

## FOUR REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

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### CHAPTER VIII.

#### A Single Eye to a Glorified Christ.

What a power there is in an attractive object! It draws the desires of the heart towards it and enlists the activities and energies of the mind and body for its attainment.

Let us take an illustration from daily life. A young man has set up in business. His distinct and attractive object is : soon to work up a flourishing business. His corresponding motive within may be either the *treasures of Egypt*—the love of money—or the *pleasures of Egypt*, *i.e.*, soon to be enabled to retire from business and enjoy himself for the rest of his life—or the *honours of Egypt*, *i.e.*, to become a wealthy man, a man of position in society and politics. His *object* being thus very attractive and the corresponding motive within very powerful, circumstances will have comparatively little influence upon him, except to call all his energies into play for the attainment of the desired object. A dull season, or a commercial crisis may throw him off the rails, but as the disturbed spider, whose net has been torn, at once sets to work to mend it, so he sets immediately to work with redoubled energy, to repair the damage. The distinct and attractive *object* before him, and the powerful *motive*

*within*, render him comparatively superior to circumstances around, and his line of action is, humanly speaking, a very *simple*, though perhaps, not always a *straight* one.

Everything, then, depends upon whether a man's object and his corresponding motive is a right or a wrong one. A wrong object indicates a wrong motive. For a true Christian there is only one right and legitimate object—*Christ*. "For me to live is Christ," could one say, who was a man of like passions with ourselves. So there can also be but one true and right *motive* for a true Christian — *Christ*. "The love of Christ constraineth us," the same apostle could say. What characterised Paul, was a single eye to a glorified Christ, and thus his body was full of light. Like a wolf he had made havoc in the flock of God at Jerusalem. Then in his mad career of persecution, on his way to Damascus, he had been "apprehended," *i.e.*, laid hold of by Christ Jesus. From the top, the highest round of the ladder of his religious Jewish attainments he had been smitten down and made to kiss the dust. The higher the religious scaffolding, the deeper and heavier the crash and the smash.

What characterised the conversion of the apostle of the Church and of glory, was his having been "apprehended" by the glorified Head of the Church, and his desire to "apprehend" Him, of whom he had been "apprehended." It gave to his whole life that peculiar stamp, which distinguishes him from other servants of the Lord.

Christ, the Head of the Church, His body, exalted at the right hand of God, was the subject of Paul's testimony. But the glorified God-Man was not only the subject of his testimony, but the *object* of his daily life and walk. The heart and mind of the apostle of glory turned to *one point*, even Jesus, the once despised and rejected Nazarene on earth, now the glorified Christ in heaven. As the plant turns towards the sun, so the activities and tendencies of the new man and resurrec-

tion-life in the apostle turned towards the glorified "Son of man," in the energy of the Spirit of glory, who filled Paul, as He had filled Stephen. As the needle steadily turns towards the pole, though trembling from the motion of the vessel, so the heart of the apostle of the Church turned towards her glorified Head. That all exceeding beauteous, glorious goal, for which he had been apprehended of Christ Jesus, Paul strove to apprehend, though he had not yet apprehended it.

What an attraction lies in a beautiful and desirable goal! It sets all the spiritual and physical capacities of men into motion. The more attractive the goal, the greater the exertion to attain it. We see this every day exemplified in the vain-glorious, yet so earnestly plied pursuits of this poor world, be it a race or regatta where every muscle or nerve is strained to be the first to reach the coveted goal, or in the arena of political ambition or military fame and glory, where every natural capacity is taxed to the utmost, to attain the desired goal. The nearer the racer approaches the winning post, the more strenuous is his exertion, and his attention being bent upon the *one point*. Other objects on the way-side, generally claiming his interest, are scarcely noticed and soon left behind.

Judaism, with its religious privileges and aspirations, once so attractive and all-absorbing to Saul, were left behind by Paul, disappearing in the distance like a receding coast. As a swimmer, making for the shore, by the powerful exertions of the life in his body, maintains the mastery over the element of death surrounding him, whilst at the same time nearing the shore;—so the activities of the new man and the energies of the risen Christ-life in Paul were all of them making for the shore of the First Resurrection.—Those words from glory: "*I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest*," addressed to the trembling, prostrate Israelite, had been the "*coup de grace*" for his Judaism.

Peter might swim ahead of all to the *earthly* shore, to be the first to salute his risen Lord and Saviour

standing on the shore. Paul made for the Resurrection-shore, where there is no question of loaves and fishes ("I go a fishing"), but where he beheld the Captain of our salvation and "First-born of many brethren" standing (as in the case of Stephen) ready to receive him and give him the "crown of righteousness," when he had finished his course.

With such a goal before Paul, what was Judaism to him with all its religious allurements? It was nothing, nay, worse than nothing—*positive loss*, nay, *dung and dross*. To Paul, old things had passed away; all things had become new. He could say: "One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I **press** toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Are we doing the same, Christian reader? If Paul, like Elias, was a man subject to like passions as we are, let us not forget, that the same new nature and the same resurrection-life, with its heavenward, Christward aspirations and tendencies, that were active in Paul, and the same Spirit of glory, that acted upon him and drew him towards Christ, have been given to every true believer. Does that Blessed Divine Person dwell within us as an ungrieved Heavenly Guest? God grant it.

"For our conversation [or citizenship] is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the power whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

(*To be continued.*)

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## BRIEF THOUGHTS ON PHILIPPIANS.

Ch. i. 20-30.

The Apostle too had confidence in the Lord—it was his earnest expectation and hope, that the grace which had sustained him hitherto would sustain him to the end; that in nothing he might be ashamed; but that, as always, Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. “For,” he says, “to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” So thoroughly was Christ before him, and so thoroughly was he yielded up, body and soul, to Him, that he was content to live or die, as might best suit the Lord, and conduce to His glory. In such language we observe self completely displaced, and the Lord—His service and His glory—filling the vision and heart. Christ was his one object: to live longer here was to labour further for the honour of His Name, and to become more deeply acquainted with Himself. To die would be undoubted gain to the suffering apostle, for then he would be *with* Christ—he would be at home with the Lord. To one so true of heart, how painful to have to write in Ch. ii. 21: “All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” Few walked as himself and Timotheus; the many, even in his early day, mixed self with the service of the Lord.

It was happy to remain, it was happy to depart: he felt in a strait betwixt two. “If I live in the flesh, it is worth while;” for so the verse should read. But he thought of the Church: he was its minister in an especial manner; he bore it on his heart, sharing the affections and feelings of the Head for His members; and it was this which made the difficulty. For him it would be far better to depart, and leave all the suffering and affliction behind; but “to abide in the flesh is more needful for you,” We must remember that decline was setting in on every hand, though the days were so early: evil men were already at work, seeking to corrupt the testimony of the Lord, and lead astray the saints. Paul knew that the evil would spread—he

told the Ephesian elders so (Acts xx.) some time before the writing of this letter to the Philippians—he desired therefore to stay, and guide the Church's barque a little longer over the troubled sea. And having this desire, and this confidence that his abiding in the flesh was needful, he knew that he should abide, and continue with the saints, for their furtherance and joy of faith. Observe the calm elevation of the man! Viewed from a human standpoint, it rested with the Emperor as to whether he stayed or not; but he looked not at man, whether in power or otherwise; but calmly settles his own case in the presence of the Lord. It was needful for the saints that he should remain for a season: neither Jewish hatred nor Imperial caprice could therefore interfere. He was persuaded he should see his beloved Philippians again; and he reckoned on their love, that, when they saw him, their rejoicing would be abundant in Christ Jesus.

Mark, he desired to stay for their "furtherance and joy of faith." Sweet and simple language from an apostle—one armed by the Lord with authority. As far as possible, he avoided any *display* of authority, being very far removed, in spirit, from any who would lord it over God's heritage; he preferred to say: "Not for that we have dominion over your faith; but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand." (2 Cor. i. 24.) But, whether he came or not, he desired that the walk of the saints should be good: "only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ." This was his joy; as he could say to the Thessalonians: "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." (1 Thess. iii. 8.) And as John: "I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in truth." (3. John 4.) Precious identification with the glory of Christ! He desired two things for the Philippians, (1) that they might "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel," and (2) that they should not be terrified by their adversaries.

Practical unity is a precious thing, and of the first importance, as the Apostle earnestly shows in Chap. ii. 1-4.

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” (Ps. cxxxiii.) The Spirit of God is the bond of unity, as also its power. He, working in the hearts of the saints, fixes them upon one Object, and binds—knits—them together in one purpose and aim. Outward uniformity must not be mistaken for this. This latter may be brought about by a general subscription to a creed, or submission to a code of laws, or to a person, as in Popery: but the oneness of mind which the Spirit produces and sustains is a transcendently higher and more blessed thing.

“Striving for the faith of the Gospel,” is, I conceive, a different thing from “contending earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints,” (Jude); the latter is in view of internal corrupters, the former in the midst of a hostile, and in the case of the Philippians, a pagan, world. They were not to be terrified by their adversaries, knowing that He who was in them was greater than he who is in the world. They were to present a courageous front to the persecutor. This calm courage which grace supplies operates in two opposite ways:—to the enemy it is an evident token of perdition; to the suffering saints, it is an assurance of salvation, and that of God. The enemy is made to feel that the Christian is invincible, that the worst only deepens his bliss; and he cannot resist the conviction in his conscience that he is fighting against God, which can only result in perdition, “seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.” But the saint, on the other hand, feels that the grace which is preserving him through the furnace, will keep him to the end; and, having for an helmet the hope of salvation, he goes forward undaunted and with holy calm. To suffer is a privilege, the Apostle tells us. Compare (Mark x. 35-40.) There is a difference between suffering *with* Christ, and *for* Him. The first is the necessary fruit of having His nature, and is the portion of every Christian in a greater or less degree; the latter is the result of identification with Him and His cause in the world. It is *for* Christ here. Paul had suffered at

Philippi, and was suffering at Rome; the Philippians were now tasting the same cup. But it was "for His sake," and that sweetened all; even as when Israel were at Marah, and could not drink of the waters because they were bitter, and God showed Moses a tree, which, when cast into the waters, made them sweet to the taste.

W. W. F.

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### BECAUSE YE BELONG TO CHRIST.

It is often said that "Actions speak louder than words." So they do in the eyes of men. It is the Lord Who trieth the *heart*, and He alone can read the *motive*. Motive is always important, the motive of affection especially so, and the motive of a Christward affection deeper and deeper still. A benevolent person is always admired, but even a "natural man" of a kindly disposition, may, though unconverted, lavish gifts and acts of beneficence on the sons and daughters of want. How different is it when a deed of benevolence is the outcome of a heart that has been won to Christ! In such a case, there is an earnest desire to "spend and be spent" for Him, and as we who are believers cannot now really break our alabaster boxes on the head of our beloved Lord,\* we are privileged to help His people, and thus in our measure to help Him, for we are enjoined to do good unto all, but especially to those who are of the household of faith.

How touching was the way in which the Lord acknowledged His intimate connection with His own suffering ones, when He said "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" The Lord in His true sympathy, showed that what was done to His people was done to Him.

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\* But we can do so at His feet, which is better still, and the place not only for true worship, but for true service.—ED.



If Saul cruelly ill-treated the Church, it was just the same as if he had ill-treated the Lord! Marvellous thought! And yet again the Lord taught us the same truth when He said "I am the vine, ye are the branches;" He and His people indissolubly connected.

Then, too, how striking is the passage at the end of Matthew xxv., where in principle we see the same thing. To neglect the Lord's hungry, thirsty, outcast, ragged, sick or imprisoned people, is just the same as neglecting Him, and to succour those who are in such circumstances, will be regarded as if done to Him. He is in glory at God's right hand. He does not need anything from us, and indeed what could we give that we have not already received from Him? but in His gracious loving accents He assures us that as we do an act of kindness to any of His poor, afflicted, or tried ones, He will receive it as if we had wrought a good work for Himself. What a depth of condescension is seen in this!

There are some remarkable words uttered by the Lord, as recorded in Mark ix. 14.—"Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My Name, *because ye belong to Christ*, verily I say unto you, He shall not lose his reward." Mark this. The *motive* is the great feature. "*Because ye belong to Christ.*"

How much there is in this little word "Because!" Is it not a challenge to us in much that we do? The more truly we love the Lord the more we shall love His people, and the more will our hearts yearn to "show kindness" for His sake. "The poor have ye always with you, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good." If we have not the "will," we shall fold our hands and do nothing: but if we have the "will," and love to the Lord in our inmost souls, we shall search out objects on which to expend our time, our money and our talents, and do all for them "because they belong to Christ."

H. L. R.

## “THE VOICE OF THE LORD.

How sublime is the twenty-ninth Psalm! How grand are the seven-fold statements therein as to the “Voice of the Lord!” It gives us an idea of the power, the majesty, the might of God, and ends by saying that, “The Lord will give strength unto His people, the Lord will bless His people with peace.” How wonderfully blessed it is for us who are believers to know that this Great and Glorious One is on our side, that we are His and His for ever, so that when we hear the roaring of the sea or the blustering wind in the trees, we can recognise the voice of Him Who is a Father to us, and even when we read or hear of the tornado, the cyclone, the avalanche, the flood, or the devastating tempest, we still know that He cares for us, and doeth *all things* well.”

“*The Voice of God!*” Does not the very thought of it thrill our souls? We so small, so puny, are yet connected with Him Whose voice can “shake heaven and earth.” But we must listen. The natural man, the unconverted, can with his outward ear, hear the sound of the storm, or the rushing cascade, but we who belong to God, must be attentive and grasp the deeper meaning of what He says.

The sheep follow the Shepherd for they “know his voice;” they flee from the stranger,” even if he should approach them with seductive words. How blessed to know the voice of the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and then to follow whithersoever He leads. It was He Who with a loud voice cried “Lazarus, come forth”—that voice of almighty power which awoke the dead. It was He Who affirmed “Every one that is of the truth heareth My Voice,” and He Who in addressing the church at Laodicea, graciously said “If any man *hear My voice*, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” Oh the joy of such communion, fellowship “with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ!” Surely there can be nothing sweeter on earth,—and can anything surpass it in heaven!

Mary sat at Jesus' feet, and *heard His word* (Luke x. 39). The believing Samaritans said "We have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." Thus we see that blessing always follows those who listen to the "Voice of the Lord." He enjoins us to "keep His word" (John xiv. 23.) And makes it a test as to our love to Him. It is for our constant benefit that we should listen, and then, having listened, let us remember, let us "*keep*" the sayings of Him Who "spake as never man spake."

Power, majesty, divinity are stamped on the works of creation at which we wonder and adore, but though "Great to speak a world from naught, 'tis greater to redeem!" We hear the accents of *love* in that voice which came out of the cloud saying "This is My beloved Son, hear Him." We do listen, and our hearts go out in responsive love, which though feeble is real and true, a love which will yield full praise by-and-by.

H. L. R.

## THE SON OF MAN IN JOHN XII.

The Holy Spirit's presentation of the Son of man in John xii. 20-33, is full of instruction. Doubtless to the apostles for the moment it appeared as if the world, hitherto so reluctant to acknowledge His claims, was at last ready to accord to Him that honour which was His due. But Jesus saw all things in a totally different light.

Those Greeks who expressed their earnest desire to see Jesus, were no doubt actuated by praiseworthy motives. This very earnestness was an open rebuke to the so apparent indifference of Israel to the fact that her "light" was "come." (Is. lx. 1).

He had spoken as none ever spake: He had bestowed rich blessings on the sick and needy; every word and every action of His had glorified God; but *the world had*

*not altered its character*; and had He come to judge it, its judgment had been just. But He was come to save the world in the only possible way: by His own death upon the Cross.

Scripture affords the clearest evidence that the Lord has left us an example, that we should follow in His steps; but we as guilty sinners needed more than this. To refute the folly of those who argue that Christ was simply "a pattern Man" we need only quote His own words:—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

He saw our need, and met it Himself, and gave His life for His sheep. What man counts his most valuable possession—his life—this the Perfect Man gave, that the believer should be a recipient of that which is infinitely more precious, even "eternal life."

**If any man serve Me, let Him follow Me,"**

He said. After our Lord's resurrection Peter did this by special command, but the disciple whom Jesus loved did not need to be commanded; it was sufficient for John that the risen Lord was leading the way. (John xxi. 19, 20). May it be ours, beloved, to learn from Peter a lesson of promptness in obeying our Lord's commands, and from John that attraction of heart to the Lord that displays itself in instantly following wherever He leads us.

**"Where I am, there shall also My servant be."**

At that moment He occupied the position of the One who had maintained throughout His life the most absolute and perfect obedience to His Father's commands. He had proved Himself to be indeed "a companion of all them that fear God," yet his very love and faithfulness had brought down upon Himself the world's fierce hatred.

How our hearts rejoice, when we read our Lord's loving acknowledgment when speaking to the Father about His

own, "I am glorified in them!" Not that He was indifferent to their many failures, when He says of them what it would not have become them to say of themselves. On the other hand we read "Marvel not if the world hate you." Are we indeed content to stand where Jesus then stood, to the honour of Him that had sent Him, at the expense of "bearing His reproach" in the face of a hostile world?

If so, we shall be looked down upon, and be small and despised in the eyes of the many. They will not appreciate our actions of true-hearted service, especially those who *know* what is right but *do* it not. Such will certainly turn against and oppose us. But what says our Lord?

**"If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour."**

Yes, there is One that rightly estimates the true servant, who has gone forth to Jesus, outside the camp, and bears his reproach. *The Father will honour such.* Here is encouragement indeed!

**"Now is My soul troubled,"**

said Jesus, even He who presently said to His own "Let not your hearts be troubled." *Why* was His soul troubled? He is not yet assailed by those wicked men who afterwards shouted "Crucify him!" but He is now in full view of His Cross. Foreseeing all that would come upon Him, the Perfect Man felt all perfectly. Had He urged as His plea,

**"Father save me from this hour,"**

His cry had been heard, and answered; but He was come to save, and "this hour" found Him perfectly willing and ready to lay down His life for the sheep. The burden of His God-honouring and self-sacrificing request is

**"Father, glorify Thy name."**

None on earth save Himself, knew what this would involve. Cost what it may to Himself personally, He

would glorify that Name in accomplishing our salvation. That answering voice from heaven, though given for the sake of others, bore its own most conclusive testimony, that the Father's Name would be glorified in the obedience unto death of His Son and our Saviour. May it be ours to glorify His Name.

A. J.

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## FRAGMENTS.

### The Gospel of Genesis iii. 15.

This Gospel published in the first promise in the face of the devil himself, is maintained in these last days by the Apostle in the face of men on earth and angels from heaven. (Gal. i. 8). Whether it be the earliest or the latest preaching of it, this glorious gospel is still the same. It is the "testimony of God, which He has testified of His Son." It is the gospel of the bruised and yet victorious "seed of the woman." In the bright and perfect idea of it, man is silent and passive. Abraham had only to *believe* and righteousness was imputed to him. Israel had but to *stand by* and see God's salvation. Joshua, in Zech. iii., the prodigal, the convicted adulteress are all in like case. And here [Gen. iii.] at the beginning of our sin, and the beginning of God's Gospel, it is just the same. Adam has only to *listen*, and through hearing to believe and live. The word is nigh us, and we have but to receive it, without working anything in the heights above or in the depths beneath. The activities are God's. The sacrifices are God's. The profoundness of our silence and passiveness in becoming righteousness, is only equalled by the greatness of the divine activity and sacrifice in acquiring righteousness for us. In the sight of such a mystery we may well stand and say, "What has God wrought!"—"Simple indeed it is to us," as another has said, "but it cost Him everything."

J. G. B.

### Nearness of the Glory.

The sense of the *nearness of the glory* should be cherished by us—and here I mean the nearness in *place*—and we need be at no effort to persuade ourselves of it. The congregation of Israel were set at the door of the tabernacle, and as soon as the appointed moment comes, the glory is before them. (Lev. ix.) So at the erection of the tabernacle, and so at the introduction of the ark into the temple. (Exod. xxiv. 10.—2 Chron. vii. 1.) So when it [*i.e.* the glory] had business to do (though in different characters) with the company on mount Tabor, or with the dying Stephen, or with Saul on the road to Damascus. Wherever it may have to act, and whatever it may be called to do—to convict, to cheer, or to transfigure; to smite to the earth the persecutor, or give triumph to the martyrs, or to conform an elect vessel to itself—it can be present in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. It is but a thin veil which hides it or distances it. The path is short and the journey rapidly accomplished. We should cherish the thought of this, beloved. It has its power as well as its consolation. And so, ere long, when the time of 1 Cor. xv. arrives, that moment of the general transfiguration, as soon as the Lord's shout of command and the voice of the archangel summons it, the glory will be here again, as in the twinkling of an eye, to do its business with us, that bearing the image of the heavenly, we may be borne up, like Enoch, to the country of the heavenlies.

Then shall the Lord be glorified in His Saints, not as now, in their obedience and service, their holiness and fruitfulness, but in their personal beauty. Arrayed in which, and shining in our glories, we shall be the witnesses of what He has done for the sinner that trusted in Him.

J. G. B.

## WHAT IS DEATH?

### 1. For the natural man.

For the unbeliever, nothing can be more terrible than death. It is justly and scripturally called "the king of terrors." It is the judicial close of the being of the first Adam. What is beyond?—It is not only so for the animal in man, though that be true; but the more it is considered in connection with man's *moral* nature, the more terrible does it become. Everything in which man has had his home, his thoughts, his whole being employed, is closed and perished for ever. "When his breath goeth forth, his thoughts perish." (Ps. cxlvi. 4.) Man finds in it an end to every hope, every project, to all his thoughts and plans. The spring of them all is broken. The being in which he moved is gone: he can count upon nothing more. The busy scene, in which his whole life has been, knows him no more. He himself fails and is extinct. None have to do with him any more as belonging to it. His nature has given way, powerless to resist the master to which it belongs, who has the power of death and now asserts his dreadful rights.

But this is far from being all. Man indeed, as man alive in this world, sinks down into nothing. But why? *Sin* has come in; with sin, conscience; with sin, Satan's power: still more, with sin, God's judgment. Death is the expression and witness of all this. It is the "wages of sin," terror to the conscience, Satan's power over man, for he "has the power of death." Can God help here? Alas, it is His own judgment of sin. Death seems but as the proof that sin does not pass unnoticed, and is the terror and plague of the conscience, as witness of God's judgment. It is the officer of justice to the criminal to apprehend him and take him before the judge, and the proof of his guilt in the presence of coming judgment.

How can it be but terrible? It is the seal upon the fall and ruin and condemnation of the first Adam. And he has nothing but this old nature. He cannot subsist as a living man before God. Death is written on him,



for he is a sinner, he cannot deliver himself. He is guilty withal and condemned. His judgment comes.

## 2. What is death for the believer?

But Christ has come in. He has come into death,—O wondrous truth, He, the Prince of life! What is death now for the believer?

Now mark, reader, the full force of this wonderful, unspeakable intervention of God. We have seen death to be man's weakness, the break up of his being, Satan's power, God's judgment, the wages of sin. But all this is in connection with the *first* Adam, whose portion, because of sin, death and judgment are. We have seen the double character of death; the failure of life, or living power, in man; and the witness and conductor into the judgment of God. Christ has been made sin for us; He has undergone death, passed through that which is Satan's power and God's judgment. Death, with its causes, has been met in its every character by Christ.

The judgment of God has been fully borne by Him before the day of judgment comes. Death, as the wages of sin, has been passed through. It has, as a cause of terror to the soul, in every sense, lost its power for the believer. Death as a physical fact, *may* take place, or *not*. For so wholly has Christ put away its power, that that is not necessarily the case.

"Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall *not all* sleep, but we shall all be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51.)

"Desiring," says the Apostle, "not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon, that mortality might be *swallowed up of life*."

Such is the power of life in Christ.

But death has much more than passed away.

### "Death is ours."

"Death is ours," says the Apostle, as "all things are." (1 Cor. iii.) By the blessed Lord's entering into it for me, death and judgment too are become *my salvation*. The sin, of which death was the "wages" has been put

away *by death itself*. The judgment has been borne for me there. Death is not terror to my soul ; it is not the *sign of anger*, but the blesseddest and fullest *proof of love*, because Christ came into it. The very power of the law against me, I am freed from, for it has power over a man only as long as he lives ; but in Christ I am dead to the law already. *God has, by death, met sin and judgment already*. In a word, Christ, the sinless One, having come in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, my whole condition, as in the first Adam, has been dealt with. Dealt with, so that all its consequences have been, righteously undergone, and *by death*, the old man, Satan's power, sin, judgment, mortality itself, which are connected with the old or sinful man, are passed and done with for ever. I live before God now in the One who is risen, after enduring all that belonged to the old for me. God has dealt with the old man and all its fruits and consequences for me, in the One who has taken even the natural consequences attached to the old. Death has freed me for ever from everything that belonged to, and awaited the old man, as alive.

First, condemnation and judgment are entirely over, as a question of the soul's acceptance. The dreadful ordeal is passed ; but by another, so that it is my deliverance from it according to the righteousness of God.

The floods which destroyed the Egyptians were a wall to Israel on the right hand and on the left, the path of safety out of Egypt. The salvation of God was there. Egypt and its oppressive power were left behind them. Death is deliverance and salvation to us, as to our bodies (Rom. viii. 23), our souls having been saved and delivered already from the power of darkness by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

What is *death* become in *practice* ?

In the power of Christ's resurrection *I am quickened*. He is become my life. I can dispense, if I may venture so to speak, with the life of the old man : I have that of the new. But He who, now risen, is my life, passed

through death. I reckon myself dead. Hence it is never said that we are *to die* to sin. The *old* man does not and would not die to sin. The *new* man has no sin to die to. We are said *to be dead*, and commanded to reckon ourselves dead.

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.” (Rom vi. 11.)

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Col. iii. 3.)

And then we are directed to mortify our members which are on the earth, in the power of this new life, and of the Holy Ghost which dwells in us. (Rom. viii. 13.) I have the title, then, to reckon myself dead. What again is death to me in this respect, if really the desires of the new man are in me! yea, what deliverance and power! What is dead, for faith, is the old, hindering, harassing, sinful man, in which, as responsible to God, I was lost, and unable to meet Him. “*When*,” says the Apostle, “you *were* in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” (Rom. vii. 5.) But in Ch. viii. we read:—

“Ye *are not* in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” (V. 9.)

The flesh is not our place of standing before God. We have acknowledged ourselves lost and ruined in it. That was the standing of the first Adam, and we were in it. Law applied to it, death, judgment. But I am not in it now, but the last Adam, *i.e.*, Christ.

Secondly,

### Death as to Ordinances.

As regards ordinances, the Apostle says:—

“If ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments of the world, why as though living [or alive] in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?” (Col. ii. 20.)

For faith, we are dead, not alive in the world. Hence, also, everything that makes us practically realise this—trial, suffering, sorrow—is gain. It makes morally true, and real, in our souls, that we are dead, and thus

delivers from the old man. "In all these things is the life of the Spirit."

It is being disengaged and delivered from the obscuring and deadening influence of the old man. These sorrows and breaches in life are the *details of death morally*. But of the death of what? *Of the old man*. All is gain.

Thirdly:

**If death comes in fact, what then?**

Again I say: the *death of what?* *Of that which is mortal*, of the old man. Does the new risen life die? It has passed through death in Christ, and this has been realised in us. That life *cannot die*. It is Christ. Hence, in dying, death is simply left behind. It is the *quitting of that which is mortal*. We are

"Absent from the body and present with the Lord."  
(2 Cor. v.)

That risen life was previously outwardly connected with what is mortal. It is no longer so. We are absent from the body and present with the Lord. We depart and—*are with Christ*.—It is true, faith looks for a greater triumph—we shall be "clothed upon"—still this is God's power. The old man, thank God, never revives. God, because of His Spirit that dwells in us, will quicken even our mortal bodies. The life of Christ will be displayed in a glorious body. We shall be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He may be the "first-born among many brethren. (Rom. viii.) This is the fruit of divine power. But meanwhile death itself is always deliverance, because, having a new life, it is our being disencumbered from the old man which hindered and hemmed our way. It is our being *with Christ*. How sweet and refreshing is the thought! When once we have seized the difference of the old and new man, the reality of the *new life* we have received in Christ, the death of the old will be known and felt to be true and real gain. No doubt, God's time is best, because He alone knows what is needed in the way of discipline and exercise, to form our souls for Himself. He even may

preserve us to know the power of this life in Christ, so that mortality shall be "swallowed up of life" without our dying. (2 Cor. v. 4.)

But if death is but the ceasing of the old man, it is but the ceasing of sin, hindrance, trouble. We *have done with the old man*, in which we were guilty before God: *righteously done with it*, because Christ has died for us—*for ever done with it*, because we live in the power of the new.

Such is death to the believer—"To depart and to be with Christ, which is far better."—As *judgment*—Christ has taken it;—as to the *power of sin*—it is the *death of the very nature sin lives in*. As to *actual mortality*—it is deliverance from it to be with Christ in the new man which enjoys Him. Who, as to the proper gain of it, would not die?

If we live to serve Christ, the sorrow of this world is worth while, but it is not the less sorrow in itself, whatever blessing may cheer us through it. To us, to *live* is—*Christ*; to die, *gain*. It is but the old man that dies; our misery first, our enemy afterwards. Of course, this supposes divine life, and in practice the heart to be elsewhere than in the things the old man lives in.

W. H. D.

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### EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

Beloved brother. . . . We go on through the toils of service, where as good in Christ, it has to make its way, and make itself effectual by divine strength in the midst of evil and alienation from God, and, as to testimony, adapt itself to it. This it was that was so beautiful in Christ. In *heaven all* is good, God is there, and only goodness and holiness, and nothing inconsistent with it. We cannot be simple, or want simplicity there, for God fills everything, and we and all are then what He would have us. It is an infinite "*I am*" of good. But Christ was something else. He was divine good and infinite, but

good adapting itself, showing itself infinite in being always itself, and yet adapting itself to all the wants, sorrows, miseries, sins, that were in this poor world. We get to God, get to the Father by it, because He has got to us. What a wonderful thought it is, to see Godhead emptying itself, thereby to prove itself love, as no angel could have known it—coming down as man even unto death, and to be made sin, that I might learn what God is in death, where sin had brought me; and absolute obedience in man, in what disobedience had brought us into; death, the way of life,—the extreme of man in weakness—where (as to this world) it ended; the place where God is revealed and triumphant, and the power of Satan destroyed. But the Christian, redeemed by this, and according to this, has, walking in holiness, to express divine love in this world, by manifesting the life of Christ, and seeking the deliverance of souls. What a calling! and what a privilege!

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## SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PAGE.

### The sufficiency of Scripture.

A few reminiscences of the experience of an old Sunday School Teacher may be interesting and encouraging to those now engaged in the work, and who are, perhaps, cast down at times by the little apparent success.

I believe the great thing is to bring the *word of God* to bear upon the hearts and consciences of the dear children committed to our charge; but it must be made very simple, and suited to their capacities, for we must remember that most of them are unaccustomed to read, or hear it at home. They may see a Bible lying upon a shelf with other books, but seldom, or never read by their parents: perhaps even spoken of disparagingly; and we have to make them understand that it is *God's Book*, and of interest to *them*. A cold, dry way of reading it will be of no avail; they must see by their Teacher's way of using the Bible, what a reality and blessing it is to them, and that it is their Teacher's earnest desire that each child may share the blessing.

The various truths of the Bible may be illustrated by incidents in every day life, or by things they see around them, but I would not read to them any other book for this purpose. Use the Bible alone, and seek wisdom from God to make it interesting and attractive to the children. There is enough in the varied scenes of our blessed Lord's life, and in connection with His wondrous death, resurrection and ascension.

Then in the Old Testament and in the "Acts of the Apostles," what narratives of surpassing interest!

With this blessed Book in our hands we have surely no need to turn aside to other books. It is the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone that are "able to make" a child, or a grown person "wise unto salvation." "The entrance of Thy word giveth light," says the Psalmist, and we must remember that the Holy Spirit, who has indited that word can alone open the heart to receive it. Therefore the importance of prayer in connection with our efforts.

I will give a case in point. A young Teacher of 16 had a class of little ones in a country Sunday School, and often felt sorely tried by their inattention and indifference. This cast her upon the Lord, and earnestly she cried to Him to enable her so to present Scripture truth that the children might understand and receive it.

One particular Saturday evening and Sunday morning she was more than usually earnest in prayer for this, and in the afternoon took for her subject, "Man's creation and fall, and God's remedy for man's sin, *their sin*." The children listened, and her heart was comforted.

About a year afterwards a little girl of the class was taken ill, and visited by another Teacher, who, to her surprise found the dear child quite happy, and desiring to go to the Lord Jesus. She had no fear of death, she knew her sins were forgiven, and that she should soon see Jesus who loved her and died for her. Upon being asked, How long she had known her sins forgiven, she said "Ever since Teacher read to us about Adam and Eve being turned out of Paradise, and the Lord

Jesus coming to save sinners." Many questions were put to her, but the dear child's confidence in the precious blood of Christ was unshaken, and two days after, she departed (aged eight years) full of joy in the prospect of being with Him.

The poor mother who was unconverted was inconsolable at the loss of her "dear little Mary," who, she said, had been so different lately to what she used to be—so patient with her younger brothers and sisters, so loving and obedient to her parents, and so useful—she should miss her sadly.

\* If the Lord will, I shall in a future number give a few instances illustrative of the text :—

"Cast thy bread upon the waters : for thou shalt find it after many days."  
C. P.

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### HYMN.

O Jesus ! when I think on Thee,  
My heart for joy doth leap in me ;  
Thy blest remembrance yields delight ;  
But far more sweet will be Thy sight.  
Of Thee, who didst salvation bring,  
I shall for ever think and sing.  
Thy love, O Jesus, ne'er can cloy,  
Fountain of bliss, and source of joy.  
For me Thy precious blood was spilt,  
To seal the pardon of my guilt  
And justice poured upon Thy head  
Its heavy vengeance in my stead.  
O let me ever share Thy grace ;  
Still taste Thy love and view Thy face ;  
Where'er I am, where'er I move,  
Be Thou the object of my love.  
"Blest Shepherd ! what delicious fare,  
How sweet Thy entertainments are !  
Never did angels taste above  
Redeeming grace and dying love."  
To Thee I'll be for ever joined,  
Joy of my heart, joy of my mind ;  
And in the Father's house above  
Unhindered taste Thy perfect love.

G. O. T.



## FOUR REQUISITES FOR THESE LAST DAYS.

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### CHAPTER IX.

#### **4. Watchfulness unto prayer and intercession, and fellowship with the godly.**

It is a well known and true saying, that prayer is for the soul what breath is for the body. Breathing is the first action of life in the new-born babe, even before he turns to the milk. God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And as the breath of the human life proceeded from God, so the first breath of the regeneration-life in the new-born child of God "born of the Spirit," ascends in prayer to Him, who is the Giver and Preserver of the new, as of the natural life.

One of the first requisites for sustaining life and health to the natural man, is a pure atmosphere to breathe in. Likewise to the new man in the believer the breathing in the pure heavenly atmosphere of prayer is an indispensable necessity.

When in the natural body that sad disease, consumption, has set in, its characteristic symptom is the impeded breathing. Likewise the spiritual decline in a believer, is characterised by lack of breathing, only not by being impeded, but through neglect. Sad it is to behold the poor sufferer in decline panting and struggling for a breath of air. He certainly does not neglect to try and satisfy the cravings of his poor, wasting lungs for a draught of the element of life. But, oh, how much sadder to witness in a backsliding believer the wilful

neglect of that very instinct of the new man in him, stifling the cravings of his spiritual lungs for the pure atmosphere of heaven.

The same inspired apostle, who when writing to his healthy and prayerful Philippians, pointed with uplifted finger to the glorious and beauteous exalted object of faith, (Ch. iii.) enjoins them in the following Chapter :

“ Be careful for nothing ; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

And what would be the result ?

“ And the *peace of God*, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

And to the Ephesians, when speaking to them, not of earthly conflicts, but of the formidable battle to be fought in heavenly places against those “ spiritual hosts of wickedness,” and pointing to the necessity of “ putting on the *whole* armour of God,” he enjoined the necessity of

“ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and *watching* thereunto with all perseverance for all saints.”

Mark the apostle's words :

“ *Watching* thereunto ” (i.e., unto prayer, making every opportunity an occasion for prayer).

Suppose a soldier on duty as sentinel before the camp, falls asleep. The enemy comes upon him, kills him and enters the camp and slays its inmates. Of what use would his armour and sword be to the unwatchful sentinel ? He would be the first victim of his own neglect.

It was in the garden of Gethsemane, that those solemn words of our gracious Master were heard,

“ *Watch ye and pray*, lest ye enter into temptation.”

When the temptation is there, prayer is generally too late.

And it was from the threshold of Gethsemane, as it were, that the same gracious Master's warning injunction

was addressed not only to those poor sentinels of His, who could not watch with Him one hour, but sounds out to all His disciples of every age, until He comes again :

“ And what I say unto you, I say unto *all*: *Watch*.”  
(Mark xiii. 37).

And if the apostle, when writing to his Philippians, whom he could call his “ joy and crown,” found it expedient to enjoin upon them the necessity of prayer and supplication with thanksgiving ; and if he, when writing to the Ephesians, who in their then so happy condition needed not the Lord’s later solemn injunction : “ Repent and do the *first* works,” found it necessary even then, to exhort them to watchfulness “ unto prayer with all perseverance and supplication for all saints,”—what about the present “ *perilous times* ” and “ *last days* ”—might we not say, the *very last* of the last days—of which both, the Lord’s bosom-disciple and the apostle of His glory, have given us warning in such solemn words? Days of spiritual earthquakes, explosions, tornados, and inundations, by which the god and prince of this world with his “ hosts of wickedness,” are doing their utmost to undermine and subvert all divine foundations of truth, order and authority, be it ordained for this world by God’s merciful providence, or by His wisdom and grace in the Church.

If Daniel three times every day knelt down to pray in his chamber, the windows being open towards the place where once Jerusalem with its temple and altar stood, remembering King Solomon’s prayer (1 Kings viii. 46-50), it behoves us, fellow believer, in days like these, to kneel down *seven times* every day, keeping the windows of faith open towards our heavenly Jerusalem and towards Him who is the light of Jerusalem on high, as He was the Light of the world, when He trod this earth, adorning it by His Presence, as He now adorns the heavenly courts above. The whilom “ Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief,” is the same now in His sympathy in heavenly glory. Its apparent distance cannot lessen His power nor weaken His sympathy. Since the days of Stephen until now *He* is ever the same, “ Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day and

for ever." He *cannot* be more than He is, nor will He ever be less. Even in the glory above, He is "*touched with the feeling* of our infirmities." All the clouds of incense ministered to Him by the numberless hosts of heaven, cannot conceal from His view the poorest and feeblest of His needy ones in this "valley of tears." Nor can the vast chorus of the unceasing songs of the redeemed in heaven, accompanied by the strains of their numberless harps, with their vast volume of sound, prevent His hearing the feeblest anxious bleating of some stray sheep or lamb of His flock. He whose steps were arrested by the cry of poor blind Bartimeus, listens now in glory to the cry of a penitent sinner.

"O Lord, Thou too once hasted  
This weary desert through,  
Once fully tried and tasted  
It's bitterness and woe.  
And hence Thy heart is tender,  
In truest sympathy,  
Though now the heavens render  
All praise to Thee on high."

Let me challenge myself and you, beloved: How often in the day (I will not speak of the night) do we respond in the secret of our closets to the encouraging injunction of that Divine love, to make known our requests to a God who did not spare His only Begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us all, and says, how shall I not with Him also freely give you all things? How often do we render unto Him even the *first fruits* of the day, upon which He has a sacred claim after the mercies of the night? Do we plead business and its increasing claims? Sad response indeed would be such a plea! The "pray, let me be excused," sad as it sounds in refusing the Gospel, sounds sadder still amongst Christians. Daniel in his high position as the chief dignitary after the King, might have pleaded business with more reason than you and I, dear reader. And yet, he found time for being closeted with God three times every day, notwithstanding his watchful enemies and the Kings prohibition. Have not we far greater reason than he to be on our faces before God and to cry, "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face—*because* we have sinned against thee. To the Lord

our God belong mercies and forgiveness, *though* we have rebelled against thee." First the "*because*," then the "*although*."

Daniel's prayer was in an especial way *intercessional*. So it should be with us in a far higher and intimate sense according to the *nearness* and *dearness* of our christian relationship. We cannot be in true individual fellowship with the Father and the Son, without thinking of the children, so dearly beloved by that Father, and of the precious flock so dearly bought by the Good Shepherd, and of the members of His body, for whose sake the "grain of wheat fell into the ground and died, that it might bring forth much fruit," and that they "might be" "gathered into one." (John xii. and xi.)

There lived not many years ago a Christian minister, a devoted and prayerful servant and steward of his Lord. The walls of his study were ornamented—not with pictures, but with the names of the christians of his congregation. Every day he made it "*his business*," to intercede for each of them in the silence of his prayerful closet, bearing them up before the Lord on the loving arms of the prayer of faith. What blessings must have resulted from such prayerful intercession for himself no less than for those he prayed for! That man was indeed a true pastor "according to God's own heart!" Our natural selfishness betrays itself but too often in our lack of intercessional prayer. It is soon felt in the assemblies of saints, especially on the Lord's Day morning, whether there has been much individual self-judgment and intercessional prayer offered up to God in the secret of the closet during the week. It is easy to complain about lack of power in the meetings. *Bring power with you* into them, through previous self-judgment and prayerful intercession, and you will be a fellow-helper of their joy, instead of a grumbler and complainer at their shortcomings.

We therefore do well to heed the injunction of that blessed man of *prayer by day and by night*, when he wrote to his beloved Ephesians, exhorting them to be

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication *for all saints.*”

And let me add, where there is real prayerful “fellowship with the Father and the Son,” there will be “*fellowship one with another.*” (1 John 3). It is true, in these last days, everything getting ready for the open outbreak of the final apostacy, faithfulness to God and to the Word of His truth has an isolating effect on account of the increasing indifference to divinely inspired and revealed truth, and consequently increasing worldliness, alas, amongst christians. But whilst general fellowship amongst them is thus sadly barred, communion amongst those who desire to remain faithful, though in the deep sense of their shortcomings and in conscious weakness before the Lord, to keep His Word, and the word of His patience, not denying His Name—that fellowship is becoming all the more close and intimate. Godly christians are such who *side with God*, keeping themselves undefiled by the flesh, their garments unspotted by the world, and their minds and hearts untainted by unsound, God and Christ dishonouring doctrines, or by wilful association with those who hold them. (Rev. ii. 14.)

At the close of the Old Testament prophets we read, that

“They that *feared the Lord*, spoke often one with another.” (Mal. iii.)

It was the same when the Lord appeared among His earthly people. (John i. 40-46.) But when the last of His apostles, His bosom disciple, whose constant injunction to his fellow-christians was, that they should love one another, wrote to the “Elect Lady,” who with her children were evidently lovely and excellent christians, whom he loved,—not because they were “nice christians,” but “*for the truths sake,*” the loving apostle found it necessary already in those days, to warn the elect lady, lest her virtue of christian love and hospitality should become a snare of the enemy, by entertaining men, who under the cloke of christianity and christian love tried to creep into the houses of christians, or as

C. H. Spurgeon said, under plea of seeking the friendship, of the servant, aim at robbing the Master. As to such, we fully agree with Spurgeon's cautioning advice, to put a fresh bolt on the door and keep up the chain." (Comp. 2 Tim. ii. 20-22.)

May our gracious Master, who is also "He that is holy, and He that is true," and holds the keys of service as well as of hades, at His coming find His servants with their loins girded—not *loosely*, but *tightly*, (which is very different to being "narrowminded,") and their lamps burning,—not *dimly*, but brightly. Well girded loins and bright lamps go together.

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## BRIEF THOUGHTS ON PHILIPPIANS.

### CHAPTER II.

The apostle had in chap. i. 27, expressed his heart's desire that the Phillipian saints might walk together in unity; this he now follows up in a touching way. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." All this his heart was deeply enjoying, their gifts and loving messages to him in prison being the immediate cause. To be thus thought of, when so many were forgetting him, and ashamed of his chains, was indeed encouragement\*, their love had comforted his heart, it was a true display of fellowship in the Spirit, and of bowels and mercies, *i.e.*, the tender compassions of Christ. Would they fill up his cup of joy? One thing would do it—to hear that they were "of one accord, of one mind." He desired them to shew the same love among themselves that they had so sweetly shewn to him. His

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\* The force of the word rendered "consolation" is rather "encouragement."

heart was not content to see them merely outwardly one (*i.e.*, not outwardly dividing): he wished their hearts to be "knit together in love." Their state was far better than that of the saints at Corinth, where party-making, in the most carnal way, was going on in the assembly. Still the apostle's heart was not satisfied. He always wished the saints to be what they should be for Christ. He would not have them rest short of a full answer to the mind of God. To rest satisfied with our spiritual state, even if comparatively good, is a snare. Paul could commend the Thessalonians for loving one another and all the brethren in all Macedonia, but would not have them stop there; and adds, "but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more." (1 Thess. iv. 10). To walk together thus in unity and lowliness of mind is requisite, and affectionate consideration for each other. The apostle warns against strife and vainglory (compare Ch. i. 15, Gal. v. 26); and another apostle tells us that "where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." (James iii. 16). The opposite spirit should prevail: each in lowliness of mind esteeming other better than themselves. Only grace can enable us to do this: but where grace is enjoyed, and the Spirit is working unhindered, it is a joy to see Christ in my brother, while I see failure and shortcoming in myself. An affectionate interest is enjoined in each other; saints are not to be exclusively occupied with their own interests, but, as Paul puts it elsewhere, by "love to serve one another." (Gal. v. 6-13). Love delights to serve; it cannot be self-occupied. The pattern is given in Christ Jesus, who humbled Himself in love that He might serve us. Marvellous grace! Wonderful and exalted pattern for our souls! He was in the form of God; to Him it was no robbery to be equal with God, but He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant. The contrast with the first Adam is very marked. Adam was made in servant's form, and was created to obey, but aspired to "be as God." This was robbery, and brought its judgment. How different was it with the second Man! As the eternal Word, He was in the beginning with God, and was God: without Him



nothing was made that was made. But He emptied Himself, choosing to serve. The form of God was laid aside for a while, though never His divine prerogatives. When here in flesh, He could raise the dead, cleanse the leper, command the winds and the waves, and read the hearts and thoughts of men.

He came to *serve*, saying, "A body hast Thou prepared me," "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." (Heb. x.). To His disciples He could say, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." (Mark x. 45). And again, "I am among you as He that serveth." (Luke xxii. 27). And he has not laid the servant's form aside: He is the girded One still, though in glory. He is the true Antitype of the Hebrew servant, who said, "I love my master, my wife, and my children, and I will not go out free." (Exo. xxi.). And even in the future, He will love to serve His own. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching; verily, I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." (Luke xii. 37).

But the Lord, in His downward course in grace, did not stop at the assumption of servant's form: "being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." What a stoop! What a wondrous pathway! But it has ended for Him in glory. He Himself laid down that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." God has seen to this. He has highly exalted Him, and given Him the name that is above every name, and has decreed that every knee, whether heavenly, earthly or infernal, shall bow to Him, and own His lordship, to His glory. It is important to observe the point of view from which the Lord's humiliation is spoken of in this chapter. It is not that He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, though that, blessed be His Name, is true; but that He humbled Himself in love, to serve. This is our pattern: "let this mind be in you."

The apostle continues to exhort the saints. They had always obeyed ; not merely when he was present with them, but much more in his absence. To the Galatians he had to speak differently. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. (Gal. iv. 18). And now that the apostle was absent, the Philippians must work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. They no longer had him to encourage them, and lead them in their conflict with their foe : they must count on God for themselves. If Paul was unable to help them, God was there still, working in them to will and to do of His good pleasure. This is the only resource for the saints now. The apostle, in bidding farewell to the Ephesian elders, commended them to God and the Word of His grace." (Act xx). Apostles have ceased, but God remains : to Him we turn.

He desired them to do all things without murmurings and disputings, and to be blameless and harmless, children of God without rebuke in the midst of a perverse generation. Verses 15-16 are very striking : every sentence reminds of Christ. Was not He blameless and harmless, Son of God without rebuke in the midst of perverse Israel ? Was not He the Light of the world, and the Word of life ? Saints are thus to have Him before them, and follow His blessed steps. And if the saints so walked, Paul would rejoice in the day of Christ : so evident would it be that he had not run in vain, nor laboured in vain. No labourer boasts of work that turns out badly, even though the fault may not lie at his door. Apostolic exhortations are frequent as to this. See 2 Cor. vi. 3 ; "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed." Also 1 John ii. 28 ; "little children, abide in Him, that when He shall appear, *we* may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." And many other passages.

So dear was the service of Christ to him, that Paul was quite willing to be poured out as a drink-offering : to him it would be a matter of rejoicing. He regards, in verse 17, the Philippians as a sacrifice, himself merely

(so lowly were his thoughts) as the bin of wine poured of old on the sacrifice. If this would glorify Christ, he was willing and desirous ; and called upon the saints to rejoice with him. Unselfish servant ; and unselfish saints, upon whom he could count to rejoice even at losing him whom they so dearly loved that Christ might be magnified. But though he was thus quite willing to be poured out, and expected sooner or later to be so dealt with, he believed he should abide for the present, as we have seen in Chap. i. Therefore he hoped to send Timotheus to them shortly, that he might be comforted by having the latest information as to their state. He knew not who else to send. Timothy trod in his footsteps, and loved to care for the saints, but he could not say so of all. All sought their own things, not those of Christ Jesus. Painful and early departure from the simplicity and singleness of heart of Acts ii. to iv. ! What is man ! Need we wonder at the worldliness and apathy of our days ? Let us examine our hearts : has Christ the first place ? are His interests ours ? Timothy had proved himself : as a son with a father, he had laboured faithfully and well in the Gospel, unlike John Mark, who commenced well, but departed from them at Perga, and went not with them to the work. (Acts xv. 38). Him, therefore, Paul hoped to send presently, trusting in the Lord that he also himself would soon be able to follow.

Meanwhile, however, he would send to them Epaphroditus, who had come to him with gifts from them : "my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier," as Paul affectionately describes him, "but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants." Verses 26-28 furnish us with a fine picture of delicacy of affection and tender consideration for others. Epaphroditus had been sick, "for the work of Christ he had been nigh unto death ;" the Philippians had heard of it, and this distressed the heart of the devoted sufferer. That he should have caused them a moment's anxiety was a deep trial to him, and caused him to long to see them again, that their hearts might be set at rest. Paul thoroughly shared this feeling, and much as he desired

to keep him, he would urge him to return, that when the saints saw him again, they might rejoice. Wonderful! What does the selfish heart of man, as such, know of such feelings? This is the Spirit's fruit—He forms the new man after Christ. God had mercifully spared Epaphroditus to Paul and the saints: the apostle would have him held in reputation. Like Paul, he regarded not his life that he might serve Christ. (Acts xx. 24). Such characters shine the more brightly in a declining day: we have seen that the apostle had to groan over the majority of the labourers, here was one who gave his heart (and the heart of God) deep joy.

W. W. F.

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## REDEMPTION.

### EXODUS XV.

It can be well understood after so trying a scene as that in which Israel had been, the sea before them, shutting them in, and Pharaoh and his host pursuing them behind, that "they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, and they said unto Moses, because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?"

But although they had "cried unto the Lord," they had not in their *hearts*, as we see, calculated on His delivering them. Therefore it must have been a most wondrous thing to them, when God was so publicly manifested to be on their side. So is it with us when we are thus tested. With trial on every side, shut in, as it were, with trouble of one sort or another, our hearts are often found buried under the circumstances, instead of calculating upon the God, who is above them, to deliver us from them."

Israel, it will be seen, was dealt with in unqualified grace, whatever might be their murmurings, till they reached Sinai, that they might know how entirely God was for them. But afterwards, through their folly in

getting themselves under *law*, which they ought to have known they could not keep, they brought upon themselves a different line of treatment. In Exodus xvi. we see that when they murmured for flesh, God gave them quails, *without any reproach*, that Israel might know that God was feeding them on the ground of *perfect grace*. But afterwards, when under law (as in Numb. xi. 33), when they again murmur for flesh, we read, "while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people." But *here* we read (that is, *before* they get under law), the Lord gave them in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full" (Exod. xvi. 8). And when they came to Rephidim, where there was no water, the rock was smitten for them, and they got water. All this was *continued grace*, that Israel might know how entirely God was bent on doing them good, *bad* as they might be.

It may be well to distinguish, for our soul's profit, the difference between the passover in Ch. xii. and the redemption through the Red Sea in Ch. xiv.—For a person may hear the Gospel and receive it with joy, and be rejoicing in the forgiveness of sins; may see the loveliness of Christ, and have his affections going out after Him. Still, if all this is not founded on redemption—on his having come through the *Red Sea DRY SHOD*—when temptation comes, down he tumbles, and away goes all his joy. Now the joy of this 15th Chapter, is, that God has absolutely redeemed Israel from Egypt and the Red Sea, and has brought them in His strength to His "holy habitation." *This* is, as we shall find, a very different thing from getting joy merely from our being screened from judgment at the passover in Egypt.

The distinction between the passover and the Red Sea is this, that in the passover God had made Himself known to them as a *God of Judgment*. Therefore the blood on the door-post was necessary to screen them from judgment. It kept God out and He *passed over*. For had He come into their houses as a God of judgment, He must have destroyed them as well as the

Egyptians, for they had deserved it quite as much, nay *more*, for they knew better. But at the Red Sea it is quite another thing. There it was God coming in strength, as a "man of war"—as their salvation. The passover delivered Israel from God's judgment; the Red Sea delivered Israel from their enemies. The moment they become in danger from Pharaoh and his host, God comes in, and in the "greatness of His excellence," overthrows them in the sea. The very sea which they dreaded, and which appeared to throw them into Pharaoh's hands, becomes, under the power of God, the means of their salvation. It was "*through death*" that He *delivered from death*. Like as Christ went down into the stronghold of Satan; went down under the power of death, and by rising again from the dead delivered us, who, through fear of death, were all our life time subject to bondage. Thus there was an end of their ever seeing an Egyptian again.

The Red Sea is redemption out of Egypt and God Himself is become their salvation. They ARE redeemed; no longer now "*hoping*" for mercy. So it is with a soul. On having entered, by faith, into the blessed effect of Christ's death, it is not only that the blood screens from judgment, but the God that was feared, *is my Saviour and Deliverer*. Now Israel can rejoice that judgment is passed, and sing His praises for having brought them to His holy habitation, to God Himself, in the light, as He is in the light. He had brought them up from among the dead into the light of His presence. And observe here that they are brought into God's presence, into the light as God is in the light, before they have taken one step into the wilderness. For there can be no conflict till redemption is known. Israel did not attempt to fight with Pharaoh. The only question with them was how to get away from him. They had groaned under his yoke, but they did not combat against him. How could they? They must be brought to God first. They must be made God's host, before they can fight God's enemies or their own.

So it is with an individual soul. I have no power to combat Satan, while I am his slave, for there can be no conflict in slavery. I may groan under his yoke, and desire to be delivered from him. But before my arm can be raised in fight against Satan, I must have a complete and *known redemption*. Israel were not only happy in escaping their pursuers; but it was complete redemption known, and therefore they could count on God's power for everything else. They can now say, "the people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them. All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away." (Ex. xv. 14-15.) This was Rahab's experience, as she 40 years later said to the spies: "As soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you; for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." (Josh. ii. 11.) Israel's joy does not arise from having *no* enemies, but from God having taken up His people and put them in His own presence. But farther (v. 17) it is said, "Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountains of thine inheritance; in the place, O Lord, which Thy hands have established." This was yet to be done. Israel was already with God in His holy habitation. So we are already now in God's presence, but not yet in the place His hands have made;—"in the mountain of thine inheritance." It is not Israel's, but *God's inheritance*. So in Ephesians the apostle prays, that they "may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."—It was *God's land*, that Israel was to dwell in, and the *Father's house* is our dwelling place, and He will bring us in, so that there is no fear of enemies by the way: to faith they are all powerless. *Full and entire confidence belonys to redemption.*

"Well then," as men would say, "it is all plain sailing now!" No, not at all. God says, as it were, I have redeemed you, and I am going to bring you unto Canaan, and therefore you must pass through trial. And in Ch.

xvii. we see, that it was “according to the commandment of the Lord,” they “pitched in Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink.”—It was a dreadful thing to be three days in the wilderness without water. It was almost insupportable. Does not this make redemption *uncertain*? No, not at all—yet it was a dreadful thing to have no water. It was certain death in that country. And when at length they came to water, it was bitter. Now this is trying work. But it was for this very thing that God brought them into the wilderness, to *prove* them and *bring out what was in their hearts*. (Deut. viii. 2.) The “bitter herbs” did not show what was in *God’s heart*; redemption had shown that. But in *their hearts* lay much that had to be manifested and corrected.—What can this all mean? Israel had been redeemed for ever; and then bring them into a place, where they had not a drop of water to drink!—To be sure, this is the very effect of redemption. And so it is with us. Being redeemed for ever, there are a quantity of things in us that have to be brought out and corrected. When they get the water, as we have seen, it was so bitter that they could not drink it. But all this is because they must drink into the power of death; for, being redeemed, we have got life. This cannot be learned in Egypt. Israel had no “*Marah*” in Egypt. It is wilderness experience. Redemption must be *known first*, and the effect will be *death to sin*, to selfishness, and one’s own will. [After Rom. v. comes Ch. vi.]—Now all this is deeply trying; and that is just what God *would have it to be*. A person might say, all this trial is come upon me, because I am not brought into redemption. But no. It is *because you are redeemed*.

*(To be concluded in the next number, if the Lord will.)*

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### THE SON OF MAN IN JOHN XIII.

“Therefore when he [Judas] was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him.” v. v. 31-32.

The Spirit of God has drawn our attention to the fact that the Lord gave this glorious testimony before the eleven *after the betrayer had gone out*. From the very first He had known that the heart of Judas Iscariot remained unchanged; for all that he had been privileged to share with the other disciples privileges of the very highest character. He had been taught the same precepts, had seen many mighty works wrought, and had hitherto taken the place of a true-hearted servant of Christ; yet still, he was “the son of perdition.” For all this the Lord had ever dealt so graciously and lovingly toward all, that when He said “One of you shall betray me,” the disciples “looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake.” Holiness, infinite goodness, meekness and long suffering-patience had up to this point displayed itself in Jesus before Judas: and by attentively observing and comparing all that the four Evangelists tell us of our Lord’s gracious dealings with Judas before the latter finally left that upper room, we may find set before us for our learning an example of the spirit we ought ourselves ever to display when we too are brought into close contact with such as oppose themselves, and finally become reprobates. And when that wicked man had “gone out,” the eleven were privileged to listen to the glorious testimony of Him who is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” The Speaker was the “Lamb, without blemish, and without spot.”

In the preceding part of this Chapter we may discover that which shows a most beautiful appropriateness to the term “Son of man.” “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and

girded Himself. After that, He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded."

His own glorification being then imminent, He the Holy and undefiled One, realising that His beloved disciples needed these ministrations on their own parts, stooped in His own self-sacrificing love for them, and washed their feet. Marvellous, condescending grace on His part who is higher than the Kings of the earth! He had had compassion on the five thousand, and did honour to His disciples in handing *to them* of the five loaves and two small fishes, that *they* may give to the multitudes to eat. Now compassion for those very disciples is manifested in His own self-appointed task, which, while it met their present need, was surely calculated to make every true-hearted disciple realise how great was His incomparable love for them.

John had full confidence in His love, and appreciating it, leaned on the bosom of his Lord and Master. The Spirit of God instantly speaks of John himself as being the disciple "whom Jesus loved." Ought not this to suffice to fully assure us of our Lord's gracious appreciation of John's inostentatious display of love and confidence in Himself?

' In this Chapter we see the Son of man dealing with the believing sons of men so as to make these feel perfectly at home with Himself.

He that stooped and washed the feet of His disciples, knows the full extent of your failures, beloved fellow-believer. You may have had misgivings that His love might weaken towards yourself as these shortcomings on your own part have become more and more manifest. But never forget that John's feet needed washing as much as did those of his fellow-disciples. For all that, John pillowed his head on his Lord's bosom, and found no sweeter resting place on earth. And it was this very disciple who by the Spirit has written to teach us very much concerning those glories which find their centre in

the Lord's blessed Person ! May we too know much of precious intercourse with Jesus, and may our increasing acquaintance with Himself ever tend to make us think more and more highly of Him, and less and less of our unworthy selves.

With becoming affection and reverence in spirit we would listen to our Lord's memorable words:—"Now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in Him." He, the perfect Man, had alone fulfilled the fourfold conditions of Psalm xxiv. 4. Every deed, word, and thought of His had glorified God. God was ever glorified in Him, and more than ever at that moment when He suffered for our sakes upon Calvary's Cross. Directly He had finished that work God glorified Him who accomplished it. And the Spirit through the apostles bore powerful witness that God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every other name. At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow.

A. J.

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## READINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

(See No. 24 p. 284.)

Ch. ii, 12-25.—After the wedding at Cana, the beautiful type of Jehovah's re-union with His earthly people, (Comp. Isai. liv. and lv.) Jesus goes with His mother and brethren, the representatives of His relationship with Israel, to Capernaum, to dwell with them. But upon the purification and blessing at Cana must follow the cleansing in judgment of the defiled temple at Jerusalem. The patient spotless One, who could say: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," is seen making a scourge of small cords, driving them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen, pouring out the changers' money and overthrowing the tables. To the dove-sellers He says: "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." Strangely solemn action! All the more

strikingly solemn, because it was done by the "meek and lowly" One! But that meekness and lowliness in Him was never permitted to supercede His zeal for His Father's glory. The only perfect Man, who trod this earth, was like a well-tuned harmonious instrument in the Master's hand, which gives no discordant sound. Every feeling of His heart, every thought of His mind was uttered at the right time, and in the right way and place; every chord responding in sweetest harmony to the Master's touch, all being subject to the Master-hand, that elicited the sublime harmony. But the Father's honour was ever paramount. He "did those works which He had seen with the Father," and "spoke those things which He had heard of the Father." When in the temple at the age of twelve, not teaching but asking questions in perfect propriety, and the doctors being astonished at His understanding and answers, He replied to the remonstrance of His mother: "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" But immediately after this he returned with His parents to Nazareth and "was subject unto them." In the first part of our chapter we heard Him replying to His mother's remark: "They have no wine," with: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" (We saw with what meaning.) But immediately after, He went with her and His brethren and his disciples to Capernaum. And upon the Cross when His mother stood weeping at the foot of the Cross, and "a sword pierced through her soul," according to Simeon's prophecy, the dying Son providing for His mother, bequeaths His mother to the "disciple whom He loved," who stood at her side. Who but He could and would have done so at such a place and under such circumstances! What a legacy at that "place of a skull!" And what a reward to the disciple of His bosom! Did not the apostle appreciate and manifest it ever afterwards in his daily life with His Master's mother? No doubt. Did then those apparently harsh words in the temple, or did the "scourge of small cords," and the rest of that solemn act of the purification of the defiled temple betray or manifest any disharmony in that

wondrous "harp with ten strings?" if we may say so with all reverence. No, it was the crowning perfection and the very key note of the melodious harmony of Him, whose life, so beautifully typified in the meat offering, went as a constant sweet incense up to His Father and God.—God's glory was paramount. Would, there were more instruments like Him.

"All the Father's counsels claiming,  
Equal honours to the Son,  
All the Son's effulgence beaming,  
Makes the Father's glory known."

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### SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PAGE.

**"Your labour is not in vain in the Lord."**  
(1 Cor. xv. 51).

(See May Number, p. 22).

Connected with the school mentioned in my preceding paper a Bible Class was conducted by the teacher who visited "little Mary" in her illness. She laboured earnestly for some years, and two of the girls were brought to the Lord during the time, but she was obliged to leave the town without seeing any result as to the rest. She was succeeded by little Mary's first teacher, who, conscious of her inferiority in gift and devotedness, could truly say, "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." It pleased the Lord however, in the course of two years to bring out six more of the girls to the confession of Christ as their Saviour and Lord, who could distinctly trace their first awakening to their former teacher.

After two or three more happy years the second teacher left the town, but several years afterwards she found to her great joy that most of the others had been turned to the Lord. Some were married, and were bringing up their children in His "nurture and admonition." And is it not a blessed thought dear fellow worker, that every soul that is saved may be the means of saving others, who shall be to the everlasting glory of our God and Saviour? One of the converts in that Class I met with in middle life, a godly and intelligent chris-

tian. She was keeping a school for her own maintenance; evidently doing that to the Lord, and spending all the rest of her time in serving Him chiefly amongst children.

Another Class in a distant town was gathered in a private house. They were children of believers, from 10 to 20 years of age, four boys amongst them. Most of them were eager and attentive listeners, but the teacher while watching for their souls, never pressed them for a confession, having seen much damage to young souls, and much dishonour to the Lord as the result of such a practice. Called after a time to live in another place the teacher Mrs. ——— heard now and then of them for a few years, but it must have been twenty years after leaving them that a stranger called to see her. She proved to be the youngest of that class, and brought the glad news that all fourteen had been brought to the Lord: four children of a consumptive mother had “fallen asleep in Christ,” and were with her in His presence, while the rest were in fellowship with His saints on earth. One more class I will bring before the reader which may encourage younger teachers as the fruit appeared more quickly; but which shews the necessity and the blessedness of waiting upon God for the *right* word at the *right* time. It was a large class of young women and girls, many of them believers. A young married woman, who had “always attended her church regularly,” was brought by a friend. She had seen much sorrow, and was still suffering. At first she was shy and distant, but a little sympathy soon won her, and as she knew no one in the town outside the business house in which she lived she was pleased to stay to tea occasionally with Mrs. ——— the conductor of the class, and by degrees told out her troubles. Of course she was directed to the One who alone can bind up the broken heart, and heal the wounded spirit. She assented to all, and professed to know the Lord, and to cast her cares upon Him.

Mrs. ——— felt sure she was deceiving herself, and by asking pointed and searching questions found that she

knew nothing of sorrow for sin, of the new birth, or of the atoning and cleansing power of the blood of Christ—indeed, she thought that her own righteousness, and her suffering from the sins of others were quite sufficient to secure heaven for her !

Mrs. ——— read to her the iii. Rom. to shew her what God thought of us all, and prayed earnestly that He would open her eyes to the truth about herself, that she might know the blessedness of the atonement made by the Lord Jesus. She went away distressed and angry, and for more than a fortnight Mrs. ——— did not see her. Then she called one evening, with evident reserve in her manner, and upon Mrs. ——— receiving her affectionately, and expressing pleasure at seeing her, she said, “I did not suppose you would wish to see me as you thought me so wicked.” A long and earnest conversation followed which ended in joyful thanksgiving to the “God of all grace.” The blind eyes were opened, the self-righteousness was broken down: dear Mrs. L., came to Christ as a lost sinner and found in Him a perfect Saviour. From that time her confidence and joy in Him were unshaken, and she bore her trouble patiently, learning of the “meek and lowly” One, and so finding “rest to her soul.”

The two youngest of the class (sisters) were still unconverted: they paid little attention themselves, and would often try to distract the attention of the others, and apparently to annoy the teacher, who loved these girls, and earnestly sought their blessing. They seemed to recognise this, and to respond with some affection, but still continued their naughty ways.

One Lord's day the portion read led Mrs. ——— to speak of the Lord's coming, and the separation that must take place between believers and unbelievers, even between parents and children, brothers and sisters when He comes to take up His own. The interest of both was aroused—they listened seriously, and she went on to say that the Lord would be glorified in the destruction of the wicked as well as in the salvation of believers, and that the saved ones would then be so thoroughly taken up with the Lord's

glory.—His perfect justice in the destruction of those who had refused His mercy and His wondrous grace to themselves that they would feel no regret for those left behind, though now their hearts so yearned over them! If they expressed their feeling at all, it would be in the adoring acknowledgment, “Just and true are Thy ways!” This fairly broke them down, and they stayed behind the rest, with the earnest enquiry, “What must I do to be saved?” A few days after, the elder found peace, and the following week the younger one, and as long as Mrs.——had intelligence of them, which was some years, they gave manifest proof that they were the Lord’s. This paper has already exceeded its limits, so I close with the apostle’s assuring exhortation, “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in *due season* we shall reap, if we faint not.” Gal. vi. 9. C. P.

### A PLEA FOR THE CHILDREN.

Oh gather the children for Jesus,  
 Ye hearts that are loyal and true;  
 While the dew of life’s morning is on them  
 Oh come, for the reapers are few.  
 Ye know not the wealth of affection  
 Hid deep in each warm little breast;  
 Then speak of the Saviour to children,  
 And bring them to Him to be blest.

Oh! gather the children for Jesus,  
 Or, ere the bright morning has flown,  
 The tempter will offer his baubles,  
 And purchase their souls for his own.  
 Oh! stretch out thine arms to prevent them,  
 To-morrow it may be too late;  
 Oh! raise up a finger and point them  
 The way to the beautiful gate.

Then gather the children for Jesus,  
 And tell them the wonderful tale,  
 How in love He came down to redeem them—  
 To save them from Satan and hell.  
 Oh! think not, the souls of the children  
 Are nought, in that loving One’s sight,  
 Ah no! in His crown they shall glisten,  
 Rare jewels of beauty and light.

M.



## OUR WARFARE IN THE HEAVENLIES.

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(Read Ephes. vi. 10-18.)

After Joshua and the children of Israel, in fulfilment of the glorious song of Redemption at the Red sea (Exod. xv.) had for the second time passed through the waters *dryshod*, and “passed over” (v. 16) into the promised land, “right against Jericho,” the Lord as “Captain over the Lord’s host,” appeared to him, “with His sword drawn in His hand,” in the attitude of a commander, just about to lead his army to victory. It was, no doubt, a pleasing sound to the ears of the Lord, when He was challenged by Joshua with those words :

*“ Art thou for us, or for our enemies ? ”*

With Joshua, there was no such thing as neutrality in divine matters. No quarter to the enemy, when the glory and honour of God and His Son are in question, who said :

*“ He that is not with me, is against me.” \**

But the earthly leader of Israel’s hosts, before proceeding against Satan’s mighty stronghold, had to be reminded of two truths, all important for victory, viz. :

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\* When saying (Luke ix. 50) : “ He that is not against us is for us,” the Lord warns His disciples against the narrowness of party spirit and sectarianism, whereas in His decided declaration : “ He that is not with me, is against me, he warns them and us against the far greater evil of “ broad views ” or “ latitudinarianism,” *i.e.*, indifference to the honour of God and His Christ, under plea of *Christian love*.

1. That it was not his own skill or bravery, nor that of his mighty men of valour, that secured the victory, but that power and wisdom and authority belong to Him, who is the "Chiefest among ten thousand." \* It is only under His leadership, that victory is secured.

"Midst mightiest foes—most feeble are we—  
Yet trembling before our great Leader they flee.  
The Lord is our banner, the battle in His,  
The weakest of saints more than conqueror is."

The uplifted sword in the Lord's hand expressed both, power and authority. Joshua had been taught it at Rephidim, after Israel's passage through the Red Sea, in their conflict with Amalek. And after they have crossed Jordan, he is reminded of it again before Jericho, for we are but too apt to forget it. (See Josh. vii. 3-5.)

2. But he had to be reminded of something more. At his question, "what saith my Lord unto His servant?" the Lord says to him,

"Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place, whereon thou standest, is holy. And Joshua did so."

The Lord's Presence, is a gracious, but first of all a *holy* Presence. (Isai. vi. and Rev. iv.)—"God is light." This comes first. Then, "God is love." He that "hath the key of David," and of all true service, "He that openeth and none shutteth, and shutteth and none openeth, announces Himself to Philadelphia as

"He that is *holy*, he that is *true*."

Moses was taught this at the burning bush, which was not consumed, ere he could be the leader of God's people through the wilderness. And Joshua had to be reminded of it, before he could lead Israel to the conquest of Canaan.—If the servant of Christ looses sight of these two truths, viz., that wisdom and power belong to Him,

"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,"

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\* Hebr. : "A standard-bearer."

and Who said,

“All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth.—  
*Go ye therefore*” etc.

and that all *authority* for service and testimony must emanate from Him, “who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen,”—his service and testimony will soon loose the savour, unction and power of the Spirit, who “glorifieth Him, receiveth of His, and sheweth it unto us.” And if he fails to realise the holiness of His Presence, he will soon find the doors for service shut by the Master of all true service, “who shutteth and none openeth.”

Let us now, under God’s gracious help and guidance, enter on a closer examination of the portion heading these meditations.

As with Israel, so with us, conflicts belong to the wilderness, but the real warfare takes place in Canaan, *i.e.*, as to us, in the *heavenlies*. Israel’s warfare was *aggressive* in its character. They had to conquer the promised land and exterminate its wicked inhabitants, who by their idolatries and abominations connected therewith, were defiling the holy and fruitful land of promise.

The Christian’s warfare in the heavenlies, on the contrary is defensive in character. We have to maintain against the attacks of those spiritual “hosts of wickedness” that which is ours already there above through the conquest and victory of a greater Captain than Joshua, even the Captain of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ. On this defensive character of the Christian warfare we shall enter more fully later on.

Further.—The weapons of Israel’s warfare against those wicked nations and inveterate enemies of God, filling the holy land, were *carnal*. Not so the weapons of God’s heavenly people, who are blessed with all spiritual blessings in a heavenly Canaan, flowing with better things than milk and honey.

The inspired apostle of the Church writes :

“ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.”

Strongholds and powers — far more formidable than Jericho with its kings and warriors and high walls and ramparts.

But as Joshua before Jericho was met by the Great Commander of the host of the Lord, to encourage and remind him, that his trust must be alone in Him,—so the Christian warrior, before he is called to withstand those terrible “ hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies,” is directed towards the same victorious “ Captain of our salvation,” who has “ bound the strong man and spoiled him of his goods,” and “ bruised the serpent’s head,” and “ spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them by it,” *i.e.* the Cross.

Therefore, before being called to enter upon our warfare in the heavenlies, we are enjoined :

“ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” (Eph. vi. 10.)

Satan is a vanquished enemy. If you resist him, he must flee.

“ Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (Jam. iv. 7.)

And how ?

“ Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” (v. 8.)

But if you yield your little finger to him, he will soon have your hand, aye, both hands.

It is true, the Epistle of James deals not with our warfare in heavenly places, but with conflicts and temptations in the wilderness. But the Scriptural principle just alleged holds good for both places, only that in Eph. vi. the warfare is not only against Satan, but against his hosts of wicked spirits in the heavenly

places, *i.e.*, in the air. It is from thence, from the lower heaven, that they exercise their terrible influence as the "rulers of the darkness of this world," until they together with their leader, the "prince of the power of the air" at their final and decisive battle with Michael and his angels, will be cast out from heaven upon the earth. How immense the number of those "hosts of wickedness" must be, may be estimated from the fact, that a single man was possessed or indwelt by a *legion* of them, numbering at least 2,000! (Mark v. and Luke viii.)

It is surprising to find how many Christians take little account of, or even have failed to notice the fact, so clearly and solemnly pointed out in Holy Writ, and not only such who have never learnt to discern the difference there is between God's heavenly people, His church, with its heavenly portion, position, calling and hope, and Israel, His earthly people, with their earthly portion, calling and hope. The difference is as great as the distance between heaven and earth. This ignorance is, perhaps, less surprising in such Christians, ~~on account~~ of the effect of the religious system they are connected with,\* but it is sad that so solemn a fact, so distinctly and warningly pointed out in several portions of Holy Writ, should be so carelessly neglected and unheeded by such who ought to know better. Where worldliness with its deadening and hardening influence has set in amongst Christians, the "prince of the air" and his wicked hosts keep behind the scene and take care not to trouble them. Alas! they fail to realise their portion and access to the "heavenlies," and therefore do not meet those hostile powers.

Though a true believer, as observed already, need not to be afraid of Satan and his powerful hosts, Satan being a defeated enemy, yet we are warned in our chapter

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\* We heard of a dear, devoted Christian, who was utterly taken by surprise, when the true meaning of Eph. ii. 2 and vi. 12, was pointed out to him. He knew well what the tempter's wiles in our conflicts in the wilderness mean, but the warfare in the heavenly places was to him an entirely new truth.

against the "*wiles* of the devil." It was not by his power,—as the *dragon*,—that sin entered into the world, but by the subtlety of the *serpent*. But even his power ought not to be underrated. The inspired apostle of the church certainly does not speak lightly of it to the Ephesians. He writes to them :

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood," [*i.e.* against our fellow-men] but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual [powers] of wickedness in the heavenlies." (V. 12.)

The apostle does not make light of those "powers and principalities," though he did not fear them. Many an army has been defeated through underrating the power of the enemy.

Like the armies of this world, that vast innumerable army of evil spirits or "*demons*"\* under the command of Satan, the "prince" of that "power of the air" consists of its several divisions and sub-divisions, each of them commanded by their several leaders, called "principalities" (or, "authorities,") two of whom we shall presently meet in the book of Daniel.

What Satan is for the innumerable "hosts of wickedness" (*i.e.*, of the fallen angels or evil spirits or demons) as their "prince" or leader, Michael, the Archangel, is for the countless heavenly hosts of the good angels, the "ministering spirits," sent to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation. They also have their "principalities" or "authorities" as their leaders under "Michael." In Eph. iii. 10, they study the manifold wisdom of God in the Church." In Rom. viii. 38, the evil "principalities and powers" are spoken of. In that remarkable scene recorded in the Epistle of Jude, we find the two Commanders of those two hostile armies face to face contending for the body of Moses, which Satan evidently intended to play into the hands of the Israelites, that they might worship it as they had done with the

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\* Not "devils." There is only *one* Devil. The words for the two are quite different in the original.

brazen serpent, but was prevented by Michael from carrying out his design. In Rev. xii. we have the final decisive contest between these two leaders and their armies (to which the Lord refers in Luke x. 18.):

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.—And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore, rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” (v. v. 7-12.)

As a great army consists of army corps with their divisions and brigades and regiments commanded by their respective officers, so those “hosts of wickedness,” commanded by the “prince of the power of the air,” are spread throughout the air surrounding this globe, whence they exercise their pernicious influence as the “rulers of the darkness of this world.”\* The “prince and God of this world” is neither omniscient nor can he be omnipresent. He, therefore, has his agents to keep him

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\* Be it by inciting nation against nation to war and bloodshed, or keeping them in heathenish darkness and idolatry, or dividing the church of God by sectarianism and party spirit, or corrupting the saints through evil doctrines and indifference, worldliness and fleshliness, or by instigating men to persecutions of godly saints, or by darkening men’s minds by rationalism and infidelity—in short, by rapidly filling again this sad earth with violence and corruption, whilst heaven is filling fast with departing saints—until the Great “Captain of our salvation” Himself shall descend from heaven into the air, to give to all that are His at His coming, the final “lift” out of this “valley of tears” unto the Father’s house and into the joy and rest of His Presence.

informed of what is going on in the different parts of the world, each part being ruled and influenced by the host, specially allotted to it.

From several portions of the Old Testament, which distinctly prove what I said as to those "powers and principalities" in the heavenlies (such as Job i. and ii.—1 King xxii. 19-23) I select one passage, which in an especial way illustrates what has been said. I mean the 10th Chapter of Daniel, the prophet.

An angel was sent to Daniel and to the King of Persia on a double mission. To Daniel—"to make him understand, what should befall his people in the latter days. The contents of his message to the King of Persia the angel does not disclose to the prophet, as it did not concern Daniel and his people. Very likely they bore the character of some governmental instructions, sent by the Lord to Cyrus through His heavenly messenger. Two years before that time King Cyrus, to whom God had "given all the kingdoms of the world," and who willingly avowed God as the Divine Liege Lord, to whom he owed his place of supremacy, had sent forth an edict for the deliverance of the Jews from their Babylonian captivity and their return to Jerusalem to "build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (*He is the God*" added the pious king,)"—"which is in Jerusalem." It appears not unlikely, that the angel's message had reference to that favourable turn in the affairs of Jehovah's people. The harps were about to be removed from the willow-trees at Chebar's banks, and to resound again in Jehovah's newly built temple at Jerusalem to the praise of Him, "who is good, and whose mercy endureth for ever."

Be this as it may, we find in this Chapter another striking instance of the way, in which the Spirit of God in the Holy Record indited by Him, from time to time lifts the veil, that separates the visible and invisible regions, to give us an insight into what passes between heaven and earth, and into the mischievous diatribes of those "rulers of the darkness of this world," constantly



engaged in endeavouring to thwart God's gracious designs on behalf of His (earthly or heavenly) people, to warn us and put us on our guard, and at the same time to encourage our faith in letting us see His mighty and good Hand,

"Guarding us through the deadly fight"

and "making all things work together for good unto them that love Him." These so graciously vouchsafed occasional glimpses into what passes in those invisible regions, beyond the ken of men and their telescopes, cannot be slighted by us, without loss and even danger to our souls.

Satan and his satellites' design evidently was to prevent the Lord's angel from delivering his message to Daniel and to the King of Persia. The "prince of the Kingdom of Persia,\* most likely the commander of that portion, or "*army corps*," so to speak, of those innumerable "*hosts of wickedness*," or "*power of the air*," spread in the lower heavenly regions above Persia, to exercise their hostile influence upon that kingdom, opposed God's angelic messenger, attempting to bar the way to his destination. Of the immense strength of those "*wicked spirits*," for they also "*excel in strength*,"—though doing the will of *their* terrible leader, and listening to *his* word—we may form some idea from the fact, recorded in this chapter, that that "*prince of the kingdom of Persia*" was able to resist the angel sent to Cyrus and Daniel, twenty-one days, so that the arch-angel Michael had to come and help him.

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\* I need scarcely to say, that the "*prince of the kingdom of Persia* (v. 13) is not the same as the "*King of Persia*," Cyrus, at whose court the angel stayed for a time. This very fact shows, that the two cannot be one and the same person, leave alone the absurdity, that any man, even the strongest, should be able to resist an angel, whereas *one* angel alone slew in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in Senacherib's camp.—In v. 20 we find both the "*prince of Persia*" and the "*prince of Greece*" mentioned, the former being the chief ruler of the darkness of Persia, and the latter of the darkness of Greece. The angel, sent to Daniel, had to fight with both,

To contest with such "powers and principalities" nothing less than the "*whole armour of God*" is required.

Of this I hope to speak the next time, if the Lord will.

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## BRIEF THOUGHTS ON PHILIPPIANS.

### CHAPTER III.

The apostle now exhorts the saints to rejoice in the Lord ; a word, to his mind, so important, that he repeats it emphatically in chap. iv. 4. He has already spoken of different kinds of joy : (1) In making request for the saints, (2) That Christ was abundantly preached, (3) In seeing the saints walking together in unity, (4) In being poured out as a drink offering. Here he leaves the streams, as it were, and traces all up to the source, directing their hearts to the Lord Himself. To write such things could not be grievous (irksome) to him, and it was safe for the saints. How much we need to be reminded of the true source of all our joy ! We undoubtedly find joy in the fellowship of the saints, and in the service of Christ ; but it is unsafe for our hearts to rest there. The saints may cause pain and disappointment, and the service may discourage ; where then the joy ? But if the heart is set upon the Lord, whatever the days or circumstances, all is well.

But there are things which cloud our joy, and intrude themselves between the soul and Christ. The apostle proceeds to speak gravely of one in particular. Judaising teachers were everywhere at work ; active enough when he was moving about, they were probably much more so now that he was a prisoner. He describes them unsparingly as "dogs," for they had no sense of conscience or of shame ; as "evil workers," because they were corrupting the work and truth of God ; and then contemptuously calls them "the concision." The saints were to "beware" : to be led by these teachers after the law and ordinances who would ruin their joy, and separate

them in heart from Christ. Any merely outward rite\* is of no value in the eyes of God (it is "concision-maiming"): "we are the circumcision," finding our death and separation to God in the death of Christ, "who worship God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh.\*\*" It is to be observed that it is not the grossness of the flesh that is spoken of in this chapter, but its religiousness: it is worthless, and they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

If anyone thought he had whereof he might trust in the flesh, Paul had more. He was a circumcised man, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Benjamite, a Pharisee, zealous against all who appeared to slight the law, and as touching the righteousness which was by the law, he was blameless. Who could shew a fairer picture? But whatever Saul of Tarsus might have gloried in, Paul the saint and apostle gloried in Christ alone. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." The ardent legalist and persecutor was arrested by a glorified Christ at the height of his course; he saw, on that memorable day, the despised Nazarene, whose followers he was pursuing to death, in the glory of God. His conscience was touched—his heart was attracted. He saw a righteousness revealed in Christ, which put all human doings in the shade, so that what he had regarded as gain, he now counted but loss—he would no longer stand in his own righteousness, if that were possible. Henceforward his heart was occupied, not with himself and works, but with Christ. And after many years of suffering and loss for His Name—a path surely of unparalleled trial, except as we remember the path of his Lord—he was of the same mind, Christ was all. Every thing to him was but loss and dung, as compared with the excellency of Christ Jesus the Lord. Unlike the

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\* I do not include the Lord's Supper here. That is connected with the new creation and stands on wholly different ground.

\*\* It is worthy of remark, as confirming the character of this epistle, that *sin* is not once named in it, and *flesh* but this once, just to say that we have no confidence in it. The believer is regarded throughout as walking in the power of the Spirit.

foolish Galatians, he continued to run well, allowing none to hinder. He regards Christ here as a prize to be won at the end, and divine righteousness as that in which he will stand in that day, which is quite in accord with the character of the Epistle. In another aspect, Christ was his when he wrote, and divine righteousness too; but throughout Phillippians the believer is regarded as passing through the wilderness to the heavenly goal. The apostle kept the goal before him—Christ; allowing nothing to divert the attention of his heart, and thus he was energized for, and sustained in, the path of peculiar trial, reproach, and labour to which the Lord had, from the first, called him. To him the end was so blessed, to have Christ for his own, and to be found in Him, not having his own righteousness, which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, that he cared not how bitter and rugged the path might be which led him to it. He desired a yet deeper experimental knowledge of Christ, and the power of His resurrection (and who knew it better than he?) and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death. To him it was no small privilege to drink of His cup, and to be baptised with His baptism: indeed, the deeper his sufferings, the more he would be like Christ, and that was enough for him. In verse 11 we must read—"The resurrection *from among* the dead." What possible meaning can be attached to "*of* the dead?" The general fact of resurrection can scarcely be an object of desire, for no man can evade it, all must rise again; but Paul had before him the glorious day when Christ will return and call His own from their tombs to bear His heavenly image, the rest of the dead being left in their graves until the judgment of the great day. The resurrection of the believer is of the same character as that of the Lord Jesus; "*from among the dead,*" for blessedness, for glory in the Father's house.

Clearly to this the apostle had not yet attained, nor was already perfect; but he followed after, if that he might apprehend that for which he was apprehended of

Christ Jesus. Christ had laid hold of him for glory ; he desired to lay hold of it that the glory might have its full power over his soul. He would forget all the things behind, and do but one thing, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the calling of God on high in Christ Jesus. He would not forget grace, and what it had done for him (1 Tim. i. 12-16), but would forget—not rest in—all attainments by the way. If I had a twenty mile walk before me, I might be thankful when the fifteenth mile stone is passed ; but it would not do to rest there, but I must leave the fifteenth and the sixteenth behind as all others, and press on towards the end. So pressed Paul : the Glory—Christ—was before him ; he would not stop short of that. He exhorts the saints to do the same : “ let us, as many as be perfect,\* be thus minded ; ” and if any had not properly learned their heavenly pathway, God would reveal even this unto them. But all are responsible to walk up to attainment, whether great or small. The apostle then calls upon the Saints to imitate him (in 1 Cor. xi. 1 he qualifies it, “ even as I also Christ ”) in running this race towards the heavenly goal, and bids them mark any amongst them who walked the same. There is another class of men we are to “ mark ” according to Rom. xvi. 17—those who cause divisions and offences (stumbling blocks) contrary to the doctrine which we have learned. Such are to be avoided, but all who walked as Paul walked, and were thus examples to the believers in word, in behaviour, &c. (1 Tim. iv. 12), were to be studied and imitated. The mention of this brought to the apostle’s heart a painful thought ; there were those of whom he had often spoken, and of whom he now spoke weeping, who were enemies of the cross of Christ. They were not necessarily persons who had abandoned the profession of Christ, though they never had life ; they were enemies of the *cross*. Having found the path one of reproach and loss, they had renounced it, loving earthly things, and preferring a path of self-indulgence and ease. Their end was destruction ; but the apostle felt keenly the open dishonour to the Name of the Lord Jesus.

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\* “ Perfect ” here is in the sense of “ full growth ; ” in verse 12, it is likeness of Christ in glory.

The Christian's citizenship is in heaven, not here ; his home, his portion, his all, is where Christ is. From heaven we look for Him, as Saviour, to complete His work in us by changing our poor bodies. The salvation of the soul we have now ; for the salvation of the body we wait till that day. He will then change our body of humiliation (a better reading than " our vile body "), and fashion it like unto His own body of glory. Wondrous thought ! The same power which He will display in the millennial kingdom in subduing all things to Himself, He will presently put forth upon the bodies of all who are His. He is thus the Hope of our hearts in the close of this Chapter, as He is the Object of our hearts in the centre of it.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Verse 1 is a fitting close to the precious subject treated in Chap. iii. " Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." He had placed them, as it were, in Chap. iii., outside the world, with their citizenship in heaven, Christ in glory the Object and Hope of their hearts : in this position and experience he would have them stand fast, and not be moved by the wiles of the enemy.

The apostle then appeals to two women who were evidently a little at variance, " that they be of the same mind in the Lord." Theirs was not strife of the gross and loose character as at Corinth ; still it was a defect among the godly which the apostle could not sanction. " Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines." (Song ii. 15.) He entreated the mediation of his true yokefellow (probably Epaphroditus). These women had laboured with him in the Gospel, and he had a regard and concern for them : he would have his yokefellow act the blessed part of the peacemaker, as our Lord Jesus Himself enjoined. Again he exhorts the saints as in Chap. iii. 1, to rejoice in the Lord. Precious testimony to the faithfulness of the risen Lord to His poor tried servant ; for his own heart was most assuredly enjoying what he here presses on his brethren.

In this chapter we see how the Christian, walking in the power of the Spirit, is enabled to walk above all circumstances. Therefore are we exhorted to moderation (or yieldingness), for the Lord is at hand. It is not the part of the saint to resent wrong, or to contend for rights: doing well and suffering for it is rather our path while the Lord is hidden in heaven. When He is manifested, all will be changed, for His saints will share with Him. Meanwhile, it is our privilege to be without care, making known all our requests to God. Not merely large matters, but small; everything we are invited to pour out before Him. In Matt. vi. the Lord Jesus instructed His disciples in faith as to food and clothing: here the word is wider, "Be careful for *nothing*." What repose this gives in such a world—and, may we not add, such a church—as this! We are not told that we shall get all our requests—that might not be well—but that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Paul requested, yea besought, the Lord thrice to remove the thorn from his flesh; but was simply told that the Lord's grace was sufficient for him, and that His strength was made perfect in weakness. (2 Cor. xii.) The same apostle requested to be allowed to go to Rome, but for many years was told, no. (Rom. xv. 23.) He desired also "a prosperous journey;" but the Lord saw fit to send him as a prisoner, and to wreck the ship. (Rom. i. 10.) We are in the Lord's hand, He orders all in perfect wisdom for His beloved saints; and who can be His counsellor?

The peace of God is a somewhat different thought from the peace of Christ; as both differ, though flowing from, peace with God. "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you." (John xiv.) This is the peace which ever filled the heart of Jesus as a perfect Man of faith below. He committed everything to the Father; we are called into the same path. The peace of God is that which pervades God's own heart above, which nothing disturbs. The heavens have been corrupted, the earth ruined, Israel had failed, the Church likewise; yet nothing disturbs the peace of the Divine heart. His counsels stand, in spite of all creature failure; there God rests and we rest too.

Food is furnished for our thoughts, for the loins of our mind are to be girded up: the lovely things, the things of good report, &c., are to engage us. Blessed portion! The true heart does not wink at evil, the rather abhorring and shunning it; but does not dwell upon it. We cannot touch the unclean in any way without contracting defilement. We see this strikingly in Numbers xix. The priest who sprinkled the heifer's blood, the man who laid up the ashes in a clean place, indeed all who had to do with the matter were unclean until even, though they had only acted in putting sin away. We particularly need this injunction as to our thoughts in the present day, when there is so much of a painful character to fill the mind. If our minds *dwell* on evil, we get defiled, our communion is marred, our spiritual tone is altogether lowered.

If the Phillippians practised what they had learned, received, and heard, and seen in Paul, the God of peace would be with them.

The apostle proceeds to commend them for their care of him, proved by the coming of Epaphroditus. There had apparently been a long interval without any tokens of love; but the man of God loved to regard it, not as carelessness on their part, but lack of opportunity. In those days saints could not remit by post to the Lord's labourers; the gifts must be carried, perhaps afoot many hundreds of miles. But though thanking them and the Lord for their care, the apostle does not speak in respect of want. "I have learned," he says, "in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Blessed superiority over all circumstances——Christ engaging the heart, and the Spirit operating powerfully in the soul! It is easier to some to be abased than to abound. David, when hunted as a partridge upon the mountains, trusted God; when dwelling at ease in Zion, Satan allured him into the foulest sins. Jehoshaphat,



when weak, counted on God, saying, "We know not what to do;" when strong and rich, he joined affinity with Ahab and helped the ungodly.

Paul had been well disciplined. The Lord said when He called him, "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts ix.) Whether full or hungry, Christ was all. What can the enemy do to such? The believer has a life, which, wrought upon by the Spirit of God, rises quite above the difficulties of the way, and is unquenchable.

Still, the Philippians did well in their expressions of practical fellowship. If the apostle had learned how to suffer need, it ill became the saints to permit him so to suffer. In this respect the Philippians had always ranked well, sending even long distances to minister to the need of the Lord's servant. Paul calls it fruit which would abound to their account; and "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing unto God." Marvellous! The Spirit uses language similar to that used of the sacrifice of Christ in Eph. v. 2, it partook of that character with God. Would the Philippians be the losers by their liberality? Nay, Paul's God would supply all their need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. The beauty and fulness of this expression is to be found in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Note, he does not say "*our*," but "*my* God;" for he is speaking of experience, not doctrine. He had *proved* God; he knew Him to be faithful; he could vouch for Him to those to whom he wrote. When it is a question of relationship, he says "*our* God and Father," as in verse 20; every believer, experienced or not, being a child through grace.

He concludes with salutations to all the brethren with him, mentioning particularly some who were of Cæsar's household, proving Christ had a people there, fruit possibly of his labours as a prisoner. Precious simplicity of affection, which our hearts do well to cultivate more and more.

W. W. F.

## REDEMPTION.

(Conclusion.)

We may seek to avoid these bitter waters of Marah, but God will bring us to them, because He must break down all that is of the old man in us. It is true that in His own good time He will put in that which sweetens. But because God has redeemed me, and brought me to Himself, He is now putting His finger on everything, be it love to the world, setting up of self, my own will, or whatever else it may be, that hinders my soul's enjoyment of Himself. As I said, He will put in that which sweetens. But, "beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." For as surely as you are redeemed, so surely will God break down your own mind and will. Yes, God will make you drink the very thing that has redeemed you [*i.e.*, death]. Now, Israel is going on with God, and He is dealing with them. He gave them statutes, etc., but He did not do this, before He had redeemed them.

Israel had been troubled before by Pharoah, but now it was from God. This was the effect of having to do with God. Israel now learns God in a new character, as "the Lord that healeth," which is a different thing from His promise, that if obedient, He will put none of the diseases of Egypt upon them. They had been exercised by God, that they might know God as the "Healer." ["Jehovah-Rophi."] And it is for this that the whole heart has to be brought out before a God of grace, that it may know God as a "*Healer*." We cannot escape it, [and we bless Him for it!] for God will so arrange circumstances as to bring it about. Sometimes, indeed, we are humbled before men, and this is very trying; *this* is, indeed, a very bitter water! But, then, what a wretched thing it was, to be seeking to magnify oneself.

As soon as "the tree" (*i.e.*, the cross) is put into the waters, then they refresh the soul. [Comp. 1 Pet. ii. 18-25.] First, it is joy in redemption, then, joy in tribulation, and now, joy in healing. First, God makes us sing in the knowledge of redemption; then, secondly, if

we are to have the practical effect of redemption, which is the enjoyment of God in our souls ; (the flesh that is in us can never do that ;) our own will, worldliness and a host of things in us, will be hindering it until God has dealt with them, and then we learn God as a " Healer."

"But," say you, " what do you mean by knowing God as a ' Healer?' that I am redeemed for ever?" Well, it is thus; when you have a complete and known redemption, then God suffers these trials to come upon you, and, indeed, brings them about to teach you what is in your heart, as He says, "that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end." God Himself knew what was in thy heart, but He will also prove it to thee, and then thou wilt know Him as a " Healer."

After this, "they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water, and three-score and ten palm trees ; and they encamped there by the waters." Now, Israel experiences the natural consequences of being with God, the full stream of refreshment, as soon as they were really broken down. Had Elim come first, there would have been no sense of this dependence on God for everything ; for Israel would not have had the conflict which produces dependence, and dependence communion. Flesh, with all its train, would have been unbroken. It is only for this that He delays, for God delights in blessing His people. The numbers twelve and seven [at Elim] are different figures of perfection ; perfect shelter and shade : "The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night ;" and perfect streams of refreshment from God Himself ; and all this in the wilderness, and they rest there. But Israel must be exercised at *Marah*, that they fully may enjoy God at Elim. Redemption had brought them to God, but now it is, joy in God. So it is with us. Although we are redeemed, we cannot have these springs from God Himself, flowing through our souls, with unbroken flesh. Whatever trial we may be in, however great the trouble, even if drinking the very death that has redeemed us, if we can only see God's hand in it, only discern the cross of Christ in it, then we get that

which sweetens it, in the understanding of God's mind and purpose in it. Not that "chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Flesh is not faith; and what is more, we cannot walk in the path of faith without faith. Therefore we must be put to the test. If I lose my trust in God for one moment, that very moment flesh comes in under some form or other. The very moment I feel perplexed, or at a loss what to do, my eye is not single. It shows that I am out of communion, or I should know what to do.\* If my eye were single, my whole body would be full of light. Then there must be something yet to be detected in me, something I have not yet found out in my heart. It may not be wilful sin, but still it is something which God will exercise my heart about, and about which He will manifest Himself as Jehovah-Rophi. Thus as it is in Romans, we first have *joy in tribulation*, and then *joy in God*. It is not merely that we are redeemed, but refreshed in the wilderness by the God that has redeemed us. Let us therefore not think "some *strange* thing" has happened to us, because of the trial we may have to pass through.

W.H.D.

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### "SIR, WE WOULD SEE JESUS."

While the synoptic Gospels furnish us with other details in connection with our Lord's riding into Jerusalem upon an ass's colt, the Gospel of John gives us the words by which the Pharisees expressed their animosity against Him, saying, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold the world is gone after Him."

"The world," according to their limited application of this term, simply included Israelites, and left entirely out of reckoning all the needy Gentiles. On the other

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\* Only that God may keep us waiting sometimes, before He manifests His will to us as to difficulties, to exercise our faith and patience in dependence upon Him.—ED.

hand, this presentation of Himself *to Israel first*, as her King, they strongly resented; for their envy and strong enmity against His Person, rendered them blind to the nation's great need of His salvation.

Their folly was rebuked by the evident earnestness of those Greeks that were come up to worship at the feast; even as, years before, the indifference of the inhabitants of Jerusalem to the fact that unto Israel a child was born and a Son given, was rebuked by the wise men from the east raising that searching question,

“Where is He that is born King of the Jews?”

These Greeks came up to worship at the feast. Had these very persons entered it before “Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,” they would have found *the Court of the Gentiles*, into which alone Gentiles might enter, occupied by a motley crowd of those who sold and bought in the temple, and of money changers. Israelites might and did pass within, into *the Court of the children of Israel*, and there worship undisturbed; but for the poor sin-burdened Gentile, that dared enter only the outer Court, and yet was sincerely desirous of making known his heart's earnest longings before the Lord of all the earth, neither priest nor Rabbi had felt sufficient interest in him to ensure for him the benefit of the so necessary quiet as he reverently bowed low before the Lord God of Israel.

*One*, however, thought of and cared for each poor Gentile stranger, even Israel's King, who was come to the daughter of Sion, and was indeed higher than all the kings of the earth. Our Lord, when purging the temple, said, “My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer.” And these were living representations of those “nations,” sincerely desirous to worship Israel's God.

Other strangers might have occupied themselves in going about Zion, with marking well her bulwarks, con-

sidering her palaces and counting her towers ; but these were accuated by a very different motive. They were desirous of seeing, not grand buildings but, one meek and lowly Person.

This being their sole object, to them Philip was a person of more importance than the most learned Rabbi. Verily in the estimation of many he was despised as a Galilean, but these esteem him highly, and this because he enjoys privileged intercourse with Jesus, and may serve them all by introducing them to Him whom they are so much wishing to see.

The point I am seeking to illustrate and to draw particular attention to is, that purity of motives and sincerity of desire could not avail the Gentile to remove for him that barrier, that middle wall of partition, that for so many centuries had separated between Jew and Gentile. That so far as his position in the temple was concerned, although a true worshipper, his was the outside place.

And this had been your place and mine, dear Gentile-born fellow-believer, if our Lord Jesus had not Himself effectually removed and broken down that middle wall of partition, "that He might reconcile both (Jew and Gentile) unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby." And when we reflect upon the devout and God-fearing Gentile's ecclesiastical position, before our Lord suffered for our sakes upon the Cross, and contrast it with those priceless privileges enjoyed by believers of Gentile birth ever since "God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," it does indeed behove us to "look unto the rock whence we were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence we were digged," but on the other hand, even more to render unceasingly the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to God and the Father continually in the Name of Him to Whom we are all indebted for His consecration for us of that "new and living way" through the veil—His flesh—by which we are now privileged "to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."

The expressed desire of those earnest Greeks is more than realised by us, as now "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."

A. J.

### FRAGMENTS.

Christ makes *childlike*; the world makes *childish*.  
Worldly Christians always are more or less *childish*.

The love of Christ to His church is the very element in which spiritual joy lives and thrives. There may be knowledge and service, but if the love of Christ is not sensibly the moving spring, there will not be edification. "Knowledge puffeth up" him who has it, "but love edifieth" those to whom it ministers. I have always found rest, however troubled before, when in the fellowship of Christ's love to His people, however feebly enjoyed.

The great thing is to remember that we are nothing, *God* is all, and to consent to it. There is no trouble or anxiety then, for there is only God for it; and more, the heart seeking only His glory, can count upon Him to maintain it. His will is ours, and we do not want things to be otherwise, but inasmuch as He is active in His love in the scene *that is*, even so are we, through His grace, and then we find rest.

There is danger in putting the girdle off. While it is on, we are braced for service and happy, but when some service is over, there is often a feeling of weariness, it may be of the body; but the danger is in letting the mind too slip down into nature for rest. It is a great thing in resting to have Christ with us. The "rest" of the disciples after their mission was to be with Him and one another. "Come and rest awhile." If I seek rest in reading the word, or prayer, or singing, or visiting the poor, or fellowship in person or by letter with the saints, it will but strengthen for God; but if in self-indulgence, it will open the door for Satan and the world "Being les go they went to their own company."

## EVENTIDE.

### A Retrospect.

Lo ! the shades of night are veiling  
Mead, and mountain, stream, and sea—  
Lord, ere slumber seals mine eyelids,  
I would raise a song to Thee.

'Twas Thy hand unlocked my senses,  
When the morning flushed the skies ;  
'Twas Thy loving voice that bade me  
Cheerfully to toil arise.

Joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure,  
Each have crossed my path to day.  
All its hours Thy love has brightened,  
Speeding one by one away.

Oft-times in my heart's deep chambers,  
Sin has waged a mystic fight  
If through grace Thy child has conquered,  
Thine be all the praise to-night.

For Thy watchful care, I bless Thee,  
For Thy mercies, ever new,  
For each holy thought within me,  
For Thy Word, so tried and true.

For Thy mighty power and guidance,  
Source and Giver of all good ;  
But above all else I praise Thee  
Saviour, for Thy precious blood.

Now beneath Thy wing's safe shelter,  
Cleansed and pardoned, glad and free,  
Lord, I lay me down and rest me,  
Nought between my soul and Thee.

M.



## OUR WARFARE IN THE HEAVENLIES.

(*Ephes. vi. 10-18.*)

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### II.

#### **The Whole Armour of God.**

As observed already, the Christian warfare in the heavenlies is, unlike that of Israel, *defensive* in its character. Therefore, all the different parts of the "armour of God," as described in our chapter, are of a *defensive* nature. So are the "helmet," the breastplate, the "shield," the "girdle" and the "shoes." The only exception is the "sword," which in its very nature may be either, as the case may be. But even here it is rather the *defensive* than the aggressive character of the "sword of the Spirit," which appears to be prominent, as is evident from v. 13:

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God (including the "sword of the Spirit," which is the Word of God) "that ye may be able to *withstand* in the evil day, and having done all to *stand*."

Mark the expression: "The *whole* armour of God." Not one single part of it must be left out. Suppose a warrior clothed in a solid coat of mail opened his visor during the battle, or left his shield behind for convenience and ease, he would at once be exposed to the enemy's missiles, and his life not be safe for a moment. Would he ever leave his *sword* behind? It would be the first thing he would take with him. Alas! many a Christian soldier has succumbed to the enemy, from having left his sword behind!

Mark also, that the armoury is that *of God*. Man's wisdom and skill can have no part in its composition. It is and must be of Divine fabric. As has been observed by another, "no human power, no wisdom is of any avail. Satan's wiles or weapons go clean through them at once. The use of such weapons is the foolishness of confidence in self, which is (witness Peter's case), exactly what exposes us to him."

Before considering the different parts of the armour of God, a few words more on the *defensive* character of the Christian warfare in the heavenlies.

As has been observed, Israel's warfare in the earthly Canaan was in its very nature *aggressive*. It was a war of conquest. The promise was :

"Every place that the *sole of your foot shall tread upon*, that have I given unto you." (Josh. i. 3.)

They had to fight for every inch of Canaan soil, to wrest it from the possession of the enemy. Not so the Christian warfare.

The reader will have noticed the repeated occurrence of the words, "stand," "withstand," and "stand," in v. v. 11, 12, and 14. It is not ours to attack, but to withstand the enemy's attacks, and after having *withstood*, to "*stand*." Often a victorious army has been beaten through carelessness after victory, by dissolving its ranks too early and taking its ease. We are enjoined to "*watch, stand fast* in the faith, to quit ourselves like men, and be strong. (1 Cor. xvi. 13).

The following occurrence in the war of 1870 between France and Germany affords a practical illustration of what has been said :—

Towards the end of that war a Prussian general with a small army of 30,000 men found himself confronted by the overwhelming force of a French army of 120,000 men. In this extremity the little German army for the first

time during that war, was commanded to keep strictly on the *defensive*. They were told simply to "*stand fast*," and to hold their ground in the strong position chosen by their commander. For three days, constantly attacked by the immensely superior numbers of the hostile army, and at their back the fortress of Belfort, from whence a sortie was to be expected at any moment, the little army quietly "*stood fast*" holding their ground against the fearful odds, which they had to confront. Again and again were the masses of the French cavalry hurled against their steel squares bristling with bayonets, only to find themselves thrown back like the billows of the raging sea rebounding from the rocky island, leaving numbers of their dead and wounded behind at each repulsed attack.

Again and again the watchword was heard: "*Stand fast!*" At last succour appeared, and the French army began to retreat in wild confusion, pursued by the small force they had intended to annihilate.

The victorious general received from his Monarch a telegram with the acknowledgment of his and his little army's heroic *defence*, in the following words:—

"Your heroic defence of your position, during three days, with a besieged fortress at your back, is one of the greatest feats of arms of all times," &c.

It requires far more moral courage to *stand* on the defensive than to attack. Animal courage is shown in aggression, but *moral* courage is evinced by standing one's ground against attacks by overwhelming forces. There are many *Jehus*, but not many like the Apostle, who could say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, *I have kept the faith*" ("once delivered to the saints").

But how infinitely greater was his reward than that of the Prussian general! For He could add: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not unto me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing. (2 Tim. iv. 7-8).

Would there were more, not only valiant, but steady and persevering warriors like that apostolic champion of the truth, in these days where Satan with his rulers of the darkness of this world does everything in his power to assail and upset the very foundations of both gospel and church truth. Oh, for more faithful champions of the truth, who “watch,” *stand fast* “in the faith, quit themselves like men and are strong,” and yet “let all things be done with charity,” according to the faithful and loving apostle’s injunction! The warriors of Christ have to stand their ground against far more overwhelming forces than that little German army. But He who is the Captain of our Salvation, and the “King of Kings and Lord of Lords,” is mighty to support, and strengthen us in our heavenly warfare, and He has given us an armour which cannot be injured by all the united power of those “hosts of wickedness” in the heavenlies, provided we keep to our divinely-provided armour alone, abstaining from carnal weapons of any kind.

Let us now, under God’s help, consider the different parts of the “Armour of God.”

### 1. The Girdle of Truth.

Naturally we should be inclined to think that the description of that armour would begin with the “*sword*,” or at least with the “*breast-plate*” (or “*cuirass*,”) or with the “*helmet*.” No! It begins with the “*girdle*” around the *loins*, as the expression of the *conscience* and *heart*, as the seats of exercise and affections. He that searches the reins and the hearts, begins at the “*inward man*” and the “*hidden parts*,” where He “*desireth truth*,” and will “*make us to know wisdom*” (Ps. li). The “*Sword of the Spirit*” can only be handled in resisting the wiles of the aggressor and opposer, who essays even to handle the Word of God (as he did when tempting our great Heavenly Master,) when it has first of all done its work as the “*two-edged sword*,” which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow,

and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

First the "girdle," and the "sword." First the "loins," *i.e.* the inward man, "*girded*" with *truth*. The "*girdle*" gives strength and carriage to the body, and enables you to "*stand fast*." Only there is a great difference between a natural or outward girdle, and the *inward* or spiritual "girdle of truth." If our body is girded too tightly, it impedes the natural breathing. With the spiritual "girdle of truth" it is exactly the opposite. The *tighter* it is, the better and easier is the breathing of the *inward* man in the Christian. *You can't have it too tight.* If a Christian shrinks from the Word of God, and tries to parry it off, it is a bad sign of his spiritual condition. If honest before God, he lets it enter the secret recesses of his conscience and heart. The knife, which laid bare any hidden fault in the bodies of the sacrifices, was in the hand of the high priest, as the intercessor of the people. How could we bear the two-edged sword in its flesh-cutting and judging power cutting us to pieces, if we did not see it wielded by our Great High Priest" above, who while His Word detects in us every hidden spot, to judge ourselves before Him, before whose eyes all things are naked and open, at the same time intercedes for us before God, no longer bearing our sins (that he did on the Cross), but bearing us up on His mighty shoulders as the Son of God, and on his gracious heart as the perfect Son of man, perfect in human sympathy, and in divine power.

(To be continued.)

## ON ISAIAH L.

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This chapter forms part of an important section of the prophecy of Isaiah, extending from chapter xlix. to chapter lvii. In the section immediately preceding, Jehovah has a controversy with His people Israel about their idols ; \* here that question is left, and an even graver one taken up, their treatment of Messiah. Messiah had been presented to them, and had been despised, rejected, and had received the cross at their hands instead of the throne which was His right.

In verse 1 Jehovah appeals to His people's conscience as to the cause of their sorrows and distresses. Why had He put Israel away ? Why had He left them in the hand of the enemy ? Because His heart had changed ? Or because He had no power to deliver ?

In speaking thus to them, He speaks of the relationship which existed between Himself and Israel : she was His wife, His delight had been in her : "Thy maker is thine husband ; Jehovah of Hosts is His Name" (Isa. liv. 5). But on account of her iniquities and transgressions He had given her a bill of divorcement and put her away, though but for a season. We here see the working out of the principle of law : unfaithfulness brought judgment. How different is the ground of grace ! Never in the New Testament is the Church spoken of as a divorced woman, however failing. She is called to be the bride of Christ in the coming day, when He will present her to Himself (the true Eve to the last Adam) a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing ; but holy and without

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\*It is noteworthy that both the sections alluded to close with a declaration that there is no peace to the wicked. Isa. xlviii. 22 : lvii. 21.

blemish. (Eph. v.) What an incentive to loyalty of heart to Him while waiting for such a glorious consummation ! The path during the present is very aptly set forth by the Apostle in 2 Cor. xi. 2 : " I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Paul's desire was that the Church should walk in entire separation from the world which cast out her Lord, a chaste virgin, keeping her heart free for Christ during the whole of her sojourn below. But, alas, when one looks at the facts ! How soon did the Church—not only mere lifeless professors, but true saints also—forget all about His coming, and her own heavenly calling and relationship to Him, thus slipping into the world, dwelling where Satan has his throne, to the dishonour of the Lord and the falsification of her testimony. But is she therefore a divorced woman ? No. The professing mass will, it is true, be spued out—cut off (Rev. iii. Rom. xi.) ; but not His true saints, however failing and mixed up with the general corruption. It will be thus readily seen how false is the principle which persists in introducing the Church into the prophetic books. It is an earthly people that is there spoken of ; law and government, not grace. To apply all this to the Church is to lose sight of the peculiar and heavenly blessedness which pertains to that body, which is a serious and irreparable loss. " As many as He loves He rebukes and chastens " (Rev. iii.) ; and failing saints in Christianity experience this ; but not rejection, for we stand upon the ground of grace. But Israel stood not upon this blessed and only safe ground, but upon that of human works ; hence their rejection, though not for ever. Elimelech's widow is the type during the present interval. " Call me not Naomi," said she ; " call me Mara : for Jehovah hath dealt very bitterly with me." (Ruth i. 20.) But why was it ? " Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away." (Isa. i. i.) Moreover, had Jehovah no power to deliver ? " Is my hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem ? Or have I no power to deliver ? " (verse 2). " Power belongeth unto God," and He had exercised it frequently in the past on behalf of His people, as He seems to remind them. " Behold, at my rebuke I dry

p the sea," probably an allusion to the deliverance from Egypt ; "I make the rivers a wilderness," perhaps referring to the wondrous passage of the Jordan, when their fathers were brought into the land. Moreover, "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." We are in the presence of the mighty power of Jehovah ; He tells it out that His people's conscience may know that their afflictions were not because He was either indifferent or powerless, but because of their sins.

But how marvellous that we should immediately read, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." (Verse 10). The speaker is beyond question Christ, in his humiliation below, yet it is the same voice as in verse 3. Wonderful ! Our hearts bow at the thought : the humbled One was *Jehovah*. Blind the eyes that failed to discern His glory when manifested ! If the world knew Him not, the Father knew Him ; owned His title, and expressed His pleasure in him. Other Scriptures thus describe the Lord Jesus. Psalm cii. notably. He is there shown in His sorrow, with indignation and wrath immediately before Him, pouring out His heart to God. Mark the expressions : "My days are like a shadow that declineth, and I am withered like grass" ; "He weakened My strength in the way : He shortened my days," "I said, 'O, My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days : Thy years are throughout all generations.'" Harken to the response, "Thou, Jehovah, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the work of Thine hands : They shall perish ; but Thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up and they shall be changed : but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." (Psalm cii. 25-27. Heb. i. 10-12). Thus did the One to whom He appealed in His distress, own Him as Jehovah, and as Creator of all. Similar is the witness of Zech. xii. Jehovah speaks there of the future blessing of Israel when Messiah shall be again presented to them, and says, "They shall look upon *Me* whom they have pierced." Thus would the Spirit of God impress upon our hearts that tho One who humbled Himself to walk and to suffer below was *Jehovah*.



Now observe the attitude of the Blessed One, in His humiliation: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to Him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." We get two things here; the opened ear, the ear of the learned, and the tongue of the learned. We must distinguish between the opened ear here and in Psalm xl. There we have Christ coming into the world, saying, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; Mine ears has Thou opened." Strictly, the word there rendered "opened" is "digged"; and it is interpreted for us by the Holy Spirit in Heb. x., "a body hast Thou prepared Me"; showing that the Blessed One, when uttering the words, was taking a servant's place, to hear and obey, coming to do the will of God, unto death and in death. But Isaiah l., 4 shows us His daily habit; it was ever to hear afresh, before going forth to speak and to serve. Hence He could say, "I have not spoken of (from) Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (John xii., 49), again, "I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." (John viii., 26), and to the Father; "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest Me." (John xvii., 8) He was "swift to hear"; and has left us, in this as in all else, a precious example.\* If we desire to be able to speak words in season to the weary, we must be in the secret of His mind, learning daily of Him. Truth must be received into the soul, and fed upon and enjoyed, ere we can be channels of blessing to others, whether sinners or saints. That which is merely intellectually known is of but little value, either for ourselves or those to whom we speak. The following remarks of one, now with Christ, have often impressed my mind, "Some are urgent after knowledge, they are ever schooling the mind. This way calls for a continual effort, and acts as a constant pressure. . . . We should take care how we traffic with unfelt truth. . . . A little knowledge, with personal exercise of spirit over it, is better than much knowledge without it." Needed words:

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\*The Holy Spirit, one may say, follows the same course; He hears, then speaks (John xvi. 13).

especially in a day of bustle and superficiality like the present. The ear of the learned is needful to the tongue of the learned.

We get a contrast between Isaiah lv. and liii., 7. In the latter scripture, the Spirit twice tells us that "He opened not His mouth." He was in the presence of his foes; no upbraiding or impatient word crossed His lips. But when it was a question of "him that was weary," whether during His pathway, or upon the cross (as in the case of the dying thief), it was not a time to be silent but to speak. Matchless Master! perfect in all His ways. But He did not stop at hearkening; He obeyed. "The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." Obedience is linked with hearkening by the Spirit in 1 Sam. xv., 22. Who could turn Christ back from His purpose? He would obey; He would go forward to death; who dare attempt to dissuade Him? Peter well-meaningly sought to dissuade Him in Matt. xvi., 23; but the Lord discerned in it the voice of Satan, and treated it accordingly. It was all voluntary on His part; "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not My face from shame and spitting." Note, "*I gave.*" The truth is, that none could touch Him until He chose to give Himself up to their malice. Before the hour came, it was useless for them to lead Him to the brow of the hill to cast Him down headlong, or to pick up stones to cast at Him; He simply passed by. But there came the moment when He said, "This is your hour and the power of darkness" (Luke xxii., 53). It is important to notice the different ways in which the closing scenes are spoken of by the different Evangelists. The synoptists dwell on His deep sorrow—anticipative sorrow—in the garden (though Luke the most fully, and this in keeping with the character of his Gospel—He depicts the Son of *man*), while John omits it all, and brings before us the calm majesty of the Lord when confronted by the armed multitude. At His word they all fell backward to the ground. Why so in John's Gospel particularly? Surely because the Spirit is there engaged with the Divine glory of the Incarnate One; and who could lay hands on such an One until He chose? But

He gave Himself up to all ; the glory of God required it, and our redemption. What wonders, solemn and blessed, are seen in the cross ! There man fully revealed himself in all his wickedness and enmity to God ; there Christ displayed Himself in all His perfectness and devotedness to the Father's will ; and there all the attributes of God's character—His righteousness, love, grace, &c.—shine out as nowhere else.

The Blessed One counted on God to justify Him ; He knew He would not be confounded, nor made ashamed (v.v. 7, 8). Could God do less than raise up and glorify the One who had glorified Him so perfectly below ? How wonderful that the Spirit of God in Rom. viii. should put Christ's language in Isa. l. into our mouths ! We are able to take up the triumphant challenge, " Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth ? " He has brought us into His own place before the Father ; we stand in His acceptance. All that is true of Him as the risen Man, is true of those who, through grace, believe in His Name.

The chapter closes with an address to the two parts of the Jewish nation ; the believing remnant of the last days, and the apostate mass (v.v. 10, 11). The godly who fear Jehovah and obey the voice of His Servant Christ (Isa. xlii. 1), are to trust the name of Jehovah and stay upon their God. But they have no light, and walk in darkness, the very opposite of the Christian standing. We are in the light as God is in the light, and there every Christian is called to walk in enjoyed communion with the Father and the Son.

As for the apostate mass, who kindle a fire and compass themselves about with sparks ; this shall they have of Jehovah's hand, they shall lie down in sorrow. As the herd of swine into which the legion of demons entered, they will receive and bow down to him who will come to them in his own name, the " man of sin," and rush headlong to their own destruction. " They are not all Israel who are of Israel."

W.W.F.

## A WORD TO BACKSLIDERS.

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If one looks at the fearfully rapid strides which worldliness makes amongst the flock of God—and not only amongst the younger portion of that flock—one can but hide one's face before God in the dust and weep over our common shame and reproach, which we have brought upon God's testimony. Surely, it behoves us to say, not only like Daniel, "We have sinned," but to add, like Nehemiah (when he was himself in the place), "I have sinned." Why is the "gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed?" Is it not because we have become rich and increased with goods, instead of buying of Christ Jesus that "gold tried in the fire," to be bought of Him alone? And how was it that we became rich and increased with goods? Was it not because we *would* be rich, forgetting the apostle's warning? (1 Tim. VI., 9. 10). And why would we be rich in this world? Because we had "left our first love," and therefore the "love of money, which is the root of all evil," and the love for the things of Egypt, its honours and pleasures and treasures had seized us—the very things which Moses refused, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

But it is not only the treasures of Egypt, which have ensnared, alas, not a few Christians. The prince and god of this world has many baits besides the love of money, to draw souls away from Christ. Another apostle, "the disciple whom the Lord loved," wrote:—

"Love not the world, nor the things, that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever."

How is it that we are not "valiant for the truth upon the earth?" It is not, because we have lost the secret strength of our Nazariteship in the treacherous friendship of this world? Alas! many a "man of valour," many a champion

of the truth has been delilalized \* in the enervating embrace of the world !

But remember, Christian reader, that the Lord, whilst reproving His backsliding people of old invited them again and again before He judged them, with that touching appeal, "Turn, oh backsliding children, saith the Lord . . . . and I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

And had not God given unto you, once a sinner of the Gentiles, that true Pastor in Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd ? He had fed your soul with knowledge and understanding by His Spirit, in the blissful pastures of His Word, and refreshed your heart beside the still waters of rest.

He had made you taste His grace and loving kindness. And yet you have turned aside, worse than the prodigal who turned his back upon his father's house before he really knew the love and grace of that father. You have turned your back, not only upon the Father, but upon His blessed Son too, who had left His Father's house to tell out His Father's heart to prodigals like you and me, to bring us through His cross and resurrection unto that Father, of Whose person He Himself was, and is the express image, as He was, and is the "brightness of glory." You have turned away from that Good Shepherd, who came to seek and save the lost, you amongst the rest, and to carry you on his shoulders home rejoicing. You have turned his rejoicing into grief. Have you considered Whom you are thus grieving and slighting, in turning your back upon such a Shepherd, and slighting His pasture ? Alas, alas, you have forgotten the *price* with which that Shepherd has bought you, even His own blood.

There was a time when your eye, in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, and with the ardour of first love, was fixed on His blessed person, who is "altogether lovely," so that you saw no beauty nor comeliness in the things of this world that you should desire them, and they were unto you like "roots out of dry ground."

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\* "*Delilah*" means—poor, impoverishing, weakening, or making oppressed.

You had been made to hear the voice of that Good Shepherd, who spoke to you on the day of salvation: "Thy sins are forgiven, go in peace." You knew that voice, you loved it and followed it. With the eagerness of a new-born babe you turned to the sincere milk of His Word.

You had learnt to say "Abba Father" to His Father and God, because that blessed God had sent the Spirit of His Son into your heart, and in the power of that Holy Spirit you held sweet communion with your fellow-Christians. You worshipped God in the beauty of holiness, together with His redeemed people, and at the table of His dear Son. You remembered Him whose love was "strong as death, and Whose body was given for you, and His blood shed for the remission of your sins, and your joy was full, and your cup running over.

But alas, those are bygone days, and the sorrowing words of "Lamentations" are yours. "The joy of my heart is ceased; my dance is turned into mourning. The crown is fallen from my head." Sad and grievous indeed, and dishonouring to that blessed Saviour's Name, has been your defect, your fall and wandering from such grace and love! No wonder that your happiness is gone, remembering from whence you have fallen. Those seasons of quiet, unclouded, and practical peace, the result of a conscience kept sweet and undefiled under the holy eye of a gracious God, are bygone times, "gone for ever," Satan would whisper. That blessed divine Comforter within you, who filled you with joy and peace, has become a stern reprover, because you have preferred and sought the comforts of the world, "where our Lord was crucified," and you have "made provisions for the flesh." Or, worse still perhaps, you have by slighting the rebuking voice of the Exhorter, as you previously had slighted His comfort, succeeded in silencing at last that grieved Divine Heavenly guest altogether for the time, and are floating along with the current of the world, apparently quiet, yea even happy, as far as this can be said of one who has, like a sow, returned to the wallowing in the mire—the natural element—and like a dog to his own vomit, happy if you can only succeed in forgetting that you were once happy.

Poor, poor, wanderer ! from the feast of the fatted calf, and from the joy of the Father's house, you have turned again to the "husks of the swine." It seems as if you had pawned to the world the very "shoes from your feet," if not the "ring from your finger," and taken again to the old filthy rags.

The company of your brethren and the assemblies you seem to dread, and yet to yearn for them. The enemy, taking advantage of a harsh word or rough demeanour towards you on the part of some stern, though faithful, or of some ungracious brother, whispers to you (for remember, he always is the "accuser of the brethren"), that you have lost their confidence for ever, and that therefore they do not want you in their company, as being only felt a dead weight amongst them, and a dishonour to the Lord's Name and testimony.

Most of this, if not all, is, of course, quite true, and the best way to frustrate the intention of the accuser is, to own that it is true. This must at once silence the accuser, who wants you to believe that your brethren judge you, to prevent you from judging yourself, that is, to prevent your restoration. Or he seeks to lead you into despair (for his wiles are manifold), under the pretence of self-judgment. Where Satan works in the conscience of a backslider, he never leads him to the Word of God for true self-judgment, but will try to use it as a weapon, to frighten and harden a stray one of God's children into despair. It is a terrible judgment on the part of God, when Satan is permitted thus to gain ground and power in the conscience, and to turn even the medicine of the Word into poison, by misquoting and misapplying it.

The writer heard of a case, in which a Christian, a preacher of the Gospel, who had been used in blessing, had been living for a long time in a secret course of sin. Satan at least acquired such power over him (his conscience being constantly practically defiled), that he lost all assurance of salvation. He said that he had been like a pipe, conveying blessings to others whilst he himself was dry (a new proof, by the way, how dangerous a thing it is for one who has no settled peace to be engaged in Gospel service). He took to reading novels, turning away from the Bible ; "for that

book," he said, "only condemns me." In this state of despair he remained for thirteen years! Then he fell into decline, when shortly before he died the Lord restored his soul to life and peace.

Thirteen years of misery and despair! Solemn warning for every Christian not to presume upon such grace, nor, on the other hand, to despair of that grace through listening to the old serpent, who would say, "Your iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven," or, "Your punishment is greater than you can bear."

I will not enquire how long you have turned away from that "Good Shepherd," and have slighted His and your gracious Father's love, and grieved His Holy Spirit; nor how it was you turned away from His rich pasture to the meadows of Sodom, and, perhaps, worse than Lot, to its unrighteousness and fleshly lusts, too, that defile body and mind. "Where art thou?" That first question in Holy Writ, so solemnly addressed by a pitiful, but holy God to His fallen creature, fallen amidst the abundance of an *earthly* paradise — does it not with a double and threefold force and solemnity apply to a fallen child of God, *heavenly* in calling, *heavenly* by birth, *heavenly* in blessing, position, and character, and with a *heavenly*, glorious hope?

"Remember from whence thou art fallen."

Here one would stop, bowed down under the sense of one's own repeated wanderings from that loving Shepherd's heart and pastures, whilst thankfully owning the grace of Him who *has* restored and *does* restore stray souls. But if these lines should meet the eyes of a backslider and draw forth a tear of genuine repentance and godly sorrow, we will bless God for it.

Do not despair, weeping repentant one! Christ does not despair of you, hard and thick as the icy crust may have grown, with which the world around, or the flesh within, have encased your poor wretched heart, that has once basked in the sunshine of His favour. Do not despair!

"He restoreth my soul."

There is the *saving* grace of our Saviour, and there is the *restoring* grace of the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. As no sinner has gone too far for that grace to reach and save him, so no sheep or lamb of His flock has ever gone too far astray for the restoring grace and love of Him who gave His life for



us. When Jesus was on earth, His gracious ear was swift to discern and listen to the feeblest cry of appeal to His mercy from a needy one, and His tongue was not slow to speak the word of healing. And do you think the apparent distance of glory, where He is now seated, "crowned with glory and honour," can prevent His hearing the feeblest bleating of one of the farthest stray sheep of His flock? No, no, no! "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever"—Jesus Christ. He cannot be more than He is, and He will never be less. The same in all His fulness of blessing, the same in His power, the same in His love, the same in His wisdom, the same in His faithfulness, the same in His holiness, the same in His truth, the same in His sympathy, the same in His grace to save and to restore. Blessed be His name!

"He restoreth my soul."

Ah, do not listen to the suggestion of the enemy, who fain would make you believe, that you are beyond the restoring grace of Jesus, the "Shepherd and Bishop of our souls," as he would make an awakened sinner believe, that he is gone too far for God's saving grace in Jesus the Saviour.

"He restoreth my soul."

This is true and available for every stray one of His flock, as it is true and available for every sinner, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save "sinners." The blessed "whosoever" holds good as to the restoration of stray sheep, just as much as it does for unsaved sinners. It holds good, I repeat, for every stray one of His flock, without saying *how far* he had gone astray. David is the pattern of the wondrous restoring grace in the Old, and Peter in the New Testament on Christian ground. Had any sheep strayed farther than David or Peter? Alas, I repeat, alas! that straying from such a Shepherd and such a pasture ever should occur. But the Shepherd is also the High Priest, blessed be His Name! He intercedes for the stray ones, and the result and effect of that intercession is repentance and confession. The very tear that dims your eye, poor wandering one, and falls upon these leaves—is it not a proof, yea, the fruit of His intercession for you, just as Peter wept, because his thrice denied Lord had prayed for him. I pray to God, that this tear, the first fruit of Christ's intercession, may bring forth "fruits meet for repentance," as it did in the case of Peter.

**POWER AND NEARNESS.***I. Kings XIX.*

Demonstration of power never invigorates the soul, unless it is connected with private communion with the Lord ; and then it is the *communion*, and not the *power*, which confers the blessing. The power is to give effect to service, but is always followed by depression a disheartenment, unless the soul is kept in secret nearness to the Lord. We learn this from the chapter before us. Here was Elijah, after witnessing one of the most marvellous demonstrations of the Lord's power on earth : "The fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifices, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." Besides this, there was also a great rain in answer to Elijah's prayer. So that there had been a double manifestation of God's power ; one, to corroborate the mission of His servant, the other to bless His people. Yet, after all, we find in the next paragraph, that Elijah is so disheartened and fearful, that he fled for his life a day's journey into the wilderness, and requested for himself that he might die ! In this state the angel of the Lord comes to him, to prepare him for a journey to the mount Horeb, and then, having eaten nothing for forty days and forty nights, he is instructed that the Lord (as for him) is not in the great and strong wind, which rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord ; nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in "the still small voice." He is in that secret, so noiseless communication which "no man knoweth but he which receiveth it." When Elijah heard the latter, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave.\* His soul responds to the unmistakeable voice of the Lord ; the sheep knows His voice. The manifestation of His mighty power had not much effect on him.

And this is our experience, if we have but *retirement* and abstraction enough from nature to observe it. The soul must be in a *listening* attitude in order to *distinguish* (if I may so say) the *peculiar notes of the voice of the Lord*. The

\*In Heb. i. we have His mighty voice, "the Word of His *power*," in ch. x. His "*small voice*" (v.v. 18, 19). Then comes "*Let us draw near*" (v. 22).

listening attitude is morally typified by Elijah's position at the mount of Gad—*alone, and without food*, subsisting only on God's provision for him. When nature clogs, and the world confuses, we shall not easily distinguish the "still small voice" from the voice of His wonders; nor, on the other hand, will mere solitude, miserable solitude under a juniper tree in the wilderness, adapt us for spiritual apprehension. It is *solitude with God at Horab, unsustained by nature*, that is the true preparation for spiritual judgment and instruction. We find that the Lord, after performing a great miracle, constrained His disciples to get into a ship (Matt. xiv.) There they were toiling in rowing, and He saw them, and yet He came not to them until about the fourth watch of the night, and then would have passed by them. The effect of the demonstration of His power in the miracle had passed away, and that event could not avail them now. If it had enlarged their faith in the Lord, they would have had a gain from it now; but then it would have been from the Lord, and not from the evidence of His power. The Lord wished to establish the value of Himself to them, and to teach them that the acts of his power were only proofs of his own value; but that *proofs* could never suit in emergency without *Himself*. Miracles were to prove the value of His interest in His people, but in no wise to supersede the greater gain of *nearness* to *Himself*. After the miracle His disciples are placed in such an exigence, that unless He *draws near* there is no hope of escape, but when He *does*, "immediately the wind ceased." At this they are amazed, not evidently having learnt from the miracle what they ought—even that He who wrought was not merely displaying His power on one occasion, but thereby expressing His interest in those for whom His power could at any time be in operation. In the histories of God's people in the Scriptures we find that continually humiliation and disaster immediately succeed some signal mark or demonstration of God's power in their behalf. Why is this? Simply because to be signalised is always dangerous, unless the soul is simultaneously kept conscious of the necessity of dependance on God. When the disciples told the Lord that even the demons were subject to them, He replied, "Rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven." What God is *to me* is greater than anything God does before me.

No sooner is the song for the marvellous deliverance from Egypt ended than the children of Israel are murmuring on account of Marah. What does the great demonstration of power in the passing through the Red Sea avail them now? They must realise their dependance on God as a very present help in time of trouble. The great deliverance proved to them His value, but *Himself*, and not the *proof*, is the only sure blessing in time of need; and therefore the needs-be that we should be brought into such trying circumstances.

When David reaches the summit of regal consequence, he numbers the people; but in his humiliation he learns God in a way and manner that he had never known before; just as in his fall respecting Bathsheba he had learned the depth and magnitude of God's restoration. So now he gets in the hour of humiliation a fuller revelation of His mind than ever before made known to any one. Not that it is good to fall, but God's grace is a greater thing to my soul than the acts of His power, and therefore David advanced more in moments of repentance than he ever did in any season of honour and glory. Paul found more strength in his soul from the communication, "My grace is sufficient for thee" than from all the evidence of the glory, of which he was a wondering spectator.

The source of strength and blessing to man is in dependence on God. The tendency of a manifestation of power is to make me independent of God, as having power on my side. There is ever a craving for power in the natural mind, because the thought of man since the fall is, that if he had power, he could do better for himself than God would do for him. Man did not primarily in his nature deny the *power* of God; he distrusted His *love*; and as His power without love could not be trusted, the power was distrusted too, but at the same time it was always desired.

Men may own God's power abstractedly, but His *love*—never. They, therefore, seek the power to accomplish, what *their own love for themselves*, not what *God's love for them*, would seek for in it. They have no faith. Man would use any borrowed power, and personally glory in it.

Consequently, the moment man is engaged by the power of God, apart from communion with Himself, it must be a snare to him and must leave his soul barren and unfaithful. If is *God Himself* who strengthens the soul.

“The Lord stood by me and strengthened me.”

The consciousness that the Powerful One **LOVES** me and is beside me, is the true invigoration of the soul. When Elijah heard the “still small voice,” he returned to his work like an omnipotent man. When David was at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, he was in spirit and intelligence more advanced than ever he had been before. And when Paul said, “I take pleasure in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me,” he had reached the summit of moral glory.”

I like to see the power of God, that I may magnify His name, but the more I do so, the more do I desire in my own soul to realise in an unseen, unmistakeable nearness that He is *my* God ; and the latter is always dearer to me than the former, because the more distinctly I know Him, the more sincerely can I join in magnifying Him. Have we not seen gifts and distinct powers from God become a snare to the church and the possessors of them, over and over again? The soul is more occupied with the expression, than with the heart of Him from whom it came. Powerful teaching blesses me just in proportion as I can realise the love of Christ, of which the teaching is the exposition. If I am engaged with the exposition, as I might be by a poem, then it is *mental* and not *spiritual*. It is, in fact, beyond me, and if my conscience demand at some time hence my accordance with the results of the exposition, I discover that I received the exposition, and felt the power of it, without appropriating it to myself as the very sentiments of God's heart towards me. The consequence is I am worse off than if I never heard, for I am humbled when I reckoned on gain. Real power, after all, consists in the *inward sense* it produces, not in the outward demonstration of itself. Paul would rather speak five intelligible words than possess the gift of tongue as a mere demonstration of power.

People sometimes wonder at the manifestations of God's power, as if they were total strangers to the manner and

greatness of it in their own souls. An undue place is given to that which nature can more readily apprehend, for with nature it is always from the outward to the inward instead of *vice versa*.

May we be spiritual enough to own every gift a power from God *as given to the church, from the church, and for the church*, but also may we know the "still small voice," the secret communion, the unseen link, which should be our real resource rather than any demonstration of power.

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## SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER'S PAGE.

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### The Power of Reality.

If there be one thing more than another that is likely to impress and attract those with whom we are brought into contact, it is reality. The unconverted people around us, whether children or adults, generally have sharp eyes, and if we give them reason to think that there is any lack of genuineness in our profession—any other motive for our labour than true-hearted love to our Master and to the souls for which He died, then good-bye to our hope of winning them for Him!

How often one has heard of deep and lasting work being done in the Sunday-school by a Christian with very little gift, and, perhaps, hampered by peculiarities which would be likely to bring him into contempt. And, in spite of all, that odd, unprepossessing person has won the children's love and respect, and has brought more souls to Christ than another, whose eloquent tongue, attractive appearance and winning manner would lead us to prophesy nothing but success for him. How is it? The first man was *real*—intensely, thoroughly, desperately real, and the children believed in him, and felt that the things of which he told them were worth having, and worth seeking for themselves. The second might indeed be a good man in his way, but that ring of utter genuineness was wanting, and the beautiful words he spoke failed to make any lasting impression.

The thought of the great importance of reality, not only as it affects ourselves, but with regard to its influence

upon others, has been much impressed on my mind by its striking exemplification in two Christians I have lately seen.

A young Danish sailor lay ill of typhoid fever. I had seen him once or twice when he was asleep, and had left little books upon his bed, but one day when I went I was glad to find that he was awake. "He's such a nice man," said the nurse, as she took me into the ward, "and he speaks just a little English." I gave him some flowers, and began to talk to him, but he seemed very indifferent, and I could hardly tell whether he understood what I was saying, or not.

Then I read to him in broken Danish a few verses from the Bible: he listened, and as I read, there dawned upon his face a smile, the sweetness and restfulness of which surpassed anything I had ever seen before. When the reading was finished, the smile faded away, and the weary look returned; he was too ill to take an interest in anything else. The next time I saw him I read again. Again the same joyous smile. Then I just managed to put into Danish the words: "Is your soul saved?" and was answered by a clear decided "Yes." The next time he was dressed and walking about the room; his mind was clearer and he was better able to answer the questions I put partly in English and partly in Danish. I found that he had been brought to the Lord some time previously (I think he said two or three years ago), and that he was rejoicing in the knowledge of Jesus as his Saviour. Again when the Lord was spoken of (and *only* then) the same smile overspread his face—a smile of such indescribable restfulness and satisfaction, that it seemed a reflection of heaven's own light. His words were few, but that smile told a tale of the utter reality of the peace and joy within the sick man's soul such as no words could have done.

I stood by the bedside of another sick seaman: this time it was a Norwegian. He was very ill: his hollow, sunken face looked more like the face of a skeleton than that of a living man, and told of such suffering that one almost shrank from troubling him with questions. His knowledge of English was but small, and mine of his language still

smaller, but bye-and-bye as he was telling me about his illness, I caught something about "going home to Jesus." Oh, what a joyful sound that was, after I had feared that as is so often the case, I should find the poor man in darkness of soul as well of suffering of body. One or two questions soon drew out that Lars knew his soul was saved, and his sins forgiven, and that he had come to the Lord Jesus during his last voyage, since his illness began.

And then in feeble tones he murmured, "*Jeg er saa glad, saa glad jeg har fundet Jesus—I am so glad, so glad I have found Jesus.*" And there was a ring of reality—a tone of utter rest and satisfaction in the voice of that poor emaciated Norwegian which told just the same tale as the young Dane's smile. There was no room for doubt or questioning. Christ dwelt in those two hearts; His presence was a known and felt reality, and as one looked and listened, one could only long to know more of that same rest and joy.

Dear fellow teachers, do let us seek grace from the One Who is so ready to give it, that we may be more in communion with Himself, that the peace and happiness of which we speak to the dear children may be so thoroughly known and enjoyed in our own souls that they may shine out in our faces, and that the ring of reality in our very voices may show them that we have a treasure worth possessing.

C. H. P.





## OUR WARFARE IN THE HEAVENLIES.

(*Ephes. vi. 10-18.*)

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### II.

#### The Whole Armour of God.

##### 2.—“THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

THIS important part of the armour of God, it need scarcely be said, does not refer to our standing before God as to our righteousness, which is in Christ, in whom we have been made “the righteousness of God,” and who Himself is our righteousness. The “breastplate of righteousness” is not to serve as a shelter against God, but against our enemies in the heavenlies. How, indeed, could we stand against those terrible “hosts of wickedness” if we did not know our standing in Christ, there being no condemnation to us who are in Him? “If God be for us, who can be against us?” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth,” &c., &c. (Rom. viii. 31-39). Blessed accumulation of questions in that precious portion, questions—not of doubt or uncertainty, but expressing the assurance, nay, the victorious challenge of faith. These very “principalities and powers” (or, “hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies”) are there spoken of as “not being able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

What, then, is the meaning of the “*breastplate of righteousness*?” It simply means *practical righteousness*. Righteousness in our daily life, be it in business, in the family, in the church, and in our contact with the world.

Before God, the believer who has peace with God, has a perfect conscience, *i.e.*, a conscience purged by the blood of God's Son Jesus Christ, which "*cleanseth from all sin.*" God is not only not against him, but *for him*. But true as it is that we could not stand against Satan's assaults without this, yet if a Christian's walk and spiritual *condition* is inconsistent with his *position* before God, as in Christ, our righteousness, by walking in unrighteousness and after the flesh, how shall he be able to stand in his conflict with Satan? With a conscience uneasy before God, whose Spirit he is grieving, with a certain "looking for of judgment" (even if only in a temporal way), how can he stand against the terrible adversary pointing at his defiled garments? There will be no angel of the Lord's presence to say to the enemy: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. . . . Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Such an one will be a coward before the enemy, and cannot "*stand*" his ground against his attacks. Unhappy in his heart, and with a bad conscience, he must be miserable, and all the more if he has peace with God. But a miserable man is a poor soldier to stand on the defensive against a cruel and subtle enemy. "God *for* us" and "God *in* us" is not the same thing, though the latter is the consequence of the former. If I grieve the Spirit of God within me, which is the power of communion with the Father and the Son, and have to reap the bitter fruit of sin in its effect of separating and distancing from God; if I have neglected to "behold that manner of love which the Father have bestowed upon us," and am growing cool and indifferent; and if in consequence, my feet are turning from the straight "path of righteousness," in which the "Good Shepherd" leads His sheep, then my path is no longer as the "path of the just, which is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." I have forgotten that "light is sown to the righteous, and gladness to the upright in heart."

How is a Christian in such a spiritual condition to withstand the assaults of Satan and his wicked hosts in the heavenlies? His "breastplate of righteousness" has

become rusty, and the thrusts of the enemy go clean through it. May the "loins of our mind" be "girded up" closely, then the "breastplate of righteousness" will be kept shining and polished without a flaw. The missiles of the adversary will glide off powerless, and the champion of Christ be able to present, single-handed, the bold front of faith and of a good conscience, to the blows and thrusts and wiles of Satan and his hosts. They will glide off from the polished steel of his "breastplate," like the angry billows from the rock of a Pharos in the midst of the sea,

"Calm amidst tumultuous motion,"

for he has built his house upon a rock, not forsaking "the way of righteousness;" and the rains, and the winds, and the floods, cannot bring that house to fall. May the God of peace and grace keep the feet of His dear saints in these perilous times "following after righteousness and peace, and charity and faith, with all them that call upon the name of the Lord out of a pure heart."

### 3. — "FEET SHOD WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE."

After the "girdle" and the "breastplate" come—not the sword, nor the shield, nor the helmet, all important though they be, but the well-shod feet. We do well to remember that in the Divine Volume even the *order* of the *words* is divinely inspired. For if the Divine Book were not *literally inspired*, the inspiration would be defective, and the book be no longer *Divine*. Once deny the *literal* inspiration of Holy Writ, and you are on the high road of rationalism and infidelity.

Why then are the "feet" mentioned before the sword and the shield, which one would naturally look for first, as being closest to the "girdle" and the "breastplate?" Simply because the character of the Christian warfare in our heavenly Canaan, as has been said, is "*standing*" on the defensive and thus holding *our* ground there against the enemy. A warrior might have a good sword, and

shield and helmet, but if his foot-gear is bad, how shall he be able to "stand" before the enemy, especially on a stony or thorny ground. Did you ever hear of a soldier going slip-shod into the battle? He would soon be foot-sore and unable to stand his ground against the enemy.\*

The expression, "your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," has often been applied to the evangelist's preparedness and readiness to preach the gospel of peace, and enabling him to stand his ground against Satan and those rulers of the darkness of this world. But we must bear in mind that it is a question of doing warfare in *heavenly places*, and withstanding those "hosts of wicked spirits" there. Is he to preach the gospel of peace to *them*? The very thought would be absurd. The words "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" mean the preparation which the gospel of peace in its peace-giving delivering power gives to our feet to "stand" our ground before our enemies in the heavenly places, and to "*withstand*" them. Even a believer if he has not that settled peace, which the gospel of peace imparts (and there are not a few in that uncertain condition, though not so many as in former years, the full gospel being more widely known), will not be able to stand his ground against the insidious attacks of those wicked hosts. It is a dangerous thing for believers who have no peace with God, to preach the gospel of peace. They give out what they do not possess. Such pretence of "testimony" is hypocritical in its character, though, perhaps, not intentionally so, and must produce either spiritual misery or hardening of heart and conscience. So much as to his testimony in the world. But it.

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\*It is a well-known fact that in a recent war between two great Continental powers, one of the causes of the defeat of the vanquished party, was their bad commissariat, not only as to the food, but their having been supplied with badly made boots, so that the agents of the great manufactory which had supplied them, did not dare to show their faces in the streets of the capital of the conquered nation.

gives, besides, a handle and weapon to the enemy. Be it our testimony to God's truth on earth, or our warfare in the heavenlies—*settled, solid peace* together with practical holiness and righteousness, is one of the first requisites. No standing against the "prince of the power of the air" and his wicked hosts there above, without the solid foot-gear of settled peace.

But with our loins well "girt about with truth" and the "breastplate of righteousness" kept clean and bright, and possessed of that "preparation of the gospel of peace," even settled peace with God, the "peace of Christ," *i.e.*, peace amidst a world of trouble, will "rule in our hearts," the "*shield of faith*" will not be *down*, nor *up and down*, but steadily *up*, to "quench the fiery darts of the wicked," the "helmet of salvation" will be kept bright and polished, and the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," be handled in the weighty power of, and guided by, the Spirit, Who has made, that formidable weapon of the believer, which Satan and his wicked spirits dread more than anything else. But of these three latter parts of the "armour of God" I hope to speak in the next paper, if the Lord will.

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## CHRIST IN THE VESSEL.

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"And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, saying: 'Lord save us; we perish.' And He saith unto them, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, 'What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!'" (Matt. viii. 23-27).

It is evident that our Lord can never at any time or in any way fail in His dealings towards us. He can never for a moment forget; nor can He fail in power. It is impossible that there can be any failure in His ways or

dealings with us. Hence the smallest degree of fear or distrust is always sin—is always unbelief. Yet we must all be conscious that it does often arise in our hearts. There may indeed be various shades of it. There may be anxiety about ourselves, about our families, about our circumstances; still, we never can be in a position in which this distrust can be allowed. Sorrow may be right and very wholesome to our souls. We may be cast down—but the Lord always remains the same. It is well to be cast down sometimes, and to have to say, as in the Psalm, “My soul is cast down within me,” but we ought never to be cast down without proving the effect of it to be to cast us upon God for help [and thus to continue with the Psalmist, “*Why* art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.”]

But faith has to be exercised in respect to the character of God’s dealings with us in the path in which He is leading us. I would not, for example, now expect like the Jews that God would be with me to give me the victory in some violent conflict with a foe, because it is our privilege to suffer quietly. Still I shall learn that in whatever way I count upon God, He is faithful. People have sometimes quoted the 91st Psalm as a proof that we are not to die of pestilence, but this is a mistake. It does not apply to our case—though God may preserve His people from calamity—and we ought to be intelligently walking in His ways. In the path of obedience, in doing the will of the Lord we may count indeed upon the fulfilment of His promise, “He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.” But we must not forget how Satan quoted this promise. He wanted the Lord to do a something which God had not bidden Him to do, and used this promise as his warrant to expect the exercise of divine power. But we are only to look for the exercise of God’s power when we are simply in our proper path as Christians.

When the Lord told His disciples to take nothing for their journey—no purse, nor scrip, nor two coats—it was

because He Himself was there, as Emmanuel, in the midst of His people. But when he asked them afterward, "Lacked ye any thing?" and they replied, "Nothing," He added, "But now He that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." When rejected by Israel's unbelief, He was no longer acting as Emmanuel upon earth, and consequently the position of His disciples was entirely changed. They must now take what they may meet with. For what He was showing in His miracles and acts was, that Emmanuel had come in amongst His people, and that all Satan's power, and all man's misery, would disappear at once, if man were morally capable of receiving Him in this character. Hence the lepers were cleansed, the hungry fed, and all that were diseased came to Him and were cured. If they had had faith, the Lord was there on earth; there to bind the strong man, to remove all evil, and to make man happy on earth. But man had not the capacity to receive Him in that character in which He came. The disciples ought plainly to have counted on His power. They ought to have healed the sick and raised the dead, and cast out demons. It was when they were proved incapable of using this power, and were complained of for not exercising it, by the father of him who had the dumb spirit, and who brought him to Jesus, that He answered, "O, faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" They afterwards came to Him apart and asked, "Why could we not cast him out?" And Jesus said unto them, "Because of your unbelief." They had not faith to use the power. So again, when the multitude were an hungered, and the disciples asked Him, "Shall we go and buy bread for them?" and He answered, "*Give ye them to eat.*"

They were expected to use the power, and they ought to have used it according to the revelation God had made of Himself. And here is where our faith is to be exercised in walking in subjection to God's Word, and to what His Word points out, and in this path, counting on the power of Him to sustain us, who has set us in it. It is there

most surely that we shall be put to the test. If Israel is to go through the wilderness, they will need faith. And if Israel is to fight in Canaan, they will need faith. And if Israel has not faith for the wilderness, Israel will fail in Canaan. So here, the disciples ought to have counted on Emmanuel's power. If He is in the boat with them, they are not going to perish in the storm. But their unbelief is shown in their distrust, "Lord, save us, we perish."\*

And if this showed their *earnestness*, it showed too their *unbelief*, and is but too accurate a picture of ourselves.

We are in the same boat with Jesus, and in whatever shape the trouble comes, we are called to have faith in Him. The trial of our faith comes *in the path we are in*, and not in some other. Christ has perfect love to the Church—He loves her and cherishes her—and we are to count on Him for a constant supply of grace to our souls, that we may overcome every trial. He calls us to live as saints on the earth, to walk as He walked, and to continue to the end. And just as the disciples in the boat, we ought to count on His power and help to overcome every evil, let what storm there may arise.

I have said that the Lord is not exercising His power in the way of temporal deliverances now. That is not what characterises the present exercise of His power. If, therefore, I am looking for temporal deliverance, I may be looking for that which He never meant to give. The Church is to be in a state of weakness in the eyes of the world, and to be sustained in that weakness by an *unseen* power. "Strengthened with all might, according to His *glorious power*, unto all *patience* and *long suffering* with joyfulness" (Col. i. 11). The more we get to be companions with Jesus, the more will He defend us against everything evil, and keep our souls in a quiet, lowly, and humble place. Let us be once in that place of quiet and obedient service, and then we may always

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\*In Mark IV. it is still worse. There they doubt not only His *power*, but His *love* too. "Master, *carest* thou not that we perish?"



reckon on the Lord for help. There is a ground in the relationship in which we are set to God, which secures to us all that His Almighty Presence can give. "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the *Lord Almighty*." I have been struck with the embodiment of the Old Testament Scriptures in the New, with regard to the way in which God manifested Himself in former dispensations:—As the *Almighty* to Abraham, as *Jehovah* the Unchanging One to Israel, and the like, and the way in which it is all brought to bear on us in the endearing name of "*Father*." Now, in this relationship of "*Father*," you may count on all things—not, indeed, simply as the "*Almighty*" and "*Jehovah*," but that as "*Father*." He will use all His power as Almighty and Jehovah too, in your behalf. I, who *was* the Almighty, and *am* the Almighty, am your Father. Therefore, it is not our place to come to Him with fear, but to count, as walking with Him, as a Father, on all that He is. "Holy Father," said the Lord Jesus, "keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me." We are "holy brethren," as having a holy Father. "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

May we desire to be in the place, where God has set us, and being once there, to count on all the tender grace and love we want in the way, and to reckon on His faithful goodness.

W. H. D.

## THE BLESSED HOPE.

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IN closing the subject matter of his second epistle to the Thessalonians, the Apostle tells us very sweetly that our Lord Jesus Christ, and God our Father who hath loved us, has given us everlasting consolation and good hope, through grace (2 Thess., ii, 16); and it is of the utmost importance for our souls that we have a clear apprehension of what that hope is. When the Lord Jesus was leaving this world to go back to the Father, He said to His own: "In my Father's House are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv, 2, 3). For Him, the pathway, with all its sorrow and rejection was nearly over; there remained but one more act, the mighty work of redemption; and then, resurrection and the Father's house. He desired to link their hearts with the place to which He was going, that they might be weaned away from earth, to which they no longer belonged, and be formed after a heavenly pattern henceforth. And they knew (or ought to have known) where He was thus going. He was going to the Father, to the Father's house. In thus speaking of the glory, He doubtless had before His mind the temple on earth, which he frequently called "My Father's house" (John ii, 16), around which were grouped many chambers for the use of the priests when engaged in their service. It is this figure the Lord borrowed when He said: "In My Father's house are many mansions." Wonderful thought for our hearts, there is a place in the glory for all whom the Father has given Him; no less a place would satisfy His heart. His love is actively engaged in the preparation of the place, the title being found in His precious blood. Henceforth the disciples were to be occupied with Heaven, not Canaan, and to believe in an unseen Christ, hidden at the right hand of God. The latter feature is the more to be noted, because Jewish hope is set upon a Messiah manifested in power and glory upon the earth (Psalm

xlv,cii). This will not be disappointed, but will be seen in its day ; but meanwhile, believers are called to a better portion, and are to believe and love one who is not seen (1 Peter, i, 8).

But how will He introduce them and us into that glory ? "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." There need be no mistake as to the meaning of His words ; not death is intended, as John xxi, 21-23 plainly shows, but His coming—the personal return from Heaven to receive his own. No details were gone into on that solemn night—for them the disciples must wait, as for much else, until the coming of the Comforter—the Lord simply states the precious fact for the stay and comfort of their sorrowing hearts. We do well to cherish His words in all their simplicity, none the less because long and well known ; and to let them have their full sanctifying power over our lives. The Thessalonian converts read us a valuable lesson, who, in all the fresh energy of newly imparted divine life, waited in simplicity of faith for God's Son from Heaven, their deliverer from the wrath to come. Our souls lose considerably if we confound His coming with His day, as is commonly done in Christendom. His day will be introduced by His public appearing in power and glory, when He will be accompanied by all His saints, and attended by His angels. For His enemies, that will be a day of blackness and judgment ; for His friends it will bring deliverance and rest ; creation shall be set at liberty from the bondage of corruption ; and Israel shall be gathered and blest. But ere He thus appears as the Sun of righteousness, it will be our joy to welcome Him as the bright morning star, and to be changed into his image (Mal. iv., 2, Rev. xxii., 16). For this we wait in patience ; "No sign to be looked for," signs being connected with His appearing.

Though the Lord Jesus gave no details to His disciples, but the simple promise of His return, details are not wanting in the Scripture, in 1 Thess., iv. notably, all being there spread out before us. The circumstances called for particulars. The saints of Thessalonica were distressed because some of their number had fallen asleep, fearing apparently

that they would lose somewhat of the blessedness which awaits the saints at the coming of the Lord, because of not being alive to welcome Him. "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope." The hope sweetens every bitter cup, even death, which to the believer is but sleep. Our God would not have his people stoical, but feel deeply the circumstances of the scene through which we are passing. Nevertheless He would have the hope kept ever before our hearts. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep through Jesus will God bring with Him." These words contain a simple principle, which, in the absence of complete apostolical teaching, should have guided their hearts; that what God has done for Jesus He will also do for all who belong to Jesus. God has raised up His beloved Son from among the dead, and put Him in heavenly glory, He will do the same for all who are His. Rom. viii., 11, and 2 Cor., iv., 14, are equally clear as to this. The knowledge of this would have helped the Thessalonians in their perplexity, if they had borne it in mind. The expression "*in* Jesus" in 1 Thess., iv., 14, is properly "*through* Jesus"—a very precious thought for the heart. When the Christian dies, it is the act of the Lord Jesus. He has laid His hand upon His own. This gives repose to the heart that trusts in Him.

Verses 15-18 are a parenthesis. In verse 14 the Apostle shows that God will bring His saints *with Jesus*, referring to the day of public display; in the succeeding verses he explains how they get to be with Him, to be thus manifested together. It was a direct revelation to Paul, as were other truths (compare Eph. iii., 3, 1 Cor. xi., 23), "The Lord himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." The sleeping saints will be the first to respond to his well-known voice, instead of being preceded by the living, as the Thessalonians feared, and will be raised up in incorruption and glory. This is "the resurrection of life" in contrast with "the resurrection of judgment," as spoken of by the Lord Jesus in John v., 29; "the resurrection of

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the just," when the godly will be recompensed (Luke xiv., 14); "the first resurrection," all who have part in which are declared holy and blessed (Rev. xx., 6). The living will then be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and transformed into the image of Christ, their bodies being fashioned by His mighty power like unto the body of His glory (1 Cor. xv., 52, Phil. iii, 21). Then, simultaneously, all will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. This is the glad moment for which we wait: where are our hearts with regard to it? "Watching" is precious to His heart. In Luke xii He promises such to sit down to meat, while He will gird Himself, and come forth and serve them. "Doing" is spoken of in the same chapter; but the Lord gives the first place and holds out the highest reward to watching. I may be *busy* from mixed, or even false motives, but *watching* can only be if the heart is set on Christ.

"Even so, Come, Lord Jesus."

W. W. F

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### FRAGMENT.

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WE want to have the eye more set on the glory, beloved. It is necessarily hidden as yet, but it is real, waiting for its appointed hour to shine out. It tried whether the earth were in a fit state to let it shine, but it found it otherwise. Indeed *all* the great things of God have assayed man and the earth, and got no suited answer. *Righteousness* addressed man's heart in the law. The voice that called man to *repentance*, spoke in man's ear by the Baptist—*grace* would fain have softened and drawn man in the ministry of the Son from the bosom. But nothing of God found its answer in man.

## FAITH WORKING BY LOVE.

*Gal. v. 6.*

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THE world cast out the Son of God in the day of His tender, personal, diligent love, waiting, as He was, on all the need and sorrow that were around Him. For his love they were His enemies. They took, also the occasion which His humiliation afforded them (a humiliation assumed for the salvation of sinners), to cast reproach and indignity upon him. "When He came," as another has said, "to reconcile, to display the tenderness of His sympathetic love, then nothing would do but they must get rid of God. When He comes into the very midst of the sufferings and woes of a world lying in wickedness, they refuse to have him. They used the opportunity of His humiliation to heap indignity and scorn upon Him."

If this were so with the children of men ; if this were what the Lord of life and glory had to find in the world, the faith which apprehended Him (workmanship of His own Spirit), was the more grateful to Him. And we have good reason to know that it was so, blessed be His Name ! *He not only relieved the need that was brought to Him, but He took delight in the faith that brought it.*

That faith, however, distinguished itself differently. It worked by different passions of the soul. It worked at times, I may say, as by a spirit of *reverence*, at times as by a spirit of *liberty*. For it was not only that the Lord met instances of strong faith, or of weak faith ; he met faith having very different characteristics in its approaches and appeals to Him.

For instance, it was *forward* in the company that brought their palsied friend to Him. It was *reverend* in the woman who touched Him in the crowd. In Bartimeus it was marked by a strong, unquestioning apprehension of *grace*. In the centurion it worked by a worshipping apprehension of His *personal glory*. Bartimeus knew Him in the grace of the Son of David, who was to

make the lame to walk, and the blind to see, and he would cry and cry again, and make his sorrow to utter itself aloud in the ear of Jesus, in spite of the multitude. The centurion, on the other hand, judged himself unworthy to approach Him, and his house unworthy to receive Him, and would scarcely allow his sorrow to be heard above the measure which necessity put upon it.

Here surely was a difference. The one was all forwardness, knowing the grace of Christ, the other all reverence and reserve, knowing His personal glory. And yet we cannot say which was the more acceptable to Him. Each of them, with like sureness and readiness, gets the blessing he needed; and evident it is, from the whole style of the narratives, that He was refreshed by the faith of each, though it made its approach and appeal in so different a spirit.

And we see this diversity among the saints now. The spirit of reverence, like the centurion's reserve, prevails in some, the spirit of liberty, like the boldness of Bartimeus, in others. We, through infirmity, may misunderstand one another, because of such differences; but happy is it to see that the Lord, after this manner, can and does appreciate each and all.

But if faith thus worked in the presence of Christ in His day, it had worked by other passions of the soul before that day. "By faith, Noah, moved with *fear*, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." The word to which Noah listened and which he received, was such as naturally awakened fear. Faith in it worked by fear: it brought solemn tidings to his ear, and fear of God and of His Word was the fruit of his faith.

Rahab tells the spies of Joshua, that what her nation had heard of the God of Israel for His people, had caused a panic, and she, believing the tidings, received the spies. This was another instance of faith *by fear*.\*

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\* The law worked in that way. *Fear* was the end of it, as Moses tells the people: "God is come to prove you," says He to them, "and that his fear may be before your faces" (Ex. xx.). Moses himself trembled, saying, "I exceedingly fear and quake."

All this is so. A spirit of reverence, a spirit of liberty, fear and other passions may be the form of that power in the soul which faith works by. But the apostle speaks to us of *love*, as being the due power, by which it *now* works. As he says, "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love."

If faith, *at this day*, take up fear, it has taken up its wrong instrument. The Lord can comfort the feeble mind, and meet the tremblings and uncertainties of the heart; but let us confess them as unworthy of his grace in Christ Jesus. He would be sullyng the brightness of His own way, if He could admit that faith in Him could work by fear. *God* apprehended, as His glory shines in the face of Jesus Christ, must inspire confidence and liberty; and that is faith working by love.

The epistle to the Galatians reads for us the title of faith to work in this way. The Son of God has borne the curse of the law, that we might get the blessing of God. The Son of God was made under the law, that we might be brought from under it into the adoption and liberty of the children. Confidence, liberty, the conscience and heart at ease, love answering love, must be the fruit of faith in such facts as these. It is, therefore but the conclusion of all this to say, that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love."

But I must add a little of the fruit both in the soul and in the life of this fine principle, this "faith which worketh by love." And here I say, what a difference between *blessedness* and *religiousness*! The Galatians passed from the first to the second. Sad, dishonourable journey! In their *first* estate, they would have plucked out their eyes for Paul, the witness and minister of Christ amongst them, just because they were so happy in Christ. In their *second* estate, Paul stands in doubt of them, and he fears they might, through biting and devouring, go on to consume one another. They had become much more



*religious* than when he had known them before ; but they had lost their *blessedness*. They were observing days and months and times and years ; but where were the eyes that were once ready to be plucked out for others ?

What a difference ! And so at this day. Souls we know who are in the sweet personal enjoyment of Christ, by which they gain a state of strength and victory, while the whole scene around us bears witness of the easy natural combination of religiousness and worldliness ; of the observance of ordinances, and yet of full subjection to the course of this present evil age.

Now, “faith that worketh by love,” is the spring and parent of this state of “blessedness,” of which we are speaking, and which the apostle describes in Gal. iv., 15, “Where is then the blessedness ye spake of ? for I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.”

The apostle himself, as the same epistle shows us, had experienced this same blessedness. When he first received the gospel, he went down to Arabia : for he needed not Jerusalem or apostles, or anything that all could do for him or give him. He had his treasure with him ; *the Son was revealed in him*. So afterwards at Antioch, he did not fear Peter : the creature, however honoured or above him in some sense, did not command him ; his happy spirit was feeding on the “love of the Son of God” (see Chs. i. and ii.).

These are touches of the spirit of the apostle, indicating indeed that state of “blessedness,” which waits on the “faith that worketh by love.”

The Hebrew saints give us another example of the same. In the day of their illumination or quickening, they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods and became the willing companions of them who suffered and were reproached for Christ’s sake. The church at Jerusalem in Acts ii. shows us the same. The saints there were together and had all things in common. No man called

anything he had his own. They ate their bread with gladness, praising God. And so the eunuch in Asia in Acts viii. He went on his way rejoicing, able to *lose Philip*, because he had *found Christ*. Surely these knew the "blessedness" of the "faith that worketh by love." But time would fail us to tell of all such cases *then* in those days, and *now* in our days—blessed be God for it!\*

J. G. B.

\* The above was written 37 years ago.—Ed.

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## READINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

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Ch. ii. 18-25. (See No. 26).

WHEN that remarkable scene of the purging of the temple took place, and pigeons and money alike had taken wings and fled away, and the dovesellers and sheep and cattle dealers with sheep and oxen had followed suit, none daring to lift up a finger in protest, cowed down, not so much by the "whip of small cords," but before the Divine Presence and the felt authority of Him who wielded the rod of chastisement—the Jews (*i.e.*, some of their rulers, I suppose) then appeared and asked Him: "What *sign* showest thou unto us, seeing thou doest these things?" With them, signs and miracles settled everything. "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom." And yet for more than three years they had daily witnessed the wondrous works wrought by "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among them by *miracles* and *wonders* and *signs*, which God did by Him in the midst of them."

Had those "miracles, wonders, and signs" produced in them living faith in the "Son of God" and "King of Israel?" (Ch. i. 49). No, their only response consisted in their attempts to ensnare Him by false reasoning and ambiguous questioning. Jesus gave sight to the blind, pointed out by their prophets as one of the characteristics of the true Messiah. The only effect was increased

enmity and hardening of conscience. Even their officers, sent to apprehend Him, dared not to lay hands on Him, but returned, saying, "Never man spake like this man." What was their rulers' answer? A curse.—"Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him? But this people who knoweth not the law, are cursed." Jesus had given sight to the blind-born man, a thing "not heard of since the world began"—the grateful and faithful testimony on the part of the healed one adding, "If this man were not of God, He could do nothing. The reply of religious hardness and pride was, "Thou was altogether born in sins" [because he had been born blind] "and dost thou teach us?" "And they cast him out." The miracles wrought by the Lord increased in number and magnitude. Even the dead were raised. No response of faith. "Hearing, they heard, and did not understand, and seeing they saw, and did not perceive." And why? "For their heart was waxed gross, and their ears were dull of hearing, and their eyes had they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted," and the Lord "should heal them."

But a still greater miracle had been wrought by the "carpenter's son," as they contemptuously called Him. That "sign" had been wrought "for the glory of God, and that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." By divine power Lazarus had been recalled from the domain of death, and even of corruption. Many of the Jews, who witnessed that marvellous sign, had believed. Did that convince the chief priests and the Pharisees? They said: "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." Then from that day they took counsel together for to put Him to death." But the greatest "sign" of all was still to come. On being asked, "What 'sign' showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" the Lord answers them:

*"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."*

That temple, the pride of their eyes, and yet permitted by them to be turned into a den of thieves and robbers, and into a cattle market, was indeed to be destroyed, and not a stone to be left upon another, and not to be raised again, but a temple of Mohammed to be erected in its place. But a far more glorious and wondrous temple than that of Solomon or Herod was about to be destroyed, not by Gentile conquerors, but *by themselves*, and to be raised again in three days. That Holy Temple, indwelt by the Father and the Spirit, and prepared by One greater than Solomon\*—was

\* “A body hast Thou prepared me” (Heb. x.)

to be destroyed by their wicked hearts and hands. Those holy and gracious hands, which had spread gifts and blessings to the right and left, healing the sick, feeding the hungry multitudes, caressing and blessing the little ones, were to be nailed to the cross-beams of the tree of curse; those feet going about and carrying the glad tidings of peace from place to place, of which indeed the prophetic witness was true: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion “thy God reigneth,” were to be fixed to the cross with hammer and nail. The heart full of grace and truth, loving-kindness and tender mercies was to be pierced by the spear of wickedness, but only to draw forth the blood to save.” The lips whence tides of blessing went forth, preaching the gospel to the poor, and speaking words in season to the weary, blessing the children, instructing the ignorant, teaching daily in the temple, and uttering the gracious invitation, “Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” and interceding even upon the cross for His rejectors and murderers, saying “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do,” were soon to be closed in death.

Those wicked questioners of the Lord of glory were unable to grasp the meaning of the “sign” He gave them in answer to their interrogation.

It was, indeed, the greatest “sign” He could give them of His authority for purging the defiled temple.

But the temple which they would destroy was about to be raised again in a more marvellous way than the body of Lazarus by the Divine power of his sisters' guest, who rewarded their hospitality with more than royal liberality, as He had rewarded Abraham's and Sarah's hospitality at Mamre with the promise of a son and heir. At Bethany it was recalling His "friend" Lazarus back from the bonds of death and corruption, and restoring the beloved brother to his mourning sisters.

But now the mighty voice that had recalled Lazarus from the grave was itself to be silenced in the tomb. That wondrous temple of Divine build was to be destroyed by the builders who rejected Him, who was the true Foundation Stone. Who was to raise it again? With men, death is the end of every earthly hope. So the two mourners of Emmaus thought, and spoke to the "Stranger" who walked between them. They were right in their disappointment of their Messianic hopes. The body of Israel's Messiah — that destroyed Holy Temple—had rested in the grave on the Sabbath, which was the very seal of God's covenant with His earthly people. With the Jews all was over. But the One who walked in the midst of the two of Emmaus had then made good the promised "sign" of His authority given to the Jews. He had raised the body—not of a Lazarus, subject to death and corruption, but His own body, that holy temple subject to neither. But He, in obedience to His Father's will, had *subjected Himself* to death, He who was and is the "*Prince of Life*." Unlike Lazarus He could never be subject to corruption, for He was the "Holy One of God." "Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." The grave where His body was laid had not before contained any dead body. If even the body of a little infant had been laid there before, it would have rendered the place unfit for the body of the "Holy One of God." No vestige of corruption must be connected with *that* tomb, just as the ass's colt on which the true "King of the Jews" rode at His public entrance into Jerusalem, never had borne the yoke of sinful man.

He Himself, the Prince of Life and Son of God, alone could raise again the temple of His body. He alone, who could say, "Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (John x., 17, 18).

(*To be continued D.V.*)

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### SELECT SENTENCES.

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1. Faith is present dependence upon a present God ; it cannot live out of His Presence.
2. When is faith most wanted to sustain the soul ? When all visible evidence of power is removed.
3. The real amount of our faith is proved, when there is nothing visible to look to.
4. We are never so near failure as when we have acted faithfully. (Witness Elijah in i. Kings, ch. xviii. and xix.) We can hardly trust God in two consecutive instances.
5. The great secret of all power and permanency now is faith in God—nothing visible, nothing tangible. The soul finds strength and encouragement, as it reaches unto God (Ps. 46).
6. You may be comforted by fellowship, and have your heart refreshed ; but you must work by your own individual faith and energy, without leaning on anyone whatever ; for if you do, you cannot be a faithful servant
7. The door open for *self*, is open for *Satan*, too
8. The sin-sanctioning saint's portion is a wounded conscience—for the *grieved Spirit* is a *griever*.
9. To honour God and retain a good conscience are of more worth than intercourse with "good men" ; communion of saints I will not say ; for that can never be found apart from His honour and a pure conscience.
10. Human amiability is often enonity with God.
11. Light does not guide, until it has overcome darkness.
12. Real Christian progress is characterised by our estimate of great essential truth—truths connected with, and flowing from, the Person of Christ, "that I may know Him."

**“HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YE?”***Mark VI., 38.*

The Lord uses what the disciples had. It was but little—nothing for such a multitude; but when blessed and broken by Jesus, it goes a great way. The God who gave life, could sustain it, independent of means or multiply the means to make them adequate to the use. So now it is what “*we have*” that Christ uses. Use what we have in faith, and He will make it meet the need of all present. It is the power of God giving efficiency to His word that makes much or little a blessing, and without that, plenty is in vain. In ministry of His word, the grand end is getting the soul, through the presentation of Christ, brought into living connexion with God. True ministry does this for the poor, the rich go empty away.

**EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.**

Dearest Brother. . . . There are three things I find in the often trying and toilsome life of faith: First, trusting God that nothing can hinder His accomplishing His purpose. All that Joseph’s brethren did to frustrate the accomplishment of his dreams, just led to that accomplishment. . . . *Next*, for us, simple obedience, taking God’s mind for wisdom and doing His will. He has a path for His saints in this world; in it they find Him and His strength, though, perhaps, the life of faith be dark. *Then*, if we know the purpose of God, light is in the soul. But the path He will guide us in. It may seem dark, but if His, it is the way of arriving at His rest. But a single eye seeking nothing but Christ, is the secret of certainty of walk and firmness as having the secret of the Lord with you. But what a calling! We have to walk worthy of God, who has called us to His own kingdom; and yet what a joy to be thus associated with himself! And we know His purpose is to glorify Christ, and so we seek that in walking worthy of Him and serving Him in love.

J. N. D.

**“We shall see Him as He is!”**

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If to *hear* of Him be so sweet below,  
'Mid scenes of temptation, of sickness, and woe,  
Oh ! what will it be when to Heaven we go ?  
    *An eternal gaze at Jesus !*

If to *read* of His wondrous, limitless grace  
Be a joy, as the record Divine we trace !  
What rapture to see His blessed face !  
    *An eternal gaze at Jesus !*

If to *think* of His love, as we sit at His feet,  
And list to His voice, be surpassingly sweet,  
Oh ! bliss beyond telling, when round Him we meet !  
    *An eternal gaze at Jesus !*

If to *learn* of Him, of his lowly ways,  
Be rest to our hearts, in pilgrim days,  
How blest, in His presence, to yield *full* praise !  
    *An eternal gaze at Jesus !*

If to *watch* for His coming, through weary years,  
Be a daily hope, giving smiles for tears,  
What fruition of joy when the Lord appears !  
    *An eternal gaze at Jesus !*

H. L. R.





## OUR WARFARE IN THE HEAVENLIES.

(*Ephes. vi. 10-18.*)

### IV.

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#### 4. The Shield of Faith.

In the preceding paper attention was called to the beautiful moral order of the different parts of the armour of God. First those parts referring to the *inward* man, *i.e.*, the *girdle*, the *breastplate*, and the "*well-shod feet*," then follow the pieces for outward activity. If it is a question as to our standing *before God*, *standing* or *position* (in Christ) comes first, then *state* or *condition* of soul. But in our heavenly warfare *against Satan* and his powers and principalities, as to our standing against such enemies, *state* comes first, then *standing*. First *internal condition*, then *external activity*. First, order in the affections of the *heart*, being kept bound up with Christ by the "*girdle of truth*," then the "*breastplate of righteousness*," the *conscience* kept sweet and clean in the holy light of God's presence, and by walking in the paths of righteousness; then a *mind* at peace with God through the gospel of peace. Without this, the "*shield*" would afford no protection, for then the arm and hand would have no strength to *hold it up*; they might hold perhaps, the shield of Jacob's *contrivances*, but not that of Abraham's *faith*, to whom God said, "*I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.*"

But what kind of faith is it that supports this shield? It is that faith which says, "If God be for us, who shall be against us?"

Then realising what that *God has been, and is, and will be* to us, it continues, "*He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*"

What a mine of truly Divine wealth in that single verse ! Poor miners we are ! If we would more diligently work the mine of God's own Word (in the sense of Prov. ii., 1-5), what nuggets of gold, genuine gold of faith should we bring up from the depths of that shaft of inexhaustible blessing ! The missiles of the adversary would glide off powerless from the "shield of faith," presenting to the aggressor the challenges of faith engraven upon it.\* First the *turning to God*, realising what *He is for us* Rom. viii., 31, 32 ; then the turning round upon the enemy with the challenges in the following verses—challenges of *faith in God* and different to Peter's challenges of *faith in himself* (Mark xiv., 29-31).

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (See also vv. 35-39).

Or such logical conclusions of faith as these :—

"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear ?

"The Lord is the strength of my life—of whom shall I be afraid ?

"When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

"Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear ; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident."

But it must be the "shield of *faith*." The shield of self-confidence, or confidence in men, that "maketh flesh its arm" and leans upon that prop, will be broken to splinters before Satan's weapons. As already observed in our last number : If Israel is to go through the wilderness, they will need faith. And if Israel is to fight in Canaan, they will need faith. And if Israel has not faith for the wilderness, Israel will fail in Canaan. It is the same with the heavenly people of God, only that our adversaries in the heavenlies

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\* Verse 16 in John iii., is a similar mine of gospel blessing, each word being a nugget of Divine gold in itself, as pronounced by the One in Whom all blessings are, to the glory of God, from Whom all blessings flow.

are far superior, both in numbers, subtlety and power, to those Israel had to contend with in the earthly Canaan. They are not the less dangerous because they are spiritual and invisible.

**"THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED."**

But there is one especial kind of projectiles hurled by that Wicked One and his hosts of wickedness, against the Christian warrior in his heavenly warfare, which requires a few closer remarks. I mean Satan's "*fiery darts*." He does not "draw his bow at a venture," but takes a keen aim, and when his arrows, where the "shield of faith" is down, enter in through some unguarded crevice of the armour, they carry infernal fire and poison with them, and only He who was lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness, can prevent those wounds from proving fatal.

If the Christian's warfare here below has been carried on in the aggressiveness of the flesh, and with carnal weapons, instead of the energy of the spirit, like the great champion of faith (2 Cor. x., 3-5), how will he be able to stand his ground above in the heavenly warfare? If he has neglected his access to the sunshine of God's grace in which we stand in Christ Jesus; if the heart has opened the door to Satan through lust, how can he stand and withstand in the heavenly places, against the assaults of the enemy! The "shield of faith" will be down and Satan get power over his soul. Like a coward fleeing from the battle, he will in his flight drop his shield, and at last his armour, piece by piece. In the last number of this magazine (pp. 87-88), I gave a most solemn instance of such a case. The eminent servant of Christ, who mentioned it to several of us many years ago as a warning, wrote about the same time the following timely words, more timely than ever in these last days. I give them here. He wrote :

"I would add, that I do not believe that this is ever a simple case, that is, that it happened by itself, without some producing cause. Satan had tempted for incontinency, a heart which had opened the door to him by lust, which had even strayed out in spirit, into his (Satan's) domains, forsaking God—not in will, perhaps, but in heart—letting

itself loose, exposed itself naturally to his power, particularly in these lusts, which a corrupt will nourishes, which, as the apostle expresses it, '*war against the soul*,' and which are so contrary to the will of God, to His purity and holiness. Where these lusts are, in any degree, wilfully indulged in by one who is a Christian, it is well, if the result be not this terrible power of Satan over the soul, which, for a time at least, darkens the light of God in it, and hides his favour, the knowledge of which only makes the loss of the sense of it more terrible to him who suffers under it. It seems to be gone for ever, at least it may reach this point. At any rate it is the most terrible chastisement which can reach a human heart. If a soul belongs to God it will surely be delivered, but who can say, how long it may suffer. The great remedy against such a danger is to have the soul frequently *in a positive way*, in God's presence, who is light that all may be clear in our conscience, all free in our heart. In a word, that we may not only enjoy blessings *from* Him, but be, as He graciously permits us, *before* Him. I have gone through the effect of not having the "shield of faith" up, and particularly what is the cause of it, as a warning, but the case, blessed be God's grace, is as rare as it is terrible."

Another of these "fiery darts of the wicked," may be mentioned here. It is that of blasphemous and infidel thoughts arising in the mind, or rather being suggested by Satan, who after having suggested them, makes the one, to whom he has whispered them, believe, that he has committed the "sin against the Holy Ghost." It is but another instance of the way in which the arch-deceiver adduces scripture to harass and torment souls, and drive them to despair. When the Lord in Matt. xii. spoke those solemn words that "the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men," and "whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come," he uttered them at the time when the Pharisees had committed the awful blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, by calling him Beelzebub, the prince of the devils (or demons). When saying, "neither in this world nor in the world to come," our Lord did not speak of this visible world, nor of the invisible world to

come as a *scene* of good and evil and blessing or judgment, but of *times* and *ages*. The word in the original ("aion") means "*age*," *i.e.*, it refers to time, be it the *age* or time in which those blaspheming Jews were living, or the "*age to come*, *i.e.*, the *millennial age*. The word employed by the inspired writers when speaking of this created world as a visible "*scene*," is quite different ("kosmos"). The Lord's expression, therefore, clearly refers neither to this visible world nor to the invisible world of eternity. The Lord's meaning, in speaking to and of the Jews, clearly was this, that if a Jew, living at the time of the Lord's presence on earth, or during the millennial time, committed that awful sin, it should not be forgiven him, neither during that age when God was in Christ, reconciling the *world* unto Himself, not imputing trespasses unto them," when "all manner of sin and blasphemy should be forgiven unto men" except this one, *i.e.*, when grace was extended even to the *vilest* penitent sinner, down to the thief on the cross; *that sin* (*i.e.*, the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost) would not be forgiven. Neither would it be forgiven even during the millennial age of Israel's blessing, if that blasphemy should be committed *then* by any of them. We must not lose sight of the fact that those solemn words of the Lord in Matt. xii. were addressed to the *Jews*. It was no question at all of the Gentiles, who knew not God, and were not yet called.

Evidently the Lord spoke of the age of the Jewish dispensation under the old covenant, which was then drawing to its close through their impending rejection of their Messiah, and He points onward to the millennial blessing of Israel under the New Covenant, during Christ's reign over the earth. Those words of the Lord, therefore, do not apply at all to the *Christian age*, whilst the Church is being called from among the Gentiles; the "*times of the Gentiles*." To talk to souls now of committing the "*unpardonable sin*" would almost sound like blasphemy against Christ and His work, whilst the gospel of grace and salvation is being preached, and the message of life and peace still being delivered by thousands of God's ambassadors, proclaiming to penitent sinners the virtue of that precious blood which "*cleanseth from all sin*," and announcing to them through

faith, "*justification from all they have done.*" (Acts xiii.)\* Satan's stratagem is just this. He suggests or whispers blasphemous thoughts, and even blasphemies against the Holy Spirit to a soul, and makes the poor deluded one believe that the blasphemous thought has originated with, or been assented to by him, and then drives him to despair by telling him that he has committed "the unpardonable sin." For such distressing cases peace and deliverance ought to be sought, even the knowledge of God's full and free salvation in Christ Jesus. Of such sorely tempted souls it cannot be said that the "shield of faith" has been *dropped*, for it had never been *up* yet on the arm of faith.

I have dwelt on this subject longer than at first intended, having witnessed many years ago a case of this kind, as an instance of Satan's cruel subtlety.

B—— was a very rich landowner in the Rhine province. He was said to be a millionaire. The enemy had succeeded in persuading him that he had committed the "unpardonable sin" of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Being engaged in preaching the Gospel in the neighbourhood, I went to see him. There he was in his comfortable dwelling-house, amidst his accumulated wealth, the very picture of despair, sitting in his arm-chair at his fireside, surrounded by every comfort of daily life, his grey head bowed down, and his pale face the expression of despondency. His was not the language of Laodicea, saying "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." He knew that he *was* wretched and miserable and poor. He knew it and felt it, but he knew not that he was "*blind and naked.*" Blinded by Satan and the "love of money, which is the root of all evil," and had been used by the enemy to choke the good seed that had been sown, but fallen on stony ground; yet very religious he was, liberal to the poor, and contributed to religious benevolent institutions, which had been used to conceal from him his nakedness before God, before he had been brought to his present state of despair.

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\* The notion of "unpardonable sins" must be left to Rome and its confessionals.

Before him stood a large table, covered with all kinds of religious tracts, many of them poisonous medicines, mixed in the devil's laboratory, and placed there by B'——s many religious friends and visitors from the neighbourhood. The Gospel was put before him, both in its solemn and in its bright aspects, and he was advised to clear his table and make a clean riddance of those unwholesome religious drugs that covered it, and keep solely to the Word of God. At the same time the delusions of the enemy were shown up to him, and he was warned against listening to them. He appeared to be much affected, and when I left him he sat erect, drawing a deep breath of relief, and a beam of hope appeared to brighten his sunken eyes and features. But at my next visit, on coming to that neighbourhood again, I found the table again covered more than before with Satan's anti-Gospel drugs, and himself relapsed into his old desponding position and, if possible, more miserable still. For several years, when coming again into those parts, I visited him again, but found him always the same; sometimes momentarily relieved and hopeful, and then again in the depths of despair. The secret of the continuing power of the enemy appeared to be this, that the knife had not been put to the quick, and the real root of the matter—the love of money—never been really judged, besides the leaven of wrong religious doctrines daily ministered to the poor victim of the wily enemy.

On a visit to the Continent several years later, I heard that he had died—how? I could not learn. His spiritual condition at his death seemed not to have been divulged. If he really was the Lord's, there is no doubt but that God delivered him, and set his soul at rest.

I have given this solemn case as a warning in these perilous times of worldliness and money-making amongst religious professors—and Christians, too, alas!—and at the same time as a caution against the pernicious effects of those poisonous mixtures and narcotic drams ministered to precious souls in the deadly shadow and atmosphere of the religious Upas tree of the present evil age.

May the Good Shepherd who died for His sheep, keep them feeding peacefully and in childlike simplicity in the

only safe pastures of Holy Writ, indited by His Spirit, who "glorifieth *Him*, receiveth of *His*, and sheweth it unto us," that we may grow by the sincere, *i.e.*, pure and unadulterated milk of the Word of God, growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Satan cannot follow us into His presence, nor can his "fiery darts" reach us there.

On the "helmet of salvation" and the "sword of the Spirit" next time, if the Lord will.

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### FRAGMENTS.

We are apt to limit and to say : "*Some* things have worked together for our good." God says : "*all things*."—Joys, sorrows, crosses, losses, prosperity, adversity, health, sickness, the gourd bestowed, and the gourd withered; the cup full, and the cup emptied; the lingering sick-bed; useful lives taken; spiritual props removed. The apostle does not say, "We *see*, but "we *know*." It is the province of faith, to trust in the dark.

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The very blessing of the Church brings us into a kind of conflict, that we should know nothing of, apart from such a position and privileges and blessings. So the church is subject to more failure and evil than either Jews or Gentiles were, because they were not set in the same blessings. A Jew might do many things which would be monstrous in a Christian, and find no defilement in his conscience. The veil that was over the knowledge of God, being rent, the light shines out, and the consequence is that this light, which has come out of the holy place, cannot tolerate evil. Christians, if not walking in the light, are in a more dangerous position than a Jew. Satan may draw and entice me with many things which would have no power against me if I were not so favored. Hence the need of the exhortation : "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."



## **"THE THIRD TIME THAT JESUS SHOWED HIMSELF TO HIS DISCIPLES."**

On the very day of His resurrection, within those closed doors in Jerusalem, the Lord appeared to His disciples as they sat at meat, instantly and graciously announcing that "peace" which He had made, and by His presence in their midst, His words, and actions, He fully convinced all those present that He was indeed risen from the dead. Thomas, not being then present, still doubted, and after eight days Jesus came the *second* time and stood in the midst of His disciples, Thomas sees and believes, and reverently acknowledges the risen Saviour to be his Lord and his God.

From John's words we gather that each of these appearances to His disciples occurred in Jerusalem, which certain of the apostles presently leave, and retire to the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee.

Here Peter's natural energy prompts him to say "I go a fishing." His six companions answer, "We also go with thee." No sooner said than done, for they "entered into a ship immediately." Viewed from a human standpoint merely, their promptness and diligence is commendable. But they expended their natural energies in vain, for notwithstanding their ceaseless efforts, "that night they caught nothing." *They* are occupied with their own labour and fruitless toil, but their risen Lord thinks of and cares for *them*. When His own were in Jerusalem He stood in the midst; now that they are many miles from that city, He again is with them, although, as yet, they discern Him not.

Now, as then, the saint of God may fully rely upon the practical fulfilment of His own gracious promise, viz., "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

After that long, sleepless night of arduous toil came the morning. Jesus is standing on the shore, but they discern not their Lord. Alas! How often have we been equally unconscious of His presence, until, like them, we have been aroused to the consciousness of His nearness by some unlooked for token of His unceasing and tender care for His own.

"CHILDREN, HAVE YE ANY MEAT?"

This affectionately-worded enquiry, expressive of the tender concern on His part who made it, is replied to by the curt answer, "No." Yet it was well on their part to own their failure.

He speaks the second time, now saying, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." Instant obedience is rewarded by immediate blessing, for a multitude of fishes are enclosed in the net. Were we more prompt to obey, the desires of our hearts would often be more promptly given us, but in the Lord's own way.

That disciple whom Jesus loved is the first to discern his Lord. John, discerning His presence, remains contentedly at his post, devotedly toiling in harmony with his Lord's command. May we all profit by John's example!

"IT IS THE LORD."

John's words stir Peter's heart to its utmost depth. They instantly recall to him the incomparable preciousness of the Person of Him that stands upon the shore. His ardent spirit and sincere affection for Jesus each displays itself in a way most remarkable. Although they are the result of the Lord's blessing on that last casting of the net—what is the value of all those fishes therein contained compared with the privilege of being in the Lord's own presence. Peter thinks more of his Lord than he does of the fishes.

But the ship itself is even more valuable than the fishes. Peter springs out of the ship. The ship is nothing to Peter with his Lord on the shore. It was he who proposed that fishing expedition, but now even his six devoted helpers are all left without any ceremony because "It is the Lord" that stands upon the shore.

Was not this leaving his brethren in the lurch? Had they not abundant reason to complain of his leaving service and turning his back upon his brethren? When the Lord gave the word "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught," it was Peter who "went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes."

He had left fishes, ship, and his brethren, in his desire to be on the shore with Jesus; now the very position he occupies who had set the Lord before all else that he held

dear, enables him the more effectually to help his loved brethren. For when it is a matter of drawing the net to land, he has the decided advantage of firm footing upon the shore. Those whom he left in the ship are now the better helped by Peter by the very fact of his leaving them to be with his Lord.

May the realised presence of the Lord be more to us than the results of the Lord's blessing upon our labours; yea, more to us than our nearest and dearest fellow-labourers; and He will certainly give us the privilege of helping all the more effectually by reason of our having set Himself before all.

When the disciples reached the land they saw a fire of coals which they had not kindled, fish thereon which they had not caught, and bread of their Lord's own providing. They were to be His highly favoured guests, and receive of His bounty. Yet He graciously condescends to own and acknowledge the fruit of their toil. His own resources are infinite, yet will He have them to bring of the fish which they have caught.

“COME AND BREAKFAST.”

He says, and in His own presence they rest after all their toil. “Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.” They are His guests, and He, their host,—the Lord of life and glory,—waits upon them in infinitely rich and condescending grace.

The apostles own comment is, “This is now the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead.” Yes, “Jesus showed Himself,” not now to simply prove the fact of His resurrection, as even Thomas was already convinced that Jesus was indeed risen; but on this *third* occasion “Jesus showed Himself,” and convinced His own disciples that their risen Lord was He, who during the days of His ministry, had ever met all their need. Whether seen or unseen He was with them always, unceasing in His watchful care over them, meeting every emergency, and blessing others by their means even after their own failures were apparent to themselves. Very many and valuable lessons we may each and all learn by this third appearance of Jesus to His disciples.

The contemplation of that scene upon the sea shore of Lake Gennesaret recalls to our hearts the promise of the Lord as to their reward who are found watching when He returns. He will gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and come forth and serve them.

A. J.

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## JUDGMENT AND CONFESSION.

*Psalms l. and li.*

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The Psalms contain both prophetic and moral instruction for our souls. Prophetically, we have the sufferings of Christ and the dealings of God with Israel, particularly in the last days. His chastisement of them in His government for their sins, His restoring grace in planting them once more in their own favoured land; and the feelings of the believing remnant of His people in view of all this. Morally, this is precious instruction for the heart at all times and whatever may be the dispensation. Rightly read, there is much food in the tillage of this wonderful book.

Psalms l. and li. are a pair, and must be considered together to see their respective beauty and force. In the first, God comes in power and glory, and enters into judgment with His people; in the second, those who are true in the midst of Israel, broken-heartedly confess their state, and the state of their nation before Him, and beseech His mercy.

In verses 1-6 of Psalm l., we have grandly described the coming in power of Him who is El-Elohim-Jehovah; He comes to "judge the people." He comes for the blessing and deliverance of the nation, and for the establishment of His kingdom, as Psalms xlv. and lxxii. fully show; but before this can be realised, He must take account of His people.

Note, Zion is called "the perfection of beauty," as in Psalm xlviii. she is described as "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." How wonderful after all her sins!

Truly, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." But even now she is called by the spirit "the holy city," (Dan. ix. 24, Matt. xxvii. 53). It is a precious lesson that God is able to come in over all human sin and failure, and carry out His own gracious purposes for the glory of Christ in spite of all.

Jehovah distinguishes His saints, the godly remnant, from the mass in verse 5, "those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." They have learned that the death of Christ was for their sins and iniquities, and have placed themselves in faith under the virtue of that sacrifice before God.

In verses 1-6, as another has remarked, the judgment is set; in the following verses the books, as it were, are opened, and the charges brought out. They are two-fold. Jehovah complains of their worship (verses 7-15); and of their general moral ways (verses 16-23). They had heaped sacrifices upon His altar, were abundant in forms, and thought that God was such an one as themselves, satisfied with mere ritual and formality. But of what value is all this to God, when the heart is elsewhere? The remnant feel this in Psalm li. 16. The beasts of the forest are His, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; He needs nothing from His people. But the overflow of renewed hearts is precious to Him at all times; whoso offereth praise gives Him glory. This He values, and nought besides.

But the moral ways of Israel were also bad, and Jehovah proceeds to charge it home upon them. He looked for righteousness—He was entitled so to do; but he found none. Has He not noted all their iniquity, their fellowship with thieves and adulterers, their evil mouth and deceitful tongue? Though He has kept silence, He has seen all, and reproves them, and sets all in order before their eyes. How inexpressibly solemn! Well might the Psalmist say, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified."

In the following Psalm we have the other side, the confession of those who feel all deeply before God. The historical occasion of this psalm was the coming of Nathan, the prophet, to David after his sin with Bathsheba. But the

Spirit of God carries the penitent far beyond his own case, and gives us touchingly the deep and true confession of the remnant of David's people in the last days. It is not unusual for the Spirit to deal thus with a vessel. In speaking of kingdom-glory and covenant-faithfulness in Psalms lxxii. and lxxxix., the Psalmist got carried far beyond Solomon, and speaks plainly of Christ. So, in this chapter of confession, the Spirit sees beyond the repentant King on to the time of the end.

Mercy is sought in verse 1, the ground, according to Rom. x., on which God will restore Israel at the latter day. Sin is fully confessed, forgiveness and cleansing are longed for, and God is justified in all. These are always the marks of a true soul. Where the work is superficial, sin is apt to be slurred over, because God is but little known; but the writer here looks at all in the light of the Divine presence, and speaks and judges accordingly. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight."

But the Psalmist goes deeper, and looks not only at the fruit, but at the root of all. The nature is corrupt. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Solemn, but true. On such a stock good fruit can never grow; only the new man, wrought upon by the spirit, can bring forth fruit unto God." In the Gospel we learn that God has dealt with the corrupt root as well as the evil fruits in the cross; and full deliverance is ours by faith in Christ dead and risen. Rom. i. to. viii. fully unfolds this.

The remnant accept the chastisement as from God; asking to hear joy and gladness, "that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice (v. 8). The yearning that iniquities be blotted out will be fully answered when Christ appears and the new covenant is made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah; then, their sins and iniquities shall be remembered no more (Heb. x.). The penitent beseeches God to hide His face from his sins, but not from him; "hide Thy face from my sins"; "cast me not away from Thy presence" (vs. 9-11). The gravest sin confessed is "blood-guiltiness." David doubtless thought of Uriah; the remnant, like Judah with regard to Joseph, will think of Christ whom their fathers slew. When they clamoured for

his death, they cried, "His blood be on us and on our children" (Matt. xxvii. 25); and God holds the nation responsible accordingly. But faith will learn in the coming day, that the blood which their fathers guiltily shed was an atonement for their souls, in the wisdom and grace of God. In making confession, David (the remnant, too in their day) prays that the Holy Spirit may not be taken away. This no Christian could say, the Spirit being given to all such in virtue of accomplished redemption; but David knew not this abiding privilege, nor will the believing Jews presently.

The results are given in verses 18-19: "Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness" &c. This will be seen when Christ comes, when Israel's broken-hearted confession is accepted, their sins blotted out, and Zion becomes a praise in the earth. Meanwhile the godly feel that mere sacrifice and burnt offering is but little worth, that God prefers a broken spirit, and never will despise a broken and contrite heart. But when their proper relationship is fully established, and the Lo-Ammi sentence is reversed, Jehovah will accept their sacrifices of righteousness, their burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings, their bullocks upon His altar. But truly confession, heart searching, and brokenness of spirit before God in view of human failure and sin, is good for the soul, whatever the day may be.

W. W. F.

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### "ABBA, FATHER."

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Is there not a lack of a due knowledge of the Father in most saved souls? a lack of the knowledge of their relationship as sons? a want of *filial* affection and communion with the *name*, and *grace*, and *love* of our Heavenly Father? Surely there is, and a consequent loss of the blessing proper to that holy relationship, and a want of understanding of that wondrous word of the Lord Jesus.

"I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, *for the Father Himself loveth you*" (John xvi., 26-27).

I make bold to say that the gracious Lord, in teaching His poor disciples, sought to lead their minds and hearts to a knowledge of the Father's love, more than to aught else. *He could* tell them of His love—"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you" (John xv.)—of washing the feet of His own, of heavenly mansions, and of His return for them, with other precious truths which fell from His lips as they flowed from His heart of love; yet, as it seems to me, nothing does He insist upon so much, as that they (and we) should understand the *love* and *care* of the *Father*. He who of Himself could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," came to reveal the Father, and marvellous it is, that while in His dependence as the humble man on earth, He cried, "Abba, Father" (Mark xiv., 36). \* The Holy Ghost puts the same cry into the mouth of the sons. "Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father'" (Rom. viii, 15). Again that remarkable passage in Gal. iv, 6, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying 'Abba, Father.'" It must be confessed that many believers are yet without solid peace. Not having judged themselves as totally ruined and helpless, they are not "thrown over" (if I may use the expression) *on Christ Himself* for righteousness divine before God. They do not get a perfect conscience in God's presence, and cannot enjoy a fixed, settled peace, founded on Christ's efficacious work and glorious person. Other saints again, from careless walk, alas! from sin and self, grieve the Holy Spirit of God, the sacred guest of the child of God, whose body is His temple. How can such have joy and peace in believing?" (Rom. xv. 13.) A grieved Spirit, because He is the *Holy* Spirit, cannot be the spring of "joy and peace" to such, or of access to the Father. These all will be, according to their need, looking rather to a Saviour

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\* The Lord, during His humiliation on earth, whilst constantly in testimony and in prayer, referring to His Father and turning to Him, yet only *once* uttered the word "*Abba*." It was in Gethsemane, when the "prince of this world" sought to bring all the terrors of death to bear upon Him, and that awful *cup* was before Him. It was there and then that the cry, "*Abba, Father*," went up to God from the depths of His agony. How different our "*Abba, Father!*" Blessed be that love that procured it through such sufferings!—Ed.



and a knowledge of redemption than entering into the joy of "access by one Spirit unto the Father"—to the blessed acquaintance of "truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ."

But oh! as the loved apostle could witness,

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!" \*

The Father's heart of love was the spring, the living source of all our blessings and mercies. All flowed from Him according to His own grace and mercy, which is "from everlasting to everlasting." He would not spare, but gave freely, "the Son, who is in the bosom of the Father;" and the Son could say of His own, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name, those whom Thou hast given Me."

I would again refer to Scripture, and that affords the beautiful witness to us and a various and affecting testimony, meeting the children of God, as it were, on every side, whether as to the love of the Father, or that which should mould their walk and draw out the affections of their souls to Him. In the gospels of Matthew and Luke we find the gracious Lord telling them that,

"Your *Father* knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him,"

and that "the very hairs of their heads were all numbered." It was "the *Father's* good pleasure to give them the kingdom"—that they were to be "perfect as their Father in heaven was perfect."† And how sweet that word:

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your *Father in heaven* give good things unto them that ask him."

Therefore,

"Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find."

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\* The original text says "children" ("tekna"), not "sons" ("huoi"). The word "children" expresses nearness of relationship in affection; "sons," position and privilege of relationship, with corresponding responsibilities and duties.—Ed.

† In Matt. v. we have the *kingdom* and its principles, in ch. vi. the *Father's love* and the confidence that should answer it.—Ed.

Dear reader, I would inquire plainly of you, whether you possess that *confidence in your Father's love*, that *sense of relationship* and of your full title to say, "*Abba Father*," the strongest cord, as another has said, round a man's heart—that you can be without fear before Him in worship, in making known all your requests with thanksgiving, and have liberty to confess everything to Him? *What a place it is!* The sweet sense that a *Father's* heart rests in His love over you.—*His eye ever upon you—His ear open to every cry, yea groan* (see Rom. viii. 23)—*His power* (Almighty) causing

*"All things to work together for good."*

In John's Gospel, where the Lord Jesus is not revealed as Messiah, but in the full divine glory as the Son of God and Son of the Father, what blessed unfoldings we have as to the Father! "The true worshippers shall worship the *Father* in spirit and in truth, for the *Father seeketh* such to worship Him" (Ch. iv. 23). Further:

"That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you."

Further:

"If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My *Father* will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

And, to conclude these citations, which speak for themselves in their surpassing sweetness, that most blessed word of Jesus in His prayer (xvii.):

"I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it, that the love, wherewith thou has loved me, may be in them, and I in them."

I appeal again, reader, as I would to my own soul and conscience—do you *enter into this*, tasting of the love of God, your Father, *and of such manner and character of love?*—Happy he who does so in any measure, and walks in the power of an ungrieved Spirit—"the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "*Abba, Father*."

To continue a little. The reading of the precious Scriptures, that bring the *Father* before us in the riches of His grace and glory, I feel to be most blessed. What a testimony does the Epistle to the Ephesians afford us!

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

This is founded, I doubt not, on the Lord's own declaration after His resurrection,

"Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto *My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God*" (John xx.).

unfolding our standing in the same position with Himself, with His Father in redemption, and our blessed relationship. And the reader will observe how this pervades the Epistle, Ch. i., 4, it is as God.

"He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world."

It is as *Father* that He has

"Predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself" (v. 5).

Wondrous revelation of grace and love! He would have "*children to Himself.*" Sons near Himself! Further, as most know, the prayer of Ch. i. is addressed "to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory." In Ch. iii. it is: "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is as to *communion*, the former as to *power*. John tells us in his first epistle of "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ," the blood of Jesus Christ having cleansed us from all sin, "so that we can walk in the light, as He is in the light." And in a passage before quoted he does not try to explain or define it, but calls our attention to the love "the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God," the blessed relationship following from His heart of love, and securing His children by such a word,

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous."

However hateful sin is, yet provision is thus made, because "grace reigns through righteousness," and there is the advocacy of Christ. If I have quoted at some length from scripture, dear reader, it was to bring out what the Holy Ghost reveals to us as to the Father, and our deep

heavenly blessing, our heavenly relationship as *children of God*. And now I would say, let us seek to know more of the place of sons—the *filial affection*. Let us in more simplicity have confidence in our Father,—more waiting on Him as dear children. It is not that it is to lessen our knowledge of, and dependence and obedience to our Lord Jesus; nay, but to increase it. The Father's eye and heart are ever on Him, and it is in communion with the Father that we really see the dignity of Christ's person, His beauty and glory as the Son of Man who is in heaven. God has revealed Himself in the person of His dear Son, and in Him we find our all; our life, righteousness, motive, strength and wisdom. The true knowledge of the glory of Christ's person opens to us the counsels of God; and in Him, indeed, we know the Father. Let us by the Eternal Spirit's power, who dwelleth in us, and who down here is the spring of all our knowledge of the Father and the Son—for even the new man in us cannot take the things of Christ and show them to itself, we are absolutely dependent on the Holy Ghost—let us, I would humbly say, in the hand of that blessed Spirit, ungrieved and unhindered, seek to have more fully “our fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Amen.

BY ONE OF THE FATHER'S CHILDREN.

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## READINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

(Ch. ii., 23-25).

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The chapter closes with the statement that when Jesus was in Jerusalem, at the passover in the feast day, many believed “when they saw the miracles which He did.” They had, by way of a mental conclusion, arrived at the conviction that Jesus must be “a teacher, come from God,” because no man could do the miracles which He did, except God was with Him, as Nicodemus said, *before he was born again*. “But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for *He knew what was in man*.”

When a servant applies for a situation, the master or mistress of the house require him to produce a written testimony as to his character, because they "do *not* know what is *in* man." But He who "searcheth the reins and the hearts," when Peter was introduced to Him, could say, when He "beheld Him, "Thou art Simon, the Son of Jona: Thou shalt be called Cephas" (*i.e.*, a *stone*). How different, indeed, was Peter's confession to that of those Jews, some of whom (belonging to the class referred to above) said that He was Elias, some, John the Baptist, and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. Peter gave to the Lord's question: "But whom say *ye* that I am?" that glorious reply: "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" Flesh and blood, the reasonings of the head, had not revealed that to Peter, "but," said the Lord, "My Father which is in Heaven."

Was then this truth, that Christ as Son of God must be revealed by the Father, an excuse for their unbelief? In no wise. Did not the Lord say: "Seek and ye shall find?" "Ask, and it shall be given unto you?" "Knock, and it shall be opened to you?" The little band in the closing part of John i. had been seeking—earnestly *seeking*, as their joyful words of discovery, "We have found Him," proved. So they had *found*. Nathaniel had been "asking" and "knocking" under the fig tree, and so it was given to him to recognise in Jesus the "King of Israel;" nay more, the the door of a still higher revelation was opened to him: that Jesus was not only the Messiah, and the King of Israel, but the *Son of God*.

Not so those at the close of our chapter. They had, indeed, not the effrontery of those Jews in the temple to say, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" whilst Jerusalem and the country were ringing with the fame of His mighty deeds, occurring under their very eyes. No, they "believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did." But the Lord "did not commit Himself unto them." Their faith had its spring in the *brain*, instead of in the *heart*. *Genuine, i.e.*, divinely wrought *faith, hope, and love*, must be matters of the *heart*.

In the sense of John ii. (23-24) it may be said, that some may believe, *i.e.*, give a mental assent to gospel truths, without being saved. To assert such a thing about true believers, would be monstrous.

But we shall (p.v.) enter more closely upon this the next time, if the Lord will.

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## SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS' PAGE.

### THE SCOTCH SAILOR.

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Much has been written to encourage Sunday-school teachers to hope for a *future* blessing on their labours, even though they may see no present results; and we have often read cheering accounts of "bread cast upon the waters" being found again "after many days." May I add an instance which has just come under my own notice, of the way in which the truths taught in the Sunday-school come back to the memory after long years of forgetfulness?

A Scotch sailor lay between life and death in a London hospital. God had spoken to his conscience: he felt and owned his lost condition as a sinner, and now Satan was seeking to drive him to despair, and so keep him away from the Saviour who was so ready to receive him. He thought he was too bad to be saved: all was dark, he said; and he refused to be comforted, when a dear Christian nurse sought to show him how bright all might be, if he would but come to the Lord.

He was in this state when a visitor came to his bedside, and spoke to him of the Lord Jesus. He listened willingly, but seemed afraid to take to himself the gracious messages read to him from God's Word. He had been such a bad man—too bad to be forgiven—that seemed to be his one thought, expressed in broken whispers, for he was too ill to speak aloud.

But as the visitor took leave, after putting before him in a few simple words the love and grace of the One who said: "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out," he

held her hand fast, and would hardly let it go, while he murmured something in tones too faint for her to catch. She could but think that a ray of hope had entered his heart, but knew nothing certainly till she saw him a week or two later. Then she found that dear P—— had come to the Lord Jesus, and knew that he had not been cast out.

"*That's what I'm hanging on to,*" he feebly gasped, as she quoted a passage from God's Word, and at intervals he was able to tell her that he did believe in the Lord Jesus, and had everlasting life, and that he knew his sins were forgiven.

P—— still lives, too weak to speak above a whisper, or to express much joyfulness, but he is calmly resting in the Lord, and, little though he says, there is no mistaking the peace he enjoys, or the love and gratitude with which he looks up to the God whom he can now call "*Abba Father.*" Yesterday his visitor was speaking of the precious blood of Christ, which had cleansed him from all his sins.

"*All rubbed out,*" was his whispered answer.

Then he told how two of his little ones go to the same Sunday-School in Scotland which he used to attend as a boy. His visitor asked whether he could remember now the things he learned at the Sunday-School.

"Yes," he said; "they all come back to me now—the texts and the little hymns. And I remember many a question Mr. J—— asked me."

"I daresay you had forgotten it all these years?"

"Yes, but I remember it all now."

And so, while the dear man lies there on his bed of pain (most patiently borne), with scarcely strength to read or speak, the lessons learned in the dear old Sunday School come back and comfort and sustain his heart.

C.H.P.

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### FRAGMENTS.

When called to endure tribulations, I am not to question: "*How shall I pass through it?*" but I am assured *beforehand* that they shall not "be able to separate me from the love of Christ, nor from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." Is not this enough?

"I beseech you, my dear friend, to abide by that one dictum, '*It is written*,' and leave 'It appears to me' to the philosophers. . . . Theological verities themselves, in their harmony and beauty, are to be looked for in the Scriptures alone. It is there we find their best mutual illustration; and we must ever consider the sacred Volume as its own safest and best interpreter."

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## JESUS.

THE NAME OF NAMES.

*Philippians ii., 9, 10.*

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One Name above all others !  
 Oh, what a precious Name !  
 No wonder that while musing  
 Love burns with brighter flame.  
 My Lord and Saviour, Jesus,  
 Ever abides with me :  
 A priceless, peerless treasure :  
 Oh, what is He to thee ?  
 My solace in each sorrow,  
 My light 'mid nature's gloom ;  
 My rest 'mid strife and tumult,  
 My star that guides me home ;  
 My fragrant "Rose of Sharon,"  
 The King of high renown ;  
 Fountain of truest pleasures,  
 My glory, and my crown.  
 Yes, He is all my treasure,  
 I need not aught beside ;  
 With His strong arm defending,  
 What ill can e'er betide ?  
 He's "altogether lovely,"  
 In Him no spot I see ;  
 The chiefest of ten thousand,—  
 Oh, what is He to thee ?

M.



## OUR WARFARE IN THE HEAVENLIES.

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(*Eph. vi. 10-18.*)

### V.

#### 5. THE "HELMET OF SALVATION."

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What the helmet is for the protection of the head against the blows of the enemy, the *assurance of salvation* is for the soul of the believer in his contest with those wicked spirits in the heavenly places. By "salvation" we understand the salvation not of the soul only, as a thing of the present, but of the body also, as a future fact, the latter, as presented in the Epistle to the Philippians, being as certain as the former, both being mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans (chs. v., viii., and xiii.), whilst in Ephesians the salvation of the *soul*, as a present thing, is chiefly spoken of.

Before proceeding, let me offer a few remarks on the meaning of salvation in the Christian sense.

*What is Christian Salvation?*

"*Salvation*" in the New Testament, *i.e.*, Christian sense, has not a mere *negative* meaning, of "*not coming into condemnation*," but an intensely blessed *positive* sense of having "*passed from death unto life*." It is not only "*no condemnation*" for you who believe, but you "*are in Christ Jesus*," *praised* be God for the former, and *blessed* for the latter. "*Salvation*" for the Christian believer means not only God taking you *out of a condition* of being *lost*, but *into a position of acceptance in Christ Jesus*. It means, God in his pitying mercy and redeeming love taking us *clean out of the first Adam* and placing us *in the last Adam*, even Christ Jesus, the "Lord from Heaven." How many stop

short at the *negative* side of salvation ("shall *not* come into judgment") knowing little of having "*passed from death unto life*," and of "*having eternal life*," leave alone having a position—"standing," nay, "*acceptance*" in Christ, as being the "*righteousness of God in Him*" (2 Cor. v.), and "*accepted in the Beloved*" (Eph. i.). Such souls remaining in partial obscurity of the *positive* side of the gospel, under the influence of a defective gospel, or from culpable, selfish neglect, do not know the full meaning of Christian "*salvation*," and are deprived of the full joy of God's salvation and of true "*rejoicing in Christ Jesus*."

Even in the Old Testament we meet with the same use of the term "*salvation*" (only, of course, not in the same Christian sense), when it first occurs as applied to Israel in Exod. xiv.

*"Stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah, which He will shew to you this day."*

God was about to take them out of Egypt, the place of slavery, death and judgment, and transfer them to the shore of safety and deliverance on the *other side* of the *Red Sea*, after having made them pass dry-shod through the midst of it. The waters which were *death* and *judgment* to Pharaoh and his hosts, were dry ground (or *life*) and *deliverance* to Israel—a figure of the place which the Lord of glory in His wondrous love and grace took for us upon the cross.

Such as are ignorant of the true meaning of "*salvation*" in the Christian sense, will be ill-fitted for the warfare in the heavenlies. Of what kind can be the "*helmet of salvation*" they wear? It can be neither bright nor solid, but must be dull and dim, full of dents from the blows of the adversary. Only divine mercy can prevent its being battered in, and protect the head of its wearer.

How bright and shining and solid was the "*helmet of salvation*" of the great apostle of grace and glory, when the dauntless bondman of Christ, standing as a prisoner before Festus and King Agrippa, spoke those memorable words:

"I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that

hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

God grant that our "helmet of salvation" may be more like that of Paul, shining brightly in the polish of glory in these dark days of rationalism and infidelity, and reflecting the light of Him, Who, being the brightness of the glory of God, was crucified for us, having shone in this world as "the light of the world" with equal, undimmed brightness from first to last, and loved His own, who were in the world, with perfect love—"unto the end."

Before closing this paper, a few words on the 8th verse of 1 Thess. v. The apostle enjoins the Thessalonians, as he does the Ephesians, to "put on the *breastplate* and the *helmet*," only with this difference, that to the Thessalonians he speaks of the "breastplate of *faith and love*," and the "helmet of the *hope* of salvation." Why this difference of expression? Simply because Thessalonian believers are not viewed as doing warfare in the "*heavenly places*" (which is the characteristic point of view in the Epistle to the *Ephesians* (Chs. i., ii., iii., and vi.), but as witnesses of the truth amidst a hostile world. They were exposed to severe persecutions, and therefore needed the breastplate of *faith* rather than that of righteousness. There was no doubt as to their walking in the paths of righteousness, or the apostle would not have called them his "crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming." But he was afraid, that their faith might waver under the hail-storm of persecutions levelled against them by the tempter, lest his labour amongst them might be in vain (1 Thess. iii. 5). To that intent he had sent Titus, to "establish them and comfort them concerning their faith, that no man should be moved by these afflictions," for "we are appointed thereunto" (vv. 2 & 3). But it was not the "breastplate of faith" only they needed, but of "*faith and love*," lest they should suffer themselves to be provoked by those persecutions, unmindful of one of the chief features of the Christian's character, to "bless them which persecute us," to "bless and curse not," and to "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

It would be absurd to talk of a breastplate of *love* in our contest with those wicked spirits in the heavenlies, the instigators of the persecutions of the faithful in all ages. It is in conflict with poor deluded human adversaries, set on and led on by Satan and his spiritual hosts of wickedness that the "breastplate of *faith* and *love*" is needed. In our heavenly warfare it is the "*breastplate of righteousness*" and the "*shield of faith*."

The *helmet* of the "*hope of salvation*" (1 Thess. v. 8). In our contest with our enemies in the heavenly places, *i.e.* in the air (Eph. ii. 2; and vi.) it is the "helmet of salvation," *i.e.*, the salvation of our *souls* as a *present thing* that is required. It was different with the Thessalonians, as it is with us in the days of persecution by the enemy's tools in this world. There it is not so much the question of the certainty of our *souls'* present salvation, but of the final salvation of our *bodies* at the coming of our Lord, as presented in Rom. viii. 23-25, and xiii. 11, 12, and in the Epistle to the Philippians. It was the looking onward to the fulfilment of that bright hope, which was to enable the Thessalonians to stand firm amidst the storm of persecution.

And *we* have that same hope of our dear Lord's coming, to change these poor bodies of ours and fashion them "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," "like unto His glorious body,"—giving us the final *bodily lift* (as now already spiritually) *above* this "valley of tears" and "of the shadow of death" and up to *Himself*, when He will lead His redeemed of every age into the "Father's House," and say, "Behold, I and the children, which God hath given me."

Then contests in heaven or on earth will be a thing of the past, and God will wipe away all tears from the faces of His children.

"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 57, 58).

(*To be continued*).

## EARLY MARKS OF DIVINE LIFE.

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It is truly refreshing to the soul to ponder the first epistle to the Thessalonians, and to observe the operations of the Spirit of God in those youthful believers, and the precious fruit borne in abundance by them. Scripture brings before us experience as well as doctrine; it is not only profitable for doctrine, but also for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. iii.). In the epistle to the Philippians, we get Christian experience of an advanced order, they being saints of long standing in grace, persons who had proved God in a variety of ways and circumstances; in Thessalonians we have the divine life manifesting itself in its early stages. Both show fruit in due season; but the season is different.

The Apostle's stay at Thessalonica was apparently very short. He was soon hunted from the town by the unbelieving Jews, and had to leave the converts to God. Hearing that persecution had broken out against them for the sake of the Lord Jesus, and being very anxious about them, he thought it good to be left at Athens alone, and sent Timothy to establish them, and to comfort them concerning their faith. On his return, bringing good tidings of their faith and joy, his heart expressed itself in this letter (probably the earliest he ever wrote). His heart rejoiced deeply at the work of the Spirit in them; the divine life was healthy and vigorous; he was comforted by the tidings of it in all his own afflictions and distress.

Notice how he addresses his epistle to them: "To the Church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ." The second epistle opens similarly. The language is to be observed, being different from all the other apostolical letters. The explanation lies, doubtless, in the fact that they were babes; for in John's epistle, where the family is classified, the babes are characterised as knowing the Father. If such know but little else, if as yet all the great truths of Christianity are not understood by them, they know Him of whom they have been begotten, the

Spirit of God in them teaching them to cry "Abba Father." This is one of the earliest marks of divine life.

And, further, Paul thanked God for their "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. i. 3). Here we get the three great characteristics of Christian life in this world; as we read, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. xiii. 13). All was in the sight of God the Father; the divine life develops itself in His presence, the soul is consciously under His eye, it learns of Him. It is deplorable for the progress of the soul if the sense of God's presence is lost.

All their good works sprang from *faith*. Divine faith is never inoperative, but produces manifest fruit, as James reminds us. (James ii.) Works prior to faith are either "wicked" or "dead"—(Col. i. 21; Heb. ix. 13)—but God looks for good works from those who have been born of Him, and have His Spirit. (Eph. ii., 10.) We read of some who had begun to wax wanton against Christ, because they had cast off their first faith. (1 Tim. v. 11, 12). Christ was no longer before them as at the first, faith was no longer fresh and bright; the whole spiritual tone was low in consequence. Let us profit by the word, and brace ourselves up, beloved brethren. God is with us still, the Lord God of Elijah is the same to His saints as ever. Where is our faith in Him? Where is the faith that looks to Him, draws on His boundless resources, labouring energetically in the world for His Glory? "We walk by faith"; we are only sustained in a fruit-bearing condition in measure as we keep the Lord before us, and allow His Spirit to act unhindered within.

*Love* was there also, and love delights to serve; therefore we read of "labour" or "toil." The Thessalonians could have said with Paul, "The love of Christ constraineth us." (2 Cor. v. 14.) When the heart cools toward the Lord, the labour, if continued, is of little value in His eyes. We see this in His address to the assembly at Ephesus. (Rev. ii). Works were abundant, earnest care was there to avoid fellowship with evil, false apostles were refused as liars, but the heart was wrong. The Lord commended all the good, but said, "I have against

thee\* that thou hast left thy first love." And the Lord calls it a fall, and exhorts the assembly to repent. His love is changeless and unending; He looks to His own that are in the world for a response to it. Shall we not render it to Him? But in this we have to watch ourselves, so deceitful are our hearts, that we slip not into self occupation, than which nothing is more unhappy. It is not unusual for a young believer to experience deep distress, because after a time he does not discern, as he thinks, the same glowing affection towards Christ, as at the beginning, and then Satan comes in with the word in Rev. ii. (just quoted) to harrass the soul; for the enemy can use Scripture with us, as we know from the record of the temptation in the wilderness. Now, this is a danger, and some have been completely bowed down by it; but the fact is, that love to Christ, after a while, as His own love becomes a more precious known reality, develops into what I may call a deep settled affection; not expressing itself, perhaps, quite in the same way as at the first, but none the less real and true. It is the same in nature; the love of the husband who has been long years united to his wife, is deep and true, yet it does not display itself in quite the same way as in the early days of love. While we should ever be self-judging people, we must guard against being self-occupied people. If our hearts dwell on His love, ours to Him will readily and spontaneously flow out, and service to His Name will result.

*Hope* was bright at Thessalonica also: looking for the Lord was an integral part of their Christianity. They had turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. If the hope is missed, the fruit of the Spirit is incomplete. We are saved by hope, we are called to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, we are to abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, for God has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. Yet how many there are who have never grasped it, and who are looking for death rather than the Lord! It has been said by some that the Lord's return is a truth only suited to the advanced. Such a notion is refuted absolutely by the epistles to the

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\*Not "somewhat" against thee, as if it were a small matter. The inserted word weakens the force of the Lord's complaint.

Thessalonians, which say more about it and matters connected with it than any other epistles of the New Testament, and it is plain that those saints were mere babes when the Apostle wrote his inspired communications to them. But, alas, how soon does the fine gold become dim! When the Apostle sent the second letter, he had to be silent as to their "patience of hope," he no longer discerned it as formerly. Their faith grew exceedingly, and their love to each other was abounding, but they had allowed things to come in to cloud the hope. The enemy had persuaded them that the persecution and tribulations they were enduring were connected with the day of the Lord, that that day was upon them with all its sorrows. The Apostle soon cleared away the difficulty, and made all plain, showing that the saints must be gathered to the Lord Jesus, and the apostasy take place, and the man of sin be revealed, ere that solemn day can set in, but the incident conveys solemn instruction to our souls. We learn in it the need to watch our hearts every step of the journey against the ever-varying machinations of the enemy.

But all was yet well and happy when the Apostle wrote his first epistle, and we have furnished us, in consequence, a lovely picture of divine life displaying itself in its earliest stages in saints in this world. The Holy Spirit of God, of course, is the power of all.

W. W. F.

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## FRAGMENTS.

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One atom of brokenness of spirit is better than filling all London with miracles.

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You never see a Christian go through his course without being "brayed in a mortar." Unsuspected evil may demand this, but it will, under God's hand, be thus.



**FAITH'S ANSWER.***(1 Kings xviii. 41-46).*

The great blessing of faith is that it links our souls with God. It is a secret communication, establishing relations of confidence and repose between the heart and God. Faith exists unknown to anyone but its possessor and God. It shows its vitality by works, but its vitality is its enjoyment, and not its power of demonstrating itself.

The history of its action is an interesting, instructive study. Dependence on God, or *faith*, is the first element of our new life, the great antagonistic principle of the old nature. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" is the abstract rule of the believer's life. My will, in nature, being errant, all my power, natural or acquired, acts so as to sustain what is wrong, that is, my natural will. Well, but now as quickened by the life of Christ into the sensibilities of His nature, I am constantly finding that difficulties occur to me, all the greater because my will runs counter to God's will. Nay more, I find that many new desires are awakened within me, which I have no power in nature to gratify. In both these cases I learn that I must lean on God; and as I lean—and I know what is His mind or intention towards me—so have I faith or confidence in Him about any given result.

It is evident that we have too little of this blessed sentiment, and this arises from our great self-dependence. Whether it be as regards difficulties in our path unsurmounted, or good desires ungratified, we do not lean sufficiently on the Lord, and have not the sweet and invigorating consciousness of His direct assistance in supplying our need. We are constantly helped by His mercy and providence, and though we may then recognise His hand and thank Him, yet this is not walking in faith.

Faith, I repeat, is the great principle of life. I open my eyes, *confident* that I shall see; if I did not, it would be great marvel to me; and every demand that my natura

mind makes on me, assumes that my life and strength are equal to that demand, and will accord it. So likewise with *living faith*. My difficulties and desires are before the Lord. I know they are, and I know that He is the true source of help. And as I make demand on Him, I *know* the amount which He will render me according to my sense of His ability as *engaged for me*. A man who rightly knows his own powers, would never tax them beyond their ability, wisely ordered. But so far as he feels their ability, he can tax them to the utmost, and this is faith.\* It is then a secret conviction, known only to myself, of God's grace towards me. I rest in it; my heart is strengthened and blessed by it. There is nothing so blessed as to understand that faith is an individual secret between our souls and God—that *God Who gave His Son for us*. This is always the proof to us of what His heart is, for no other blessing could establish us before Him as this does.

Now then, seeing that faith is an individual secret, how comes it that many desire that what is so *close, personal, solemn, and divine*, should be proved as having existed by evidences that will convince the crowd? [John vii. 4, 5.] Your secret exists, and you cannot explain it, and you ought not; it is too sacred, and yet you wish that the public should know that this sacred confidence has produced certain results in a very distinguished manner. [Ezek. xlv. 19].

That there *will* be results, there can be *no question*; perfect results, accurate according to the demand you made, and (as I have said) according to your sense of God's ability as engaged for you ["Be it unto thee *as thou believest*."] But that the results, the answer to the prayer of faith, should be known to anyone outside the range of necessity, I cannot and must not expect. Suppose I entrust my difficulties or desires to a human friend, who I am sure will co-operate with me and relieve me; is it necessary that in doing so he must publish his assistance and service? By no means. If he has convinced *me* of it, no matter *how* he accorded it, he has assured the affection and confidence which reckoned on him; and this we desire from a friend far more than that others should acknowledge what has been done.

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\* Comp. Rom. xii. 3 and 6.—ED.

God in His love wants to reveal Himself to our souls, and if He answers our faith so as to make us feel that it is He *alone* that has done it, he cares not for the publication of it.\* Nay more, He will often make it of very insignificant appearance, in order that the soul may be kept in the blessing of the secret assurance of faith, which progresses, step by step, with the evidence, if the evidence is not too great to make faith no longer necessary. The moment we are in *sight*, we are out of *faith*. God could never desire to put us outside of faith *now*. Hence, even in answering our faith, He *so* answers it that we want it in a moment again, even while enjoying the result. He cannot distinguish men *as map*, but He loves man, and will make him depending on Him to *feel* it. Consequently, in order to keep the soul in full blessing, the Lord must keep it in faith; and if He communicated to my own heart the answer to my faith, He has done *all* I have required of Him. The apostle Paul knew God's love and power in the answer which he received to his faith in the salvation of the ship's crew (Acts xxvii), though to human eye it was a sorry provision and a scrambling escape to some 270 souls—"some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship."

But what matter how man judged, if the heart of the apostle had its secret confidence responded to? If he knew that the power of God had interposed for him, he was not careful that others should know more than the result.† In the passage before us (1 Kings xviii. 41-46), which is referred to in James v. as an exposition of "effectual fervent prayer," we find, first, the faith which can say to Ahab, "Get thee up, eat and drink, for there is a noise of abundance of rain."

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\*It is true that we should be to the praise of Him who has called us from darkness unto his marvellous light. But that is not the question here, but rather the *publishing* of the *secret communion* of *individual faith* with God, and His answers to it, under plea of glorifying God, which at bottom is but profane self-glorification.—Ed.

† And even the result he did not make known to them to boast of his communion with God, but to re-assure and encourage them to take the food so necessary for them.—Ed.

Faith cometh by hearing; the intimation had reached the prophet; he had heard the sound thereof; he had the secret consciousness in his soul that he was drawing on the ability of God to meet the case, and he could speak of what that power could accomplish, though as yet he had no more intimation of it than a "sound." No one understood this "sound" but himself, neither could he communicate it to another, although he could speak of the effect. This conviction the soul obtains in communion with God. It is but a *conviction*—a "sound": but yet it is the warrant to the soul, knowing the strength and grace it rests on, to expect an amount of relief commensurate with the reliance on them. In a word, it is resting on the strength offered me by God, and my soul receives the conviction of what that power *can* and *will* do. Elijah can without hesitation propose to the King to "get up, eat and drink," in the assured hope of rain. But what is his own course? He retires to the top of Carmel, casts himself upon the earth, and puts his face between his knees. This teaches us the condition of a believing soul. It *has* the intimation of the coming blessing and *can speak* of it. But this does not lead to indifference or indolence; nay, rather, the soul, burdened by the wondrous reality of trusting God, is engrossed with the subject the more as it approaches fulfilment. According to the exhortation in Col. iv. 2, it "continues in prayer and *watches* in the same," &c., being quite awake to the manifestations of fulfilment.

The prophet sends his servant to look toward the sea, but there is nothing to be seen at first. The word is, "Go again *seven* times." Prayer and watching must be perfect.

"And it came to pass the seventh time that he (the servant) said, 'Behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand.'"

Could there possibly be a smaller indication of coming rain? A cloud the size of a man's hand is hardly visible on the horizon. What patience to send seven times! What carefulness of observation to discern anything so insignificant, and after all to learn so little! But faith wanted no more. The soul rested in God, and only prayed and watched till demonstration was granted, and at the smallest notice, the

heart was entirely assured, and the prophet tells Ahab, "Prepare thy chariot; get thee down, that the rain stop thee not."

Thus are we instructed of the nature of the "effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man," *i.e.*, one seeking to go rightly. No one can lean on God to be sustained in what is wrong; but to be sustained in and strengthened for what is right is not only to be expected, but it is sin if we seek relief otherwise; because we must, in that case, be leaning on something besides God, and what we *lean* on, we *magnify*.

In conclusion, we require, first, *Faith* for the secret conviction of help from God, to invigorate the soul with a sense of divine ability, which is engaged on our behalf.

Secondly, the praying, wakeful condition of soul, being conscious of the solemn blessing vouchsafed to it until the moment of fulfilment comes.

Lastly, not to seek great or pompous evidences of the fulfilment, but with the true sensibility of affection to interpret the smallest notification, because the more intimate anyone is with another, the sooner and easier will he understand his simplest gestures and promptings.

The Lord give us grace to enter into the life of the One Blessed Man down here, ever leaning on God, ever sensible in Himself of the sweet consciousness that He could count on the ability of God.

"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me, and I knew that Thou hearest me always."

And this is the Blessed One who lives for us, and whose life is ours, with all its susceptibilities.

"To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

W. H. D.

## READINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

(Ch. iii. ).

In the two closing verses of the preceding chapter we were reminded of what "*man*" is at his best, even when professing to believe in the Name of Jesus; and of Christ's estimate of man's religious profession, "because He knew all *men*, and needed not that any should testify of *man*, because He knew what *is in man*."

It is the same with the religious profession of the present "evil age." There may be a "shaking of dry bones," produced by the "stirring sermon" of some powerful religious orator, or the combined efforts of a revival committee. Nay, the "dry bones" may even appear to be "covered with sinews and flesh and skin," but, as in the case of the bones which Ezekiel saw in the "valley of bones" (Ezek. xxxvii., 8), there came a stir, a "shaking" amongst them, "but there was no breath in them," *i.e.*, no *life*, until the breath of life from the Lord breathed upon them, the "wind" in our chapter which bloweth where it listeth, and then they "*lived*." "So is every one that is born of God." Appearance of life, the mere "shaking of the bones," is no *real life*. It is like the galvanising of a corpse. If linked with a galvanic battery, the electric stream makes the dead bones shake. The corpse begins to rise from the death-bed, stands on its legs, and even makes a few strides through the chamber of death, until the link which connects it with the galvanic battery is severed, when it collapses again—a corpse. So is everyone that is born of men, *i.e.*, galvanised into religious profession—life.

At the opening of our chapter we again meet with "a *man* of the Parisees, certainly a respectable, moral, and religious man, a ruler of the Jews, but yet a "dead bone," without the breath of life, for he was not "born again." But there had been a "shaking," for he did not, like those at the close of ch. ii., stop short, satisfied with the conclusion he, like them, naturally had arrived at. He could not rest there, but went a step farther, dangerous as it was to a man in his position. He "came to Jesus," but "by night," from fear of the Pharisees. As soon as God begins to deal with a soul, there is

an instinctive fear that the world will be against us. He does not approach Jesus with the haughtiness of the Pharisee, thanking God that he is not as other men are, nor with ensnaring questions. Nor did he say: "All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?" but in an unassuming and humble way, ready to take his place at the feet of Him whom he owns to be a teacher come from God, "for no man can do the miracles which thou doest, except God be with him."

Does the Lord own Nicodemus in his religious character, however amiable in appearance? Does He own him as an enquirer after truth, instructing him in divine doctrines? No. He cuts him short with that crushing reply:

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God," (leave alone "*enter*" into it, v. 5).

God cannot use a bit of the old man for the Kingdom of God, nor can He *teach* the old man, for

"The natural man" (even in Nicodemus) "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

The indispensable preliminary condition for being "*taught* of God" is to be "*born* of God," *i.e.*, a new nature, the "*new bottle*," and the Spirit of God acting upon that new nature as the "*new wine in the new bottle*," drawing forth its heavenward, God-ward, Christ-ward affections, and instructing the new-born one in the things of God. Nicodemus did not come to Jesus, enquiring how to be saved, nor even how to inherit the Kingdom of God? He simply wanted to get instruction from Him whom he owned to be a teacher come from God. But he came as an honest enquirer, though still influenced by the fear of men. But Jesus, who knew what was in man, in His wisdom and grace does not reproach him for being influenced by the fear of men. He takes him up, *as he is*, not as he *ought to be*. But he does not spare the knife. He cuts him short as to the religious flesh in the old man, which is still worse than the "*natural flesh*," so to speak. He does not begin with the roof, as

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men often do, but with the fundamental truth of the necessity of being "*born again.*" First the *wound*, then the *healing*; first the *two-edged sword*, then the "*honeycomb.*"

(*To be continued.*)

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## THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 Cor. xi.

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### I.

There is something deeply affecting in the plea which our Master puts before us in connection with this supper, in the appeal He makes to us—to do it "in remembrance of Him." It is a commemorative act, an act showing that our hearts have *personal affection to Himself*. "This do in remembrance of *Me*." I am sure our souls feel the poverty of doctrine, in comparison of truth as we get it in connection with the Person of Jesus. The sweetest part is, "Do it in remembrance of *Me*." That you and I should be in the wilderness to remember Jesus—to sympathise with Him in His death and sufferings! This is the place in which we stand in connection with Him. That He can look on us poor saved ones—sinners that we are, though saved ones—and say to His Father, "There are a few gathered to My Name, remembering *Me*!" And that is joy to Him, to the heart of the Lord, and a refreshment to Him. And He can thus joy in our joy at the remembrance of what *He has done for us*. It is bearing affection to Him; personal remembrance of Him is the sweet thought and assurance—not mere doctrinal knowledge.

Very often we find much personal love to the Lord. when there is very little clear understanding of truth, We could not do it intelligently, without seeing the love of Christ.

G.V.W.



## II.

It betrays great ignorance of the character of the Lord's Table, and a sad lack of a true sense of the Lord's presence, and of the purpose for which the saints are gathered on the Lord's Day morning (Acts xx., 7), to make that sacred place an habitual opportunity for delivering addresses, and often even lengthy ones. May we look at the saints as the redeemed family of God, worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth, or as Christ's sheep and lambs praising the Good Shepherd who died for them, or as members of His body, the Church (of which that table is the expression), remembering Him, our living Head in glory, in His sufferings and death, till He comes; it betrays, I say, a sad misconception of the character of His table, and a still sadder lack of a sense of His presence, to weary the saints with lengthy addresses.

It is true, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," but the liberty of the Spirit, not of the flesh. I am far from saying that, after the breaking of bread, the Spirit may not lead some brother to minister a word of comfort, or even of admonition, to the gathered saints, especially when the atmosphere of the assembly, from some reason or another, had been dull or heavy, when a few words in season may be helpful to turn the tide (though this generully occurs at and after the breaking of bread, when done in the Spirit). But I am sure that the Spirit of God, who "glorifieth Christ, receiveth of His, and sheweth it unto us"—(and never more so than at the Lord's Supper)—would not lead any, even the most gifted brother, to deliver habitually lengthy addresses to the saints, and by thus wearying them, as much as lies in him, to obliterate the very character of the Lord's Supper, and weaken the blessing they had received in breaking the bread in remembrance of Him, especially where that ministry assumes the character of doctrinal teaching, or when it is performed with the lively deportment and gestures of an energetic evangelist or lecturer. We remember a well-known and dearly-remembered servant of Christ, excellent and blessed both as an evangelist and teacher, with a powerful voice and lively deliverance, when

preaching the gospel. When he felt free to speak, after the breaking of bread, a word of edification to the saints, his manner and bearing was altogether different, though quite natural. Without any excitement, and calm in his bearing, he spoke with a quiet and subdued voice, becoming for the occasion. His address seldom occupied more than 15—20 minutes, and was always in keeping with the tenor of the meeting, contributing to deepen the impression received at the commemoration of our blessed Lord and Saviour in His sufferings and death.

As to speaking at the Lord's table *before* the breaking of bread, it appears generally out of place. There may be exceptional cases, when the spiritual atmosphere of the assembly is particularly low, and the Spirit may give just a few words to stir up the saints, but such cases are very rare. To me it appears a most solemn thing for any one to push himself into the foreground, whilst the hearts of the saints are engaged with musing on the sufferings and cross of our adorable Saviour. Such attempts of "raising steps to the altar" only serve to expose the nakedness of him who undertakes it. (Ex. xx., 26).

"Fools rush in where angels dare not tread."

If there is a full tide of blessing, it will be found that additional addresses often tend to lower that tide, rather than to increase it.

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### SELECT SENTENCES.

Communion of saints does not spring from their agreement one with another, but from their union of heart about God.

We must learn that after all our progress, we are nothing better than sinners saved by grace.

Light does not guide until it has overcome darkness.

## A TEST OF THE HEART.

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“He that is not with me, is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth” (Luke xi. 23).

When Christ is manifested, people must take their stand either *for* Him or *against* Him. There may be natural claims and natural affections, which have their rightful claim; but they must not be allowed to interfere when Christ is in question. “Let the dead bury their dead,” is then the word; and “he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.”

I must be either on the side of *Christ* or *Satan*; there is *no neutral* ground. As Joshua said, “Art thou *for us* or *for our adversaries*?” In the contests of Canaan there could be only *for* and *against*. So we have spiritual enemies to contend with; and Joshua leading the people on in conflict, is a figure of Christ’s and the Spirit’s leading the soul against our spiritual enemies. In this conflict

“Whosoever is not *with* me, is *against* me.”

I must be acting with Christ and the Holy Spirit, or with the world and the devil.

“He that gathereth not *with me*, scattereth.”

Christ has become the centre of all God’s thoughts, and of all that God owns, and we have consequently to judge our hearts in detail as to whether *He* is in everything our *centre* and *aim*. We may be occupied even in gathering Christians together, yet if it is not Christ in our own spirit, it is but *scattering*; for *God knows no centre of union but the Lord Jesus Christ*. Christ then must be the *object*; Christ the *centre*; and nothing but Christ—the *end*. For whatever is not gathering *round that centre*, and *from that centre*, is but scattering.

BY ONE GATHERED TO *HIS NAME*.

## COMMUNION, AND THE GROUND ON IT.

*Gen. xviii., 16-33.*

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We have here a very descriptive display of the ground of intimacy, on which the Lord sets His people with Himself. In the case of Abraham, the condition of the revelation put him in that place in which he stood (v. 19) though in much higher sense. He stood on the earth, the place of judgment, but we are altogether out of the place of judgment, enjoying the blessing itself.

The men rose up and looked toward Sodom. The Lord directed them in judgment, and Abraham went with them to show them the way. The Lord makes His saints His companions, not invariably, but still He does.

“Who hath known the mind of the Lord? But we have the mind of Christ.”

Thus in the communications God has made to us, He has made us His own companions in the best way; for I do not know a better way in which any one can show his love to another, than by communicating to him his thoughts and feelings.

“Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him.”

So we are to walk with Christ, until He comes and takes us up to Himself. The exercise and path of *faith* is down here.

Abraham went with the men to show them the way only. And mark, the Church is above judgment. I don't mean above discipline, to do them good.

Lot had looked *towards* Sodom and was then *in* it, but Abraham was *out of it*. Abraham being the Lord's companion, is not only delivered out of the judgment, but when the Lord is going to judge, He must tell Abraham about it.

“Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do? for I have known him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment: that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”

So it is with us. The ground of this communication is the thought the Lord has about us. He has centred His love in us, therefore He lets us into His confidence. He says, "If I have brought Abraham into this place, I will introduce him into it." So God has made known to us the mystery of His will, *because of the place* in which He has put the Church in Christ.

There is great blessing in this word, "I know him." The Lord does not talk in that way about those He is going to judge. When He talks about judgment, He talks about "going down to see," and till He has fully investigated it, He won't touch them. It is not so with the saints. He has no need, so to speak, to go down to see about them, for *He fully knows them*. As he said to Abraham, "I know him."

The cry of Sodom had come up before God. But before going to execute judgment, He will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, "which has come unto me."

"The men went towards Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before the Lord."

That is blessed. For if the Lord knows Abraham, so that he is able to get the blessing, he stays with the Lord Himself. The Lord is going to bring judgment on the world, and He won't smite till he can't help it. But no judgment coming on the world can separate Abraham from Him. God's eye rests upon Abraham, so that he rests quiet in God. So it is with us. Whatever trial may be coming on the world, our place is to abide with the Lord Himself; and then, like Abraham, the effect of having drunk into this grace will be, we shall be calm, quiet, and happy. Our place is not to go down and search out the depths of iniquity in this world the "great Sodom," which "lieth in wickedness;" but to let the cry "come up." *There will be Lots many;* but let us be with God on the mountain, abiding in perfect peace with the Lord Himself.

Abraham being in perfect peace, *had nothing to ask for himself*, and was therefore free to *intercede for others*. So

it was in the case of Abimeleck. If Abraham be a prophet, if he has this intimacy with the mind of the Lord, let him pray for these. So it is with us,

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

The possession of the Lord's mind gives the power of intercession for others, not like wrestling Jacob to get blessing for himself, though we may have to wrestle for ourselves and get individual blessing. Here it is communion, and the knowledge of this communion produces peace and joy. There is reverence of course, "I am dust to ashes," but perfect intimacy.

*"And the Lord went His way as soon as He had done communing with Abraham, and Abraham went to his place."*

Abraham's position was with the Lord, in perfect peace, in unquestioned confidence, having nothing to settle with God, but on the ground on which he can enjoy perfect communion with Him.

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## FRAGMENT.

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### TO-MORROW.

"Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. vi. 34—Luke xii., 29-31).

Does each day upon its wing  
Its allotted burden bring?  
Load it not besides with sorrow,  
Which belongeth to the morrow.  
Strength is *promised*, strength is *given*,  
When the heart by God is riven;  
But foredate the day of woe,  
And alone thou bear'st the blow.  
*One thing* only claims thy care,  
Seek thou first by faith and prayer  
That all-glorious world above,  
Scene of holiness and love;  
And whate'er thou need'st below,  
*He* thou trustest will bestow.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS PAGE.**

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**Dull Scholars.**

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In our Sunday School teaching do we take sufficient account of the dull ones of our respective classes? Some children are bright and intelligent, and evidently interested in what we say, and others are listless and inattentive from the fact that they do not understand us; and naturally we occupy ourselves with those who evidently enter into what we are teaching. Yet the dull and uninteresting have souls to be saved as well as the others. And if we realize the wondrous truth that God gave up His own Beloved Son that souls might be saved, and that the object of the Lord Jesus in coming down to this sin-stricken world was to do the will of His Father and glorify Him by saving sinners, even at the cost of His own sufferings and death, shall we not earnestly seek to make clear to each one the way of salvation, especially to those who perhaps never hear, except from our lips, the blessed truths of the Gospel? The bright ones may be the children of Christian parents, and by their example and precepts are prepared to understand our teaching, while the other poor children are brought up without the knowledge of God, and in daily companionship with sin and misery.

Catechisms are now by most teachers reckoned out of date, and no doubt the majority of them contain more or less of error—yet is not the catechetical form of teaching the way to impress what is taught upon young minds?

It is important after reading the Scripture to question each child, especially the dull ones as to what has been read, and to seek to make it plain to them; and the same with portions given them to commit to memory.

The Holy Spirit alone can give wisdom to do this aright, and to present the truth so as to interest these dear young souls. Therefore the need of earnest, unceasing prayer on their behalf and our own. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but "God giveth the increase."

I have been led to these remarks through speaking to a girl about her soul a short time since. She seemed to have

no idea of the way of salvation. I referred to the account of the jailor of Philippi, and his earnest enquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" and asked her what was the Apostle's answer. She replied, "I think I have heard, but I don't remember!" And yet this poor girl had attended a Sunday School for ten or twelve years—a school, too, in which the teachers are intelligent and devoted, and have reason to praise God for the fruit of their labours.

Sunday School teachers have surely need of patience, not only with the dulness of their scholars, but with their self-will and self-importance, as well as disrespect to their elders and superiors, which the present day training, or rather *want* of training so nourishes. But let us not be discouraged, dear friends; we have the example of our blessed Master's patience with the dulness and ignorance which surrounded Him in His walk on earth, as well as His quiet dignity under insult. We know, too, how graciously and tenderly He received the children that were brought to Him, and how ready He is to bless them still. His grace is sufficient for us, and "He giveth *more* grace."

C. P.

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### Home to Thee!

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Home to Thee, Lord! Home to Thee;  
 No more sin! From sorrow free!  
 Bounds my heart with ecstasy;  
 Home to Thee, Lord! Home to Thee!

Home and rest! ah! soon 'twill be  
 Time all passed! ETERNITY!  
 Heaven's own strains of minstrelsy;  
 Ah, my soul! what joy for Thee!

Lord, Thou said'st "Remember me,  
 Bread and wine I give to thee."  
 With Thine own I worship Thee,  
 Hoping soon Thy face to see.

Oh that I may watching be,  
 Longing, waiting, Lord, for Thee.  
 Bearing trial patiently,  
 On my way, Lord, home to Thee!

H. L. R.



## OUR WARFARE IN THE HEAVENLIES.

(*Eph. vi. 10-18.*)

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### The Whole Armour of God.

#### 4.—“THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD.”

THE “Sword of the Spirit” is, as has been observed before, the only part of the “armour of God” which may be either aggressive or defensive.\* But in our chapter it is its *defensive* rather than its aggressive quality. The Christian soldier is not called to wage an aggressive war against the “hosts of wickedness” there above. That is preserved for the Archangel Michael and his angels at a later, though not very distant period, after the rapture of the saints has taken place, and Christ, the “Captain of our salvation,” has summoned and caught up all His own in clouds, as in chariots (comp. Acts i. 9, and Rev. xi. 12) to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17), the present seat of the rulers of the darkness of this world, to lead us into His Father’s house with its many mansions, right through those countless hosts of our opponents, none of them daring to resist our progress under our great Leader.

In our warfare on earth against the strongholds of Satan, in gospel and church-truth testimony, and in contending for

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\* A striking instance of its *aggressive* power we find in Acts xix. 18-20. It was the same in the case of the converts in India in *Carey’s* days, when they brought their books of sorceries and divinations, and burnt them. What an inroad was then made into Satan’s kingdom!

the faith once (or, "once for all") delivered to the saints, combating deadly errors, and exposing the falsehoods and wiles of the enemy and his emissaries, the "Sword of the Spirit" appears in its aggressive as well as in its defensive character. Here to prefer the defensive, under the plea of wisdom, amidst the daily increasing inroads of the Archdeceiver upon the open and religious world, would only betray the cowardice of the one who prefers to stand on the defensive, and soon end in his throwing away the sword and taking to his heels. Here the watchword is: "Quit you like men, be strong." It is not the drawing of the sword of self-confidence and animal-courage, the cutting of the ear followed by the denial. Nor is it the sword of the tongue or pen of the skilful disputer and controversialist. Such weapons will not serve for the aggressive warfare in earthly places any more than for the defensive in the heavenlies.

When the apostle came first to Corinth, he "came not with excellency of speech or wisdom, declaring unto them the testimony of God," but he was with them "in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling." His "speech and teaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power." And though many thought his "bodily presence weak, and his speech contemptible," yet the weapons of his warfare were "mighty through God to the *pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*" This was aggressive warfare!

What an inroad was made upon Satan's kingdom by the "Sword of the Spirit," wielded under His guidance, by the chief apostle of the circumcision at the first preaching of the gospel at Pentecost and afterwards, 3000 sinners converted and delivered from the power of Satan, darkness and sin, by *one* single "sermon" (if we may use the word), and that sermon mainly consisting of simple quotations from the Word of God, the Spirit of God applying it in His own

searching power to the souls of Peter's hearers. The apostle was contented to let the Word of God speak and do its work in its own Divine authority and power. We find the same in the ministry of the apostle of the church in preaching the gospel, not to speak of the Lord himself. It would be well for those fitted for public testimony to follow such patterns; for I doubt not that one of the causes of sterility and lack of real blessing in the gospel and other addresses consists in the inclination of gifted preachers and teachers to speak themselves instead of letting God's own Word speak in its own authority, power and simplicity, being content to be nothing but mouthpieces of the Lord. If they did so, they would preach and teach more "as the oracles of God," as the apostle Peter enjoins us, and the ministry would savour less of the vessel and more of the Spirit. Little real power and blessing will accompany the preacher or teacher, who at the beginning of his address contents himself with unsheathing, as it were, a part of the sword, and then thrusts it back into the scabbard, so that it remains almost hidden during the remainder of the sermon. Thus the authority and power of "*Thus saith the Lord*" cannot rest upon an address, be it gospel or lecture, where man's voice is prominent and God's voice kept in the background. Man's word must return void—void of blessing—whatever the oratorical power and attractiveness of the speaker may be.

I have spoken of the faithful way in which those apostolic pattern servants of the Lord handled the "Sword of the Spirit" in its aggressive as well as defensive power in their earthly warfare against the kingdom of Satan.

But what was their starting point for service and testimony? it was from the *heavenlies*, even the sanctuary above. It is *thence* the Lord sends His disciples as messengers into the world, as he said to them when appearing amongst them as the Risen Saviour.

"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (John xx. 21.)

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." (John xvii. 18.)

Heaven was the starting-point of "the faithful Witness," Who came to do the will of God, and spoke the words which He had heard with the Father, and did the works which He had seen with the Father.

Heaven must be *our* starting-point for all true service and testimony on earth. And it is just there and then, when closeted with the Lord, endeavouring to realise our access to the Heavenly Sanctuary, and our spiritual blessings in the Heavenly Canaan (as at the Lord's table), that we have to meet the opposition of the great adversary and of his wicked spirits, who know very well where our refuge and our strength is, to draw grace and strength and wisdom from above for our daily work here below, and for faith to rise above the difficulties, which they raise here below against the testimony of the Lord's servants, and patience to bear up under them. They do all in their power to intercept, or at least weaken, our link of communion with Him, who is "the Anchor of our souls." That blessed "Anchor" is both "sure and stedfast." I need not say there is no barrier on the part of God and His Son, who is our "*living way*" to God," as He is our "anchor" within the vail. The "let" and hindrance are in us, in flesh and self. And the adversary and his hosts know how to act upon it to intercept and weaken our communion with the Father and the Son.

##### 5.—"SATAN HINDERED US."

Had not even the great apostle of the Church to own that "Satan hindered" him when he once and again would have come to see his beloved Thessalonians? (1 Thess. ii. 18.) Further, he had oftentimes purposed to visit the saints in Rome, nay, he had "longed to see them, that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift, to the end that they might be established," which they greatly needed (Rom. i. 11.) But he had been "*let*" i.e., "*hindered*." By whom? the apostle does not say, and it must therefore be left an open question. But there appears to be reason for doubting whether the hindrance was the same as in Acts xvi. 6, 7. For we find a

little later on (chap. xxi. 4, 10-12) that the Spirit of God, through some disciples at Tyre, and again at Cæsarea, through Agabus, a prophet who had come down from Judea, told the apostle not to go up to Jerusalem, and all Paul's companions joining in warning him against going there. The path of the apostle of the Gentiles evidently lay in the direction of the capital of the Gentiles, whither his own desires, no doubt prompted by the Spirit, had constrained him to go, but he had been "let." But his intense affection for his own nation (so touchingly expressed in Rom. ix. 1-3), was suffered to lead him out of his true path of service aside for Jerusalem. He failed, as Mark had done before, only his failure was of a much more serious nature than Mark's, though his motive was in itself better, and infinitely preferable to Jonah's. But like Jonah, Paul had to spend a season in the depths of the sea, and go as a prisoner to Rome, with a chain upon his flesh, for having permitted his own will (often so strong in the Lord's most gifted servants, and therefore all the more dangerous and serious in its consequences, if permitted to act and guide) to run counter to the Lord's will. No blessing for Paul at Jerusalem; nothing but failure. And though the faithful and gracious Lord stood by His servant, and intervened on his behalf, yet even that intervention only took place behind the scene, in an indirect way, very different to the earthquake at Philippi, where His servant was in the right path. Have not we often made the same humbling experience in our small corners of service?—"Satan hindered us."

And is it not just then, when in the secret of the closet, on our way to the sanctuary above, in prayer, and inquiring for guidance, when about to enter upon the duties of the day, or to embark upon some important undertaking, or before entering on any portion of our Master's service, that we find ourselves baffled by the wiles of the enemy?

"How can this be?" some reader might exclaim. "Did not the Lord say, Pray, that ye enter not into temptation?" Certainly, but He also said, "if thine eye be single, thy body shall be full of sight." If I enter into my closet with my mind

made up about the subject of my prayer, with the heart fixed on a certain desirable object, and that with an unsubdued will, however good and right in itself the desired thing may be, self, unsubdued self kneeling down and praying for guidance, the door is open to the enemies' wiles acting upon the treacherous heart and its feelings, and representing them to be the will of God.

Two Christians were praying together. One of them appeared much embarrassed about some difficulties that had arisen in his life-path, and cried: "More light, Lord, more light," when the voice of his friend fell on his ear, saying: "To him that hath, shall more be given."

Balaam-prayers are sometimes granted, but they yield neither the light nor the guidance pretended to be sought, but end with—the ass rebuking the folly of its rider.

How many prayers from mixed motives are offered up, especially in cases of unscriptural marriages, where the subtlety of the natural heart particularly betrays itself, and which when carried out under Satan's influence, result in life-long misery, unless God intervenes in His wondrous grace.

## CHARITY.\*

“For I show unto you a more excellent way.”  
 “The end of the commandment is charity.”

(Read 1 *Cor. xiii.*)

This way of surpassing excellence, so often missed, so little understood, it is the purpose in this paper, by the Lord's help, a little to unfold.

It is difficult in a day like this, clearly to perceive *God's ends*, whether in the individual believer, or in the collective body. And when they are discerned, it is still more difficult consistently to carry them out. This arises not from any want of plainness and explicitness in the divine Word, but from our views being so contorted by the false exhibitions of Christianity around us, and from the heart's estrangement from the moral power of the cross. It is hard to emancipate the spirit from those false influences that are at work, and bear upon us on every side, from a Christianity that, conjoined with the cross, may be said, emphatically, to “mind earthly things.” We should be indebted for the moulding of our thoughts and desires to the precious relations of our God in His Word.

The assertion ought not to surprise us, that even as Christians we often miss God's ends, since it is on record before us that the Corinthians, with their apostolic constitution as a church, and with all their plentitude of spiritual gifts, had failed of discerning God's ends in two most striking points (there were others too, and of a moral nature,) to which they were obliged to be solemnly recalled by the Spirit of the Lord.—They missed *God's end in their* gathering together at the table of the Lord, so that it was “not to eat *the Lord's supper*,” but *their own*. And they were so aside in their use of revealed

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\* “*Charity*” stands throughout this chapter, not in the sense of liberality to the poor, but it means Christian love. (See v. 3.)

truth and spiritual gifts, as to bring upon themselves the rebuke of being "carnal" and walking as men, and very children in their use and valuation of what they had received from God, It need not, therefore, be thought wonderful that individual Christians now should often fail to discern God's end in them as His redeemed; nor that the assembly, however rightly constituted, and however full its ministrations of truth as truth, and perhaps secretly boasting in its knowledge should need the solemn consideration, that "knowledge *puffeth* up, but charity *buildeth* up,"—and to be warned in the language of the Spirit,

"Yet show I unto you a more excellent way,"

of this we may rest assured that no principles, however scriptural, nor truths, however deep, will keep the soul in God's paths, if "love," as the end of all, be not sought.

But what is their charity, without which all gift is but an idle clangor, and all knowledge but as childish amusement?

In Christ its exhibition was perfect, even in its *objective* character. Its exercise flowed from Him without any antagonistic power, and without any place for the negation of self. For as "God is love," so Christ was the perfect manifestation of this love, in a man, in human circumstances. In truth He *was it*, inasmuch as He was "God manifest in the flesh." But in us it is the exact opposite. It begins in us with the negation, the active negation, of all that is characteristic of nature, or of the old man. Its power stands in the new risen-man, in Christ. It is Christ in living power in the soul: "To me to live is Christ"—"Christ liveth in me."—Hence it is impossible that this "most excellent way," this end of God in His saints, should be understood or sought, where the soul is not in possession of the *confidence of acceptance*, and where being "*risen with Christ*" is not practically laid hold of. It is a hopeless enigma, where this is enigma. For the manifestation of a thing cannot be, where the thing itself does not exist. It is an energy of life, that evolves its own appropriate form,



and it cannot be but from the living spring which is within—the divine nature—“that which is born of God.” It alone will bear the stress of days like these; for it overcomes and cannot be overcome.

*Love asks no motive; it is its own motive* It depends not in its exercise, on success, or estimation, or approval from without. And he well understood its power who could say, “Be it so, though the more I love you, the *less I be loved*.” But its perfect example is seen only in Jesus on the cross. Power was not there—sympathy was not there—the estimation of those who had known its exercise in life, in their sick being healed, or their lepers cleansed, or their dead raised up, was not there, nor was the estimation of those there, who were debtors to His love for life and salvation, and who were to know its abundant fruits after love had achieved its victory amidst rejection, and desertion, and sorrow, and death.

In the exposition of this chapter, the peculiar position of which the most careless cannot fail to notice, I take it to be so far plain in its practical bearing on the “husbandry of God” that he who exercises gift or ministry, of whatever character does it in vain, as to himself, if it flows not from this spring of love, and I take it to be no less plain, that God’s end is not accomplished in those that are ministered to, if charity be not quickened and nurtured, and if its characteristic exercises be not awakened in the soul. The end of God in his saints—His ‘perfect way’ for them—is “*charity*.” And so love’s ministry begins in love in them who exercise it, and issues in the nature of love in those on whose behalf it is exercised: even as the apostle unfolds to Timothy, that “the end of the commandment (or charge) is charity.

If, therefore, it were the speaking with tongues,—although they displayed in a wonderful manner the power, and even the goodness of God in reaching men in their divisions and various languages, which were the fruits of sin—yet, “if I speak with tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity,”—if *love* direct not their exercise, and if *love* be not awakened as their

result, I am in the sight of God, and as to all divine results, a mere *empty sound*: "I am as sounding brass or clanging cymbal."

But deeper than this. If it were the *interest of the mind*, which so often stops short of God's ends, and makes *its own recreation and delight its end*, even when dealing with the bright revelation of truth,—it is worthless. Prophecy and its penetration of all mysteries, and all knowledge, on which we build so much *satisfaction for ourselves*, and expect, with frequent disappointment, so much *fruit from others* reach not the point. Love's husbandry is not advanced by instruments such as these. Even the "*faith*" that knows how to bring in the power of God, in its miraculous displays—the faith that could "remove mountains"—will falter in this "perfect way." If I have no more than this, and seek no more, still "*I am nothing*."

But farther still. Benevolence in me may have its widest scope, and zeal may reach its final limit, yet may it never reach this heavenly way. Though I give *all my goods* in doles to feed the poor; and though I become a martyr in my zeal, if "*love*" be not the spring, it nothing profits. Philanthropy may have its devotees, and zeal its martyrs; "*love*" only profits.

"Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." (1 John iv. 7-8)

Herein the teaching of the apostle Paul, and that of John, however widely they diverge in their general tenor, are found to coalesce. Indeed, it must needs be so when God's final end stands in the view of both.

"Love," then, "is of God;" and in order to love, we must be "born of God." It is the exercised display of that, which is essentially and characteristically divine. It is to be exercised in a world, where trial of its energy will be found, and in circumstances where everything but itself must fail. But

"*Love never fails*."

In the blessed example of the Lord Jesus we see how everything in a hostile world was but the occasion of the brightening display of love, until it reached its crowning manifestation in the death of the cross.

This love, then, can never differ from itself: so that if suffering is to be encountered in its exercise, or an occasion for kindness to be shown, love is guided for its work.

“Love suffers long, and is kind.”

Nay, further: is another to be advanced and myself thrown into the shade? Be it so.

“Love envieth not,”

It looks with an eye not envious of others, and is not insolent or rash. As it seeks not another's praise, so it is not inflated with an estimation of attainment in itself. Love's carriage is ever in deepest modesty: there is nothing unseemly in her ways. It

“does not behave itself unseemly.”

Her own she does not seek, and is not resentful of the slights she meets. Evil she thinks not, nor imputes. She

“Rejoiceth not in iniquity.”

but finds in the triumph of the truth her joy. She “beareth all things,” that must be borne, “believeth all things that should be believed,” “hopeth all things” while ever there is the possibility of hope, “endureth all things,” while endurance is demanded.

“Love never fails.”—“Prophecy,” though dealing with divine communications “will be done away;”—“tongues,” though the bright witness of Christ as the ascended Lord, “will cease;” and knowledge such as the mind of man can grasp, though heavenly communicated, “will be done away.” They are but steps by the way—the rudimental advances towards that,

beyond which is no advance. When *that* is reached, these will have receded from view, or will be looked back upon from the vantage ground of that which is perfect and eternal, just as manhood now looks back on the things of its childhood with a corrected and abated estimation of their worth. But

“Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.”

Deep and eternal as are the truths on which the assurance of faith is built, and apart from which there can be no onward progress for the soul in the paths of the Lord, still *His end* is onward. Even the assurance of hope is not God's end. There is something deeper still. The revelations which ally the soul to Him, “whom having not seen we love,” will cease, and be no longer the ground of “*faith*,” when

“We shall see Him as He is.”

Even the bright visions of hope, with all the sublimities and glories which it anticipates, will reach their issue, and be no more as *hope*; but *love* will still remain. Nor is it in an *abstract* manner that it is said, love will remain as characterising the nature of God, and therefore eternal as Himself: eternally blessed as is the thought—but love remains *now*, as the way that we have to pursue, a way that never fails,

But how surely nothing that is of nature will enable us to pursue this way. Nay! how surely must that which is natural to us, as men, be put aside, in order to make a step of progress here! It is the way of the cross; the way of death to the flesh, the way of self-denial. It is a path that lies only in the sight of God—a path which “the vulture's eye hath not seen,” but still it is “the path of life.” But a path that none but the “*single eye*” will find.

Unlike those gifts and ministrations of the knowledge, which bear the stamp and impress of power in their exercise, and which man can covet and value, “*love*” looks only to the eye

of God for approval of its labours, and can alone be estimated by those whose hearts are fashioned by its heavenly power.

Truth may be ministered and delighted in, but truth in its highest range or deepest character will not keep the soul, if, for himself, and in the light of God, each one seeks not the ends of "*love*." Truth may be coveted, and right principles may be boasted in; but *love* only will stand the time of trial. Everything short of this will leave those that are attracted by it, but as chaff before the winnowing fan, when the stress of suffering for the truth may come.

"Love never fails," and "the foundation of God standeth sure," and it may be added, "the Lord will keep His own;" still, he who in God's husbandry looks not to "love" as his spring of strength, and seeks it not as his final end in souls, is but laying the foundation for discomfiture and failure, and a result common to every previous revival amongst the Church of God.

Charity respects, necessarily, all that God respects, for "God is charity." It cannot be exercised in maintaining anything that is contrary to God. Its essential character is unknown, where such a thought concerning it possesses the mind. It *seeks God's ends and these alone*. And what are these but the glory of Christ, and that there should be a due estimation of His worth in those that are His?

W. H. D.

## THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS.

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It is to be observed that the subject of priesthood is to be found principally in the epistles of Peter and to the Hebrews. In the first we get the priesthood of believers; in the latter the work of Christ for us as Priest on high. The point of view from which Christians are regarded is much the same in both epistles. In neither are we contemplated as in Ephesians, already sitting in heavenly places in Christ, blessed with all spiritual blessings; but in Peter we are strangers and pilgrims, passing through the world as through a wilderness to the inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven (being subject to the government of God in the way); and in Hebrews, as labouring to enter into the rest that remaineth for the people of God; a portion better far than that which God set before Israel of old. How sweet then to find in such epistles the truth of priesthood brought out! While in this world, in weakness and need, we have a great High Priest in heaven on our behalf (Hebrews), and are ourselves a priestly people, able to draw near to God, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Him by Jesus Christ (Peter).

In 1 Peter ii. 4-10, we get a twofold character of priesthood: we are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, and a royal priesthood to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. It is of the utmost importance to see that the apostle is here speaking of the whole body of believers, and not of a certain class. Observe the marks whereby they may be identified. Such love and believe in the unseen Christ (ch. i. 8), have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ (ch. i. 18), have been born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God (ch. i. 23), such have tasted that the Lord is gracious (ch. ii. 3), and have come to Christ as unto a living stone (ch. ii. 4). Where these marks are to be seen (and they are true of all who believe), there we have the priests of God. To admit the notion of a priest between our souls and God is

to deny, however unintentionally, the sacrifice of Christ. If we need a priest, wherein are we better off than the Jew of old? The Jew could not draw near to God within the sanctuary, for the veil was there; and the blood of bulls and goats could not afford God a righteous ground for rending it for His people. But *Christ* has been here, the Antitype of all the sacrifices of old, and the Accomplisher of the will of God; and having offered one sacrifice for sins, has taken His seat in perpetuity at the right hand of God. The veil is now rent; we are a company of priests, washed, sprinkled, and anointed, and can draw near to our God with the boldness of faith. It was when the truth of accomplished redemption became weakened in men's minds in the Church that ministry gradually became transformed into priesthood, to the permanent loss and injury of the saints of God. Accomplished redemption, and the notion of an earthly priest cannot be held together. If the one is enjoyed, the other has no place.

Some of the expressions used by the Spirit in 1 Peter ii. are really quotations from Ex. xix. There Jehovah said to Israel, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant . . . . ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation." There we learn the desire of God's heart for the people whom He had redeemed; He wished them to be a kingdom of priests. But alas! it was never realised in Israel (but on the contrary a family—Aaron's—was immediately after set apart for the office), for it was made dependent upon their works. When God introduces an "if" it is fatal for poor man, though in his vanity, he is slow to admit it. But in 1 Peter ii. we get no "if"; but it is absolutely declared "*Ye are.*" On the ground of Christ's sacrifice, all is settled and sure; our blessings can never be forfeited or taken away.\*

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\* It is to be noted that Peter's epistle was addressed to believers among the Jews. Such have all the blessings that the nation has forfeited, and for which the nation must wait until another day. For such, the Lo-Ammi sentence is already reversed, and they have obtained mercy. But all is equally true of Gentile saints, for it is a question of the efficacy of the work of Christ.

We have seen that a twofold character of priesthood is spoken of here—the one Godward, the other manward. Godward, we are “a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” God is holy, and can only have holy people about Him. We were by nature altogether opposed to God and unfit for His presence; He has not only dealt with our sins, but has imparted to us a new nature, capable of enjoying and worshipping Him. But He would have us holy practically too. If in 1 Tim. ii. 8, it is laid down that in prayer we are to lift up “*holy hands*,” in worship, it is, if possible, of even greater importance. “Our God is a consuming fire.” Not the sinner’s God, as some have said; nor God out of Christ (a strange expression), as others; but “*our God*.” Reverence and godly fear become us in all our approaches to Him. There is all the difference between slavish dread and godly fear. The sacrifices we present are “*spiritual*”; and are named in Heb. xiii. 15, 16, where again we get a Godward and a manward side. Surely David was much in the mind of God when he wrote, “I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs” (Psa. lxix, 30, 31). Mere outward forms will not satisfy our God; He wants the overflow of His people’s hearts. That is always a delight to Him, drawn forth as it is by the indwelling Spirit. But such sacrifices are only acceptable by Jesus Christ. While in our present condition, everything we do is marked by imperfection; but, blessed be His Name, “we have a great High Priest that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God”; and all arises to our God and Father by Him, and is fragrant with His fragrance. For the development of this, we must turn to Hebrews.

A different thought is connected with “a *royal* priesthood”; it is manward—“that ye should shew forth the praises (excellencies) of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.” In Israel, the priests had responsibilities Godward and manward: they went to God for the people, and they stood *for* God among them. Thus, “the priest’s lips



should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts" (Mal. ii. 7). It was theirs to put difference between holy and unholy, between unclean and clean, and to teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah had spoken to them by the hand of Moses (Lev. x. 10, 11). We are to be *for God* in this sense; do we understand it? We have been born of God, and are partakers of the divine nature; it is for us to display the proper fruits of that nature before men. Is God love? Then "every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John iv. 7). Is He righteous? Then "we know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (1 John ii. 29). And so on. These are His excellencies, and we are to shew them forth; the Spirit of God being in us as power. Once we were in darkness, and knew nothing of God; but we have been called out of it by His grace into His marvellous light, there to walk in the full revelation of what God is. What do men see when they look at us? Do they merely see our own natural characteristics; or what the Spirit produces in the soul? Let us examine our hearts as to it in the light of the divine presence.

How wonderful that the word "royal" should be used of us! Grace has invested us with a holy dignity, and would have us walk becomingly, in consistency with the place in which we have been set.

May we enjoy His abounding grace, and seek His glory.

W. W. F.



## IN THE HEAVENLIES.

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THE use of the word "heavenlies" in Ephesians gives a clear testimony to the exalted nature of the calling of the church. It occurs four times, and each time adds stress to this peculiar character of the saints of these days. It testifies:

- (1) To the nature of our blessings (i. 3).
- (2) To our present position in Christ (ii. 6).
- (3) To the present display of the manifold wisdom of God on high (iii. 10).
- (4) To the present conflict waged against the saints by unseen foes (vi. 12).

In the first place (1) then, we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ; the remembrance of which causes the apostle to exclaim aloud with all the intensity of his renewed affections:—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3). The blessings of the Christian, therefore, are unique. Inasmuch as the believer is not of this world, neither do his blessings partake of a worldly character.

In this particular the Christian is in direct contrast to the godly Israelite. His blessings were particularly declared to be earthly and temporal. Compare for instance Deut. xxviii. with Eph. He should be blessed in the city and in the field, in the fruit of his ground and the increase of his flocks, in his basket and his store, in his barns, and in all he set his hand to. This was suited to an earthly people, but the Christian is expressly stated to be heavenly. Hence we find his blessings are spiritual, apprehended alone by faith. What have the basket and store, barns and fields, to do with a heavenly man?

Heaven is his home, and he wants what is suited to him in this extraordinary position. This rich endowment he receives in Christ, all spiritual blessing being bestowed upon him.

Are the Christian's blessings any the less real because they are spiritual? Not so: are not election by God the Father, sanctification by the Spirit, and sprinkling by the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. i.) as real as houses and lands, flocks and herds? Indeed they are much more so. The riches of this world are proverbially fleeting and uncertain. But what God has made us (1 Cor. i. 30) and given us in Christ Jesus is ours now and ours for ever.

Secondly: (2) Our present position is heavenly: for "God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 4-6).

The apostle treats in this chapter of the abolition of the distinction between the Jew and Gentile in the Church of God. He shows the Gentile ("you") dead in trespasses and sins (ver. i.) and the Jew ("we") dead in sins also (ver. 4). But the rich mercy, the great love and the saving grace of God concerned themselves in these dead sinners. The result is that they are quickened Jew and Gentile together, and raised up together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. Now into the heavenlies none can bring their national differences. On earth the Jews and Gentiles had their respective boundaries assigned to them as well as their respective blessings. But in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile (Gal. iii. 28); for all are one in Him.

It is to be remarked that the language before us is not symbolical or figurative. Our position on high is connected with Christ. We are "in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus." Can it be said that He was symbolically raised up? Or that He is figuratively in the heavenlies. The thought is preposterous.

Yet if He is there, so are we, for we are in Him. By faith therefore we are really, not figuratively or symbolically, there.

In the next place (3) we learn that even now the hierarchies of heaven observe the manifold wisdom of God illustrated in the church. The preaching of the mystery of the church is proceeding "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. iii. 10). It is also true that in the ages to come the church will be the vehicle for the display of the exceeding riches of His grace (Eph. ii). But it is in accordance with the doctrine of the whole epistle that the lofty intelligences and powers on high should already be cognisant of the gradual fulfilment in the church of the "eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus." The Head of the church is exalted far above these authorities and powers (Eph. i.); and it is in His place of exaltation that the assembly is associated with Him. Therefore the eyes of these wondrous beings are uplifted to see, in Christ and the church, the working out of the Divine plans, inasmuch as the plans concerning the earth are for the time in abeyance.

Further (4): The saints are so literally regarded from the Divine standpoint as being even now in the heavenlies, that their scene of conflict is there. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in the heavenlies" (Eph. vi. 12). The activity of the powers of darkness against the saints of God may be gathered from Job i., ii., Dan. x. 12, 13. And here we are definitely warned of these foes whom we too have to encounter. They cannot separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, as the apostle says (Rom. viii. 38). Neither can they dispossess of our place in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus; but they can and will prevent us enjoying it, unless we wage ceaseless warfare with them.

As Israel had their earthly foes to encounter in the land of Canaan, so we have enemies no less real and no less malevo-

lent in the heavenlies. These we must vanquish, clad in the panoply of God. Otherwise a spirit of worldliness will prove how little we have grasped the great truth of this epistle—the heavenly calling of the church.

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith” (1 John v. 4); for it is by faith we accept the fact pointed out in this paper that the saints of God are as much heavenly now as if they were bodily there. Whether their ways correspond to their position as viewed by God is another matter deserving the most serious attention. It is certainly not sentiment or mysticism, but sober fact that the Christian is heavenly—a fact resting on the same basis as the knowledge of forgiveness of sins, justification and every other blessing, viz., on the word of God. Does my reader acknowledge the fact as of God? If so you are responsible to shape your thoughts and actions accordingly.

W. J. H.

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## FRAGMENTS.

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SATAN has no power over the new man in us, but if we walk in the flesh, we lay ourselves open to His devices. It is the secret of our strength against him, to know that he has no power over the Spirit, but only over the flesh; and greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world.

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It is ours to let God *choose our service*, though it may be to leave a sphere of public usefulness, where we hoped to win souls to Christ, to go to a sick-bed or to a prison. We are at best but poor judges of what will most glorify God and serve our generation. *He knows*; and therefore we may well give up our wishes and our hopes for the accomplishment of His blessed will. May He give all His servants *grace* to do this!

Why cannot they pray? Prayer is a spiritual exercise—they are immersed in *sense*. Prayer lifts us above this world—they “*mind earthly things*,” with their eyes riveted upon earth, how should they look up to heaven? May we by improvement of the grace already given, prevail upon God to pour upon us more and more abundantly the spirit of grace and supplication, in the sense of our need. For, be assured, if we would ever go to heaven ourselves, our hearts and desires must be there before us.

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Let our souls learn that to obey God is to renounce ourselves—to give up our own will, that we may do *His*. Let us not calculate that we shall be always able to expound or harmonise his ways. Verily, “He is a God that hideth Himself.” Nothing but faith, implicit faith, can carry us through the path of trial. When God tries faith, he often confounds reason. He asks us to walk through the sea, to eat bread from the clouds, or to drink water from the rock of flint. “We must learn,” as one has said, “to *trust* Him, where we cannot *trace* Him.” He sent Elijah to the brook, and the brook dried up; then to be sustained by a widow, who had only a meal to eat and then die. He gave a son to the Shunnamite, and afterwards took him away. But even to reason, in due time He made it all plain. He would have faith, first of all, to hold her sway unwaveringly; and then it often happens that reason gets the exposition, that patience may work experience, and experience hope.

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## “SOWING IN TEARS.”

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*“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”*

*Psalm cxxvi. 5.*

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“Sowing in tears”—’tis well; go on,  
Thou can’st not work in vain,  
The Master’s eye is watching thee,  
He knows thy toil and pain.  
Oh, thinkest thou the precious seed  
Will not repay its cost?  
Oh, thinkest thou thy faithful Lord  
Will count thy labour lost?

“Sowing in tears”—’tis well, for thou  
Shalt reap ’mid joy and song,  
And though as yet no fruit appear  
It surely will ere long.  
And there, safe in the Master’s hand,  
A bright reward awaits  
The patient toiler in His fields  
Outside the pearly gates.

“Sowing in tears”—’tis well, take heart,  
The days are short and few;  
And after labour cometh rest  
To faithful hands and true.  
Soon, soon the Master’s eager call  
Thy listening ear shall greet;  
Then thou shalt bind the golden sheaves  
And lay them at His feet.

M.

## NOTICE TO OUR READERS.

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*Being prostrate with a severe attack of illness, so that I scarcely felt equal to the task of completing the number for December, and feeling daily more the increasing infirmity of my nearly fourscore years, I am no longer able to continue "Comfort and Food," of which this number, therefore, will be the last, unless some servant of Christ could be found willing to take it up. If so, my readers will be duly informed in proper time.*

*Thanking you all for your kindness and forbearance as to the slips unavoidably connected with a Magazine, and thanking God for His rich grace in sustaining power,*

*Affectionately yours in Christ,*

*J. A. von POSECK.*