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COMFORT AND FOOD

FOR THE WEARY AND HUNGRY.

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

“FOR EXHORTATION, EDIFICATION, AND COMFORT,”
(1 Cor. xiv. 3).

EDITED BY J. A. V. POSECK.

“Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God.”
(Isai. xl. 1.)

“A word in season to him that is weary.”
(Isai. l. 4.)

“Feed the flock of God.”
(1 Pet. v. 2.)

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FOUR REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.*

CHAPTER I.

A "Horn Filled with Oil."

"And the Lord said to Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil and go; I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite." (1 Sam. xvi. 1.)

It is well in our days to remember those words of the Lord to His faithful, yet gracious prophet. What a fatal resemblance the religion of these latter days bears to that of Saul, preferring sacrifices to obedience, and the fat of rams to the hearkening to God's word!

Would God there was amongst us more of the *mourning* of Samuel, and of the spirit of humiliation and intercession of a Daniel and a Nehemiah! But in those men of faith, their mourning was followed by a decided witness and activity in the energy of faith, which proved the reality and genuineness of their previous mourning.

We, therefore, do well to remember the word of the Lord to Samuel: "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? *Fill thine horn with oil and go*; I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite."

Difference between Samuel and the Christian Believer.

We are not prophets, it is true. We are more than prophets, for "he that is least in the Kingdom of heaven, is greater than he," that is, greater than even Christ's forerunner, who was "great before the Lord," and "more than a prophet," and "no prophet"—not even Moses—"greater than he."

* The main part of this paper appeared ten years ago in the "Christian Testimony." But the principles of truth propounded therein becoming of greater import day by day, it is now reprinted.

* But not only *are* we more than prophets (whose faithfulness ought to humble us to the very dust); we also *have* infinitely more than they. Samuel might be told to "fill his horn with oil," to anoint Jesse's son King over Israel. But we, beloved child of God, have an "unction from the Holy One, and know all things." God has anointed us, also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Samuel was told to fill his horn with oil, and go and anoint Jesse's son.—*We* are enjoined to be "filled with the Spirit (which is more than being "sealed" by the Spirit), and "go" and glorify—not David, but David's Son and Lord. We are to forget things which are behind (*i.e.*, the religion of both the Sauls), and make much, nay everything of Christ. The religion of the Old Testament Saul at Gibeah was the same, as to its nature and effects, as that of the Saul of the New Testament in Jerusalem. The former persecuted David, and the latter David's Son and Lord; only that through God's marvellous grace and power, this Saul was turned into a Paul, the greatest servant of Christ. He had done it in ignorance, not so the former.

What then means to us "*a horn filled with oil?*" Simply, our being "filled with the Spirit." And how does the Spirit act? The Lord said to His disciples, when speaking of the Holy Ghost, whom they were to receive of Him :

"He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

And no sooner had that promise in marvellous grace and blessing been fulfilled at Pentecost, and the Holy Ghost come down upon the disciples in the shape of fiery cloven tongues (*i.e.*, for both, Jews and Gentiles), than He at once began, through the mouth of Peter, to glorify the Name of Him, whose Person God has glorified in Heaven, and whose Name (which expresses His Person), God wills to be glorified on earth. The very first name in the first Gospel preached at Pentecost is the most adorable Name of "*Jesus.*" And how does the Spirit, through the Apostle, conclude?

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord and Christ*."

And what was Paul's first testimony at Damascus?

"And straightway he preached *Christ*" (*i.e.*, the risen, ascended, exalted and glorified *Jesus*), "that he is the Son of God." (Acts ix. 20.)

Such was the testimony of the Holy Ghost then, and such is it now. "*He shall glorify me.*" The Spirit of glory, which rests upon us, points upwards to the glorified One, Who sent Him down from Heaven. As Jesus, when on earth, glorified His Father in heaven, so does now the Holy Ghost on earth glorify Jesus, the heavenly Christ.*

And our heavenly *Christ* ["Anointed"] in His character as Head of the Church, His body, has given us the Holy Oil, "the anointing from the Holy One," not only in our priestly and royal character, but as such, whose first and paramount duty it is, to "glorify Christ." And if that blessed heavenly Guest, that dwells in us, is not grieved, our eyes will follow the direction of His uplifted finger, that points to a glorified Christ, and we shall be ready with joyful lips to proclaim the virtues and excellencies of Him who has called us from darkness into His marvellous light. The Spirit's comforting and teaching us is not the first thing, but His glorifying Christ. It is not we, but Christ, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

Beloved, is our "horn filled with oil?" Are we "filled with the Spirit?" Stephen, a man subjected to like passions, as we are, when "full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."

* In John i. 41, Jesus appears as the *earthly* Christ ["Anointed"], *i.e.*, *Messiah*, in Acts ii. (in a transitional way) as the *heavenly* Christ, yet ready to return to the earth as Israel's earthly Messiah, if Israel would receive Him. (Acts iii. 19-21.) In Ephesians we behold Him definitely seated at God's right hand in glory, in His heavenly character as the Christ [Anointed], Head of the Church, His body.

Let us ask ourselves again : Does that wondrous Divine Person dwell within us an ungrieved Guest? If so, our horn will be filled with the Holy Oil of consecration to "crown Him Lord of all."

" Till there with yonder sacred throng,
We at His feet shall fall ;
There join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all."

Him, God's chosen One, precious to Him, and precious to us, through grace. What a privilege, what joy in this dark and disconsolate time of a *Christless* religion, to glorify Christ and exalt His blessed Great Name, and praise His excellencies, both divine and human, His perfections both as Son of Man and Son of God.

But Samuel, when coming to Saul's house with his horn filled with oil, had not been told *which* of Jesse's sons was the Lord's chosen one. He had to learn an important and salutary lesson. For when Jesse began to make his sons pass before the prophet, Samuel looked at the tall, stately form and the handsome face of Eliab ; and remembering Saul's stately and handsome appearance, who " was higher than any of the people, from his shoulders and upward," he said (within himself, I suppose) ;* " Surely, the Lord's anointed is before him." He forgot that God had given the people a King according to their own heart and mind, had given them a King in His anger, and was about soon to remove him in His wrath.

An Important Lesson.

" But the Lord said to Samuel : ' Look not on his ' [Eliab's] countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him : for the Lord seeth not as man seeth ; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

For Samuel it was not enough to bring his horn with the oil in it. He had to learn that all-important lesson, to enable him to discern, which of Jesse's sons was the Lord's chosen one. So for us beloved, it is not sufficient

* Eliab's heart soon betrayed itself. (Ch. xvii. 28.)

to have the "anointing from the Holy One," blessed security as this may be, even for the youngest babe in Christ, against the subversive and seductive spirits of anti-Christian doctrines in these "last days" and "perilous times." Under the sure guidance of that blessed Spirit, we are to "try the spirits," discerning the only true Christ from the many false ones, and glorify God's Elect and Chosen One, *God's Christ*, remembering the words of the great Apostle of the Church: "Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?" and: "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." Remembering all this, we have, like Samuel, to learn that lesson, so hard to nature, not to look at *outward appearances*.—I do not add: "but at the heart," for that is God's province, who alone searcheth the reins and the hearts—but to test everything by the *written Word of God*. "Neither the Spirit without the Word, nor the Word without the Spirit," is a sound and safe principle of truth in our days especially. It is not merely: "Have you got Christ?" but *what Christ* have you received? Is it *God's Christ*? Is it the Christ of *Scripture, or not*? As it will be at a not very distant time, when the cry will be raised: "*Here is Christ*," and "*there is Christ*," just before the appearance of Anti-christ himself; so in our days, in doctrines, books and sermons of all kinds, *Christ* is taught and proclaimed. But *what Christ*, dear reader? Is it the *Christ of God*? Is it the same, of whom [the Apostle wrote: "Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth,—*Christ is preached*, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice?" If so, it will be the Christ of God's Word—the *written Christ*. The *ascended Christ*,—the *written Christ*, and "*Christ in us, the hope of glory*," always agree. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of fellowship indeed, but the true "fellowship of the Spirit" cannot exist in any place, or among any number of "*Christians*," who do either themselves not hold or teach the true Christ of God and of His written Word, or for "*love's*"

and "peace" sake maintain fellowship with those who hold or teach a doctrine, that encroaches upon the perfect Person and work of Christ. As it has been truly said: "Put Christ No. 1," and the "nice Christians" No. 2, and you'll be right enough; but if you put the "nice Christians" No. 1, and Christ No. 2, you'll soon go altogether wrong. Alas! how many are doing so in these testing days, not intentionally, I grant, but practically. Have they sat down and counted the cost? If so, they must have an uneasy presentiment, to say the least, as to where such practice must land them. We have known some, who had been looked up to as "spiritual Christians," and when the decisive moment came, manifested a sad lack of what Samuel had to learn.

Two "Ceasings."

There are two kinds of ceasing in the first two chapters of the prophet Isaiah. The first (Ch. i. 16, 17) is:

"Cease to do evil; learn to do well."

Through grace some of us have learnt this in some way, as to the "going forth without the camp" of a Judaised Christendom, which is much worse than pure Judaism. But there is another "ceasing" at the end of Chap. ii., which to nature appears far harder than the former. It is this:

"Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

It is just here, where not a few are turning aside in these sifting days. For honest Christians it is not so difficult to "cease" from a false religion and from evil men who "lie in wait to deceive," (Eph. iv.) But it is hard, very hard, to "cease" from "*good men*," such as Barnabas, when they go wrong in divine matters, especially when they possess not only great gifts, but an imposing and attractive personal appearance to boot. Throughout all ages of the history of the Church there have been such periods of trial, when it was manifest, what Christians had learned of Christ, and what they had learned of men. Calvin has truly said, "If we receive divine truths from men, we shall soon receive

errors from men,"—as if they were divine truths, we may add. Only what we have learnt in God's Presence, at the feet of Christ, will stand the test.

This leads us naturally to one, whose habitual place was at the Lord's feet, and whose service was a sweet savour to God. I need not say, I am speaking of Mary and her *alabaster box full of spikenard*—as the second requisite for days like these. The blessed Spirit within us, who glorifies Christ, also "*receiveth of His*," and thus fills or stores the heart, like Mary's alabaster box, with "*precious spikenard*," that is, thoughts about the Person and work of Christ, of His excellencies and perfections in love, grace, truth, goodness, patience, wisdom and power, in order that the "*alabaster box*," when opened in due time, may send forth the sweet odour of its contents, and the house be redolent with the savour of it.

This second requisite for these last days; an "*alabaster box filled with spikenard*," will, under God's help, form the subject of our next paper.

May God grant us a "*horn filled with oil*," to go forth and make much, yea, everything of Christ, extolling His great Name and proclaiming the virtues of Him, that called us from darkness into His marvellous light,

"That we might be *filled with the knowledge of His will* in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," and "that we may approve things that are excellent; that we may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being *filled with the fruits of righteousness*, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

CHRISTIAN POSITION, SERVICE AND WORSHIP.

(JOHN XII.)

The memories of Bethany cannot fail to touch a chord in the heart of every one who loves the Lord Jesus. We naturally find pleasure in lingering over the spot that was dear to one we love. How much more when that one is the Lord Jesus Christ, the One to whom we owe everything. We love to think of anything associated with His blessed Name; but what makes Bethany

peculiarly interesting, is, that He seemed to find in the society of that little company a resting place in His toilsome path. How sweet to think that He, "who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself," such hatred and antagonism from man, had one little spot, where He could find those, who, although they knew but little, were truly attached to Himself.

The result of such intercourse is seen in the *confidence* of love, which that message of Martha and Mary reveals: "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest, is sick." They *knew* He loved their brother as well as they, and it is not *their* love but *His* love that is uppermost in their minds. It is to this spot that Jesus turns in His last journey to Jerusalem. "And they made Him a supper." There is no formal invitation, as with Simon the Pharisee. None was needed, for there was the ease, and as we have said, the confidence of known love.

What a supper it was!—Who was there? The Son of God—"God manifested in flesh,"—Who were around Him? A company, attracted by perfect grace, and for whom He—the Son of Man—was soon to lay down His life.

There is significance in the way the Bethany family is introduced. Jesus came to Bethany, "where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead."—"Martha served," and "Mary took a pound of ointment, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair."

In this we have an illustration of Christian *position, service, and worship.*

1. Christian Position.

Lazarus had been dead; but now, alive from the dead, he is seated in company with Jesus. So with the believer. He is alive from the dead, and that in the power of an endless life. We cannot be too clear as to this. Weakness and a troubled conscience is the result of imperfectly apprehending it. If we look at ourselves, we find failure to the very end;—if we look to God's side,

we find nothing but perfection. Christ is our life. The Father

“hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.”—“And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”—“If a man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God.” (Col. i. 12, 13.—Ephes. ii. 6.—2 Cor. v. 17, 18.)

Such is the character of our standing. We shall not be more meet for heaven, when we get there, than we are now, nor will our heaven be more secure. The title is perfect. True, if I look at myself, I see nothing of all this, but I am not called upon to look at myself, but to *judge* myself. That is what God has done with nature; “condemned sin in the flesh,” and I am to reckon myself dead to sin and alive unto God. True self-judgment, however, we must remember, proceeds from being in the presence of the Lord. The light exposes self in its true colours, and puts an end to all thoughts of improvement. We get the principle in Job’s case: “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself.” But the same light that exposes self, manifests the unalterable grace in which we stand; and the desires of the new nature being strengthened, we get power to keep the old in check. We leave it behind in all its badness, and going on in the power of the new nature, its energies are displayed. That is the principle of overcoming, as we read in Gal. v. 16:

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.”

2. Christian Service.

A word as to Martha. It is the Lord’s Presence that calls forth her service. She does not lose the opportunity of ministering to Him. In this we learn a lesson. We ought not to seek to get through this world as comfortably as possible, because our consciences are set at rest. It is not in keeping with the activities of Divine love, to feast on our own blessings, in the midst of a groaning

creation. Where these blessings have their proper effect, the Saint is a channel of blessing to all around.

“Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (John vii.)

Oh, how our selfish hearts are exposed, when we think of the pathway of the Lord Jesus on earth, or even of the unceasing care and bowels of compassion that animated such an one as Paul. But it is important to note that Martha's service is connected with the Lord. It must ever be so, where there is true service. We are always apt to imitate others, or work for the sake of a place or a name. But this will never do. The Lord has work for each of us—for each his own work—and the test of its being rightly done is, whether it has been done *as for Him*. Of course, to know what the Lord has for me to do, and to have Him as the object in doing it, there must be the broken will and the single eye.

3. Christian Worship.

Mary figures prominently in this scene. The appropriateness of her action is apparent from verse 7 :

“Against the day of my burying hath she *kept* this.”

Jesus was soon to leave them.

“Me ye have not always.”

In view of His approaching death, Mary esteems nothing too costly to spend, and pours out the precious ointment which she had kept for this purpose, as the answer of a loving heart to the love of His. It is the spirit of worship. In the eyes of man it was waste and an occasion for grumbling. But who can estimate its value in the sight of God? Man valued the Son of God's love at thirty pieces of silver. To faith He is the most glorious object that mortal eyes could behold. Set down with purged consciences in the presence of God, within the Holiest, our eyes behold that Holy and Worthy One, who by His shameful cross has brought us there. What else can we do but worship, and what more delightful than the sweet odour of a heart doing homage to that glorious One, in whom all fulness dwells, and in whom the Father finds infinite delight

A practical word on the thought with which we started. It is sweet to think that there was one spot on earth where Jesus could meet loving hearts. But have you ever thought that He seeks the same still? We sometimes sing:

“Who find in Abba’s favour
Our spirit’s present home.”

and this is blessedly true. But there is another side—

“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.”

May it be ours, to have His love so filling our hearts, and every word of His so attended to, that He may find a dwelling place in us and with us here!

THE SIN AND TRESPASS OFFERINGS.

In the case of a Sin offering for an individual, the Priest who offered it was to eat it: “in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.” (Lev. vi. 26.) Eating in Scripture is expressive of identification: Jesus in making atonement for His people’s sins, thoroughly, in grace, identified Himself with them, and confessed them as His own. Psalm xl. is indisputably Christ’s language,—the Spirit tells us so in Heb. x.—and there the blessed One says, “Innumerable evils have compassed Me about: Mine iniquities have taken hold upon Me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of Mine head: therefore My heart faileth Me.” (Psalm xl. 12.) “*Mine* iniquities!” never, if applied abstractly to Christ. He was ever and only the Holy One of God, the delight of the divine heart. But He was bearing *our* sins, standing in our room; He therefore in His amazing grace and condescension identifies Himself with all, and confesses our sins as His own to God, meeting at His holy and righteous hand the judgment which was their due. The “*mine*” is the more wonderful here, because in verse 3 He speaks in the plural, and says “our God.” But there He speaks as risen—the horrible pit and miry clay were

left behind, His feet were on the rock—and though He had stood alone at the altar when bearing sins, in resurrection He associates with Himself in the place of acceptance and blessing the many brethren, and says, “He hath put a new song in My mouth, even praise unto *our* God.”

This identification has a modified application to ourselves in our dealings with our brethren who may have sinned. The principle is made plain in Gal. vi.; “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” Here we have a sinning saint, and one seeking to restore him; which was, in principle, what the priest did for the man who brought his sacrifice to the altar; but how is it to be done? It is to be a very thorough and heart searching business for the restorer. “Ye which are spiritual:” does not that probe heart and conscience? “In the spirit of meekness, considering thyself:” what humbling work! Yet how prone we are to play the schoolmaster with each other, or to adopt Jehu’s haughty air, “Come, see my zeal for the Lord.” Nay, brethren, it will not do; if I seek to restore my erring brother, I must feel the sin as deeply before God as if I had done it myself; and must feel, further, that, but for divine grace, I should have fallen in the self-same way. What do we know of burden-bearing? How far have we learned in the school of Him who took our load? *

The Apostle uses two quite different words for “burden” in Gal. vi. In verse 2, it is a question of feeling for and with each other, (*barae*)—but in verse 5 it is responsibility (*phortion*) which no one can take up for another, but every saint must answer for himself to

* It must be borne in mind, that the Apostle is speaking here of “a man overtaken in a fault.” But if a Christian, disregarding the word of exhortation, *wilfully* perseveres in a course dishonouring to Christ, meekness should be tempered with firmness and even sternness, yet without harshness. (Comp. Gal. ii. & iii.)
—Ed.

God. We do well to covet more of this brokenness of spirit in times of failure, that we may be used by the Divine Spirit for the restoration of those who have gone out of the way. Foot-washing is blessed work, and will not fail to get its reward in the coming day. But God has a method of His own for doing this; and a very blessed one; have we learned His ways?

It is very noticeable that the Holy Spirit states four times in the course of about twelve verses that the Sin and Trespass Offerings are "most holy," (literally "holy of holies,") see Lev. vi. 25-29, vii. 1-6. Why this care? He does not speak thus when describing the Holocaust and the Peace Offering. The truth is, He, who is here to guard Christ's glory, would impress us with what the blessed One was personally while making atonement for sin. The adversary has ever been ready to take advantage of the humiliation and profound grace of the Son to dishonour Him and traduce His glory. What wisdom therefore here on the part, not of Moses, but of the Holy Spirit, who has inspired all! Did Christ stoop to suffer for sins, to be made sin for us, to become a curse? Personally He was then "most holy"—as truly and emphatically so, as when "in the form of God" above. Adorable Lord; the darkness of that dreadful hour is passed, and the light of the Father's presence is His everlasting portion. He is worthy.

W. W. F.

SEVEN DARK NIGHTS FOLLOWED BY BRIGHT MORNINGS.

Sardis—The Night of spiritual Death. XI.

Spiritual corruption in Thyatira.—Spiritual death in Sardis. Which is the worst? Awful and long had been the night which century after century, hung over the European continent and England, lit up only by the fires of the Auto-da-fés of the blood-thirsty Inquisition. But that darkness had been followed by the cheerful light of the Reformation - morning, shining all the

brighter on account of the preceding night, men hailing the rising sun of recovered Divine truth with a similar delight to that with which the inhabitants of the remote arctic regions hail the re-appearance of the glorious orb after months of darkness.

But even amidst the corruption and darkness of Thyatira God had preserved a faithful remnant, which did not hold nor know Jezebel's seducing and corrupting doctrine, and did not boast of "knowing the depths of Satan." And though it is first in Thyatira that the promise as well as the closing exhortation are addressed to the consciences and hearts of the remnant as separate from the professing body, yet even when speaking to Thyatira, the Lord owns energy and devotedness, saying :

"I know thy faith and love and service, and thy patience, and thy last works to be more than the first."

Two of the only true Christian motives for every good work—*faith* and *love*, are recognised even in Thyatire.* In Ephesus (ii. 2) they are absent. (Comp. 1 Thess. 1, 3.)

But where is energy and devotedness in *Sardis* ? We might just as well talk of energy, activity and devotedness in a dead body. The spiritual death of Protestant Sardis is hopeless.

What caused it ?

To find the right answer to this question, let us turn for a moment to the Lord's own words to the Church in Sardis. My Christian readers will remember that the Lord in speaking to the seven Churches, in His opening words addresses each Church according to its spiritual condition for the exercise of *conscience*, and closes with a corresponding promise, for the comfort and encouragement of *the heart*.

Further : In each of the churches He in His perfect grace sees something which He can own, except in Sardis and Laodicea, from causes apparent enough.

* Only "hope" is not mentioned. But that bright hope, the "morning star," is promised to the "Remnant."

Lastly : To each of the Churches He addresses a rebuke and words of warning, in His perfect faithfulness, except to Smyrna and Philadelphia. He has no rebuke for the former, because she was about to suffer for His Word and Name's sake ; and none for the latter, because she was faithful in conscious weakness before Him.

To Sardis His words are :

" These things saith He, that *hath* the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars : I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die : for I have not found thy works perfect before God."

He speaks as the One to whom all power (including all authority) is given in heaven and on earth ; and as the One who possesses all spiritual power (the seven Spirits) and authority (the seven stars) in the Church as the Head of His body.*

It was just here that the chief of the Reformers so fatally and signally failed. If they had been less occupied with the re-forming of churches, and more with Christ, the Head of the Church, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily in power as well as wisdom, Protestantism would not have sunk to the low spiritual level of " Sardis."—But here it was where Luther, Zwingli and Calvin so sadly failed. They placed themselves under the patronizing wings of the worldly "powers that be;" Luther under the shelter of the Prince Elector of Saxony, Zwingli and Calvin beneath the wings of the magistrates of Zurich and Geneva. The rulers of the world placed the sword at the disposal of the Reformers, and these in return adorned the rulers of the world with the respectable mantle of Protestantism. The baneful effect of that unnatural alliance soon made itself felt. Worldliness began to exercise its deadening influence upon the spiritual life of the "Protestant" Churches. The "dead bones" were not only "touched" but *handled*.—Hence defilement without subsequent cleansing. Then—*spiritual death*. "Thou hast a name

* In the 5th Chapter we have the "seven horns" (perfect power), the "seven eyes" (perfect wisdom), in connection with the "*Lamb*."

that thou livest, *and art dead*. The spiritual weapons of warfare, handled by the great champion of the truth, which

“Are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds,”

the power of which Martin Luther had experienced at Worms, when facing the great ones of both the open and the religious world, were laid aside and exchanged for the carnal weapon of death—the sword. Hence the lamentable and humbling scene of Zwingli, the faithful defender of the faith, drawing the sword and marching at the head of the army of Zürich to the battle of Cappel, where he was slain. He had “drawn the sword,” and was “killed by the sword,” according to the forewarning words of his Master.—It was the “Shiloh” of Protestantism in Switzerland; the glory had departed and “*Icabod*” was stamped upon it.

Hence, further, that terrible scene of a *Protestant stake*, erected at Geneva under the auspices of Calvin, for the burning of Servetus, the heretic, and Rome’s scornful finger pointing at it!

And what about Luther? It was well for the great Reformer that he did not live to see that terrible final outcome of his and his fellow-Reformers lamentable mistake, even that terrible war, which during thirty years devastated the German Empire, when another faithful champion of the truth, the noble and pious King Gustavus Adolphus, in his mistaken zeal (or, what would be worse still, partly from motives of worldly policy?) again “drew the sword and was killed by the sword.” Oh, how many children of God, not only in the ranks of the Swedish, but of the other Protestant armies that helped their enemies to lay waste the fertile fields and make desolate the peaceful homesteads of the “Fatherland,” may have been “killed by the sword” during that awful war, while engaged with handling the carnal weapon of death against their fellow-men. *That* was not the sword which their great leader, under

the guidance of his Greater Leader, had wielded at the Diet of Worms and laid prostrate the enemies of God and of His truth.

Such a terrible war, as to its length and ruinous effects, has not been known in this world's history.—But terrible as were its effects in temporal things, more pernicious still were they upon the spiritual life of Christians. Hardening of consciences and hearts followed by way of a natural re-action upon the carnal strife of party-passions ;—despair and spiritual degradation, and indifference, and then the desperate condition of spiritual deadness in the wake of the worldliness, which had come in like a flood ; but no standard was lifted up. The standard bearers had fainted, and one after another passed from the scene, and the sheep and lambs, exhausted after the long struggle, were fainting and scattered over the dark mountains. They said no longer : “ Who art thou, O great mountain ? Before Zerubbabel,” [*i.e.*, Christ] “ thou shalt become a plain,” but : “ There is a lion in the way.” They lost heart. The world with its cares and snares had begun to make its inroad upon their spiritual life. Christian households, where the Word of God used to be the daily lamp for the feet and light for the path of the happy inmates, and whence in response the voice of praise, such as : “ Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott,” used to ascend, lay buried in the silence of spiritual death. “ They that were in the house,” and they that “ came into the house” did no longer see the “ light shining” brightly. It had grown dim through the theological and doctrinal channels, which had rather impeded and obscured than conveyed the light of divine truth to their souls. Polemical pamphlets and books had taken the place of “ The Divine book,” which “ is truth,” and “ the sword of the Spirit.”

“ Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent.”

Such is the Lord's word to Protestant Sardis—and :

“ If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know, what hour I will come upon thee.”

Worldly Protestantism will be treated like the world. The Lord will come upon it "as a thief." Its zeal against Romanism (and even this is waning fast,) will not be allowed as a plea for its worldliness and spiritual deadness.

The night of Protestant "Sardis" is not like the black cloudy night of Thyatira or Romanism, which with its mantle of "darkness covereth the earth." It appears like the moon in a cold winter night, shedding her reflected waning light upon an arctic ice-field.

But in Sardis as well as in Thyatira, God has kept a remnant, "*a few names even in Sardis*, which have not defiled their garments" by worldliness (Jam. i. 27). He holds out to them the encouraging promise :

"They shall walk with me in white : for they are worthy."

May He grant "ears to hear, what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

"THE LIGHT OF THE BODY IS THE EYE."

(Read Luke xi. 33-36.)

The candle being lighted, there it is, whether people see it or not. A *blind man* perceives not the light, though it may be shining never so bright. So if a man likes to go into the dark, I should say he has some bad motive in his heart ; or else his eyes are bad, and cannot bear the light. But if my eyes are sound I joy in the light. So the word is painful to one who has not clear eye-sight, who has not the single eye. When the soul is in health, there is full perception of the Word ; the whole body is full of light, having no part dark.

This is a most solemn word for us all. A person, converted but yesterday, may be full of light, though he may, in many things, need the teaching of God. Still, it applies as much to the babe in Christ as to the grown man. If we are only faithful to the light, God will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear. But there is a teaching of God, when God

Himself is in the soul ; then everything is seen in God's light.

If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not ; but if he is walking in the night, he has to think which turning to take. If walking in the daylight, he may walk on without thought.

"If thine eye be single, thy whole body will be full of light, having no part dark."

When the candle is there, we see all around. The light shows itself, and by itself shows everything around.

The eye receives the light. The light never varies. It is the *eye* which varies. The eye is either *single* or *evil*. It is not said, *single or double*, but *single* or *evil*.

"If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light."
 "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness."
 —"The light of the body is the eye."

If Christ be my object, my whole body will be full of light ; if not, it will be all darkness, since it is *all Christ*, or it is *all evil*, however *religious* it may appear.

If I have Christ as my object, all is simple. I may have difficulties to overcome ; nay, if following Christ only, in a world that is entirely opposed to Him, it must inevitably lead to difficulties in the path ; still the path will be plain and simple.

The light is set on a candlestick, "that they which come in may see the light." Therefore one is forced into this question : Do you see it or not ? Christ has set up the light in the world. He was in the world, and for the world ; but does the world see the light ? God has displayed Himself fully in Christ ; and if Christ has displayed Himself to your soul, the effect of that will be to manifest your condition. Do you say, "Suffer me *first* to go and bury my father ?" If so, there comes out this secret ; you have something in your heart that takes precedence of Christ there.

When I do not find my body full of light in any given circumstance, I know there is something not single in my eye, something that has not yet given way before the

power of Christ—something not yet given up, or something perhaps that has come in. If I keep anything in my heart besides Christ, my conscience is bad, and my eye being evil, my whole body is full of darkness. People often say they cannot see; of course they cannot, when they have some other light. Moreover, that which they do see, will quickly be given up, if they are not walking in the power of that which they may possess. How often have we seen saints who have had light, and *departed from it, having even that light taken from them*. Such, indeed, may get an *easier conscience*, perhaps, but then it is on a *very much lower level*.

The “*single eye*” relates to the state of our desires and affections. Even the common *affairs of life* may hinder the unqualified spirit of Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus, and hearing His Word. But the admonition is,

“Take heed, that the light which *is in thee, be not darkness*.”

If our standard be not Christ, the light in us will *become darkness*. If we have taken for our measure something that is not Christ, and *Christ alone*, the manner of our judgment will be wrong, and the light in us becoming darkness, we shall be guided wrong, and mistake our path.

But if the eye be full of Christ, and we judge everything by that light, when we see anything that would not glorify Christ, we say: That will not do for us. The vessel may be small, but it must be wholly for Christ.

May we be walking in the power of the Holy Ghost, by the divine teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, contented to walk with Him and desiring no other path: having our eyes upon Him, and upon Him only. So that when other objects are put before us, we may be able to say: It will not do for me, for it is not Christ. Oh! may we be simple concerning evil, in a world of evil. May we be so occupied with Christ, that there may be no room for it to come in—not making it our business to judge the evil, but remain simple concerning it. And may Christ be so the one object of my heart and affections, that I may have no *dark corner within*—the Holy Ghost making Him the centre around which every thought and desire of my soul is entwined.—W. H. D.

HOW DO YOU WORSHIP?

(*John xii. 1-11.*)

She came not to hear a sermon, though the first of teachers was there. To sit at His feet and hear His word (Luke x. 39) was not her purpose now, blessed as that was in its proper place. She came not to make her anguish known to Him. Time was, when, in deepest submission to His will, she had fallen at His feet, saying, "Lord, if thou hast been here, my brother had not died" (John xi. 32); but to pour out her supplications to Him, as her only resource, was not now her thought, for her brother was seated at the table. She came not to meet the saints, though precious saints were there. Fellowship with them was blessed, and, doubtless, of frequent occurrence. But fellowship was not her object now. She came not after the weariness and toil of a week's battling with the world, to be refreshed from Him, though surely she, like every saint, had learnt the trial of the wilderness; and none more than she, probably, knew the blessed springs of refreshment that were in Him. But she came, and that, too, at the moment when the world was expressing its deepest hatred of Him, to pour out what she long had treasured up (v. 7); that which was most valuable to her, all she had upon earth, upon the Person of the One, whose love had made her heart captive, and absorbed her affections. She thought not of Simon the leper—she passed the disciples by—her brother and her sister in the flesh and in the Lord engaged not her attention then—"Jesus only" filled her soul—her eye was on Him—her heart beat true to Him—her hands and her feet were subservient to her eye and to her heart, as she "anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair."

Adoration, homage, worship, blessing, was her one thought, and that in honour of the One who was "all in all" to her; and surely *such* worship was most refreshing to Him.

The unspiritual (v. 4.) might murmur, but He upheld her cause, and shewed He could appreciate and value the

grateful tribute of a heart that knew His worth and preciousness, and could not be silent as to it. A lasting record is preserved of what worship really is by the One Who accepted it, and of the one who rendered it.

And now, dear reader, is this *your* mode of worship? Or do you on the Lord's day go to hear a sermon, say your prayers, meet the saints, or be refreshed after your six days' toil?—Oh! if every eye were on the Lord above, if every heart were true to him; if we were each determined to see “no man . . . save Jesus only,” what full praise there would be! Not with alabaster boxes now, but our hearts filled with the Holy Ghost—a stream of thanksgiving, of worship of the highest character would ascend in honour of the Blessed One who now adorns heaven, as He once adorned the earth. Be it ours thus to worship the Father and the Son in Spirit and in truth.

D. T. G.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER'S PAGE.

Faith and Works.

There is one difficulty which perhaps, as often as any other, confronts us as Sunday School teachers, and, in moments of depression, inclines us to think that our labour has been in vain.

A child professes conversion; his faith appears to be clear and simple, and we are overjoyed at the thought that at least one soul has been brought to the Saviour's feet through our instrumentality. We watch the child's ways, hoping to see a change in keeping with the profession he makes. But alas! no such change is seen; or, if at first there is some improvement in conduct, he soon falls back into his old ways, and we sadly ask ourselves: “Was it all a mistake? Was there no real conversion after all?”

Don't you think this very serious difficulty is often partially due to a defect in our way of presenting the Gospel? God has opened our eyes to see the simplicity of His plan of salvation. He has shewn us that we are saved, not by works, but by faith alone, and in our anxiety to make this clear to our children, we have rather ne-

glectd the other side of the question. We have dwelt upon justification by faith as brought out in Romans and Galations, and forgotten to press home the fact that there *is* such a thing as justification by works. And perhaps this has produced the sad result which so grieves and perplexes us. No doubt Satan's wiles and the hardness of the children's hearts have to be taken into account, but I think we are always safe in searching *ourselves* to see whether there is not something amiss in us which may have, at any rate, a partial share in causing the trouble.

The children are accustomed to hear of the free grace of God, and surely they cannot hear too much of it; but, if not counterbalanced by warnings like those of the Apostle James, is there not a danger that such teaching will only harden, *or*, to say the least, produce superficiality? In one case perhaps a child may be truly converted, but, through constantly hearing of grace with scarcely a word as to his own responsibility, he hardly troubles about his walk; he may, out of love to the Lord, avoid any very marked sin, but that is all. Though he would not say it with his lips, there is a thought lurking in his heart that he is saved, and that is all he need trouble about. Surely this is a very unsatisfactory sort of conversion, and one which might well cause observers to doubt in its reality. Another child, hearing that "it is only to believe," gives a merely mental assent to the truths brought before him, and concludes that now he is all right. A third is altogether a hypocrite, professing to be the Lord's, though he knows he is not. Of course in neither of these latter cases can there be works in proof of a faith which does not exist. All three classes need the solemn warning to be sounded in their ears: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man (or child), that faith without works is dead?" James ii. 19, 20. Such pointed teaching is in no way incompatible with the tenderest, most patient love—nay, is rather a proof of it.

A few Bible stories have struck me as forcibly illustrating the relation of works to faith, and the beautiful way in which they dovetail together. Perhaps outlines of two

or three of these stories, illustrating the subject in a way suited to the capacities of children, may prove helpful to young teachers, though those older in years and experience may find them very defective.

Next month's outline will be, the Lord willing, "The Story of the Kind Black Man."

H Y M N .

(Written by a German monk, nearly 600 years ago.—
Translated from the German.

To praise Him in the dance! O blessed day!
The pilgrim journey done.
No more press forward in the weary way,
For all is reached and won.
His hand at last, the hand once pierced for me,
For ever holdeth mine.
O Lord, no songs, no harps of heaven will be
Sweet as one word of thine.
Lord, altogether lovely, then at last
High shall the guerdon be:
Thy kiss outweigh the weary ages past
Of heart that breaks for Thee.

* * * *

Yet now, I know Thee as the hidden Bread,
The blessed One Who died.
Who sitteth at my table, by my bed,
Who walketh at my side.
I know Thee as the fountain of deep bliss,
Whereof one drop shall make
The joys of all the world as bitterness,
My Lord, for Thy sweet sake.
Lord, Thou hast loved me, and henceforth to me
Earth's noon-day is but gloom;
My soul sails forth on the eternal sea,
And leaves the shore of doom.
I pass within the glory *even now*,
Where thoughts and words are not.
For joy that passeth words, O Lord, art Thou,
And bliss that passeth thought.
I enter there—for Thou hast borne away
The burden of my sin:
With conscience clear as heaven's unclouded day,
Thy courts I enter in.
Heaven now for me—for ever Christ and Heaven.
The endless *NOW* begun:
No promise—but a gift eternal given,
Because the work is done.

("Christian Testimony.")

FOUR REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

CHAPTER II.

An Alabaster Box Filled with Spikenard.

(Read Luke vii. 37-50, and Mark xiv. 1-9.)

IN the two portions of the Gospel referred to above we have the description, by the pen of Divine inspiration, of scenes very different to that referred to in the preceding part of our meditations. For, however precious in its simplicity, and full of most profitable instruction for our souls, that scene in the house of Jesse may appear, and perfect in its place, as is every portion of the Divine Record, yet from its merely typical or foreshadowing nature, it cannot be compared with the two wondrous scenes in the houses of the two Simons, which form the subject of this second part of our meditations.

In Jesse's house we saw the anointing oil from the prophet's horn poured upon the head of Jesse's offspring, the modest and humble ruddy shepherd boy David, as he had been fetched from his so faithfully tended flock. Instead of Saul, the king after the people's heart, but rejected by God, we beheld the young shepherd being anointed as king by the prophet, in the presence of his father and brethren, who thought him, who was the man after God's own heart, beneath the prophet's notice.

But in the houses of the two leprous Simons* we behold Jesse's root and offspring, David's Son and Lord, anointed, not by the hand of a great prophet, but by two of the Lord's

* Only that one of them was a *cleansed* leper ; most likely he was the same as the one at the end of Mark 1.

humble handmaids, when God's well-beloved Son, who was in an infinitely higher sense than David, "the Man after God's own heart," was about to be rejected by the builders and to be disallowed of men, who, like David's brethren, saw no beauty nor comeliness in Him, while even His own disciples in the house of Bethany begrudged the homage done to Him, as being a "*waste*."

But let us meditate more closely upon these two scenes, each unique in its beauty, and set in relief in its brightness (especially at Bethany) by the very darkness and hideousness of the surrounding evil.

Two Alabaster Boxes.

The "Alabaster box," as the expression of the renewed heart's best affections and of the new mind's sublimest thoughts being devoted to Christ, yea, of the whole being spent upon and lost in His all-beauteous and all-glorious Person, occurs twice in the Gospels on the two remarkable occasions already alluded to.

In the case of the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee (not to be confounded with Mary in the house of Simon the leper at Bethany), we behold a "child of wisdom," who had been a child of sin and folly, prostrate at the feet of Jesus, the "Friend of publicans and sinners," pouring out her heart's affections upon His Person, overwhelmed as she was, in the presence of *grace personified*, seen in the graceless abode of a self-righteous Pharisee. She had been *lost away* from Him, and now she was *lost in Him*, who was "fairer than the children of men, and grace poured into his lips." The Father had drawn that soul to His Son, and the Son said: "I will in no wise cast out." She poured out herself upon Him. Much had been forgiven her, and she loved much. The tears, wherewith she washed His feet, showed her deep *repentance*. The kisses wherewith she covered them, spoke of the *love* of that broken-hearted sinner to Him, who came to heal the broken-hearted. Her hair, "the woman's glory," formerly used as a net in Satan's service, to catch and entrap other souls for his dreadful slavery, was now

employed as an humble towel to wipe His feet, showing her devotion to His Person.

But above all, her *Alabaster* box, emptied upon His feet, expressed the deep and true *homage* of her whole being, bowing before the Saviour-God. This was more than the anointing oil, poured from the prophet's horn upon David's head. It was the bowing down, though not yet in conscious worship, like Mary's, but the instinctive bowing down of a sinner's soul, in which God had begun His work of grace, before Him, who was the image of the invisible God, yea, the Revealer of the Father, Who was drawing that soul to His Son, to receive from His fulness grace upon grace. In His Person she perceived all the grace that a poor outcast sinner, like her, stood in need of, convinced that *He* would *not* cast her out; for had not the self-righteous Pharisees, who had no balm for a broken-hearted sinner, called Him "the friend of publicans and sinners?" The very reason, why they rejected Him, had been for her the reason for going to Him, in Whom grace and truth came *personified* into this sin-deluded world. Her conscience could unburden itself before Him in her tears, heedless of the chilling presence of Simon and his friends, and her heart could pour out its holy love in ceaseless kisses upon His feet, unchecked by the selfish hearts around her, and all unconscious of their presence, so she emptied her alabaster box with its precious contents upon His feet, after having washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair, overwhelmed by the Presence of a Divine Saviour.

But, precious and acceptable though her homage was to God and His Son, the Holy Ghost, in perfectly Divine appropriateness does not say, as in the case of Mary (John xii.), that the house was filled with the odour of it. The reason for this omission appears to me not only this, that the contents of the alabaster box in Luke vii. were not of that higher order of ointment, called "*Spikenard*," as in Mary's case (of which I shall speak further on), but because the case in Luke vii. bears the character of grace towards a penitent sinner, and not the higher character of worship like that in Mark xiv., Matt. xxvi. and John xii. This appears to me the reason why there is no mention made of

a sweet odour filling the house in Luke vii., though the omission detracts nothing from the exceeding beauty of the scene, nor from the character of that "child of wisdom," who "justified wisdom," and therefore was justified by that gracious One who Himself was and "*is wisdom*." The sole difference lies, as mentioned already, in the different character of each scene. In Luke vii. it is, *Jesus and the penitent and justified sinner*; but in Matt. xxvi., Mark xiv. and John xii., *Jesus and the accepted worshipper*. *

We find throughout the Gospels, that whenever on special occasions men showed their disregard of the Son of God, God took care to honour Him in a special way. When the Divine Babe had been laid in the manger of a stable, because there was no room for Him in the world's "inn," and while Herod was planning the destruction of the Child, the three wise men from the far East fell down and worshipped him, and offered "gold, frankincense and myrrh." And when over His Cross the mock title was written: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," the dying thief must verify the title by his appeal: "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom."

So in Simon the Pharisee's house. Amongst Simon's guests there was One, seated in some low place, in an humble garb, and of simple appearance. The host and his servants had not thought it worth their while to offer Him water to wash from His feet the dust of the road, which He had contracted in His errand of love and unremitting service—an act of common courtesy shown in the East even to the humblest visitor or guest. But God honoured His Son in the

* The reason why the fact of the "odour of the ointment filling the house" is not mentioned in Matt. xxvi. and Mark xiv. appears to me to be this, that in John xii. the homage rendered to the Son of God (expressed by Mary's anointing His *feet*), is paramount, as being rendered to the highest of His glories, whereas in Matt. and Mark it is rendered to the Messiah-King, as expressed in the anointing His *Head*. Of course, as a matter of historical fact, Mary anointed *both*, His *Head and feet*, only that the Spirit of God records or omits one of the two in each of those three Gospels, according to the prominent character of Christ presented by each.

very place where men despised Him. He procured water for the feet of Jesus, far more precious and pure than that of Simon's reservoir—water flowing from a better fountain, even the heart of a penitent sinner, touched by divine grace. That was the proper water for the feet of the Saviour, who had come into the world to save sinners. Simon had not anointed Jesus' *head* with oil. She anointed His *feet* with the precious contents of her alabaster box. The self-righteous Pharisee had no kiss for the gracious Saviour, in whose Person upon the Cross, "righteousness and peace" were to "kiss each other." The broken-hearted sinner, overwhelmed, as said before, by the Presence of a Divine Saviour, from Whose fulness she was receiving—drinking in, as it were—grace upon grace, covered His *feet* with kisses. Much had been forgiven her, therefore she loved much. The blinded Pharisee did not know who the guest at his table was. He did not know that it was the same whom another Simon (or Simeon, which is the same,) had held as a babe in his arms, exclaiming: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Poor blindfolded Pharisee! He had a grown-up Saviour as guest at his board, who filled the whole land with the fame of His mighty words and deeds, at whose bidding the blind saw, and the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, and the dead were raised, and—he knew Him not! A guest was at Simon's table, who, nearly two thousand years before that day, had with two of His elect angels, been the honoured guest of a better host, of whom Simon and his friends vainly boasted as their father. Simon's guest was the same, even the Messiah, to whom Moses and the prophets had pointed as the One, who was to usher in the millennial blessings of Israel, and for whom the Jews were looking—not yet in penitent faith, as the "Deliverer from their sins" (Matt. i. 21.) but as the One, who was to deliver them from the effect of them, under which they smarted, *i.e.*, the yoke of the Romans. To Simon—oh, blinding and hardening effect of pharisaic religiousness!—

there was no beauty nor comeliness in that despised Guest of his at the bottom of the table. But the Father, who loves and honours His Son Jesus, and draws souls to Him, had sent a pardoned sinner to Simon's house to perform the duties of the neglectful host, and bestow upon the slighted Guest the honour and distinction due to Him, in doing the very things which Simon had omitted to do. Whereupon "Wisdom," having been justified by her child, in turn justified her child, turning away from the prodigal daughter's "Elder brother," who was no Barnabas, *i.e.*, "Son of consolation," but a "Bar-Nabal," *i.e.*, Son of folly. Jesus sends that blessed "child of wisdom" away with the full assurance of pardon, salvation and peace, whilst towards Simon and his companions, He, in His gentle and quiet dignity, assumes His place as Judge, giving them a foretaste of that awful moment, when Simon's once despised Guest will be seated on the "Great White Throne," and the final judgment be pronounced upon all unbelieving mankind along with the Simons of every age.

But, however blessed and wondrous the scene between *Jesus* and the *sinner* in Simon's house, we now proceed to a still more blessed and wondrous scene in the house of another and better Simon.

(*To be continued*).

THE SIN AND TRESPASS OFFERINGS.

THE trespass-offering presents to us much the same truth as the sin-offering. I am aware that some have thought that there is a very distinct difference between them—the one setting forth God's gracious provision for what I have done, and the other for what I am. There is one serious difficulty to this. In the sin-offering, as truly as in the trespass-offering, we get the words "and it shall be forgiven him." Now sin (*i.e.* the root—the nature) is never forgiven; its sorrowful *fruit* is, but the *root* is condemned. This we get plainly taught in the early chapters of the Epistle to the Romans; until we reach chapter v. 11 the Apostle is dealing with the question of *sins*; from chapter v. 12 it is *sin*, and of *it* we read, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of

sinful flesh, and for sin, *condemned sin in the flesh.*" (Romans viii. 3.) If what *I am* is regarded at all in the Levitical offerings, it is in the Holocaust; for there the Israelite brought his offering because, bad in himself (though with no particular acts in view), he could only be accepted in his unblemished sacrifice. In the trespass-offering conscience, certainly, is more prominent than in the sin-offering. In Chapter v. 1 we read that it was sin for any to refuse to be a witness when adjured; God is to be recognised in the ruler or judge, for the powers that be are ordained of God.* In verses 2 and 3, a man touching the carcase of an unclean beast or creeping thing was defiled and guilty; Jehovah would have His people walk with vigilance. Also rash oaths, either to do good or ill, were condemned; the offender was guilty before God. "And it shall be when he is guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing, and he shall bring his trespass-offering unto Jehovah." (Lev. v. 5, 6.) The God of Israel was graciously considerate of the poor, therefore there were grades in this offering as in those of sweet savour. "If he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass which he hath committed two turtle doves or two young pigeons unto Jehovah." "But if he be not able to bring two turtle doves or two young pigeons, then he that hath sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin-offering." (Lev. v. 7, 11.) (In the latter case the offender was forbidden to put either oil or frankincense upon the flour; it must not be treated as an ordinary meat-offering.) Here we have the provision for extreme poverty, for God would shut none out from the riches of His grace, but we also have foreshadowed a very feeble apprehension of the Person and work of Christ; still, there is blessing for the soul, for God graciously comes down to where we are. Another has said, "If truth of purpose was there in owning it (sin), and owning it in such a sort that

* Indeed, in the Old Testament the word "Elohim" (God's title) is often used of rulers and others who act on the part of God; e.g., in Psalm lxxxii. the word is used of angels, and in Ex. xxii. of judges. Thus we have to recognise God in the ruler and in the judge.

the need of atonement before God was felt, which alone consequently is recognised as owning sin, the poverty of apprehension does not hinder the perfect forgiveness. . . . If a real sense of needed atonement be there, the want of apprehension of the full import of sin and death, that is, of Christ's death and blood-shedding, will not prevent the getting the benefit of that death and blood-shedding."

Now we come to the two main parts of the trespass-offering. In Lev. v. 14-19 we have sin in the holy things of Jehovah; in Chapter vi. 1-7 trespass against one's neighbour. Sin in the holy things presents a very solemn thought to the mind; it shews we are never free from the possibility of sin. Have we not proved it in our experience to be painfully true? Not only when in the world are we liable to sin, but even when engaged in the holiest possible exercises. What holier occupation is there on earth than worship? Yet have we not known worship to commence in the Spirit, and end in the flesh? We are always exposed to the danger, the flesh being ever present and ever corrupt. This character of trespass might be committed ignorantly, but the guilt was not the less. "Though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity." When the sin was known, the Israelite was to bring his sacrifice to the altar, a "ram without blemish out of the flocks." And more, "he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest." But who could estimate the amount of harm done in such a case? Certainly not poor erring man, for conscience cannot be relied on in such matters; the priest—the representative of Jehovah, and the upholder of His claims—was the assessor; and he assessed "by shekels of silver after the shekel of the sanctuary."

We will now turn to the second part of the trespass-offering—trespass against one's neighbour. We do *not* read here, "If a soul sin through ignorance." The reason is apparent when we examine Lev. vi. 2-5. If a man lied about trust-money which he had fraudulently used; or in matters of partnership, or if one took anything by violence from his neighbour, or found lost property, and lied concerning it, could ignorance be pleaded? Nay, the righteous

Lord loveth righteousness, and he would have the thing owned and put right before Himself, and before man. Therefore the offender was to restore what he had misused or stolen, and add the fifth part thereto, and then bring his sacrifice to Jehovah, when the word of forgiveness would be pronounced. It is observable that in the case of trespass in the holy things, the sacrifice preceded the restitution, but not here; the offender must first make amends to his neighbour, according to the ordinance of Jehovah, ere his sacrifice could be accepted. This would prove the reality of the repentance: it is often much more humbling to confess to man than to God. Moreover even such sin, as is really against man must be regarded as "against Jehovah." Solemn consideration! when I wrong my neighbour I sin against God. This was what David felt and confessed in Psalm li. 4, when he said, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight," though in reality he had wronged Uriah the Hittite. The fact is, God would have all thoroughly out and judged in His presence; half measures never suit the Holy One with Whom we have to do.

I cannot close this notice of the trespass-offering without alluding to Israel's apprehension of it all in a later day. It particularly applies to them—a people who have known the will of the Lord, and trespassed against it. In that day they will say, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." They will then learn that Christ was their Trespass-Offering, having borne all in order that they (as well as we) might be blessed.

W. W. F.

MARVELLOUS GRACE.

The third chapter of Zechariah has often been referred to and dwelt upon at length by earnest evangelists, because it furnishes a very striking and apt illustration of the manner in which free and sovereign grace meets the deep need of the lost and undone sinner. The force and beauty of the illustration is not lessened by pointing out that the primary application of this particular portion of God's Word was to

the then sad condition of the priesthood. For in point of fact it was no ordinary individual, but *Israel's High Priest* that the prophet saw standing before the angel of the Lord, clothed in filthy garments, and the adversary standing at his right hand to resist him. Now, for a guilty sinner to be thus attired and situated is ever a most serious matter, but for Joshua the High Priest to be in a position so humiliating and distressing, was nothing short of a most dire calamity for the entire nation of Israel. "Filthy garments" would necessarily preclude him who wore them for the time being from performing one of the most important of the priestly functions, since "holy linen garments" must be his sole clothing, who entered within the veil, there to sprinkle the blood of atonement. Alas! if not so clearly before, it was now made painfully evident that so far as the proper carrying out of its legitimate responsibilities was concerned, the priesthood had broken down entirely. Nor can we be surprised at such a distressing condition of things after reading II. Chron. xxxvi. 14; Ezek. xxii. 26, etc. Ever to recover, solely on the ground of merit, what former priests had forfeited through their wicked actions, was for Joshua, their then living successor, a moral impossibility.

The subtle and cunning adversary

had not been slow to perceive his opportunity, and was at this critical moment seen to be occupying vantage ground which former wicked priests had weakly yielded to him; and this in order that he might all the more effectually maintain a most determined resistance, and so further his own malicious designs, not only upon the erring sons of Aaron, but upon the entire nation of Israel. Here as elsewhere, the following up of apparent advantages gained only resulted in his more complete discomfiture. He is instantly silenced by that withering rebuke administered, for the Lord had chosen Jerusalem, although He had chastised her prophets, priests, and people, because they had done iniquity. Indeed, they were many who had perished in the devouring fire, but this was a brand *plucked out* of it in the sight of the enemy, who was thus made to see the upsetting of all his own plans, and himself rendered utterly powerless to render any further opposition.

To the adversary there is no place more dreadful than the presence of the Lord; we are not ignorant of his devices; it becomes us therefore to be sober and vigilant; but let us not forget that to the saint who is enjoying communion, the adversary cannot, because he dares not, then come nigh. It is when we are out of communion (from such a state may our God preserve every believing reader) that we find ourselves in close contact with him, and are worsted in the conflict; until, as in the case we are considering,

Grace interposes.

Now, altogether losing sight of the silenced adversary, the prophet sees simply the High Priest of Israel, standing inactive, and in a position to urge no plea, before the angel of the Lord; his attire bearing unmistakeable witness to the fact, as humbling as it was sorrowful, that the priesthood had become defiled and sinful. In the presence of the Light all is made manifest, yet there, though searched and humbled by its rays, Joshua remains. At the moment he can do nothing more, nothing less.

The activities of abounding grace, pure and all powerful, are instantly displayed. Others, by the Lord's express command, take Joshua's filthy garments off from him. What this happily involved was at once clearly explained to the needy priest by the words:—"Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee." Oh the immensity of the relief thus graciously afforded! Those garments so deeply stained and dyed by past iniquities, with all their evidences of former guilt, mercifully removed as completely as if such had never existed! Had he not been already silenced, the grounds for the enemy's intended accusations are no more.

But there was more needed, for an *unclothed* priest dared not assay to make atonement.

If it had not been the Lord who had interposed in richest grace on Joshua's and on Israel's behalf, this high priest could scarcely have dared to hope for more than the complete removal of his iniquity. But He who had begun this good work would also perfect it; and the words were spoken to Joshua:

"I will clothe thee with rich * apparel."

There appears to be some uncertainty as to whether the second word of verse 5 should read "I" (*i.e.* the prophet) or "He" (*i.e.* the Lord). Whether the voice of the prophet, moved by the Spirit to express the Lord's mind, or that of the Lord heard speaking with absolute authority, the words uttered—"Let them set a fair mitre upon his head"—bear witness to the full restoration of priestly dignity in him upon whose head the mitre was instantly set.

To adorn Aaron, Bezaleel and Aholiah, with others who were wisehearted in Israel, had made at the first those priestly garments for glory and for beauty; but now Joshua is clothed with garments of *the Lord's own providing*, to the praise of the glory of His own rich grace. The intrinsic value of Aaron's costly attire becomes insignificant when the whole is compared with that "rich apparel" with which the Lord clothed Joshua. Had it been a simple restoration to privileges originally enjoyed, after all had been forfeited by his predecessors, this had been remarkable indeed, but the wearer of this same "rich apparel" was the happy recipient of even greater privileges; thus was manifested grace wonderful indeed!

Beloved brethren in Christ Jesus, while it becomes us one and all to seek "grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: (for our God is a consuming fire)"; observing how many instances are given in the Word of God of privileges abused being thereby forfeited for ever, we have abundant reason to cease not to magnify His Name Who restoreth the soul, that He so very often brings His erring and humbled servants, who have manifested a penitent and contrite spirit, into the enjoyment of privileges even greater than those before bestowed.

* Or "festive apparel."—ED.

Behold that priest, clothed with filthy garments, and the adversary standing at his right hand to resist him ; and behold that selfsame priest, his iniquity gone, clothed in marvellously "rich apparel," and *the angel of the Lord standing by him*, to vindicate, to defend, to cheer, to support, and to energize for future service, this highly favoured one ! and may this truly wonderful sight move every believing reader to acknowledge with a thankful heart that he or she has also been the recipient of like precious and marvellous grace.

The promise given as to future priestly service

must now be very briefly considered. "And the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts ; (1) If thou wilt walk in My ways, (2) and if thou wilt keep My charge, (3) then thou also shalt judge My house, (4) and shalt also keep My courts, (5) and I will give thee a place of access among these that stand by.' " *First* :—as an individual his walk henceforth must be in the fear of God. *Second* :—As God's High Priest there must not be in the future any relapse into evil practices ; no connivance at, or allowance of, wickedness in others, such as I Sam. ii. 12-36, and II Kings xvi. 10-16 reveals. Then *third* :—to him should be given ability and opportunity to pronounce judgment, and to take forth the precious from the vile. *Fourth*, the Lord would greatly honour him in his priestly service, by entrusting to him the due performance of all the great and grave responsibilities attaching to his own high position and calling. *Fifth* :—he should be accepted, and privileged to *come near* to Jehovah ; yea, occupy the position of an acknowledged and recognised servant of the Lord God of Israel, as one of the many that do His pleasure, hearken-
ing unto the voice of His Word.

Although our calling and present position are very different to his, we may learn much from the solemn charge and the gracious promises given to Joshua.

A. J,

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

“ Beloved Brother—I hear that your —— is in a very precarious state, and I seize a moment to write to you, to express what I trust you are assured of, dear brother, my unfeigned sympathy with you, and I would add, dear Mrs. ——, though I have not seen her.

If the soul walks with God, it is not hard, but it is submissive ; and there is no softer spirit, nor one which is more susceptible of every feeling than submission. But then it takes the will out of the affections without destroying them, and that is very precious. So was it with Christ. He felt everything. His tenderness was perfect, and yet how perfect His submissiveness ! How God exercises the heart by these things ! It is not simply that the heart is tried by the sorrow itself (in which we can reckon on the most tender sympathy of Christ) ; but when the heart is thus brought into the presence of God, who is thus dealing with us, all our ways, all the interior of our hearts, all His ways with, and His appeals to us, often in such cases rise up within. If the will is unbroken, and grace not clearly known, a perplexed and anxious judgment ensues ; if not this, often a humble and lowly judgment of self ; for the knowledge of grace makes us lowly, when it is real.

It is astonishing how much often remains as a sediment at the bottom of the heart of a man, gracious in the main of his life, which the rod of God stirs up when He thrusts it in—often underlying all the contents of the heart, yet always to be carried off by the living stream of the waters of His grace—not merely faults, but a mass of unjudged materials of every-day life, a living under the influence of what is seen, or unjudged affections of every kind. All that is not up to the measure of our spiritual height is then judged before God in its true character, as connected with flesh. . . .

God may visit us to bring out the sweet odour of His grace, not indeed even then without need, as the soul itself will own, for in such cases it will feel the need of

realising all the communion, which in its closer character was hindered by that for which God is dealing with us. But grace being fully known, and submission being there, the practical result in fact, and before others is a sweet savour of willing bowing before God, and even thankfulness in the midst of sorrow. When this is real, it is very sweet. He too is very present in it, and it is thus we make real progress in such exercises. It is astonishing what progress a soul sometimes makes in a time of sorrow. It has been much more with God; for indeed that alone makes us make progress. There is much more confidence, quietness, absence of the moving of the will; much more walking with, and dependence on Him, more intimacy with Him, and independence of circumstances—a great deal less *between* us and Him—and then all the blessedness that is in Him comes to act upon the soul and reflect in it; and oh! how sweet that is! What a difference it does make in the Christian, who, perhaps, was blameless in his general walk previously!

I trust the Lord may spare you your ——, dear brother. A first trial of this kind is always very painful: the heart has not been in it before. God comes and claims His right on our tenderest affections. This is strange work when they have just been drawn out; but it is well—it is good. I am sure you are in His hands; and that, I am sure, is all a way of love, and the best that the wisdom of His love can send. If the needed work can be done without the sorrow, He will not send the sorrow. We might even dread if it be needed. His love is far better than our will. Trust Him; He may well be trusted; He has given His Son for us, and proved His love. Present your requests to Him: I do fully for you. He would have us do it, and then lean fully on His love and wisdom. If he strikes, be assured He will give more than He takes away.

Peace be with you, dear brother.

J. N. D.

UNHALLOWED FAMILIARITY.

There is a familiar way of speaking indulged in in these days of religious sensationalism and profane sentimentality, which is most offensive and repugnant to the spiritual instincts and to the Christward affections of every godly Christian. It is the way of addressing in prayer, or speaking in Gospel addresses of the Blessed Person of the *Lord of Glory*, crucified for us. Such expressions, as : "*Dear Jesus*," "*Sweet Jesus*,"—" *Precious Jesus*," are constantly uttered by unhallowed tongues and pens, omitting His proper title of "*LORD* !" —The very fact of this omission betrays but too much the lack of true subjection to the authority of Him, at whose Name one day every *knee* shall bow, of those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that *Jesus Christ is LORD*, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 10, 11).

It is true, that the Gospels constantly mention the name of "*Jesus*," without His title "*Lord*." But then it was the time of His humiliation here on earth (Phil. ii. 5-8.) His Lordship had not yet been proclaimed. The first Gospel preaching at Pentecost begins with "*Jesus*," by way of historical testimony, as in the Gospels. But how does it conclude ?

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same *Jesus*, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and *Christ*."

Is the stupendous humiliation of the Lord of Glory, who humbled Himself and gave His blessed, perfect *SELF* for our wretched selves, to justify us in addressing Him in that familiar way ?—If He is not *ashamed* to call us "*brethren*," is this a reason for us to call Him : "*brother* ?" The plea of *love* does not avail as an excuse for such an unhallowed familiarity. The Apostle Peter certainly loved the Lord—none more than he. Deep indeed had been his fall, and sadly forgetful had he been of the reverence due to his Master, when at his shameful denial, he had said : "*I do not know the man*." Yet when, at his restoration, thrice the searching question is put to him by the Good

and Great Shepherd : “Simon, son of Jonas” [not “Cephas” nor “Peter”] “lovest thou me?” he answers : “Yea, *Lord*, thou knowest that I love thee,” and : “*Lord*, thou knowest all things ; thou knowest that I love thee.” He does not say : “Dear Jesus,” “Sweet Jesus.” Well might the Lord have distrusted the genuineness of his love, if he had done so. There is such a thing as natural love and admiration of Christ in His humanity, which is very different to the affections of the newborn nature for Him.

In speaking so, I do not in the least intend to imply the slightest doubt of true affection for Christ in many—nay, most of those who address the Lord in that familiar way. They do so by way of habit or mere imitation of some “good man,” whom they have heard addressing the Lord in the same way. I am sure, the utter impropriety of such familiar terms in speaking to our Lord and Saviour needs only to be put before them, to “stir up their pure mind,” which recoils from such unguarded expressions, and to make them discard a habit so unbecoming to saints, approaching the Throne in heavenly courts, where the once rejected Jesus of Nazareth is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high in His own dignity as Son of God, and according to His merits as “Son of man,” crowned with glory and honour.

The glorious One, to Whom God says : “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,” and of Whom the Spirit of God says, that He “is above all, God blessed for ever. Amen,”—is He to be addressed, as it were, on terms of equality by bits of clay, saved by grace?

It is true that many will say “Lord, Lord,” to whom He will answer: “I never knew you, depart from me.” But this will be said in that day to those “that work iniquity.”

In I Cor. xii. we read that

“No man can say : Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost.”

This is the true version of that portion of Scripture. It means, that no man can address Him or appeal to Him directly as "Lord Jesus, but by the Spirit of God," which is quite a different thing to saying: "Lord, Lord."

This reminds me of an incident, which occurred at N. in the Isle of Wight. A band of gipsies encamped near that little town, had, (very likely in consequence of some transgressions,) suddenly left the island, leaving behind them a gipsy woman, who was too ill to be removed. Miss W. a Christian lady, who used to visit the poor in that quarter of the town, found the poor woman in a wretched lodging, where she was left to perish. The poor creature was in heathenish darkness. The name of God appeared to be unknown to her, leave alone the name of our blessed Saviour. Needless to add, that she could neither read nor write. Miss W., however, did not despair, but looked to Him, who opened both the eyes and the heart of the blindborn man. She spoke to the poor sufferer of "Jesus of Nazareth, Who was anointed by God with the Holy Ghost and with power: Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him."

This testimony of the blessed Lord's gracious humanity, when the "kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared," in His Person, Who came "to preach the glad tidings to the poor," and had been "sent to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised"—was just what suited the poor gipsy. Again and again she asked her visitor: "Oh, tell me more about that kind gentleman!"

But when Miss W. began to tell her, that that blessed perfect Man was also the Son of God, nay God Himself, the poor gipsy, who by that time had acquired a notion of the true and living God, was bewildered. She could not understand, how He could be the "Son of man," and the "Son of God" at the same time. The "God-Man"

was beyond her comprehension. But her visitor did not despair. She looked up to "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," and "hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ," and continued to present in a simple way the Divine Person of Christ to the sick woman.

Miss W. was prevented for a few days from going to see the gipsy, and on her next visit she found her dying. In fact, it appeared as if death had done its work already. The rigidness of death was upon her face, and with her emaciated hands folded, and her eyes closed she lay still and immovable, so that Miss W. thought all was over. But presently the poor woman opened her eyes, lifted up her hands, and looking upwards, breathed the words: "*Lord Jesus!*" and expired.

To her Christ was no longer merely a "kind gentleman," but the "*Lord Jesus.*"

May such sentimental believers, who have contracted this unspiritual way of addressing the Lord, and speaking or writing about Him, learn from the dying gipsy that reverence due to the Lord of Glory, crucified for us.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER'S PAGE.

The following is an outline of the story of Ebedmelech the Ethiopian (Jer. xxxviii and xxxix.,) put into simple language for young children. I found it useful in illustrating the subject of faith and works to a class of Italian boys and girls not long ago. They were greatly interested in it, and seemed to grasp the point clearly. The Sunday-School teacher will, of course, see how the story could be dwelt upon more at length, and made more interesting than space will allow in this outline. Various ways of applying it personally to the children will also doubtless suggest themselves.

The Kind Black Man.

There was once a black man who left his own country to go and live in a distant land. I don't know whether he went willingly, or whether he was taken by force. At any rate, he went, and he was made one of the principal servants of the King of that country.

Now in the black man's own land the people worshipped idols, and no doubt he had been accustomed to do the same. But when he went to his new home, he found that the people of that land, which was called Canaan, believed, or professed to believe, in *one* God. The true God had done a great deal for them. He had loved them, oh, so much! and taken such care of them, and called them His own people. But alas! the poor heathen found that most of them were not a bit better than himself—indeed I think they were worse. The King, his master, was a bad man, who was constantly disobeying the God in Whom he professed to believe, and the people were like him. What must Ebedmelech, the black man, have thought of that?—Those who called themselves God's people behaving worse than a poor heathen!

What must unsaved people *now* think of the conduct of many who call themselves Christians? Isn't it likely to make them think there is no reality in it, and to set them against becoming Christians themselves?

But I am glad to say that, in spite of all the wickedness he saw around him, Ebedmelech did not turn away from God. He believed in Him, and became His servant. And soon he found an opportunity of doing something to please the Lord in Whom he trusted.

There was a good man named Jeremiah living not far off. He was a true servant of God, and God used to send messages to the people through him to tell them to repent of their wicked ways. But they would not repent, and at last God allowed their enemies to come and besiege their chief city, Jerusalem, where the King lived. The people, who were called Jews, hoped that they might be able to

drive away their enemies, but Jeremiah told them that they would not succeed, and that, even though the soldiers had gone away for a little while, they would return, and take the Jews prisoners, and burn their city, because God had sent them to punish His people for their sins. The princes of Jerusalem were so vexed with Jeremiah for speaking such words as these, that they put him in prison. (Jeremiah's sufferings and his daily allowance of a piece of bread from the bakers' street, might here be enlarged upon to interest the children).

But all his troubles did not frighten the good prophet: he still bravely gave the wicked princes the warning messages God sent through him, and bye and bye they grew so angry that they asked the King to let them kill Jeremiah. Now the King, though very wicked, was not as cruel as these princes, and he had been trying to protect God's prophet; but he was such a coward that he was afraid to contradict them, so he said to them "He is in your hand; I can't do anything against you." (A comparison might be drawn between Zedekiah and Pilate).

So the princes took the prophet, and let him down by ropes into a pit. At the bottom of this pit was a quantity of mud, so deep that poor Jeremiah sank in it as if it had been a bog, and there they left him to die.

But the King's black servant heard what had been done, and oh, how it grieved him to think that the man of God should be treated so cruelly! He went at once to his master, and said: "My lord the King, these men have done a very wicked thing in putting Jeremiah into the pit. He is likely to die of hunger there." God moved the King's heart to listen to his servant's words, and he answered: "Take thirty men with you, and pull Jeremiah out of the pit before he dies."

So the good black man went off and collected the thirty men, and he also did what you might think a very strange thing: he picked up all the old pieces of rag he could find,

and took them with him. What were they for? You will see. When they reached the pit, Ebedmelech let down the rags by cords to Jeremiah, and called out to him: "Put these rags under your armpits, and the cords over them." They were to prevent the cords from cutting the poor prophet's arms. So you see Ebedmelech was thoughtful as well as kind. Then they pulled hard at the ropes till they had got Jeremiah safely out of the pit.

God did not leave the kind black man without a reward. Soon after He sent him a message through Jeremiah. He told him that when the city was taken by the enemy, and the wicked Jews punished, He would deliver him, the poor black man, and his life should be spared.

But what reason did God give for saving Ebedmelech? Was it because he had been so good and kind—because he had saved the prophet's life? No. God did not mention that at all, though we know how pleased He must have been with him for it.

Listen! "Because thou hast put thy trust in Me, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxix. 18.) It was the black man's *faith* that saved him, *not his works*. We are told first of all about his good works, but the end of the story lets us into the secret of them. He believed in God, and that was the reason of his daring to do what not another man in the city dared, even if he wished to do it. His works proved that he was a true believer, but his faith in God saved him.

But let us remember that the black man was not satisfied with being a believer. It *must* come out in his life. It does not seem that he was naturally a very brave man, for God speaks of "the men of whom *thou art afraid*" (ch. xxxix. 17), but he felt that he *must* take sides with God's servant, and serve God in helping him, even at the risk of his own life. And just as truly as faith and works both had their part in the life of the kind black man, so they must both have their part in the life of every saved boy or girl. It is by faith alone your soul can be saved,

but if there are no good works in your life afterwards, is not that a proof that there is no true faith in your heart?

(The story of the attempted escape of Zedekiah and his princes through the garden, and their capture, might be graphically described, as showing the inevitable punishment of the unbeliever, while Jeremiah and Ebedmelech were delivered by God).

C. H. P.

“MINE EYE SEETH THEE.”

JOB XLII. 5.

I heard of Thee, Lord Jesus !
 Of Thy beauty, and Thy worth ;
 And yet this foolish soul, enslaved,
 Still worshipp'd things of earth.
 I heard of Thy self-sacrifice,
 Thy death, in matchless love !
 But all was pow'rless till Thy look
 Melted me from above.

I met Thy gaze, Lord Jesus !
 As it lingered o'er my soul ;
 It shed a flood of peace and joy,
 No doubting could control.
 Such was the depth of tenderness
 In that blest look of love,—
 It charmed mine eye from things beneath,
 And now I look above.

I see Thee now, my Saviour !
 I but *heard* of Thee before ;
 And this enraptured eye would rest
 On Thee for evermore,—
 Would kindle with Thy beauties,
 As it dwells upon Thy face ;
 And this full soul would overflow
 With thoughts of Thy sweet grace.

I see Thee now, Lord Jesus !
Lo ! all other objects fade !
It is Thy peerless presence
That has thrown them in the shade.
My heart was bound in things of earth,
But Thou hast set it free,—
Hast burst the gilded, galling chains—
Given me to live for Thee.

I see Thee now, Lord Jesus !
As Thou waitest for Thine own,
Sitting beside Thy Father,
At His right hand, on the throne.
Down here Thou art rejected,
But we view Thee, Lord, on high ;
And strengthened by the wondrous sight,
Can suffer—yea, can die.

I see Thee now, Lord Jesus !
Yet a brighter morn is nigh ;
When Thou shalt call God's children
To their Father's house on high.
The sweet anticipation
Of that blessed, longed-for day,
Does much to cheer the lonely hours,
While Thou art still away.

S.

FOUR REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

CHAPTER III.

Two Groups or kinds of believers, engaged in the
Lord's Service.

(*Luke viii. 1-3, and x. 38-42.*)

A few remarks as to Lazarus, Martha and Mary.

In the 10th Chapter of the Gospel of Luke we are for the first time introduced to the happy little home of Lazarus and his two sisters, whom the Lord loved. The heavenly Stranger, who had not where to lay His head, made it His retreat, when after a day's unremitting service and labour of love, He withdrew to that peaceful little household of faith with its happy inmates, who knew better than Simon the Pharisee, how to appreciate the presence of such a Guest. It is there we first find Mary seated, as a true learner, at the feet of the "*Son of man*," receiving from His fulness, before in John xii. we behold her worshipping the "*Son of God*," and pouring out upon His feet the precious contents of her alabaster box. In Luke Ch x. we find her sitting at the feet of Jesus, the eyes fixed on the One, who is altogether lovely, on His divine and moral beauty and comeliness; her ears drinking in His words of grace, truth, wisdom and love. That stream of blessing, ever flowing from His lips—whether as a mighty tide in teaching and healing multitudes, or as the gentle flow of private conversation, ministering words in season to the weary, entered into the hearts and minds of the privileged hosts of that wondrous Guest, especially into the heart of the one at His feet.

Mary's posture was a stationary one—at the feet of Christ, the secret of all progress in true knowledge, service

and practical walk ; whilst her more active sister (whose liveliness had, perhaps, been conducive to her brother's and sister's quietness,) is chiding with her for *lack of service*. But what does the Lord reply ?

“ Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things ; but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

What words these for a “day of small things” like this, when men are boasting of doing great things in the field of Christian labour and service ! Mary had chosen “the *good part*”—Why, she was sitting there, doing nothing, whilst Martha was up and doing, serving the Lord. The difference between the two sisters was just this : Martha was occupied *with serving* the Lord, and Mary with *the Lord Himself*.

Service a Snare.

Alas ! to how many of the Lord's beloved has service become a snare, by permitting it to slip in between Christ and their hearts. Everything that is allowed to come in between Christ and us, whether it be the Gospel service, lectures, visiting the sick, serving the poor, or good works of any other kind, becoming the means of self-exaltation, soon assumes the nature of idolatry. It is the bosom disciple of the Lord, “whom the Lord loved,” who closes his first Epistle with the solemn warning :

“ Little children, keep yourselves from idols ! ”

Whilst reclining on his Master's bosom, being pillowed, as it were, on His love, no idol could slip in. It was the same disciple of Christ, whom the Holy Ghost chose to write that wondrous Gospel, which has been called the “Grand Gospel,” not only on account of its depth and yet marvellous simplicity, of language, nor merely because of the great principles unfolded in it, (such as “*life*,” “*light*,” “*love*,” “*believing*” and “*world*”) which occur in the Gospel of John incomparably more frequently than in the “synoptic Gospels,” but because the Person of Christ, in His Divine glories, and what He is in Himself, are set forth in that Gospel in an especial way.

John, who more than others did "cleave with purpose of heart" to the Person of Christ, was the one who in an especial way wrote down what Christ is as the Great "*I am*," in His glories as the Son of God. And let me add, beloved, there is nothing renders our souls more stable than keeping the *Person of the Son of God* constantly, fixedly before our eyes in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, who "glorifieth Him, receiveth of His and showeth it unto to us," thus filling the alabaster box with spike-nard.

Two groups and kinds of godly Women.

I have said that Mary's posture and service before the Lord was of a *stationary* character. But in a wider sense this may be said of the whole little household of Bethany. (We must not forget that the Lord loved all the three).

We find in the Gospels two groups of godly women, both of them patterns of true personal devotedness and acceptable service to the Lord, only in different ways. One of them is of a *moveable*, and the other of a *stationary* character. The former is honourably mentioned in the 8th Chapter of Luke, as also in other portions of the Gospel. The names of three of them are recorded: "Mary, called Magdalene, (not to be confounded with the sister of Lazarus, nor with the woman in the house of Simon, the Pharisee,) out of whom went seven demons; and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward; and Susanna, and many others which ministered unto Him of their substance." They, with the Apostles, went with the Lord to every city or village, where He preached, and showed the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. A blessed service indeed, and acceptable to God and His dear Son.

The other group of devoted servants of Christ is the *stationary* one at Bethany. They did not follow the Lord whithersoever He went, though none the less true "followers," i.e. disciples of Him, whose love to them is especially recorded in Holy Writ, as is His love to John.

Difference between these two groups.

But there is a striking difference between these two groups. The former, so honorably mentioned in Luke

(viii.) we behold again in the closing Chapter of the same Gospel, coming to the grave of Jesus, with the spices and ointments they had prepared, to perform the last service of love to the dead body of Him, whom they had served and followed so devotedly from place to place. But they had to be questioned at the mouth of the empty grave by the two bright heavenly messengers of the resurrection : "Why seek ye the living among the dead?"

Not so those at Bethany. Neither Lazarus nor his sisters, nor even Martha, are to be seen at the grave. Why? One would have thought, that he, whom the Lord not many days before, had recalled to life * and given back to his mourning sisters, would have been the first to mingle his tears with those of the women at the grave, and that his two sisters, with whom Jesus had wept in perfect human sympathy at their brother's grave, before He restored him to them in Divine power, raising him from the dead, would have been the first to join those women at the grave in their intended service of love.

It was *because* Lazarus had been partaker, and his sisters witnesses of that wondrous resurrection scene, so divinely described in the eleventh Chapter of the Gospel of John, that neither of them was present at the grave of Jesus. Could they go and seek one among the dead, who could say at Lazarus' grave : "I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die ?"—Could they seek Him among the dead, who needed only to utter the Word of Divine command : "Lazarus, come forth," and the dark mouth of the grave had to give up its prey, and death, nay, corruption to disappear at his bidding? Impossible. They had learnt too much at Bethany, to go to the tomb in Joseph's garden and "seek the living among the dead."

Blessed little group of Christ's handmaids at His grave ! They had followed Him during His Life, moving with

* Not a small boon even to a godly Jew, (Comp. Isai. xxxviii.) especially with their blessed Messiah living in the midst of them on earth, who was to "redeem Israel" and establish the promised kingdom.

Him and His Apostles from place to place, willing to spend and to be spent in their untiring, loving devotion to His Person, attending to the personal wants of the "Son of Man" with that tenderness and attention, which characterises godly women. Great indeed will be their reward in heaven!—But twice blessed little family of Bethany, who were permitted to be the hosts of the Son of God, but had a perception of His glory, not only as Israel's Messiah, but as the Son of God,* in a greater measure than that, however honoured group at the empty grave of Jesus.—And thrice blessed Saviour, who loved them all and appreciated their Service of love in their several places, *but made Bethany His retreat.*

May we learn of each of these groups, what the Spirit and the Word, indited by Him, intend to teach us: the self-denying, loving and active devotion of the *former*, in Christ's service. And from the *latter*, the being at home with the Son of God and His glories and thoughts, in the attitude of worshipful nearness at His feet, as the only place of learning Divine truth and service. Alas! with all our superior blessings and privileges, how short, how lamentably short do we fall of that which characterised each of those two blessed groups! Have we not but too much forgotten, that the only way of practically imbibing and exhibiting the *mind of Christ* is—the *heart's prayerful study of Christ* in the Word of God and at His feet!

But let us now turn to that scene of incomparable beauty in the house of Simon the Leper.

* Even Martha, though less than Mary entering into the Lord's mind, said, like Peter, to Him: "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."—And she not only said, like Mary, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," but she added: "But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." (John xi. 21, 26, 27.)

THE DRINK OFFERING.

It is not a little remarkable that the Drink Offering is not brought forward in Leviticus (save in allusion in Chap. xxiii.), the book which treats particularly of sacrifice and offering; but in Numbers, in which book, it is obvious, there is quite a different object before the mind of the Spirit. And, further, it holds a very peculiar place in that book; following immediately, as it does, the solemn record, in Chap. xiv., of Israel's unbelief in the wilderness, and of Jehovah's declaration that none of that generation should enter the good land, but Joshua and Caleb. How wonderful then, and at first sight strange, to read at once, "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitation, which I give unto you." (Num. xv. 1-3.) Israel had forfeited all claims to the promised land: their rebellion had reached a climax. Spies had been sent out (in evident distrust of Jehovah) [?] one man of each tribe, who returned after forty days with the report that the land was as good and rich as they had heard, but that the cities were walled up to heaven, and the people strong, and, in comparison, they were in their own sight and that of the enemy, as mere grasshoppers. The result of such a report was not that the people cast themselves upon the God who had already done so much for them; but tears of unbelief, murmuring against Moses and Aaron, and the appointment of a captain to return into Egypt. The effect of the remonstrance of Joshua and his faithful companion Caleb was simply a call to stone them with stones. Jehovah then appeared for the vindication of His Name, and declared solemnly that not one of that unbelieving generation should cross the borders, laying at the same time His hand upon the ten unfaithful spies, who "died by the plague before Jehovah." This was followed by a fleshly outburst in Israel: "Lo, we be here, and will go up into the place which Jehovah had promised: for we have sinned." (Num. xiv. 40.) They were discomfited, for Jehovah was not with them: and the Canaanites chased them

“as bees do” even unto Hormah. (Deut. i. 44.) How wonderful, I repeat, to read next, “When ye be come into the land, etc. ;” and to find instructions concerning sacrifice and oblations, among them the Drink Offering. What a faithful God is ours! Though His people had forfeited all by their disobedience and unbelief, He had not changed. His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were before Him, and the honour of His Name was bound up with their fulfilment; and though He would lay His governmental hand upon His people for their unbelief, He would ultimately bless and fulfil every word He had spoken. The fifteenth Chapter looks forward therefore in some sort to the Millennium, when Israel will offer before Him the sacrifices of righteousness, and the true wine of the kingdom be dispensed abundantly.

The libation was never offered as a separate offering, but accompanied the Burnt Offering and the Meat Offering. This is seen in the instructions concerning the morning and evening lambs. “Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar: two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: and with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shall do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah.” (Exod. xxix. 38-41.) Wine is ever the symbol, in Scripture, of joy: this offering, therefore, sets forth the divine light and joy in the life and death of Jesus; the first being shadowed by the Meat offering, the latter by the Burnt offering. Do not the Gospels shew us the infinite joy the Father found in all the ways of perfect grace of His beloved Son on earth? Where else could the Divine heart find joy? Man had deeply revolted from Him, and was steeped in corruption and iniquity; and if the sight of man’s condition was so painful in Noah’s day that it

repented the Lord that he had made man, causing Him to be grieved at heart, what must the spectacle have been, after ages of further trial, under law and without it, when the only Begotten walked here, and the wickedness and hatred of man's heart displayed itself to the full? The whole scene was a moral waste, the Jew being nothing better than the Gentile, though favours had been abundantly shewn and privileges conferred: nowhere could the Divine eye rest with complacency and joy but upon His own beloved Son incarnate among men.

And if His life ministered joy to the Divine heart, what shall we say of His death, viewed in its Burnt offering aspect? Do we wonder that the Lord said, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again?" (John x. 17.) That wondrous death was the culminating point of a life of perfect devotedness (though it was much more than that); and in it all God could find infinite joy. But our God does not keep all to Himself, one may say with reverence and gratitude: He shares with His own what His heart has found in Jesus. God's priests shared all that was brought to the altar (see Num. xviii.); it was their portion, in the gracious provision of God. And surely our souls know the precious meaning of this: we are privileged to find our joy in the same blessed One in whom (and in Whose work) God finds all His joy. Peter expresses this very sweetly in his first Epistle. God says of Jesus that He is "precious"; the Divine Spirit instantly adds, "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." (1 Peter ii. 6 7.) there is, however, this immense difference; God's joy and delight is perfect and immeasurable: ours is proportionate to the power of the Holy Ghost in us. Thus Israel were directed to bring the same measure of wine as of oil. If a lamb was offered, the accompanying meat offering was a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of oil; the Drink offering of which was the fourth part of an hin of wine (rather more than a quart). If the sacrifice was a ram, the Meat offering was two-tenth deals of flour mingled with the third part of an hin of oil, and the

Drink offering the third part of an hin of wine ; and if a bullock was presented, with it were required three tenth deals of flour mingled with half an hin of oil, and a Drink offering of half an hin of wine. Weighty reminder for our souls ! We only enjoy Christ and enter into God's thoughts concerning Him, in measure as the Holy Ghost is permitted to work in us. When we hinder and grieve Him, we rob our souls of joy, to say nothing of the dishonour to the Lord's Name. The Spirit is the minister of Christ, and loves to familiarise our hearts with Him, and the things which concern Him ; but how often we hinder His gracious operations by our own folly. Foolish souls are we ! Missing too often the joy our hearts really long after, and which we well know can be found nowhere but in Christ the Lord ! Our hearts are no better than those of the earthly people of God : ever ready were they to turn elsewhere from God, "pouring out drink offerings to other gods to provoke Him to anger." (Jer. vii. 18.)

Jehovah was particular that the Drink offering should never be poured upon the golden altar of incense. "Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering ; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon." (Exod. xxx. 9.) The incense altar was the place of priestly communion ; and we not only see Jehovah refusing strange incense (for nothing must form the subject of worship and communion but Christ), but He objected to the confounding of that altar with the one in the tabernacle court. Outside they were to offer the Burnt offering, etc., and there only were the Drink offerings to be poured. At the altar of Burnt offering's God met the sinner : at the golden altar within the sanctuary He met the worshipping priest. There is danger to-day of confounding the two things : if I intrude myself or my sins into the worship of God, I deal with at the inner altar what only befits the outer. Is not this often done, brethren ?

In conclusion, it is precious to notice Paul's allusion to the Drink offering in Phil. ii. 17. "Yea, and if I be offered (or poured out) upon the sacrifice and service of

your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." Touching language from Paul the aged, the prisoner of Jesus Christ! To him, (and surely to God) the service of the Philippians' faith was a sacrifice; and he was prepared to be poured out upon it (as the strong wine upon the sacrifices of old) that God might find joy. Precious and devoted servant! Where do we observe the like to-day?

W. W. F.

MARVELLOUS GRACE.

II.

Jehovah's Servant the Branch.

Directly following that most solemn charge, and those conditional promises made to Joshua, are found certain *unconditional* promises, introduced by the Spirit through the prophet in a manner as impressive as it is emphatic and instructive.

We linger for a moment to meditate upon this remarkable introduction, which at once discovers itself to be a mine rich in precious truths.

The preceding verses of this Chapter, that have been already considered, show very clearly that Joshua had not taken unto himself those honours according to his present dignified position, all having been bestowed upon him in marvellous grace. The culminating point with respect to those honours was reached in his being by the Lord of hosts called by his name, and formally saluted thus :—"O Joshua the high priest,"—

His "fellows" that "sat before" him are also addressed; although not called each by his name. Who were these? Other members of the priestly family, possibly the *chief* priests, who represented each in his own person one of those twenty-four courses into which the Aaronic priesthood were divided; even as each served in his proper course, in subordination to the high priest before whom he sat, while all together they represented the entire priesthood. Those honours attaching

to their several official positions caused these to be men which were a sign, or wondered at. We wish to draw special attention to the fact that here we have the then restored priesthood as such recognised and formally addressed. These same priests being thoroughly conversant with all the weighty responsibilities, ceaseless activities, and manifold duties then devolving upon the priesthood. Presently they may each one stand to offer gifts and sacrifices, but for the moment all must needs sit and listen, for the Lord of hosts had said, "Hear now." So they sit still, and listen to the Holy Spirit's testimony concerning "another priest," of a higher order than their own, that should presently arise, and unite in His own Blessed Person the very highest priestly and kingly dignities.

"Behold, I will bring forth My Servant the Branch."

The importance of this announcement becomes all the more apparent by its being compared with what is set forth in Rev. v. 3-6. In this latter Scripture, save the Lion of the tribe of Judah, no man in heaven, or on or under the earth is found worthy to open the Seven-sealed Book, and by the might of His power, having purged this land of its iniquity, to inaugurate that universal reign of millennial blessedness and felicity, which is so often referred to by the prophets and described in terms as glowing as their language is sublime. Whereas Zechariah here speaks of the same Blessed Person, as Jehovah's Servant the Branch, that will presently appear to take up the cause of "a nation scattered and peeled a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled;" purging out of it all that offend and do iniquity, yea, removing the iniquity of that land in one day; and finally raising Israel to its appointed place of pre-eminence over the nations.

That the then present and future welfare of the nation was beneficially effected by this first restoration of the Aaronic priesthood has been as clearly shown by the preceeding verses of this Chapter, as that the yet future

restoration of the sons of Zadok, with like beneficial results to the nation, is certified by Ezek. xlv. 15-24. Nevertheless the priests themselves were as powerless as the nation at large to effect that first restoration (Joshua himself was unable by any effort of his own to remove his own iniquity); all then depended,—as for the future restoration all will depend,—upon the glorious work finished by another, Himself “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.”

As “the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God” as the openly acknowledged “fellows” of Him that will

“bid the whole creation smile,
and hush its groan :”

even so does the future unparalleled blessing of the nation of Israel depend upon the bringing forth of

“THE BRANCH.”

The dread results of the outpouring of Jehovah's wrath upon Israel are graphically told in the two last verses of Is. iii. The first verse of the next Chapter I understand as showing that the spared remnant will exhibit at the first the extraordinary spectacle of daughters in proportion to sons of Israel numbering seven to one. “In that day shall the BRANCH of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely for them that are *escaped* of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that *he that is left* in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called *holy*, even every one that is written among the living (or “unto life”) in Jerusalem.”

The passage just quoted makes very apparent what is the true force and meaning of those significant words uttered by our Lord, when, speaking of Himself, and of the time of the Son of Man's coming to this earth in power and great glory, He said, “One shall be taken, and the other left.” For it shows that in *judgment* shall the first be taken, and the other left for entrance into *blessing*.

Isaiah iv. 4. shows that for the cleansing of the people they will be indebted,—not to the Aaronic priesthood but,—to the Lord Himself, “the Branch;” who shall also create and perpetually maintain over Mount Zion His glory-light, which will abide as the constant and sure defence of all that live beneath its beneficent rays

The Restoration of the Kingdom to Israel,

and her consequent exaltation above all the nations of the earth, solely through the instrumentality of that BRANCH who is both Son and Lord to David, is the glorious theme of Is. xi. Though here, as elsewhere, before the Spirit of God proceeds to speak of universal peace, joy and blessing, He draws attention to the Person that is the Communicator of all that will then be severally enjoyed by each member of the then joyful creation. And we shall do well to pause a while to consider Him, and what is here written of Him.

“And *the Spirit of the Lord* shall rest upon Him:” that Spirit which wrought so mightily in Elijah, when the heavens were closed that they rained not, and again opened in answer to his prayer. Even in him who called down fire from heaven to consume his adversaries.

“*The Spirit of Wisdom* ;”—Him that caused Solomon to be renowned all over the wide world for wisdom. The *Spirit* of “*understanding*.” Who made David to understand all the works of the pattern, and so qualified him to instruct his son beforehand as to the building of the Temple. (1 Chron. xxviii. 19).

“*The Spirit of counsel* :” who gave Joseph ability to give good counsel to Pharaoh (Gen. xli. 33-36). The *Spirit* of “*might* :”—even He that energized Sampson to perform all those feats by which his prodigious strength was displayed openly.

“*The Spirit of knowledge*”—who revealed to Daniel the lost secret anent Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, and enabled him both to tell and to rightly interpret that dream. The *Spirit* “*of the fear of the Lord*,” by which Moses so quickly discerned the Lord’s mind at critical moments. (Deut. ix. 18-12; Numb. xiv. 41-43; xvi. 4, 5, 46).

To all of these eminent servants of the Lord had the Spirit been given by measure, (Numb. xi. 24, 25, may be cited as one remarkable instance) but to the Son without measure (John iii. 34). In Him therefore will the energy of the Spirit be displayed in all its infinite perfection; and as He will excel Solomon in wisdom, so will He surpass Sampson in might; yea, He will excel all others even in that in which each one did himself excel. They were in their day eminent, but in all respects the Son of Man will, "in His day," have the pre-eminence.

After pronouncing sentence upon the unfaithful shepherds of Israel, who had scattered and driven away the Lord's flock, Jeremiah speaks of "a righteous *Branch*," in whose days Israel shall be enabled to apply Psalm xxiii. as expressive of their own secure and happy position. (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.) Again, while bearing testimony to the future joy and full blessing of Israel, the same prophet says, "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the *BRANCH* of righteousness to grow up unto David, etc. (Jer. xxxiii. 15).

Our limited space will not allow us to give more than the simple reference to Zech. vii. 12. 13; but we trust enough has been written above to clearly established the reason why Joshua and his "fellows" were exhorted simply to listen, as they sat, to Jehovah's testimony concerning His Servant the *BRANCH*.

A. J.

THOUGHTS ON THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR MUSIC

In the Religious Services of the Present Day.

Painful and serious as it is to touch upon existing arrangements among Christians in a time of general failure, and when the most part are peculiarly sensitive as to any interference in those things which they allow, yet if there are questions affecting the glory of God, and a man's eternal

destiny, it is simply cowardice to shrink from raising them. We come in at the close of the dispensation. We are in "the last days," marked by the Spirit of God as "perilous" (2 Tim. iii. 1-5), because mere professors of Christianity—unchanged in heart towards God, loving self, loving money, loving pleasure—take up the *form* of godliness while denying its power. Every period of time has had its characteristic feature. Thus Popery characterised the "latter times" of 1 Tim. iv. 1-3, even as mere profession does these "last days." Precious souls have been ruined eternally by both. The "form of godliness" of to-day has perhaps less of "the blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits" of the "latter times," but it is none the less to be feared. Indeed, this "form of godliness" is confessedly becoming more and more attractive. All that music, eloquence, and taste can minister to it is increasingly laid under contribution, and when we think of the solemn fact revealed by the Lord in the parable of the wheat and the tares, that they would both be found in the world throughout the dispensation (Matt. xiii. 33), we are led to ask the question—Will these things minister to the growth of the wheat (the children of the kingdom), or of the tares (the children of the wicked one)?

Love of music, and the present facilities for its cultivation, (combined, no doubt, with the growth and far-reaching influence of the Tractarian movement), have brought about a great change in the "religious services" of the day. They have not only raised the demand for fine singing, but have gone far to supply it. They have imparted to thousands the power to sing with effect, when collected together in numbers, and not a few christian congregations furnish the opportunity for the display of much musical talent which tells powerfully on the feelings of those who have an ear for it. Whatever the pleas put forward in defence of this, an upright conscience must confess, that there is far more reference in the singing in such congregations to the ear of the creature than to the glory of the Lord. The most solemn words, avowedly addressed to the Living God, are too often secondary as compared with the music composed for them; and when "the service" is

over, it is painfully evident that the lips that uttered them are as free as ever for folly. Will not all this greatly help on the growth of tares for the near-approaching time of harvest?

We know from 1 Cor. xiv. that when the church came together at first, there was godly liberty for singing, as well as for prayer and for the exercise of gift, while everything was regulated by "*the commandments of the Lord*" as therein written by His apostle, and nothing left for development. (See v.v. 15, 21, 22, and 37). In James v. 13 we have the condition of the heart that can sing acceptably to the Lord, as we see exemplified under most remarkable circumstances in Acts xvi. 25. Still more clear and definite is the instruction in Eph. v. 18, 19, where the Spirit seems to be the spring and power of worship and joy in the soul (as the Lord taught the woman at the well of Sychar, John iv.): "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in the heart to the Lord"; while Col. iii. 16 guards the words that are uttered in praise, that they should flow from "the word of Christ dwelling in us richly," and thus the hymns, &c. be according to the mind of God as revealed in Scripture. How important at the present moment it is to consider what is here said, and to seek understanding of the Lord in all things; for, while remembering that it is written "Praise is comely," yet if God is not glorified in the melody ascending to Him from the hearts of those who sing, what is the sweetest music but solemn mockery!

And God is not mocked. The natural heart is known to Him. It is too deep a sink of hard, unbelieving and rebellious enmity against Him to be covered over by any form of godliness, however fair, and the most advanced religious service can make no change in this. The formalist may deceive others, may deceive himself, but he can never deceive God. Who forced the civil power to sentence Jesus to the cross? Formalists. And when? In the midst of their religious solemnities. They thrust Jesus into the hall of judgment, but "they

themselves went not in, lest they should be defiled ; but that they might eat the passover." And when He was crucified "because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was a high day) they besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." How revoltingly cruel their scruples, and how vain, for Jesus was dead already.

Such were formalists eighteen hundred years ago. What was God's estimate of the observance of that pass-over, when His Son was lying in the sepulchre, crucified and slain by the wicked hands of those who kept it? And what vital difference can there be in any mere formalist now? His form of godliness is but the poor effort of the natural heart, striving in vain to hide its nakedness. God saw it all at Calvary and He sees it to-day.

But it may be urged that there are "true worshippers" as well as formalists in these congregations. To such then may we address a word? You know in some degree the meaning of that Scripture: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." To have fellowship with God we must be *real*. Light is no flatterer as men are. There is no darkness in Him or where He is, and wherever we are, we are under His eye. There is nothing more dangerous than *unreality* in Divine things, especially now. Have you hearkened to His word? Have you acted upon Divine counsel? "*From such turn away.*" (2 Tim. iii. 5). From whom? *From formalists*. Precious to God, as wheat for His garner, *you* have not formalism, but *Christ* and *love* to root in. "Rooted and built up in Christ." (Col. ii. 5.) "Rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. iii. 17.) You know that it is impossible to look to Him for life, eternal life, and not possess it; for pardon, and not receive it; for peace, and not enjoy it; for growth and not make progress, for eternal glory and not gain it. But you also know well, that all this suits not the tares, and Satan has prepared the soil for them—oh, how well! So the formalists grow. But for what? Do you really believe the Lord's words in Matt. xiii. 40, 42?

Can you then sanction that which you know is not "after Christ," and which, whatever the zeal manifested for souls, tends to deceive them? God, in His abundant mercy, does bless the preaching of Christ to souls, and truth in hymns, as in tracts, even where that which accompanies the preaching and the hymns is contrary to His revealed will, but can it be a right thing to make this a plea for disobedience? He has said "*from such turn away*," and "to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams."

It may however be said that all this is rather dealing with what is on the surface, than going to the root of the matter. This is indeed true, but the conscience is often more directly met by calling attention to the fruit, then to the root, seeing that every tree is *known* by its *fruit*. The predisposing causes for the rapid development of the present "perilous" phase of the professing church are not far to seek, and may, by God's grace, be considered further on; but the Spirit of God in 2 Tim. iii. has marked out these open, public, characteristic features of our day, and it is the clear and express commandment of the Spirit:—"from such turn away." This is what is pressed now.

No doubt the mass of Christians have not really learnt that "the flesh profiteth nothing," and they are beguiled into a modified Judaism, not knowing that it was by God's dealings with Israel that He *demonstrated* that the greatest advantages and privileges bestowed on man, short of new birth, resulted not in his improvement, but the reverse. God was more dishonoured by Israel than by the idolatrous Gentiles (Rom. ii. 24). Yet even Israel (on whom God imposed *carnal ordinances*, or ceremonies, until Christ came and they met their end in the cross, See Heb. ix. and x.) were strictly enjoined not to go beyond the commandment, or to mock God with the lip while the heart was far from Him. (Read Ps. 1. 7 to 23; Prov. xv. 8; Ec. v. 1, 2; Is. i. 11 to 15; xxix. 13; Amos v. 23.) May the Lord preserve us from tempting Him as that unhappy people did.

W.B

SEVEN DARK NIGHTS FOLLOWED BY BRIGHT MORNINGS.

XII.

Philadelphian Morning.—Recovery of the old Scriptural truths.

Toward the close of the last century God raised several faithful witnesses, to awaken Protestantism, sunk in worldliness, from its deadly sleep. Their testimony was in the power and demonstration of the Spirit of God. The very worst of sinners were smitten with conviction under the mighty voice of those chosen vessels of the grace of God. Prodigals who appeared past recovery, were turned to God from their idols. Brands were plucked from the burning, who appeared as black as the devil himself, and were washed whiter than snow by the precious blood of the Lamb of God, and Laodicean Christians aroused from their perilous lethargy under the powerful preaching of men like Rowland Hill, John and Charles Wesley, Whitfield and J. Newton and others. But faithful as was their testimony and most blessed in the conversion and salvation of numbers of precious souls, it was chiefly confined to the preaching of the Gospel. And though one of the great blessings of the Reformation, the unimpeded dissemination of Scripture truths, had continued, the Bible having become common property, it appeared as if the glorious truth of the Church, which had been buried beneath the religious rubbish of so many centuries, was to remain hidden still. For one of the manifold stratagems of the enemy of truth is this, that where he cannot altogether prevent or suppress the spreading of Scriptural truth, he places some portion of it in the foreground, confining to it the whole interest and activity of believers, in order to divert their attention from other and equally important, nay, still higher and more blessed Divine truths, keeping them in the dark background, however clearly and decidedly Scripture may set them forth for the hearts and consciences of believers.

But our Lord Jesus Christ, who is not only the Saviour of sinners (praised be His Name), but above all the Head

of His body, the Church, composed of all really saved and sealed ones would not permit, His coming being close at hand, the precious truth of Christ and the Church—the very centre of the Divine counsels—any longer to be obscured and kept in the background.

Fresh Witnesses of Divine Truth.

Just as Wycliffe, John Huss and Jerome of Prague had been the harbingers of the approaching bright morning of the Reformation, so were those godly and dauntless witnesses, such as J. and C. Wesley and their fellow-labourers already mentioned, but the heralds of the bright “morning of *Philadelphia*.”*

“*Philadelphia*” is the very opposite of boasting. It is *conscious weakness* before the Lord “Little,”—(not “a little, *i.e.*, some, but) little strength *i.e.*, *weakness*—*conscious weakness*, but *faithfulness* (“holding fast” and “not denying”) amidst weakness. Its name means, “brotherly love.” But that does not mean brotherly love at the expense of Divine truth and at the cost of the honour of our Lord and of His great and blessed Name. It means holding fast (not loosely, but with a *firm grip*) *His Word*, and the Word of *His* patience, not

* Nothing is farther from the writer's mind, than to claim the title of *Philadelphian* Saints for the Christians referred to in the following. Any such claim would be worse than pretentious, remembering, from whence we have fallen, who once “did run well” Alas! the “candlestick has been removed.” “The crown is fallen from our head, and our dance is turned into moaning.” What I desire to dwell upon, is the marvellous and sovereign grace of God, granting to His sorrowing people from time to time such sunny breaks in the accumulating clouds, —bright and warm spring mornings in the midst of winter, His Spirit lifting up the standard of recovered Divine truths, and applying them in His own delivering power and comfort to the consciences and hearts simultaneously in the most distant parts of this country, by chosen and honoured instruments from among so-called “brethren,” a denominational and exclusive name, but too soon acquiesced in by some of those more distinguished witnesses, much to the injury of their own testimony, for such is man at his best.

denying His Name, which is done by *indifference* and *subsequent adherence* to doctrines which dishonour His Name.

The character of "Philadelphia" is trusting in Him, who holds the keys—not only of death and hades, but also of service, "Who openeth and none shutteth, and shutteth, and none openeth. "Philadelphia" certainly means "brotherly love," but brotherly "*love in truth*," and "*for the truth's sake*." That love is not without the *backbone* of *truth*. It is not like those soft jelly-fish in the sea, which cannot be laid hold of, but slip through your fingers. But let us turn to "brighter things"—even to our bright "*Philadelphian morning*."

During the third decade of this century God raised in England some eminently gifted witnesses of the truth. One of them, endowed with gifts of an exceptional measure, was used of the Lord to bring to light again the truth of the gospel in such fulness, as had never been known since the days of the apostles. But not only was the gospel in its original purity and completeness recovered by that highly honoured witness of the truth, but the pure light of the scriptural doctrine of the church (which in the course of centuries of decline had almost disappeared beneath the heaps of rubbish of human religious ordinances and dogmas) was put again on the stand in England in a clearness and scriptural simplicity, unknown in the history of the church since the days of Pentecost.

What characterised that movement was especially the practical acknowledgment of the presence, authority, and guidance of the Holy Ghost in the assemblies of believers. But that acknowledgment was closely united with the practical recognition of the written word of God and its authority, unlike many religious revivals, so called, where Satan endeavoured to conceal the assumptions of the religious flesh set in motion by him, and to set aside, under the pretence of guidance by the Holy Spirit, the authority of the word of God indited by the same Spirit. The believers, referred to above, acted upon

the thoroughly sound principle:—"Neither the Spirit without the word, nor the word without the Spirit."

The Spirit of God, dwelling in His own recognised authority in the assemblies of those Christians, His powerful and blessed activity was unimpeded in their midst. It almost seemed as if the glorious days of Pentecost were about to re-appear amongst them, to judge from the freshness, simplicity, devotedness, love and unity that characterised them.

"The effect of the truth on the hearts and consciences," says A. Miller in his excellent "Short Papers on Church History," soon was manifest. There was great freshness, simplicity, devotedness, and separation from the world. All was new. They flocked together and gave themselves to the study of the word of God, and soon experienced the sweetness of christian communion. They found the Bible,—as they said,—to be a new book. It was no doubt, in those days of virgin freshness a most distinct and blessed work of God's Spirit, the influence of which was felt not only throughout this country, but on the continent and in distant lands."

"It was no uncommon thing at this time to find valuable jewelry in the collection boxes, which was soon turned into money, and given to the deacons for the poor."

The eminent servant of Christ referred to already, who was God's instrument in the marvellous movement, wrote in those days in reply to a French religious journalist: "We were only four men, who came together for the breaking of bread and prayer, on the authority of the word, 'Where two or three are gathered unto my Name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matt. xviii. 20); and not, I hope, in the spirit of pride or presumption, but deeply humbled at the state of things around us; and praying for all Christians, members of the body of Christ, wherever they were ecclesiastically. We thought of nothing else but satisfying the need of the soul according to the word of God; nor did we think of it

going any farther. We proved the promised presence of the Lord ; and others, feeling the same need, followed in the same path, and the work spread in a way we never thought of in the least."

"It is very apparent," says Mr. A. Miller, "that they had no thought of constructing a fresh system, or of reconstituting the church of God, as God had constituted it at first,—of restoring it to its Pentecostal glory. They seem to have had no statute, no system, no organisation. They held the faith of all orthodox Christians with regard to foundation truths ; but having received light from God's word as to what the calling, position and hopes of the church are, they could no longer remain in what man and the world called "the church." These thoughts and searchings of heart issued in the secession of many individuals from the various bodies of professing Christians, and in their coming together for worship and communion on the ground of the 'one body,' as formed and directed by the "One Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 13.—Ephes. iv. 4.)

The secret of this christian devotedness was their devotion to the Person of Christ in the power of the Spirit practically acknowledged as dwelling among them. "They made," as Marsden says in his "Dictionary of Christian Churches," "no show of an especial creed. They simply proposed the practice of christian truth, as taught by our Lord and His apostles in the New Testament. They taught that it is the presence of the Holy Spirit which forms the church. It is the acknowledgment of the Holy Spirit as the really present, sole, and all-sufficient guide of the church during the Lord's absence." This was a chief feature in the testimony of these Christians.

But the enemy of the truth did not rest. He who in Israel tried everything to counteract the divine testimony of the prophets of Jehovah by means of false prophets, and later on in the earliest days of the church, even during the lifetime of the apostles by false teachers, introduced such also amongst the happy Christians

referred to above. Those tools of the enemy sought to paralyse, obscure, and, if possible, put aside those divine truths brought to light again by the above-mentioned faithful servant of Christ and his fellow-labourers. Their efforts were, in an especial though indirect way, brought into play against the scriptural truth of the presence, guidance and authority of the Holy Spirit in the Church of God, which these "evil workers" sought practically to set aside, supplanting it by the human tenets of teachers of their own, and claiming for them absolute authority. Soon evil doctrines, derogatory to the honour of Christ, made their appearance; whence arose the necessity of godly separation from all those who tolerated and adhered to these false teachers and their doctrines according to the solemn words of the inspired apostle of the church: "There must be divisions among you, in order that those who are approved may be made manifest among you" (1 Cor. xi. 19). The faithful servant of Christ, alluded to above, was again honoured at that time by his heavenly Master with being the champion of the truth and chief promoter of this godly separation, however humbling for all.

"Then had the churches rest"—for many years. But the adversary, who never sleeps, did not rest. He resorted to one of his old stratagems, by introducing the demon of religious party spirit, as he did of yore in that so richly endowed but elated church at Corinth, with no less contending parties and subsequent moral and doctrinal evils. A second,—an *ungodly* division (1 Cor. i. 10-13.) was the fruit of those machinations of the evil one. "They have sown the wind and they have reaped the whirlwind;" whilst a small remnant, kept by the mercy of our God from being carried away by those party currents and undercurrents, still remains in undisturbed peace on the *terra firma* of God's own word. May grace deepen the sense of our common shame and humiliation and of the sad havoc amongst that once so happy portion of the flock of God, and of the irretrievable damage to the testimony of divine truth; May the Lord in His mercy grant "repentance not to be repented of," ere that solemn day appears!

“THE YEAR OF GRACE,” 1895.

What an important and solemn truth is contained in this phrase so often carelessly quoted! And when we think how many of these years of grace have rolled on since the death of the Blessed Son of God made it possible for Mercy and Truth to meet together, and Righteousness and Peace to kiss each other, does it not fill our hearts with adoring gratitude to God, the “Father of mercies” who gave His Son for such a world of sinners and rebels; to the Son, Who gave Himself to die for us; and to the Holy Spirit, who for nearly 1900 years has borne unceasing and patient witness of “the grace of God that bringeth salvation?”

If we glance at the world’s history, since, in conjunction with the religious leaders of the day, it put to death the Son of God,—if we scan the appalling record of its wickedness and rebellion, the cruelty and injustice, the impiety and blasphemy connected with its profession of the Name of Christ, which continue to this day, spite of its gilding, we are constrained to say that each succeeding year down to the present has been a “Year of Grace.” And if we look back, dear Christian reader, upon our own individual history, can we not reckon years of grace during which God has borne with our folly, sin and rebellion against Him—preserving our

lives until that special year in which He manifested Himself to us, bowing our hearts to Himself, revealing Christ as the One Who had made satisfaction for our sins, bringing us as children into His family, and giving us His Holy Spirit, whereby we cry "Abba, Father?" And what about the years since that time, beloved? Has not each one proved a "Year of Grace?" Who but God, "the God of *all* grace," could have borne with our "manners in the wilderness" for *one* year, not to speak of forty or fifty?

Oh! may this grace teach us to "deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." May it arouse us too, during the little while that remains, to seek more earnestly the salvation of precious souls around us, that many more may be added to the thrice-blessed company that shall be led by the Lord Jesus into the many mansions of the Father's House to be with Him where He is.

C.P.

"Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no." *Deut. viii. 2.*

"He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." *Ps. cvii. 7.*

FOUR REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

CHAPTER IV.

An Alabaster Box Filled with Spikenard.

(Matt. xxvi. 6-13 ; Mark xiv. 3-9 ; John xii. 1-8.)

IN each of these three Gospels the Spirit of God, before introducing us into that bright scene in Simon the leper's house, records in a few words the dark counsels of "the assembly of the wicked," that was soon to surround the cross, and was now gathering at the house of the high priest. Satan, the prince of this world, was summoning his principalities and powers in the heavenlies, "the rulers of the darkness of this world," to instigate and prepare his earthly tools at Jerusalem for the terrible battle to be fought at Calvary. A darkness thicker than any that had ever brooded over Jerusalem, even in its worst days, was now gathering upon it. An awful pass-over was to be kept with the satanic leaven of malice and wickedness. The Lamb of God was to be slain; Messiah to be cut off and have nothing. At the high priest's palace the watchword of high treason was whispered by one of the Lord's apostles: "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast."

It was since the raising of Lazarus from the dead, when God's glory shone so brightly through His Son at the dark mouth of the grave, triumphing over death and corruption, that the wicked counsels of these tools of the "murderer from the beginning" had ripened into the bloody decision, "to take Jesus by craft and put him to death;" some of the more cautious and men-fearing

adding: "Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people."

The darkest of all murderous and treacherous nights, that ever hung over this sad earth, was approaching; the atmosphere of Jerusalem was thickening: the leaven of malice and wickedness was everywhere working, and they were going to keep "the Jews' passover."

But through that increasing darkness there shines a steady light from the house of the cleansed leper at Bethany, and as we approach it and enter in, a scene presents itself to our wondering and adoring gaze, the brightness of which is enhanced by the very darkness and coldness of the dangerous night without. There we behold the Lord with His disciples in Simon's house at a supper, which loving hearts and willing hands have prepared for the gracious Master. Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead, sits amongst the guests at the table with Him, and Martha serves, as usual. But there is another who serves—Mary. And what a service is hers! Martha ministers to the bodily wants of the blessed "Son of man," who was about to be delivered into the hands of sinful men. Precious and blessed service indeed! But a higher and still more blessed service is reserved for Mary. She ministers to the *Messiah*, the *Son of God*. "While the king sitteth* at his table," her "spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." She opens her beautiful alabaster box† of almost transparent marble, and pours out part of its

* Or rather "*reclineth* at his table." It is the same in Matt. xxvi., Mark xiv., and John xii. and also in Luke vii. To understand these scenes better, we must remember that the ancients did not *sit* at their meals, but *reclined* on couches. Mary, therefore, came up, *behind* Him, as He reclined at the table, and bending down over the couch, poured the spikenard on His head and His feet; and, probably kneeling at His feet, wiped them with her hair.

† The *alabaster* is a species of marble, distinguished for being light, and of a beautiful white colour, almost transparent. It was much used by the ancients for the purpose of preserving various kinds of ointment in.

“very precious” and “very costly”^{*} contents upon Christ’s head, and part upon His feet. Like the woman in Simon the Pharisee’s house, she does not speak one word, but she does just the right thing in the right way and at the right time. Whiter and purer still, through the grace of God, and more transparent than the beautiful vessel in her hand, was that godly heart, filled with Christ, rejoicing in the beauty of the Messiah-King, and bowing adoringly before the glory of the Son of God. More precious than the contents of her alabaster box, were the adoring affections of her heart, which had been filled by Him before Whom she now bowed in worshipful homage with the precious stores of the thoughts of the love and grace and truth, and all the moral glories of the Father, of which He, at Whose feet she had imbibed them, was the personified expression. No doubt deep gratitude to the gracious Saviour who had restored the beloved brother to his sorrowing sisters, at the same time filled her and Martha’s heart, and had its share in their service of love. But that gratitude formed only one of the seven ingredients, so to speak, of that precious compound, the odour of which filled the house, and ascended higher still; for it was spent upon Christ, and came from a heart filled with Christ. And, as the penitent sinner in Simon the Pharisee’s house poured out her ointment upon the feet of the “Friend and Saviour of sinners,” heedless of the chilling presence of the self-righteous Pharisee and the religious disputes of his friends, so Mary, in Simon the leper’s house, poured out her spikenard upon the head of Israel’s Messiah-King and the feet of the Son of God, (whose divine power and authority she had witnessed at her brother’s grave), heedless of the indifference of some of the disciples, and even of the presence of His betrayer.

^{*} *Spikenard* was made of the finest oil, *nut oil*. It consisted of seven ingredients: 1.—Malabrathum; 2.—Schoenus; 3.—Costus; 4.—Amonium; 5.—Nardus; 6.—Myrrh; 7.—Balsamum, that is, all the most valued perfumes of antiquity. It was obtained in Judæa by foreign commerce from the East Coast of Africa and from India.

But there was a great difference between the homage done to Jesus in the house of the Pharisee and that offered to Christ in the house at Bethany. The former sprang, as has been observed, from the heart of a penitent sinner, moved to its inmost depths by the riches of divine grace, as revealed and personified in Jesus, and drawn in grateful holy love to Him, Who in no wise cast out even the vilest sinner, who was drawn to Him by the Father.

But in the house at Bethany, it was not only the deep sense of perfect grace and truth, as it appeared in Jesus, in Mary's heart, (though, of course it was this also), but especially of the glories of Christ as the Messiah-King of His people, and above all, of His glories as the Son of God, that is, His *Messianic* and His *Divine* glories, that bowed her heart and knees before Simon's honoured and blessed Heavenly Guest, and made her pour out the precious contents of her alabaster box upon His head, as Messiah-King, and upon His feet, as Son of God. The first part of her worshipful homage expressed that note :

“ Hail to the Lord's anointed,
Great David's greater Son.”

—thus foreshadowing the future homage of His people, when “they will be willing in the day of His power,” and will hail their once rejected and crucified King with: “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

“ When to the time appointed
The rolling years have run—
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free ;
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity.”

The second act of her tribute of silent worship owned Christ as the Son of the living God, as Israel will also own Him in that day, when they will not only hail Him as their King, on Whose shoulder the government shall be, but will call His name: “Wonderful,” “Counsellor,” “The mighty God,” “The everlasting Father,” “The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah ix. 6.)

But that time had not yet arrived. Christ must first suffer before entering into, and coming in His glory. He was to be disallowed of men, and to be rejected by the builders. The leprosy of idolatry, even the love of the treasures, the pleasures and the honours of Egypt, which Moses had despised, preferring the "reproach of Christ," still clung to his nation. There was something of it in the house at Bethany, not in Simon the cleansed leper, Christ's grateful and willing host, but in some of His disciples, and the worst in one of His apostles, who had been for more than three years His companion, but not, like John, His follower. All that time he had been the daily witness of His mighty works and gracious and heart-searching words. But whilst walking alongside with the mighty and gracious One, whom he called "Master," even the Son of the living God, there was an idol in his heart, which he carefully harboured and concealed, and would not suffer to be dethroned, even by the daily sight and presence of Him, Who was "God manifest in flesh." Thus he became a thief, the chief of traitors and the "*son of perdition*."—Christian reader! remember the words of the Lord's inspired bosom disciple, *whom Jesus loved*: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

Judas it was who took the lead, and became the spokesman in giving expression to that "*indignation*"—not within him alone, but in others of the Lord's disciples—at that which, to them was nothing but a "*waste of ointment*"—for it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and given to the poor. Does the reader feel indignant at that indignation? Well he may, but let him pause for a moment, and remember that three hundred pence, which to us may appear to be a small sum, means according to our money, more than nine pounds. And suppose such an ointment, of more than nine pounds' value, were lavished before my reader's eye in a moment, to anoint some beloved and honoured head, would he not feel tempted to be angry at such a "waste of money," remembering how many starving poor might have been helped by such a sum? So let us put our swords into their scabbards, reader, considering how the same inclination that was in the Lord's

own disciples—practically to prefer service and all kinds of good works, by which *we* also get some credit, to the adorable person of Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us—is to be found in us. “And they murmured against her.”

And how does the Lord silence their murmuring? Does He rebuke them for their care for the poor? Certainly not. “Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever you will, ye may do them good: *but*”—mark that ‘*but*,’ benevolent Christian reader—“*but* Me ye have not always.” Ah! what a gracious, and all the more crushing, rebuke! How their hearts and consciences must have felt its force, after those gracious lips had been closed in death for them on the Cross, where He suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring them and us to God, and to fit them and us to dwell with Him in His and our Father’s House. Will they, and shall we, then think the homage that all heaven renders to Him too costly?

We have observed already, how God, during the presence of His dear Son on earth, always took care in an especial way to honour Him, when men on special occasions showed their disregard of Him. So it was in Simon the Pharisee’s house, so it was in the house of Simon at Bethany, and so it was at the culminating moment of Satan and men’s hatred of Him, when that mock title, affixed to the cross by Pilate, was acknowledged and verified by the dying thief. But, as in Simon the Pharisee’s house, we find “wisdom” in turn justifying her child, so we find the same, though in another and a higher way, in the house of Simon the cleansed leper, at Bethany.

(To be continued).

THE RED HEIFER.

Here we have another sacrifice which is not found in the book of sacrifice and priesthood:—the Red Heifer. This, as the Drink offering, is placed by the Spirit of God in the Book of Numbers in a wilderness atmosphere. In this Chapter (Num. xix.) we read of “the camp” and

“tents”; and the book, as a whole, presents us with the Divine record of the journeyings of the people of Israel through the desert. The Red Heifer has very much the same place in the book of Numbers that the day of atonement has in Leviticus. There the leading thought is approach to God within the sanctuary, and Jehovah’s dwelling in the midst of His people, the blood on the mercy seat being the righteous ground; here the people are viewed as pilgrims in the desert, liable to contract defilement by the way: therefore the provision of the heifer.

“All these things happened unto them for types,” the Spirit assures us; and in Israel’s position we have a picture of our own. Believers are in the wilderness (the world is this to them); and are proceeding to the inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven; and while passing through, are liable to get defiled. This line of things, found in Peter’s epistles and in Hebrews, by no means clashes with what we find in Ephesians. There saints are viewed, according to the counsels of God, as already seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Him. Numbers, in the Old Testament, finds its answer in Peter in the New: and Joshua, in Ephesians. Both positions are true of the Christian collaterally: he is at once in the wilderness and in Canaan—the heavenlies.

It is important that saints should understand their place in the world as strangers, and accept it thoroughly. Our connection with the world has been severed by the cross of Christ; and now we are not of the world, even as He is not of it. Therefore holy vigilance becomes us, that we be not tainted with the world’s spirit, or learn its ways. God is too *holy* to walk with a defiled man; but *grace* makes full provision for all the need.

The heifer must be spotless and unblemished: these expressions we have frequently met with in our consideration of the offerings, and they mark the care of our God for the honour of His Son. He would have all know

that the One who died for sin, was personally the unblemished and untainted One; as thoroughly so, when bearing sin, as in the uncreated glory above.

And not only was the heifer to be "without spot," etc., but it must be one "upon which never came yoke." This recalls the Lord's words to the Jews in John viii. 34: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin." Sin not only defiles, and estranges from God, but it *enslaves*. How little had the Jews learned it in our Lord's day! They boasted to Him that they were Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how then could He speak of making them free? Their words were untrue, even *manward*, for they had often been in bondage to Gentile powers because of their sins, and were, in fact, under the thralldom of the Romans at the time of speaking; but *Godward* the case was even worse—they were the slaves of sin. Very similarly does the Spirit speak to us in Romans vi.: "But God be thanked, that ye were the slaves of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart," etc. And further, "being then made free from sin, ye became the slaves of righteousness." Now this yoke the Lord Jesus never knew. It was His delight, from beginning to end, to do the will of His Father and God. When coming unto the world, He could say, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;" in the course of His path, "I do always those things that please Him;" and at the end, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest Me to do." (Psa. xl. 8, John viii. 29. John xvii. 4).

The heifer was to be given unto Eleazar the priest, "that he may bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face." "Without the camp" speaks to us of the outside place which was accorded to Jesus, when rejected by Israel and making atonement for sins. The nation abhorred Him, and cast Him out of their holy city, crucifying Him in the place called Calvary; and, (what was incomparably deeper) God forsook Him, and called for the sword of Divine justice to awake against Him. This was an outside place

indeed : the holy soul of the Divine " Surety " felt it in all its terribleness of sorrow. But if we were to enjoy the inside place, He must take the outer ; if we were to have life, He must go down into death. So rich is His grace !

It was not the work of Eleazar to slay the heifer, slaying not being proper priestly work ; another slew her before his face, and his work began with the blood, which he was to sprinkle with his finger directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times. The tabernacle was where God dwelt ; the blood was thus sprinkled before God. Only on the day of atonement was blood carried within the veil. The heifer was then burnt. The word is " sahraph," " to consume " as in the Sin offering ; not " hikteer " as in the Holocaust. The death of our Lord Jesus, in its Sin offering aspect, was judicial : it was the judgment of God which was due to sin.

Into the burning of the heifer were to be cast cedar-wood and hyssop and scarlet. We read that Solomon spake of trees " from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." (1 Kings iv. 33) ; they represent the extremes of nature. Scarlet in Scripture is invariably a symbol of earthly glory. Thus I am privileged to see in the cross of Christ, not only an end made of my sins, and all my judgment borne ; but an end of everything in which I might glory after the flesh. " The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world : " my affections must be centred elsewhere, not here. How instructive that this should be introduced into this type ! The Spirit would bring before us clearly our true relations with the world, and all that is connected with it ; and it is the forgetfulness and neglect of this which causes us to get defiled, and lose the enjoyment of our proper communion with God. We cannot touch the world without getting defiled. If we habitually applied the sentence of death to ourselves — " always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus " — our communion would flow on uninterruptedly, as indeed it should. One cannot have to do

with sin in any way without getting defiled. This is solemnly seen in the fact that the priest, after sprinkling the blood of the heifer, had to wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and be unclean until even: the man that burned the carcase was in the same position; and the man that gathered the ashes must wash his clothes, and remain outside the camp, as unclean, until the even. Deeply solemn reminder for our souls! If these men must be regarded as defiled who were simply engaged in one way or another with that which put away sin, how much more so is the actual sinner defiled! And how much more serious are the sins and defections of a Christian than of a mere child of Adam! Such are sins against love and grace, professedly known and enjoyed; and against the light of the perfect revelation of God to our souls.

W.W.F.

(To be continued).

SEVEN DARK NIGHTS FOLLOWED BY BRIGHT MORNINGS.

XIII.

The Present Night of Infidelity and Scepticism in their Various Forms.

Hitherto we have been meditating upon dark nights and bright mornings *in the past*, from the night of "chaos" and its subsequent Creation-morning down to the spiritual night of Sardis followed by the bright, but transient Philadelphian morning.

But now we have come to the night of *this present time*, the shades of which are closing in around us in ever increasing thickness—darkness that "*may be felt*,"

only more solemn than that of Egypt, the present spiritual darkness being the result of wilful rejection of, and opposition to completely revealed Divine truth, and therefore in a still higher degree judicial than even that of Egypt.

We need not go as far back as the days of the "Annals of Halle" by Arnold Ruge, and the teachings of Uhlich, Wislicenus and König, and Bruno Bauer in Germany in the second and third decades of this century, followed by Strauss' "Life of Jesus," in Switzerland, and later on by the "Life of Jesus" by Renan in France; nor even to the effusions of kindred spirits in England, such as "The Greatest Thing in the World" and the doctrine of evolution in the writings of the same author (Mr. Drummond), or to the quite recent production of that "Will o' the wisp," "*Lux Mundi*" ("*tenebrae mundi*" would be the more appropriate title). Nor need we to remind our readers of those great scientific men of great fame and little shame, who use their professor's chairs, for instilling into the minds of the young, entrusted to their care, the poison of rationalism and infidelity, and effacing the early impressions of piety and reverence for the Holy Scriptures imbibed at their mothers' knees; nor at the huge tidal wave of infidelity and disregard of all that was held sacred and to be revered, which is sweeping over the universities, drowning in infidelity untold numbers of the rising generation, and making them the seminary for spreading abroad the seeds of unbelief and rejection of all that is divine, and of everything that comes from God, and belongs to God.

It is neither needful nor profitable to enter upon the discussion of books like that of a certain dissenting minister, who in the first five pages of his book, denies four fundamental truths of Christianity, viz., man's ruin, and by implication, the need of atonement, further, the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, then the Godhead of Christ, then, eternal punishment, and finally at the close of his book *expressly* denies atonement, saying that we are not saved by the *death* of Christ, but by His life,

A faithful witness (the late C. H. Spurgeon) as to the rapid decline of Christianity in these days of a Christless Christendom, says in his remarks on this terrible downgrade: "No lover of the Gospel can conceal from himself the fact that the days are evil. Read those newspapers which represent the Broad School of Dissent, and ask yourself, How much farther could they go? What doctrine remains to be abandoned? What other truth to be the object of contempt? A new religion has been initiated, which is no more Christianity than chalk is cheese; and this religion, being destitute of moral honesty, palms itself off as the old faith with slight improvements, and on this plea usurps pulpits which were erected for Gospel preaching. The Atonement is scouted; the inspiration of Scripture is derided; the Holy Spirit is degraded into an *influence*!* The punishment of sin is turned into fiction, and the Resurrection into a myth. And yet these enemies of our faith expect us to call them brethren and maintain a confederacy with them!

At the back of doctrinal falsehood comes a natural decline of spiritual life, evidenced by a taste for questionable amusements, and a weariness of devotional meetings. . . . When the old faith is gone, and enthusiasm for the Gospel is extinct, it is no wonder that people seek something else in the way of delight. Lacking bread, they feed on ashes; rejecting the way of the Lord, they run greedily in the path of folly."

"The case is mournful. Certain ministers are making infidels. Avowed atheists are not a tenth so dangerous as those preachers who scatter doubt and stab at faith. . . . Germany was made unbelieving by her preachers, and England is following in her track. Attendance at places of worship is declining, and reverence for holy things is vanishing: and we solemnly

* Not only the Person of the Holy Ghost is thus attempted to be done away with, but even the Personality of the Son of God reduced to a mere "essence" by some of the modern "Gnostics."—ED.

believe this to be largely attributable to the scepticism which is flashed from the pulpit and spread among the people. Possibly the men who uttered the doubt, never intended to go so far ; but nevertheless they have done the ill, and cannot undo it."

"It now becomes a serious question," continues Mr. Spurgeon, "how far those who abide by the faith once delivered to the saints, should fraternise with those who have turned aside to another Gospel. Christian love has its claims, and divisions are to be shunned as grievous evils ; but how far are we justified in being in confederacy with those who are departing from the truth ? Numbers of easy-minded people wink at error so long as it is committed by a clever man, and a good-natured brother, who has so many fine points about him. Let each believer judge for himself. But for our part, we have put on a few fresh bolts to our door, and we have given orders to keep the chain up ; for under colour of begging the friendship of the servant, there are those about who aim at robbing the Master."

The Bright Morning of the First Resurrection.

But thicker and thicker as the darkness is growing around us in the present night of atheism, infidelity, scepticism, rationalism, agnosticism in the open, and in the religious world, let us remember, faithful, and therefore more and more isolated believer, that all this is only the sure sign of the approach of the brightest of all mornings, even the morning of the Lord's coming *for* His Saints, which is the beginning of the "first Resurrection." The last hour of the night before day-dawn is the darkest and coldest. It is the sign that the morning is near, even the bright Resurrection-Morn for all that are Christ's at His coming.

"O happy morn ! The Lord will come,
And take His waiting people home
Beyond the reach of care ;
Where guilt and sin are all unknown ;
The Lord will come and call His own,
And place them with Him on His throne,
The glory bright to share.

The Resurrection-Morn will break,
 And all the sleeping saints awake,
 Brought forth in light again.
 O Morn too bright for mortal eyes!
 When all the ransom'd saints shall rise,
 And wing their way to yonder skies—
 Call'd up with Christ to reign."

We have dwelt already more largely on the happy subject of this brightest of all earthly mornings for the Lord's heavenly people, in preceding Numbers of this Magazine,* and therefore can but conclude with the repeated expression of our prayerful desire, that the light of that blessed hope may keep our hearts and consciences more constantly in the Presence of Him, who Himself "*is our hope.*" It is in His Presence alone, that the hope of His coming, now so close at hand, (may we not say, *imminent?*) can be experienced by us in its living reality, cheering our hearts amidst the increasing darkness, illuminating our family circles, and shedding its light upon our daily path with its increasing difficulties for the faithful. We need not say like Cleopas and his fellow-disciple: "Abide with us, for the *day* is far spent, and the *night* is at hand," but: "The *night* is *far spent*, and the *day* is at *hand*!" Keep us, O Lord, abiding in Thee, and Thy words abiding in us, that Thou mayest find us fruitful and watchful, as Thou wilt have us to be at Thy coming! May our hearts be "burning" at His words, like those two at Emmaus, and our conversation, like theirs, be "*concerning Jesus.*"

SCRIPTURE READINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

(See No. 17.)

V. v. 29-34. We now have come to the well known "*days*" in the latter part of this marvellous portion of Holy Writ, including the first verse of the second Chapter. Why is the wedding in Cana called the "*third day?*" Ought it not to have been the *fourth*? For in the first

* Nos. 12, 13 and 14.

chapter we have *three* days already. This has appeared a difficulty to many. But the apparent difficulty disappears when we consider that the 35th and 43rd verses with the respective portions headed by each, are to be taken as *one* "day," both referring to the presentation and application of the efficacy of the sacrifice of the "Lamb of God" to Israel; v. v. 35-42, His presentation to the *then living* generation, and v.v. 43 to the end to Israel in the future, when they shall see Him, whom they had pierced. In v. 28 we have the statement that John was baptising in Bethabara, *beyond* Jordan.

Then the next verse (29) begins with the *first* "day," John testifying to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin [not, "*sins*"] of the world" (Comp. Col. i. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 1.—1 John, ii. 2. where the correct reading is: "for the whole world" (not: "for the *sins* of the whole world.") Here we have the precious Gospel Testimony as to the "Lamb of God" with regard to the "sin of the whole world," v. v. 30 and 31 appear to be a parenthesis. In the following three verses (32-34) the forerunner mentions that wondrous scene, showing the "*Lamb of God*" to be the "*Son of God*," which is the characteristic testimony of the Gospel of John, where the message of eternal life through faith in Him, Who was the life and the manifestation of it in His own Person, is going out to the whole world, and Israel set aside from the very beginning as having rejected the Lord. And when, after their rejection of the testimony of the Holy Spirit by Stephen, Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles was called, his first testimony was to Christ as the *Son of God*, and then in the second line as the *Messiah*, whereas Peter, who had borne that glorious testimony: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," in his first preaching at Pentecost presented Him to the Jews as their *Messiah* or "Christ" (comp. John i. 41), His character as "Son of God" in Peter's first preaching appearing only by way of implication.

Thus the "first day of the Forerunner's testimony applies to the efficacy of the Lamb's sacrifice as to the "sin of the world," and no doubt in its wider Gospel

aspect, as being *available* for *all* ("whosoever") *effectual* for those who believe ("whosoever believeth.") (John iii. 16.)

V.v. 35-42 contain the testimony of the Lamb of God, who was to "save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21.) This testimony was addressed to the Jews contemporary with John the Baptist. But they did not want to be "saved from their sins," because they *loved sin*, as the Gadarenes loved their swine, but they would fain have been saved from the consequences of their sins, under which they smarted—even the yoke of the Romans.

Only a small remnant (oh, how small!) received the forerunner's testimony. They "*found*" the Messiah, because they had "*sought*" Him, and two of them, at His gracious invitation in reply to their enquiry, "*came and saw where He dwelt.*" V. 42 finishes the first part of the *second "day,"* as referring to the *then living faithful Jewish remnant.* V.v. 43-51 refer to the future Jewish remnant. Philip and Nathanael are its typical representatives. We read: "Jesus would go forth into *Galilee.*" *Galilee* throughout the Gospel of John signifies the place of the Jewish remnant. Philip and Nathanael especially are beautiful representatives of that future Jewish remnant. Nathanael owns Jesus to be the "*Son of God*" first, then "*King of Israel,*" whereupon the Lord points to His millennial glory as the "*Son of man,*" which goes beyond the "*king of Israel*" and the fig-tree" (Comp. Dan. vii.) Before *that* fig-tree which witnessed Nathanael's prayerful exercise of conscience and heart, the Lord needed not to hunger, for *that* fig-tree showed precious fruit, even Nathanael, the "*Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile,*" he being the beautiful type of the deep and genuine exercises of soul in the future Jewish remnant. Would there were now more such "Nathanaels under the fig-tree!" It would be all the better for us and above all for the glory of Him who said: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me."

Thus we have Christ in the first chapter of John's Gospel as the "*Son of God,*" as the "*Lamb of God,*" and as the "*Son of Man*" in the wider sphere of His millennial reign.

“WHO LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME.”

GAL. ii. 19, 20.

What words are these from the lips and pen of the chief of sinners, snatched from the wrath to come in the hour when his mad and wicked rage was touching its highest point. What words for us to repeat with hearts throbbing their unspoken praise !

And did the Son of God love Saul of Tarsus ? Was His eye upon him in compassion, in tenderest sovereign love, as the clothes of Stephen's murderers lay at his feet ? Fathomless love ! Love possible only in the bosom of the Son of God !

The importance of the place which Stephen's martyrdom occupies, its character as a sort of filling-up of the guilt of those who, with wicked hands, had crucified and slain the Lord of glory, and especially its relation to the subject before us render a few remarks upon it desirable. The cross was the highest expression of the hatred of man against Him who had come down from God in the pure grace which seeks and saves the lost. But to the Lord's prayer, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do," his murderers owed a "lengthening of their tranquillity." Alas that they should have used it to do despite to the Spirit of grace and to send a message by Stephen, "We will not have this man to reign over us !" Yet, just as Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by Him, so Stephen, the witness of a glorified Jesus, was not left without divine testimony. Those who had deliberately refused the miracles and wonders and signs which God did by the Lord Jesus, sinned against the Holy Ghost Who shone in Stephen's face. Those who boasted that their great lawgiver's face shone with the reflected glory of Jehovah, refused the *same* light when it testified that Jesus is Jehovah. The wickedness of man had reached its deepest depth. And Saul presided at that bloody scene ! He consented to the death of a man in whose face the light of heaven beamed ; a man, moreover, whose only crime was his relations with Jesus the Son of God.

It is permitted to us now to turn from earth with its gnashing of teeth upon the follower of Christ, and its stoning of that shining face—to turn to heaven and learn its choicest thoughts. At the right hand of the Majesty there, Jesus stands to receive the spirit of His beloved and honoured witness. The circle which is filled with joy when one sinner repenteth, was moved with fresh delight, as the *standing* Jesus received that thrice happy spirit. Man had done his worst, and that “worst” was to put to sleep the object of his hatred. Hatred is never satisfied. It gnaws the heart in which it dwells. The unhappy murderers leave the scene of their wild and cruel rage with gnawings of hell in their bosoms. But love in its home above kept high feast at that self-same moment. Ere the devout men had raised for its burial the disfigured body, but lately bright with the light of Jehovah-Jesus’ face, the released spirit was received into the arms of eternal love. It gazes, satisfied, on the face of Jesus. The joy of Jesus like the flow of David’s loving tears exceedeth! He has more joy in receiving Stephen to the paradise of God than Stephen has in finding himself “present with the Lord.” But LOVE IS SATISFIED;—love in its full fountain in that eternal heart, and love in its blessed stream in that ransomed spirit.

From that height the eye of the Son of God is upon the chief of the persecutors as the awful scene closes, and as each takes up his clothes. Eyes as a flame of fire indeed, and yet full of unspeakable love! He looks down upon the blasphemer, the persecutor, the injurious man, not to take speedy vengeance, not to cry, “Depart, thou cursed, into everlasting fire.” No, blessed Son of God! Thoughts of peace and not of evil are Thine towards Saul of Tarsus, Thine enemy.

“Who loved me.” Not a step of all that path of rebellion and hatred against God in His highest and fullest manifestation of Himself but was known to the Son of God. Precious were the saints to the heart of Jesus; He calls them “*me*” for indeed they were of His bone, and of His flesh! Of old it was said, “he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.” Doubly true was this of

those whom Saul persecuted. Indeed it was not for their own sake that he hated the disciples of Jesus. It was solely because of the Name they bare. Hear his own testimony before Agrippa of the "many things" he did "contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth":—"I punished them oft in every synagogue; and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even to strange cities." (Acts xxvi. 11).

Truly he *was* the chief of sinners. His malice against God manifested in flesh, his turning the highest attainments, the most lofty position and the most perfect righteousness in the flesh to frustrate the best work of God, and that in which His heart was most engaged—in this he was truly the chief of sinners.

With what abhorrencé do the pure eyes of the Son of God behold sin! And *such* sin, how it grieved Him at His heart!

The heart of Paul felt his own former guilt as he wrote his burning word of warning to saints in danger of going back to a system, the sworn enemy of Christ and of His cross. How he judged afresh the wicked course which Christ Himself cut short in His heavenly majesty, in His mighty grace, as Saul neared the scene of further havoc among the saints. But deeper than his guilt was his Saviour's love. Higher than his rage at its highest against Christ was the love that knew it all, that saw it all beforehand, that felt it all, and yet poured itself out in choicest blessing on his guilty head. How his heart thrilled again as he thought that *he* personally—the guilty persecutor—was before the eye of the Son of God, when He yielded Himself to accomplish the ineffable purposes of God: *then* "He loved me and gave himself for me."

And is there not a clear sweet-sounding echo in our hearts, beloved? Is there not more than an echo? Does not the fresh ministry of Christ to our hearts now call forth with renewed love this hallowed cry, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me?" A cry sweetly personal! Had *I* been the only sinner to be redeemed to God by

blood, Jesus my Saviour would have come, would have lived, would have lived and died for me,—would have poured out His soul unto death on my behalf! *I* was before His eye—each child of grace can say—*I* was dear to His heart as He said, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” It was for *me*, guilty, hell-deserving *me*, that He cried (drops of blood on His brow, and tears in His eyes) “If this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done.” It was for *me* that at last, in the thick darkness of the place of a skull He cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Jesus, Son of God, what does this poor heart owe to Thee! What, for the favour of God now! And what, for all the joys of Thy Father’s house by and by!

And this, knowing *all* beforehand, all the rebellion, all the guilt, all the heartless sin against perfect love in which we once lived. This, too, knowing all the waywardness and coldness of our hearts since we have tasted His grace! “Who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Beloved brethren, with a heart moved as this priceless love and its precious fruits pass before the mind, let me press upon you the practical bearing of all this. “What I now live in flesh,” says the apostle, “I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Shall we not seek in a deeper measure this present, abiding sense of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge? Shall we not seek that our hearts may be led captive by it; that our ear, our hand, our foot, sanctified by the sprinkled blood and anointing oil, may be given up entirely to Him Who died for us, and rose again?

Jesus, Son of God! take these feeble hearts, fill them with Thy PERFECT LOVE, work in them mightily by Thy good Spirit that, as Thou livest in us, so what we now live in the flesh may be by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. Amen.

EXTRACTED.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER'S PAGE.

The Outline Map.

I.

Our second example of the union of faith and works is Abraham. His two titles of "Father of all them that believe," and "Friend of God" present to us these two sides of his character. The former title is brought out clearly in Rom. iv. and Gal. iii., the latter in James ii.

The children's interest might be aroused by getting them to read Rom. iv. 2-5 and Gal. iii. 2-11 on the one hand, and James ii. 21-24 on the other. What a paradox they contain! The Apostle Paul takes the greatest pains to show that Abraham was justified by faith and not by works, while the Apostle James (equally inspired by God) declares just as emphatically that he was justified by works. Surely at first sight the two statements are enough to puzzle a grown-up person, let alone a child!

The first explanation that would occur to most of us is that Paul speaks of the salvation of the *soul*—of our justification before *God*, and James of the *outward* thing—our justification in the sight of our fellow-creatures. Then, too, we might point out that the two apostles refer to totally different events in Abraham's life—Paul to his simple faith in God's promise, James to an *action* which *proved* his faith, and we might show that the faith came first, and the work specially referred to followed a great many years after.

But don't you think that, true as this is, there is yet a deeper meaning in that lovely 23rd verse of the second chapter of James—that it does not refer solely to the God-ward and man-ward sides of the question? If we compare it with the Lord's words in Gen. xxii.: "*Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son,*"

thine only son from me," surely it conveys the thought of proving our faith not merely to man, but to God (though of course He already sees it in our hearts, as man cannot do). The context of James ii. 23 of course shows that our fellow-men are thought of too, but how blessed to earn *God's* "*Now I know!*"

It seems to me that that one word "fulfilled" sheds a flood of light on the subject. Analyse the word, think what it really means—not merely the limited idea of the accomplishment of a prophecy, but "*filled full*"—something completed which without it would be incomplete. Might we not illustrate it to the children something after this fashion?

"Have you ever at school been given an outline map to fill in? The map is there—the coast-line is all perfectly drawn, and as you look at it, you say: 'This is a map of England.' So it is, but is it complete? 'No,' you say, 'there are no towns, or rivers or mountains marked: *I* have got to fill them in.' Well, I think this verse speaks to us about something which is very like an outline map. 'The scripture was fulfilled (that is, filled full, filled up) which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.'

"How strange! *that* scripture does not speak of his works at all, but of his justification by faith. Yes, the very thing! That text, which the Apostle James quotes from Gen. xv. 6, was the outline map, Abraham's willingness to give up his only son to God was the filling in. Abraham believed the word of God, and that was enough to justify him: God reckoned him a righteous man simply on account of his faith, and that is just the way in which every believing man, woman or child is saved now. But then Abraham had to fill in all the details of that map; he *was* a righteous man just as truly as your outline map is a map of England: that was what *God* had done for him; but Abraham had to fill up his life with works which should prove his faith, though they had nothing to do with saving his soul.

“Your map is given to you ready drawn: you had nothing to do with that part of it, but your teacher expects you to fill in the mountains and rivers—that is *your* part. So the Christian child, after he is saved through faith in the Lord Jesus (Who finished the whole work of salvation for him) has *his* work appointed him—has a life to fill up with little bits of service to the God Who has given him all—has to be righteous in his daily life, as God has already made him righteous through faith.

“But we must not forget that even *our* part of the work cannot be done in our own strength. The Apostle Paul tells us in Gal. iii. of some people who were trying this, and shows us how wrong and foolish they were; it is *only by the help of the Holy Spirit that we can do the least thing to please God*. We must seek His guidance in filling in our map, or else it will never be done in the right way. But as He is always willing to show us how to do it, it is our fault if it is badly filled in. What joy it would be to be able one day to show our finished life-map to the Lord Jesus, our patient, loving Master, and to hear Him say, Well done! Will he be able to say it to all of us?”

The teacher would, of course, graphically tell the story of the offering up of Isaac, otherwise the moral to be drawn from it would fail to interest most children.

Next month we may together trace back to its origin the title, “Friend of God,” and see how beautifully it fills up the map of which the first title, “Father of the Faithful,” gave the outline. We may find help too, from the way in which Heb. xi. treats the same subject.

C. H. P.

The Lamb of God.

Thou *fore-ordained* Lamb of God,
We love to think of Thee ;
Known to Thy God Thy matchless work
From all eternity.

Thou *manifested* Lamb of God,
With men Thou once didst dwell ;
Here Thou didst walk and please Thy God,
And do His blessed will.

Thou holy *suffering* Lamb of God,
Slain upon Calvary ;
There Thou didst bear our heavy load,
Our sins were laid on Thee.

Thou *now exalted* Lamb of God,
Before Thy feet we fall ;
Worthy art Thou; most blessed Lord,
To be adored by all.

W.W.F.

FOUR REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

CHAPTER V.

Christ's Response to True Service.

And how does the gracious Master defend His handmaid and own her service? He not only defends and justifies, but honours her in a four-fold way, each time increasingly and more abundantly, worthy of Himself.

1st. "Let her alone: why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me."

The first three of those words of the Lord have in Holy Writ a twofold meaning: one of them of the most solemn, and the other of the happiest character. The Lord, through His prophet Hosea, had applied them in an awfully solemn way to backsliding Israel, characterised by the name of "Ephraim."

"Ephraim is joined to idols: *let him alone!*"

Words of tremendous solemnity, showing how God, whose very first commandment to His people was: "I am the Lord thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me"—looks at idolatry and how He deals with idolaters.

It is true, "Ephraim," the "prodigal" of the Old Testament, will return in repentance at a not very distant time, "bemoaning himself," and saying; "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me and I shall be

turned; *for thou art the Lord my God.* Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth."

And the Father, who replies to a Gentile prodigal's tears and confession of utter unworthiness with; "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet," will reply to Ephraim's repentance with: "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spoke against him ["let him alone"], I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."—(Jer. xxxi. 18-20.—Compare Isaiah liv.) The words of pardoning love and grace will be spoken: "Take away the filthy garments from him," and: "Let them set a fair mitre upon his head."—Those blessed words of pardoning grace, that "reigns through righteousness," will be and can be spoken to penitent Israel, because "righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Comp. Zech. iii. and xiii).

But, oh! in what an awful way has that sentence of divine judgment: "Let him alone!" been executed upon backsliding and idolatrous Ephraim! Century after century the ancient people of God have been scattered over the whole earth. The ten tribes, where are they? None can tell. Even the acutest ethnologist is unable to discover them, whilst the remaining portion of that which is now "Lo Ammi," still bears the distinctive mark of Cain on their forehead known everywhere, fugitives and trodden down by the "Gentiles" up to the most recent date. Indeed, "Ephraim" has been *let alone* in a terrible sense!

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols!"

In another still more solemn case in the New Testament, the sentence: "*Let them alone,*" is pronounced by the Lord Himself upon those who form the most desperate and irremediable class of all sinners in the wide world; *i.e.*, upon *hypocrites*. That sentence was preceded by those awful words: "Every plant, which

my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Then follow the solemn words, doubly solemn, coming as they did, from the lips of the ever gracious, but true One :—" *Let them alone !* They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

Terrible sentence this ! Ten times more terrible than even the "*Let him alone,*" pronounced on "Ephraim." There will be restoration, in Ephraim's case, according to the wondrous grace of God, but there was none here. And what about those professing Gibeonites, who, "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness ?" What about the religious "Jannes and Jambres," who, being mere imitators, have the form of godliness, and deny the power of it, deceiving and being deceived, the modern "blind leaders of the blind ?"

"Let them alone,"

is the verdict of Him, who is the judge of the quick and the dead. There is no remedy for hypocrites. The son of perdition in Simon's house, was one of them.

There remains nothing but the "rooting up" and the "falling into the ditch !"

With what relief the heart turns away from those two dark sides of being "let alone," to the bright scene in Simon's house, and to those thrice happy words : "*Let her alone,*" spoken by the lips of the gracious Master, to her who had wrought that good work on Him. With the Lord's handmaid at His feet, there was no danger of idolatry, as little as with His bosom disciple, so long as that attitude remained their habitual one.

Nor was there a danger of putting on hypocritical appearances, as in the traitor's case at Mary's side.

The vision of her heart and mind, as well as that of her eyes, was engrossed with the moral excellencies and perfections of the "Son of Man," the beauties of the "Messiah-King" of His people, and the divine glory of the "Son of God ;" and as she was bending and ministering

to Him the tokens of her adoring homage, she became herself the beautiful typical expression of her people at a future happier period, when His people, no longer like backsliding and idolatrous Ephraim, will be "willing in the day of His power." They will behold the beauty of the King; and they will see the "King in His beauty," will offer to Him the spikenard of their homage, "whilst the king sitteth at His table." Then indeed will they say: "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden and eat of his pleasant fruits." And He will answer: "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

As to Mary, the beautiful type of Jehovah's new covenant with His people, His words are: "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on Me. For the poor ye have always with you, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good: but Me ye have not always."

What a gracious, and yet all the more crushing rebuke, we repeat. Blessed, patient and gentle Master! At the eve of His cross, to hear from those, for whom He was about to suffer and to die and to drink that awful cup, words like these; "Why was this waste of the ointment made?" Enough to chill the warmest human love and make it hesitate in its purpose of self-sacrifice! But He knew all men; "He knew what was in man." He knew alike their hearts and ours, Christian reader; but for that very reason He had come to suffer and to die for us. His purposes of redeeming love could not be shaken, for that love had not its motive in us, but in Himself. "Not that we loved him, but that he loved us." Blessed for ever be His gracious name!

Mark, Christian reader. The Lord does not say merely; "She hath wrought a good work," but: "She

hath wrought a good work *on Me.*" There are plenty of good works done by men, aye by Christians too, that shine before men, but produce no glory to God and His dear Son. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Where a good work is wrought on Christ, it will certainly have the effect of glorifying God and His Christ; if not, men will glorify you, but then there will be no reward in heaven for you. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ."

And what a reward will be ours, dear fellow-believer and fellow-servant of Christ! Not only the seal of approval in our hearts and consciences, and His gracious smile upon us, shall we enjoy as our present happy portion; not only shall we hear His gracious: "Let her (or him) alone; why trouble ye her (or him)?" rebuking the grumblers and fault-finders; (and they will be sure to raise their voices, wherever a good work is wrought on Him alone, *i.e.* done "in the name of the Lord Jesus," and to Christ, Whom we serve, and not in the name of men, nor before men); but what a reward is yet in store for all true-hearted service! Abraham and Sarah, who had had the honour of having the Lord of glory as their guest at Mamre, and of waiting upon Him; Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, who in their humble abode at Bethany received and served the One who was amongst them as he that serveth; will then in their turn be served by Him, Who is the Servant of servants, as He is the Lord of lords, and King of kings, even the King of glory, when He will "gird Himself and come forth and serve" them. And not only them, but you and me amongst the rest, Christian reader; most unprofitable servants though we have been, especially if we consider the infinitely superior privileges, in position and blessing, which are ours, compared to those

humble and faithful servants of their and our heavenly Master; all the more humbling to us, seeing what our poor "service," if it can be so called, has been and is still!—May our service be more wholehearted and in singleness of eye rendered to Him, for His name's sake, and for the greater glory of God!

(To be continued).

THE RED HEIFER.

After the heifer had been burnt, the ashes were to be laid up without the camp in a clean place, to be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation. We see throughout the chapter, the holiness and the grace of our God. So infinitely holy is He that He cannot walk with a defiled man; yet so gracious that He will make the fullest provision for all the need of His beloved people.

The mode of procedure in case of defilement was as follows: the defiled man took with him a clean person, and together they went without the camp; and the clean took some of the ashes of the heifer, putting them into a vessel with running water, and sprinkled them upon the unclean. A clean person alone could do this; for how can a man see to remove the mote from his brother's eye, if he has a beam in his own? The same principle is found in Gal. vi. 1, 2. If a brother is overtaken in a fault, the spiritual are to restore him in the spirit of meekness. We are responsible to keep an affectionate eye over each other, as members of one body. It ill becomes us to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" every declension on the part of any should cause our hearts deep and thorough exercise before God. I am not to allow my brother to drift astray; but I am to seek him, deal faithfully with him, and restore him. Not only the Apostle, but the Lord Himself, has pressed this upon us. After washing His disciples' feet, He said, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and

Master, have washed your feet ; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (John xiii. 12-15) The unclean person under the law could not be restored without the aid of his fellow. I do not mean to infer that, in Christianity, God cannot restore a straying saint without human instrumentality. Most assuredly He can : He Who converted Saul of Tarsus direct from heaven can restore His own without instruments ; but it is not His ordinary way. His way is to use His saints towards each other ; but this calls for exercised hearts.

The clean Israelite was to sprinkle the ashes and the running (living) water upon the defiled man. It is of the utmost importance to be clear as to the typical meaning of this act. It was not a fresh sacrifice for every defilement, nor a sprinkling of blood ; but the application of the memorial of a sacrifice that was past. Thus when the Christian fails, there is no such thing as a fresh cleansing, *i.e.* by blood, still less a fresh sacrifice ; but the Spirit of God, by the Word, (typified by the running water) reminds the soul of the sufferings and death of Jesus endured once for all for sin. This produces cleansing ; * the sin is abhorred—forsaken—confessed. It is not at all a question of restoring a person to a lost standing or relationship. The Israelite was such when he sinned ; and before and after. The Christian stands in righteousness before God, having been made the righteousness of God in Christ ; and this can never be touched because founded on Christ's work. But communion can be touched—marred ; we are called to enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son in the light, and this is not

* What a difference is seen when we turn from the Word of God to the writings of even a good man ! Augustine says, "For the sake of all sins baptism was provided ; for the sake of light sins, without which we cannot be, was prayer provided. . . . Once for all we have washing by baptism, every day we have washing in prayer." After speaking of certain grave offences, requiring penance, he continues "if these had been light sins, to blot out these, daily prayer would suffice." Not so speaks Scripture.

enjoyed by a defiled man. But when once the defilement is removed, through the gracious Advocacy of Christ for him, and the operation of the Spirit, by the Word, in us below, communion is restored, and enjoyed as before ; with perhaps a profounder sense of Divine grace. The sprinkling of the ashes was not to be hastily done ; for God will have sin felt. The man was to be unclean seven days ; to be sprinkled on the third day, and again on the seventh. The "third day" reminds us of the standing principle, "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established ;" God will have repentance clearly proved. But *then* the man was not clean ; there was the further cleansing of the seventh day. "He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean : but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean." (Num. xix. 12). Of course, in Christianity, it is no question of days, but of the thing typified : God will have nothing slurred over. It is easy to say, "I have sinned ;" but is its dreadfulness felt ? See Deut. i. 41 : the people uttered the words very quickly ; but where was the sense of sin ? In truth, their words then were but the working of self-will, as their previous speeches had been of unbelief. Saul is another instance of the kind. After Samuel's rebuke, he said, "I have sinned ;" but immediately betrayed his hollowness by adding, "but honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel." (1 Sam. xv.)

It is solemn also to notice that touching a bone was as touching the dead body of a man, or a grave. The first was, in itself, a smaller matter ; but what were God's thoughts ? He alone can duly estimate sin and uncleanness. What do Christians mean, when they speak of "great sins" and "little sins," or "light sins," to quote Augustine again ? Too often, they betray their superficiality by such expressions.

"The man that shall be unclean, and not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of Jehovah : the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon

him ; he is unclean." (v. 20). A man who is indifferent to holiness has no claim to be regarded as Christ's at all. The new man is created according to God in righteousness and holiness of truth, and cannot wallow in sin. "Be not deceived"—such have no place, however loud their profession, in the kingdom of Christ and of God. The true believer may fail, and grievously so ; but he soon demonstrates his reality by his grief and brokenness. He is born of God, and loves not such ways, even though he has been overtaken. Peter denied his Master, and wept bitterly : Judas sold Him, and hanged himself.

One thought more. Defilement is a serious thing, *and spreads*. "And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean ; and the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even," (v. 22). When will saints learn this solemn lesson of separation from evil ? It was not necessary to touch the unclean person himself to get defiled — defilement could be communicated indirectly by contact with a vessel which he had touched. The only true way to keep clean was to keep from the man, and all his surroundings. The same is true to-day : absolute separation from evil is God's principle ; for His Word abides the same.

W. W. F.

GRACE FOR THE WILDERNESS.

(ROM. VIII. 18, ETC.)

There are two things needed to make good our journey through the wilderness. First, an *object*, a *divine object* ; and second, the *assurance of the love of God* as the foundation of all our hopes.

Another thing, however, comes out, before the glorious object is reached, and one which underlies the whole revelation of God ; and that is, the *path we have to tread*, from the time of our knowing redemption to the obtaining of our rest. Thus, when the Lord visited Israel, the good land was promised, but not a word was said

about the wilderness ;* for the wilderness was no part of redemption, properly speaking. God would show them what was in their hearts, and thus what was in His heart ; but this was not properly the fruit of redemption work.

In the fifth of Romans we have, first: "*Peace with God,*"—"access, by faith, *into the grace in which we stand,*"—and "*joy in hope of the glory of God.*" In all this not a word of the wilderness. This is not properly a part of redemption, but rather the exercising of us for the discovery of what we are, *but in the presence of God, who has redeemed us.* The danger is in not "holding the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." There is no doubt of the faithfulness of God to lead us on to the end. Still, as regards detail, there is danger in the journey. When the joy of deliverance is first known, confidence in God is unbounded. But then we have to learn the unbelief and waywardness of our hearts. We *own* it, but we have thus to *learn* it. And if the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, these exercises will not in the least touch the sense of our relationship with Him.

The secret of getting on our way rightly is, holding the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. For we have a difficulty, where conscience is lively, under the sense of our failure, in laying hold of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, so as to apply it at all times to our need. It is not that the Lord would have our consciences unexercised. Paul's was exercised night and day. But the danger is in this, that the eye which is *turned in*, and conscientiously too, is apt to be *turned off* from Jesus and grace. Now remember, all this exercise we get as the *fruit of redemption*. All experience *previous* to that, is to bring us to feel the *need of redemption*.

In chapter vii., when he found the difference between *getting better* and *being saved*, and was rendered hopeless of the former, then he is willing to be saved *as he is*,

* See Exod. xv. 13-17.

ungodly, and *without strength*. Then God comes in, and there is "no condemnation." Now he is brought as a believer, *as saved*, into the wilderness. Now, we are apt to be either careless, saying, "it is all grace," or careful, saying, "is it all grace?" We may be honestly searching our hearts, but if not with God, we shall do it imperfectly. But if *we are* sure that God is for us, we shall spare nothing. So in Ps. cxxxix. It is flesh that weakens confidence.

After all, though we be exercised and brought under responsibility, it is Christ that is carrying on the work all through. It is grace from beginning to end. It is not merely priesthood, but there is a third thing. Certainly He is the "Apostle and High Priest of our profession," but He is also "Son over His own house." He has an individual interest in it. The good Shepherd sought *His own sheep*. Christ is carrying on, not only God's house and affairs as did Moses (Heb. iii.) but His own house. He takes the immediate care of what is His own; and He is doing it all *as God*. Thus we have all the nearness of being His own house, and yet it is God, Who is over it. He never fails in taking care of His house.

In the failure of Moses, we see that he did not get up to this principle of grace. But man can never be brought through the wilderness but by grace. The rod is the authority of Christ, but it is an authority, which has life-giving power. We need grace, special grace, which will not pass over a single fault. It would not be grace to do so, for it hinders our enjoyment. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father," He will not pass it over, but work in our hearts to show us this root of our sin, that it may not hinder our fellowship. He carries us to the end, but not blindfold, but through faith. Moses did not sanctify God. How? He did not manifest God (in giving Him His due place). But God did sanctify Himself in spite of the unbelief of Moses, by giving all the water needed.

When we see redemption, we see God to be for us. But do you say that all the way? Alas! no. You see

failure, and then you think anything but God *for* you. But why? Has God changed? No; but *you* have. Then comes exercise to bring this out, and to deepen the soul in the knowledge and enjoyment of the unchanging love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

W.H.D.

THE "MAN OF GOD."

Those who fight the Lord's battles, must be contented to be in no respect accounted of; they must expect to be in no respect encouraged by the prospect of *human* praise. And if you make an exception, "that the children of God will praise you, whatever the world may say," beware of this, for you may turn them into a world, and may sow to the flesh, in sowing to their approbation; and you will neither be benefited by them, nor they by you, so long as respect for them is your motive. All such motives are a poison and a taking away from you the strength in which you are to give glory to God. *It is not the fact, that the misapprehension of the world is the only misapprehension the Christian must be contented to labour under. He must expect even his brethren to see him through a mist, and to be disappointed of their sympathy and their cheers of approbation. The man of God must walk alone with God; he must be contented that the Lord knoweth.*

It is such a relief to the natural man within us, to fall back upon human countenances, and human thoughts and sympathy, that we often deceive ourselves, and think it "brotherly love," when we are just resting in the earthly sympathy of some fellow-worm. You are to be followers of Him who was left alone, and you are, like Him, to rejoice you are *not* alone, *because the Father is with you*, that you may give glory to God. Oh! I cannot but speak of it. It is such a glory to God, to see a soul that has been accessible to the praise of man, surrounded by hundreds and thousands of his fellow-creatures, every one of whom he knows how to please: and yet that he should be contented, yea, pleased and happy in doing,

with a single reference to God, that which he knows they will all misunderstand. Here was the victory of Jesus. There was not a single heart that beat in sympathy with His heart, or entered into His bitter sorrow, or bore His grief in the hour of His bitter grief. But His way was with the Lord, His judgment was with His God, His Father, who said: "This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was the perfect glory given to the Father by the Son, that in flesh and blood such a trust in God was manifested. And this is what you are called to, and you are not called to it as He was, but you are called to see God in Him, God has come near you in Christ, and here you have a human heart—a perfect sympathy—(as well as) the heart of God, and to this you are ever carried. And if there be any other sympathy with you in the wide universe, whether on the sea of glass, or still on this earth, it is only as the *pulsation of the blood* that flows from Christ to His members—that it is to you of any account.* Feed upon it, and remember, you are thus to walk in the world, not hanging upon one another.

G. V. W.

Momentous words in these days! God grant us to heed them.

SEVEN DARK NIGHTS FOLLOWED BY BRIGHT MORNINGS.

XIV.

The night of God's imminent judgment upon this world, as predicted and described in the Book of Revelation, and the subsequent millennial morning.

Grace is God's *natural* work, and judgment His *strange* work. More than eighteen centuries have elapsed since His Blessed Son was rejected and slain here by wicked

* It is hardly necessary to remind the reader, that the author has used here the word "*blood*" in the sense of "*life*."

hands, men handing Him back to heaven, because they would not have Him to rule over them. From the glory, whither this world sent back Jesus crucified, God shortly after, sent down the Holy Spirit, to preach to this poor hostile world the glad tidings of full, free salvation for poor sinners and enemies through the same precious blood of His Son, which proved man's consummate guilt and ruin.

Amongst men blood guiltiness is the greatest crime, to be visited with capital punishment. How great must be that crimson sin, to be guilty of the blood of the Son of God, by spurning and rejecting it in unbelief! It is the *crowning sin* of unbelievers, as the Lord said: "He" (*i.e.*, the Holy Spirit) "shall convince the world of sin, because they *believed not on Me.*" (John xvi. 9.)

Thus century after century a long-suffering God has been lingering over this blood-guilty world, waiting to be gracious. But as the whole Divine Record from beginning to end is the proof that grace is His natural, and judgment His *strange* work, the closing portion of Holy Writ is a book of judgment, though even in that solemn portion the "*Lamb*" appears no less than 23 times! But great as His long-suffering is so suddenly will His "true righteous judgments" come down upon this world, where once the Cross of His dear Son Jesus Christ was set up, and where His offer of mercy and salvation through the Blood of His Son, shed upon that Cross, is still being rejected. Suddenly, as the eagle swoops down upon its prey, the judgments of God will come upon this world.*

The four Cherubims who accompany the divine governmental chariot and are connected with His throne in governmental holiness and righteousness each represent one of the Divine qualities in judgment; the first who "was like a lion," expressing God's power in judgment; the second, who "was like a calf" (or, ox), His patience

* "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 3.)

and long-suffering; the third, "who had a face as a man," wisdom and intelligence, and the fourth who "was like a flying eagle," the suddenness of His judgments.

But sudden as these terrible judgments will be a crushing terror at their beginning, will fall upon the inhabitants of this world, in anticipation of still greater judgments to come.

When an eagle high in mid-air is hovering over some spot, the fowls in the farm-yards that lie beneath her sharp ken, begin anxiously to flutter about, uttering piteous cries and seeking shelter. Perhaps they do not all see the bird of prey, hovering over them in closer and closer circles, ready to dart upon the chosen prey, but they have an instinctive sense of the nearness of the destroyer.

In a like way we behold in the sixth chapter of the book of Revelation, whilst the first of the three series of God's judgments is being poured out over this Christ-rejecting world, the "kings of the earth," and its "great men" and "rich men," and the "chief captains" and the "mighty men," down to the lowest "bondmen" and "freemen," hiding themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and saying to the mountains and rocks, "fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

They had not, like the redeemed in the fifth chapter, made the

"Rock of ages, cleft for us,"

their refuge and hiding-place during the "day of salvation," therefore they call upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon and crush and hide them from the "wrath of the Lamb," who then will come as the "*lion*," "dividing the spoil with the strong," (or, "having the strong for His spoil,"—Germ. Transl.)

Let me mention here, by way of illustration, a remarkable occurrence, which happened in France a few years before the war with Germany. At that time a correspondent in Paris wrote to a friend in England that a presentiment of solemn events impending, was generally prevailing and its depressing effect felt in all classes of society, so that even sceptics and infidels in the salons of the higher circles began to talk of religious subjects.

And is not a similar feeling of uneasiness as to solemn events in store for this poor world, at a measurable distance, exerting its depressing influence upon thoughtful men of this world, going from bad to worse as it is? Look around you anywhere—in the social, commercial, political or religious field; there is a general feeling of gloomy forebodings, vainly attempted to be smothered and covered over by the allurements of fine arts, sensational literature, theatres, shows, and exhibitions, bazaars and musical entertainments and floral decorations both in churches and chapels, in the “Devil’s Mission of Amusement,”* in the same way in which he, who is the “Prince and God of this world,” tries everything to hide *death*, the “wages of sin,” from poor deluded men’s view, be it by means of floral wreaths covering the coffins and graves, or by turning graveyards and cemeteries into lovely pleasure grounds, to hide their solemn contents. In spite of it all, there is an increasing feeling of uneasiness, a presentiment of approaching solemn events, a sense of insecurity, whilst the sin of the first man is ripening fast towards the open rebellion of the “man of sin” in his alliance with the great Western Empire, even the “Beast.” The “dragon,” has not yet been cast out of heaven upon earth, and his “three frogs” (*i.e.* “unclean spirits”) have not yet proceeded from the mouth of the dragon and of the “beast” and of antichrist, the “false prophet,” to incite and gather the kings of the whole world to the “battle of that great day of God Almighty.” (Rev. xvi. 13, 14.—xix. 19-21.)

* See Rev. Archibald Brown’s: “The Devil’s Mission of Amusement.”

Meanwhile events travel with avalanche rapidity, and it has been truly observed by another, that nothing warrants us to say, that the "battle of that great day of God Almighty," *i.e.*, the battle of Armageddon, recorded in Rev. xix. as the final crushing defeat of the kings of this world and their armies, united in common rebellion against the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords," when He will descend from heaven at the head of His heavenly armies, to make His enemies His footstool, may not take place during the life-time of this present generation. Meanwhile the spirit of rebellion against all,—even legitimate and divinely ordained—authority and dominion, and consequent increase of violence and corruption is on the daily increase. Men's attempts to "bind the strong man" by their various efforts, prove in vain, (as in the case of the demoniac), because they refuse to believe in Him who alone could bind and *has* "bound the strong man and spoiled him of all his goods."

When the Lord, who "will not tarry," will have come, to receive unto Himself all that are Christ's at His coming, there will be "no small stir" among the inhabitants of this world at the sudden disappearance of so many Christians, as there was among the guardians of Peter's prison. But it will be only a "nine days wonder." Something fresh, some new important event will occur, provided by the prince and god of this world, to divert the attention of the changeable citizens of Athens, and they will go on, as men did in the days of the deluge and of Sodom, not planting and building—but idling, sporting, feasting and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, and saying, "peace and safety," when the signal for "sudden destruction," will be given. The glorified Lamb, once slain for sinners, opens, one after another, the seven seals, indicating the first of the three series of Divine judgments ready to burst forth upon the Christ-rejecting world. The "white horse" and the "red horse" appear and the dogs of war are let loose upon this unhappy world, which had refused God's gracious message of peace through the Blood of the Lamb. Instead of it, will be heard the solemn "*woe*

upon them that dwell upon earth."—The "*black horse*" of famine will appear, followed by the "*pale horse*" of death, *i.e.*, pestilence, in the wake of famine.—From the "souls under the altar, slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held" (*i.e.* the souls of the martyred Jewish saints), the cry will go forth: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on earth?" A great earthquake* as described in Ps. 46, will follow, as the judicial answer to the spiritual earthquakes of this present evil age in the process of upheaving and subverting all Christian foundations and levelling all divinely appointed authorities. And as the spiritual darkness of infidelity is increasing all over the *civilised* portions of this world, "the god of this world blinding the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them," so the darkness of these judgments, predicted in the closing book of Holy Writ, will increase in its awful intensity—a foretaste of that place of eternal darkness, where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth." The *Sun*—the centre of heavenly light, which hid his face, refusing to countenance the darkest deed of Satan and men, when they crucified the Lord of glory, will become "black as sackcloth of hair," and the Moon, (the reflector of that light by night) "as blood." The "stars of heaven"—the ecclesiastical firmament of religious teachers—will fall unto the earth. What a sad aspect of "falling stars" does the ecclesiastical firmament present already in these *last* of the "last days!"—

"And the heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

That is, all spiritual, heavenly and even mere religious light will be withdrawn, false teachers ("falling stars")

* Are not even the almost daily records of terrible earthquakes and of so many other convulsions in the universe, the forerunners of the approaching tempest of judgments, like the single dark clouds that announce the coming storm?

will abound like the "untimely figs" of the figtree falling to the ground when shaken by the violent winds of false doctrines, men being "tossed to and fro and carried about" by them, "by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Ephes. iv.) Unlike Nathanael's figtree, they "bring no fruit to perfection."

But as these pages are not intended for notes on the book of Revelation, we must leave to our readers the prayerful study of this and the subsequent two series of judgments in their increasing intensity and solemnity. Sufficient, to add that they, like the judgments upon Egypt of old, at first fall only upon the circumstances of men, and when they refuse to repent and bow under God's mighty hand, the plagues will fall upon their persons or bodies with increasing severity. But there will be no repentance. The small still voice of grace had not softened them, and the mighty voice of judgment only hardens them still more. They will gnaw their tongues because of their pains and sores, and curse God with them at the same time. (Ch. xvi. 10, 11), until at last "Babylon the Great," that great whore, even the "city on the seven hills," the greatest of all the abominations of this earth, will meet with her deserved fate, and the millstone of Divine judgment be flung upon her proud head. "God's mill," says a Greek proverb, "grinds late, *but when* it grinds, it grinds to powder."

(To be continued).

LIGHT AND COMFORT IN A DARK HOUR.

"Never was there any trial like mine," said a poor sufferer in one of the wards of a city hospital, whilst restlessly turning about in her bed. "Never were there such excruciating pains."

"Yes—*once*," was said in the next bed in a feeble whisper.

The first speaker was silent for a moment, and then began again in a still more restless tone :

"No one knows what I have to endure ; none ever suffered greater pains than I."

"Yes,—*One*," was again whispered in the next bed.

"I suppose, you mean yourself, poor soul, but—"

"Oh, no, not I, not I," replied the other, and her pale face blushed up to the temples, as if great wrong had been done, not to herself, but to somebody else. She spoke so earnestly, that her restless neighbour for a few moments lay quietly, attentively looking at her. The cheeks of the other woman were pale and sunk, and, her dry lips distorted with pain, so that the teeth were laid bare. But in her clear gray eyes shone an uncommon gentleness and kindness, and her calm forehead bore the impress of a refinement, which could be only the result of the heart's acquaintance with Him, who is "full of grace and truth."

"Oh no, not I, not I," she repeated.—A short pause followed. Then the midnight silence in the hospital was interrupted by the following words, slowly and solemnly uttered in the same low tone :

"And they platted a crown of thorns, and put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand, and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews ! And they spat upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head. . . . And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall. . . . And they crucified Him. . . . And they that passed by, reviled Him, wagging their heads. . . . And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?"

The voice was silent, and for some minutes not a syllable was uttered. The nurse rose from her chair at the fire, and held to the lips of the two sufferers a glass of barley water, rendered more tasty by means of lemon-juice and sugar.

"Thank you, nurse," said the last speaker. . . .
 "They gave Him gall for His meat, and in His thirst they gave Him vinegar to drink."

"She is talking of Jesus Christ," said the other woman, turning restless again from one side to the other. "But the talking of His sufferings," she added, "cannot make our sufferings better, at least not mine."

"But it relieves hers," said the nurse. "How can it do that?"—Hark! . . . again that gentle voice begins its lovely strain:

"Surely *He* hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows
 . . . *He* was wounded for *our* transgressions, *He* was
 bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace
 was upon *Him*; and with *His* stripes *we* are healed."

On the following day, some ladies, visiting the hospital and passing the beds of the two sufferers, handed to both some sweet-scented flowers.

Again that soft voice was heard: "If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith!"

Slowly some days passed. The next day was the Lord's Day. It was a fine morning, and the sun just rising, when the nurse perceived the lips of the gentle sufferer moving. She bent over her, and heard her last words: "I have fought a good fight . . . I have finished my course . . . I have kept the faith, . . . henceforth is laid up for *me* the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give for a recompense at that day." . . . Her eyes closed. . . . One moment more, and the soul had quitted the earthly tabernacle, to exchange it for that heavenly city, where there will be neither death, nor sorrow, nor weeping, nor pain, and God wipes all tears from the eyes of His children. . . .

E. C.

(*Extracted*).

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER'S PAGE.

The Outline Map—II.

Have you ever noticed that Abraham's title "Friend of God" is not mentioned till nearly a thousand years after the action which chiefly won it for him? It would be interesting and instructive to point out to our classes that, while Abraham's fatherhood of many nations (based upon *faith alone*) is often referred to in the book of Genesis, that other beautiful name is first given to him by King Jehoshaphat. The outline map is seen in very early days: the filling in appears afterwards. In Jehoshaphat's touching appeal to God, as he goes out to meet the immense army coming against him, he speaks of "*Abraham Thy friend.*"

Sometimes after we think we have found true friends, a few years suffice to prove what their friendship was worth: it will not stand the test of time. Abraham's right to the title was shown in a life of faithfulness and obedience to the God who had condescended so to honour him, and the lapse of a thousand years could not dim the glory, or diminish the preciousness of that God-given name.

Again we pass over nearly two hundred years, and this time it is Jehovah Himself who uses those blessed words in speaking to Israel through the mouth of His servant Isaiah—" *Abraham my friend.*"

Even before the offering up of Isaac, on which the title was principally based (James ii. 21-23), God had said: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" thus virtually owning him as His friend. But it is only after Abraham's friendship has stood the test of years, and has shone out so clearly that centuries later his royal descendant could speak of it as a well-known fact—it is only after this that we find God, as it were, putting His own seal upon that wondrous name, and publicly owning the humble faithful pilgrim as *His friend.*

How beautifully Abraham illustrates the Lord's words in John xv. 14! "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatso-

ever I command you." It is a great privilege to be a child of God—a fellow-heir of Christ; but is not the joy of being a *friend* of the Lord Jesus worth coveting? Abraham did as he was commanded, and earned the title of "friend;" *we* are offered the same high honour upon the same conditions. "If ye do whatsoever I command you." Dear fellow-teacher, have not these solemn words a voice to *our* consciences, as well as to the consciences of the children we are teaching?

So deep and so real was the friendship existing between God and the faithful patriarch, that He would not hide from Abraham the thing which He was about to do; and the Lord Jesus tells His faithful followers that so truly does He look upon them as His friends, that He makes known His secrets to them. (John xv. 15).

What do *we* know of this high honour—of this deep joy, dear fellow-teacher? May we learn more of it ourselves, and then we shall be able to speak to our children "out of the abundance of the heart."

As we saw last month, this title of "Friend of God" is brought out by James in connection with justification by works, while Paul brings out in Romans and Galatians the other name, "Father of the faithful," in connection with justification by faith. But Hebrews xi. links the two together. In v. 17 we are told of Abraham's beautiful act of obedience in the sacrifice of his only son—the very act to which James refers as an example of justification by works; but here we are let into the secret: "*By faith* Abraham offered up Isaac." If James shews us that faith was "made perfect" by works, Paul shews us in Heb. xi. that the works were prompted by faith.

What exquisite harmony beneath the seeming discrepancy! Faith alone justifies us at the outset; as believers, we must be justified by works as well, for without these there is no reality.

But what then? After being saved by faith alone, are we thrown upon our own resources for the rest? God forbid! We should soon make shipwreck if that were the case. No. Faith is the secret spring of the good

works which characterise the Christian. Had Abraham lacked faith, he would never have had the courage necessary for that stupendous sacrifice; he leaned upon his unseen God, trusting His sure word of promise, and nothing was too hard for him.

May these two sides of Abraham's character be reproduced in us, so that, as with him, so with us, in the ages to come, our God may be able publicly to own us as His friends. He, the Lord Jesus, *shall* be glorified in us as saints, and admired in us as believers in the day that is coming (II. Thess. i. 10); but will He be able to own us as His faithful obedient friends, or will He have cause to be ashamed of us (Luke ix. 26)?

He has indeed shown Himself *our Friend*, but do we, in our infinitely lower measure, shew ourselves to be *His friends*?
C. H. P.

OUR COMING LORD.

Thou, Thou Thyself, our Bright and Morning Star,
Wilt soon arise, and chase our woes afar:
What gladness then—what bliss without a cloud—
Shall fill these hearts so oft with sorrow bowed!

Lord Jesus! shall we gaze upon Thy Face—
That Face of perfect beauty, love and grace?
That Form Divine once nailed upon the tree,
Lord, shall these very eyes in glory see?

We shall—we shall! for Thou hast said it, Lord;
Faith resteth aye upon Thy changeless word:
"Surely I come—surely I quickly come."
E'en so; amen. Come, take Thy loved ones home.

Soon, soon these ears shall hear Thy welcome voice:
How will its tones our waiting hearts rejoice!
Soon shall Thy presence all our longings still
Our thirsting spirits drink at last their fill.

Lord, all Thy saints, now, and in ages past,
Wait for the blissful moment when at last
Thy shout, Thou Son of God, shall burst the tomb,
And call both dead and living to Thee, Home.

Lord Jesus, come! Thy Spirit calls for Thee;
Thy bride is longing sore Thy Face to see.
Lord Jesus, come! our hearts within us burn,
And hasten forth to meet Thy glad return.

C. H. P.

FOUR REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

CHAPTER VI.

Christ's Response to True Service.

But a Master so abounding in grace, that He rewards even a glass of water given in His Name, does not content Himself with those words of acknowledgment of Mary's service, rich and precious though that reward was. He continues :

2. "*She hath done what she could.*" What higher praise was, or could ever be given to any of Christ's servants even for the most devoted service ?

That poor widow who cast her farthing into the treasury, received from Him, who searcheth the reins and the hearts, the gracious acknowledgment, that she had cast in more than they all which had cast into the treasury, because they did cast in *of their abundance*, but she *of her want* did cast in all that she had, even all her living. How her service must have refreshed the Saviour's heart in the temple, even His Father's House, which those, whose service the prophet Malachi described, (ch. i. 10.) had turned into a house of merchandise !

Those poor (but rich) churches of Macedonia, when "in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy

and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality," because they, like Mary, *first gave their own selves to the Lord*, and unto the apostle "*by the will of God*," received from their heavenly Master, through His Spirit in the apostle, a still further and higher acknowledgment, than the widow and even Mary, though in the latter case only apparently. For the apostle bore them record, "*that to their power, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves.*" (Alas! alas! how unlike is our poor service to that of the poor widow in the temple, not to speak of those poor, and yet so rich Macedonians! How much more does it resemble that of those rich, but poor, those instructed and gifted, yet foolish and vain Corinthians, who needed to be reminded of the *poverty of Christ*, "*Who became poor, that through his poverty they might be made rich*," in order to "*provoke them to love and good works!*") But neither to the poor widow nor to the Macedonians, was the same praise accorded as to Mary, who was not, we must remember like those Macedonian believers, indwelt by the Spirit of God, and united by Him to a risen and ascended Christ. It is true, in their loving sympathy and zeal, those whole-hearted churches, in a certain sense, did *more than they could*, that is, they went beyond their power, (*i.e.* their means). This was not the case with Mary, of whom we are not told, that she was poor, though I do not doubt, that even in this respect "*she did what she could*," for the little household of Bethany appears not to have belonged to the rich of this world, as did Joseph of Arimathea and others, who ministered from their substance to the Lord in His life and death.

That which gave such a value to Mary's service in the eyes of the Lord, was not merely its outward value as to expense, but the *way* in which, and the *time* at which it was rendered to Him, and the "*tact*" of faith, and the unfailing instinct of holy, loving zeal, through grace, that made her do just the right thing in the right way and at the right time in the Master's service. For the Lord continues :—

3. "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying." None of His apostles, neither zealous Peter, nor the loving disciple of His bosom, who first of all recognised His risen Master, had thought of it. He had spoken to them again and again of His rejection, cross and resurrection, enjoining upon them: "Let these words sink down into your ears," but they had forgotten them, as if they had been "idle tales," for His cross as well as His resurrection were things "hidden from them." Nor did Mary apparently know any more than they about His cross and resurrection. But the difference between her and the other disciples of the Lord was this, that she, with the instinct of true and devoted holy love, had an intuitive sense, as it were, of the dangerous atmosphere around, and of the treacherous and murderous hostility against her beloved Master, that was animating Satan's tools all around.

We have frequently heard of remarkable instances, in which, the life of some one being threatened or otherwise in peril, an instinctive and irresistible presentiment of the imminent danger has come upon one or other near and dear to him, and has often served to save the imperilled life of the beloved one. That which in such cases is a kind of intuitive instinct or presentiment wherewith a merciful Creator has endowed some of His creatures in a providential way, was, though in a far higher and spiritual sense, the work of God's grace in Mary's soul. Without knowing anything of the diabolic treachery of the traitor close by her; without knowing of the imminent crucifixion of her adorable and adored Saviour, she had an instinctive, nay, we would say, an intuitive sense of the increasing enmity of Satan and men against her blessed Master and Lord, which at the same time only served to intensify the emotions of her heart in holy devotion and love for Him, and stirred them to their deepest depths. If men hated Him without a cause, she would show her love for Him more than ever; if He was to be disallowed by men, to be rejected by the builders, she would offer to Him, at His feet, the humble homage of a heart that had been taught by

divine grace to love Him whom "the Father honoured," because He honoured the Father. The best and most precious thing to be procured was but a poor expression of what was due to Him as Man, as Messiah-King, and as Son of God; but she knew He would not despise her humble and imperfect service. Thus she became a most honoured vessel under God's grace, and a fresh instance was afforded of His ways, of honouring His Son in an especial way (as we have seen in Simon the Pharisee's house), at the moment, when men more than ever showed their contempt, neglect and rejection of Him.

Nay, more, she *anointed his body to the burying*. Well intentioned and acceptable to God as was the service intended by Christ's handmaids, when they came with their spices to the grave to anoint His body *after* His death, what was it, compared to this wondrous service of the one, who anointed His *living* body for His burial, lavishing upon the holy and gracious One, as a last token of homage, all the precious sentiments of a heart, that had received from His fulness, grace upon grace, and been stored at His feet with all that became Him, and was now spent upon Him in compensation for the cold neglect of His disciples and of the wickedness all around Him.

And what was the compensation *she* received from her gracious Master, for the indignation and murmurings of her fellow-servants?

4. "Verily, I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done, shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

What monument of the most exquisite marble or bronze, erected by grateful monarchs, or nations, to the great and useful men of this world, can be compared to this truly divine monument, set up eighteen centuries ago by the Lord of glory to His humble and devoted handmaid? All the malice and power of the god and prince of this world and of his hosts have not been

able to upset that monument of divine grace and liberality, nor has time been able to obliterate its divine inscription :

“ She hath done what she could.”

As the Word of God itself, of which it forms a part, it must endure for ever. And as long as the blessed Gospel shall be preached under the canopy of heaven in hundreds of tongues through land and sea,—

“ This also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”

(To be continued).

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

The Spirit of God has designedly given to the solemn actions of the Day of Atonement the central place in the Book of Leviticus.* This book differs entirely in character from the preceding. In Exodus, we have redemption and the wilderness ; God sheltering His people from divine judgment by the blood of the Lamb, delivering them by power, and bringing them to Himself. In Leviticus, the people are viewed as in relationship with God, God dwelling in their midst according to the expressed desire of His heart ; hence, the question is, how can man approach to God within the sanctuary ? the question, surely, is deepened in its solemnity for our souls

* It must not be supposed that the sacrifices mentioned in this chapter were offered on that day alone. In Numbers xxix. 7-11 we read of a burnt offering of one young bullock, one ram, seven lambs, &c. ; besides which there would be the daily morning and evening lambs. But the sacrifices of Lev. xvi. have a place peculiarly and solemnly their own, and set forth the righteous ground of God's dealings, in blessing, with sinful man.

by the perusal of the chapters which immediately precede (Chaps. xii.-xv.), in which man, the creature, is shown up in all his vileness and corruption. How can God dwell amongst such a people; and how can such draw near to Him? The question is fully and righteously answered (though in type) in the Chapter before us.

The immediate circumstance causing these instructions was the failure of two of Aaron's sons—Nadab and Abihu. Their sin is recorded in Chap. x. The tabernacle had but recently been completed, the priests had only just been consecrated, and fire from heaven, amid the shouts of the people, had accepted the sacrifice, when these two men took their censers, and offered before God strange fire which He commanded them not. They passed by the altar of burnt offering, whence their fire should have been taken, and presented "strange fire;" with the solemn result that divine judgment fell upon them, "and they died before Jehovah." It is the same humbling lesson that we find right through the Word of God: man fails in every new position in which God places him. Noah failed immediately after God's covenant with him, Abraham soon after his arrival in the Land of Promise, while Israel broke the law before it had left the hands of God. And here, the priesthood had just been instituted, and failure had come in; and what was a moment of joy in Israel was changed into mourning and grief. The failure of that day was very complete; for the goat of the sin offering for the people, instead of being eaten by Eleazer and Ithamar in the holy place, was burnt.

It was at this juncture then, that "Jehovah said unto Moses, speak unto Aaron, thy brother, that he come not at all times unto the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat which is upon the ark, that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat." * Into

* Moses does not seem to have been debarred (Num. vii. 89, Exod. xxv. 22); but he, as mediator, is a higher type of Christ than Aaron, and held a peculiar place in Israel, and, in this sense, had no successor.

the "first tabernacle" Aaron and his sons might constantly go, accomplishing the service of God; but the holiest of all was barred. Aaron alone might enter there, and he but once a year, "not at all times;" the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest. "Draw near," are two precious words characteristic of Christianity, not of Judaism: for us the veil is rent, in virtue of the blood of Christ, and we have liberty to approach to our God. Of course, we need more than a *title* to draw near to God; we need a nature capable of enjoying and worshipping Him, for "they that are in the flesh cannot please God," much less worship; but we have all in Christ.

When Aaron drew near—once in the year—it was "with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt offering." Thus we get the general truth that the alone ground of approach to God is sacrifice.

But he was not to enter in his ordinary priestly garments of glory and beauty; they must be put off for the occasion, and he must wear the holy linen coat, &c. This helps to an understanding of Heb. ii. 17, a verse which has puzzled many. "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make expiation (*hilaskesthai*) not reconciliation for the sins of the people." Here the work of expiation is spoken of as an act of priesthood; yet it is pressed in Heb. viii. that the priesthood of Christ is *heavenly*. Nay, more; the Spirit insists that "if He were on earth He should not be a priest." The truth is, that Aaron's functions on the Day of Atonement were exceptional, for which even special garments were provided—it was not ordinary priestly work. So, though our Lord Jesus did not enter upon His proper priestly work until He entered the heavenly sanctuary above, and had been saluted by God "Priest after the order of Melchizedek," His sacrifice was a priestly act, but in an exceptional way.*

* After the *similitude* (not "order") of Aaron.—ED.

Aaron's special garments were of linen (whereas his ordinary priestly robes were of blue, purple, and scarlet, inwrought with gold and precious stones): and he was required to wash himself with water before putting them on; thus rendering him, typically, what Christ was personally, spotless and holy within and without. The Spirit of God is very careful to tell us this; for in this Chapter Christ (as typified by Aaron) is seen meeting God about the question of sin, and making atonement for it according to the requirements of His nature and throne; but, in doing so, He was personally the unblemished and Holy One of God.

The sin offerings for the day were a bullock for Aaron and his house, and two goats for the congregation of Israel. Aaron and his house, taken together, typify Christ and the Church; not indeed as one body united together by the Holy Spirit (which is never the subject of Old Testament teaching), but as a family of priests. See Rev. i. 6. But here the type falls short of the reality, as all types do; for Christ needed not, as Aaron, a sin-offering for Himself. To imagine so, would be blasphemy. (Heb. vii. 27).

"And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself" (v. 11). But before the blood of the bullock was carried into the most holy place, "he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before Jehovah, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before Jehovah, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not," (v. 12-13.) What is the typical import of the sweet incense (the composition of which is given in Exodus xxx. 35-38)? In Rev. viii. it is unquestionably a figure of the prayers of the saints, but not here. Indeed, in another chapter of the Apocalypse (viii. 3) the figure is used differently. There the Angel-Priest offers "much incense" *with* the prayers of all saints, evidently to give them efficacy be-

fore God. Therefore, however the Spirit of God may use the symbol in Rev. v., elsewhere in Scripture incense has a different meaning.

Here, in Lev. xvi., we are intended to learn the exceeding personal preciousness of Christ to God apart from His atoning work, and His own proper right to enter into the presence of God. His redemption work was righteously necessary to give us a standing before God, and to introduce us into His presence; but Christ needed no such ground. The fire of the altar tried Him to the utmost; but nothing came out but the fragrance and the excellency that was there. God delights in His work most assuredly! but He also delights in His Person and worth apart from it

W. W. F.

(To be continued, D.V.)

GENTILE MERCY, NOT JEWISH PROMISES.

(Matthew xv. 21-28).

There is a practical lesson in Christ's way of mercy towards this woman, as well as a secret in her lowly uncomplaining assumption of the place that belonged to her, that many a heart, that is seeking for help in Jesus, needs to know.

The soul that knows and owns its wretchedness, and makes no pretension to any claim, yet brings its misery before a God of goodness, is a soul that Jesus can never refuse to comfort. He may be repelled by the claims of a false and pretended righteousness; but He cannot hide Himself from the misery that seeks His aid, and has no plea nor appeal except for mercy's ear. For mercy dwells, as in its proper fountain, in the heart of God; and Jesus is both the expression of that mercy, and the channel through which it flows.

Blessed Lord! He can dismiss from His presence a company of proud Pharisees, who find fault with His

ways of grace, with the stern rebuke, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice," and can say to a poor Gentile, that pretends to receive nothing from Him but what goodness can give to a dog, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Misery thus owned and felt, and making its appeal to sovereign mercy, reaches at once the eternal spring of goodness.

This woman was of the outcast nations of Canaan, (dwelling in the regions of Tyre and Sidon, proverbial for their wickedness),—a mere sinner of the Gentiles—an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a "stranger to the covenants of promise." Her misery had drawn her to Christ for help, and her heart had entire confidence in His power. Still, at her first, and even second, appeal, she meets only with a repulse. She said, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David."—"But he answered her not a word."

The "Son of David" was a title that indeed belonged to Christ, but it was as the Messiah of the Jews; and this woman was not a Jew. A Canaanite had nothing to do with the "Son of David." She was a Gentile, and she must take the outcast Gentile's place, relinquishing the ground of Jewish promises, to which she had no claim. The disciples would have got rid of her at any-rate—for her misery could not be repulsed—but man's thoughts are not to set aside the order and the covenants of God. Therefore Jesus answered them, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."—This but brings the woman nearer to Christ, with more touching expression of her sorrow: "Lord, help me."—But, no! she must go lower yet. She was an outcast Gentile. Israel's covenanted mercies did not reach her case; and she must hear the word from Christ, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs."

This was a terrible word to fall on her ear. But it was true. And until our hearts have learned to submit to this, we have not reached the place to which sin has brought us in the presence of God; nor are we on that

ground of rest, (even if believers) that nothing can shake or disturb. It is indeed a terrible thing to feel one's ruin in the presence of God, and to know that His mercy is our only resource, and, at the same moment, to be obliged to own that we have not the least claim to the exercise of that mercy. But this is the truth of our case; and the Lord's dealing with this woman illustrates it in the plainest way.

She had no claim to the promises, and therefore could not plead them. She was not a child, and therefore could not claim the children's portion. In the presence of God, even when suing for mercy, we must indeed take the place that belongs to us. This poor woman does so. She does not refuse the place that belongs to her, however low and degraded it may be. But, oh! there is a reality in her dealing with the Lord, that nothing can set aside. She meets the reply of Christ, by taking the dog's place, and answers: "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

She owns God's sovereign right to choose a people, if He pleases. She acknowledges that she is not one of them, and that she has no right to the children's portion. But at the same time she casts herself on that sovereign goodness, to which she can make no claim, and is content with what, in its sovereign exercise, it can bestow on a dog.

The apparent harshness of Christ, in refusing to meet her appeal on ground that did not belong to her, only drew her soul to where mercy could flow without a bar. When she lets go the title of "Son of David," which a Gentile could not use; when she owns that she has no title to the children's bread; when she asks only for the mercy that the God of goodness can show to a dog, she finds that her apprehensions of His goodness are more than confirmed by Christ, and that she has reached a fountain, that rises above every thought and desire of her heart.

W. H. D.

PAUL'S LIFE.

I do not know anything that humbles one more than Paul's life. You get judged by Christ's life, but Paul's was that of a man of like passions with ourselves. Such thorough abnegation of self! Such death as to everything in himself.

D.

"AIM HIGH."

If we enter a tiny room, which has a low ceiling over our heads, we are apt to feel ourselves very big and tall, but if, on the contrary, we are admitted to the lofty hall of a splendid mansion, we naturally feel small and short by comparison. Thus we measure ourselves by what we see around us. This is the measurement of sight, human sight, which is often deceptive. But what as to our moral and spiritual stature? Is it to be according to "good works," or outward forms and ceremonies? Is it whether we are better than our neighbour? Nay, we must not compare ourselves with each other, for occupation with self is unhealthy.*

What then is the true standard? In one word, it is *Christ*. He is the only standard for the believer; and instead of indulging in pride as we look at the drunkard, the blasphemer, or the sceptic, or yielding to despair as we read of the noble and useful lives of some who have shone brightly as benefactors of their race, let us forget others, and with a single, earnest desire, let us "aim high." These words, "*Aim high*," spoken a few months since to a young student, produced a great impression on him, and shall not we, whom the Lord has made His own, adopt these two brief words as the motto for our future course? The Lord left us an example that we

* Except in self-judgment, through being *occupied with Christ*.
—ED.

should "follow" in His steps—He, the divine, the perfect Pattern. Let us not have a lower aim, but keep the eye steadily fixed on Him.

A child at school, learning to write, has an exact copy set before him, showing how he should form the characters—no blots or smears, no thick strokes where there ought to be thin ones—in fact, the copy is precisely what it ought to be, and the pupil is enjoined to imitate it as closely as possible. Thus should it be with those who love the Lord, and desire to please Him. Let us see how He walked (1 John ii. 6). Let us study, in His word, the record of His patient obedient life, and look for grace daily to do His will. But who is sufficient for these things? No one, in his, (or *her*) own, strength, but in the strength that God gives, there is power for conflict, for endurance, for the pleasant toil of activity, or the passive seclusion of a sick-room.

Let us then "*aim high*," and in order to do this, the gaze must be upward, even on Christ.

H. L. R.

SEVEN DARK NIGHTS FOLLOWED BY BRIGHT MORNINGS.

XV.

The Millennial Morning.

That morning in its unclouded and undimmed brightness will last throughout the millennial "*day*," so-called in prophetic language. And that "*day*" * will last one thousand years during the Lord's reign over the earth, with whom "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (1 Peter iii. 8).

* The "day of the Lord" is the well-known prophetic expression used for the millennial reign of the Lord, and not to be confounded with the "*Lord's day*" *i.e.*, the day of His resurrection, the first day of a new week.

It will be a morning, a day of unprecedented earthly blessings upon Israel, after a night of unprecedented trouble, called by the prophet Jeremiah "the time of Jacob's trouble,"—"so that none is like it." (Jer. xxx. 7,—and by Daniel "a time of trouble such as never was, since there was a nation even to that same time." (Dan. xii. 1.) The Lord Himself, when speaking about it to His disciples, said :

"There shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved : but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matt. xxiv 21, 22).

It is not the *ten tribes*, that will have to pass through that terrible furnace of affliction, but the *Jews*, (including Benjamin). They, not the ten tribes, had rejected and crucified the Son of David, their Messiah, when in the marvellous long-suffering grace of God, He was sent to them to see whether they would, "peradventure, reverence" His only Son. The ten tribes were at that time, as they are still, scattered among the nations. Not *they*, then, but the Jews, the rejectors and murderers of Israel's Messiah, will be called to pass through that awful fiery furnace, compared with which Israel's trials during their bondage in Egypt, appear mere child's play.

After the Lord's coming for the removal of all that are Christ's at His coming, events will travel fast for the ripening of the "mystery of iniquity," (*i.e.* Anti-christ, the "man of sin"); for "he that letteth" (*i.e.* the Spirit and the Church) will then have been "taken out of the way." (2 Thess. ii). The Jews, (not the ten tribes), aided by some great maritime power, will then have returned and re-settled in their own land. (Isai. xviii). But they return in unbelief. The severe discipline inflicted on them during almost 19 centuries has not availed to change their natural character, described by Moses, their great leader, as "stiffnecked and rebellious."—They are represented in v. v. 5 and 6 as "sour grapes ripening in the flower," thus showing that

they are unchanged since the day when God complained of them, as His vineyard which brought forth nothing but "wild grapes." (Isai. v.) They will settle down in their own land, to "make their plants to grow, and in the morning shall they make their seed to flourish, but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow." (Ch. xvii). But though this will be the end of their self-righteous and self-willed endeavours, as always, still God, hearing the cry of His "elect, who cry to Him day and night," will avenge them, and suddenly appear on their behalf and deliver them from the cruel power of their enemies, *i.e.* of the dragon, and his tools, anti-christ and the beast, *i.e.* the Roman Empire "whose deadly wound had been healed," and with whom Anti-christ had made a "covenant for a week," even a "covenant with death" and an "agreement with hell" as they will vainly boast. But their covenant "shall be disannulled," and their "agreement shall not stand." (Ch. xxviii). Christ, the true Messiah, true Prophet and true King of His people, will appear on behalf of His oppressed people. He "will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the "spirit of grace and of supplications," (Zech. xii. 10) and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."—"The land shall mourn every family apart, etc, As in every case of true repentance, it will be a most *individual, real thing*. And then it is that they, like every believer, will realise the power of substitution in that marvellous portion, even Isai. liii. They will see that their once rejected and crucified Messiah was their substitute (as He was ours) when, hanging on the tree of curse, He was made a curse, bearing the curse of the law for them that were under the law. Then the expression of their deep joy,—as deep as their previous repentance—at the discovery of such marvellous substitution will burst forth in those words, indited by the Spirit in the prophet :

"Surely *He* hath borne *our* griefs and carried *our* sorrows : yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted,"

"But *He* was wounded for *our* transgressions, bruised for *our* iniquities : the chastisement of *our* peace was upon *Him* ; and with His stripes *we* are healed."

Then from the lips of His people, "made willing in the day of His power," the great shout of welcome will arise : "Blessed be He, that cometh in the name of the Lord !"—And He, once their Substitute and now their Deliverer, will crush His and their enemies with a defeat greater still than that of Pharaoh and his army. A deliverance, in the same measure greater than theirs from Egypt's thralldom, as their trouble had been incomparably greater than all their sufferings endured from Pharaoh and his people. That deliverance will then be completed by the bringing back of the ten tribes from among the nations, among whom they had been scattered during the long centuries of their exile from the beloved land of promise. A deliverance and restoration so marvellous, that the deliverance out of Egypt shall cease to be spoken of, as we read in the prophet Jeremiah (xvi, 14-16) :

"Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, 'the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but :—the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the North, and from all the lands whither He had driven them : and I will bring them again unto their land that I gave unto their fathers. Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them ; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks."

After the night of judgment and unprecedented trouble the millennial "Sun of righteousness" will "arise with healing in his wings," and Israel shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall," (Mal. iv.) and the beautiful prophecy of Isai. (lx.) will be fulfilled :

"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. . . . The Lord shall rise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and Kings to the brightness of rising."

Chastisement, humbly submitted to, has wrought "peaceable fruits of righteousness," to make them under a deep sense of God's grace (Ps. ciii.), fit recipients of the blessings of the millennial kingdom of "righteousness and peace" under the gentle sway of His sceptre, who is greater than Solomon. Jerusalem and the people, instead of being despised and trodden down by the Gentiles, will be their resort and rallying point, and "the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto her." (Isai. lx.)

"And many people shall go and say, 'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,' (Ch. ii. 1-3).

The Jews, instead of being a byword and objects of scorn and hissing among the nations, will be earnestly sought and their company coveted:

"In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." (Zech. viii. 23).

The voice of strife and division, and the noise of war between Ephraim (*i.e.* the ten tribes) and Judah will be heard no more, for

"Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."

Ps. cxxxiii. will then be a blessed reality for them, and they will fully realise, "how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." The "dew of Hermon" will "descend upon the mountains of Zion," and the Lord will "command the blessing, even life for evermore," (*i.e.* millennial life).

No longer will the poor of Jehovah's flock be scattered on the dark mountains, like sheep without a shepherd, nor fed by false pastors, on poisonous pastures, but Jehovah Himself will

“Feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be : there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.”

He Himself, the true and good Shepherd

“Will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.”

No longer will Israel go about attempting to establish their own righteousness, but “Jehovah Tsidkenu” will be the “Lord, their righteousness.”

Nor will men any longer dare to offer to God the fruits of Cain, grown from a cursed ground, but

“They shall even go up from year to year, to worship the king, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacle.” (Zech. xii. 16).

Jerusalem will be the great millennial metropolis of blessing and worship.

“And it shall be that whosoever will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain,” (v. 17.)

The “holy city,” the “city of peace,” which had become an unholy city filled with idols and blood and violence, and later on with the worst and most desperate of all evils, even Pharisaic hypocrisy in the days of their rejected Messiah, when on the eve of their consummate guilt of His crucifixion, He wept over her, who killed the prophets and stoned them that were sent to her, because she had “not known the day of her visitation nor the things that made for her peace”—Jerusalem will be “the holy city” and the “city of peace” in a far higher sense than even in the days of David and Solomon, and Jehovah’s temple will be no longer a “den of thieves and a house of merchandise,” for

“ In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, **HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD**, and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.”

“ Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts ; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and see the therein,” (Zech. xiv. 21).

The curse will be removed from the ground, and

“ The mountains and hills shall break forth into singing, and the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”

“ Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree : and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” (Isai. lv. 12-13).

No groan will be heard ascending from the peaceful scene of the millennial creation, for

“ He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people : and they shall bend their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” (Isai. ii. 4).

“ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together : and the lion shall eat straw like the ox ”

“ And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Chap. xi. 6-9.)

The touching lamentation of the prophet Jeremiah at the ruins of Jerusalem : “ The joy of our heart is ceased ; our dance is turned into mourning,” will then be a thing of the past. The same Prophet says, looking onward to the bright millennial morning :

“ The Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.”

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"Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together in the goodness of the Lord, for wheat and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all."

"Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrows."

"And I will satiate the soul of the priest with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord." (Jer. xxxi. 11-14.)

In those bright and peaceful fields of the millennial Canaan, when the Lord shall have "removed the iniquity of that land in one day, and every man shall call his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree," (Zech. iii. 9-10.), the serpents trail will no more be found, for "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and satan," will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit, that he should deceive the nations no more," (Rev. xx. 2-3).—And whilst every creature, being delivered from the bondage of corruption, will rejoice; only one will be excepted, even the serpent, the shape of which the tempter assumed in the Paradise, to procure the fall of the head of the lower creation and to usurp his place as "prince of this world." The sentence, pronounced by the Lord, in the Paradise, will remain upon the serpent.

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and *dust shall be the serpent's meat*. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain saith the Lord." (Isai. lv. 25).

Many other portions might have been adduced from the writings of prophecy, which is full of the descriptions of the bright scenes of the millennial day, but the limits of this little magazine oblige the writer to confine himself to some of the most prominent descriptions, by which the Spirit of Christ, who inspired the pens of those holy men, delighted to depict those scenes of unequalled earthly blessings during the reign of Christ over this sad, but then happy earth.

And not only He, as the LORD OF LORDS, and KING OF KINGS, will reign, but His glorified Saints, even "all that are Christs at His coming," will reign with Him over the millennial earth. That glorious train, proceeding with Him from His and their heavenly home, will take part with Him in the judgment of this world (I Cor. vi. 2-3.—Rev. ii. 26-27) and then reign with Him during those thousand years.

If the joy in the happiness of others is the purest joy even here on earth, what will be the unceasing delight of those heavenly hosts, when they, in the joy of His Presence ever nigh, share and enter into His own joy in the happiness of His redeemed earthly people, and in that of the "nations, rejoicing with His people!" Then that glorious song in the night of the Saviour's nativity:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men,"

will be a glorious reality.—Exiled and wandering Jacob's vision of the heaven and earth uniting ladder, covered by the bright angelic messengers, and the Lord standing above it, will be fulfilled, as is written in the prophet Hosea:

"I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall bear the corn and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto me in the land; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them, which were not my people, Thou art my people, and they shall say, Thou art my God." (Ch. ii. 21-23).

Here we close our meditations. May God's blessing accompany them for the benefit of your and my own soul, beloved fellow-believer. "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light," (Rom. xiii.) for we "are children of light and children of the day," (I Thess. v.) "light in the Lord, that we should walk as children of light," (Eph. v.)—May He find us so at His coming!

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER'S PAGE.

Faith and Works, V. Rahab.

Rahab shall be our last illustration of the subject of "faith and works," though no doubt many more might be found.

Her name is coupled with that of Abraham in James ii. as an example of justification by works, and, like his, is mentioned in Heb. xi., as an example of faith.

An incident which occurred in our Sunday School several years ago, might serve to impress the two sides of Rahab's character on children's minds. An address was being given on the capture of Jericho. The preacher, after telling the story, asked the children why Rahab was saved when the city was destroyed. Immediately a little voice called out eagerly: "*'Cause she saved the soldiers.*"

"No, I don't think that was exactly the reason," answered the speaker, and then he went on to explain that it was her faith that saved her, not her kindness to the spies.

The little girl's answer was very natural—just the usual idea of the human mind that we must *do* something good, in order to be saved. But Heb. xi. 31, makes the cause of her deliverance very clear. It was "faith"—the faith shown in her own words in Josh. ii. 9-11. She herself asserted faith as her reason for saving the lives of the spies: "The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beueath."

Another woman might have saved them out of natural kindness of heart, but hers was a Godward, God-given motive. It was "by faith" she perished not with the unbelieving and disobedient inhabitants of her city, and it was "*when* she had received the spies with peace," not "*because*" she had received them.

But Heb. xi. again links itself up with James ii. Faith produced a twofold result—her deliverance, but also a course of action in her which was pleasing to God. True, there was deception connected with it, and *that* certainly was not a proof of faith; but then, how little she knew as yet of the God of truth! She marred her service by using human contrivances, such as the heathen around her used, but no doubt she learned better later on, and not a word of blame is spoken either in Heb. xi. or James ii. Her faith is set forth in Hebrews as her motive and as the cause of her deliverance, while James dwells on her action which was apparent to all, and not on the hidden spring, which God alone could discern.

Had Rahab been content with saying “I believe,” and made no effort to protect the servants of God, Jericho might indeed have been captured by Israel just the same, but *she* would not have had the honour of being instrumental in carrying out God’s purposes; never would her name have been handed down to us as an ancestress of Israel’s Messiah and our Saviour, nor would it have been thought worthy of record by the inspired pens of two apostles.

Nay, would not her indifference have shown that her so-called faith was not faith at all, and would not she and her family have perished with the guilty city? for James tells us that “as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” The other inhabitants of Jericho had *dead* faith: they had heard the same wonderful news that Rahab had heard, and their hearts had melted with fear, but theirs was the faith of demons, who “believe and tremble,” while hers was that of truly converted souls, who “believe and live.”

And those who “believe and live” *must* bring forth fruit, even though the fruit may be only thirty-fold in some, as compared with a hundred-fold in others.

May we seek for more grace, dear fellow-teachers, to enable both us and the children committed to our charge to “bring forth fruit an hundredfold.”

C. H. P.

A PETITION.

Teach us Thy way, most gracious Lord,
 And firmly set our falt'ring feet on heavenly paths,
 And give us patient meekness thus to walk,
 That all around the pathway we may spread the precious love of
 Christ.

Oh ! balm of health ! thy grace around diffuse,
 And draw poor fainting souls within its power,
 That it may raise their drooping spirits up
 And e'en in sorrow's darkest hour

Give sweet repose.

Lord ! Thou hast bid us seek the best of gifts.
 Then give us *love*, for it sustaineth all,
 Without love's fire all other gifts are dead.
 Oh ! may its glorious halo crown our heads
 And radiance shed amid the gloom of sin and darksome woes,
 Chasing away all fears and terrors deep,
 Give life, light, joy to those who seek.
 On love's sustaining arm may souls be borne
 Right home.

There love in all its fulness we can share,
 Loving and loved—no bound or limit set.
 Eternity ! how vast, how full, how free !
 Our thoughts would grasp, but ne'er can measure thee.
 Yet when our souls alight on that bright shore
 We shall be satisfied,

And want no more.

L. D.

FOUR REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

CHAPTER VII.

A single eye to a Glorified Christ.

After having considered the first two requisites so essential for our days, the first typified in the Lord's prophet of old, and the second exemplified in His hand-maid during the earthly sojourn of David's Son and Lord, we now proceed to the third, so beautifully illustrated in His Apostle of the church and of glory, *viz., A single eye to a glorified Christ.*

It is an important thing to have, like the prophet, the horn filled with oil, honouring Christ and owning His Lordship: it is also blessed to feed in the gospels on the beauties of Jesus, thus getting the heart stored, like Mary's alabaster box, with thoughts of His goodness, holiness, grace, love, wisdom, power, obedience, patience, lowliness, and meekness, even of all that He was as the perfect Man here on earth. But there is yet a third thing (though closely connected with the two first), it is, to keep the eye of faith wide open and clear, steadily fixed, (like Stephen's) in the power of the Spirit of glory, on a glorified Christ, drawing out towards Him, as the sunflower turns towards the sun, the aspirations, tendencies, and affections of the new nature, *heavenward—gloryward—Christward.*

There are three "*one things*" (paradoxical in itself though the expression may appear), to which I would desire to draw the attention of the Christian reader. The first occurs in a Psalm, the second in a Gospel, and the third in an Epistle.

The first we find in Psalm xxvii. :—

"*One thing* have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple."

It is the expression of a single eye to God, of the desires of the heart going out towards Him, and the appreciation of His presence—for what? To enquire in His temple, after we have got ourselves into difficulties and troubled waters? No, first of all, "*to behold His beauty.*" It is for *His*, not for *our* own sake. We find this blessed quality in Samuel, the prophet. His mother had given him to the Lord, when he was a child. In the house of the Lord, the child Samuel "*ministered before the Lord,*" whilst the "ministry was blamed" in the priesthood, the sacrifices of the Lord being polluted by the very priests, who ought to have guarded their sacredness. In the house of the Lord the child Samuel "*grew before the Lord,*" whilst everything around was growing from bad to worse, until "*Ichabod*" was stamped upon it all. In His temple the Lord called Samuel to his important office. It was there Samuel's heart was impressed with the sense of God's holiness, grace, goodness, and mercy—and when he did "*enquire,*" the Lord *answered* him. How different from Saul, whom God did not answer, "neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets," and who then resorted to "spiritualism," *i.e.*, lying spirits, only to hear, in that awfully solemn scene, his final doom pronounced upon him by the true spirit of God's prophet.

How much more than Samuel have we, Christian reader, both as to our perfect standing in Christ, and the nearness and intimacy of our relationship to God, and as

indwelt by the Spirit of adoption, which crieth: "*Abba, Father!*" Is our eye "*single*" i.e., towards God and His Christ? Are our heart's desires and the aspirations of our new nature drawn out in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, towards Christ? Do we seek after "that one thing," which the Psalmist desired and sought of God? His eye of faith was towards Jehovah, his expectations from Him, and his trust in Him. To him Jehovah was his light in all the dangers and difficulties that did beset his daily path, and He who saved him from all his enemies, was his salvation and deliverance out of them all. He was his daily strength, as He provided for Him his daily bread, even though it should be the shew-bread, that the priests did eat!

Oh, how little is that challenge of faith in the Psalmist: "Whom shall I fear? Of whom shall I be afraid?" known amongst Christian saints now-a-days, who yet possess so immensely more than those saints of old. We have heard, alas! too much of the challenges of natural bravado, like that of Peter, which are sure to be followed by a defeat; or of those of Laodicean self-confidence: "I stand in need of nothing"; those who use them forgetting, that they are followed by such words as these: "and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Faith turns first to God and realises, in dependence upon Him, what He is, (may it be as "*our light and salvation, or the strength of our life.*") Then it turns, and challenges Satan and all his power, and says: "Whom shall I fear? Of whom shall I be afraid?"—First let us realise what those words mean: "*If God be for us;*" then we may safely turn round and say: "Who can be against us?" If the eye of faith were more fixedly turned to the Lord (as in vv. 1-3 of Ps. xxvii.) and the heart more constantly engaged with Him, (as in vv. 4-6) there would be more of the abiding and confiding childlike trust in Him, who "will take me up, when my father and mother forsake me" (v. 10). There would be less of taking counsel with flesh and blood, but instead of it the sincere and earnest

prayer to Him: "teach me *Thy way*, and lead me in a *plain path*." (v. 11). And further, there would be a more steadily increasing sense of the Lord's goodness in this world of increasing violence and corruption and evil of all kinds, and finally a more patient "*waiting on the Lord*," who bids us "be of good courage," and "strengthens our hearts."

The second "*one thing*" we find in Luke x. 42:

"But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

I have offered already a few remarks on this important truth in the third of these papers, when speaking of the difference between Martha's service and Mary's, I would therefore only express the fervent wish, that in these days, when so "many things," and good things too, occupy and engross the minds and hearts of God's people, so that they scarcely know which to choose, we might learn, like Mary, to "choose that good part," that "*one thing needful*," namely, to sit in the quiet, dependent posture of learning divine truth at the feet of a glorified Christ, as Mary did at the feet of the lowly Jesus in His humiliation here below.

The truth, "as it is in Jesus," can now only be learnt, where His apostle of glory learnt it, at the feet of a glorified Christ (Eph. iv. 20, 21). Christ in His humiliation, that is, Jesus on earth was ever "*the truth*," the perfect revelation of God. But by "truth" I understand also, that which is the exact expression of what man is or ought to be towards God, in dependence and obedience. Jesus by being Himself ever *in* that place, showed at the same time what man really was, that is, *out* of that place, in disobedience and independence. Thus He was always "*the truth*" in this world which lieth in the wicked one, in whom there is no truth. But Jesus as the *Son of God*, was also, blessed be His name! —the truth in being the perfect expression of what *God* is *towards man*. If He had only been the truth in the former sense, that truth would have condemned us, we

should have been lost. But as the only begotten Son, who dwelleth in the bosom of the Father, He has, in His *life* and *death*, declared God, "whom no man has seen at any time." This latter is the saving truth. He alone could declare God, and He has done so. He was the exact expression of His essential being, and could say: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

Now the "Spirit of truth," who glorifieth Him, who is the way, the truth, and the life, bears witness to what man has been, and is, and will be to the end of the chapter, in the light of God and of His Christ; for He "reproves the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;" and He also bears testimony to what God is towards men, as revealed in the life and death of His dear Son. But He does this in the word of God, which "*is truth*," which He, the Spirit of God, has written, and which from cover to cover bears testimony to what man has been, is, and will be to the end towards God and His Christ, and of what God is, and has given for rebellious, ungodly sinners and enemies, and of what Christ has done for them. No wonder then, that the enemy of God and man, ever has tried and does try to conceal that precious Word, in which there can be no lie, because it "*is truth*," and bears witness of Him, who is "The truth,"—no wonder, I say, if the archdeceiver of souls always attempts to conceal this divine Treasury not only from the unconverted, but also, as far as he can, from believers (especially "The Revelation" *), by occupying them with all kinds of books instead of *the Divine Book*, which alone "*is truth*." And where he cannot succeed in this, he tries to twist and turn its precious divine truths into human religious doctrines, which have a hardening and deadening effect on the soul, whilst divine truths are quickening, refreshing, and strengthen-

* "What a promise of blessing we find in Rev. i. to reading and hearing read the Apocalypse; and yet, how universally has it been looked at as a sealed book, which cannot be understood; and therefore other parts have been turned to instead of it. We need steadiness of heart, to set ourselves, as Daniel did, to understand, and to wait on the Lord for knowledge of *His ways*, as therein made known." D.

ing. Or, he seeks in a still more subtle way, to get Christians occupied with *service*—all kinds of “good works,” and even the *gospel* or the *church*—and thus to slip them in, between Christ and the heart.

Alas! alas! how numerous are those “*many things*,” about which so many of us are “*careful and troubled*,” instead of minding that “*one thing needful*,” i.e., sitting at the feet of Christ, drinking in, (in new born babe’s simplicity) the sincere milk of the Word which is “purified seven times,”—“that we may grow thereby, if so be that we have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”*

All other things the Lord calls but “*many things*,” if they lead to the neglect of the “*one thing needful*.”—May we, like Mary, “choose that good part, which shall not be taken away from us.”

(*To be continued*).

BRIEF THOUGHTS ON PHILIPPIANS.

The Epistle to the Philippians is experimental rather than doctrinal; we get the inner life of the saints and of the apostle unfolded in a very precious way. First Thessalonians also brings before us Christian experience; but with this difference: the saints in the latter place were but young converts, consequently we see in them divine life manifesting itself in all its first freshness and vigour; whereas the Philippians [when Paul wrote to them] were *tried* saints; they had run the race for many years, and had proved God faithful throughout. The Thessalonians were characterised by their work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ; they had turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven: the Philippians had weathered the storm, and had patiently continued their support of, and fellowship with, the apostle in all his labours and necessities.

* I do not speak here of Bible readings, blessed as they are, and would God they were more appreciated, i.e., where they are under the control of the Spirit, whose “mind is life and peace,” but of individual reading of the Word of God in His presence, and at the feet of Christ.

In Chap. i. we get the blessed motives of the apostle's heart ; in Chap. ii., what has been appropriately termed the graciousness of the Christian life ; in Chap. iii. its energy, steadily pursuing its heavenly Object ; and in Chap. iv. its superiority over all circumstances.

" Bishops and deacons " are found in the address (in the *plural*, note) : local officers, the one to care for the spiritual, the other, the secular, affairs of the saints ; not gifts for the edifying of the body, as in Eph. Chap. iv.

Paul thanked God for his " whole remembrance " of these saints ; to no other company does he speak quite in the same way. In some quarters, he was able to thank God for some things, while groaning over others ; here there was nothing to cause him pain. We get thus a striking illustration of Heb. xiii. 17. He gave account of the Philippians with joy, and not with grief : to their profit undoubtedly. What particularly refreshed his heart, was their fellowship in the Gospel : they had borne him as a labourer on their hearts before God, had sent once and again unto his necessity, and, more than all, had shared with him its trials and reproach. This he recognised as God's work in them, and his heart was assured that, having begun a good work in them, God would perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. This remark of the apostle's is to be noted ; for he regards the saints in this epistle as counting on God for themselves, he, the apostle of the Church being no longer active, but in prison. This letter prepares the way, as it were, for the Church being left entirely without apostolic care. Apostolic succession is unknown to it : God working in the saints, to will and to do of His good pleasure, prominent.

It was only just that the apostle should be assured concerning them all ; he knew he had a place in their hearts *—they had been partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God, they were also of the grace wherewith Paul had been supplied. Further,

* v. 7 must be read " because *ye* have *me* in your heart."

God knew how greatly he longed after them all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. The same tenderness of affection is seen in I. Thess. iii. He greatly desired to see them, as they to see him, night and day praying exceedingly that he might see their face, and perfect that which was lacking in their faith. His dear Philippians he also describes as "dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown." Precious outflow, and acknowledgment, of affection!

He prayed for them : desiring that their "love might abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment." Love must not be unwisely displayed—it must learn in God's school. At times, love speaks tenderly, at other times sharply ; to act and speak aright in love, knowledge and discernment are needed. Love must be balanced evenly by other divine qualities. He desired, too, that they might approve excellent things—the new man exercising himself by the Spirit in God's presence as to good and evil ; that they might be sincere and without offence until the day of Christ. Note, "the day" is always introduced when it is a question of responsibility. (Compare Rom. xiii. 12, 1 Cor. i. 8., 1 Thess. iii. 13).

"The fruits of *righteousness*" (1 John iii. 7, Rom. vi. 18, 19) are before the mind of the Spirit here ; "the fruit of the *light*" in Eph. v., "the fruit of the *Spirit*" in Gal. v. "To the glory and praise of God," the apostle adds : ever, surely, the object of the believer's life and ways.

Verses 1-11 are a sort of introduction : in verse 12 he commences upon the subject matter of his epistle. His unselfish heart rejoiced that God had so over-ruled his bonds that the things which had happened unto him had fallen out rather to the furtherance, than the hindrance, of the Gospel : he would have his brethren know it, that they might rejoice together. Instead of his being regarded as a malefactor, as Satan desired, God had made it plain that his bonds were for Christ's sake, and it had turned to a testimony. How wise is our God ; and how

blessed to simply trust in Him! To the human eye, the imprisonment of such a labourer as Paul (and at such a time, when decay was beginning to set in all around) was disastrous, but the Lord knew best. Paul's chain enabled him to reach persons in Cæsar's court, and elsewhere in Rome, whom he probably could not have reached under ordinary circumstances. It is striking that the only note Scripture gives of an apostle at Rome is as a prisoner; and that years after the planting of Christianity there.

His bonds had operated also in another way. Many brethren in the Lord, who at first were discouraged by his imprisonment, were now waxing confident as to it, trusting the Lord, and were much more bold to speak the word without fear. What a cheer to the heart of the true-hearted prisoner! If he was bound, the Word of God was not: it was running its course. Though this joy was not without alloy; for some persons were preaching Christ of envy and strife, supposing to aid affliction to his bonds. How unworthy! Yet his unselfish heart could rejoice, because Christ was being preached, so assured was he that that Name could not be set forth in vain, whatever motives might operate in the speaker. Besides, he felt that all was contributing to the final victory over Satan—all was leading up to the apostle's final salvation. "Salvation" in verse 19 is not, I judge, his deliverance from prison—that is alluded to in verse 26—but deliverance at the end, which is quite in accord with the use of the word throughout Philippians. Salvation is at the end of the warfare (the salvation of the soul, however, being enjoyed meanwhile)—at the coming of the Lord Jesus. He counted on their prayers too, and the supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus. The vessel needs to be kept constantly filled with the pure oil from above, that the light may shine out.

W. W. F.

(To be continued, D. V.)

DOUBLE SECURITY.

Even in human affairs, we know what a feeling of confidence is ensured when there is a double security; how much more so, then, in those things which concern the soul and God!

Read the 10th of John—that lovely chapter which shines out, as it were, in golden letters of love, in the midst of that Gospel which has been the means of speaking peace to thousands; the 10th of John, which is a gem, a mine of wealth to the heart, full of pathos, full of exquisite tenderness, as it portrays the features of Him Who, as the Good Shepherd, gave up His life for the sheep, yea, gave up His very life that the poor sheep might know nothing experimentally of death. How different to a hireling, who would flee at the approach of danger! *Our* Good Shepherd passed through all for us, and having wrought perfect redemption on the cross, distributes the gift of eternal life to all who belong to Him—and then in gracious confidence tells us of the safe and secure place in which He has put us. We are in the “hollow of His Hand,” that Hand which was outstretched on Calvary’s tree, that same Hand which touched and blessed many an afflicted one as He walked the streets of Palestine, that Hand of love which no being can ungrasp, and from Whose protection nothing can sever us.

Yea! the sheep, the believer, is also grasped in the Hand of the *Father*, and is not this *double security* in the fullest sense! Oh! how blessed! how comforting! as safe as even God the Father and His beloved Son can make us—safe as we walk our pilgrimage way through this weary world—safe through all the trying circumstances of this scene—safe and guarded till that longed-for moment comes, when we shall be caught up far away from all that now tries us, to be for ever with Him Who died for us, and Who will take His poor sheep to be with Him in glory for ever.

H. L. R.

* See also the *double security* in Rom. viii. 37 and 39 and Heb. vi. 16-20.—ED.

THE BELIEVER'S RESOURCE.

"When I am weak, then am I strong."

(Read 2 Cor. xii. 1-10.)

It is not what Paul's "thorn in the flesh" might be, nor the nature of the revelations he received in "the third heaven," nor whether he subsequently wrote what he tells us it was "not *possible* for a man to utter," that I would now consider; but a point of far more practical importance, namely the conditions on which the grace and strength of Christ are imparted to believers for their daily walk and service.

When the question of salvation is in view, one does not speak of conditions, for *it is* God's grace to sinners. But when it is the believer's walk with God, it is otherwise. Here there are conditions. If it be as to the certainty of divine knowledge, it is, "If any man *will do His will*, he shall know of the doctrine." Or if it be the sustainment of the soul in trial, or the impartation of strength for service, it is, "My grace is sufficient for thee, *for* my strength is made perfect in weakness." For if the apostle's case was special, as to revelations and the necessary counterbalance of a thorn in the flesh, and the buffetings of Satan's messenger;—the principle which it brings out in the Lord's answer to His apostle's thrice repeated supplications for the removal of the cause of his trouble, is absolute and universal.

There are two points in this answer. First, the *entire sufficiency of Christ's grace to meet the exigency*; and, second, the *condition* on which alone that grace is *imparted*. Now the grace of the Lord Jesus is *the only sufficiency* of a Christian. "The flesh profiteth nothing." Yet Christians often act as if they themselves were sufficient for everything, except to meet some great trial, or to cope with some great difficulty, which drives them to their knees, and forces them to acknowledge their weakness, and to seek for Christ's strength.

This was not, however, the case with the apostle. He habitually was leaning upon that grace, and not on his strength. He says, "we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. His ordinary course was not to go on, like many, in the spirit of neglectful unconscious independence, until some crisis in his experience, or his circumstances, made him feel his dependence, and turn to the source of his strength. But even he had to learn that there was a fuller sufficiency in Christ's grace than he had ever yet experienced, or even imagined. His crushing trial drove him to the Lord as his only resource, and the intensity of his feelings is seen in his earnest prayer for deliverance; but he had no thought of a grace that could sustain under it and make it an occasion for the fuller display of Christ's glorious power. Still, when the answer comes, it shows how simply Christ's glory was his object, and not his own ease, or credit, or anything else. We hear no more of the pricking of the thorn, nor prayer that the messenger of Satan might depart from him; but he says:

"Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

The paradox, "when I am weak, then am I strong," by which he closes this account, shows how entirely his heart assented to the conditions of his strength, and how thoroughly he had learned the force of that word, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

How many practical lessons are to be drawn from this narration!

In the first place it is manifest, that the higher we reach in heavenly things, the lower it will put us in the estimation of ourselves, and in our condition as to this world. He who was highest of all in heavenly glory and heavenly worth, was lowest of all in earthly circumstances and human estimation. "I am a worm and on

man," * was his declaration in the hour of His sorrow; and, "the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," shows the condition in which He pursued this earthly service. But even in this He is our example:

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 5-8).

And if Paul was taken to "the third heaven," where none but himself had ever been, his heavenly elevation must be balanced by a corresponding earthly depression; or else he would not have been able to use this token of the Lord's favour for anything but self-exaltation, which is but to corrupt from its true end, what Christ bestows. Hence the necessity of the flesh being mortified in proportion as spiritual advances are made. If I enter into the truth, practically, of being

"Risen with Christ,"

the other side of the question is,

"Mortify therefore your members, which are on the earth."

A ship must be ballasted in proportion to the sail she carries, or she will inevitably be capsized. In the school of Christ the spirit is taught, on the one hand; and the flesh is scourged into submission on the other; and the proof of advancement in the knowledge of Christ is found in increasing distrust of self.

In the next place, it rebukes that vanity of mind, which esteems everything of little worth which *cannot be displayed for the admiration of others*.

The mere reference to what he had been taught as to "visions and revelations of the Lord," the apostle

* Pilate might exclaim: "Behold the man!"—On the cross it was: "I am a worm and no man."—ED.

characterises as speaking "like a fool." They were afforded for another end than to bring *himself* forward. And if *he* could not talk about his experience, in the best sense, namely what Christ had taught him and wrought by him, without being in danger of becoming "a fool," I wonder what those are who are constantly talking about themselves in connexion with what the flesh and the devil accomplish in them! Moreover, the apostle could not communicate to others what he had learned in the third heaven. The revelations were abundant, but it was "not possible to utter" them.—But why is it necessary for the heart to disclose all its treasures, like Hezekiah to the ambassadors of the King of Babylon? * Is there *nothing* that Christ teaches me for *myself*? Must I count that as nothing which I cannot vainly show to others, or even use for the edification of others? Why should I hinder Christ from giving me a "white stone, and in the stone a new name written which *no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it*?"

But the non-removal of the thorn in the flesh, moreover, teaches us the folly of thinking a change of circumstances, or the removal of a trial, necessary to one's service for Christ. If we want to *shine* ourselves, circumstances of trial will hinder our shining, and Christ sends them for the very end that *we* might not shine. But if we want Christ's grace to shine, that will shine most by means of the very trial and difficulty we may have longed to get removed.

"My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

And this was to bring out in the Apostle,

"Therefore I take *pleasure* in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong."

* This is something very different to the faithful steward or householder, who "bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." The Lord worketh *in* us first *secretly*, that He may work *by* us in public testimony. The "white stone" (Rev. ii. 17) is the result of the *former*, and the expression of, and the Lord's answer to it.—ED.

Circumstances may have their effect on our own spirits, but, unless they are sinful (and then we must get out of them,) they are certainly no hindrance to God's Spirit. A man may feel his hands to be always dirty in the world's service, and yet if he leans on Christ's grace, which is "*sufficient*" for him, he may have his heart always clean for the enjoyment of Christ, and for the service of Christ. Such a man serves Christ in his daily toil, and if he cannot always be reading and praying, he may, nevertheless, be always in communion. A mother, with half-a-dozen children, which occupy her hands through the day, and often keep her awake through the night, cannot serve Christ as she sees, perhaps, some others do; but if she *owns Christ* in her circumstances, and *hangs on His grace*, whilst she is rocking one child in the cradle with her foot, and mending the clothes of another with her hands, may have her heart fed by the hidden manna from Christ's own hand, and serve Him, whom she loves, more effectually than if she had all her time to herself, and thus felt less the necessity of the injunction, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end."

I want no change of circumstances, nor removal of trials, to enable me to pursue Christ's service. I only want to know the truth, practically, of the word, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness."—But then the sense of weakness, which alone makes room for Christ's strength, is what nature always shrinks from. "I am *so* weak," is often on the lips of Christians; and it often means that they expect strength in themselves instead of in Christ; or, that they have hitherto been leaning on a strength which has now broken down. In either case they have yet to learn the solution of the enigma,

"When I am weak, then am I strong."

A Christian ought always to feel *himself* so weak as to dread to undertake anything in his own sufficiency; and yet so strong in Christ, as to be able to accomplish everything through His grace. The sense of weakness, from

which nature shrinks, is essential to the display of Christ's strength. Without it, we should neither know the extent of our dependence ourselves, nor should we use the grace communicated for the glory of Christ.

"We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead."

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor. i. 9 ;-iii. 5).

"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isai. xl. 29-31).

W. H. D.

WORSHIP.

Worship is the rising up to God again from the believer, or from the Church, of His own thoughts about His beloved Son, and about what He has done. [John iv. 14 ;—xvi. 14.]

Confession is not worship. We have constantly to confess *before* worship, because we cannot worship, while there is a spot on the conscience, but if we stop there, we know not worship.

It is when I have passed through the blood of atonement, and (if needed) have used the sin and trespass offering, that I have *fellowship* with God, which is being led, through the power of the Holy Ghost, into God's estimate of the beauty, obedience and humiliation of Christ. It is, when resting, in the Spirit, between the Father and the Son [that I have this fellowship]; not telling about my sins—for God's mind is not filled with my sins, nor is the Holy Ghost taken up with thoughts about my sins—but with that in Jesus which put my sins away.

Worship is being nothing, and having God's thoughts about Jesus rolling through my soul.

When Jesus, Jesus, is everything, I am acting in the power of that life, which is bye and bye more fully to be manifested. If we act upon this life, we shall then, from Jesus risen, have the flow of glory in our souls; for we are in Him now, and have the mind of God about His Son. God is not occupied with what *I am*, but with what *Christ is*.

God wants us as His children to know,—not only that we are within the Father's *house*, but within the Father's *bosom* also. He wants to have our minds filled with a volume of thoughts about His Christ, and when a saint is full of this, and it ascends up to God, that is worship. And there is transforming power in Christ to change into His likeness, while we are in communion with Him and with the Father about Him.

Worship is the being *lost in wonder* at what we find in God and in Christ.

When the Spirit has led us to know the blood on the Mercy seat, He does not send us back to feed with the swine, but spends His time in taking of the things of Christ and showing them to us, and thus supplies food for worship.

In the burnt-meat-and peace-offerings, we have Christ presented to us in type as the subject for worship. In the *burnt offering*, His perfect self-renunciation and devotedness to God, even to the death. In the *meat offering*, His life in action. In the *peace offering*, as the link between God and the church, that on which God and the church together feed in happy communion. When this worship is interrupted by sin or defilement, we find, in the type of the sin and trespass offering, that God has already made provision before-hand in Christ, to restore the soul, (as soon as confession is made) to the power of worshipping.

(Extracted).

GOD ABOVE IT ALL.

A well known servant of Christ was in his study engaged in conversation with a younger fellow-labourer, when another labourer in the Lord's work hastily entered the room and in great agitation exclaimed to the former: "O, Mr. D., do you know what mischief Mr. ... is doing in H. . . ?"—"I know all about it," calmly replied the dauntless champion of Divine truth, "and I am supremely happy, for *God is above it all.*" His eyes and mind were in the right direction of faith, "Looking off unto Jesus, the beginner and perfecter of faith."—May ours be more steadily kept in the same direction amidst the upheavings and subversions all around.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." (Isai. xxvi. 3).

READINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

(See No. 20.)

Ch. ii.—On the "*third day*" (see No. 20 as to the meaning of it) there is a marriage at Cana in Galilee.—Galilee is the place of blessing for Israel, and Jerusalem of judgment.—The mother of Jesus at the feast expresses his relationship to His earthly people as their Messiah. Jesus, in separating Himself from her renounces that relationship. In Matth. xii. He does so for judgment, but here for blessing. There (Matt.) He leaves the "house" and goes to the "sea side," to the "as many," after His own had "not received Him," but had blasphemed through their leaders the Holy Spirit, by whom He cast out the demons that tormented them. As the "Sower" He then begins the work afresh.—In John ii He disowns, or, rather renounces His relationship to His mother (*i.e.* Israel), to accomplish blessing. The water of purification was to be turned into the wine of joy and blessing, foreshadowing the time, when He will say: "Eat, O friends;

drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." (Sol. Song, v. 1.)—But before that time of millennial blessing for His earthly people arrives, His relationship to them had to be renounced, for He was about to gather from the "*sea side*," i.e., from the nations or Gentiles, a heavenly people for His heavenly bride in glory, even the Church, as His body. Saul, the zealous Jew, and violent persecutor of the Church, having been laid prostrate on his way to Damascus by its glorious Head, and called to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, was made to say: "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." Like his Master, his earthly link to Israel and its Messiah as such, had to be snapped, to secure a higher blessing.

There was the wedding company, and the *true* Bridegroom was present. But they knew Him not, as the forerunner had told them: "There standeth one among you, whom ye know not." Therefore there was no real nor lasting joy. "*They had no wine*," until the true "Ruler of the feast" intervenes and changes the water of purification into the best wine, as He will at a future time change their tears of repentance into the wine of joy as their true Melchisedec.

What a picture of the joys of the men of this world! Their object is to "*enjoy themselves*" without God and without Christ. They have their "rulers of the feast," their "*maître de plaisir*"—Satan, the arch-deceiver of souls. There is "death in the pot" and dearth of true joy, until Jesus steps in and, turning the tears of penitent sinners into tears of unspeakable joy, makes them to *rejoice in Himself*, as He did with the penitent one in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Where He appears, there is fulness of joy:

"For in Him dwelleth *all* the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*." (Col. ii. 9).

And:

"Of His fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace." (John i. 16).

His very first miracle in Cana of Galilee showed the fulness that was in Him, who had not where to lay His head, yet could make the mouth of the fish His purse.

Alas ! how barren are we often with such a fulness close at hand !

(To be continued.)

“Thou Art Worthy.”

Rev. v.

Thou, Thou art worthy, Lord,
Of glad, untiring praise ;
The Lamb, once slain, shall be adored
Through everlasting days.

Heaven's vault with praise shall ring
Louder and yet more loud :
Millions of saints Thy worth shall sing,
Each heart in worship bowed.

“Worthy” ! again—again !
Angels with saints combine,
Ascribing to the Lamb once slain
Wisdom and power divine.

The tide shall still roll on—
That tide of endless praise—
Till every creature to the throne
Its voice in blessing raise.

“To God and to the Lamb
Be glory evermore” !
Fresh praises still shall greet Thy Name
From every sea and shore.

O, Lord ! that glad new song
’Tis ours e’en now to sing :
With loving heart and joyful tongue
We now our homage bring.

“Worthy”—we cry again—
“Worthy for evermore” !
And at Thy feet, O Lamb once slain,
We worship, we adore.

C. H. P.