins—further than to point out, that it was adorned and endowed with every gift and every power, with everything necessary for it to fulfil the purpose of its being set up here in this world ; and that the possession of these gifts and of this power, and its unfaithfulness in regard to them, and to Him as having given them, is the basis of His judgment of it in Revelation i.—iii.

What I wish to point out is, what remains notwithstanding the ruins, and certain principles which may enable us to avoid, through mercy, adding to the ruins, and to find Him with us in unfailing sympathy and power. The Head, Christ Jesus our Lord, risen,

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exalted and glorified, remains ever the same ; in Ephesians—"To the church which is his body ;" in Colossians—"Of his body which is the church." In either case it is Himself as Head, and as the One from whom all blessing flows, and to whom all responsibility and allegiance is due. Responsibility, then, is to Him, both collective and individual—responsibility to be subject to Him ; this is the first, the all-important, and, alas ! difficult lesson for us to learn, so little have we really accepted the fact of the first ruin spoken of, so little have we entered into the reality of the second, and so prone are we to think we can do at least something in the midst of the ruins, and that we are not altogether powerless, save as empowered and used by Him.

Our responsibility, then, is to be subject to Him, dependent upon Him, true to Him ; not to begin building, or seeking to restore an edifice, a structure which is in absolute ruins, and which must so remain. Indeed, any such attempt will only add to the already

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existing and widespread ruin. For any such object He does and will withhold power, while for the discharge of responsibility, He gives, and will give to the end, full unlimited power. All power is ever in Him—He has not changed—but the power is meted out to us in the measure of our responsibility, with regard to the present ruin by which we are surrounded, and to Himself as our Resource and Centre in the midst of it. Where we go beyond this responsibility, the power, His power, is wanting to us, and we find ourselves involved in the consequences of the exercise of our own power, and the following of our own will, though we may not at the time have been very conscious of it, and have really desired what was good, but quite out of keeping with the past history and present ruin of the church.

It is well for us to be clear upon this point, as this has been at all times the source of sorrow, weakness and confusion in the church, leading indeed to its ruin, and is even now the great

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cause of discord and strife, despite the sharp and searching lessons He, in His grace, has taught us. Where responsibility to Him is the ground of action, there is, as I have said, always His power to sustain and to carry out the action flowing from it; and, although there may be, in some, inability to discern and thus to apprehend the action and its bearings, yet conscience, divinely awakened and alive, is not troubled by it, but is able to accept it as for His glory and in His name. On the other hand, where responsibility is overstepped, another power, that of the flesh and will, has been at work, and it is no longer a question of ability nor of inability to discern or apprehend; conscience, through grace, divinely awakened and alive, refuses as impossible the acceptance of the action, as not being for His glory or in His name. The result is then only confusion and strife. The great point for us to apprehend in heart and conscience, through grace, is that in the midst of all the ruin brought about by

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pretension and selfwill, He remains the same, and He has called us out to, and gathered us around Himself, that He may have us for Himself and to Himself in the midst of the ruins, subject to and dependent upon Himself. The moment we begin to think, much less talk, about authority and rights, we are leaving, if we have not already left, this ground. Nothing remains but His authority and His rights, and, if we are really alive to the ruin around us, we shall be satisfied with them, and seek that they should have their full unhindered sway over us, thanking God with all our hearts that these are to be found and followed out through grace, no matter what the surrounding confusion and strife may be.

But, I would add, if we look for any perfect expression in this day of its ruin, of the once beautiful, manifestly beautiful church—if the power and authority of the church is before us as an object, we shall not only be disappointed, but, what is worse, we shall not find Him with us, nor His power

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sustaining and guiding us, and confusion and further ruin will result.

Sense of and dependence upon His grace is what is lacking on all sides. I do not speak of salvation, but with reference to the testimony to Himself He has called us out to and privileged us to hear—a testimony to His name, His Person, His sufficiency and His presence. It is not so much a question of being clear on this or that point of doctrine or practice, of the right rendering of this or that passage of scripture; it is the having to do with Himself, and in humbleness of mind and in dependence upon Him and counting upon His grace, seeking to discharge our responsibility to Him. And this is true both of the individual and of the assembly. Where this is in any degree carried out there will be power and joy and communion; without it, or overstepping it, there is only confusion and adding to the ruin. It was the simply seeking to walk uprightly with regard to the freshly recovered truths, the seeking to dis-

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charge honestly, though in the greatest weakness and with many adversaries, their responsibility to Him, that led many of His people, more than half a century ago now, to walk in separation from evil in humble dependence upon Him, and in the real enjoyment of the truths they had received. May the Lord give us to know and to enjoy the reality and the blessedness of walking really with Him ; on the one hand not failing in our responsibility to Him, and not overstepping it on the other, that thus His power and His presence may be manifested to His glory and to our joy.

P. A. H.

“UNDERNEATH ARE THE EVERLASTING ARMS.”

DEUT. XXXIII.

No doubt this is figurative language, but it is a “*figure*” of an eternal “*fact*” to the faith that accepts it. It is not only true that all my sins are gone in

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the work of the cross and that I am made fit for heaven ; but it is mine to enjoy the perfect affections of the heart of Him who has done it. If these words could be said of Israel as the earthly people, to manifest the way He *nursed* (that is the meaning here) and cared for them, surely as much, and far more, can be said of the heavenly company. It is not when I am in heaven that I shall want the joy of this knowledge. It is to-day on earth that I need it.

He has not been content merely to put my sins all away, never more to be remembered, and to tell me that by-and-by, after I have struggled on here, I shall be with Him for ever in heaven. He has taken me in His arms, just as you take up a little child that is precious to you. This is more than forgiveness. It is the affection of the heart that is not content without thus displaying itself. "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John x.) And if He has us there, He wants us to enjoy the fact that we are there. But it is true of us

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all. It has cost Him all the agony of Gethsemane, and deeper sorrow still—the hiding of God’s face from Him—in order that He might thus take us into His arms. He values that which has cost Him so much.—“When he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” That pearl is the church ; but we must take it up individually when the church collectively has lost the joy of it. Individual saints will have some of this joy up to the end.

“Underneath are the everlasting arms.” They never grow weary. Heap up all the weight of sorrow and care upon me that can be (and Satan and the world and my own heart are not unskilful at this work), I still say, “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” I have not to carry one jot of it alone. He who carries me will not weary of His burden, for His are “*everlasting arms.*”

The apostle John seems to have accepted by faith the *affection* that delighted to have him near itself more

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than any of the other apostles did. He shewed it in that he "leaned on his breast at supper," and repeatedly speaks of himself as the "disciple that Jesus loved." Do *you* think sometimes of yourself as the disciple that Jesus loves? That He has you in those everlasting arms, and that He will *never* put you down to leave you to walk alone? John did thus think of it. Had he any more claim on it than you? We find his attitude was "on his bosom," as he tells us of himself in his Gospel, during those closing scenes of the Saviour's life with them on earth. He writes of it again in his first epistle: "We have known and *believed* the love that God *hath* [not *had*] to us." (1 John iv. 16.)

And what was the effect on him of believing it? It was that "all fear" was gone. "Perfect love," he says, "casteth out fear"—"He that feareth is not made perfect in love." He was in those arms and he knew it, and you cannot introduce fear there. It is an immense thing to keep it as a present

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fact—to “*believe* the love that God hath to us.” For when, later, as a poor exile, he stood alone, as far as man was concerned, in the isle that is called Patmos, the same present love is his comfort and joy: “Unto him that *loveth** us,” is still his language in chapter iv. 5.

“To know the love of Christ,” that *passeth* knowing, refers to His *present* love. It must be so. How He loves me now and always, right on to the end—for my heart to rest in it. The apostle, in Ephesians iii., prays that the saints may know this love of Christ. But, mark—it is **THERE** to be known by them. “Underneath [me—you] are the everlasting arms.”

“He layeth it on his shoulder [that shoulder that “hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows”] **REJOICING.**” Who rejoices? He does. It is *His* joy here. (Luke xv.) He places the sheep there. “*In his arms*”—“*On his shoulder*”—“*in his hand*,” and it is

* Oxford Revised Version, 1881.

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His HEART that has got no other place for us than this. Why not *dwell* there consciously always? "And we have known and *believed* the love that God hath to us." "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." If we dwell there, we shall move through this world, stamped and coloured by it.

H. C. A.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST AND ITS EFFECTS.

"WE love him, because he first loved us." It is as we know His love that our love grows. Our love corresponds with our knowledge of Christ's love. His love "*passeth knowledge*," but as we know it we are affected by it. We do not love Him beyond the measure of His love known to us. The act of His love draws out our love according to the gain which we derive from it. If His act in dying for us were in any

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degree truly estimated, no subsequent act of His could increase our love to Him, because there could be no greater act than that a man should "lay down his life for his friends." The sense of my benefit from His act is the first cause of my attachment. "To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." As my heart grows in the sense of the benefit He has secured for me, the more am I indebted to Him and the bond of affection increased.

The assurance of safety from judgment through His blood affects the young believer in a very marked way. The value and efficacy of the thing done is the great and constant theme. Hence at this stage there is ever an exclusive attention to the need of sinners. I do not mean with those called to be evangelists, but it is the mark of every one at this stage, because the efficacy of the work is the prominent thought in the mind. The thief exhorts his comrade, and Andrew seeks his brother Peter. The woman who had touched the hem of Christ's garment

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had reached this point, she was really relieved ; the assurance of her safety was clear and positive. I say the response to this measure is the earnest proclaiming of the efficacy of His death, and I speak of Him as the sinner's Friend. As a rule, the evangelical class do not get beyond this.

The next stage is when the heart, relieved of its burden, seeks to know the Lord personally. Like the man who had been possessed with the devil —“prayed him that he might be with him”—or the woman in the Pharisee's house ; she braves everything to make His acquaintance, and to acknowledge to Him how she appreciates Him. Like the woman who had touched Him, and is not only relieved and healed, but she falls down before Him and tells Him all the truth. This stage has a very distinct mark. As in the former, the efficacy of the work to effect my safety was the one subject ever present, and ever insisted on, now an entirely new one pre-occupies me. Of course, the first has not lost any

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of its value because I am occupied with Him personally who has secured my safety. In this stage there is the most interesting experience. The assurance of safety is unequalled as to the relief it affords, but the sense that I am actually acquainted with the One who has done this great service for me is entrancing. I believe some of the brightest pages in all our religious literature only aim at this stage ; as it were, crave it. The mark that I have reached it is that it is Himself who is pre-eminently before my mind and thoughts. I delight, like a Jonathan, or the woman in Luke vii. 37, to strip myself in order to express my appreciation of Him. I have now arrived at love for Himself personally ; but this, because I am assured of His personal love for me. Now this is a great difference from the first stage. For instance, I might avail myself of the great benefit of safety through the blood of Christ, as vouchsafed to us by God, a greater benefit than that of the pool of Bethesda, open and

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common to the weakest as well as to the strongest. I might be abundantly thankful for the benefit, but though my heart would own the goodness of God, and His mercy to us all, I could have all this without the sense of being personally and individually loved by Him. This is my great and unique gain in becoming acquainted with Him. I find that I am personally an object to Him, and this produces the corresponding effect that He is an object to me.

Now a great deal is embraced in this stage, and few indeed now-a-days advance beyond it. As the benefit of His work was the mark of the first, Himself as an object marks the second. Let us try and put together all that is embraced in this stage.

He cannot be known now but in resurrection, hence the first thing assured to the heart, entering on this stage, is that He is risen. Many a long and joyful hour the heart has spent over this great fact; for connected with this fact, justification is enjoyed,

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and consequently peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The enemy is silenced, death is abolished, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, and not this only, but I am set free from the law of sin and death. Two things are necessary in order that I may enjoy acquaintance with Christ who personally loves me. The one, that He has placed me in God's righteousness, or how could I be at home with Him? The other, that I am free of the law of sin which is in me. Now while it is plain that I could not come near Him but for the first, yet I cannot enjoy Him if I am not delivered from "the body of this death," or if the flesh which persecutes Him in me has a right to interfere. Now many through grace can enter into the objective side of all this; that is, they can see what Christ has effected, that He has made peace by the blood of His cross, and that our old man has been crucified with Him—all blessedly true, and all affording great delight to

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the heart, so that we can "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ ;" but yet, from not entering into the subjective side, namely, what is given to me, there is not rest nor ease in the company of Christ. The subjective side is that "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." I have no doubt that many who have tasted of the exceeding joy of personal acquaintance with Christ, have been repelled and checked by the concurrent sense of their own unfitness to be near Him, and that a delay, often of years, has occurred to their realising the fondest desires of their hearts, because the nearer they were to Him, the more they felt that they were not free from the law of sin and death. Nay, many and deep yearnings of heart, or days of distress have been experienced by them in their pursuit after it. The mass of the pious aspirations and the cravings of real affection spring from hearts who have touched this stage, but are not really in it.

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When I can undistractedly enjoy the Lord as being a personal object to Him—as Joseph was known to his brethren when he wept and said, “I will nourish you, and your little ones”—He is an object to me. I long to declare at great cost to myself that I love Him, and would make Him in every way known and honoured.

When I am at rest in His company I am sensibly free from everything which would render me uncomfortable there, and I enter on a new stage or experience. The desire to be acquainted with Him is gratified, and I am happy in His company. Now it is His company which absorbs my heart. And as He was an object to me in the former, the effect of His company is to wean me from everything but Himself, because in His company I lack nothing. Like the Queen of Sheba, there is no spirit left in me. If I have trials or difficulties here, in His company I am soothed and comforted. He sympathises with me in my infirmities, and in the holiest He leads

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me into the knowledge of the Father, where I am transformed into the same image of His glory. Whether above or below He is indispensable to me; and now in response to this enlarged acquaintance with His love, I not only gladly surrender property here to honour Him, but I am weaned from everything here, and have no enjoyment but where He is. I can truly say now, "Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried." Peter in the fervour of it exclaims, "Why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake." And Mary of Bethany, still more touchingly, when she enters into the thought of His approaching death, breaks the box of spikenard "very costly," and pours it on His head. What could be of value to her here when He was gone?

Hence the mark of one in this experience is that this place, and all that which would gain for me distinction or gratification here is buried with Him. It is not easy to describe this stage, unless one is really in it. One

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cannot truly describe a sentiment or an experience which one has never had. A description which is only an imagination, though founded on fact, leaves the soul more barren than if it had never thought of it, because it has wandered into the region of unreality. To traffic with truths in an unreal way, is sure to lead to indifference as to the real—like poets, who are often most sublime when they were practically most defective. At all events, it is evident that any one in this experience is a pilgrim here. His heart is in heaven, where He is who is the solace of it, and this is the mark of the one in this experience.

There remains but one stage more. When the heart finds no solace but in the company of Christ, the truth of the mystery becomes not only an easy one to apprehend, but the very one acceptable to the heart. The full consequence of His giving Himself for me is only known when I know that I am a member of His body. To one, lonely when apart from Him, no tidings could

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be more acceptable than that there existed union between Him and me, the closest bond which never could be severed. It is not only "One spirit with the Lord," but "No man ever yet hated his own flesh ; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ the church ; for we are members of his body." No announcement could be more gratifying to a heart rejoicing in the boundless resources in His company, than that we are united to Him as closely as a body to a head. Now when I enter into the magnitude of this fact, I begin to grasp the climax that His heart looked forward to respecting us, "when he loved the church and gave himself for it." It is when I reach this height, that I in any true degree enter into the love which led Him to die, to emancipate me from all the misery I was in, and to raise me to the level where He could enjoy and use me as part of Himself, and as I enjoy this, the full result of His love, as I "apprehend with all saints the breadth and length and

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depth and height" of the vast expanse of glory where He is, I fall back to His love from which I derive it all, and know now that "it passeth knowledge." The mark that I know union with Him is very definite. The response to this, the fullest expression of His love, is that His interests are mine. As "a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband," so the heart knowing union and enjoying it cannot be diverted from Him. His heart "doth safely trust in her, . . . she will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." In concert with His pleasure she is found here devoting herself to all that concerns Him, awaiting His return; but while doing so, devoting herself in unremitting zeal to every circle of his interest in the fidelity of the bride.

In the first stage it is the benefit of His blood; in the second, the attractiveness of Himself; in the third, His company; and in the fourth, and last, the membership of His body.



SANCTIFICATION.

WE are set apart to God after the same manner and measure as Christ. Is not He our Sanctification? Have we any less? He, up there in the glory, is the manner and measure of our separateness to God. That will not do for half-and-half people. That is the sanctification of John xvii. Christ sanctified Himself—set Himself apart for us. We are sanctified through and through; not according to our own ideas. He is the only form, manner, and measure of it. Anything but that—Christ *where He now is*, mark!—is a mere figment of our own. People adopt other things because they have not faith to look into glory and see Christ there, “who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” Could we add to that righteousness or to that sanctification? Not one atom! Can we add to that Christ in glory? Impossible! But it is only by the Spirit of God that it can be known in our hearts.

W. T.

A FEAST PREPARED FOR CHRIST.

LUKE V. 27-32 ; JOHN XII. 1-3.

THESE scriptures record in detail two notable instances in the New Testament of a feast prepared for the blessed Lord : true, the scenes and occasions are different, yet there are certain great moral features in both which link them on, in a way, the one to the other.

In Luke v., Levi is called by the blessed Lord in these words, "Follow me." Who was this Levi ? Why, none other than a publican, the detested exacter of the Roman tribute, which was itself the standing memorial of the sin of Israel as a nation, for else why were they bound under the yoke of this tax ? Levi, a Jew, a publican ! Such were hated by the people and were disreputable in the last degree, hence publicans are classed with sinners, as the very outcasts of society : such

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was the man Levi among men whom the Lord Jesus thus calls. Moreover, at the time of the call, he was prosecuting his hated avocation, sitting at the receipt of custom ; thus everything was so arranged as to make the grace of God prominent at this moment. The call of the Lord was absolute and distinct : "Follow me." None but Himself could so command, none but Himself could secure the allegiance of the heart, causing it to respond in His own way—namely, even to Levi, *leaving all, rising up, and following Him*—just observe the *separating* power of the call—Levi, we are told, "*left all.*" How blessed this is ! His call took Levi out of all former detention, as really as, "I that speak unto thee am he" took the poor Samaritan away from all that previously controlled her heart. In that call to Levi, was there not something more than a mere claim so to speak from One who, though Man, was God ?

I believe the call *communicated* what it *claimed*. I am assured that there

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was conveyed to Levi's heart, at that moment, some taste, however feeble, of what was in the heart of God, which was manifested and witnessed in Him who was the only-begotten of the Father, God manifested in flesh: this and this alone accounts for Levi's feast; he spreads it and furnishes his table, as it were, in the power of the revelation which had visited him, a very day-spring from on high surely.

Now observe who it is and what they are who here entertain the Lord of glory: "a great company of publicans," and sinners—it was "a great feast"—for great was the motive power which had entered his heart who spread the table; further it was "a great feast," for great was the lift out of everything which Levi's heart had received and taken in, for he rose up and left all. Beloved readers, have we risen up, as it were, and left all to follow Jesus? Alas! how little, He knows, who appreciates, ever so little, of that which is the fruit of His own love. And, further still, it was a great feast, for

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great was the company who there were gathered by Levi to entertain the Lord of life and glory. What a scene it is, whatever way we view it, whether we look at the host or the guests, or Himself who was invited there, and who sat there amidst publicans and sinners. It is beyond all expression blessed, when our hearts are in accord with the heart and thought of God in His own blessed ways of grace and goodness; assured I am of this, that it is not natural to any of us, the pride of our hearts resents it, the pharisaism of poor fallen humanity cannot reach up to anything so glorious as this—it is the rock on which it splits. Hence we read of this grace in God only calling forth murmurings from men (ver. 30) which is further met by His own blessed, gracious words, “They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick,” “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

How comforting to know that it was the “sick” and “sinners” that suited His mercy, who brought every grace

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that was in God down into man, and took every sorrow that was in man up into God, Him of whom it was so blessedly said :

“ Love that made Thee a mourner
 In this sad world of woe,
 Made wretched man a scorner
 Of grace that brought Thee low ;
 Still, in Thee love's sweet savour
 Shone forth in every deed,
 And shew'd God's loving favour
 To every soul in need.”

That which follows here shews us how the Lord was breaking, as it were, out of the old thing, out of Israel. It was not that there was not the most complete faithfulness *to* Israel, but the order of things which had hitherto obtained was now breaking up. Those who owned in His blessed Person the Messiah—the Bridegroom of Israel, as it were—could not fast ; while He was there fasting would be out of place, out of season ; but the time was coming when the Bridegroom should be taken away from them, that is, when the

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cross would be taken by the blessed One. This would alter everything for the children of the bride-chamber ; in those days, fasting would be their proper attitude.

Then He shews how impossible it was to fasten Christianity on to Judaism, flesh and the law combined ; but there is no power that can make grace and the law to amalgamate : it is not possible to put the new wine of the Spirit, *into* the old bottles of Judaism. The Old and the New cannot be made into a fusion, such would be destructive to one side or another, the new wine must be put in *new bottles* !

Observe what we have here, namely, *old wine, old bottles, new wine, new bottles*, these are great contrasts ; in the present day we find, on the one hand, some endeavouring to put the new wine into old bottles, others actually asserting that the old things are they which have become new ! For such the old is not ended and the new is not introduced ; thank God, it is *not* so, sad though it be, that the human mind should so

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work on the things of God as to weave out theories and notions of this kind. It is not even as good as an attempt to patch up the old, for it is not even putting a piece of new garment on the old. The truth is there is a "*new bottle*" and there is "*new wine*."

Then comes a word of a very practical nature in verse 39. May the Lord give us to lay it to heart: if we indulge in the old, we have no divine relish, no taste, for the new; we then say, "the old is better." Alas! how we see on every side a decided preference for that which is old, the forms of man after the flesh, and not the energy of that which came from God.

Now the second occasion to which I have alluded will take us to John xii., we read, "there they made him a *supper*"—and this occasion and its feast, has its own characteristics as well as the other. First, it is at Bethany—that one sequestered spot on earth where Jesus was at home—there was Martha, who we are told *served*; Lazarus who *sat* at the table; and Mary

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who anointed His feet with very costly ointment and wiped His feet with her hair. How blessed to be permitted to view this scene, and, by faith, to enter into it! All is in such divine and perfect order here, whether Martha *serving*, or Lazarus *sitting*, or Mary *anointing*; what a blessed family, where His heart found what was congenial to it! Still, remember, we are privileged also to be divinely intelligent as to that which most of all *served Him*, and met Him, on this occasion, for this it was which so fully gave its character to Mary's part in this feast; she understood Him, and entered into the circumstances through which He was about to pass, and this was grateful to His heart, this really entertained Him; on Mary's part it was *intelligent sympathy*. He was about to enter into an inconceivable solitude, the solitude of death; her heart and affection in true and genuine sympathy, traverses with Him the dreary, lonely path, as well as by her act, marks her sense of the utter worthlessness of all around in

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view of His death ; on the one hand, she intelligently, having taken in the living water into her heart, understood there was that which was beyond all blessing on earth, even Jesus Himself ; on the other hand, declaring that his tomb should bury out of her sight all else valuable on earth ! For her, if Jesus dies, He carries all of hers down into the grave with Himself. That "pound of ointment of spikenard very costly," answered to all that was around Jesus, in the hatred and malignity of man in that hour. Very blessed to see Him sit there to be thus served ; to see Him accepting and vindicating the affection and sympathy which His own Person had created and called forth ; to see her, too, fruit as she was of His grace, expending on Him to whom she owed her all—*that all*, as another has touchingly and blessedly expressed it. Mary, as it were, says by this action of hers, "While the king sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof."

There is another point of solemn in-

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terest in the very affecting scene, namely, how opposite the thoughts of men are to what suits the mind of God and His Christ. The most that could be said concerning Mary's act was, that it was waste that was stamped upon it in their eyes. Oh, how little was He in their estimation who measured the service His blessed Person called forth at this worth ! For it is the Person to whom the service is rendered that is the true measure of its value. Jesus the eternal Son of the Father ; Jesus the spotless and perfect Son of God ; Jesus the willing and ready Friend of need and want and sorrow, stood so low in their estimation as to call forth the expression of waste in regard to that which was thus voluntarily expended upon Him. It is the same to-day--the present is but the continuance of the past ; the family character, as it were, is not wanting in the present generation, namely, a growing indifference to Christ--no sense of who He is or what He is--marks each succeeding generation ; and that of

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to-day, with all its boasted light and advancement in science and knowledge and arts, uses even these things to manifest how little it thinks of, or cares for Him. (See Ecc. ix. 15.)

There is one bright spot here in this dark background, as it were, on which let us turn our eyes for a moment. Jesus understood her action and its motive, appreciates it, and vindicates her. How blessed ! Was it not enough for her ? Let me say, Far more than enough : and hence He lets all know what He felt and received in that act of hers. "Let her alone" were blessed words for her, "against the day of my burying hath she kept this," was all her heart could desire. Oh the joy of being vindicated by Christ, and the satisfaction of knowing, that however feebly, we have truly and really ministered to the longings of His heart !

The Lord impart this devoted intelligence to us all in such days as these, that more genuine affection for, and true sympathy with Him, may mark us, and that nothing may be able to

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divert our hearts from Him, nothing may engage our powers but Him, and satisfy our affections but Himself.

W. T. T.

THE POWER OF THE ENEMY AND HIS MODES OF ASSAULT.

As "the whole world lieth in the wicked one," it is necessary for progress in the ways of God that one should know the devices of the enemy, and at the same time be prepared for a greater measure of his opposition. We should ever bear in mind our Lord's last words: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." (John xvii. 15.) From this it is evident that we are in a place of danger. Hence we read in another place, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." If at conversion the power of the enemy were for ever silenced, we should have a

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comparatively easy pilgrimage, or race homewards. But seeing that we are in the enemy's country, and that we cannot evade or overcome him by any power of our own—that is, that we cannot escape but in proportion as we are succoured by the power of Christ who has spoiled the strong man—it is necessary and incumbent on us to look well to our way. We never can be master of the situation if we do not understand the nature of the situation. The situation is that Satan is “the god of this world,” “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;” as the Lord said of the Jews, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” It is not merely that I am in an enemy's land, but there is in myself a deadly treachery to yield to him. “I am carnal, sold under sin.” I have to encounter an enemy who has immediately under him everything in this world, even to the very air; and at the same time, instead of being naturally proof to

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him, I am naturally the ready servant of sin. In the flesh sin is preferred to holiness.

Now when I realise the situation in its true bearings, I am convinced that nothing can shield me, or enable me to walk in victory here, but the power of Him who has overcome: no one can be an overcomer otherwise. I am in a country where there is an ever active pestilence, to which I am predisposed; and yet this is hardly the real state of the case; for the enemy of all good is unrelenting in his malice, and therefore he is ever arranging toils and snares to destroy me; ever seeking that some one may fall; he "walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

Now that we understand the situation, let us ascertain the only way in which we can be overcomers. Seeing that the assault is at once powerful, varied, and insidious, and that our susceptibility is continued and unalterable, it is of the deepest importance that we should be ever on our guard, and thus be able to detect the nature

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of the attack. In vain the net is spread in the sight of any one on the wing. Forewarned is forearmed. The first thing that is self-evident to any one in such circumstance is that unless we have the power by which our Lord walked here, we cannot walk here. Our blessed Lord who was here, "the Son of man which is in heaven," bore up unscathed against all the adverse influences. They laboured to curtail or limit that beautiful plant which grew up in a dry land. They could not, and would not, see the worth and comeliness of it. He, blessed be His name, made space for the exhibition of divine beauty in everything, from the lowest detail of human life, to the highest service unto God ; from "the hyssop that springeth out of the wall" unto the "cedar of Lebanon." One unbroken life of divine beauty from the cradle to the cross ; a life in its depth and perfection ever before God, as the pot of manna in the ark of the covenant prefigured. Every power and art of the enemy has been overcome by

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the Man Christ Jesus, and it is only as we receive from Him, and walk in His Spirit, that we can be in any degree overcomers.

Now the first help against the enemy is light. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light." The exercise of the senses is to discern good and evil, and this is the great quality of a spiritual man, he "discerneth all things." He can "nicely distinguish between two things in which there is the least difference." Now I cannot have light unless I am using the light. "In thy light shall we see light." "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." It is an immense blessing that we are in the light, and thus we can see the very beginnings of the enemy's designs against us.

The most general artifice of the enemy is to conceal the snare by an

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agreeable bait. A fish nibbles at the bait which conceals the hook. There is ever a feeling at first, that you have gained a great advantage. It is generally a long interval before one awakes to the fact that there was a hook concealed by the bait, and that one is taken captive by it.

There are various baits. Let us ascertain how the bait, this mode of the enemy's power, succeeds.

When the bait is before me more than the light, I am sure to be caught by it. The bait of bettering my condition or gratifying myself, is the most common one ; and it was by this bait that Eve was caught. There was the plain word of God against this bait, but the bait so pre-occupied Eve's mind, that the word of God was easily deprived of its true meaning by the enemy, and she was taken captive, and perhaps she did not immediately feel any sorrowful consequences from her act. The light always refers to God, and then it is not how will the act benefit me, but how will it be

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approved of by God ? It is very simple. In the one case I have my own advantage before me ; in the other, God is before me, and He sways me. In the light God is always omnipotent. I may class under this head Noah, who, though he did not intend to drink to excess when he began, was beguiled on by a desire to gratify himself. Also Lot ; the green fields, the prospect of gain, governed him. Also David, in a very sad way, at the very time he ought to have been at the battle. Ananias and Sapphira are examples of the way the bait of advancing oneself crops up in the church, as it had in the case of Achan in a former day. With a little reflection we must see the way each of these examples had been decoyed, and how pleased they were at first at their success, in no way apprehending that deep sorrow was awaiting them, in turning aside from God to gratify and exalt themselves. It is under this head that the greatest number are drawn away by the enemy.

The artifice of the enemy that I

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would place next is fear. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." Abraham abandons the land, and goes down into Egypt because of a famine. It seems more excusable to turn aside because of impending suffering, than for mere gratification or advancement ; still it is yielding to the enemy. Fear is the enemy's great engine of force in the wilderness. By the wilderness I mean the sphere where we are placed in dependence on God. Fear led to the day of provocation. The report of the land, the giants, and the cities walled up to heaven, worked upon them, and they lost confidence in God. Amalek coming out to fight against Israel, indicated the enemy's object, namely, to deter them from advancing ; consequently the hindermost ones and the feeble ones were cut off.

Now it is to be noted, that there are Christians in this day, who would not be turned aside by proffers of mere advancement and gratification, who literally have deviated from the heavenly path, because they regard it

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as an impossibility. They practically despise the pleasant land. Fear has worked upon them as fear wrought on Jonah, and on Peter, and possibly on Mark, when he returned from Pamphylia. Hence the apostle says to Timothy, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear." "Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." "I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Under this head I may place the days of darkness and distress which many souls after their conversion pass through. It is typified by Israel in the interval between the passover and crossing the Red Sea, when Pharaoh was pressing on their heels.

The third and next mode by which the enemy succeeds against a soul is popularity. Balaam devised this mode of entrapping and overcoming Israel after they had left the wilderness, and were in the vigour of a new generation about to enter the land. It is important to note that whenever Satan uses a new stratagem it is the one most likely

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to ensnare his intended victim in the advance he has made. The world is now to flatter the people of God. They are invited to join them in social life. Woe be to the Christian when he stands so well with the world that he can be received socially. The man of God could not be popular with the man of the world. The great proof of power in a heavenly man, as typified by Israel in Canaan, is that he is an exterminator of the old inhabitant. The man in the flesh is allowed no place. Hence no one can be popular either in ministry or socially but he must in some way compromise the truth of God. Alas, they find "That the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell"! In this world where the Christian naturally expects opposition, it is not to be wondered at that any measure of acceptance is hailed with pleasure. Surely the enemy expected that he would have beguiled Paul and Silas when the woman with the spirit of divination so favourably proclaimed them. The more popular a servant of

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God is, the less the measure of truth he enjoys and declares. The danger of popularity is that like Israel I become corrupted by the very element which commends me. The man who ministers to the human element in others, and thus calls forth commendation, is sure to increase that element in himself to his sore loss and sorrow.

The next artifice by which the enemy causes many to fall I may call indolence. By indolence, I mean the want of earnestness in possessing, and of extending in order to preserve. Many a one rests satisfied with what he has attained to. Very often as intelligence increases, earnestness declines. The history of many a bright soul is told in the words, "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting." "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you." If there be "adding," as we see in 2 Peter i., there is vigour of soul. "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the

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knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The failure of Israel in the land is to be attributed to their indolence. They were put in possession, and were to secure it by driving out the previous inhabitants of the land. The extermination of the former inhabitant only ensured it. To arrive at this indisputable possession was their calling; but they were indolent, they rested on their oars, and fell under the influence of the man they would not exterminate, so that eventually they were carried into Babylon. When we compromise we are victimised. No greater blow can be given to the testimony than that a saint should accept the heavenly position, as many have done in name, and then through indolence not maintain it, so that the measure already acquired is lost, and the once champion for this great position is eventually found enjoying and cultivating the luxuries of Babylon. The enemy there is spiritual. "The rulers of the darkness of this world," &c. The whole of Satan's forces are used to hinder and

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neutralise the life and ways of a heavenly man. When one is not pressing on, one will ere long cease to occupy the position in name, and the once great advocate of heavenly truth will be degraded to a captive in Babylon—the world of natural refinement. To this I suppose “all that are in Asia” fell, as also Demas who loved the course of this world. It is a solemn thing to be set in and assured of a great position, and yet to lose it, because of not maintaining it. All power ceases to be useful if not used.

Another mode of the enemy's power is persecution. God may allow me to suffer at the enemy's hand, like Job, in order that I may be a more efficient servant. “They which live are always delivered unto death.” “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” We may find it very unaccountable and trying, but if we go on in patience we shall find “the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy,” and that He prepares a table for us in the

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presence of our enemies, as He did for Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and as He did for Stephen, and for the children of the captivity.

Another is, when because of the work of the Lord prospering in our hand, we fall into self-confidence, as David when he would number the people ; or, as we often see now-a-days, a growing confidence in man's own resources to do the work of the Lord, culminating in the terrible words, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."

Lastly, I may notice another mode by which Satan effects much mischief. I may call it spiritual assumption.

Simon in Acts viii. is an extreme sample of it. He sought to obtain spiritual power by money, and in every case where it obtains, there is at length a disclosure of the hollowness and wickedness of the assumption. "They shall utterly perish in their own corruption." They "are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest." But though in the true it

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will not appear in this grievous form and extent, yet it is the effort of the enemy to induce saints to undertake higher services than they are called to by God, and thus the enemy has succeeded under this head.

A man may do good service like Joab, and yet in avenging his own personal wrongs he overlooks the king's interest, and eventually is judged of God.

I need not add more. The Lord keep us near Himself, and thus able to resist the devil in every or any way in which he may assail us.

I only call attention to these varied modes. The Lord give us grace to walk so in the light that we may detect the very commencement of Satan's plans.

CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE.

It is a great and wonderful reality to have to do with the Lord Himself, and to be in subjection to Him ; to learn

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the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, who never obeyed from fear of consequences, but because it was His delight. Christian obedience is that which flows from the delight of the soul in giving satisfaction to Him ; but if you are to be in subjection to this Person, you must learn for your own soul who this Person is. You must have to do with Himself individually, learning Him in the character of Son of God. He wants to have you for Himself, body, soul and spirit ! Yes ; *you* ! not only the religious part of you, but *you*, just as you are. He has loved you, and paid a price for you, and from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot you are His. The question becomes not what befits *me*, but what does *He* like ? And so we seek through His grace, with a joy which those only who practise it know, to give satisfaction to Jesus. The end of walking as *you* think right is only waste of time and bitterness of soul. There is nothing like the joy of giving satisfaction to Him, who knows all about you, but who has put into you a

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new nature, and can enable you to go through all difficulties to His glory.

P. A. H.

LIFE—AS TO OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS COMPARED WITH NEW.

“ALL the elect get eternal life from Christ’s hands (an ugly expression, but what it means is fully admitted). Will any get less, Mr. B. asks, can any get more? Now this proves distinctly only one thing, that the idea of the body and bride of Christ has never entered into Mr. B.’s mind at all. By life we are sons with the Father, Christ the Firstborn among many brethren. Infinite privilege and blessing. But by union with Christ we are the body and the bride of our risen Head, the Man Christ Jesus.”

J. N. D.

[*In reply to Rev. David Brown, A.M. (Morrish), p. 25.*]

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