

Food for the Flock.

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“THE WORDS OF THE WISE ARE AS GOADS,
AND AS NAILS FASTENED BY THE MASTERS OF ASSEMBLIES,
WHICH ARE GIVEN FROM ONE SHEPHERD.”

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VOL. V.

LONDON:

W. B. HORNER, 27, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1878.

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DIVINE AFFECTIONS AND THEIR OBJECT.

THERE are many true and earnest souls at the present time sorely perplexed and tried because of the absence in them of those qualities which they really long for, as suitable to Christ dwelling in the heart by faith. In proportion to their reality, and uprightness of conscience, is their sorrow and perplexity. They have tasted what earth and the things around cannot impart to them, yet it has been but a taste; the longings and yearnings are there unsatisfied, and hope deferred maketh the heart sick. They see a brightness which they do not possess, a portion which is not theirs. They are like Mary at the tomb; affection unmet is in them; this world is but a grave to them at best; they can tell you, with broken heart and weeping eyes, "I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not;" and often they say, "Oh, that I knew where I could find him!"

Now all this imparts to the soul in such a state a perturbation, a disquietude, an unrest, which is very marked;—like the bee in quest of honey, which will inflict its bitterest sting on all who seek to oppose it in its pursuit.

These satisfied affections so longed for, heavenly tastes so very earnestly desired, Christ living (domiciled) in the heart, eternal life exhibited here below, all these, and much more akin to them, are *results, consequences, effects*, not the producing power. I will state presently what that power is.

I need not delay to demonstrate the truth, that produced effects or consequences cannot either create themselves or exist even apart from that which alone can create them. You will generally find that if the mind or thought dwell much on the absence or possession of these things, the soul is correspondingly depressed or elated. It is surely good to be convicted, but dwelling much on our shortness of stature in divine fellowship, or on our leanness in realisation, leads to self-occupation of a very insidious nature; and what comfort can there be in seeing certain qualities and joys which we know we ought to possess, but which we have not? This is to us really what Pisgah was to Moses—sight without possession; and hence in a manner we are tantalised and chafed in spirit.

Let me try to state simply, as far as I know it myself, that which alone can awaken, sustain, and satisfy divine affections in the soul.

1. There must be an *object*, as the spring or source, sustainment, and satisfaction of them; hence these affections which rise, live, and set in

this object must be of the same nature with it. Christ is the object, and the affections He alone awakens, sustains, and satisfies must be divine.

2. There must be, through faith, conscious union by the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven, to Christ our object, the glorified Man at the right hand of God. Wonderful, blessed fact; we are united to Him in glory! It is accepted in faith; and in the measure of our faith is our realisation, communion, and joy.

3. He to whom we are united is in glory; and the whole glory of God, that is God's satisfaction according to His attributes, shines in His blessed face! It is from thence every ray of light that has reached us has shone. It is there we by faith *see Him, know Him, have intercourse* with Him.

In having to do with the Lord Jesus, it must be where He is; then, as it is so, as He Himself in glory engages and engrosses the soul, the affections, tastes, desires so ardently *longed* for are produced in us, and satisfied too.

This is all most important to bear in mind, because there is often a great deal of beholding *afar off*, a great deal of mere admiration without its being untrue; the view from Pisgah captivating the heart, the land that Jehovah our God cares for, and on which His eyes continually rest, viewed but not entered or dwelt in; seen in such a way as to spoil all else, but to give nothing better in actual possession. Such display dissatisfaction

and disappointment at every turn of their path; they have no moral superiority or power.

Nor would this in any way exclude that diligence and purpose of heart which there must ever be on our part most surely, yet not in any wise in the direction of what is produced in us, as if we could secure these, but that diligence and purpose of heart which is expressed in the words "looked up stedfastly into heaven;" for it is as we are detained by Christ Himself in glory, that those fruits are imparted to us which are seen and observed by men. Again I repeat it, nothing can produce results corresponding to heaven, but occupation with Christ who is there. We are transformed into His image, I mean in our measure *here*, as we are impressed by Him *there*. Oh, the glory of His grace that shines into us, as Himself, the beloved of the Father, fills the entire vision of the soul, thus shaping and forming us in moral assimilation to Himself!

Thus, too, it is that the heart is secured against the danger of valuing the occupation because of the effect and consequences seen in others as resulting from it, rather than for the joy and satisfaction of being in the company of Christ. Not that any true saint would desire to allow the thought, yet we know ourselves but little if we have but little fear in this direction; and be assured of it, when the *effects* of having to do with Christ are prominent in the soul, Christ is

valued rather in relation to these than for what He is in Himself, and His company is not sought or kept because of the simple satisfaction of being with Him.

With us it ought to be Canaan *first* and then the lessons of the wilderness. These have a very different character when this is the order. Yet I am assured it is the divine order for us. Working to heaven, and living *from heaven*, are two very different conditions of soul. It is true we are going on to heaven through the wilderness, and yet it is also true that we have started from it; and this does not make the wilderness of this world less the wilderness than it is; but if we were traversing it as from glory, all about it would be gilded, the clear and blessed light of heaven would soften the hardness and cheer the dreariness of its wilds.

It was after Moses had been in the mount with God that his face shone; the effects were witnessed by Israel when he descended from the mount. Stephen, we are told, being full of the Holy Ghost looked up stedfastly into heaven. He saw Jesus in the glory of God; he saw that which no man before him was competent to look at—the glory of God; and he saw in that glory Him who was scorned, hated, and rejected by man on this earth. Wonderful sight to faith! It had been no new thing for the heavens to open on the earth when there was One there who was

worthy; but He had died out of it, and the heavens were closed, as it were; they did not open to look down upon the earth, nor did they open for any one on earth to look into them. But now the heavens open to Stephen, and he, by the Holy Ghost, looks up, and sees Jesus in the glory of God; and, in the power of that sight which was food and strength to his soul, he bears his testimony, seals it with his blood, and follows Christ even to death.

If we look at Paul, it is the same heavenly story (Phil. iii.). The Man in glory had formed in the vessel the affections and tastes suited to Himself, but He had also satisfied those affections. Thirty years of continuous trial and unceasing labour had passed between the day that Jesus in glory met him on the road to Damascus and the time the Epistle to the Philippians was written; the dungeon of Nero might exclude the natural sun, but the light from heaven, above its brightness, shone as brightly as ever, and the only change in Paul is that *now* he counts *all* things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

Even in the things of time and sense it would not be possible to overrate the power of an object, how much more when that object is the eternal Son of the Father, the glorified One!

Do we really know that we are one with Him in glory? Do we seek His company for the

simple satisfaction of being with Him? Remember, you can never be for Christ in any little measure, save as you know, possess, and dwell with Him in heaven.

There cannot be too much purpose of heart, too great fixedness of gaze, as we look up steadfastly into heaven; yet these are neither the object of the heart, nor do they produce or promote likeness to Him. Christ, and Christ alone, is the object. The Holy Ghost, by whom we are one with Him, occupies the soul with Him, and the effect is seen by those around in the quiet restful superiority with which all our path here is trodden. We see it in Paul; we see the race of a heavenly man—goal, prize and mark before him: he presses on; he stands fast when no one stood by him, but all forsook him; amid general weakness and abounding declension, he pursues his onward upward advance. He can “rejoice in the Lord greatly” amid sorrow upon sorrow; he can be careful for nothing amid ceaseless anxieties and disquietudes, casting them on Him who can bear them and not feel their weight, and receiving instead the peace of God which passeth every understanding; he can let things go here because he possesses an eternal portion in Christ in that place where He is, and who “is at hand;” he can occupy his heart with what is good amid abounding evil, and find the God of peace with him; he can be abased

and yet not disheartened, can abound and yet be not elated; because Christ is his sufficiency in the dark day, and better than the best in the bright day. Nothing is able to stand before the heavenly man all the days of his life; nothing daunts him; seated on the power of Christ he can do all things; though he has nothing, yet he possesses all; though empty yet he is full; he has a source, supply, measure, and channel equal to the heart of God, hence he can say, "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Such, then, are the sources, maintenance, and satisfaction of those divine affections and yearnings which never can exist apart from their object, Christ, the glorified One at God's right hand. May the Lord, by His Spirit, so turn and keep the faith of his beloved people fixed there, that in them may be witnessed at this present time a more quiet, restful, and satisfied course through this present evil world, for His own name's sake.

W. T. T.

It is our positive shame when we, who have taken up the name of the Lord Jesus, go cumbered and anxious. Are you really a follower of the Lamb? Can you say, All that Christ is, is for me. Can you say that, and lay your hand on your heart, and add, Not one care, not one

anxiety, not one fretfulness ; God is for me, who can be against ? Oh, it is easy to conjure up a thousand things ! but there is light enough to show me that, as to fact, there is not a cloud. If God have brought me apart to teach me, why go burdened ? Has He thought only of the little bit of the way from the threshold of His house to the throne ? What are the cares we have to carry ? None ! The heart that is open before God can roll out all its cares before Him, knowing "He careth for you." May the Lord let Himself into our hearts after a heavenly fashion !

The disciples had left all to follow Him, and what good thing had they lacked ? Not one ! The question is now as then, Where is God ? God was then with Christ on earth, and where is He now ? With Him still. Christ is up there ; "Our life is hid with Christ in God." God is now displaying Himself with Christ at His right hand ; and I have to follow out the testimony with Christ and for Christ down here. You cannot be in communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, such poor things as you are, without feeling the contrast that there is between you and Him ; but still there is nothing to disturb your peace, though there be everything to make you loathe yourself. The whole arch of what God is in heaven is your shelter.

(G. V. W.)

CHRIST ON THE CROSS.

PSALM XXII.

THE more closely we look at the Lord Jesus on earth, at His path here, and at what He met with in that path, the more we see the terrible alienation of men's hearts from God ; and the more too we see the blessing of the fact that the Son of God has been in this world, and has passed out of it by death.

This is a great fact, and there is none like it—not creation even ; there is no fact so great as that of the Word being made flesh, and dwelling among us ; and, after all, being utterly and wholly rejected, for Satan is the prince and god of this world, who exercised his terror on those who followed the Lord, and his full power on the world at large.

But everyone must see that such a thing could not have happened without God's mind. Christ could not have gone down to death had God not permitted it ; as He said Himself, He could pray to His Father, and He would send Him twelve legions of angels ; or He could have wrought a miracle and delivered Himself ; or walked away in Gethsemane when all fell to the ground. But He did not come into this world

for that; neither did He come into the world simply to go out of it as rejected. When we see Him dying we cannot but see that there was some thought and intention which could only be made good through that death. Why should He go down into death and judgment if those to be saved were not there? Thus, seeing Him there, we get the condition of those about whom He came. Thus, too, we see One going down into that place, and rising out of it, so that the whole power of the evil which He is come to set aside is annulled; and in this too we see His divine perfection—His perfect love. He had come to attract men's hearts; but as He says, for His love He got hatred. Man would not have Him, and He goes on to the cross; and God, in all He is against sin, and in His divine wisdom, was glorified in the death of Jesus.

It is this we are a little to weigh in this Psalm, which the Lord Himself quoted on the cross. The Lord here not only takes up the central truth that He was forsaken of God, but that His path on earth led to this—all the circumstances through which He passed; and all testified to the truth of the condition the world was in. All along for His love He got hatred; but this did not hinder the love, it only led to its full expression. And, as nothing but the cross shows out so completely the state the heart of man was in, so there only can we bear to look evil in the face

—only in that cross in which I see sin and evil fully manifested, and yet perfect divine grace meeting it.

First see the blessed character in which the Lord visits the world. Certain truths may be learned elsewhere, such as creation and providence, but not judgment in righteousness, at least not until the end, and then it will be learned in the destruction of the wicked. This was what Job found so hard to understand—how those who did evil prospered, whilst the righteous were persecuted. This is just because the time of judgment is not come; the time of mercy is now going on, and we cannot have mercy and judgment at once. So all is a riddle now. There is too much of badness for man to be able to think that things are of God; and too much of goodness, even amidst all the ruin and wretchedness, for him to see how it is not of God. Men try to get over it, and to be indifferent to it; but there is too much, even for selfishness itself, not to see it. However favourable exterior circumstances may, for a few, partially remedy things, we must see that, taken as a whole, there is but ruin and wretchedness in the world.

But when Christ comes, I find perfect goodness in the midst of this scene of confusion, where there is the power of evil and suffering and sorrow. It is quite another thing from all that went before, though prophets and the like

testified of it; but what I see in Christ is God Himself manifesting goodness—of course manifesting men's hearts too—in the midst of evil and sorrow, and profiting by them to do it, and that in order to win men's hearts back to Himself. Government there is, and judgment there will be; that is the necessity of God's nature, for God cannot allow evil to go on for ever; but Christ's coming was to get back man's confidence in God by the presentation of *goodness*.

Satan had made man distrust God, saying: If you do what I bid you, you will be like God. Christ came to make us really so, and presented Himself to every sorrow and to the worst of sinners, saying: Can you trust God? Do not say you are too bad; I have come because you are bad. Do not say you are too wretched; I have come because you are wretched. Do not say the evil is too great; there is nothing so great as God. And, where this voice is heard, we see the sinner comes to Him, weeping—and it is all right to weep about sins—but confiding in this love which can be trusted when nowhere else can the heart turn and confide.

That is what the Lord was. If any pretended to be good He unmasked them. If any pretended to be above the evil, He showed what they were, as He said: "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" They were "whited sepulchres," He says. But there is always per-

fect grace for the sinner, as we see in the case of the woman they brought to Him. No doubt her guilt was great, and her sin horrid, and stoning justly deserved; but who is going to stone her? He detects all hearts. Though "love," He is "light," and it is impossible that any sinful heart can stand before Him. If they try to, it is only to have the veil drawn off as only God can draw it, and they must confess their guilt; one word of His reaches the conscience, as the woman of Samaria says: "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did."

We must be before God according to what we really are; the effect of the light is to do this; and, when what we are is brought out, it is met by perfect love in the goodness of God. There is no hardness there. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Christ was the manifestation of that goodness which never could be wearied—never could be irritated—never could fail in meeting sorrow—that goodness which had come to meet the badness.

We know that the world could not stand it. The Pharisee was too proud to receive it. The world cast out His name as evil; and at length, restraint having been taken away, and His hour being come, He gives Himself up. And now it is said to the world: "Him ye have taken, and

by wicked hands have crucified and slain," He, of course, being delivered to this by the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."

But oh, beloved friends, what a fact! To think of the idleness of the human heart! That God should have been in this world, and that man should have turned Him out, and that then man can go out and amuse himself! It is hatred to Christ at the bottom, or despising Him; but it is covered up with pleasures, amusements, vanity, anything. Man can go on amusing himself in a world which has rejected God! Still God has not given up His purpose; He is still calling out a people to His name.

See how, in this Psalm, everything brings out the state of the world. Look at all the circumstances which surround the Lord; every man is in his place. "Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round"—that is, violence. As to His friends, they run away. Of His disciples, one denies, and the other betrays. Pilate washes his hands when about to shed the blood of an innocent man. The Jews say, "His blood be on us, and on our children," as we know it is to this day. The high priest, who is there to intercede for those who are ignorant and out of the way, gives his voice against the innocent. All testifies to the moral darkness of the world. Some we know were beating their breasts with human feeling at what was going

on, and the centurion gave a perfect testimony that this was the Son of God; but the world would none of Him. Still He was condemned in both cases on His own testimony to the truth; and then went on in perfect meekness to the cross.

If we look too at Gethsemane, when He was in an agony His disciples were sleeping. And, when the men come to take Him, He has not a thought for Himself; it is, "If ye seek me, let these go their way." He puts Himself forward—stands in the gap—and then the disciples all run away. *All* the circumstances testified to what was in the world, and He perfect through it all. And in this Psalm, He, as it were, rehearses it all, and His own sorrow and suffering in the midst of it.

But these were, however, deep and real, external, and from man. From these He turns to God. And here the proper subject of the Psalm and His unfathomable suffering is found; He looks to God in the trials, and there was no comfort in the cup He had to drink. "Be not far from me, for trouble is near." Then, sorrows pressing Him still more closely, He says again, "Be not thou far from me, O Lord." Still as yet they were but the outward pressure from the hand of man. He was not stopped by them. He was going on through them to the cup which His Father was going to put into His

hand; and there He met that which made Him cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. But *I am a worm, and no man.*" So deep and terrible was the cup of judgment against sin!

It is this we are brought to through the circumstances which surrounded Him. Christ was in the world, and His being there showed out what man was. For His love He had hatred; and this is just as true of Him now. It is then that His love sets about its proper work: not to express what we are, but to put it away. Bringing out and manifesting what we are by itself, had it been possible, would have driven us to despair, but never could have done us any good without the work that brings us back to Himself, and makes us happy to be there.

Beloved friends, we must not deceive ourselves. They who seek pleasures and the like do not care to hear about Christ. Christ is not here now for you to put out your hand to crucify Him again; but the world that did it is not one bit changed. The world does not like to have Christ pressed upon it, and the carnal mind knows that it is so. What is the effect on man naturally when Christ is pressed upon him? He does not like it. What could he say of all his thoughts, and feelings, and inclinations, if God were in the room and all were

manifested? Bring Christ into any drawing-room in this country—not to speak of wicked places—and what is the effect? All is spoiled if God be there; and the reason is, that where man finds his pleasures he cannot have God. Suppose you could take a natural man to heaven; what would he do there? There is nothing there which it would be possible for him to enjoy, and he would only wish to get out of it as fast as possible. This is all that it would come to: if God is brought where our pleasure is, it spoils all; and if it were possible for us to be taken where He is, we could not stay. And yet man is amusing himself, and that in the place where Christ was crucified! It is all well till judgment or death come; and then he finds that he has been walking in a vain show, and has disquieted himself in vain.

I find then the perfectness of the love of the Saviour. His rejection only served as a means of expressing His love still further. Mark the reality of this expression as meeting all our case. Were we lying in death? He puts Himself into it. Did we deserve the cup of wrath? He takes and drinks it. Was all the power of Satan against us? He goes into it and breaks it. Christ does not say: You come to me properly, and then I will help you. No; He comes down into it all; He does not seek to escape; He does not turn away from the insults

and violence of men, but, through them all, He offers Himself without spot to God.

When I see God's love and purpose in dealing with sin in death and judgment—when I see this blessed One there—then I get this truth, that *God has been occupied about sin in grace*. When I see this blessed One putting Himself in such a place as this, I see that the whole question is brought before God and dealt with by Him in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then it is not as when God deals with *us* here, full of mercy and tender compassion for our infirmities. There was no mercy for Christ—no screen to hide and spare Him. He was the one divine Person capable of bearing all the weight of that burden, and willing to do so: and He did it.

And Oh, what a spectacle it was! If God were to sweep away all in judgment, righteousness might be seen, but there would be no love; if He were to receive all, passing over sin, there would be no righteousness. But, when Christ takes our place on the cross, we get divine righteousness against sin as nowhere else, yet infinite divine love to the sinner. Here all that God is was perfectly glorified, where sin was perfectly manifested, but where the Lord accomplished the work which put away sin.

Then we find in this Psalm that the Lord is heard in His cry. He says, "Thou hast heard

me from the horns of the unicorns ;” when the cup was drunk, and He had been, so to speak, transpierced by them, His resurrection was the public testimony that He was heard. But, even before He died, we find Him peacefully saying “ Father : ” “ Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” He did not die from weakness ; He gave up His spirit. We have thus the whole question of sin finished and settled ; and, if not settled then, never to be. It may be in eternal judgment, if this great salvation be despised, but no more settling the question of sin with God. *If* settled then, *perfectly* settled ; settled according to the perfectness of the divine nature, according to the holiness of God, and settled for eternity. Christ, having cried out to God in the place where He drank the cup of wrath, was heard ; and His resurrection is the testimony that He was.

But remark another thing, and that is, the constancy of His love. Opposition does not stop it ; through everything He goes on with His love. You cannot find a want that does not find grace in Him ; you cannot find a sinner such that he does not meet grace for his deepest need. No power of Satan, no heart-breaking through the heartlessness of man, nor quailing before his wickedness could stop it. It only showed out His love the more, the more opposi-

tion it met with. And He had no motive to go on but that love that was in Himself, and perfect obedience.

Then He says: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." What name? The name of His Father and God; the name of the One with whom He had found unclouded favour, sin having been put away. He is in the presence of One of infinite holiness; He had known and felt His power against sin; and now He gets back as man into the enjoyment of His own blessedness, not simply as the eternal Son of God before the world was, but as Son of man. He enters as having wrought the work, and now He says: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." So, when He rose, He said: "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." He had never called them that before. Now He puts them in the place He had acquired for them. He had wrought the needed work, and now He takes His disciples into the relationship He Himself was in with God, in virtue of what He had done; for, what He had done, He had done for them, and that is where He sets them.

Thus we see what this salvation is, if our souls get into the truth of what that love was which made Him go down into the dust of death

when all the power and malice of evil burst out against Him. God met Him with righteous judgment against sin when made sin for us. And then see how He glorified God about it, and understand that He, the forsaken One, got back into the full unclouded light. Then I say: There I am; for He has said, I go to my Father and your Father. I have taken your place, and wrought the work that was needed to bring you to God. You are made the righteousness of God in me, for I have been made sin for you. His first thought is, when heard, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." I must make them as happy as I am myself; I must declare thy name to them. And His love passes on, unenfeebled and undiminished, to make good the effects of His work. He says, Now you are going to be with me; and marks how we are never separate from Him. When the cup was drunk He drank it alone, but now we are never separated from Him. He does not say: Now they may sing; but: *In the midst of the assembly I will sing.* He leads the praises; He declares the name in which He rejoices. How wonderful that we should be thus associated with Himself! It is a figure, of course—His singing—but tells us how He associates us with Himself in everything.

And how perfect this salvation is! Am I to believe this? Am I really to stand in the same relationship to the Father as He? That is

what He tells me, and it is impossible that He should mislead or deceive me. If He say, "Peace I leave with you," He adds, "*My* peace I give unto you." He says, "That *my* joy might remain in you." What does perfect love do? It seeks to associate the person loved with itself in the place where it stands; and that is the way Christ blesses. It is not only that He gives "gifts;" that He does too, for our need; but He introduces us into His own happiness. He says, "That they might have *my* joy fulfilled in themselves." "The *glory* which thou gavest *me* I have given them." "That the *love* where-with thou hast loved *me* may be in them, and I in them." "I have given unto them the *words* which thou gavest *me*." That is His love—perfect—though we are such feeble vessels. He introduces us into the place on purpose that we may be with Him.

We find too, in this Psalm, that He goes on to the Millennium. It is not now "Fear him" only, as we get in Revelation; but, if you fear Him you must *praise* Him. "Ye that fear the Lord, praise him."

Now perhaps you would like God to bear with a *little* sin. No; He can bear with *none*; He puts it all away, and then puts the best robe on us, and brings us into His house, so that our hearts can go out to Him in liberty. There is truth in the inward parts; sin looked at in the light of

God and put away. What peace this gives the heart! Can you look at the cross and say, I do not know whether my sin is forgiven? You know that at the cross all was out; He was made sin there; there God dealt with it in His person. "Once in the end of the world he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." I know the work is done, for that which He came to do He accomplished perfectly. I do not ask myself what *I* think of it; I know what *God* thinks. *God* has raised Him from the dead; not only accepted Him, but glorified Him as a man, in consequence of His having perfectly glorified Him about sin. Once seen, this clears away a thousand cobwebs of man's mind and invention. I shall never get another Christ to do the work, and the One who has died never can die again. Blessed be God, He has done the work, and its value never can cease so long as He is before God.

I may be chastened, rebuked, encouraged, and warned; the revelation of His glory may draw me on, but nothing can ever touch the righteousness of God which I am made in Christ. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father," and "He is the propitiation for our sins." But the righteousness is never touched; in virtue of it, instead of imputing, He is our advocate if we fail, and the soul is restored.

How perfect is this! It is hard for us to

believe it, because it is hard for us to believe in such love. Do you believe that Christ has really brought you into association with Himself? He sets the tune of praise, and you are to follow Him. If you say you do not know whether He has finished the work—if you do not know that you are in perfect light and favour—you can not sing in tune with Him : He knows well that the work is done ; He knows well that He is in perfect light and favour.

I know you will find difficulties, but that is another thing. You will find a grace that reigns through righteousness. He has wrought that perfect work that we may righteously trust Him. How is it with you? Are you reconciled? Can you say that through this work you have peace with God? Naturally, we know, we like pleasure, gain, society, amusements—anything, provided it is not God. Are you reconciled to God? If so, in the midst of all our feebleness, we can fly to God. When temptations arise, where do I go? I go to the strength which is “made perfect in weakness.”

It is sweet to see how the apostle, in the eighth of Romans, applies this love of God to everything. He who has given His own Son, how shall He not, with Him, freely give us all things? He is for us in giving all things. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? He is for us in justifying us—He is for us, whether it be

the giving on His side, or the guilt on ours. He is for us as to the trials, or the difficulties. No matter what, if God be for us, who can be against us? When trial comes we remember that there is a rest. And, if there be a rest, it is for God's people; and, if it be for God's people, it is God's rest, and He will come and take us to it. I may send and fetch a person to me if I do not care particularly for him, but, if I think much about him I shall go and meet him myself. So He says: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself."

[J. N. D.]

I know why Christ is at God's right hand, and I know why the Holy Ghost is down here. The Holy Ghost here is the witness of the judgment of the world, and the power for me. What is He saying to the world? He says: Christ has come down here, and what have you done with Him? what account have you to give of that blessed One who went about here in thorough weakness, and walked as none else ever did? What have you done with Him?—And the world

has to answer : we crowned Him with thorns ; and we sent Him back up there, because we would not have Him.

And what is the Holy Ghost to me ? He is power for me to walk down here in the name of that blessed One who has gone up there. God has never told us that the world is changed with regard to Christ. It may now be religionized, but, as to the question of receiving Christ, it is unaltered in its spirit. But God is manifesting Christ by gathering out of it, by the power of the Holy Ghost, a people to His name, and leading them, in union with Him, through the midst of this unaltered world.

What a wondrous place I have then with reference to Christ ! and what a solemn place with reference to the world ! The weakest thing here, but united to Christ ! an earthen vessel, and yet down here in His name ! The Holy Ghost dwelling in me uniting me to the One who has been cast out, and leading me through the very scene that the shadow of the cross still rests on.

(J. B.)

A believer ought to know himself inseparable in life from Christ, the Man at God's right hand. And, if there, he must know the Man who is there—the Man who in *Philippians* was

down here and did not care what He did if only God had His way with Him—the One who brought all His Sonship into His Servantship—in every part of whose life was the unqualified force of His Sonship expressing itself in service. And the same power that put Him where He is put you there too. Are you then saying: I am a son of God, and I am going to walk exactly as He did? If you have everything in Him, are you living as He lived? He never made allowance for the flesh: “In Him was no sin.” He knew thoroughly all the weakness of humanity—what it was to be weary—what it was to have no one to understand Him; but the whole thing He was after through it all was to express His Sonship in His Servantship.

Are you walking in the power of this eternal life? There is always exercise of soul in doing so. But if it make the wilderness rough, it is only the more happy for it, only the more bright for it; there is “the answer of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.”

After all it was, I feel, no such wonderful thing that God should take *Him* up, and that He, having left the grave, should go up to God’s right hand; but when I look at where *we* were, I say, Well, this is marvellous! That He should find me out in my ruin, and set me in Christ up there! It is wonderfully little thought

of; you find it very rarely in those you live with, that there is the thought of there being the Man up there. It changes everything if you have it. You delight in God—in all the thoughts of God Himself. Down here I see groaning, trouble, sorrow; but what a portion is mine up there! There is one Man in heaven; the eyes of that Man are always upon me, and the heart of that Man is always with me; the river of refreshing flows into my soul; He is to me like a cool shadow on a hot scorching day. That Man who, when He was down here, never would have His own will; there He is with a heart looking down on me, gathering now to the place where He is, and all the heart I have is with Him and upon Him there.

(G. V. W.)

The church has failed in public testimony, so now the remnant must retire into private to promote the interest and progress of the family circle; like a man who failed in public, devoting himself to the care and education of his own.

(J. B. S.)

“THIS DAY IS HOLY: MOURN NOT.”

NEHEMIAH viii. ix. 1-3

THIS portion of God's word is of deep interest to us, because there is in it a principle that holds good for ourselves. We are all acquainted with what this book of Nehemiah brings before us: the broken-down state of the remnant that had returned to Jerusalem some years before, and Nehemiah getting leave from the king to go to their help.

They were a feeble people, but they had faith in God; so in all their feebleness they knew that God was working for them. If I have no faith in God, I shall have thoughts like those of Sanballat and Tobiah: “What do these feeble Jews? If a fox go up he shall even break down their stone wall.” But if I get God before me, how different are my thoughts. I shall see that He is working for me, no matter what my own feebleness.

They were mixed with that with which they ought not to have been, but, in spite of that, God was working for them. They had the law, and they read it; and they were recovering truth out of it. And that is what we are doing in the

present day. We cannot say that we have a fresh revelation; but, through God's grace, we can say that He has recovered truth for us. These people were no doubt looking back and remembering what their nation had been in times past; and they were weeping and making confession to God. And what does Nehemiah say? “ This day is holy unto Jehovah your God; mourn not, nor weep. Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” He recalls their hearts from occupation with themselves, from remembering the bright days in the past in contrast with those in which they were, to one *sole point*, and that was to *God Himself*—to Jehovah. This poor, feeble people, that had *cause* to weep, were recalled from all that to be occupied on this one particular occasion with what *God* was for them; and in the power of this they were able afterwards to keep the Feast of Tabernacles—that feast which will be kept in its integrity by and by. The reason that they could keep it was that they were occupied with God.

Now God would bring us up to this point at the Lord's table. We have a tendency to be occupied here—in our prayers, in our words, in our hymns—with similar thoughts to those which occupied

these people when they wept. But the Lord has set us in a place where we may say, "The joy of the Lord is our strength;" and, were it so, nothing would flow out of our hearts but worship; because thoughts of ourselves would be then set aside, and we should have the power which enabled these people to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and to occupy, as purged worshippers in the presence of the Lord, the very place in which God has set us now in His Son, and which we shall occupy in body by and by.

Neither the land nor the people were in a *state* suited to the feast; and if we take the ground of our *state* as that upon which we stand before God, I am sure we shall only weep. If I am occupied with my own wretched heart, how can I sing with any reality such a hymn as, "Not a cloud above, not a spot within"? They *had* occasion to weep, and the day came when they *did*; but they were not to do it on this particular day. I am sure that the more we realise what the work of Christ has done for us in setting us in all His own acceptance before His God and Father, and our God and Father, the more our prayer-meetings will take the character of confession, for the place in which I am set in the Beloved is that which should give character to my walk here. So, when the time, the *due* time, comes, we shall be upon our faces on the ground, that we so little answer to

the place in which He has set us. But there is a day in which we are “to eat the fat and drink the sweet.” I do not say that we are to force ourselves up to it, but I do say, if we are not up to it, do not let us be satisfied with being thus below it. When we are gathered here it is that, for the time, we may be done with everything, even to His gifts, so that there may be nothing but simple praise and adoration from our lips because we are occupied with *Himself*.

(J. G. H.)

“*Then Jacob said, Put away the strange gods.*” Bethel was filling the gaze of his soul, commanding the powers of his heart, and he says everything must be suitable to that. The hindrances are discovered.

It is sometimes said, “What are the hindrances? How am I to know them?”

If you set out to be for God, you will soon find out what they are. When the soul has Bethel before it, it seeks to answer it, and every thing that is unsuited to it must go. Do not tell me things will drop off like autumn leaves. They must be “*put away*.”

(W. T. T.)

FRAGMENT.

“CHRIST is all and in all.” Who can be this except God? “All” excludes everything else. In getting Christ we get eternal blessedness, and life, and knowledge of the Father—all that will make heaven blessed. The object on which we look gives perfect rest to the conscience and heart. The One in whom the Father delights I know has given Himself for me, and has satisfied, not only the Father’s love, but God’s righteousness. I start with the consciousness of being perfectly loved and perfectly cleansed. My relationship and standing with God are not founded on anything that I am, but on what Christ has done. The law put life at the end of the course; Christianity puts it at the beginning. The Christian has redemption behind him; and he is walking through the wilderness, waiting and watching for Him who is the object of his heart; for Him who gave not merely *something* for him, but *Himself*; who kept back nothing.

The distinct character of the Christian is that of one in a state of expectation. “Like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.”

The *state* of the soul is the first thing ; it must precede service. It is, " Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning." Before we can serve our own state is in question ; not the *service* but the *quality* of the service depends on it: Christ, the revelation of Christ, must be applied to everything : it is a dirty world, and you must have your heart rightly tucked up as you go through it—" your loins girded." There must be these two things : the heart in order (kept so by the word of God), and no will of our own. The instant we are not in the consciousness of God's presence self comes up—will is there ; but, if we are in earnest, running to attain, we are glad of the removal of every hindrance to our running. Try your heart by this. Do you think a man running a race which he cared to win would weight himself by keeping even gold upon him ? I judge everything by one object ; Christ being my object I judge all by Him, and I say, If this hinder me in running after—in apprehending—Christ, let it go.

Then, when you have got your heart in order comes the full and unqualified confession of Christ before men : " Your lights burning." If the heart be not first right within of course profession is useless, but where it is true let us have it out. There is always a shrinking from confession when there is not power within.

A Christian is one whose affections are fixed

upon Christ and who is waiting for Him. If He have bought us with a price it is that we may be as men that wait for their Lord. Every one should be able to see that you are a man waiting for Christ. If we were so, it would cut up by the roots ninety-nine out of a hundred of the things people so live for down here. Can the world say of all of us as of the Thessalonians of old: These are a people who have given up every idol to wait for God's Son from heaven? The world ought to think so. It is, blessed are those servants whom He finds, not only waiting but, *watching* for Him.

There was not one act for self in all Christ's life; He was always at the service of everyone. It is difficult for us to believe in the love of Christ, we are so selfish. Love likes to serve, selfishness to be served. Christ was *love*; He delighted to serve; He took upon Him the form of a servant; He took it as a man, and He *never* gives it up: even in that day "He will come forth and serve them." He says, You shall never make me give up this delight of myself—to serve you.

First we have, "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find *watching*;" and then we get, "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so *doing*"—serving in the place where his Lord has set him. Where their affections are watching, they get Christ's affections in return

serving them in heaven ; where they are doing they get the ruling all that He has. Where we serve we rule ; where we watch we sit at the table and He serves us.

Christ shows His perfect love. If I love a person a little I give him a little—a small thing ; if I love him much I give him more ; but if I love him perfectly—which of course I cannot do—I give him everything I have. But more, when the world gives anything it has to part with what it gives ; but He says : “ Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” He brings us into the enjoyment of everything that He has.

But at the same time He came “ to send fire on the earth ; and what will I if it be already kindled ? ” The cross brought in what man will never accept : he will not have the reproach of it ; and they despised and rejected Him even *before* the cross ; the fire was “ already kindled.” But that thing which tests the heart of man and exposes it, sets free the heart of God. When He was baptized with that baptism it opened the flood-gates of God’s love.

Verse 53 is a quotation from the prophet, describing the most horrible state of things. And this the cross will do ; take care that your own *will* does not do it. But the state of man is such that when God gives His Son, this is the effect of it.

(J. N. D.)

DEPENDENCE AND OBEDIENCE.

Deut. xiii., and xi. 1-17.

There are two subjects in these two chapters : one is the contrast between the wilderness and Canaan ; the other, the contrast between Egypt and Canaan ; they are very distinct contrasts. and the teaching of the two Scriptures is, how we are to retain what we reach. Many reach who cannot retain, because retaining a thing requires a continuance of the power by which we reached it. Many a person in natural things can reach a height he cannot maintain. A great effort, a fortunate act, may reach a great eminence, but the question is whether you can retain it.

We all admit the fact that God has a place for us hereafter, but Canaan is not a future place ; it is heaven on earth at the present time. We belong to another place altogether ; we are on earth in a place that we do not belong to. I belong to heaven, but I am on earth, and that is Canaan. I am out of Egypt, and I have to learn the wilderness, and the man who is mostly in Canaan is the man who best understands what it is to be in the wilderness, for the higher you go the better you understand what it is to be dependent.

In the history of Israel they needed the wilderness to get into Canaan, and then they left it. It is not so with us ; you often get contrasts in this way in Scripture. It is not that we leave the wilderness for Canaan, but that we are in the wilderness as belonging to Canaan. A person may say, You are not in heaven ; and I answer, That is true, but I am united to One who *is*, and I am nearer to that One than to any other. I am on the earth, but I am united to One who is in heaven ; and the more I know that, the more I am in Canaan. Besides this, I get no support whatever from this earth that I am on ; so it is the wilderness to me. And the more you advance in the knowledge that you are a heavenly man the more novel, the more distressing, the more severe, the more extraordinary, the more unaccountable, will be the trials that you are subjected to in order that you may be dependent, lest being puffed up you should lose your high position through independence or wilfulness.

There are many people who are converted who are not sure that they are saved ; and there are many who are saved who do not know that they are heavenly. But all these stand or fall together. As we read, “ The land the Lord thy God *giveth* thee for an inheritance ; ” it is a *gift*. I am as much a heavenly man as a saved man. I may be a very useless British subject, but I am one

all the same. It is a great thing to get hold of the calling : " Walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called." I lay it down as a settled thing for your soul, that you must say, I am as much a heavenly man as I am a saved man. He has already united me to Himself there, and, when He comes, it is that He may take me to the place where He is. I have not got to heaven yet, but I belong to the One who is there.

Man naturally never rises to this even when he is converted. Take, for example, the thief on the cross. He says, " Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." No, says the Lord ; to-day in paradise. He was to have, not the kingdom, but heaven. Take another case, that of Stephen. He looked up and saw " Jesus standing on the right hand of God," and he turns to his murderers and says, You are going to send me out of this place, but it is only to send me to heaven. Take a still farther case in Paul. He says, " I knew a man in Christ, whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell ;" I have lost all sense of things here. Every person does not get so high as Paul did, but every one is entitled to be where Stephen was.

It is a great thing to be able to walk about and say, I do not belong to this place at all ; It is nothing but wickedness. Take an amiable man in nature. As he suffers in seeing all the

disorder, misrule, cruelty, that is around him, what a relief to him to be able to say, My citizenship is not here; I am not responsible for it. My citizenship is in heaven. I say it is an immense thing. God says to me it is not my place. When He began with Abram, He called him out and said, This is not to be your country; come out of it to a land that I will show you. And so now God says, I do not give my people a place where my Son is rejected, but a place where He is received. I am a heavenly man, not by attainment, but by the gift of God. I am as much a heavenly man as I am a British subject, whether I am acting well or not.

Some seek to escape the edge of this truth by refusing to be called heavenly; but you are a heavenly man by *calling*. Heaven is your place: it is the first thing that is brought before you as a saved person.

I turn to these two Scriptures to show that no height to which grace elevates us at the present moment ever takes us out of dependence here. Nay, if we lose dependence, as some have done, we bring reproach on the truth we are brought into. What keeps us in the high position is dependence. A man who learns obedience without dependence is legal. What was the great lesson of the wilderness? Not simply to "humble thee," but "to make thee know that man

doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." That is, that you are to be dependent on the word of God; and then you are obedient. Obedience when you are looking for a rule is legal. Dependence is what I learn in the wilderness, and obedience is what keeps me in Canaan: but it is obedience as the consequence of being a dependent man.

Look at the Lord: *the* most heavenly Man; "the Son of man who is in heaven." And what is He down here? *The* most obedient one. He says, I have not got a word from God, so I cannot turn the stone into bread. I have learned to be a dependent man, and because I am a dependent man therefore I am an obedient man. I "live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." That is the place of a heavenly man upon earth.

It is then in proportion as you enjoy the land that there will be trials in the wilderness. So much so, that even Peter, who does not get out of the wilderness at all, says: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." I am passing through the wilderness; and the only thing I have to keep my eye on here, as Peter says, is the enemy of God. Peter, as we have seen, never puts you out of the wilderness. John is the first who

puts you out of it; and he does not put you in heaven—only gives you a heavenly life on earth. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” I have different enemies—three great ones, at any rate. There is Pharaoh; that is the clutch, the grasp, of the world. There is Amalek; that is the power of Satan to hinder. And there is Balaam; that is the snare of socialism. And these you do not get in Canaan at all.

The warning of these two chapters in Deuteronomy is, that, if you do not obey, you will lose all. He shows you all the abundance of things, the contrast that there is between Canaan and Egypt; but will all this go on? Are you sure of it? Not if you are not obedient. If you are not happy there, you are worse off than in Egypt. There was water there, any how when you worked for it with your foot; but here there is none unless it come down from heaven. We get on to heavenly ground, and we rejoice in the fact; but we keep it only by obedience. All we have in the wilderness is the terrific opposition of the enemy of God. We are attacked by the way; but we do not become aggressors ourselves until we get into the land. And what is the result of aggression? It is getting place for Christ. Those who fought the holy wars were seeking *material* space for Christ; they had

not intelligence as to His mind. What we want is to get *moral* space for Christ.

In 2 Cor. xii., we get the brightest example of the heavenly man. A man caught up into Paradise, who heard unspeakable words which it was not possible for a man to utter. He was caught up into the place without going there bodily. He is sensibly in the enjoyment of it; so sensibly that, for the moment, he has lost his link with the earth. I do not say that souls do not get a taste of it now-a-days; but, as they do, they get a deeper sense of the wilderness. Paul did: there was given to him "a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him." For this he cried to the Lord three times; and He said: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." I gave it you lest you should be puffed up—lest you should get out of the place of dependence. And then see how Paul comes round, how beautifully he accepts it; he says: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities." Whilst not out of the wilderness, I have entered on the enjoyment of heaven, and I can go back to it; but I am made sensible that I am to be more of a dependent man than I ever was before. What tried Paul was, that he lost the ability to expound this very thing that he had received. Never mind, through the grace of Christ he will be a better wilderness man.

There is not time to go into chap. xi, but it opens with showing at what an immense cost they were brought into the land. I believe the great hindrance to every soul getting on is, not that it does not know the glory—every soul has that—but that it does not know the cross. The cross has taken everything away, and left only Christ. It is not the glory that takes things away. Paul says: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” It is the cross that takes all away. Paul is a bright specimen of a heavenly man.

Now I will show you one who lost the heavenly thing, as many do, by not being dependent. In Gen. xxxiii. Jacob has come back to the land. There have been real power and grace shown in restoring him; but like many a one he thinks to rest in what he has attained. He builds a house, buys a field, and erects an altar, calling it El-Elohe-Israel. He does not give up truth, but he makes truth the thing that is before him, instead of God, who has brought him to Himself. He ought to have gone to Bethel. When at last he does get there, he finds quite another order of things. At Shechem he is a heavenly man; but he wants to rest in things here, and not to be dependent.

What is the consequence? He is brought into

the most humiliating state. He says: "I shall be destroyed, I and my house." He has to be subjected to all this in order to make him true to his calling.

The Lord make us see what a wonderful place we are called to. I do not believe a soul ever has really known the presence of Christ if it have not at some time or other, known what it is to have everything lost to it for the moment. But, when after such a moment, you return to this scene, do not be surprised if some new form of trial come upon you, because you cannot be let rest in the happiness you have reached, instead of in the grace that brought you into it. Many a one can trace failure and defeat to the moment that followed some happy time. God grant that we may seek to enjoy His Son in the unclouded light of His own presence. When I come down from it, I am all the more prepared to meet the contrariety, the opposition to God, of the scene in which I am. Thus, while I delight in the One I have learned to know up there, I possess the sweetest thing the heart can know—dependence on God. Down here I have the most consolatory sense that I am dependent upon the One I am delighting in, and so am competent to come down and take my place for Christ, to seek space for Him in this world, whilst I myself do not seek to be sustained by anything in it but by Him who is my life.

[J. B. S.]

SANCTIFICATION.

JOHN XVII.

I HAVE it on my heart to say a few words on this chapter in reference specially to the character of sanctification.

At this moment, as we all know, the Lord was rejected. From chap. xiii. we get Him speaking on this ground: "Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father." All through the Gospel, from the first chapter, He is unknown to the world, and rejected by the Jews. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." But from chap. xiii. He speaks as going out of the world and ascending on high.

In this chapter, however, what is brought out is, that He came forth from the *Father*, not from *God* only; and this involves "eternal life:" "To know thee, [the Father] the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." That is where eternal life comes in. Its character is that it is the knowledge of the *Father*; for the Father sent His only-begotten Son, that we might live through Him. Of course, therein we know *God* also: "who by him do believe in *God*;" but it is in the knowledge of the Father,

and Jesus sent by Him, that there is eternal life. And then the character in which we know Him is that of "*holy* Father;" and that is sanctification. When it is a question of the world, it is "*righteous* Father." It is not that grace does not go out to poor sinners in the world to deliver them out of it, but that saints are not of it, and have done with it.

In some places it is a current thought that Christ came into the world to connect Himself with humanity—that He united Himself to man in the incarnation, which is utter falsehood. He was a true man—in one sense more *man* than we are, for a perfect thing is more than a corrupt thing. The union of God with man—with humanity as it was, is wholly unscriptural; there is none before redemption. Nor is it ever said that God, or a divine person, united Himself to us. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, true man in the flesh, but no union with us; and to maintain that there is is totally false. I refer to it, because it is very current among Christians of all shades and forms. The doctrine of Scripture is that we are united to Christ after redemption is accomplished—to a glorified Christ. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone"—entirely and totally *alone*.

We have here a most important point practically, because "the friendship of the world is

enmity with God." Wherever I let the spirit and associations of the world in, I am associating myself with that which has rejected Christ. It may seem harsh, but it is not so harsh as the world rejecting Christ when He was here in grace. So the judgment of God is connected with it. He says, Righteous Father, I have manifested thee, and the world has not known thee. So when it comes to the Holy Ghost it is: "Whom the world *cannot* receive," because it does not know him; it is only the believer who can. The world is a judged system: "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." The Lord laid the foundation of an entirely new state of things, as to which He says, "holy Father. As to the world, it is, "hath not known thee;" and you cannot present God better to the world than Christ did.

You will find as things go on in these last days that this question will come up. Faith sees by the Holy Ghost what God's thoughts about it are, and our part is to get hold of them. When the Lord comes it will be too late for the world; that is the day of judgment.

"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The Father has a world of His own which He has given to us, to which He has taken Christ to be the centre—the new

creation. The world, as it is, rejected Christ when He came into it; and now all that is over. He came in grace: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." And now we are to walk by faith as to these things, and not by sight, for the whole thing we belong to is a new creation. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." That is what a Christian is; and we have to lay hold of it in our walk and in our testimony. I do not know what good we are if we go along with the world that rejected Christ. It is true we have the treasure in earthen vessels, but we belong entirely to the new creation; the treasure is not in its natural associations as to its surroundings here.

It is a solemn thing to say, but it is the truth, that we are begotten *by the word of God*. Plenty of creatures He had before; you might call Adam a kind of first-fruits if you like; but the saints now are the first-fruits of a creation that is not manifested at all, except as they live according to it here. We have to show it out in our bodies until Christ comes.

We read also, "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." In Hebrews it is always sanctification by the blood—on the cross. *There*

was a complete breach between God and the world, and the believer set apart to God. Here there is a double ground of sanctification, God's will and Christ's offering.

And thirdly, which is the practical part of it, we get the Holy Ghost as Him who actually works it, the immediate agent of the work in us: "Elect, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." There is the communication of a new life in Christ: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." It is the spiritual life, of course, he is speaking of; a man has not got life at all if he have not got the Son.

But, you say, do they not all know this? No. The common doctrine is that you are born again, but this is viewed as a change of the old man. They say that you were body, soul, and spirit before, and that you are only body, soul, and spirit after, only in a changed state, and that it is an exaggeration to speak of anything more—of two natures—of any new nature added. But it is a totally *new thing*. Christ our life, so as even Adam, innocent, had it not. And this is really the principle of holiness. That which is born of God is a holy thing; we are "born by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," for the word of God does abide for ever. It is a totally new thing; in the unconverted world it

is not there at all ; and therefore the Lord stops Nicodemus by saying, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God ;" he *must* be born of water and the Spirit. Many, I trust, do know this, but, where there is ignorance as to it, it will work gradually out in some shape, and it makes all the difference whether I distinctly recognize that it is a new man, Christ living in me, by which I live to God.

Christ is that eternal life which was with the Father, and becomes spiritually our life ; it is nothing that is *in* man or *of* man. That gives it its true character. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life ; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." We have seen eternal life in the person of the Son come down from heaven ; He was made a man ; so in John we read, "The life was the light of *men*." It is emphatic there It is not the life of angels. It is what you call a reciprocal proposition. That is, life and light of men answer completely to each other, and each may be affirmed of the other.

All that which was simple failure at the beginning, came out as enmity against God's own Son when Christ was in the world. He displayed

divine goodness and power, all that divine grace could be; but this manifested God, and this man would not have at any cost. He says, "They have both seen and hated both me and my Father." He was rejected in His word, and in His work, as is brought out in John viii. and ix. Thus it was not a question merely of failure and sin; there had been plenty of that before He came; it was that God Himself had been manifested in goodness before men, and because He *was* God they would not have Him. The world has been tested in this way, and the result is, that, fallen man having been turned out of Paradise, God, as far as man could do it, has been turned out of the world into which He had come in grace, when it was in the sin and ruin into which man, that was turned out of Paradise, had got. And so the world will not now bear a man that is *like Christ*. It will bear plenty of Christians; an amiable Christian it will get on with; but a Christian is called to be *faithful*. Remember the Christian has two natures, and wherever he gets on with the world it is the Christian who goes to the world, for the world cannot go to the Christian; it has only one nature.

"The carnal mind is enmity against God." Says the world, we will not have Him. So "He gave himself to deliver us from this present evil world." Thus I get the One, the Man that the

world rejected, and that God delighted in ; and God says : I must carry out my purposes of grace. And to Christ : Come and sit at my right hand till I carry them out. So that is where He is gone, and the world sees Him no more.

Now for the character of sanctification connected with this.

In Israel it was a little different. God was amongst them as a delivered people. He said to them : " Be ye holy, for I am holy ; " I will not have you in my camp without holiness. God was there ; within the veil certainly ; but still He insisted upon it that they were a people whom He had taken to *Himself*, and that they must behave themselves as such. The veil was there unrent, " the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest ; " this characterizing the whole of God's dealings then with man as to the revelation of Himself. He was sitting within the veil ; death to any man who came in, even the beast that touched the mount was to be stoned. God was saying, I am so holy that I cannot let any one come near me. I will give you laws and promises, but into my presence you cannot come.

It is not so now. When Christ died the veil was rent, and we have " boldness to enter into the holiest." What *was*, was that God did not come out to man, and man could not go in to

God. Keep the law, and have human righteousness, but still do not come near me. All that closed in the rejection of Christ. What is, is that the veil is rent from top to bottom, and that the only place I have to walk in is in the light as God is in the light, and if I cannot walk in the light I cannot walk with God at all. A Christian's place is not that he *ought*, but that he *must* walk in the light as God is in the light, or he cannot walk with Him, or in relationship with Him at all, for now there is no veil. We have a title to be in the holiest by the blood that brought us there, and are fit for it as cleansed from all sin, and there is no other place to walk in with God. But we reckon ourselves also dead to sin, to all that is without. That is the very thing that gives us deliverance. I am not in the flesh at all, therefore I can go in with boldness.

We then come to what this sanctification is *positively*. God has personally accepted *man* in Christ; the Son of God is in the glory. Our *actual* condition is never spoken of except as *being* in connection with the second Man in glory; our only connection with God is in Christ; we are "predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren." This is not a question of our responsibility; it all depends upon the finished work of the second Man; it

rests upon what is done. Christ *has* obeyed even unto death, and is glorified. As the result of His work we have been begotten again with the word of truth, we have been made the children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, and thus have a new nature. We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

Now this new nature must have an *object*, and God has given it one that is not in this world at all. There is not a single thing in this world that will not *unsanctify* us if we go after it. Sanctification is all connected with Christ in glory. The whole thing is new: the nature, the character, the object by which we are sanctified through the Holy Ghost, is outside the world entirely. The work being fully accomplished the Holy Ghost comes down and says: Now the world is done with, and, if you do not come out of it in body, be out of it and in heaven in spirit. I have come down purposely to connect you with One outside it. The object before us is a glorified Christ; He is our life: we are "created in Christ Jesus." The believer has duties here, and is not taken out of the world, but his life is wholly connected with Christ at the right hand of God, and everything that diminishes our perception of Him there diminishes our practical sanctification here.

Our testimony is that the Man whom the world rejected is at God's right hand. Where

the gospel begins is not with Christ come into the world, great as was the grace and love shown in that to win man's heart, and to which he turns to feed on with delight when saved, but with Christ turned out of it. The world rejected Him, and God took Him up into heaven and made Him there the head of the new creation, and we are to be conformed to it. "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." "Sons of God;" we have the title of Christ: "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." That was never said before redemption.

And just mark how the apostle identifies us with Christ; the world knoweth us not because it knew *Him* not. He completely associates us with a rejected Christ down here. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be"—we have the treasure in poor earthly vessels now; "but we know"—we are so identified with Christ—"that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is"—up there in glory. We shall

never see Him as He *was*, down here in humiliation, but in glory we shall see Him as He is.

And now what is the effect of this? "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." I see the work of redemption accomplished; I see Christ at the right hand of God; that is the Man I am connected with; and as to this first Adam I must reckon it dead; it is enmity with God, and I am not in it though it be in me. When we look at our portion it is that "we *are* sons of God, and when he shall appear we shall be like him." That is the Christian, beloved friends, and the only thing that there is for the Christian's heart.

"Purifieth himself even as he is pure." I can never be as He *was*, for He never had any sin in His nature; but I am going to be perfectly like Him. Thus I may do without all the notions of men as to perfection in this world; they are a mere delusion from beginning to end, for it is a glorified Christ we are going to be like, and no other Christ. He does not say we are to be pure as Adam was.

And *why* purify myself? Because I am *not* pure, and therefore I must purify myself. He does not say pure as He is pure. But He is the standard by which I purify myself, Christ, as He is there above. I am to be like Him, and the life I have of Him can never be satisfied till then. I have ever to purify myself.

You may find other passages on the subject, but there is no other way of looking at sanctification in Scripture. There is no setting apart to God except in the second Man. It is, "Beholding with open (unveiled) face the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory." Into what image? Why the image of the One I am looking at—Christ in glory. We have it expressed in three ways: "Beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord;" then "the glory of Christ who is the image of God;" and then, "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." When I come to associate it with man I must get it as it is in Him up there. If I say, Where am I to look at God's holiness in a man? I answer, In Christ in glory. He was the holy One and walked according to the Spirit of holiness down here, and I am to walk as He walked; but that by which the Holy Ghost works this in us, is, by looking at the glorified Christ up there, by having an object and a motive up there which takes my heart out of all that is here, as His was who walked through the world, as I have to do. I am going to be with Him and like Him. A man who, in heart, is not only *with* God and *for* God, but even now an imitator of God as a dear child—that is Christian sanctification.

And as when Christ appears we shall be like Him and we purify ourselves now as He is pure; our holiness, our walk now, is referred to that

day in 1 Thess. His coming runs through all our relationships here, and then as to holiness it says: "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all, even as we do toward you; to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father"—where? In our walk down here, of course! people say. But it is not so put. It is "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." It is quite true the work in us is to purify ourselves as He is; but it is to be "unblameable in holiness" when He appears. Of course if we are sincere we purify ourselves now as He is; but God has taken man clean out of this world as to his living associations and his conversation, and "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory."

What a blessed calling is ours! all connected with a glorified Christ—a Christ that the world has rejected. With a holy nature, born of God, and as an object for this life, He has given you the glorified Christ the Son of God. God, even in this way, is making you partakers of His holiness. You say, But I must get this holiness formed perfectly in a man to know its true character. You *have got* it in Christ up there. Now let us turn back to the chapter we read and you will find it there.

It puts us in Christ's place before God—before

the *Father*, more strictly—and into Christ's place before the world. The first verse begins by bringing in the Father's name, Christ on high after finishing the work, and then the disciples are placed before the Father too, His name being manifested to them. "Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son." The verse beginning "Now come I to thee" closes the first part. Then He says, "I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." That is our place. In the thoughts and mind of God we do not belong to the world at all. Christ tested it in every way, and never found, except in a poor woman who anointed Him at Bethany, a single comforter or capacity for sympathy in others, not even in His disciples.

How then am I to be set apart in the world? If I have nothing wholly outside it, my leaving particular evils comes to giving up one thing and taking to another; but getting something that is outside of it delivers me wholly from its power.

Let us keep to the word of God. The word of God is the word of *God*; it "discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart." Men when reasoning against the truth will reject the word of God; they will reject its authority, and say, "Do not quote the Bible to me." It is just as

if, when I have a fine-tempered sword in my hand, they should tell me not to use it. When you meet with cavillers the only way is to use the word, and you will find that it *does* detect. Just use the word, and you will be astonished to see how they come out with all their rationalism and infidelity.

But to turn to it now. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Well, He says, "sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth;" which is just what Christ the blessed Son of God was: He was the truth itself, and the truth perfectly suited to man's heart and conscience. This is what the word of God does, looked at as a means. The Father's word brings the truth into my heart, and searches it, and detects everything that is there; it comes as a light and shows everything there that is not of the new creation. And it does it by revealing what is up there. The law did not do that; it came and claimed from man what man ought to be down here; no murdering, no stealing, and besides this condemning lust. It takes man as man, and says, That is what man ought to be. But this is not what we have got in Christ. What we have in the truth in Him is the bringing of what is heavenly down to a quickened soul, the bringing down to it all that is in God's mind about itself. It is set apart to God by the revelation of what is heavenly, what is in Christ above,

and judges thus all that is not. They were believers, and now He is looking for them to be sanctified, and that is done by showing them what is heavenly, associating them with what is in Him above by the Father's word.

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." To carry what? The manifestation of Christ revealed by the Father's word. I cannot be sent into the world if I am in it and of it, nor go there as sent by Christ, but as I am fully associated with Him in the spirit of my mind. He says, I send them into the world as thou hast sent me. What does that tell us of their mission?

"And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth." He is set apart as the Man of God's counsels and heart, as man in glory. Nay, He says, "I set *myself* apart;" and the Holy Ghost brings the knowledge of it down, and, by the communication of Christ in glory, makes me more like Him every day. He says, You must not have a motive that is not drawn from me in heaven. All sanctification is referred to being like Him there. Kept by the Holy Father to walk as He walked down here before His Father.

Whilst it is, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given

me," it is, "Righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." It is very solemn. He appeals to the Father as against the world. It is lying in wickedness. Meanwhile, Christ is "Made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." "Imputed" cannot be applied to all these words. If to any it is not the subject of this text. People talk of "*imputed* sanctification;" how about imputed *redemption*? What does *that* mean? I hope we shall get more than imputed redemption on going into glory! It is the kind and measure and standard of these things, and that is Christ, and He made them of God to us.

It is a question of partaking in God's holiness. The world has rejected the Son of God. Up to the cross it was proved that nothing could win man's heart; he must be born again; and now, being born again, I am associated with Christ. I am going to be in the same glory that He is in, and I am going on until I get there, purifying myself as He is pure. Then I shall see Him as He is, and be like Him. The world we are naturally of has rejected the Son of God, and the associations of the believer are with a glorified Christ, waiting till He comes to take Him home. God has sanctified us to Himself by the blood of Christ.

(J. N. D.)

NEW CREATION.

CREATION is God's work, an act of divine and sovereign power. Man may, within limits, shape and fashion materials ready to his hand, but God alone can by His word call into being that which never before had existence. "He spake and it was done, he commanded and they were created." This being quite outside of all man's experience, it is only known by revelation: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were formed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do not appear."

The first creation came perfect from God's hands: "He saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." But, in His wisdom, God was pleased to put everything so made under the man whom He had created, and to leave that first man, who was of the earth, earthy, in a position of responsibility. This man, when tempted, disobeyed and fell; and not only did he himself thereby depart from God, becoming subject to death and condemnation, but, in result, the whole of that creation (which was responsibly put under him, and so depended for its blessing on the mainte-

nance by him of his true place) is now groaning: "The creation, having been made subject to vanity, not of *its* will, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same."

The purposes of God in reference to this creation will have their fulfilment, when the rights and power of Him who is the second man, the last Adam, the Lord from heaven, shall be displayed (according to Psalm viii.; Acts iii. 21., &c.); and "the creation itself also shall be set free from the bondage of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." God will yet have glory for Himself in that very creation where His glory has been set at nought.

There is, however, more than this presented in Scripture. God is not content, if one may so speak, with thus rehabilitating the old creation. He brings in a "new creation," which is a reality now morally, or spiritually, for man as believing in Christ; and He will hereafter "make new" the whole of the physical heaven and earth, so that everything may be unalterably according to Himself; and not dependent, like the first, on the responsibility and power of an earthly man to maintain himself, but on the absolute perfectness and immutability of Him who was the last Adam. It is a sphere, an order of things, in which not only all His glories can be displayed,

but in which God Himself can rest eternally.

The "new creation" will not have its real display until after the day when the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall "transform our body of humiliation into conformity to his body of glory;" or indeed, in its fullest sense, until the new heavens and new earth appear when there will be no more "sea," that emblem of unrest and instability; but it is a reality now for the believer in Christ, though it be only "by faith" we can understand it, just as it is only by faith we understand what creation meant at first (Heb. xi. 3.).

May it not be owing to the fact that it is really a "creation," and not the improvement or modification of something already existing, that the wonderful truth of which we speak is so little entered into? The soul that does not receive it as revealed by God cannot know it, for it is, like the physical creation, outside of his experience; and alas! is it not true of many who have in measure bowed to revelation, that they are more prone to seek a natural explanation of things as they present themselves to them than a divine one?

It is written, as to the physical heavens and earth, that, before the new are introduced, the old pass away. "The heavens shall pass away," says Peter, ". . . the earth also, and

the works that are therein, shall be burned up but we look for new heavens and a new earth." See also Rev. xx. 11. xxi. 4, 5. But this is equally true as to the moral or spiritual "new creation" of which we speak. The simplest statement as to it is contained in 2 Cor. v. 17. "So, if any one be in Christ (there is) a new creation: the old things have passed away, behold all things have become new, and all things are of the God who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." Thus we see:

Old things pass away.

All things become new.

All things of God.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth we find that, in all His teaching recorded in the Gospel of John, He is careful to bring out prominently that the moral condition of man towards God is one of death. His own rejection by His people (chap. i. 11) proved it. Before introducing the subject of the new birth in chapter iii., there is a thorough exhibition in chapter ii. of man's wretched state whether considered naturally or religiously. And there is a very clear statement in chapter xii. 24., that, if men were to be associated with Him in blessing, there must be an end in death of life in that condition in which He who was the only perfect expression of it stood.

In the epistles of Paul this truth is even

more clearly brought out. On the one hand we find an abundance of Scriptures which point to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ as the end of man morally before God; and, on the other, we learn that, by that same cross, for the believer, all that stood against him as a morally responsible creature, is for ever cleared away from God's sight.

In Corinthians the natural man is set aside as being totally incapable of receiving the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. ii. 14). The death of Christ proves all to have died (2 Cor. v. 14.). In Galatians vi. 14, 15, circumcision and uncircumcision, which have to say to man in the flesh, are clean set aside by the cross: nothing avails but a new creation. In Eph. i. and ii. man is looked at as dead when God begins to work with him. And so indeed is Christ Himself; though with Him it is as having laid down the life which He had as a man upon earth. So too, if it be a question of putting on the new man, it is preceded by "having put off the old man." And so in other epistles, whilst atonement and the putting away of the sins of a believer by the blood of Christ are also constantly referred to.

There is, therefore, no improvement, no modification, of the life or nature which man possesses in his old standing before God as a descendant of Adam. It is wholly set aside in

the cross; as much so spiritually, as the heavens and earth will hereafter be physically. The Lord Jesus Christ, who alone could and did stand before God as perfect in that condition of life, must have remained alone had He remained in it. But He died voluntarily in it, and so it ended, except in so far as judgment has to say to those whose sins are not put away by Him.

But, if old things have passed away, all things are become new. Where death was, God introduced a new life. It is not the restoration of an old one, but the actual communication of a new life, just as truly as when God first breathed into that mass which He had formed of the dust of the ground, and it became a living soul. The first had this earth as its sphere, the second belongs to heavenly places. The first was natural, the second is spiritual. It is not only spoken of as a new life and nature, which is in accordance with the form the truth takes as presented in the writings of John, but as a positive, actual, new creation. And it is good for us that the simple fact that there is such a new creation should impress itself on our hearts.

There is immense power in the ten opening words of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" and surely there is no less power for the soul that

ponders over them in these other words : " If any one be in Christ (there is) a new creation." They speak to us of divine and creative power exercised in associating the believer indissolubly with Christ Himself; and in that sphere, that order of things, where He is placed as raised from the dead. The corn of wheat has died, and now it has much fruit, fruit pleasing to God, the result of the operation of His mighty power.

If evidence be needed as to the " newness " of the things into which the believer is brought, it is interesting to contrast the chapters i. and ii. of Genesis with the description given in the epistles of what it is to be in Christ. In the first case all the relationships, excepting of course man's responsibility to God, are earthly in character; and we see, more or less clearly indicated, those occupations and interests which, though largely modified by the fall, constitute the main part of a natural life; whilst in the latter case, the change is total. In Christ Jesus all are one (Gal. iii. 28): " There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female." There does not exist a separation of nations, there is no subordination of social position, there is not even the distinction between male and female. Is it possible to conceive a more radical change in the condition of things? Yet

it is to this order of existence, and to nothing less, that the believer in Christ now belongs. It is a "new creation" (see also Luke xx. 34-36).

And "all things are of God, (the God) who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." The Lord God might visit Adam in Eden, God Almighty might make Himself known to Abraham, and call him "friend," Jehovah could dwell amongst Israel, exclusively and behind a veil, but this Scripture speaks of a condition in which there is perfect knowledge of God as fully revealed in grace, and nearness to Him, even as Christ Himself is near. It is now to faith that which will hereafter be true to sense: "God himself shall be with them and be their God; he will dwell with them."

And not only is there nearness of person, but perfect moral suitability. The believer who is of this new creation partakes therein of the "divine nature." "God is light," and so the believer is addressed as a child of light, and called to walk so because he is "light in the Lord." "God is love," and so the believer is told to walk in it, and "he that loveth not, knoweth not God." These points are largely dwelt upon in the epistle of John, besides constant allusions to them elsewhere. But it will perhaps be most readily apprehended when we see that as this "new

creation " is never apart from Christ, but always "in Him," so the moral characteristics belonging to it are those which are perfectly expressed in His own blessed person. To "know Him" is to know what they are, and there is no other way of knowing them.

It is needful, however, to remember here that it is only as risen from the dead that He has become both the type and the head of this new creation. He came, as regards the first creation "born of a woman," though indeed the "Lord from heaven," and "Son of man which is in heaven;" but in that order of things He died; and it is only as risen from the dead that He takes the place and character of which we speak.

It must, however, never be overlooked that, as to fact, the believer is in this world, and in a body which is of the first creation, and consequently that he is in the midst of divinely appointed relationships connected with it, none of which can be ignored without despising the word of God, and God Himself by whom they were appointed.

These very bodies in which we live, subject as they are now to pain and death, are yet "members of Christ" (1 Cor. vi.); and "your body," says the apostle, "is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own, for ye have been

bought with a price; glorify now then God in your body." In these bodies then, and in the various positions and relationships connected with the first creation, we are called to display all the moral qualities which belong to, and are ours as of the new creation, whilst we are yet awaiting its full manifestation amidst this groaning creation. For this end grace and power are ministered to us by the Spirit, from Him who is the head of the new creation, and there are abundant exhortations to guide us in all the circumstances in which we may be placed. If there appear difficulties to any one in grasping the thought of a believer belonging to the new creation, and yet at the same time in certain relationships here (divinely appointed ones of course are the only ones referred to) which are unknown to that "new creation," let him ask himself if he understand so wondrous a fact as that the Lord Jesus could be at the same time "the Son of man which is in heaven," and yet known on earth as "the carpenter," "the carpenter's son," and owning His place as "subject to his parents?" He does not question this; he believes it, because it is written in God's word; and let him equally, in faith, bow to what God says as to the place and condition of a believer. He that said, "Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God," is the same holy One

who gave full instructions for all the varied relationships of believers in this world, and who even said to them, "If any will not work neither shall he eat."

May the Lord give each of us to see what a wonderful thing it is to belong now, in Christ, to a new creation which is all of God, and may we be enabled practically to say with the apostle :—

"I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live :

"Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ;

"And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

J. S. A.

KNOWLEDGE of God's will is connected with my spiritual state ; if I could have it without being spiritual it would only be mischief. I increase in the knowledge of God's will by increasing in the knowledge of God in His nature.

(J. N. D.)

READINGS ON THE BOOK OF HEBREWS.

It is a great thing to know why a book was written ; to be able to see why God sets forth His mind in the way He does in it. So it is well to read a book through before forming a judgment on it ; for, from an isolated passage, it is impossible to get at the bearing of it. You may for instance read : “ Woe unto them that rise up early,” and stop there. The context is therefore the best explanation to what it is in connection with.

The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish converts, to show them how superior Christianity is to Judaism, though Judaism in itself was a good thing—was of God. None of us ought to have needed Hebrews, but, as Christianity has dropped down into Judaism, it is necessary for us to read it ; we may be very like the Jews, but we have no right to be. How far above and superior to anything that ever was before it, is the Christian position !

“ God, who in sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” That is not true of us,

but it was of the Jewish converts. "Whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." This is a matter of faith; we believe that He did so.

Verses 3, 4. He has gone up to the throne. Verses 5, 6. He took the place of a creature, but far above all creature intelligences. Verses 7, 8. It is very interesting, as some one has remarked, that there is no revelation in Hebrews, such as you get in Ephesians for instance; it is all explanation of Scriptures which the Jews already had. Verse 9. He is put in company with others—"fellows." This is the great secret of the book.

I may say that the Hebrews is a child's book; it is addressed to a child—to babes. It is a book in which the believer is looked at in his lowest position. There is no union, no being in heaven, though there is going on to heaven; so it is a very simple book. In one sense we are all little children, because we know so little; but it is the simplest book we can take up. It takes the bright side of things here; Peter takes the dark one. He says there are desperate things out there; be sober, be vigilant. And we must have the two; if we have not we shall not get on; we must have the intercession of Christ as well as the sword of the Spirit. The Lord said, I will pray for you; but that did not keep Peter because he did not fight

the devil. So that is the side he takes up, that we must fight the devil, for it is what he did not do himself.

Verses 10—14. The Creator comes out; He is Christ Himself. The Son has come forth, higher than the angels. And now, at the close of His career, He is called away to sit at God's right hand till He make His enemies His footstool.

It is most important to get hold of the fact that Christ was only called away from earth because of the state of things here, to wait until that state should be altered. Things here were such that He was called to leave them until the time that there should be a change—till His enemies should be made His footstool. This is the time that we are in. It is like a sentence between brackets. God has called Him away because of the state of things here, and, if I be an honest and a righteous man, I shall own things to be in that state, and look for Him to come back to put an end to it. It is a parallel time to that in the Gospels, where it says; "No man after that durst ask him any question."

"Sit on my right hand." The apostle delights in this passage; here he quotes it to show that Christ is called away from things here by Jehovah; and in chapter x. to show that He can sit down because the work is finished:

“After that he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.” But the quotation coming in thus in chapter i. is very important, as it points out the interval with which all our blessing is concerned. I do not belong to the place where my Lord is rejected, but to the place where He is received. If I am not within those brackets I have nothing. His rejection is one bracket, His return the other; we stand between the rejection and the return.

He is greater than creation; not only greater than the angels. All He has created will go to nothing, but He will not; they will all remove, be folded up like a vesture, but He will remain. He does not call the angels to make way, as he does all else in the epistle; they have to minister, that is their calling.

CHAPTER II.

Verses 1—6. He next shows that Christ is greater than any man; He is *the* man of God's purpose, higher than any other that ever was. Verses 7, 8. This is a quotation from Psalm viii. The Son of man, not the Son of God. As Son of God all things are *for* Him; as Son of man they are all put *under* Him. Verses 9, 10. Now he turns aside to see how He gets the “fellows.” It is like the high priest going up on the day of atonement. The

priests went up with him to a certain point, and there they lost him, but we do not; we go on with him. There is no such thing in Hebrews as communion; it goes no further than being of one company; but I belong to Christ; I *feel* that I belong to Him, and that I am going on with Him. We have a Captain; we are the troop—those who are of His company. It is not “Perfect *by* sufferings,” as some read, but “Perfect *through*.” It is not the thought of a man being battered into a thing, being moulded by the circumstances; it is showing out His perfection through them, in them. He might say: I can well lead you, for I have gone through all the difficulties of the road myself.

Verses 11—18. Then comes out the way the “fellows” are formed. It is a new company; it is not the Jewish company; it is those of whom the Lord says in John xx., “Go to my brethren.” He never had brethren till He rose from the dead; we hear of His mother and His brethren, but that was as man speaks. They are “all of one;” that “one” must be left large enough to take in all which it is; so it is left “one” only. If you limit it to a noun you spoil it; of one glory limits it to glory; of one stock, to stock; but it is simply “of one” that it may be everything that Christ is.

And He “took part of the same,” that He

might deliver them from all the difficulties that they were in. He is the Man who is to come by-and-by with all power, but, before doing that, He has been down into the lowest place that He might there take our place.

Turn to John xii. 24. What is the simple meaning of these words? That Christ was a unique person; there was never anyone like Him. Where is the man who could say there was never any sin in him? But, says Christ, I want to have a people of my own stamp; and, if I die, I shall rise up, and have a harvest of the same grain as myself. It is not merely that people are saved, or that grains have been improved, but that there are a great many grains like this one. It is "new creation," not "new creature," as is generally read in 2 Cor. v. It is wonderful how much mischief has been made out of this "new creature." A butterfly is a new creature; it is an immense alteration from a caterpillar; it could not be a greater; but it is not a new creation. New creation is a new thing altogether. People talk of conversion — say, "So-and-so is an altered man;" but you cannot alter new creation; it cannot be better than it is; so John insists on nothing but new creation. He says, "Who-soever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is born of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not;" so that we

might keep ourselves from sin. I am not saying a word as to being united to Christ; it is merely that you are a new creation, that you are fellows of Christ.

Verse 18. He was tried by Satan, and now He can succour others who are tried; and that not in a temptation to badness, but in the way a godly person would suffer in the presence of a temptation, not a bad one. Satan tempted Him, but there was no response in the Lord to his temptations. But when we are tempted, as the Scripture says, we are "Drawn away of our own lust and enticed." Suppose a child come into the room and see an apple on the table; it will look round, and if no one be there, it will take it. Now the Lord was never tempted in that way. The fact that a thing was not His own was enough for Him; it would have been pleasant to Him to have the apple, but it would have been no pleasure to Him to take it. Not so with us; to us it is a pleasure to. If he had let in any thought of this kind He could not have made atonement for us. Now I have an evil nature in me just the same as I had before I was converted. I am a tender flower with bad air all round me, and He says, I will put a screen about you to keep it all away; for when I was in flesh and blood I never let any of it in.

The presence of God acts in two ways upon

the soul that is in it. It first acts upon me, and then it occupies me with Himself. Some meetings are quite spoiled through getting hold only of the first of these actions and never rising beyond it. People say, "What a delightful meeting! the word cut me right and left." Certainly the disciples going to Emmaus had a grand time of it, but they did not know the One who was acting on them. It is quite right to have the word act on me: I need it. But that is not all. Having put me right it would occupy me with the Person who speaks it—with the Lord Himself. If I come into a lit up room, I do not want the light to be occupied only with me; I want to be occupied with what is in the room. I remember a person in a picture gallery saying, "At first I had this lighted up so beautifully that when I came in I could look at nothing but the light—at the glory of it. And I said, This will never do; so I had to have the light reduced until I could look at the pictures."

CHAPTER III.

Verse 1. Now it is "holy brethren," and a "heavenly calling." Our profession is heavenly, and if you do not take heavenly ground you lose heavenly blessings. Between the going away of Christ and the return of Christ there are special blessings that are only given to a

heavenly people. You must keep this new company in your mind; He has His troop round Him, all fellows going on together. I believe the book of Hebrews is carried on on the principle of the first of Acts; what they were rebuked for there—gazing up into heaven—is what we are called to do here. Your eye is to be upon Him. If it be to run the race, it is by “looking off unto Jesus;” if it be going outside the camp, it is going outside to Him; Christ is set before your heart; you find Him everywhere.

Verses 2—6. Now we come to His house—His own circle. The “house” in Hebrews does not mean the house of God, the house on earth; it simply is that I am part of Christ’s family, just as we speak of the house of Tudor, or the house of Brunswick. It does not allow of any one belonging to the house who is not put there by Christ Himself; as such He is the Son over His own house. Christ is gone into heaven for Himself and for His house. He has not gone in for Israel; He will come out for them soon; He has gone in for us; we get Him in the holiest; we do not get ourselves there; but *He* is there, and we have the right to go in. Many a child is brought to a palace without at all knowing what is going on in the palace. So the apostle takes us to heaven, introduces us into the place and says, Now study the length,

breadth, depth, and height of it. I am an indoor servant; I have been in and know all that goes on there, but I cannot tell it to you; I can only open the door and let you in, and now you must find it out for yourselves.

Verses 7—11. What was the provocation? What has Christendom done? Christendom has been in the provocation; Christendom has looked down to earth instead of looking up to heaven. Christ has been rejected by earth, and, if my heart be right, I do not look for anything here, I do not seek to set things straight here; to do so would be to turn back to the way of Cain. Christendom has looked down, and that is the provocation. The book of Hebrews is that you are looking only up into heaven, for Jesus is there, and you have a right to go in; and when I go on to the Ephesians, and learn what the heart of God has for me there, I say, I may take it all, for I have a right to go in. The Israelites would not go into the land; it was the day of provocation, and the way they began was by remembering the fish of Egypt. If ever I hear a man talking of what he might have been, and might have done, I always think, woe betide you! Peter began saying as much to the Lord, and the Lord answered him, You have made a very good bargain; you have gained a hundred-fold more. I am sure there is nothing the Lord feels more

than that we should put value on anything but Himself, or allow anything whatever to detain our hearts here. It is the provocation.

The question has been asked, "How can you be in heaven whilst you are on earth?" And that is true; I am not in heaven; but I am united to One who is. Jesus is there; and where is your heart if it have not gone after Him? The Captain of the ship is on shore, and the anchor is let down.

Verses 12—19. Just think of God being *grieved*! They would not enter in. I do not unchristianize every one who has not got heavenly joys, but I do say his carcase falls in the wilderness; it is there that he dies. I have title to enter. But, you say, I might go back. Wait till you get there before talking of going back. It is a very interesting point that there is no such thing as restoration in Hebrews; you must go to some other part of the word if you wish to find that. It is never contemplated for a moment that you will give it up. The only thing put before us is, that if you go back to any of the old clothes, God will burn them off your back, "for our God is a consuming fire." He has taken the old rags off, and made you fit for His presence; and do not you talk of going back to them. God would say, You have taken up that which I have put away, and I will not allow it. There is no such thing

as provision for return; I have got rid of all the old things for you, and now, if you do not get rid of them too, I will burn them off you. You must drop them. Nine-tenths of those who complain of their dulness and weariness, owe it to the fact that they are cleaving to something they will not give up.

Verse 19. They could not enter in because of not obeying the word, is the meaning of the verse.

CHAPTER IV.

The point here is not rest merely, but "*His* rest," that is, *God's* rest. The prominent thought of God from the beginning was to have rest. As soon as everything was made, and he saw that it was very good He rested. The Sabbath was the sign of it; and in the time that is coming, it is said "He will rest in his love." The great desire of man, too, is rest; it is man's ideal; it is God's reality. The question for each of us is, are we looking for a rest *before* God's rest? There is rest of conscience for us: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" but it is not that. Neither is it rest of soul: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It is the day when everything will be according to the mind of God;

when everything will be in unbroken rest gathered round Himself; *His* rest. Is that the rest we are looking for?

Israel got discouraged; they would not go on; they saw the cities walled up to heaven. And people now will not go on; they say the thing is impracticable. But as Israel turned back in heart first—"they fell a lusting"—so it is always. You first begin to think of the things that suit yourself, and then you refuse the things that suit God. Therefore it becomes a testing question to everyone whether it be God's rest he is looking for, or whether it be any rest in time. What is the desire of every man, from the politician in parliament down to the lowest and the poorest? He is looking for the day when he can lay down his cares and cease from toil, rest on his laurels, spend a happy old age in the bosom of his family, have a bright sunset in some little spot he has retired to. People look to connect themselves with earth in some way or other. Is that your thought? No! I expect no rest on earth. I have rest for my conscience and rest for my soul, but, as for my body, it is only "Come ye apart and rest *awhile*;" which is as much as to say, you must be working again presently. I am just going through the six week-days now; and I am going on to God's Sunday. Are you waiting for God's Sunday? Are you looking

for no rest till it come? Do you expect nothing but toil on, toil on, now? If I engage a man to work for me six days, and I see him loitering on a Thursday, I say he is not an honest man. There is "time for meals" as it were; time to rest and work again; but you must not "seem to come short" of God's rest. Work, work, work, is the whole character of the thing. What is before my mind is God's rest; that is the only Sunday for me. It is not works for salvation; it is just anything that I may have to do. A man that is working for salvation is still in Egypt. It is thus I would meet a Wesleyan with his thoughts as to work.

God's thought, as I have said, always was to have a rest: first there was the Sabbath, which was broken; then there was the rest offered by Joshua, but which he could not give them; and then David spoke of a rest. But we shall never find our resting place until we get into God's rest; and that rest is not on earth; it is in heaven. If you had asked the apostle Paul how he expected to spend the evening of his days, he would have answered, I expect to be martyred. That is how he speaks in Philippians.

I leave it to every man's conscience what his work is; it is whatever the Lord would have you do; all I say is, it is work now and not rest. There must be duty. If it be your duty

to go to the stake, *go*. I dare not dictate to anyone what he ought to do. I am dependent; I am longing for the word to show me what I am to do; and the moment I obey it I am all right. Saul of Tarsus says, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The greatest thing I deplore in the present day is the aimlessness, uselessness, want of any definite occupation of nearly everyone I meet. I believe everyone has a mission; I cannot tell others what theirs is; I might make a great mistake if I tried to. Still I can say to a woman with a family, there is no doubt about yours; but I add that the banks are not the river, though they determine the river. And just as the banks of the river are the greenest, sweetest spots, so it is at home, with those who are nearest to you, that you are to show forth most practically and perfectly your mission. Moses set to work forty years too soon with his mission. His was muscular Christianity. Afterwards He was sent by God to do the work; but he had to beware of his muscularity to the end: it was that which prevented his going into the land.

At the end of the chapter, I get two helps for the way: one the word of God, the other the intercession of Christ.

Suppose you were in a large forest, in the midst of which you saw a hundred roads, one of which only led to heaven; all the others

leading off different ways ; a road of pleasure, a road of eminence, and so on. You say, I thought I might go up this road of pleasure a little bit. No, you must take only the one road. I am not only protected by the word, but I am also directed by it. This is its double action. It protects me from going in a way in which I might be drawn aside from its direction ; and then, being in the road, it directs me. And in the road I get the company of Christ ; He says to me : I have been all along it, and I can give you my sympathy in it. The One who is passed through the heavens, is the One who is sympathizing with me all along the way—I, a poor weak thing, always wanting to turn up one or another of those ninety-nine roads. And the more alive I am to the enjoyment of things here as a natural man, the more temptation and attraction there is to me. Well then, as I refuse to go up any of these other roads, the more I have Christ's sympathy with me as I tread His path. Christ does not sympathize with a person who is in a wrong path. There are two actions in the word of God : it corrects, and it directs. The Lord corrects Martha and directs Mary. A father would say to his child, If you walk in the mud I cannot walk with you ; you must come out of it if you wish to be with me. You may feel your feebleness, your inability to stand all the difficulties of the way ; but the Lord says, I will

keep you company ; I have been through it all before you, and I have never touched sin. If He had ever touched it He could not have lifted me out of it.

If you do not get heaven you lose all the blessings of Christianity ; for if you want a priest, where is He ? “ Passed into the heavens ; ” *through* the heavens it really is. The “ profession ” we are to “ hold fast ” is this actually going on to heaven. It is that you are a heavenly man. It is a positive declaration ; and it has become applicable to us because we have got involved in Judaism. It was creditable to them to be Jewish converts ; it has never been a bit creditable to us ; but we, having been brought up in it, the thing is for us to get clear of it. If you have not got hold of the heavenly profession, you have not got hold of Christianity at all. Christendom generally is looking for something to meet its condition on earth.

Then he says : “ Let us come boldly to the throne of grace.” People sometimes say when wishing to pray, “ Let us come to the throne of grace.” In answer to such an invitation I can only say, I hope we have not left it. I could say, “ Let us come and *use* the throne of grace.” We can come as poor feeble creatures and use it. The same in chapter 10 : “ Let us draw near ; ” we have no right to be out of the position of nearness. And to those who talk of

fears of losing it, I answer, first get there before you talk of losing it. Most of those who talk of fearing to lose the holiest have never been there yet.

However, Hebrews does not put us within; it only gives us the right to go in; it is that I have got a title to be there. Just as Jonathan: he was not at the king's table; his place was empty; but it was his place as much as if he had been in it. We have a footing in heaven, and we have not to get it a second time. Have you ever known it?—ever felt what it was to be in the presence of God without a spot? He says to the Jewish converts, you have lost the old footing, and now you are on a new one, and if you have not got it, you have got nothing at all of Christianity.

CHAPTER V.

He proves now that Christ is a Priest. The natural effort of every one who has to do with ministry is to put himself as a priest between God and man. "Infirmity" is the point in this passage. The Lord is not presented as the "faithful High Priest," as in another place; here it is to offer to God, and as learning obedience. We are shown the dignity of His person, as well as His being appointed Priest. It is interesting to notice that He took the place of a thoroughly dependent man: "He was

heard in that he feared." It was not as a priest; but afterwards he was appointed priest—"a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

Verses 13, 14. You cannot explain the word "babe" in Hebrews by the same word in the the epistles of John. In John a "babe" is one who is really on Christian ground; but here the babe is a Jewish convert who is not on Christian ground at all, who has not got beyond the "first principles" of the next chapter. As a rule, every word in Scripture is best interpreted by the book in which it is expressed. Every book in the Bible contains sufficient to explain itself; I am not to go to John or Colossians to interpret Hebrews. I have no doubt the translators of Scripture in the present day will make many mistakes as to this.

The apostle gives us in verse 14 some that are grown up. The "babe" who has got on to Christian ground is "perfect" in Hebrews. It is not a question of progress here, as it is in John.

CHAPTER VI.

Verses 1—8. This is the "perfection" he means; these are the first principles; it is not Christianity at all. What! you say; not a converted man! No, not at all. None of these things are within the brackets. You might

have a man have them all without being born again. We have very much lost a true thought which the churchmen have. The dissenters are all for membership ; but it is members of a church, not of Christ's body, with them. A churchman, on the other hand, is all for getting a man to church. If you ask him, "Why cannot you say what you want to him here?" he answers, "Oh, no! I must get him into church." This thought we get in 1 Cor. xiv., which shows us the power of God in the house of God. In that chapter is the only time the word "layman" is used. The layman there falls down, worships God, and acknowledges that God is "*in you*" clergy, not in *himself*. Being there, he is in a place of blessing ; and if he go out from it there is no other for him ; he had better take care not to leave it. Just as Noah might have said in the ark : Now, my son, you are in a safe place ; do not leave it, or you will be drowned. It is no question of conversion. Then, you ask, what does he gain ? He gets what we have in these verses 4 and 5. There is a wonderful sheltering power in the word ; he is made a "fellow" of the Holy Ghost (not partaker) ; he is in company with Him, though not indwelt by Him. If I go into a house, and sit down in a comfortable chair there, do you mean to say that I have not got some of the privileges of the house, though

I do not belong to it? You know that I have. And you know perfectly well the power that is felt sometimes in a meeting; how every soul is hushed; and how the presence of God is felt, whether by converted or unconverted. The man at the feast, he got the feast, but he did not get the garment; he sat all through the wedding supper, and no one found him out until the king came in.

There is no real conversion in these verses. It is the wonderful action that takes place in the house of God short of conversion. We have lost too much the thought of the power of God's presence on the earth; we look at it too much only in connection with souls that are converted. It never says in Corinthians that the man who came in was converted; only that the "secrets of his heart were made manifest." The house is "the habitation of God through the Spirit;" it takes the place that the *sche-kinah* glory did in the temple: every one who came in was not a believer, but every one who came in was in contact with the glory. The question in Scripture is whether a man who takes a Christian position be able to maintain the position he has taken. The man in 1 Cor. v. is admitted to be converted, yet he is put outside the assembly; he is not fit to be in it. It is, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person;" and that though he be a converted

man. But he was brought back again among them very soon afterwards. In this chapter of Hebrews the apostle is showing how a Jew, having taken Christian ground, if he turn away from it, crucifies for himself the Son of God, and from that there is no return; for if this wonderful thing come upon a soul and there be no answer to it, it is like earth drinking in rain from heaven, and bearing only thorns and briars after—fit for nothing but burning.

Verses 9—17. “But,” he says, “we are persuaded better things of you.” There are real things that accompany salvation. You take an interest in what belongs to God: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” We are thrown into a new circle, a new relationship, and the question is whether we like this relationship. We must be relations to them. A man does not love his relations without their *being* his relations. In the church a man has got out of his own natural circle into one outside nature. “As I have loved you, ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Verses 18—20. In chapter iv. we had the rest of God; now we have the hope. In Hebrews you are going on to heaven, and Christ is always the object before you. Are you in heaven? No; but *He* is there. Are

you on shore? No; but the Captain is: "The forerunner is for us entered." And He is bringing us on to where He is Himself. It is not with us as it was with Israel; Canaan is not the type of our position; there is nothing about Canaan here except in contrast; it is heaven that is brought out here. Canaan is the heavenly man upon earth; there is nothing at all about that in Hebrews. The wonderful thing in the tabernacle is that it is not a type at all; it is a copy of the original. We are going on to the original of which it is the image. If you say the tabernacle is a type, then you must have an antitype of it to come after it; but it is not; Moses saw it up in the mount, and came down and gave the children of Israel the pattern of it. If the tabernacle be only a type, then I must be waiting to come to the antitype of it; whereas, if it be an image, I am only going on to that which was there before the tabernacle ever was.

Abraham rested everything on the heir (verse 14); how much more do we rest everything upon One who is greater than the heir—upon that Christ who is the fulfilment of and answer to the heir, though I am down here and He in heaven a great way off.

There are three different ways in which we are looked at in connection with heaven. In

Hebrews, the lowest of the three, we are seen on earth looking up into heaven ; in Joshua we are in Canaan, heavenly men fighting on earth ; and in Ephesians we are seated in Christ in heaven, which necessarily includes the two others. But Christendom is nothing more in principle than Jewish converts. They have not occupied the place of heavenly men for centuries ; they have made the earth their centre ; converting the earth has been their aim. "They say they are Jews and do lie ;" they are not Jews ; if they were it would be no lie. And this is what makes the camp which you get at the end of the book. There is no Christianity proper if you leave out heaven ; earth does not belong to Christianity proper, because Christ has been rejected from earth. We have not only the certainty of getting into heaven at some future time, but it is ours now. People say, I shall get into heaven when I die. And what will you get till you die ? Earth. Exactly ; and that is what I object to. The apostle says, Though you are not in heaven yet, still I give you the place, and I set your eye on the One to whom it all belongs, and who is gone in there for you. God could not give us the earth that rejected His Son. My heart is to be occupied with the One who has entered there for me as High Priest ; and therefore the apostle beautifully

says that He is gone, not either into Canaan or into heaven, but "within the veil." He says, I will not talk to you of either earth or heaven; but is your eye on Christ? Is it turned to the magnet, the loadstone of the heart?

The truth that will deliver souls in the present day is the book of Hebrews, though it be a child's book. Souls do not know that they are saved. They have got hold of the value of the sacrifice on earth; but they will talk of "a fresh application of the blood;" they have not got a Priest in heaven.

Hebrews is uncommonly lovely to the heart, because it always draws it up. It says: It was quite right for you to listen to the prophets; but here is the Son of God for you—the One who has come down to contend with all your foes, and who has gone back to heaven, having overcome them all for you, and who now makes you His fellows. As already said, it is like the whole congregation of Israel going up with the high priest to a certain point, and then, to use a common expression, they are "at fault"—they have lost him. But *we* "see Jesus." If I look up to the highest point, I have Him there; and if I look down to the lowest point—to my weakest point—I have Him here.

CHAPTER VII.

Verses 1, 2. Christ has not yet come out as King of Righteousness; He is King of Peace already.

Verse 3. That is all they knew about him; no one knew what he was.

Verses 4—26. We look after this One gone into the heavens, and we find Him there a Priest after a new order; Christ is now the fulfilment of the Aaronic course in a new way. When He comes out it will be to bless Israel as Melchisedec did Abram. Many Christians have not got hold of the priesthood of Christ at all. If we do not take heavenly ground we cannot know it. When there was an effort made a little time ago to damage the priesthood of Christ, the question was put, What did the Melchisedec priest do? I do not know what he did inside, but I know very well what he does when he comes out; he blesses the people.

I have got in heaven a High Priest who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." *I* am not separate from sinners, but *He* is. My ship may move about a little, but it cannot part from its anchor, and that is safe within the veil. It is a wonderful thing, that, as the apostle says, I may have a "supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ"—a stream that

comes down to me from heaven. I am here in the midst of all that is against me, and He says, This is what I send down to you. I am like a man in a diving bell, with everything most adverse to me: how am I sustained in it all? By a life that is in connection with Him in the holiest, in the full supply of His Spirit; a life that will not coalesce with the surrounding element. It is what we need for our destitute condition—what you call “journeying mercies,” if you like. If you are not anchored within the veil, you have no anchor. He knows the circumstances I am in, and He sends down from God the suited grace. If I may say it with all deference, He knows them better than any one; so he is either thinking of you to give you suited grace, or He is thinking of you to no purpose at all. If you have real sympathy with me, and are thinking of me in the circumstances I am in, you cannot but minister to me if you have the ability. So I believe we never get near Christ individually about any transaction that He does not leave the impress of what His own grace would have been in the circumstance. When the Lord was in the ship He was asleep. The disciples naturally thought he was indifferent about them; if they could have been persuaded He was not forgetful of them, though asleep, they would have been as quiet as He was; but they

were not; so they awoke Him. And what did He do? He put them all to sleep: "there was a great calm;" and that is what there ought to have been at the first. Otherwise, it comes to this, that He is thinking about me, but that He has not the suited grace to meet me. But He says, I have all that is suited to you; I am "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." That is the High Priest that becomes us.

There is not a word about sin properly in Hebrews: it is "infirmity." I am on the heavenly road; but I feel how weak I am, and how unable to get on. No sooner am I clear from judgment and death than Amalek comes against me. Now, the two things to help me in this are Hebrews and Peter. The Lord says, I pray for you. That is Hebrews. But when Peter was tempted, he ought to have said, I will take the sword and fight him. When he was asked to go in, he ought to have said, No; I will not go into your house; I will not go to your fire. So this is what Peter is strong about. The moment I take my place as a heavenly man, Satan says, I am against you in everything. We never fail that we find we did not resist. Peter's great point is "whom resist;" he does not take you out of the wilderness, but he says, resist the devil in it.

There are two classes of ministry: one to

save you *from* a snare, the other to save you *out* of a snare. In the one case you have got in, and you are rescued; in the other you are kept out of it. Happier to be kept out of it; but we get the two.

Bad temper is not infirmity: it is perverseness. The Lord never takes away my weakness; He does my perverseness. You say I am convinced that Christ is worthy of all my love. And how long will you keep to it? Not half an hour!

“No infant’s changing pleasure
Is like my wandering mind.”

He says I will take away your thieving; I will not take away your timidity, but I will give you my strength in it. Christ keeps me on the road in spite of my infirmity.

Verses 27, 28. The apostle draws the distinction between the high priest’s own sins and the sins of the people. Aaron offered for his own house; Christ for His—for His family, as we saw in chapter iii. It is not the house as a building; it cannot ever become “the great house.” In Ephesians the house is looked at as not interfered with by man, but it *could* be, as we find it is in 1 Cor. But here it cannot be; it is the house of Christ. He offered the bullock for His own house; the two goats are not offered yet; He is gone in within the veil with

His own blood, and the two goats are yet to come for Israel.

Verse 19. "Perfect" through the whole epistle is that he has got to the top of the thing: "they without us should not be made perfect," as we get it further on. They have not got to that yet; but it is the top, where no further improvement can be. So the law made nothing perfect nothing complete.

CHAPTER VIII.

Verses 1, 2. We get the word "heaven" now. It was "the majesty on high" in the first chapter; now it is "in heaven." The tabernacle on earth was the image; we are introduced into the reality, into the original.

Verses 3—5. This is a very important point; "If he were on earth he could not be a priest;" therefore He is not on earth. We have to deal with heaven itself; and those who think it is too high to go to heaven may do without a priest. If we do not know Him there, we do without the good of it; it is not that He forgets us; He is always pleading for us; He does not cease because you do not enter into the value of it, but how can you be in concert with Him if you do not know where He is? You do not get the special blessing connected with it. Formerly the association was earth; they never got into the holiest; the

high priest himself only went in once in the year. The first thing God told Moses to make was the thing they never reached till Christ came: the mercy-seat was the first thing in the mind of God, and the mercy-seat was never reached till Christ's death. None of the Jews ever got to it. Whilst the book of Hebrews does not say that we are in heaven, yet we can look in, and Christ is gone in for us. Then, however holy a man might be, however sincere, a time came when he lost his priest: he went in; now the nearer I get the plainer I see. He who has accomplished everything for me is there, and I have a right to go in after Him; my right is established. As to title every Christian is there, but there is a moment when I first get the sense of the enjoyment of my right. Hebrews is individual; each individual has a *right to the holiest as the fellow of Christ*. We follow Him, not upon earth but into heaven. It is very necessary to learn that I have a right to go into my Father's house. It is the point that is settled all through the Hebrews.

Verses 6—13. It is important here to make one remark about the covenant, which may clear false ideas from peoples' minds. Among men a covenant is an agreement between two. I propose terms to you, and you correct them until we come to an agreement. A covenant with God is quite another thing; God only has

a voice in it: He defines the terms. The children of Israel said they would accept God's terms, but they did not make a single term themselves. Now God says, I am going to bring in a new covenant. We are not under this covenant, though we have to do with the Covenanters. He told them He would propose a thing to them: He would create a nature in them which should be entirely according to His own mind. He says, I will make a people who shall know me from the least to the greatest, and in whose hearts shall be written my laws. This is the millennial saint; therefore this epistle meets the millennial state, for we must remember it is written to Jews. Verses 11, 12 will be the condition of the millennial saints. Is it true of us? I hope so. I hold him to be a very bad Christian who does not go beyond the law. I will beat any Sabbatarian that ever was; for I keep the day not to myself, but to God. Whilst he is a legalist, I am trying to please my Lord the whole day through. He says, I keep Sunday as the Sabbath. I keep it too, but it is as the Lord's day. But the Lord's day being the Sabbath duration of time, I fall into creational order; only, instead of keeping it as an enactment binding on my conscience, I keep it to please the Lord of the Sabbath.

And so on with all the commandments. As

to a thief, he is not only no more to steal, but he is to be a giver. No one could ever get into Canaan by keeping the law. I must die in Christ and live in Him, and so get in. Certainly a Christian will not be in practice below a heathen; but the moment I hear a man say, I am going to judge myself by the law, I say, There is a man who has no proper sense of what Christianity is. Christianity goes far beyond the law. The law says, you are not to call your brother a bad name; but I am to die for my brother. Do you mean to say that I am not higher than a millennial saint even now? I am not in millennial circumstances; but I am in more than millennial favour. Does Christ reign in your heart now? If He be reigning in your heart he will certainly reign in your house. I believe He holds every one of us accountable for behaving as if He were on the throne at the present moment; otherwise, we do not believe in His kingship. It says, "Seek the *kingdom* of God."

CHAPTER IX.

Verse 1. "A worldly sanctuary." It does not mean anything of a sinful character; but it was an earthly arrangement.

Verse 2—10. We have lost a great many things through being children. The Jewish converts were not up to it, and so the apostle stopped: he says, it is not the time to speak of

these things. The great point is, that the way into the holiest was not made manifest whilst the first tabernacle was standing; but now the way is open, and he wants to get them, with a good conscience, into God's presence. So he shows them first that Christ is gone in, and then he opens the way for them. This chapter shows us Christ in, the next shows us ourselves. They have not got a good conscience here yet; the conscience is not yet purged. But they must be in first, before he will explain to them what is inside. It would be indulging mere curiosity to do so. God says, I cannot tell you anything on your standing; you must come on to mine. Many think they can get *information* about the things of God; but, as He did to Moses, He still says, "Draw near;" you must get to my level before I can speak with you. God's thought is to get us where we can learn of Him undisturbedly. Where does He write Christ on our hearts? Anywhere? Not at all! In glory. Many try to get acquaintance with the great things of God, who have never been experimentally through Hebrews, and this does great damage to souls. It is like the prodigal son looking in through the window, instead of going in at the door. We are to walk through the length and breadth of the land; and how am I to walk through unless I am in?

Verses 11—14. Now the conscience is purged. Can you say, I have stood before God, and there was not one single thing, one single blemish of any kind, upon me? It is not that He is just to me, but that I am just before Him. God has no more claim on me. Some commentators have said that the prodigal son kept his rags on under the best robe, so that he might look at them sometimes to keep him humble. You may smile at the idea, but, nevertheless, a great many act on it. That is not what God has done. He has entirely moved Adam out of the way; and the soul never gets perfect liberty until it sees every shred of the old clothes gone, and nothing but Christ left. God said, "The end of all flesh is come before me." For a moment it was fulfilled in the deluge; for a moment everything was either dead or covered; and now, again, God sees no flesh before him: every one is either covered by the death of Christ, or lost. What would be the most incomparable blessing that could be conferred on us? Would it not be to get rid of the flesh? And God has got rid of it in Christ. There is no sense of deliverance until you get to Christ in glory; and you never get near Him unless you see His death.

Verses 15—17. This is the statement of the doctrine. We do not receive property until the testator is dead; so in the case of our

Lord: death was not only for the redemption of the saints, but it also opened the way to the inheritance. You see, the moment the wrong end is cleared away, everything is fair with God. That is what He said to Cain: we will be on terms; there is no enmity in me; if you will clear everything away, there is nothing on my side. It is the same in the thief on the cross: everything that offends against God is taken out of the way, and then all is thrown open. In Exodus the blood was shed, and then, in a moment, they saw "the body of heaven in its clearness." The saying is, "I can forgive, but I cannot forget." That is not at all God's way; He says: Remove the offending thing out of my way, and everything is open to you. The prodigal son was in favour in a moment, as if he had never done anything wrong. There is no enmity on the part of God. I take a long time to be reconciled to God, and so I cannot believe He can so quickly be to me; therefore it says, "Be ye reconciled to God." The soul gets clear about the value of the blood long before it gets the thought that it is in perfect favour; it is a long time before you get to "*in Christ*." Every believer has it "through Christ;" but it is "*in Christ*." You do not get "*in Christ*" until the sixth chapter of Romans, and then it is "*in*" for the first time; before that it is "*through*."

Such souls are in Adam still, though I doubt not they are converted. But I say to them, change your ground; for "there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The Galatians are properly Romans who have gone back from the eighth chapter. Romans brings saints out of the law; in Galatians they go back to it. So the apostle says, Of whom I travail in birth now; for I am not quite sure that Christ is in you. Every man in Christ is a new creation.

The word "eternal" is so often repeated in Hebrews ix., because the first tabernacle was not eternal; this is; it is for ever and ever.

Verses 18—22. If I understand Exodus xxiv., it was not the priest alone who did it all, which makes it still more interesting. We are seen coming up under cover of the blood with Him, everything thrown open to us.

Verses 23—27. The way into the holiest was "not made manifest;" while the pattern was standing the original was not opened. It was not that the tabernacle itself was defiled, but it was sprinkled to get a defiled people into it. The original is purified to get us in; it is all opened to us, and it cannot be defiled by our going in. There are no wicked spirits in Hebrews as you find in Ephesians. Hebrews is only our right to go in; the wicked spirits are inside; we must be in before we can meet

them. You can hardly say that it is heaven itself, but the whole creation is defiled, as you often hear people say, feeling how everything is spoiled.

The holy place is the Jewish place. The holiest will not be visible during the millenium. Christ brought us in as His own house, and He brought in also the Jew; He brought in the heavenly company and also the earthly. The heavenly will be entitled to the holiest, and the earthly to the holy place. Christ has opened the way, so that I am as much cleansed for heaven as for earth; indeed, heaven is far the more certain of the two to you; you can "read your title" to heaven far more clearly than to earth. Why? Because the light is clearer there. A very small thing interrupts the soul—turns it aside. There is nothing we ought to desire more than to be in circumstances, in surroundings, pleasing to the Lord. It is a poor thing, indeed, if I do not seek to know the Lord in circumstances that are pleasing to Him, in surroundings that suit Him.

I often wonder evangelists do not bring more out the thought that the prominent thing that God had in His mind was never carried out until the death of Christ—the mercy seat. God says: The thing I told you to make first, not one of you has ever reached; but my Son has come out, and He is made the way. The

thought of God is to have man without a cloud in the brightest spot ; and therefore when man was found perfectly incapable, He says : I know what you most want, and what you want most I will give you first. I have no doubt the holiest was thrown open the first day ; but, Aaron's sons bringing in strange fire, it was all closed up ; after which comes the command to drink no wine. Wine is acting from impulse. Giving out a hymn because it is "on your heart," for instance, is impulse. I am not an individual when I come into the assembly ; I am really a member of the body, under the government of Christ the Head.

Verse 28. There will be no question of sin at all then. Sin is not taken away yet, as we well know. This is future. He has taken away my sins, for how can I have sins if I be in Christ ? But sin is in the world. The work is done which will put it away, but the full result is still future.

CHAPTER X.

Verses 1, 2. That is the place we are brought into. There is no more conscience of sins, not sin. I can come into God's presence without a single thing being laid to my charge. It is not whether you continue on, but whether you have ever been on this ground. Many hesitate at making such a statement ; but I believe

they hesitate because they have never realised the fact of what the work of Christ has done for the believer. You may have a bad conscience, but I cannot admit that you have a bad one until you have a purged one. You may be merely legal. What do you judge your "bad" by? Is it by the law or by Christ? Many a man would have a bad conscience, but the question is, what does he judge it by? Many a one shelters himself under "I am a failing person." Do not tell me of failure or of what you are, until you have got into His presence without a single thing displeasing to Him. "But I may go back?" Well, we will answer that afterwards; settle it first that you have got in this once; that you have, like Jonathan, got title to a place at the king's table. Psalm xxxii, which speaks of no imputation of sin with God, is the Psalm where there is the deepest distress, because the soul will not confess. The great principle of divine grace is, that where I am most detected, there I am best protected. The Lord says, I will protect you; and "if the Son make you free, ye are free indeed."

Verse 3. This is exactly what is done in Christendom; there is reference made to sins every day, because they do not know a Saviour in the holiest. There is a premium for the soul on getting higher; if you were to go up,

you would see yourself perfectly clear in the sight of God; you would see not only the sins, but the sin gone. I never yet heard a man talking of his sins when he was out of them. If a man say to me that he is so worldly, I am ready to answer, so you are. Your confessing failure shows that you have a conscience, but do you drop the thing that you fail in? When you first got into the holiest you dropped everything; why not now? You have something in your right hand that you will not give up. If a man be really confessing in private, he will not want to confess in public. I am not speaking of confession for the assembly, but of a man's own private confessions. I repudiate this flesh of mine in God's presence as a wretched, vile thing; there can be no good conscience if I do not. But many souls are harping on their sins instead of abandoning them; saying, "I am so weak," and refusing all the time to abandon their weakness. There is never an excuse for weakness: I take pleasure in weakness, for His strength is made perfect in weakness. But in nine cases out of ten it is not weakness at all but perverseness. If a man be really repentant he is praising the Saviour; he has got on to the other side.

Verses 4—9. "The first," that is the offerings. Verse 10. This is the great point: it is "the offering of the *body* of Jesus Christ." He

comes forth and takes a body ; and, when He offers that body, all is removed that barred me from the presence of God. God has separated us now to the same standing as Christ. Christ has come down from God and measured my distance, and placed me in the measure of His nearness. Verses 11—13. This is actually the period we are in. Verse 14. The professing church in the present day knows nothing whatever of this ; it has dropped into ritualism. Verses 15—18. Supposing a person say, I have failed now ; what will become of me ? I answer : Still, you cannot get out of the place ; you cannot get out of belonging to Christ's house, out of being one of the family. Wesleyans say you can fall away. They make the new creation less than the old ; whereas the new is infinitely, incomparably, beyond the old. Besides which they try to change the old into the new. Verses 19—23. Verse 19 ought not to be divided from 20 ; it is all one sentence ; it is not two ways ; it is only one. The door is wide open ; I look in ; I have a right to go in, and, if you once enter, you ought never to go out again ; the veil is taken away, and you have boldness, and the more you realize, the more you have boldness. It is the fullest efficacy of the faith. It does not mean what we commonly call "full assurance." It is the full *weight* of faith. It is not

that you are assured of the faith, but it is what the faith gives you—what you derive from the faith. And it is not that you are to have your hearts sprinkled, but that they *are*. We draw near with a true heart: I have not taken this standing without the full verity of it in my soul. I am perfectly *suited* to the place, and have title to be *in* it. There is not a speck upon me, not a thing to offend against God; the body is fit for the Lord. You cannot lose your standing, the footing you have got; further on it comes to not giving up your birthright; God chose to quicken your soul; take care you do not give it up. It has not to be done when you come in; all was set right before. It is a difficult thing to explain practically; the blood is on the mercy seat for every believer, but each one has to have it upon himself also. It is only by the Holy Ghost I can come in. There is only the flesh and the spirit here, so there is not a word about the oil. You are brought in as priests before God; the blood is not only on the mercy seat, but it is on you. The blood is for the weakest believer, but besides that, at the consecration of the priest, it was sprinkled on him. The flesh is over; I am left entirely to the things of the Spirit; entirely in the power of the oil. We are fellows of the Holy Ghost.

Verses 24, 25. How long ago is it since

they saw the day approaching? 1800 years ago. We know He is due; that is the thing; we are sure He is coming. We do not judge of the day by events; we know that it is due. When the Revelation was given there was nothing to hinder. It is now just as we say of a train, "it is due." So if the Lord were due some time ago, how much more now? The world takes up the question in a contrary way to the professing church, but both arrive at the same conclusion: the professing church says: "My Lord delayeth his coming;" the world, "Where is the promise" of it?

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," is that we are not to drop out of Christianity; not to fall back to Jewish standing.

Verses 26—31. These people with all their talk were never converted at all. They had been sanctified by the blood of the covenant, by the position they had taken as professing Christians. They had taken this place and never answered to it. Baptism has to do with the old man; the Lord's supper, with the new. God has got a house on earth in the midst of all the confusion; and the moment you take your place in that house, you take the position of present administrative forgiveness. And I believe God deals with all who take that place. He treats professing Christians very much

as if they were all true believers; he deals with them on the ground that they themselves take. There is no question as to their being in the house of God. Every churchman has an idea that there is something in being within the walls; they take off their hats when they go in; they think everything of the house. On the other hand the dissenters look for membership; they know nothing about the house, and are pitched out somewhere without one, whilst ritualism makes everything of it.

Giving up in that day would have been going back to be a Jew; in the present day, it would be apostacy from Christ. The Holy Ghost was acting in the place they were in, and they refused that place. Scripture does not say there is no hope for such persons, but in the place they have got to there is none.

The church is looked at in two aspects: the house and the body. While the wise woman keeps the house everything is in beautiful order; but you can easily see, if she be indolent and negligent, to what a state things will come. It is not that she ceases to be the wife, the bride, but that she is not caring for the house. If she had been always true to her place, there would have been no disorder. When Christ comes he takes away the bride, and leaves the house here. Satan has collected it together, so it is called "the synagogue of Satan," and

then it becomes the great whore. The pope is not the man of sin : he exalts himself *in* all that is called God, not “*above* all,” as we read in Thessalonians.

Vesses 32—37. There they really suffered for their Christianity. The time was getting long, and the test of patience is whether you can endure. So here we come to another word : we have *boldness* to go up, but we have *patience* to go along the road. It is very interesting the way the coming of the Lord is brought in here. It is the rest that is for us in chapter iv., whilst we work ; here the coming of the Lord is the thing that is for patience.

Verses 38, 39. We get a very important principle here. Every person’s progress is in accordance with what it costs him. I find a man who has to walk ten miles to a meeting is ten times as fresh as the man who lives next door. If it cost you anything it brings out the virtue of Christ which enables you to do it. It is a great fact that any person is a leader now, not so much through what he knows as through what he suffers.

CHAPTER XI.

These are all men of God, and their lives set forth what they did by faith. There is what I may call a gradation in their histories, a successional virtue brought out in them. First we

have justifying faith in Abel. Then Enoch's faith ending with translation into life. Noah's faith takes him safe through judgment. Abraham has separating faith; and so on, till we culminate at a very interesting point, which proves to me that the apostle Paul was the author of the epistle; it is internal evidence to it, as we say: "Rahab perished not, and what more can I say?" We have got the Gentile into the land, we have got as far as we can go. Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles, and the great thing with him is to show that a Gentile is there. A worldly person in herself, he says, I have placed her on the same ground as the people of God. It is the only touch of the Gentile that he gives in the epistle.

It is not the varieties of the faith that is brought before us; it is that in these specimens we learn that faith is the cure for everything. If you have faith you can do anything; it only wants the thing to call it out. A different need only calls forth a different phase of it. There are four phases of the moon, but every one knows it is the same moon. Abraham is a man of faith, and he dies a stranger in the land; whilst Moses goes there in triumph. And it is a different thing to the gift of faith; the gift of faith has to do with service; but this is common to all. If a gift be not used for God's glory, but for man's service, it loses its character. Gifts of

ministry may be misapplied. Gift belongs to the assembly ; and not only to the assembly, but Christ's gift is for Christ's benefit in his saints.

In this " cloud of witnesses " it is all earthly associations. If you ask what is faith, I answer, here are specimens of what faith can do. It is not the thing proposed to faith that is the difficulty, but it is, if you count on God you can do the greatest thing just as easily as a small one. You cannot in yourself do a small thing a bit better than a large one. Faith is that I count upon what I do not see ; if I can see it, it is not faith. As has been said often, a thing that you have been praying about will look less likely than at any time just as it is going to be accomplished. As they say, " the darkest hour is the hour before dawn."

Eve lost faith the moment "*she saw.*" People say what is the harm of a beautiful view ? None, I say, unless it influence you. Look at Paul in the shipwreck : the master says, go on ; all the passengers say, go on ; but Paul says, I would not. But then there was a third thing : the south wind blew softly ; that was Providence. But no, says Paul, I will not look at Providence. If I look for wind, I shall not get it ; but if I am going with God, I shall find Providence fall in with me. Sad to say we know so little of faith ; that is the reason we are influenced so much by what we see.

CHAPTER XII.

Verses 1—4. The weight is something outside ; the sin that besets is something inside. The weight is not properly a sin ; neither is the sin what people call their “ besetting sin : ” it is the whole principle of sin in you. Some things are much more easily recognised as sins than others are. It is not only Amalek that we have to meet, but Balaam, too. The Israelites got the victory over Amalek, but they were borne down with Balaam. Nothing does so much harm as the social element ; so the wise woman says, “ Forsake the foolish, and live ; ” just the opposite to Balaam, who says, Come into our company. Worldly society is intolerable to the true soul ; the world cannot do you any good, and it does do you much harm ; whereas, the company of the Lord’s people should always be agreeable to you ; for, though there may be failure in them, yet there is always Christ in them also. The more I walk with God, the more I draw out what is of Christ in you. Supposing you were all diamonds, and I brought a light into the room, how you would all shine ! The difference between a piece of glass and a diamond is, that the glass lets the light through, but the diamond absorbs it. Christians should be all diamonds.

Well, what is a weight? Anything that hinders me; for instance, music. If I find it a snare, I throw it aside, just as I would a cloak that was in my way, if I were running a race. Whatever hinders a man from running, is a weight, for this is the race.

Paul was pressing on to the goal. I believe he saw it at his conversion. He saw the mark then, and he ran on to it ever after. If you say you cannot see your goal, I say, you cannot go to it then; and, what is more, you cannot race until you can worship. Worship is, that I am in spirit in my Father's house; racing is, that I am going home to it.

The race here is, in principle, the same as in 1 Cor. ix.; only there the apostle is talking more of the way he has trained or disciplined himself for the race, rather than of the race itself. The point of that passage is, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." You must be a self-denying person. That is laying aside the weight. It is always so: after knowledge comes temperance. For every bit of divine knowledge that I get, I grow more temperate, more self-denying; I want less than I used; I give myself less gratification than I used. One can excuse a person who knows but little in a great many things; but we lay aside everything that we may go on; and the more we get on,

the more we have to bear. The cross was the greatest trial, the greatest suffering, that could possibly be brought out. It is not redemption here; it is the martyr side of it only that is looked at. I need not say it is the same cross. But, just as if a horse can go over a six-barred gate it can go over a two, so, if you can bear the cross, you can bear anything. As to what he says of being a "castaway," it is, that he was writing to those who made much of their gifts. He says, if I stood upon my *gift*, I might be cast away; I do not go upon that ground at all. The believer can be subjected to very severe judicial treatment here; and that comes out in the chapter we are on. God says, I do not see you in the flesh at all; so you come into the holiest; but the flesh is in you, and, if you do not judge it, I must tear it from you; and that is where chastening comes in.

The Lord is always put first in everything; as it says in John, "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them." It was "for the joy that was set before him." We can understand something of that joy; the martyrs had it at the stake; Stephen, no doubt, was full of it when he was going to the Lord. And we have not yet died; we have not all been martyrs yet.

Verses 5—11. It is extremely interesting how he brings in chastening here; not at all

as we think, for we generally think chastening to be something very much out of the way, but the very pelting of the stones on Stephen was freeing him from the flesh, and setting him for ever in the presence of God. And so persecutions and troubles here, they set us free from the flesh. Chastisement is too often connected in our minds with punishment; it is not so much that as correction. It is martyrdom, if you like; not retiring to have a happy evening to our days. You are to lose the flesh; there must be the cross; so it is "mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth;" there is something that must be got rid of; the flesh must be torn out of us in one way or another. It may come to special sins, but it is the whole thing that you have to get rid of. Thus we never can say we have got beyond the need of discipline. The chastening in 1 Cor. xi. is confined wholly to the body, because the believer has been eating and drinking unworthily. Here in Hebrews it is much wider. It is not simply punishing: He corrects you for something that would hinder you from running the race. Jonah might have said, why should you have let me get into all this trouble and affliction? Well, I gave you full instruction; it was because you would not bow to the word, and therefore you got the blow. If Paul had not had the flesh, he would not

have needed the thorn; it was preventive. To Laodicea it is, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." God always speaks before He chastens. The Father's chastening has to do with everything; "If ye call on the Father, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

Chastening may have to come upon you for failure; still, wonderful grace! if you be exercised thereby, you get all the good of it, just as if you had been walking righteously. In three ways my body is dealt with; first, governmentally, that is on account of my forefathers. I may have a sickly body because of the wickedness of my grandfather. In this the Lord gives me His sympathy. Secondly, on account of my own failure. In this I have exercise of heart and conscience. And thirdly "for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death." That is a distinct honour; a decoration won in the Lord's service. I think the persecution of the present day is the opposition of believers. A man who is faithful will have very few friends. The more exclusively you are set for Christ the fewer friends you will have; every one will be shy of you. The character of the present day is, be good friends with every one.

Verses 12—14. Go on steadily and follow peace and holiness, or more properly sanctification. Verses 15—17. Esau gave up his place

in the inheritance. Verses 18—24. This is what we have come to. All this is what is connected with man. In chapter x. we get what we come to on God's side; here it is what is connected with our own side. It is everything as it now stands at this moment; it is not the future; it is not what you *will* come to. There are eight things mentioned; the "ands" separate and determine them.

Verses 25—29. He is going to shake everything. If we give it up now we shall have manifold more; if we hold to it, when everything is shaken we shall be shaken too.

CHAPTER XIII.

The last chapter is exhortation, and takes up the visible ground, which is important for the Jew. We are visible, and we are now put into a visible place; we are put outside the camp. The camp is an orderly construction of religious arrangements; it is a settled state of things, with military precision, and sentinels to keep all from going outside it. And those who do have to pay the penalty of it which is our portion. Where is your address? "Outside the camp." Where are you to be found? "Outside the camp." And what are you doing there? I am praising God and serving man. We are a praising people; praising God. That is what people ought to find us doing. They

cannot see us worshipping, but they ought to hear us praising. And is that all? We are serving man too. There must be nothing contrary to the altar about us. The altar is the figure for worship; "we have an altar;" we have gone inside there; we are invisible there; but here we become visible; we are found outside the camp—outside everything that has regulation. Then have you disorder? I hope not; the Lord keeps order. But the moment you make anything ordered and settled it is in the camp.

When a convert came out of Judaism, he had no place but the church to go to; but the difficulty that we have to contend with is, that there are a dozen places. But, go where I may, I cannot leave Christendom; I cannot leave the house of God. It may be a very large house; but, as has been often said, let me get into some little clean corner of it; into some attic; some upper room. There may be a house in which dancing is going on in one of the rooms; but I can keep in another.

At the time the epistle was written "the camp" applied to Judaism; but there is the principle of it to this day. Ask people where they get the word "priest;" they must go back to Judaism for it. Wherever I find Judaism, there I find the camp, and wherever I find Judaism, I stand clear of it. I am de-

pendent on God's Spirit alone for arrangement. If I have a case to deal with to-day, I cannot deal with it by a case that has already been dealt with; I must have God's guidance for that special thing.

The camp and the house are not the same thing. The camp is peculiar arrangements that are going on in one part of the house. It is a thing that never ought to have been in the house; they brought it in, but it has no right there. However, we are in the house, and we cannot deny our family; we have to bear the shame of it. When the captives returned from Babylon, there was a nice handful of them; but where were all the others? Those who came back had to bear the weakness and the shame of the defection of the rest. And as it was then God's house, though in a state of dilapidation and ruin—"they break down the carved work with axes and hammers, they have cast fire into *thy* sanctuary"—so it is still His house. Well, and what are you doing? I am keeping things as straight as I can in the clean corner.

(J. B. S.)

THE inward revelation of divine favour makes the path of sorrow full of sweetness.

(J. N. D.)

“GOD FOR US.”

ROMANS viii. 26-39.

THIS is the only passage in the epistle to the Romans that speaks of the purposes and counsels of God. The epistle takes up the responsibility of man, showing how grace has met it in the cross of Christ, and ends with exhortations founded upon this. Man is looked at as alive here on the earth, though justified, and Christ his life, and so dead to sin, and hence exhorted to yield himself to God as free. But in this one passage, which closes the doctrinal part of the epistle, the apostle gives us God's purposes.

In the previous part of the chapter he speaks of “no condemnation,” of that which has been wrought out for us through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; but it is not merely forgiveness and the clearing us of all our sins; it is positive deliverance from the power of sin in our Adam standing; it is not merely that which met the righteous judgment of God, but that which delivers us and brings us in Christ into a new place. And to this is added the presence of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who first “bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God;” and, secondly, “helps” us as we pass along the

road, "making intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered."

We are not in the flesh as to our standing before God, but our bodies are yet under the effect of sin, and being in the body "we groan within ourselves." Everything around us is in a state of confusion and corruption; we are redeemed in the midst of it, but we wait for the adoption, the redemption of the body.

The Christian having thus the forgiveness of his sins, and the earnest and comfort of the Spirit, goes on to learn that God is for him. We do not know what to pray for as we ought. We have spiritual desires of good, and the sense of evil around us, though our intelligence is not clear enough; but He makes intercession in us according to God. We do not know what is the best thing to ask for; some things cannot be remedied till the Lord come; but, whilst we do not know what to ask for, we *do* know that "all things work together for good to them that love God." On this we can reckon with unfailing assurance.

Job is a wonderful book in this way. There we are given to see how these divine dealings are carried on. The throne of God is set up, and the sons of God come in before Him, and Satan goes in too. Then come God's thoughts about His servant; "for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the

whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." But we must wait God's time, and then we see "the end of the Lord," for God was looking on all the while.

It began, note, with God. He says to Satan: "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in all the earth, a perfect and an upright man?" God *had* considered him. Satan says, Well, you have made a hedge about him, so why should he not fear you? Then God lets Satan loose at him. He lets him take all that he has, his servants are killed, his children are killed, his fortune gone; and Job says: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Then Satan says: Oh! skin for skin! a man will give anything for his life! Then God says, You can have his body, but not his life. So Satan smites him with sore boils, so that he becomes both wretched, and the derision of his neighbours. His wife wants him to curse God and die; but in all this Job sins not; he has "received good at the hands of the Lord and shall he not receive evil?" So that I get this fact: all that Satan did against Job entirely failed, save that it entirely cleared him from Satan's accusation and the charge of hypocrisy. All that he could do, Satan did, but could do no more than he was allowed to do.

But now we see how God was watching over Job. Job was full of himself. He was doing blessedly, but he was thinking of it too. Supposing God had stopped short here, what would have been the effect of it? Why Job would have said: Well, I was gracious in prosperity, and now I have been patient in adversity; and he would have been worse than ever. God had justified him from Satan's accusations, and his suffering had only prepared the way for closer dealings of God.

Job's friends come and tell him that he must be a wicked man or such things would not have befallen him, that this world was an adequate witness of the government of God. Whether his pride were hurt by his friends, or whether it were their sympathy broke down his spirit, as sympathy often does, I cannot say, but now Job broke down utterly, and cursed the day when he was born. It brought the flesh out. The loss of the cattle and all that, had been nothing, but now the latent evil is laid bare. Still his faith recognizes the good in God, though his flesh breaks sadly out. "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him." So he says, If I could find God, He would not be like you. But his friends' work was now done.

Then Elihu comes and takes the ground of special providence in God's dealings with His people. He says, Take heed lest God does not

take you away with a stroke. But when *God* comes in, Job says, not "when the eye saw *me* it blessed me," but "now mine eye seeth *thee*, wherefore I abhor myself, and I repent in dust and ashes." He knows himself in God's sight. And all that Satan had done was merely as the instrument preparing for the the work that God was going to do.

Thus we get an exhibition of God's ways. This world is not now an adequate witness of God's government. On great occasions it may be sometimes seen, and indeed, if we have eyes, in small. At the flood it was; and at the destruction of Jerusalem Israel was made to taste it. But, even now, God has the upper hand, and makes everything work together for good. In the book of Job we are let behind the scenes. We see God teaching the man's own heart what was in it, giving him to feel his utter nothingness, and outward blessing followed. For such was the character of blessing as known in that day in the way of government.

The apostle looks beyond all this—beyond the ways of God on the road, which are only the instruments to work out His purpose. It is Satan's world in a certain sense, though he cannot take things out of God's hand. He could go to the Chaldeans and say, Take the cattle; and how little they knew they were

doing God's will all the time, and that the hand of God was in it. They are all the ways of God with a view to His purpose, making everything work together for good, “for whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” That is His purpose, and we are even now nigh enough to see and trace His hand—anyhow we shall see it soon, if we do not now.

He goes through the whole course of God's sovereign purpose till it lands us in the glory. It is well to notice that predestination is always to something; it is not the persons merely, but He has predestinated them to something. Then He closes it all in with, “What shall we say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us?” Not only am I cleansed so that I can stand before God, but I get this immense truth that *God is for me*. As, by Christ, I believe in God, my heart knows that God is for me in everything; “He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.” The heart, in looking at God, can say as to every circumstance of the way, “God is for me.” I may not always like what He does, but He is always for me. “Not a sparrow falleth to the ground,” not without *God*, but “without your *Father*.”

Job says, “Blessed be the name of the Lord,” and it is lovely to see his patience and

submission. But the apostle goes further. It is another thing to "glory in tribulation." It is one thing to say, He is wise and good, and another to say, He is for me.

Another point, too, I would notice. When the Holy Ghost reasons with man, He does not reason from what man is for God, but from what God is to man. Souls reason from what they are in themselves as to whether God can accept them. No, I say, He cannot accept you thus; you are looking for righteousness in yourself as a ground of acceptance with Him. You cannot get peace whilst reasoning in that way, and I should be very sorry if you could. But "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He loved us from no motive at all but what was found in His own grace. We do not know *Him*. The prodigal did not know his father till his father was on his neck kissing him. He was reasoning from what he was, and not from what his father was, as to how he would receive him.

The Holy Ghost always reasons down from what God is, and that produces a total change in my soul. It is not that I abhor my sins; indeed I may have been walking very well; but it is "I abhor myself." That is how the Holy Ghost reasons; He shows us what we are, and that is one reason

why He often seems to be very hard and does not give peace to the soul, as we are not relieved till we experimentally, from our hearts, acknowledge what we are. As in the case of the Syro-Phenician woman, the Lord does not seem to listen, and so He goes on until she owns that she has no title to anything, that she has no more claim through promise than through righteousness, till she only pleads that there is enough goodness in God to give her what she has no right to; and Christ cannot say that there is not.

Until the soul comes to that point He does not give it peace; He could not; it would be but healing the wound slightly. The soul has to go on until it finds there is nothing to rest on but the abstract goodness of God; and then "If God be for us who can be against us?" There are three things here in which He is for us: God is for us in giving; He has given the very best thing, Him who is one with Himself, His Son. If God have given His Son surely He will give everything else. Of course He will! It is reasoning down from what God is and what God has done. I ask, Will He give me all I want? Yes, indeed; and not only all I want, but He will set me in the glory, and I certainly shall not want anything there. This is the giving part. If He have given His Son, He will certainly give less things.

Well, but what about my sins? This is the very place I learn how great the love is; where I get the answer, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Why, it goes up to God in justifying. It is not we are justified in His sight, but He justifies. Little matter who condemns if God justify. If I look at my sins I get this great truth that "God is for me." It is through the work of Christ I am justified, but here God is looked at as the source of it all.

It is just as in Zechariah, when Joshua stood clothed in filthy garments. Satan accuses him, and what has he to say for himself? Nothing. And who takes up his cause? The Lord Himself! And can Satan begin again after that, or put the brand in the fire which God has plucked out? God takes away the filthy garments; He replies to Satan and puts him to silence as the accuser, and that too when Israel were wretched sinners just come out of Babylon. He says, Give him a change of garments. And so He is ever about our sins. He is first for us in giving, and then in justifying. He does not leave us in our filthy garments.

"Who is he that condemneth?" ought to be in the previous verse. Then arises the third point: shall anything separate us from this divine love? "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at

the right hand of God." He does not say God; we find God again lower down, but here it is Christ; and see how gracious that is. I get the love of One who has gone into all the difficulties, all the sorrows of the way. We do not know much of them, but still there are trials, and what do we get in them? Divine love. Christ has tasted it all. God is for us in them. "It is Christ that died." He has been down even into death, so I need not be afraid of that. Oh, but then He is so high up now! Well, if He be, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." He went through all these things that try and test the heart down here, and up there He lives for us. So "who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

It does not say from Christ, but from His love. We certainly never shall be separated from Christ, but the point here is, that no circumstances by the way can separate us from His love. There are none that He has not been through. Perfect isolation in this world is perhaps the most trying thing a man can go through. Christ was absolutely isolated. As regards comforters here He had not one. At the very table where He told of one going to betray Him they disputed who should be the greatest. The Holy God looks down upon us, and, in His love, counts the very hairs of our head as a Father, but here it is the love of

Christ in that He has gone through the sorrows.

“Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution?” More perhaps than cares; it is the cross that answers to the crown. “Or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” So the apostle had the thorn in the flesh—that which to human eyes, and to his own, was a great hindrance to his preaching, made him awkward in his ministry; but he gloried in it. The *me* was put down and it paved the way for the power of Christ. It was not that he did not feel it, but he says “I glory in infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me”; and in Rom. v., “We glory in tribulations.” I have the key to it all in knowing that God is for me, and that “He withdraws not his eyes from the righteous,” so I can glory in it. It is more than submission. It is the apprehension of *the ways* of God through this world, and the knowledge that there is a perpetual care over us making everything work together for our good. Let Him work, though in trial; He wants to do me good in my latter end.

“For I am persuaded that neither death, nor

life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." No suffering that can come to me through a creature can separate me from this love which is in God. It is a love which is divine in its nature, and which comes down into all my circumstances. God is thinking of me in the trial ; He knows beforehand all about it. He did not pray that Satan might not sift Peter, but that Peter's faith might not fail. He had to be sifted. Why so ? Because there was confidence in himself, and that must be broken down. But then there was the danger that he might despair, and go out and hang himself like Judas, and so the Lord prays for him. He must be sifted, like you and me, but it must be under God's eye that he may learn the perfect character of God's love to him in it all.

God is then for us in giving, for us in justifying, for us in caring for us in everything ; even as with the children of Israel, He took care of their very clothes as they passed through the wilderness. God is for us through everything. If death stare me in the face, well, Christ went through it. If evil powers be against me, well, I have a love with me that has been tried, and destroyed that power. I

learn in these very things the perfectness of the love of God. It comes out in the minutest circumstances, in every little detail. I come up boldly to this truth, that "If God be for us who can be against us?" There is nothing that can make me say, I do not know whether He be for me or not. If it be difficulties and trials I say, Well, it just shows what pains God is taking with me.

And now, beloved friends, have you got to thus thinking of God? It may not be very pleasant, but certainly not a single thing can happen to me, that is not the very best thing that God can do for me. Submission is all right, but it is "In everything give *thanks*." Can you do that? Are you near enough to God to give thanks to Him for everything? Our wills must be broken; that is quite true; but our hearts meanwhile give thanks. We shall feel the sorrow; God does not mean that we should not; it is not insensibility; but I get this blessed truth that He who works all things according to the counsel of His own will, is the One who is for me. Then I can so trust His love, my will being broken, that I can not only bow but give thanks.

The Lord give us so to know Him that we can say, I am but a poor vile sinner, but I have learned this, that God is for me. Amen.

[J. N. D.]

“THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, IN A FLAME OF FIRE.”

EXODUS II.

IF we desire to know God, as God, it is very important to observe His early comings-forth as the “I am” into the midst of Israel, by the form of “the Angel, in the flame of fire” at the bush; as well as in the manner “of the cloud;” and as “the glory of the Lord;” whether their goings be in Egypt, or in the wilderness, or in Canaan. We may then better add to these unfoldings of Himself their typical meaning and application for ourselves, as united through His own purpose and grace, to “a glorified Christ,” by a heavenly calling and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Before God was manifest in the flesh, “the flame of fire,” “the cloud,” and “the glory,” were the three witnesses, if we may so speak, of “I am’s” presence in the midst of His people Israel, when He came down in delivering power to take them out from “the fiery furnace” and “the house of bondage.” They make for themselves their own histories moreover, either in performing their distinctive missions, or else in their combined and effective

actings, ere the twelve tribes are settled in Immanuel's land. For us, as believers in an ascended Lord and Head by His accomplished death and victorious resurrection, they necessarily carry their significance much further than this *earthly* rest.

The entrance of "the Angel of the Lord, and the flame of fire," by the way of the burning bush, "which was unconsumed thereby," was also the manner of the "I am's" introduction to their deliverer, and the mode by which Moses became acquainted with "Him who dwelt in it." "The good will" would tell its own wondrous tale "on the head of Joseph, who was separated from his brethren," in its proper times and seasons.

Moreover, this commission of divine interposition to Israel was handed out to Moses from its midst, as a suited token, and a kind of first fruits of the coming harvest field. The "I am hath sent me unto you" could be nothing less than this to him, and meant to the eye of faith, that God's holiness and grace would go hand in hand together, to open out the way by which He could descend, and go along with a people, who in their own nature "of flesh and blood" were consumable, and yet not be burned by the destructive fire. This

secret, or the beginning of "the mystery of God," was opening itself out before Moses, when the Lord saw that he turned aside "to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned, and God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and Moses said "Here am I." This was his meeting place with the "I am," as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob : and Moses hid his face, and was afraid to look upon God. Imperfectly as this lesson of sovereign grace was apprehended by the leader and commander of that day, yet was it to prove a mine of undisclosed wealth to untold generations when the "Interpreter" between God and men should pass that way. In such a presence, Moses drew his shoes from his feet, at the bidding of Him who had sanctified the ground on which he stood and made it holy, but who nevertheless spoke to him out of the fire, in sovereign power, as "the living God."

Beyond this commission and warrant to Moses, to go forth as the deliverer of the people out of Egypt, "the angel of the Lord, in the flame of fire," had to make good His own mighty errand, by acts and deeds, in the midst of the Israelites. In due season He moved onward with them in their journey, and began His work at their tent doors, by means of "the sprinkled blood" upon the lintel and the side

posts, to shelter them on "that night, much to be remembered," when the Lord spared them, but smote all the first-born of the Egyptians. "The Angel and the flame of fire" justified themselves for such diverse acts, by "the lamb slain," and could therefore become in undisputed righteousness salvation to these, but destruction to Pharoah and their enemies. Even the "I am" sanctioned this difference and contradiction between the blood of the lamb and the destroying angel outside, so that the beginning of "the feasts of the Lord" with Israel was founded on its basis, and bears along with it the unfading name of "the Lord's passover." The unconsumed bush was verified on that night, when the Lord passed over His blood-bought people in sovereign grace.

But "the flame of fire" had likewise moved onward into that hour of
The flame
of fire. darkness and of judgment to teach them other lessons, and to lead forth the paschal lamb, that the whole assembly of the congregation might kill it, and find their food in the flesh thereof roast with fire. The loving kindness and the almighty power of the "I am" had passed over them, and fed them with the mighty's meat, and preserved them for His own glory. The fruits and effects were morally in beautiful harmony with these early

lessons of redemption taught them at the doors of their houses, and in the depths of the Red Sea; for Israel on its exodus saw on the morrow "that great work" which the Lord had wrought in their salvation, and "they feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his servant Moses."

Other services yet remained for "the Angel of the Lord, and the flame of fire," in order to establish relations between Jehovah, and the people whom He had redeemed out of Egypt, and brought to Himself for blessing in Canaan. These found their occasion when the tabernacle was reared up, and all its altars and sacrifices were appointed. On that day it was, that "the flame of fire" could further justify itself between God in His holiness, and His people in their failures, by entering in at the door and doing its work at the "brazen altar," with the bullock as a whole burnt-offering to the Lord, and point out the place where "righteousness and peace might meet together, and mercy and truth kiss each other." These were the Sanctuary revelations to faith in order to maintain his worshipping people in communion with God, for "the flame of fire" had brought forth the "sweet-smelling savour" from the unblemished sacrifice, by which God was glorified in holiness and in majesty. Moreover, the law of "this house of the Lord"

was, that the fire was never to go out, either by day or night, like the blood on the door posts of the other house, which was never to lose its value in their remembrance before God.

The Angel of the Lord which had saved them at the outset, and redeemed them, changed His character after the sin of the golden calf, and becomes "mine Angel" to go before Moses, and to lead the people into the place of which the "I am" had spoken. The record of these journeyings and the loving sympathy and faithfulness of this Angel is touchingly related eight hundred years after by Isaiah, who justifies Him before Israel, in the day of their declension. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of old." Nor was the Angel less observant of their welfare in the day of danger, when the enemy came in like a flood, and the hosts of Sennacherib threatened to destroy them, for then it was "that the Angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and four thousand; and when they arose in the morning they were all dead corpses."

Although "the flame of fire, and the unconsumed bush," began thus the typical history

of redemption, yet did it also contain the secret of resurrection, though this was not brought out till "the prophet like unto Moses," and yet greater than he, declared it when challenged by the Sadducees, who neither knew "the living God," nor His power. Jesus threw them back upon "the bush," and the "I am," for a proof that the dead are raised up. "The God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto him." Jesus pointed out still further, and carried on the fulfilments of the bush, and of the Angel of the Lord, into the glory of the coming "kingdom of God," where the patriarchs and prophets and the "children of the resurrection" are to be finally settled and seated as His witnesses. In the day of its full display, when Messiah their King shall have been welcomed to the throne of the kingdom of David, and shall sit moreover "as Son of man, on the throne of His own glory," the burning bush will take revenge on all who have refused its guidance, and cast them into the fire, "prepared for the devil and his angels."

"The cloud" in like manner had
The migra- a way of its own, not meeting the
tory cloud. people of Israel at the beginning
of their journey out of Egypt, but

waiting till the time should come for them to be "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Accordingly, the Angel of God and the cloud are in company, like the Angel of the Lord and the flame of fire were at the bush, and the lesser follows the direction and ways of the greater. When the children of Israel, for example, were to turn and encamp between Migdol and the sea, the Angel of God and the cloud were as extraordinary in their doings as the bush that burned, and was not consumed; for "the Angel which went before the camp, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face in like manner and stood behind."

Nor was this enough to display its character and purpose on behalf of God, for it came between the Egyptians and Israel, "and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these, so that the one came not near the other all night." But beyond these friendships and animosities of "the cloud," it came to pass that in the morning watch "the Lord looked through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, so that they fled from the face of Israel, because the Lord fought for them."

When "the Angel of God, and the cloud," had fulfilled their respective missions.

in the conflicts of Egypt, and had put them beyond the enemy's territory and power, the Lord took possession of the cloud and prepared it as His chariot for the wilderness journey, and thus "the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light; to go by night and by day." He took not away the cloud as His witness from before the people. The faithfulness of the cloud was not more remarkable in their travelling days, when the camp was on a journey, than when it tarried, and the tribes halted at the sounding of the silver trumpets, which called the assembly together at "the door of the tabernacle" for the worship of God, as their Jehovah. Indeed, when Moses had reared up the court round about the tabernacle, and the altar, and set up the hangings, and finished the work which was given him to do, "then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." He then moved from His chariot into the holiest of all, between the cherubim, making that mercy-seat His dwelling-place, inside the veil. Externally "the cloud of the Lord" was upon it still and waited upon Him, or moved as He bade it, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all the journey.

The mys-
tery of the
cloud.

Nevertheless "the ways of the cloud," and of Him who rode therein, held its mystery, as well as the flame of fire and the burning bush. Redemption by blood and by the rod of divine power are to make a path for the redeemed, in their proper times and seasons, into "the glory of the resurrection," as we have seen, and into the royalties of "the kingdom of God," as well as into the presence of "heavenly Majesty." The Lord Jesus, who opened the mystery of resurrection from the dead, out of "the book of Moses," by interpreting what God had really said to him at the bush, likewise unites the Christ and the mount of His transfiguration, and the "Son of man coming in his kingdom," together. "I tell you of a truth, Jesus said to his disciples, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

The cloud had long waited upon the bidding of Him who dwelt therein, till the reasons of its departure from the earth to the heavens were declared in the failure of Israel, and their forfeiture of Canaan through transgression, like Adam originally lost the lordship of creation. The cloud went up from the earth and tarried for the brighter moment of the transfiguration when its Lord should ascend in righteousness that "high mountain," which was the sign and

seal from God, that He had reached by perfect obedience on the earth the highest place *out of* the heavens, "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, and there appeared two men, Moses and Elias, talking with him." It was on such an occasion as this, and upon such an interview that "the bright cloud" returned, and took possession of that intermediate scene between the kingdom and the church, and overshadowed them all. The disciples "feared as they entered into the cloud: and there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, hear him." The momentous conference between the heavens and the earth was ended, and the two men in glory were parted from them. The cloud likewise went its way, to wait for its Lord on the morning of the third day, at the Mount of Olives, when His victorious resurrection "out from among the dead" should be no longer a secret purpose of Him who cannot be "the God of the dead." The risen Christ gives a title to God now, as the God of the living, for "all live to him." Jesus also came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, having accepted as the result "His decease," and its accomplishment for the eternal glory of God and His own, in Jerusalem and upon Mount Calvary.

After His crucifixion, and the darkness of

death, and the grave were over, for He could not be holden by the one or the other, He was raised by "the glory of the Father," and renews His acquaintance with the heavens and the earth, in the new title of accomplished redemption for us. His own glory by resurrection put Him in possession of all. And then came that mysterious interval in the reckonings of time, those forty days during which our Lord stands in the midst of His disciples, "the doors being shut," or goes up and down, it may be, between "the things that are seen, and the things that are not seen." Never observed again by the world, yet going in and out amongst His redeemed ones for forty days—but no longer known upon the earth as Messiah—and saying, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father." An interval which had more to do with the new things than with the old ones, out of which, yea, and into which, His death and resurrection had carried Him. In effect, old things had in His person passed away, and all had become new, for all things were of God; and another history of man, and of "men in Christ," was to come forth after those forty days when He Himself would not be "known after the flesh." A period, we may say, which connected Him more with "the times and seasons which the Father had kept in his own hand," and of

which He was about to be made the visible centre in the heavens, than with the expectations of His disciples touching "the restoration of the kingdom to Israel," or "the restitution of all things." Nevertheless, He spoke to them of "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," in these new relations with Himself. "The cloud" that waited on Him, and waited for Him, was ready to receive Him up out of their sight, and to part Him from them, giving them other hopes even as to earthly blessing, when "this same Jesus" whom they had seen taken up to heaven in the cloud, should "so come in like manner, as they had seen him go into heaven."

But an interval of ten days followed these forty, as mysterious for the disciples whom He had left behind as were the forty days to their ascended Lord, and which was to fashion and form their hearts in communion with Himself on high, by the descent of the Holy Ghost. The angel of the Lord, which appeared to Moses in a flame of fire, or the bush which burned and was not consumed, had revealed "the good will of him who dwelt in it," by the great mystery of godliness, namely, "God manifest in the flesh," and had accomplished its typical meaning also, by the way of "resurrection from the dead," through the power of God, who could not be "a God of the dead."

True to its import, Jesus had lifted the veil before its time and shewed them the patriarchs and prophets, and the children of the resurrection, as seated and at home in the kingdom of God, "for all live to him," on the other side of death and the grave, with Christ.

The Angel of God and the cloud
 The return of the cloud. had travelled in company with the
 tabernacle of testimony through the
 wilderness, and then it parted to
 go by the way of the Mount of Transfiguration,
 till He to whom it pointed took His place
 thereon, as greater than Solomon, in the power
 and majesty of the throne of the Son of man,
 and the greatness of His kingdom, by "the
 voice from the excellent glory." The cloud which
 covered that mount parted company with our
 Lord when He laid aside this earthly dominion
 for awhile, that He might descend and pass
 through the dark and mysterious pathway of
 "his decease," in order to reach by His suffer-
 ings the centre and seat of all glory, at the
 right hand of God. "The cloud" tarried for
 Him at the Mount of Olives, and was the
 witness, not merely of resurrection into the
 kingdom of God, which the burning bush had
 been commissioned to be, but of His ascension
 to the throne of the majesty on high. "The
 cloud" found its earthly fulfilment at the

mount where Jesus was transfigured, and in the highest glory which promise and prophecy could lead Him into. It waited for its crowning fulfilment elsewhere, after the death and resurrection of its Lord; when the marvel of His ascension to the highest place, and His installation as bearing the highest name in heaven, was to be manifested "to principalities and powers," who had their dwelling therein.

"The cloud" that received Him when He was taken up had duly and faithfully accomplished its unmistakeable errand from first to last. "The promise of the Father," after those fifty days or "seven weeks" of Sanctuary computation were fully ended, would introduce a Pentecost to the hundred and twenty men of "the upper chamber," who were not of the world, and yet who waited upon the earth till they should be endued with power from on high to "shine as lights" therein. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon you," were the parting words of their Lord, when He was taken up; moreover, "they were to be witnesses to him unto Jerusalem and the uttermost parts of the earth." The cloud had done its work like the bush, and other times and seasons were now to break forth in heavenly light upon the world by the presence and action of the Holy Ghost. Men on whom "the promise of the Father" rests, and who, under this anointing, are the ap-

pointed witnesses of another revelation, by which to gather men out from the world itself to Christ by faith, as the second man, and "the beginning of the creation of God." The burning bush and the cloud could do no service in these ministries, though they led to them, and would be out of place. The mysterious "forty days" and the ten, or the seven weeks of Old Testament prophecy (when Jehovah kept His feasts with His earthly people Israel, by such reckonings) have begun their heavenly relations with the Father and the Son, and date their history from "the glorified Son of man" *there*.

"The glory" and its mission is necessary to complete this three-fold cord, which was to draw the people of Israel out of Egypt through the wilderness and into Canaan. Historically the glory has more to do with the ultimate purpose of God and objects of faith than with "the fiery furnace" or "the house of bondage." Moses and the rod of God's power were sufficient to bring them out of Egypt, just as the cloud waited on them for their journeyings through the desert. Their first acquaintance with "the glory" is equally distinct as was that of the cloud or the bush, and could only be made as "they looked *toward the wilderness*,"

The appearance of the glory.

on the occasion too of their murmurings against Moses and their lustings after the flesh-pots of Egypt. "The glory," so to speak, beckoned them through the wilderness into the dwelling-place which God had chosen for Himself and for them, in "a land flowing with milk and honey." "The glory," like the cloud and the flame of fire, though connected strangely with the demands of Sinai dispensationally, and its thunderings and lightnings, in external government between God and the works and ways of the people, yet took the hidden path of the tabernacle, and made each for themselves a way into the secret thoughts of God under the new covenant. It travelled along therefore by the altars and veils, by the blood and the incense, to "the mercy-seat," where the cherubim spread their covering wings out over and beyond "the holiest of all." "The glory," however, exceeded the fire and the cloud in this, that it irradiated the high priest of the Sanctuary likewise on the great day of atonement; and after this consecration of Aaron, by "garments of glory and beauty," it claimed for itself a pathway therein and "a dwelling-place" with God. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle," putting its seal upon the finished work according to the patterns originally given to Moses, and thus tak-

ing the initiative as to its purposes and objects. So also, when travelling days were over, and the tabernacle gave place to the temple, the glory took possession in the name of the Lord, and filled it from the innermost place to the outermost, and, we may thankfully add, this is God's order, carried out to perfection with His worshipping people still.

Wonderful as the moving tabernacle was in its migratory character through the wilderness journey; and illustrious as the temple was in its place of rest under King Solomon, in the days of prosperity and peace; yet the glory, like the cloud and the flame of fire at the bush, soon turned aside into a path for itself, and departed from rebellious Israel, to wait for Jesus and the resurrection. Who of us has not read the history of its ways by the prophet Ezekiel, till finally it went back into the heavens? Who does not recall the lingerings and the reluctance of "the glory of God" to leave the vineyard of the Lord of hosts? The typical griefs and the sorrows, so to speak, of the glory, its hesitation, and its halting at the door posts, and upon the house top, and over the city, till there was no remedy but to carry the sad tale back to God, of its own rejection and refusal.

In brief, the burning bush revealed the secret ways of the everlasting "I am," as the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, by the

resurrection, and opened the gates for them into the kingdom of God, with the children of the resurrection, waiting upon Jesus, as the forerunner and fulfiller of all their hopes in this path, the "One who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore."

The cloud in like manner tarried till it could come back again, and bear witness to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, as the King of kings, coming in royal majesty and honour into His kingdom, where the patriarchs and prophets and the elect children are yet to meet and hail Him. The bush had opened the way for faith and seated the citizens in the kingdom in expectation of their King, and the cloud then welcomed the Son of man in power upon the Mount of Transfiguration into His kingdom; pointing onward, as we have seen, to the day of His ascension, when the cloud was to carry Him up for higher honours and other glories to "the right hand of God."

The extension of the glory. "The glory" had its own prerogative, and upon this it eventually took its stand, waiting for "the fulness of the time" when God should send forth His Son, born of a woman. The glory had patiently travelled its earthly path, with men in the flesh, testing and trying and encouraging them, but without effect. Hesitat-

ingly at first, yet decidedly at the last, it refused to go along with mere flesh and blood, and became a stranger betwixt God and men, till the mystery of the incarnation drew it forth from its hidden place as the fit investiture of the young child, "the unspeakable gift" of God to mankind! "And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them," so that there was one outburst of harmonious song between the heavens and the earth, and between angels and men, "of glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good pleasure to men."

But "the mystery" of the incarnation must needs develope itself for dire necessities (which, alas, we as sinners well know) in the glory of redemption, and redemption by the further glory of resurrection, and resurrection by the crowning glory of ascension "to the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," where the Son of man now is, having reached "the glory of God," and being in it.

The history and ways of the glory outrun those of the cloud or the bush, and cannot be confined to the kingdom of God, or to the glory and honour of "the Son of man" coming into His dominions in millennial days, though each be faithful to Him that appointed them their respective courses, and each be perfect in his times and seasons as they ran them.

According to the divine counsels,
The glory "the Son of man in the glory" in the
in the heavens. heavens was to be the birth-place
of spiritual blessing and of eternal
blessedness for us, as truly as the earth beneath had become the birth-place of sin and death through Adam, and all the powers of Satan superadded, which separated mankind from God in untold misery and woe. No power could extricate, nor could any one deliver, who was unable to make an end of sin by being made sin for us, and going down into the grave, yea, lying in the belly of the earth, and yet not be holden of it; and where was such an One to be found? Moreover, the glory of God and His essential holiness and majesty demanded this, by His flaming sword at the garden gates, or else it never could have been sheathed.

Yea, more, who could go over the pathway of the burning bush with God, and verify its meaning to the full, as the "I am" in the kingdom, but He who offered Himself without spot as a sacrifice by means of "the flame of fire," that nothing but a sweet savour might ascend up to God?

Who could travel with the cloud through this sinful world and only halt upon the Mount of Transfiguration, for "a drink by the way," ere He pursued His journey by the path of His own

sufferings on the cross into the horror of darkness and death, till the morning of that third day committed Him to the care of the cloud, which received Him up and carried Him to "the throne of God," by a way that the vulture's eye had not seen, nor the old lion or his whelps ever trodden?

The bush and the cloud had done their services for God, and for Christ, and for faith, and now "the Son of man *in* the glory" was to begin a new creation from the position He had reached with "the Father of glory above," according to the purposes of God, before ever the world was. He will also deliver in due season this old creation, "which was made subject to vanity not willingly," from the bondage of corruption under which it is groaning into "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." But besides and far beyond the deliverance by redemption of this creation, (into which sin entered and death passed upon all men, because all have sinned) or the formation of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, lay the promise of the Father to glorify His Son, and through the Son to the "many sons," whom God was likewise "bringing into the glory." The unspeakable gift of "the Son of the bosom" had been registered in heaven, though refused and rejected by the earth. "The world seeth me no more," were

His parting words to it, as He took His place on the Father's throne till the prince of the world should be actually cast out.

“The gift of the Holy Ghost” yet
The Holy Ghost from the glory. remained bright in the records of inspiration and promise for the children of God by “faith in Christ Jesus,” and was to come down from the Father and the Son when Jesus was in “the glory at the right hand of God.” The Holy Spirit, unrestrained by the times and seasons which govern us, had anticipated the great day of Pentecost, and descended in the form of a dove first of all to bear witness to Jesus as the anointed man, and to accompany the voice from heaven which claimed the incarnate One as the Son of the Father in whom He was “well pleased.” The Holy Ghost had thus identified Himself with a Man upon the earth, leading this “Son of man” over the paths and places of our defeat and disgrace and of God’s dishonour, as well as of Satan’s success, that He might re-assert and maintain the rights of the insulted Majesty in heaven by His obedience unto death, and turn our Golgothas and Aeldamas into the places of His triumph and of God’s glory.

“Led by the Spirit” into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, He overcame him,

and said, Get thee behind me Satan. "Justified by the Spirit," He surely was against all the contradiction of men and the gainsayings of their leaders and governors throughout His wondrous ministrations in their midst. When His presentations to Israel's faith and acceptance as the antitype of the voice out of the burning bush, or of the migratory cloud on its mysterious journey, or of the glory which beckoned them upward, were over, and the hour was come that He should present Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of a people who, instigated by the devil, would not have Him, it was "through the eternal Spirit that he offered himself without spot to God."

In the New Testament history, and ways of the Holy Ghost towards us, it is indispensable that He should come forth from "the glory" out of the holiest of all, where God dwells, and by the way of the "opened heavens." The Holy Ghost was not yet given, "because that Jesus was not yet glorified;" nor were the heavens opened to us, because the Son of man had not been taken up by the cloud into them; nor was the way into the holiest yet made manifest for us through the rent veil, that is to say His flesh, because the High Priest had not passed through.

Another Genèsis had thus begun with "the Son of man in the glory of God" in heaven; and another Exodus was to commence on the earth, by "the descent of the Holy Ghost" into the midst of that new-born company, who had hitherto been keeping "the feasts of the Lord in Jerusalem," and to lead them out into this new fellowship of the Son of God after the new pattern of the "promise of the Father, which saith he, ye have heard of me." Our new order as born from above, yea, born of God, is, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation: old things are passed away, and all things are become new, and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ."

In fact, a new race of men were coming out in the life and righteousness of the second man, and in whom the Holy Ghost had come down to dwell, making their bodies "the temple of God," till the day when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, "and we put off the image of the earthly, and put on the image of the heavenly man," and are caught up to be for ever with the Lord. The first creation with its Adam, the man made out of the dust of the ground, into whose nostrils God breathed the breath of life, was mainly provisional and serving as the pattern of that which was to

come. The second man in the glory of God is the witness and seal of the Father's love to Him and to us, and is now become the channel of *all* that precious love; moreover, He is manifested as the centre of all His purposes from everlasting and the Head of the new creation of God. He is also the model and likeness to which as men in Christ "we are predestinated to be conformed, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." The Spirit of glory and of God resteth now upon us as Christians, yea, as sons of God, "shining as lights in the world, and holding forth the word of life." Or, as one of the heavenly family has said, "for me to live is Christ," and again "that Christ may be magnified in me, whether by life or by death."

The grand object of the Holy Ghost's ministry, as sent forth from ^{The glory} ^{our} birth-place. *the glory* by the Father and the Son, is to reveal to "the elect of God" as the "beloved of the Lord," all the purposes and counsels which were hidden in God from before the foundation of the world, and by which we enter upon our heavenly relations in life, as children of the Father by "the Spirit of adoption." Besides, these revelations of the Father's love are the operations of the Holy Ghost, who, ever true to "the Son of man

in the glory of God," glorifies Him, takes and of the things which are Christ's to fashion our hearts and form our affections, yes, and to satisfy them in the conscious enjoyment of what satisfies our blessed Lord. It is actually and practically by the Holy Ghost thus come out from the Father's love and the Son's glory that while here upon this earth "we are baptized by one Spirit into the one body," of which the risen and exalted Lord is the Head. In virtue of this new order of baptism it is, that we enter likewise upon our church relationships as individually united to Him and to one another, as "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," which the Lord in His faithful love nourishes and cherishes as being Himself.

What a portion is ours, as thus one with a glorified Christ in such marvellous, because such intimate associations! Indeed, it is these church and bridal relations that form in us the sweetest affections, of which as new creatures we are either conscious or capable; because they lead us forth to the very object of Christ's own most precious love and delight. For what, we may ask, would the delights of the Lamb be without His Bride? Or what would the exalted Head in the heavens be without His body? Could such an One "abide alone"?

The love
from the
glory.

Indeed, this love between the Bridegroom and His Bride, and betwixt the Head and the body, His members (which so exceptionally and emphatically form its very nature), takes its rise in "the glory of God," where the Son of man now is. It reaches us where we are, and like the love of God is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." Love like His must be perfect, and to be perfect must be mutual. Such love as this, and in this new order of relationships, is nevertheless not too unearthly and high to be reciprocal, though to be reciprocated by us it must needs be through the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us.

In this wonderful "little while" of the Bride's preparation and the church's completeness out of this old creation, our Lord knows how to manifest himself to His own as He does not unto the world. Yea, the Father can come and the Son also to make "their abode with us," and definitely, and very distinctly, does Christ, as the Head of the body, "dwell in our hearts by faith; that we being rooted and grounded in love," and reciprocally, "may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled into all the fulness of God." His own love has thus perfected itself in us by leading us to the fountain of His own delight, and filling us with all the fulness of

God ! He who once as the good Shepherd led His sheep into green pastures, and beside the still waters, when on the way up from the washing has made us know and drink, yea, be filled from the springs that meet His own thirst, in "the fulness of God."

Yet, once more, as touching the
The fruit
of His
glory. reciprocity of His love, which perfects itself in its own objects. He co-operates with the witness of the Holy Ghost, (which has descended from *the glory* "to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles,") by claiming a place for Himself in our hearts and dwelling there as "Christ in you the hope of glory," for which Himself and we together wait the manifestation. By His own most faithful and precious love, by the faith to which He confides Himself in our hearts, and by the pledge of reciprocated confidence which gives Himself as "the hope of glory," He has done all that perfect love could do to make love perfect on our part towards Himself till He come to call His Bride away, and to "present the church to himself a glorious church." What a present and what a future is ours !

Any further applications of these three subjects with which we started, namely, the burning bush, the travelling cloud, and the resident

glory on high, which have respectively their issues in "the kingdom of God," or through the heavens "to the right hand of the throne," or lastly "the Son of man in the glory of God," would be out of place, and ought to be, except to constrain our love by His own. Yet how practical and full of meaning they are for us whose "citizenship is above." The Spirit of God from the kingdom of God, the Holy Ghost from the ascended Lord on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, the promise of the Father, sent down from the Son in the glory of God, are not only the several witnesses of the distinctive spheres of Christ's glory, whether above or below, but operate in us, if ungrieved on our part, to form and fashion us in true consistency, like the sun-dial to the sun. In the light of the divine presence, and under the sweet and constraining influence of the love of Christ, may each judge himself down to death by the cross, or be encouraged "not to live to ourselves," but to Him who is in the glory of God, and is coming again to take us there.

In conclusion, a word or two upon another point may be in place; for some Christians begin their journey, and rightly enough, with "the angel of the Lord, and the flame of fire at the bush," but merely travel along by the

way of resurrection at the last day into the hope of final blessing in heaven.

Others accept "the journeyings of the cloud" as well, and follow Jesus through the world into the heavens by faith, where He sits at the right hand of God. The word of promise and prophecy defines their expectations, and connects them therefore much more with the coming kingdom, and with the reign of Christ upon the earth, than with the knowledge of Him as the second Adam and the beginning of the *new* creation of God.

Others again combine "the ways of the glory" with the cloud and the "I am" of the bush, as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and so embrace (with all these millennial prospects to Israel and the Gentiles at the second coming of Christ, as the King of kings, and Lord of lords) the other and higher glories which belong to Him as "head of his body the church," and the present operations of the Holy Ghost on earth, in calling out and fashioning "the Bride" for the approaching marriage of the Lamb. Upon this nuptial day, when "the Lord shall present the church to himself, a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," all else hangs. The restitution of all things, the deliverance of a groaning creation, the

thousand years of blessing, the time of prosperity, and universal peace and joy upon the earth, all wait for and upon the "Bride adorned for her husband coming down from God out of heaven, and having the glory of God." The partner of His joys!

Stopping short "of the promise of entering into God's rest" is, alas, the characteristic of many, who started by way of the bush, but have come very short of the heavenly calling and strangership upon the earth. Others, again, who began with the cloud "fear as they enter into it," or "build tabernacles" contented with their own experiences on the mount, and so lose Christ, as "the hope of glory" for the way and all that lies beyond.

"Christ dwelling in the heart by faith," that we may enjoy His own sweet love that passeth knowledge, is the secret but well-known power by which His own are led forward into "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and "into all the fulness of God."

J. E. B.

WHENEVER you get sanctification and justification mentioned together, sanctification comes first.

(J. N. D.)

A PURGED CONSCIENCE.

HEBREWS X. 2.

THERE are two ways in which grace is presented to us in the New Testament. One is brought out in Ephesians, where all the tide of blessing attaching to the believer, because he partakes of the Spirit of Christ, is shewn. When so looked on by God, as one spirit with the Lord Jesus, that which is said of Christ is said of the believer in Him: he is crucified, dead, buried, raised up, and seated with Christ in the heavenly places. The other way in which grace is taken up is, not beginning with the new man planted in the heart, but arguing out the case with the conscience of a poor sinner; and very gracious it is for the sinner that thus it should be. This is most largely brought out in Romans, as well as the impossibility of natural religion. In Hebrews comes the question of conscience, and whether the conscience have been so purged that there is no more sense of sins. As it is said: "that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins."

Now what is this conscience which the apostle speaks of here? It is very plain if we look at Scripture, and take the simple meaning of the word itself: *con* and *science*, or knowledge. That is, it is the certain knowledge that a man

has within himself about things. Scripture declares this to have been in man since he listened to Satan and partook of the tree. Man from that time onwards has had a knowledge within himself down at the bottom, notwithstanding all his unbelief. Sometimes he puts his thoughts out, as infidels do, and says, "I do not believe in eternity or in the Scriptures;" but afterwards he will say, as has been said to me before now: "I said that to keep you away from reaching me. You have got the advantage over me, for you, by the light you have got, see into eternity, whereas death is to me a dark, black curtain."

The way in which this works is presented differently in Scripture, and people make a great many mistakes about it. If you turn to Gen. iii. you will see: "The eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked." This was the first effect of their taking of the tree that God prohibited. God had said, Do not touch it. They took of it, and then came the deep inward feeling, I am unfit for God's presence; so they had recourse to something that lay in their own circumstances; they put their hands on the thing nearest them to cover them, and they were apparently quite comfortable, having thus smoothed over the surface by something within their own range of things. But when the voice of the Lord is heard saying,

“Adam, where art thou?” he tries to hide. What he had, this smoothed inward feeling, could not stand when God spoke and said, “Adam, where art thou?” And that has stuck in man’s mind to the present time. He knows he is not fit for God’s presence, and God is a heart-searching God. Thus I get, in the father and mother of the family, conscience brought in. And have not you got it? Have you not got the same feeling that Adam and Eve had in the garden? As I said just now, you *have*.

Now turn to Romans, where the apostle speaking of the heathen, in chap. ii., says: “Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.” There have been many instances of this inward persuasion in the mind of the heathen. One man, an old philosopher, came to the conclusion that there was but one God, and his arguments are as good as those of Paley in his “Natural Theology.” He even argued from his works that this God was a beneficent being. But when he was going to be put to death for saying so, he said to his disciples: “I have vowed a cock to Esculapius, and I have not offered it.” Just going to be put to death for maintaining the unity of the deity, he speaks of offering a sacrifice to a false god! So there was no power among the heathen, though

they had conscience. We see what a stupid thing conscience is.

And if we go abroad to the individual, we shall see what an equally stupid thing, what a senseless thing, is conscience. Let me put the senselessness of it before you as it was seen in myself. When as a young man about twenty years of age I felt that I was a sinner, I looked at Scripture, and saw that I was descended from sinful parents. I said: "There Satan brought sin in;" and conscience added: "You are not fit for God's presence." So I began to do something to better myself. And what was the sense of that? It came to just this: Satan had overcome my parents in the garden, and I thought that I had more power as fallen than Adam had as unfallen. You see how senseless conscience was in me. And if ever there were a Pharisee who sought to get a good conscience I was that one; by starvation and fasting till I was at death's door. What did that do for me? I found I had got into a state of departure from God, and I was just telling God to stand back till I got to Him; thus quietly assuming that I could do God's work for Him. My trying to do it was only the expression of my senseless conscience. A conscience that can do that is blind and cannot see afar off.

Remark that when the apostle speaks of a purged conscience, that is, of a soul that has the

sense of sin removed from it, he begins by showing how far the sacrifices appointed of God could give it. It was clear they could not. God had set up a system of sacrifices, and yet He never stopped talking of sin and sacrifices. They began at the passover; then came the feast of unleavened bread, and so on, till they came round to the great day of atonement. If we had been on earth then with the light we have now, we would have said: I will gladly offer a lamb, and a kid, and a bullock too, but, dear me, I am a great deal more important than fifty thousand bullocks! And if the sacrifice did not come up in value to the one who offered it, it could not remove the sense of sin. All the bullocks that Solomon offered did not come up in value to Solomon himself, and so could not remove his sense of guilt.

And then the thought would come up: It is all very well for me to do these things, but even if I lay down my life itself, how can that make any compensation to God who has been insulted by my sin? I say, No; I have a feeling in my breast that God has not got His place here in my heart, and when I meet Him we shall have things to settle. He can say to me: You have got being from me, and yet you have not loved me. When young there may have been passions, blasphemy, and the like; and since I have cut off these external bad fruits, inside my

heart what a want of trust in Him ! I must feel that if I, as a creature, meet Him as a Creator, I have something to settle. The very feeling of this shows a conscience that is not purged. It has still blots and spots ; it is not fit for His presence.

I want to draw your attention to what it is that gives a purged conscience, for it is very important at a time when knowledge is so much on the increase, when there is so much instruction as to the superstructure, and when the hour of trial comes it is found there is no answer within as to this settlement of God about things.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we find that the platform is drawn above. I am down here, but God has spread the heavens above, and pitched a tabernacle there ; He has arranged the heavens after an entirely new order. Jesus Christ has sat down there in the true tabernacle, and God, in taking His Son into the heavens, has taken Him there as the One who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," and has set Him at His own right hand according to His plan and counsel before the world was.

But what has that to do with my conscience ? Directly I get into the light of it, it has everything to do with it ; because when there is trouble within me about the things I have to

settle with God, I lift my eyes there and I say: He has been there before me, making the throne of the Highest a throne of mercy, and letting the only question now be, whether mercy suits Me. I am a sinner, and God has a right to show mercy. I cannot say He is bound not to let out mercy because man has rebelled; He had not shown it out in creation or providence, but He thought He had a perfect right to show it out when His Son was in the heavens at His own right hand. And what mercy and compassion this is! God looks down and says: How will you be when you stand before me, and plead guilty as one who has had to do with the God of mercy? Oh! I say, I will not settle then; I say for myself now, that if He look over the whole of England He will not find a specimen better fitted to show what mercy is to, than myself. That is the feeling in one's own conscience, and then one gets rest.

But He here shows me how He makes His throne the throne of mercy; He explains the ground on which He feels justified in His holiness to speak to a sinner. He would have felt that His honour was tarnished if He had spoken to a poor sinner about mercy, except through the death of Christ. But now He has used sin itself as an occasion to show out His mercy. On the cross He showed out the horrid

character of the world and the horrid character of Satan, and then He took Christ up to a new place as man at His own right hand, and so He says, I am free to speak of mercy to the poor sinner.

I would press the death of Christ in connection with the character of God. People look for something to satisfy themselves, and we need to have this. But *God* needs to be satisfied, for there had been an impediment in the way. How could He be just and yet the justifier? His own Son bare the wrath, and if so God can now speak of mercy; nay, God can come out and look for the poor sinner, because Christ has died.

Now heaven is arranged at present in a way to throw out in the light the accepted sacrifice of Christ; and if I come to that, can I have a spot remaining on my conscience? Can I have conscience of sins? I do not say, the consciousness of sin. I have got that, or I could not have forgiveness; but I have not conscience of sins. Conscience and consciousness are two different things. Saul had no consciousness of sins when his conscience was so hard that he was putting God's saints to death. If any one had said to him, What a dreadful sinner you are, he would have answered, No, I am a righteous man. When he saw the sacrifice of Christ he had no more conscience of sins, but he became

perfectly conscious that the law of sin and death was in his members, and that he could not have it taken out until he was glorified.

Am not I a happy creature to have no conscience of sins at all? Do I go into His presence and say: I have been trying to rub out this score and that score; sometimes I think I have succeeded and then again not? No! I go and say, This is astonishing! I have learned in Jesus, alive at Thy right hand, the full volume of Thy mercy and of my sin, such as it defies a finite mind to grasp.

I can remember, when trying to get the consciousness of rest, and I have seen it over and over again in others, trying to get a measure for sin—something to measure sin by—as perhaps by looking at it in its aggravations. For instance, that it was much more awful in a Christian land, and with the Bible in one's hand. All this supposes that the person does not admit that sin is infinite because it is against God. But directly I saw sin finished on the cross I got rest, because I had got a measure by which I saw sin infinite, and until you, a human being, can get into a state to, in a measure, understand what passed in the soul of the Son of man, you will never know what passed between Him and God. Sin was indefinitely great, but sin was indefinitely put away, and sin too that was against God. And who was the

person who bore it? The Son of God and Son of man. Now I could not say that I am better than He. Thousands of bullocks are not so much worth as one man; but put the whole human race together, and can they be compared to the Son of God as Son of man? No! Well, He went in and bore what was due to me, and the whole thing was settled then and there, and to my faith directly I knew it.

In this chapter, I find that this tablet written in me, called conscience, directly it gets into the light of heaven (unless I am prepared to judge God, and Christ, and the Holy Ghost), must say that the whole is settled. If God feels perfectly free to speak to the sinner, and not only so but looks out for the chief of sinners to show His mercy to; what if I should say, I am more punctilious than thou, and do not feel that I am free to go? If He say, You are free to come right clean into the presence of the Majesty in the heavens, and if you say, I cannot come, then all that it proves is that your eye is not upon Christ. If God sees no difficulties and I do, what is the sense of that?

(G. V. W.)

I NEVER can meet a cross, that I do not meet a blessing, if I take it up as such.

(J. N. D.)

THE TWO CRIES.

PROVERBS ix.

THE word of God gives a complete answer to all cavilling. Man urges continually that he is in a ruined condition, and knows not how to escape from it. Scripture gives a direct contradiction to this. It says there are two cries on the earth—two invitations, either of which man accepts: the cry of wisdom and the cry of folly. What is called folly in the sight of God is thought a great gain in the world. God designates her cry as that of “the foolish woman,” because it has the qualities of natural attraction, and it is subtle in its influence. It is of immense importance which cry we attend to, and are led by; and every honest person knows how often he turns aside from the voice of wisdom and listens to the voice of folly. The cry of the foolish woman is naturally more attractive to us than the cry of wisdom, because of the terms of the latter.

The foolish woman cries to those “who go *right* on their ways,” and to them only. The world is not inviting the world; there is no occasion for it to do so; and the intention of the invitation is to lead the upright astray. On the other hand, wisdom gives her invitation from the very highest places of the city; she sends it

out to every one; she longs to give to all that which she has provided; she cries from the highest places as if, being really right, she were the more determined. They say a man who is right is always persistent. The other is persistent too, but she has not got the same thing to offer, and therefore she cannot assume as high a place as the former.

There is a great distinction in the cries. Folly offers something that will gratify—something pleasant to look forward to. If that be my thought it is almost sure to be something wrong. It is not this that wisdom proposes, but something right; what is good is not always right; you may be doing a good thing that is not a right one at all.

I am going to wisdom's feast, and therefore I refuse folly's. I am going to have bread and wine; not the Lord's Supper, I need scarcely say, but that which the Lord's goodness provides for me; the present enjoyment of soul in what God has provided for it. "They began to be merry"; it does not say that they had reached the finish of it.

Many speak of God's love as having done its most for us; but that is not all; it has done its *best*. Love has done its most; Christ has died for me; you could not get anything greater than that; but that does not satisfy love; it must do its *best*; it says to my soul:

Come up here ; eat of my bread and drink of my wine. Many souls possess the most who have never got the best ; they have never yet seen the good things that God has prepared for them. We read in Corinthians " Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." It is a quotation from Isaiah, and the apostle quotes it to prove that Isaiah did not know the Great Supper. There is something great there, he says, but I do not see it ; it is to me like folding doors, and I cannot see inside them. Paul can say, But *we do* ; we are not inside, but the doors are opened, and we see in. That is the Great Supper ; that is wisdom's entertainment. Love has gone down to the lowest point to reach me there, and now it would take me up to be with Christ where He is.

The house is a divine organization, an abode ; the seven pillars give us the completeness of it ; all is in perfect order, the most perfect arrangement, for " Christ is the wisdom of God " ; He is the spring, the fountain, everything to the soul ; all is connected with Him, all springs from Him, and therefore it entirely ravishes my heart ; it gives me a sense of perfect delight ; it is to me instant refreshing, as bread and wine typify ; as the apostle says, To God I am beside myself. It is not only that I am saved but that

I have a great feast. "Many waters cannot quench love." I am at the feast; the work is crowned: it is the festival of accomplished grace; and therefore it is, "In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." To so great a height does love take me!

But many saints know nothing of wisdom's feast, and so they are not satisfied; they are always seeking some pleasure, by the way, to supply the lack they feel; they want something here, to be like little flowers in a hedge of thorns. But separation means that I have no *right* to such things. What right have I to pleasure here? what right have I to *anything*? It is only Christ who can give me real pleasure, and that is at God's right hand; it is not here; it is something beyond what the human mind can reach to.

We ought to weigh the fact that there is only one spot that can satisfy the heart of God for us, and that spot too is the only one that can fully satisfy our hearts. You may thank Him day and night for the love He has shown you, but you have never got to the crown of it if you have not got there. It is all ready; it is accomplished; and it is the labour of the Spirit of God to bring you there. God has revealed it by the Spirit, and it is the sure mark of a faithful servant, that he labours to lead the soul to the things that God has prepared for it.

The world presents something that is pleasant, something that can be seen; there is no faith where you can see. Wisdom says, There is nothing to see in what I offer you; if you want it, you must "forsake the foolish and live." And so it always is in Scripture; it is always the evening before the morning: Abraham goes up to mount Moriah before he gets the blessing. In a world where God is unknown it must be so; it is a standing principle that "They who sow in tears shall reap in joy." You never took a step in your life that you did not find sorrow either with it or before it. But if I trust God in it, it will all open out like a bud. The question is not whether what is before me is in itself pleasant. Never is anything presented to you but that your first thought is, What will there be pleasant for me in it? You must not make this your object, but only seek that which will be according to God's mind for you in a world of evil, and it must therefore be a path of separation; *but* "If thou embrace her she shall bring thee to honour." "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

The foolish woman attracts; she seeks to turn aside those who are going right; that is her object. The world knows how to address itself to each one of us; we each, in a certain sense, have got a world of our own—some sphere that affects us. The foolish woman always

ensnares or draws aside from the path of rectitude; she always runs in the opposite direction to wisdom. It is self-gratification that she offers, and that is always the bait when the flesh acts. I have no doubt that the better and the more comely the thing presented in connection with self-gratification, the more dangerous; and things are getting more this character every day. The lack is not that people are not going on nicely and rightly, but do they know the things that are in the heart of God for them? He is ever crying to His own, but another voice tries to rival His, and it is a great thing to be aware of it and to be armed against it. The worst of it is, that many think they have made such a good start, got such a long way on their road, that they are quite safe from such invitations, whereas they have never yet got out of the harbour at all. The thing is, not to think you have got out of sight of land, but to pull away every day. There is nothing like getting clear of the shore at once; but even when you are quite clear of it, yet as long as land can be seen, that is as long as you are on the earth, you are not out of danger.

I would press the thought that there is nothing God so delights in as making us perfectly happy, even in such a scene of ruin as this; as the psalmist expresses it: "This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bul-

lock that hath horns and hoofs." What shall please Him? Some tell me obedience; others something else; but what does the Scripture say? It is *praising* God: "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." No amount of sacrifice can be of the same value to God as the enjoyment of the place He has set us in. Could anything be more disheartening to a loving parent than his children being dissatisfied with his care for them? Does ever a cloud cross my heart in the thought that there is not perfect love for me up there? If I had not an atom of His favour to show it me, I am satisfied with what I have in His heart. Nothing has done such damage practically to souls as judging of God's heart by His favours. I give the favours a colour by the love: I do not judge of the love by the favours, but, knowing the love, I appreciate the favours.

He brings me into a scene of perfect happiness. Here it is wisdom that is said to do it; wisdom is set forth as to its action. Most hearts dwell upon love, and I do not object to their doing so, but wisdom only can complete love. When Abraham made a feast for Isaac he set forth the expression of his love. God says: Where shall love have its plenitude, its full demonstration? When I gather you round

my Son. Then it will have its plenitude. We are to have the sense of the delight of God in us in this scene. As Caleb says: "If the Lord *delight* in us, then he will bring us into this land." But I cannot use such words for I say, He *has* delighted in us, and He *has* brought us in. Abraham loved Isaac before, but now he wanted to give some distinct expression of this love to the whole household; the festival is an expression, a demonstration, of the love when it had got to its height; so that which fully expounds the satisfaction of God's love is not when it reaches you in your ruin, but when it brings you into His own presence. This is the culminating point.

In 1 Cor. ii., the apostle speaks of wisdom doctrinally; and in Col. ii. his conflict is that the saints should understand the wonderful position into which they are called. Is this future? No, it is not future; that is the very point: "God *hath* revealed them unto us." It is what qualifies me for the contrariety, the difficulty, of the scene down here. When was it Moses said, "Show me thy glory?" It was when he was filled with the ruin of everything here, when all here was at an end. Israel had failed, idolatry had come in, all was gone; and then he says: If I could but taste of the scene of divine brightness, if I could but see God's glory, I could face it. When was Isaiah quali-

fied? When he saw the King, the Lord of hosts; Habakkuk the same; and in the New Testament, Stephen looks up, sees the glory of God, and now he can meet everything.

It is an immense lack to souls not having a high moral elevation. If you have not a high sense of what you are brought to, your walk will be in keeping with your thought. How can a man be in keeping with a great thing if he have never seen it? I know nothing that saints are more deficient in than this; they cannot retire into solitude and say: I have a scene of perfect unbounded joy that my Father has given me outside of all the difficulties here. You are not fit to serve if you cannot say this: I see Him up there, and I am to walk according to what I see down here. If I had not seen Him up there I should be powerless down here, but if I have, I see what a practical thing it is to walk according to His life here. You may eat of the bread and drink of the wine that is mingled; there is wondrous joy to be had while in such a world as this. I never could face things here unless I could say, That which keeps me steady is the fact that I have a scene of light and joy outside all that attracts me on the one side and that oppresses me on the other. Wisdom is the aggregation of everything that delights the heart. When the queen of Sheba heard the words of Solomon "there was no

more spirit in her." People talk of trying to get out of the world, but I say, get but one sight of Solomon and you will be out.

But, says someone, I have not got it. Are you looking for it? "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." I would set you looking for it; I would have you seek "To see thy power and thy glory as I have seen them in the sanctuary." I would have you say, I will cry to-night for it; I will cry for weeks, and, if I do not get it in weeks, I will cry months, but get it I *will*. A sinner must believe to get heaven, but a saint must cry for it to enjoy it. He has given you a taste for it, and he will satisfy it: "He that seeketh findeth."

I want your soul to be awakened to the fact that there is the cry of wisdom; I want you to listen to it, and to enter into all the favour and love of God so that it may produce in you a practical result, and that practical result, *separation*. Who is safe from the enticing words of man's wisdom, and all the subtle ways in which it is propounded? No one who has not heard the voice of God's wisdom; only he is proof against it who knows Christ "the power of God and the wisdom of God:" "This I say lest any man should beguile you." Souls need Christ in a deeper way. If He have come down into this scene and delivered you from

the things that surround you here, you can afford to take a new path and follow Him in faith.

If I contrast the two cries, I see that one demands moral separation; the other, offers pleasure. And all day and every day the two are inviting me; and, whenever I cannot tell which is the one to attend to, the words "For-sake the foolish and live" will guide me. A really wise man looks to be rejected; but on the other hand I get into the place where love is created by the service of love: "Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee."

And after all you have a better time of it here: "By me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased." You are a man superior to the things here, but, besides that, you derive more from everything in this scene because of what Christ is to you in it. On the contrary, when you come to the foolish woman, it all ends in sorrow of some sort: "The dead are there."

The Lord lead us into it, beloved friends. It is not merely in my walk and personal blessing that I gain, but I am led into the deeper sense of what God has prepared for them that love Him. There is a spot of unclouded light, a sphere where He has gathered everything round His Son, who will gird Himself and come forth and lead you into the light where He is.

(J. B. S.)

MANASSEH AND EPHRAIM.

GENESIS xli. 51, 52.

THE names of Joseph's sons, born to him in the land of his exile, are full of the deepest interest and significance; his own history, remarkable and chequered as it was, I do not here refer to further than to notice, how it sets forth in figure and type the varied exercises and trials to which a servant of God is subjected in order that he may be a suitable vessel for the Master's use.

We do not find that either of these names was given without a special reason and intent; yet they were not, as is so commonly found, names which served to connect the child with some great member of the family, distinguished either by title or possession; on the contrary, this devoted servant of God will have the children born to him in a strange land, even in their *names*, witnesses of how entirely apart from "his father's house" he was, and how in it he was only left to be fruitful to God amid affliction and trial on every hand. How truly did Joseph, personally and typically, answer to Jacob his father's words of prophetic import: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall: the

archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel)" Gen. xlix. 22-24, See also Moses' blessing as recorded in Deuteronomy xxxiii. 13-17.

Now the meaning of Manesseh is *forgetting*, and of Ephraim, *fruitful*, and these are two great features which the revelation of God's mind and will for the present moment, when received in faith, produce in our hearts. No one can truly say that he forgets "his father's house," until his heart has found a treasure in a brighter scene; then where he is in body, becomes the land of exile to him, yet he has no desire to return to the past, he forgets it; what derives from him bears the confession of it in even the name; his toil and his father's house alike are faded from his remembrance. It is truly a wonderful emancipation to a man, when what he has found and possessed in heaven throws into shade and obscurity and oblivion all that natural pride of birth and pedigree which are connected with our "father's house."

Yet it is never the case, save as the heart has been won and satisfied by Christ in glory; it is only Christ in heaven that can displace "all things," leading us to count them loss for the

excellency of his knowledge. How sorrowful it is to see many so little distinguished by this Manasseh character of testimony; though the doctrine as to it, is accepted, at least outwardly, the conformity of the ways in *practice* is often so glaringly inconsistent, as to raise the question how far terms and language are understood, or how far it is the antinomianism of the heart manifesting itself.

It is sorrowful and solemn to reflect upon the feeble connection which seems to exist in many souls between truth and its maintenance; the highest character of testimony may be held doctrinally, along with the most evident self-seeking and worldliness. How is this? is often asked. I shall give the only answer that satisfies my own heart. Truth is sought after or held in the *mind* instead of Christ personally domiciling in the *heart*; I know I shall be met by some with—"But Christ is the truth." I reply, Quite true; but it is possible to separate Christ from truth, for what is the human heart not capable of? And it is a serious question how far more importance has been attached to natural quickness of apprehension than is its due, even to the slighting of some, who, though slow in apprehension, were far more solid in soul, and more conscientious in their handling of the truth because deeply impressed with the sense of its claims upon those who profess to receive it.

How blessed it is when in heart we can really walk through the world as in a foreign land! Christ in glory having so possessed us, that we are but vessels here at His disposal and pleasure. I say, *vessels*, in contrast with either *agents* or *actors*; as I understand it, a vessel is simply to contain and display what is set therein; we are set in this world as vessels to contain and display Christ, thus forgetting all our toil, and all our father's house.

When the eye is single, that is when Christ alone is filling its vision, all is lost sight of; not only our toil and father's house, but even our *progress* in pressing on to Christ in glory; hence says the apostle "*forgetting* those things which are behind," from the same word as is found in Genesis xlv. (see Septuagint.) What a wonderful and surpassing power which by its own excellence and blessedness, turns out every claimant or rival, that Christ alone may rule and reign there. Reader, have you so found and known Him in this land of exile and strangership, that you can inscribe on all as your motto in part, Manasseh!

But another son was born to Joseph at this time also, to whom he gives the name of Ephraim, that is *fruitful*.

Now this sets forth another and second testimony, which the blessed Lord has called His own to render for Him in the midst.

of this hostile scene. We are left in a world with which we ought to have nothing in common, to be fruitful for Christ, and that too where there is absolutely nothing to succour, but on the contrary, where everything, even the best here, draws away from the only source of fruitfulness and blessing. Happy is the saint who has so learned to fear the baneful influences of this world's atmosphere, as to keep nigh to the one spot from whence vigour and freshness flow, and thus to be on earth like a tree reversed, the roots in heaven, the branches here; not only satisfied, but in some little measure displaying it in fruitfulness for Christ. Alas, how few there are who seem to be awake to the immense favour of God, in leaving us *for* Christ in such a world and time as this!

There is another point of great interest, in this history, which finds its antitype in the Lord's ways with His saints at the present time. It required both the pit and the prison to develop and mature this testimony of Joseph. And is it not so with His saints now? Can there be either *forgetfulness* or *fruitfulness*, save as death practically works in us? Is it not as we bear about in our body the dying of Jesus, and as we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that His life is manifested? And what fruitfulness like this?

It is blessed to learn and be assured of it; to His blessed death we owe our all; by it He has set us free from the moral pit and prison in which we were hopelessly undone; but while almost every saint would glory in this, how few there are who have as yet accepted the solemn reality, that it is only through death, we can, as free, follow Him; and it is only as death practically works in us, we are either forgetting or fruitful.

May the Lord awaken us all to a more serious estimate of such a calling, so as to set forth in a scene of moral death and darkness, the land of our exile and strangership, the beautiful simplicity of those whose father's house and toil are all to us things of the past, to be no more remembered or resumed connection with, and we, though in a foreign land, fruitful trees of the Lord's culture, even "planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

W. T. T.

“NOT OF THE WORLD.”

EPHESIANS i.

WE get here the whole scope of God's thoughts and purposes. The epistle to the Ephesians takes in two things: the presence and power of the Holy Ghost on earth, and the condition that we are in as the result of it; and what this is founded on, the exaltation of Christ at God's right hand. Ephesians does not speak of the coming of the Lord, because the way our glory is brought about is not its subject; but the present blessing of the saints. There is a distinct part at the end where our conflict with Satan comes in, but the general scope is what I have said: the basis, the exaltation of Christ; then purpose, what is in God's mind; and then the knowledge of it, by the Holy Ghost come down. “He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand;” that was needed for us to know our place and the most important consequences flowing from it down here. The presence of the Holy Ghost who has come down from heaven, the seal of our being heirs, and the earnest of the inheritance, is our present condition, based upon Christ raised to the right hand of God. A *man* is sitting at the right hand of God; a wonderful truth for us; “His delights are

with the sons of men." Being a man, and having died, and therein perfectly glorified God, God has raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand, and thereupon the Holy Ghost is come down here, so that we are associated with Him and the things that are on high, in heart and mind, though not yet there as to our bodies. This is where the heart has to be; our conversation in heaven, for the Lord is there, not here; He is coming to make our bodies like unto His glorious body, but at present we have the Holy Ghost associating us with the place where He is.

God has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." That is God's mind. We are not yet there in fact, but it is the thought of God about us, and we ought to have it always before us. Blessings of the Jews in earthly places under Christ will be fulfilled in time, but for us it is "spiritual blessings," and "in heavenly places," and "in Christ" Himself; and our present connection with it all comes through the Holy Ghost.

We next get, in verses 4 and 5, two aspects of these spiritual blessings: they are brought before us in connection with the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is, Christ is looked at as Son and looked at as man. The Father owned Him in manhood as the Son in Mat. iii.,

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” God is called the God of our Lord Jesus Christ as man ; He is called His Father as Son.

This is the great basis of the wonderful place in which we are. It is man that God has in His mind put in this place of glory in His own Son. And this is not without its consequences, and those of the very highest nature.

God’s choosing us before the foundation of the world, is not what affirms in the time of choosing the sovereignty of grace, for, supposing for a moment that God were to choose us now, it would be just as sovereign an act as doing it then. The practical truth brought out in His choosing us before the foundation of the world is, that it proves that we have nothing whatever to do with the world ; before its very foundation we were chosen ; we have nothing to do with it but to get through it. God would bring us into this blessedness with Himself which has nothing to do with the world. We have just to go through it “unspotted ;” that is all we have to do with it. Our living place was settled with God before ever it existed. God had this thought to have a people in Christ, “holy and without blame before him in love.” This is what God Himself is. He thus brings us to be according to His own nature—“holy

and without blame " before Himself. We have an infinite object before whom we are, and having the divine nature we can enjoy that object. We are not taken out of the world yet—are not meant to be ; but we are to pass through it as Christ did. If one look at it in another point of view it is just what Christ was Himself, and that before God. This is the thought of *God*.

Then (verse 5) I get the *Father*. He might have had servants like the angels, but this was not His thought: "He predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." He insists on that, it is the blessed part of it—that it is before God, and to Himself as Father. If it be a relationship it is to Himself.

Thus I get the nature, "holy and without blame. It does not say there "according to the good pleasure of his will," for God could not have beings in His presence in a sinful state. But when it is relationship, it is "according to the good pleasure of his will:" He chooses to have us as sons. I get love, the nature of God—"in love"—and love of predilection too. The place we get into is one that is according to the good pleasure of His will, and He brings us according to His own nature before Himself; there is not a cloud because He has "made us accepted in the beloved;" Christ assuredly; but He gives that name to

Him to mark the full character of the blessedness, and thus brings us into His own presence.

That is the purpose; it does not say here how much of it is accomplished; it will not be fully until we are in the glory. Only in the end of the chapter we get what is accomplished in fact, as the ground work of all our present enjoyment of it in spirit. God takes Christ out of death and sets Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. This is an accomplished thing; it is "wrought in Christ;" Christ as man is in the glory of God.

And then we get the third thing: the Holy Ghost has come down meanwhile. Before the purpose is accomplished, but when the work in Christ is accomplished, the Holy Ghost comes down, the seal with which God has sealed those here who have part in His purpose, and the earnest of their inheritance. We are then competent to see God's plans about Christ Himself, His purpose "to gather together in one all things in him, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." Then it is glory.

The first verses were our calling; now it is our inheritance. And this inheritance is "after the counsel of his own will." It is sovereign grace to poor sinners that brings us into this place. It will not be accomplished until He comes; it is in Him we have obtained it, being "predestinated according to his purpose." That which

is believed in order to our being sealed is "the gospel of our salvation;" John the Baptist was the forerunner of Him who was to accomplish it, but now we have the glad tidings of it consequent on the actual exaltation of Christ, and the seal of the Holy Ghost as the earnest of what is to come.

This is where we are whilst still in the world which is no part of the purpose of God, but in which, passing through discipline, we learn the difference between flesh and spirit; it is His *ways*, it is no part of His *purpose*. The Holy Ghost comes down from heaven, gives us to know Christ, reveals to us our inheritance, bears witness to us that we are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." He makes us know where we are; that we belong to heaven and not to this earth at all. As we read in Proverbs: "In the beginning of his way, before his works of old, from the beginning or ever the earth was, then I was by him, as one brought up with him, and my delights were with the sons of men," so He became a man, and is gone into glory as our forerunner.

I desire that our hearts may feel that in God's thoughts and purposes He has given us a place that is not in the world at all, and that all our business in this world is to keep ourselves unspotted from it. I do not belong to this world; before the foundation of it I was

chosen. It is not thus simply the sovereignty that does what it pleases, but that we, as Christians, do not belong to earth at all. Epistles of Christ is what we are; we may not live up to it, but it is what we are called to: to manifest the second Man in the midst of the world that has rejected Him.

(J. N. D.)

SCRIPTURE says this is *night*, this season between Christ's rejection and His coming again. When He returns it will be all blessed and bright; but till then His people are here with widowed hearts, though one with Him at God's right hand, having fellowship and communion with Him there, and getting power from on high. And this power enables me to sink the old thing—to reckon dead that which wants position, and influence, and place here. The very fact that we should be fretting for such things is a sign of the working of the old man that belongs to earth and to such things. But I have power to walk in conscious deliverance from the man that has his heart set on this scene.

(J. B.)

HAGGAI II.

How remarkable is the way in which God sets Himself and man in contrast. His name be praised that there never was a more vivid contrast! If it were not so, there would be no foundation for us, no continuance for us, no happy end for us. Man cannot communicate goodness, and his uncleanness spoils everything that is near. But now I am here, says God, and you have recognised me, and therefore there is nothing that I will not do for you.

This was always His way. It was the same when Israel danced before the calf. They had spoiled everything in principle: the living God had taken them up to be Himself their God, and they had made a calf of gold. But what does He say? "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." I will have my own way. I defy you, Israel, with all your wickedness, hindering me having my way with all the earth. Where is Israel now? Have they succeeded in hindering Him? No! and they will be gathered yet into the land because God's word will not fail. God says, In spite of all that man can do I will have my own way; I will have my Son reigning over the earth, and my glory

covering it; "I will be gracious to whom I *will* be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I *will* show mercy."

Besides this vivid contrast between God's ways and man's ways, this also comes in: man cannot hold a blessing, but if, in spite of what man is, God will give a blessing it will not be till man has got God before him as his end. If you and I have got the Lord Jesus Christ as a living person in heaven, so walking with us in our solitude going through the world, that we are living by Christ, and for Christ, and to Christ, very weak it may be, but if I have the Lord Jesus thus before me, He can bless me individually, and let the blessing appear and show itself. Everything turns on whether we are seeking the Lord's face. I ask you, are you living to Christ? Are the particular things that surround you individually occasions to bring in Christ? If so the Lord will bless you in a particular manner.

God had sold Israel into captivity. Then He bethought Himself of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and He raised up prophets to speak to them of good things to come just because it is natural to God to bless. He loves to bless. God acted and prepared things for the delivering of His people, and so a remnant had come back to the land, and their thought ought to have been: What will Jehovah have us to do

now that we have got back? But they were not thinking of Him. However *He* did not cease to think of them: He meant to have the altar raised up, and the temple restored, and the city built for their comfort too. Some said; "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." Well, how come you back in the land if the time be not come? "Is it time for you to dwell in your ceiled houses and this house to lie waste? "You have houses and have taken great pains to finish *them*. Are you my people? Did I send you into captivity? Did I open the gates to let you out? Well, I have come back here with you. Have you prospered while forgetting my things? It was no question that He was thinking of them; it was as plain as possible that He had come back with them; and He never would allow it for a moment that, if a people have got their glory because of their connection with Him, He and that people can have separate interests. How close He was to Israel all the time! You have put money in your bags, but I have let it out: you have sown much, but it comes to little; you eat, but you have not enough; you would have had far better food in the barley loaves if you had had me with you. I brought that drought about. What a thing it is when God says, You can leave me out: whereas the beginning of all blessing must be

that you and I are *understood* to be in company. How come you to think of ornamenting your own houses, carving your beautiful ceilings, and putting *me* off to a more convenient season?

What will the living God that raised up those mighty Gentile powers as the scourge for Israel do? He has opened the prison doors and said, I go out with you. But from them He gets no thought whatever in return. Can they stop Him from blowing on all that they do? No, He is putting His mark on everything connected with them, not because they are not loved, but that they are loved so much that He must put His name on all. Let every household thing bear my mark, and I will bless you. He would not let them know the comfort of their own houses till they could say God's altar is made. They must begin there.

Now there is a great principle in all this for us. Where are we? On our individual walk is there that stamp that people outside, and our own hearts inside, know that the journey we make is in company with the Lord Jesus Christ? It is so beautiful to see that, directly they take one step in the way, the tender love of the Lord has a word to comfort them. I am going up the mountain with you; it is not now I am putting holes in your bags and blasting the labour of your hands. No; you

have set your face to do my will and I am with you. How graciously He puts Himself before them to encourage them. Have I to go the way all alone? Is the road all solitude? Are there none others treading it? The Lord knows His secret people, and can bring them out of their hiding places for the comfort of our hearts, and He does reveal them to us the moment we act on His word. He says, Never mind; you be strong; I have gone out before you, and I have got a house to build. The Lord has gone first in the path; it is not only that I have found a people on it that are living to Christ a great deal more than I am, but that He Himself is with me. If you have set your faces to live for Him, be strong, for He says, I am the one to will and to do according to my good pleasure.

There is another thing that is immensely consolatory to the heart. God says (Ver. 5.): you have forgotten all the promises, but I have not. Because you walked contrary to me I took you out of the land, but I did not forget my word to you. It is as fresh in my memory as at the first. You had no capacity to take it in while finishing that beautiful ceiling for yourself, but now that you have taken these few steps for me I tell you; it is not a fresh coming in on my part, or that I have changed my mind; I am acting just as I did at the

beginning. Do you say, how can I dare to go forward? Well, *God* has gone forward, and, if God have gone forward, the closer I am behind the safer I am.

The Lord never ends a dispensation without giving it a close worthy of Himself. How beautiful it is in Luke to see a widow brim full of God's thoughts and looking out for the Messiah. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard." He would not let Mary and Elizabeth talk of Him without putting His ear close down to hear, and, if Christ act now as He always does, what am I to expect at the end of the present dispensation? A people with whom the Spirit can say "Come." All the churches only fit to be spued out of His mouth, but if the Spirit be in a poor sinner saved by Christ, He will with that one invite the Lord Jesus to come. What is the great thing for our day? Why it is living to Christ. People sometimes get a vague idea of living to the glory of God, but the only way of living to the glory of God is to recognise Christ with them in their circumstances where they are. The love that was in Christ's heart so dwelt in the soul of the apostle that he said, I want Christ to be magnified in my body. Could God turn away from that? Will you not live for me Paul? If thou, Lord Jesus, carest for me living for

thee down here, I *will* live for thee. Christ shall be magnified in my body. Is that your "earnest expectation?" If instead of living for Christ I have been living for myself, those around will see that something mars the light shining out; they will say: If all the light that shines out is the measure of the Christ that shines in, he must have very little. It is the One whose love has never passed from me for a moment who wants me to live for Him. We shall not get away from His hand; it is impossible to go through this world without suffering; but you may choose which kind you will have: you must suffer for Christ, or you may think for yourself and have God with the rod close behind you. Which of the troubles was the better of the two; Abraham's or Lot's?

It is the mind and purpose of God to make as complete a split between flesh and spirit in these last days as in the days of Pentecost. Who is living Christ, and who is not? If your heart be fresh on Christ, and Christ come to-night, you have the enjoyment of Christ before He comes and you will meet His face in joy. The Father's thought is, that as His Christ is up there absolutely for us, so He will have us down here absolutely for Him. Do not you then pick up all the things around you; do not gather curiosities out of the gutter; but say: Through His grace I will work out what He has

worked in; I will live to Christ whose eye is looking down from heaven on me, and I will make manifest to others the One to whom I live. (G. V. W.)

2 COR. 8-10.—He looks what is the natural portion of sinful man in the face—death and judgment. As to death, it is all settled; for what is death to those who have life in Christ? It is only “absent from the body, and present with the Lord;” therefore we are always confident; we have done with mortality as to the body, done with sin, done with groaning to be with Christ; and therefore it is “*far better.*” Death—the question of death—is all settled. And he says elsewhere it is gain: “all things are yours . . . life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours.”

Then comes the second thing, what comes after death—“the judgment.” Well, judgment he cannot talk of in that way; judgment cannot be *gone*, therefore he calls it “the terror of the Lord.” And, let me tell you, that it is a very useful test to put the soul into the presence of the judgment. Here am I, a poor sinner, and I have nothing but the cross; the cross suits a sinner, surely, but you cannot say judgment suits a sinner. If he think of judgment he cannot be easy. But we read: “As he is, so are we in this world;” well, if I am *as* the

Judge, of course I can be happy in view of the day of judgment. The righteousness of God puts me into the glory of heaven. If I talk of myself as the righteousness of God, of course the judgment day has no terror. If you still feel uneasy about the judgment day, I say you have to get clear about the righteousness of God. The apostle does not make light of it; it is the terror of the Lord. It is not gain. When it was death it was gain, because it is to be present with the Lord; still when it is judgment he does not tremble as to himself; it urges him to go and preach to poor sinners, to persuade them. We shall all be manifested, saints and sinners; but it is no terror for me at all, because Christ is my righteousness, and as He is, so are we. But there was an effect on himself; he realized it as a present thing; we are manifested to God: so everything in his heart was judged continually as it will be in that day by Him. He says, as regards death, it is all gain to me, and as to the judgment, it has brought me into God's sight in such a way that I judge myself now as if it were already that day. If Paul got into a kind of ecstasy, it was not excitement; he was beside himself to God. If he comes down to sober reflection in himself it is to think of the saints for their good. A blessed way to spend his life between the two!

(J. N. D.)

HEBREWS.

IN "Notes of Readings on Hebrews," the expression, "a child's book," is not intended to convey that we could by any means be independent of this most important truth. It was addressed to Jewish converts just emerging from the camp, and no part of the sacred writings conduces more to preserve the believer from the camp, or to separate him from it. The Hebrews pre-eminently sets and establishes the soul in grace. As "fellows" of Christ we are succoured by Him down here from His height above as well as sustained in the Holiest. The Romans teaches me the Christian state. Hebrews leads me into the true Christian place, unfolding to me the ministry of Christ on earth and in heaven. When it is said, none of us ought to have needed Hebrews, it is not meant that we do not require this book, but that we should not be in the position of Jewish converts, to whom it was written. Their tardiness in leaving the camp was used of God to give us a wondrous unfolding of Christ, not only to help them out of the camp but to preserve every believer from slipping into the camp.

J. B. S.

CHRISTIAN POWER.

A FEW THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS.

"At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me." Acts xxvi. 13.

"WELL, brother John, what did he give you at the lecture last night?"

"Oh, just the same as he always does."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, he was soaring away somewhere in the clouds."

"*Above* the clouds, perhaps you mean."

"Just so, quite out of sight—above our heads altogether."

"And what did you get, sister Mary, from the word last night?"

"Oh, it was Christ Himself where He is!"

I have quoted the above dialogue, the substance of which, I have often heard from the lips of saints, because I am becoming more and more convinced that the difference between John and Mary is not one of words only, but that they really represent two entirely different states of soul. At first I was unwilling to think that the difference was anything more than might be accounted for by some acciden-

tal circumstance, John being at the time perhaps occupied with some care or trouble, and therefore incapable of following the teacher who might be endeavouring to unfold to the dear saints some of the unsearchable riches of Christ, and would explore with them the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of that glorious scene to which every Christian who is walking with an ungrieved Spirit consciously belongs. And, let me ask in passing, is there anything so delightful and bracing to the soul, as treading the hills and valleys of eternal sunshine, the heavenly places, into which the Christian is now brought in Christ Jesus, and which he is permitted already to enjoy in the power of the Holy Ghost? But, as my own eyes were gradually opened to see the truth of God's word as set forth in Rom. viii. as to what a Christian really is, from God's point of view, I began to see that the difference in the spiritual condition of John and Mary is no accidental one, but that indeed it is so radically different that, when John comes to "see" what Mary sees, he will speak of it as passing into a new region altogether, a change so wonderful that he can only compare it to a second conversion. In fact the two states of soul are set forth plainly in Rom. viii. 6. "The mind of the flesh (lit.) is death, *but*, the mind of the Spirit is life and peace."

Now do not misunderstand me or imagine that, in quoting this verse, I am saying that John is unconverted, and Mary converted. No, both are born again, and are children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ, whom they love and desire to serve; I maintain this point most firmly. But the truth is, Mary has got something which John has not. Her eyes have been opened to see such perfection in the Man at the right hand of God, such a glorious light has shone into her soul, from heaven, far above the brightness of the sun of nature when at its best and brightest, that it is with her as with Saul of Tarsus (Acts ix): self in every shape and form is displaced, and everything under the sun is faded and has lost its deceitful glitter for her, and now the one thing she has before her is to know more of Him there.

She has seen Him risen a conquerer from the tomb, beyond the region of sin and death, and He has spoken peace to her *conscience* through the blood of His cross (John xx. 19-20). But more than that, He has spoken a deeper peace to her *heart* (v. 21), His own peace. And further still, she possesses the "more abundant life" (John x. 10), which was first breathed by Him who is the life-communicating Spirit (1 Cor. xv. 45), into those disciples met in the upper room, (v. 22) thus bringing them into participation of His own life on resurrection ground. And she

knows Him now in the centre of the heavenly glory at the right hand of God, seated there as the Purger of her sins (Heb. i. 3), and the Head of the body of which she is a member, by virtue of the Holy Ghost dwelling in her (Col. i. 18), and her desire is to know more of Christ Himself for power to rise above everything here, as He is above it all.

A. And what is the state of John then? You say that he is a Christian; what more does he want, except of course to be occupied more with Christ, as Mary is?

B. Stay, I did not say that he is a Christian. I said that he is born again, and therefore a child of God, but to characterize him as a Christian might be to give him a title which I do not think Scripture does.

A. But I must come to a thorough understanding with you on this point; do you make a distinction between being a child of God, and being a Christian?

B. Does not God in His word make a distinction? Let me use a little illustration, which may help to make this point clear to you. Suppose now I describe a bird as "an animal that flies" (the power to fly being that which chiefly characterizes or marks the bird), could you correctly call it "an animal that flies" while still in the nest before it is fledged?

A. Why no, it would be an incorrect expres-

sion, though it certainly will fly some day if it come to full growth.

B. Now you have just brought out my point: "it certainly will fly some day, if it come to full growth." But suppose something occurs which stunts its growth, and stops the development of its wings, it will still be a bird.

A. Yes, certainly.

B. But will it be "an animal that flies?"

A. No, clearly not.

B. Now I will apply my allegory. What is a Christian in the Scriptural use of the word? A Christian, or "*one of Christ's*," is one who not only is quickened or has life by being born again "of water and of the Spirit" (John iii. 5), that is to say, the Holy Ghost bringing home the word of God, or "water" (look at 1 Pet. i. 22, 23; Eph. v. 25, 26), with life-giving power to the soul, but, far more than this, he has got the Holy Ghost dwelling in him ("living water." John iv. 10, 14, and vii. 38, 39), and he thus is enabled to walk through the world with an unseen power, which flows from union with Christ risen and glorified, to whom he is consciously united by the Holy Ghost sent down from that glory.

This is what Scripture calls "Life in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 25), "Life more abundantly" (John x. 10), and "Life in resurrection" (Col. iii. 1). As being dead and risen with Christ he

is conscious that he belongs not to earth at all, but to a glorious sphere, the new creation, in which sin and flesh have no place, and Christ fills the whole scene.

From this it follows that union with Christ in the glory, by the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, is that which makes a Christian, and from which his power flows. Look carefully at the following references: Gal. v. 16, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." And again, v. 24, "They that are *Christ's* have crucified the flesh with its passions (lit:) and lusts." And again: Rom. viii. 9, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, *if so be* that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is *none of his*," that is, "none of Christ's," or "not a Christian," though he be born of God. Hence you will see that *power* to keep the "old man" in its place of death, and to rise above earth altogether (having "wings" as it were) and not merely having life (as the nestling bird has) is one of the most marked features of a Christian, and this power manifests itself in *liberty*—Rom. viii. 2, 13, 15; Gal. iv. 6, 7; 2 Cor. iii. 17; *joy*—Rom. xv. 13; and divine *intelligence* of spiritual things—Rom. viii. 5, 6, 15-18, &c. 1 Cor. ii. 9 to end; 1 John ii. 20, 27. (Please to read these references carefully).

To go back again, then, to my original theme.

John is like a nestling bird, "a babe," and in a "carnal" condition, as it says in 1 Cor. iii. 1: "And I brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto *carnal*, even as unto *babes* in Christ." Whereas Mary is grown up into the full truth of Christ (note that the word "perfect" in some places is used to mean "full grown," in contrast with being only an infant in Christ, see 1 Cor. ii. 6, and xiv. 20; Phil. iii. 15; Col i. 28; Heb. v. 13, 14, and vi. 1), and she is therefore like a bird which can fly, though it may not be with a very strong wing yet. John is still "at the foot of the cross" knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as the crucified one, but Mary knows Him also as the risen and glorified one. John, as I happen to know, has been converted under a sensational and defective gospel, in which only the *human* side of the cross was presented—the love of Jesus in dying for sinners to put away their sins, and the work finished, and everlasting life for the one who only believes. But Mary knows something also of the *divine* side of the cross, where we see God coming into the scene in *power* as the raiser up of Jesus from the dead as our sin-bearer and substitute in token of His perfect satisfaction in that work. Hence God is now the justifier of him who believes on Him (Rom. iv. 5, 26). It also shows us God giving Him a place at His own right hand in glory in

honour of His work at the cross, and sending down the Holy Ghost in the name (John xiv. 26) and for the glory of that blessed One. (John xvi. 14). This truth when laid hold of by the believer introduces him into a sphere in which:

(a) All things are in *power* ("weakness" we see at the cross). 2 Cor. xiii. 4; Rom. i. 4; Acts i. 8; Eph. vi. 10.

(b) All things are of *God*. 2 Cor. v. 18; 1 Peter i. 21.

(c) All things are *for the believer*. Rom. viii. 28 to end; Eph. i. 19, 23; Eph. iii. 20; Col. ii. 20.

The consequences of this are very marked in the state of soul in each. In John there is a great lack of spiritual power to rise above flesh and earthly things, whereas Mary manifests this power in every act and word when walking in communion with Christ (for there is no reserve or store of power in one's self).

A. You say that John is only a babe, and Mary full grown? Why John has been saved many years longer than Mary!

B. That alas, is quite true. But the fact is that John has been stunted in his growth, and his "wings" have never been developed. You remember we agreed that the bird would fly some day *if* it came to full growth. John has been brought up in an organized system of religious training for young people, in which it

was taught that if he as a lost sinner believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, he would be saved, and that then he would be a Christian. Well, as I said before, through God's grace he did believe, and obtained life by faith in the precious blood of Christ. Then he was told that as he was now a Christian, he must seek for grace to walk and behave as a Christian, and this he sought to do.

Now this teaching was right to a certain extent, only that one great cardinal truth of Christianity was entirely omitted, and was therefore quite unknown to him. His soul was not led onwards and upwards to Christ in the glory, so that he was never intelligently connected with the place where Christ is (the Head of the body), and from which the Holy Ghost has come.

In fact he is just in the same condition as those disciples at Ephesus of whom we read in Acts xix. Paul having come to Ephesus, and finding, perhaps, that these believers, (for they were believers), were still in the "infant" condition, asked them pointedly, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost *since* ye believed? and they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost is" (come). In fact they were almost entirely ignorant of the significance of the Holy Ghost's advent in Christianity, and so unhappily it is with very

many believers to-day, but with far less excuse, than the disciples at the beginning.

Thus it was that John was arrested in his spiritual development, and therefore stunted in his growth. Can we wonder then that power is just what he lacks? He was "very nice" when first converted, I am told, and hard-working too, but he gradually dropped into the ways of the world. And though whenever a stirring gospel is preached he enjoys it very much, and starts into fresh energy and "work for the Lord," yet, when a teacher visits the assembly, he always shows the same inability to grasp the full truth which we saw at the beginning. I do not say that he has not received the Holy Ghost, he may have; but the point I wish to press is this, he seems to have no consciousness of his relationship to the Father, or of union with Christ "on the right hand of the power of God."

A. But suppose that dear John were aroused to see that he is still in what you call the "infant" condition, what ought he to do? Should he not pray for power?

B. No, I think not. But the fact is, it is a difficult case. If he were only recently converted, the full truth of Christ ministered to him in a loving and careful way might bring him into the truth, but, as it is, he is like a badly set fracture of a bone, grown strong in

its crookedness, which first requires breaking afresh and then resetting. But, be that as it may, the great thing is to endeavour to lead him on into "the regions beyond," and to show him the fulness that there is in Christ there; to let him see that in Christ glorified, not only has he got "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace" (Eph. i. 7), but, that he is also "complete in him who is the head of all principality and power" (Col. ii. 10). And he should then be shown that when he has once "received Christ Jesus the Lord" (Col. ii. 6), he ought no more to ask for *power* than he would ask for forgiveness of sins, for he has both in Christ.

What would you say if you heard a believer asking God for the forgiveness of his sins? Of course I do not allude to the confession of any particular sin or sins committed, which is the duty of every child of God to do at once (1 John i. 9).

A. I should say that he does not know what he has got already in Christ risen (Col. i. 14).

B. Quite so. And in the same way if I heard a believer praying to God for power, I should think that he does not know what he already possesses in Him, who "liveth by the power of God" (2 Cor. xiii. 4).

A. Then if one be conscious, as I generally

am, of want of power to rise above self, cares, troubles, and persecutions, what should one ask for?

B. Ask the "God of the Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory," that He will so enlighten "the eyes of your heart" that you may know what is yours in Christ more fully, and also that you may have grace to detect and lay aside everything that may be hindering the working of the power of God within *you* (There was nothing in Christ to hinder God's working in *Him*). Look carefully at the following verses :

Eph.i.18: "The eyes of your understanding (or heart) being enlightened; that ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his (God's) power to usward who believe, according to the working of his (God's) mighty *power*, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."

Eph. iii. 20: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the *power that worketh in us*, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen." And you may be sure that, just as you behold with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, so will you be "changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Lord the Spirit"

(2 Cor. iii. 18). For there is a transforming power in beholding Him as He is even now, by which we gradually, yet surely, possess for our own strength and enjoyment, all that there is in Him.

R. M. B.

CHRIST is not yet sitting on His *own* throne; God said to Him when He had accomplished the work on the cross, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." But the day is coming when He will put down His enemies and sit on His throne. The present state of things according to the Scriptures is this, that Christ is sitting at the right hand of God until He makes His enemies His footstool. When you see all the wars and tumults and misery, and wretchedness, and superstition that there is all round us, do you think that Christ is sitting on His throne?

But He is doing a more blessed thing; if He were to come at once, He would have to exe-

cute judgment on all this; but He is gathering out now His joint heirs; this is what He is doing whilst He sits there. The Holy Ghost has come forth to gather those that are to be entirely associated with Christ in glory, and therefore God bears with the evil and wickedness of the world. That is the great condition of things now: the world has rejected Christ; God has received Him. Peter is constantly telling us this; this is the Holy Ghost's controversy with the world. Christ, God's blessed Son, that the world rejected, God has raised up, and declared Him to be the Son of God with power. The Holy Ghost from the day of Pentecost—from the day that Christ was rejected—comes to bear the blessed testimony that He who was thus refused here, God has received there.

(J. N. D.)

I WOULD notice a beautiful thing as to those words "made of a woman, made under the law." It shows how completely Christ met the whole case. The *woman* brought in *sin*, and the *law* brought in *transgression*, and Christ meets both: come of a woman, and made under the law.

(J. N. D.)

GOD'S CHRIST.

PHILIPPIANS iii.

PAUL had but one single thing to do down here : it was that Christ might be magnified in that poor perishing body of his, which was chained to a Roman soldier in the house of Cæsar. You say, what a wonderful power Paul must have had ! True ; but do you not see that it came from knowing that the whole heart of Christ was set upon him, and what could he do then but be to Christ what Christ was to God, when he came in the spirit of " Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." There is power in the sense that the heart of Christ is set upon me.

In Phil. ii., we get the perfection of the service of Christ—the perfect way in which He did the work that would set God free to bless. That work must be estimated by the will of God. Christ did God's will, and therefore I get the strength of God Himself as to the salvation that He wrought. Then in chap. iii., Paul shows where his own heart found its springs.

We are so horridly selfish that the first thought always is, " What can I reap from this ? " If you saw yourself fully in the light of that love of Christ you would be glad to have nothing

more to say to that "I." Christ, the centre of all God's plans now becomes the centre of mine—I, a poor nothing, picked up by Christ to be worn by Him in glory! What is all that man can gather to himself compared with this? And what can a creature made by God be if he have not God Himself? Saul of Tarsus thought he could do something for himself till this thought broke in upon him, that the Son of God who had died, risen, and gone back again into heaven could open His heart and care for him. Christ, a living person in heaven, shows Himself to the hearts of disciples down here. Do you know Him thus, believer? Is it Christ, God's centre, or is it a Christ the fruit of your own intellect? God's Christ is such an one as is suited to your heart to twine itself round. But in these days the gospel is cramped down to infinitesimal dimensions, and we ought to consider if we present the Christ of God fully; not merely the bit of truth that can meet some particular need of a soul, but Christ the One who meets everything, the centre of God's heart and thoughts.

"Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." What force in these words "*my Lord*." Our stupidity and waywardness are so great that we often know not what we would be after, and at such times how good is

that name "*my Lord.*" The wide universe must yet bow down before Him, and shall not I? Paul had suffered the loss of all things, but what was that? An intelligent person might draw to himself the picture of what he might have become in this world, but, after all, what was it to give up? What was it all worth? Only "loss." Into a cup full of water pour anything weightier than water and the water will be displaced. Here is a human heart into which God has poured His own gold, that precious Christ, and may He not well displace all the rest? I do not count what I have laid down to make room for the precious gold God has given me. Can you spare Christ? Is it not rather: Oh I have looked at Him, and thought I knew a little about Him, but I must be satisfied with knowing that thou knowest it all, Father, whilst I go on only learning a little more. My Father knows all about this precious One who is my rest.

Paul's heart was caught by the life and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ long before he knew all the depths of his own sinfulness. Sometimes God meets those who have unsatisfied wants; at others He meets a soul, as He did Saul, and creates wants in it. Saul had never known God, and God introduces Himself to him, showing him that Jesus Christ as Son

of God in heaven whom he had judged as an imposter upon earth. Eternal life thus came to him with the light of the glory of Jesus Christ ; but he had not yet learned the ruin of the creature. Sin is putting self in the place of God—putting God into the second place and self into the first, and there pleasing self. When Christ was revealed to Paul the beauty of His unselfishness shone out before him, and the thought came, Oh, that I could be like Him ! His thought was, Christ has a certain character that I want to bear ; He went through suffering which I wish to share. I like to share my Master's portion down here.

What is the value to me of my taking this position ? Why this ; that you will not get a single word from Christ if you walk in selfishness and high places here. That is all. Lot in Sodom had no communication from God ; and he who is walking with a carnal step, with flesh unjudged as if there were something good in it, hears no whispers of Christ. If Christ speak to him it is but to say, You are very unlike me.

Oh, to be walking, though at an infinite distance from the Lord Jesus Christ, hardly able perhaps to catch sight of the skirts of a man like the apostle Paul, yet in our little way on the same principle as the Christ of God ; “Not my will, but thine be done,” giving

thanks in all things. The Lord Jesus Christ found perfect rest to His soul because He was subject. Is your spirit like a caged bird beating itself against the bars? Better take quietly the will of Him who put you there.

There are a number of things, which, if we were to spend a fortnight with the apostle Paul, would be found very unlike Christ, and all those things must come under judgment. We want present association with Christ. What is there in your life that you would not like to do before Him? Whatever the presence of Christ my Saviour would make me feel to be unsuitable, that I have to judge. He never leaves me, is ever in me as the channel of the life eternal down here, and He can be no party to what is not the expression of His own life. I commit Christ to all that I do.

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Has Christ occupied Himself for years with you, and have you no desire to see His face? Christ has a right to take us into His Father's house, and He will do it in spite of all our foolish ways; but what manner of men ought we to be? What more can God do for you than to give Christ, and to make all that He is efficacious to you, and to promise

you a body in which the eternal life will fill all up. Such a large Giver, what may He not expect from us? (G. V. W.)

BEFORE there can be union with Christ for me, there must be complete deliverance from what I was, and from everything that belonged to me as a child of Adam. And it is death alone that can deliver me. Why? Because I belonged to the man that was guilty, and death alone can put an end to that man, and deliver me from the condition that attached to him. And this death not only delivered me from the bad things that belonged to it, but from the good things—from *everything* that belonged to that man that had to die; from good things that became bad things by being misapplied—things that were in their right place for the first man, but which have no place for the man in Christ.

(J. B.)

THE NATURE OF THE CHANGE EFFECTED BY GRACE.

PSALM xxxii. and LUKE x. 29-35.

WE could hardly get a simpler Scripture to set forth what God has done for every believer on this earth. It is not that every believer *enjoys* it, but that God has *done* it. "Himself hath done it," and it is very important to us what God has done. He asked man to do something for Him before He did anything for man; and man having utterly failed in doing it, God has now done everything for man.

I take up, then, the simplest passage I can find, in order to bring out what the grace of God makes of a man on earth, not in heaven, what the grace of God makes of a poor sinner who believes in Christ on earth. What has He done for such a man? This is what I would simply bring before you.

The first statement you get in this Psalm is quoted by the apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Romans: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." This declares to us what God is: it is God coming out. It is God's glory and

happiness to say, Poor, wretched sinner, I can clear you entirely. It is a great matter to get this simple thing impressed on the soul—the delight that God has in clearing us. See how the Lord speaks to His disciples about the woman of Samaria. No, He says, I cannot eat. They wonder and are surprised that He should do such an uncourteous thing as to refuse the meat that they had brought Him. But He had come “to finish *His* work,” and that was His meat. Many a time I thought it was *her* work.

Has it ever entered into your heart the delight that it is to *God* to clear you? The thing that has come out, which is so insisted on in Hebrews, and which God announced in the flood, is, “The end of all flesh is come before me.” For one moment it was so: all was either covered or drowned; a figure of what grace is. All is now gone judicially in the cross; and “He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;” He does not impute sin to them. “The worshippers once purged have no more conscience of sins. This is a very important verse to get correctly in the soul. God has no claim for sin; sin once gone in the cross of Christ, God never imputes it again. Do you mean I never do it? No; nor does God say the end of all flesh is come before *you*. If I say it is come before my own eye, I know it is

not ; but, if God is the one I have offended, am I solicitous that the one I have offended should be satisfied as to my offence? If I have offended an affectionate father, I want to know how he feels about my conduct ; if he says, I have removed it all myself, I am at perfect ease in his presence.

I put it to every soul here, Are you really resting in heart on this, that God can never impute a sin to you again? And a much greater thing than that too, He has liberated His own heart. Do not talk about committing sin, but get the sense that you have a purged conscience. A purged conscience is that God does not impute sin to me.

But I often find people saying, I feel that I am not as I used to be ; I feel that there is something wrong. Well, what have you been doing? Oh, I have been drawn away by politics, by painting, or the like. But, have you stopped it? No. Then you are still entertaining the thing that revived the flesh.

What I insist upon is, that you must get hold of what God has said ; "To whom the Lord doth not impute sin." It is the main point of everything. "He died for our sins." What for? to satisfy my conscience? Not merely ; but to satisfy God. Nothing can be simpler ! "Our old man has been crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." The

moment you get the cross it is judicial; He has fulfilled in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ that which was foreshadowed in the deluge; the end of all flesh has come before Him. It is a wonderful moment: I have got into the holiest of all; the clothes of the old country are gone; the prodigal is in the Father's house.

But is not the great thing the gospel of the *glory*? I answer, *everything* comes from the glory, and from nowhere else. But what do you get in Saul of Tarsus? That the *cross* is what brings in the glory. Everyone that is saved has the light of the glory, but it is not everyone who sees it. It took Saul three days to learn the effect of the cross, before he could rest in the glory.

What I want to leave distinctly on every heart is, the relief that there is to the heart of God when He can say, I do not see a spot on you. But how can I get on such ground as that? I come in "by a new and living way," not merely by the blood; it is "through the veil, that is to say his flesh," and having done that, I have got rid of Adam. What will heaven be? Why, not a bit of flesh left! and that is what heaven is now; that is the residence for a soul now. What puts me into the bliss of heaven is Gilgal—cutting off the flesh. I have got in and I reside there. What is the

character of the place? No admittance to the flesh. You have not to combat the flesh here, but to speak of what God is.

God has brought in the perfect liberation of His own heart. His Son said, "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." But now God has liberated Himself, He is free to go out to poor sinners. I am perfectly at a loss for words to convey the magnificence of the love of God, that could come down to such a world as this, to rid me of all that stood between me and Him. And how did He do it? by a stroke of His hand? That would have been like a king, to pass by a transgression; but He did it in righteousness. He brought in the end of flesh by the cross of His own Son. Do you think God will ever let flesh go? No, never! He will even "deliver to Satan for the destruction of the flesh." A child of God may be in a house where wickedness is going on, and, if that house fall, the first one to be stricken down in it will most likely be His own child.

God, then, has seated me at His own board, at the King's table: "While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof;" I am in the enjoyment of the wonderful position He has set me in. This is the first point, and it is a great thing to get hold of it, because it is grace.

God forgives, and never imputes. He forgives what you have done, and He does not impute what you are. Real repentance is, that I put my flesh as far from the eye of God as He has put it from Himself. I do not really sorrow unto repentance if I do not.

In the New Testament we see this figuratively brought out in the parable of the man who fell among the thieves. Here we find the state of the soul of a wretched sinner. What is a state *for* grace? A state *of* grace, we often hear of. Now, there are two things that form a state *for* grace: one is, that you do not resist the grace; and the other is, that you do not conceal your need of it. The man who had fallen among the thieves was in this wretched condition, and he did not resist any offer of kindness, neither did he conceal his need of it. Many a man who does not resist God's offers of forgiveness, yet conceals the extent of his need. This is the third verse of our Psalm: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long;" but then he comes to saying, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I *not* hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." This is the great evidence of having no concealment. If everything be cleared away there is nothing to cover. You may say what you

like to me, I have settled it all with God. That is the proof of a man really forgiven ; but what brings about this state of no guile is, that there is full confession ; if you have the title to forgiveness and you are not quite happy, it is that you have not thoroughly confessed all. The man in Luke does not say, I had six wounds, and I covered up three, and let the other three be healed, and I am well of those but not of the others, for I can see them still.

What is the use of grace if you do not want it ? Suppose I were to say to a man deeply in debt, that I would pay all that he owed ; and he were to bring his account books to go through with me, and set to work turning over three or four pages at a time so that I might not see the contents, and, upon my remonstrating with him, I received for answer that, They are gambling debts and the like, and I do not want you to see them. This is just what many do as to their sins. Says the psalmist, “ When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring.” “ If we *confess* our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Many a one goes wrong in this way ; many a one has never made a clean breast with God, and so is walking with an appearance of ease that he does not possess in His presence. Just as a bird will go hovering about over any part of

the field but where its nest is, to draw away the dogs from it, so many a soul tries to conceal one thing or another from God's eye.

Now God has not a claim on me for sin, but He has a claim on me for holiness; He will have holiness and truth in His people. "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him." That is, he shall be preserved in the midst of all that is contrary to him here. It is the actual state of a person placed in this world; as we get it in our parable, "He set him on his own beast." This opens up a wonderful field as to where the forgiven soul is set upon the earth. But, I add, if there be partial ignorance as to the first point, there is also ignorance as to the second—the position in which the forgiven soul is placed.

God's Son not only came down by Himself to clear away everything from me that could offend the eye of a holy God; but, when He was exalted to God's right hand, as Peter says, "He shed forth this which ye now see and hear:" He has sent the Holy Ghost to be the power in His saints. It is given in striking figure in Luke: "He set him on his own beast."

Without a spot upon me, liberated in my

conscience, but in the very scene of my suffering, in the very place that tells of my shame and my degradation, I am in divine power. It was not that he walked a few steps, and then went a few steps on the horse. No, "We are *more* than conquerors." And I believe that it is not a question whether we are up to it, but whether we *know* it. I like a child who gets on the table and says, "I am as high as my father." He, anyhow, knows the height he is aiming at.

A man who is walking in divine order in daily life, is a man of power. Many do the right thing in the wrong way; that is not being a man of power. Doing everything in the right way at the right time, that is power. It is not simply doing a *good* thing that is necessarily power. The old prophet brought back the young one very kindly, but there was no power on either side. Paul says, "I can do all things through him who strengtheneth me;" that is power.

We have wonderfully lost hold of the fact that the Holy Ghost has come down to be power in the believer—power for action. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which pass-

eth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Do you believe you are in favour when you are praying?

If I may make the distinction, there are two ways in which I get to God in prayer; one is, that I tell Him my need; the other, that He hears me. It says, "Let your moderation be *known* unto all men." The word "*known*" there, means that I do not publish it, neither do I keep it secret. But in the next verse, "Let your requests be *made known*," means that I *do* declare it; that I go to God several times about it, until I can say, I know that I have made it known. I may not know what I am to do about it, but this I do know, that I have got His ear, and I come back into the midst of all my troubles, at perfect peace. Is it that there is any change in them? None at all; but I have made them known to Him, and I have got His peace about them. I am like a mountain, the sun gone, and the winds and storms around me, but I am looking up to God through all, and I have got power.

But do you never have temptations? If I do, I have that which is a well of water springing up into eternal life, and which causes that I shall never thirst. I pass by a shop window, and I see a book that I would like, but do I go down the street disconsolate because I have not got it? Not a bit! I have the Spirit of

God ; I have inexhaustible resources ; the temptation has only this effect on me, that I say to myself, The Spirit of God does not want that, and I am just as happy without it. When Abraham returned from the battle, having refused the goods of the king of Sodom, Melchisedec met him and blessed him ; and I believe there is no man who suffers ever so little for Christ, but a special messenger is sent to him to minister blessing to him. “ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” Do you think the Lord had not a halo round Him wherever He was on this earth ? Then outwardly ? “ He anointeth my head with oil ;” in a scene of sadness I have the oil of gladness. And inside ? “ My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

In saying this I am not talking of serving at all. No one can serve until he enjoys. When a man can tell me what a passage has done for him—when he can say, This is what this passage can do ; then, I say, he can help me with it. I can only take you as far as I have gone myself.

Thus, in the very place in which I am forgiven, God has sent down to me the new wine, and set me up in power ; I often ask myself, “ Is the Holy Ghost dwelling in you ?” I look up to God, and thank Him with my whole heart

for setting me on the earth in this most wonderful position. The great work in the present day is not to be refuting infidelity, but to be taking up your bed and walking—showing power in the place where you had none. The man who was healed carried his bed, not to prove that he was forgiven to himself, but to the bystanders. Let me see in any place one faithful man walking with divine power, and I know there will be a wonderful effect from it in that place.

Now I turn to the third and last point: “He brought him to an inn.” “Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.” I will say here, what may surprise you a good deal, namely, that no one has the third, who has not the second; very few people know that the Lord cares for them; they have not got to the inn yet. And it will not do to go there on foot. Paul says, “Everywhere, and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry;” I am perfectly happy in the care of the Lord. “He brought him to an inn!” That is a place for travellers, it is not heaven. What can be more interesting than the knowledge that I am altogether in the care of the Lord here on earth? So many saints are disturbed, so many are restless, because they are not living in the knowledge that they are under the

care of the Lord ; and then there is no power to walk. Why have you no power in walk or in service ? It is because you are not clear that the Lord is caring for you, that He is in all watchfulness over you, that He has let down the strong quills of His protecting care till they sweep the ground around you, and, if you are wise, you will creep up close under His wing, into the very down.

There is a reality in these things. My heart delights in the extent of what God has done for a poor soul when he puts one in power on the *earth*. I have not said a word about heaven; I am simply dwelling upon that which I want very distinctly to bring out, what God's grace has done for a believer on the earth. I say, he is cured, he is carried, and he is cared for.

The Lord grant that this little word may not be without its value to our souls. He says, the cross of my Son has cleared away everything from my eye that was against you, and now down here I leave you to walk through this scene in the power of Him who died for you. Thus I walk through an unreconciled scene, a reconciled person. May each of us have a more correct sense of the magnificence of the state in which God sets us on this earth for His name's sake. Amen.

(J. B. S.)

THE POWER OF WEAKNESS.

GENESIS xxxii.

IT is well for us that the blessed God never abandons His purpose to bless His people, and well for us too that He blesses after the thoughts of His own heart ; this being so, what limit can we put to the blessing ?

It is both instructive and interesting to observe the way and method of God's sovereign goodness to His people ; it is thus, the wise " understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

In Jacob's history, which I think furnishes a striking illustration of this principle, every dealing of God with him was in view of making good the sovereign goodness revealed to him at the outset. If we turn to Genesis xxviii., which may be termed the start, what do we find ? Why a poor outcast wanderer from his father's house and home, overtaken by night, lying down to sleep on the stones for pillows ; it were hardly possible to find circumstances more untoward or gloomy ; yet here it is God can be ; for while man's falsely boasted independence repels Him, man's need and misery become occasions to Him, blessed be His name, as the most suited platform upon

which to display that sovereign goodness which delights to bless the weary and the outcast.

Jacob dreams, and God speaks! and wondrous utterances they are: "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Oh, what grace, what sovereign goodness on God's part! No wonder that this spot the witness of it, should be called Bethel, that is, the house of God.

Now this manifestation of sovereign grace and goodness on God's part, contained within it the full scope of blessing for His poor servant. Many and various were the ways of God with him in bringing it all about, and making it good in him, yet nothing was bestowed in the end which was not unfolded in promise at the first. How faithfully He keeps His word with us, as He kept it with Jacob; to the latter He said, "*I will not leave thee* until I have done

that which I have spoken to thee of," and He never did leave him, His hand was never withdrawn, in accomplishing the purposes and plans of His heart; stroke after stroke, blow upon blow, witnessed how true God was to His purpose and His word.

The circumstances in which Jacob is found are remarkable, but ever, I believe, those in which sovereign grace asserts itself and acts; let us name the circumstances as recorded in this chapter.

1. The threat of his injured brother Esau (chap. xxvii. 41), placed him in the condition of a banished man from his home and father's house; as such he fled.

2. Overtaken by the darkness of night without shelter or friend, the stones of the earth are his only pillow.

3. In the above circumstances he sleeps, and dreams, and the Lord draws near, and gives him to hear His voice.

Now this last fact, namely, his sleeping, is the time when the blessed God acts, for sleep is the type of nature's inactivity and expressed helplessness. I say *expressed*, because though nature is always a weak helpless thing, yet sleep is in the fullest way its *expression*, when nature is thus silenced, as it were in type, and subdued, the power of the man being in abeyance, God speaks and acts.

Let me cite another instance of this type. If we turn to 1 Kings iii. 5-15, we shall find it. "In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

This scene, beautiful and striking as it is, presents the other side of the truth which is sought to be illustrated: we have seen how, when nature is inactive, the blessed God draws near and speaks; here we may equally see in type how that, in nature's inactivity in God's people, divine thoughts take the place of all that is merely human. Solomon asked for wisdom, "And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solo-

mon had asked this thing." Surely we never please Him in what we ask or do, save as nature's claims are disallowed, and to this end *sleep* sets forth its inactivity, and *fasting* the denial of its claims in its activities. When it is so, the blessed God stands at the top of the mystic ladder, heaven is then not far off, or wisdom is asked as the thing most pleasing to Him. To us, this is Christ, God's wisdom and God's power.

I turn now to chapter xxxii. A long and trying period intervenes between chap. xxviii. and chap. xxxii. Suffice it to say that Jacob departs from Laban, full and not empty; at Bethel he had but the stones of the earth for his pillows, but now he is rich; as he said himself he had "oxen and asses, flocks, and men-servants, and women-servants;" he has now, as we may say, a stake in the world. During those twenty years he had been with Laban, amid trial and vexation, he had been gathering around himself all the materials for the discipline which awaited him; the approach of Esau brings on a crisis moment in Jacob's history. He lets out his natural character to its full extent in view of meeting his enraged brother; he plans, and prays, and plans again; he makes every provision, and then is "left alone." How like man as man! But this solitude, while on the one hand it was Jacob's

folly and selfishness, was God's moment of blessing; "There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." Who was the mysterious, unlooked-for, unexpected stranger? No doubt it was God Himself, and He is here to deal with and put down dependence in self; and hence, as the picture of this, what was touched and shrank was the known sign of man's strength. Yet while this power of nature was being withered, Jacob himself was sustained; the same hand that dried up, as it were, the sources of natural strength, imparted new power from above; and so it is, he enters upon a new day, gets a new name, Israel, and is blessed as a crippled man; and not only this, but when the sun rose upon him, that is, when the influences of the day are around him, he is in the expression of weakness; "he halted upon his thigh."

I think there can be but little doubt that this scene in the patriarch's history, is that to which the apostle alludes in Gal. vi. 15, 16. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon *the Israel of God*." What is "this rule"? Is it not for us the new order of things into which through grace we are introduced? and was not Jacob after the night of

Peniel, the picture of one who, having been delivered through the cross of Christ, has learned now the power practically of the death of Jesus in his mortal flesh?

Let us consider well the excellency of such weakness as this ; for it is not the mere inability of one who is powerless, but it is the case of one who, having been in the full flow of natural strength, was met and contended with by Him who knew how to put out of joint the spring of creature strength ; it is therefore divinely wrought weakness. How blessed to go halting and limping all one's life after this fashion ! to be so indebted to Him for lack of nature power, that His strength becomes our ability, as Himself becomes our solace and stay. " I will not let thee go," though the utterance of a vanquished man, is the announcement of victory.

Now similar to this in many respects, is the case of the apostle in 2 Cor. xii. He could boast and glory in that which made little of him before men, because thereby the power of Christ rested upon (*lit.* pitched its tent over) him ; thus it was he knew that, by being weak, he was strong ; paradox it may seem, yet who that knows the deep blessedness of the secret would have it otherwise ? On the contrary may we not justly and truly say, " Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness " ?

There is this difference in the two cases just touched upon, that whereas with Jacob it was the breaking down and withering up the seat of energy of one strong-willed and unsubdued, in the case of the apostle of the Gentiles it was the preventive grace of God, in order to cut off the resources of nature; in Jacob it is subjugation of natural force and will at their height; in Paul it is the anticipative prevention of divine grace; both are excellent and perfect in their time and place, like every way of our God.

This weakness, which is really our strength, is the moral power of death, practically withering and setting aside the man in the saint, in order that the plant of renown in each one of us may spread forth its roots, and produce its fruit, even the life of Jesus, in our mortal bodies. Blessed it is, if in any measure we have learned to be in subjection to our Father's heart and ways, even in that which is naturally death' to us, but no language can convey the blessedness of being so in communion with Him as to be able to say, "*I take pleasure*" in them.

A vessel in the power of weakness is a sight for angels truly; yet this is what God delights in; but how little any of us seem to have the sense of being simply *vessels*. There is too much of that which tells of our being actors or agents, but a vessel is distinct from both, and is simply to

retain and manifest the treasure placed in it. In Gideon's army we read of (Judges vii.) three hundred tried and proved ones, who were *retained* because they had manifested a reality of devotedness to which the ten thousand that had *remained* were strangers; it is this vessel character which marks them; they are at the disposal of another, they were those pre-eminently to whom their chief could say "Look on me; as I do, so shall ye do." It is this very three hundred that carried "empty pitchers," and lamps within them; at a given signal and moment they brake the pitchers, and this was the hour of their victory. What moral beauty there is in all this; surely it speaks in its typical import of that greater victory which is announced as won in these words, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor. iv. 8).

It need not surprise us that such are the ways of our God with His own; nothing could set aside man in his badness or goodness, but *death*. Why should we shrink from it? We brought death into this world; solemn thought for us all. The Son of the Father goes through death, that the man who brought it in, might be for ever set aside; thank God it is so before God, and He recognises only the risen and

glorified Christ; but then, *practically* and *experimentally*, death alone can secure to each of us divinely wrought weakness, or the practical setting aside of the man in each of us, which can neither be reformed nor restrained, and thus alone is room made for the power of Christ to display itself in us, once *agents* or *actors*, now but *vessels* at the disposal of His pleasure and will. May each heart thankfully be enabled to say, "Be it unto me according to thy word."

W. T. T.

"He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." It is a present manifestation which is an anticipation of heaven; as if He said: Till you can abide with us, we will abide with you. "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

(J. N. D.)

THE CHRISTIAN A LIGHT-BEARER FOR CHRIST.

LUKE xi. 19—36.

THE first thing we notice in this Scripture is, that the Lord accepts, or foresees, His rejection by the Jews, and speaks of those among the Gentiles, who should rise up and condemn the nation. The Queen of the south should rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; so the men of Nineveh; because the one came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and the other repented at the preaching of Jonas; but a greater than either was here—the Lord Jesus Christ. Here were two marks of the light now shining in the darkness: suffering and glory; suffering from man for the glory of God. Jonas was the one who suffered; Solomon represents the glory. I am not going to dwell upon it, but simply state the facts.

The Lord is now in the place of rejection. I suppose no one would be bold enough to say the Lord was not rejected. Still, whether you do or not, you must admit the simple fact that He is not here on the earth. He is gone to heaven, and we look for Him to come again.

The Scripture is very definite about His being rejected. The Roman soldiers put Him to death, after the Jews had handed Him over to them, saying, "By our law he ought to die." These brought the law, which God had given them, to bear upon Him, and the Roman soldiers the sword, which they also had received from God. The Jews and the Gentile Romans combined to put Him to death. True, Pilate, the viceroy under the emperor, washed his hands to clear himself from the crime, but He was nevertheless clearly rejected, both by Jews and Gentiles. I cannot understand a person who refuses to believe in His rejection; I have heard it done. But what saith the Scripture? "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ. For, of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus." True, it was what had already been determined; nevertheless, it was

they who said, "This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." I want no other proof of it; and, to a mind subject to Scripture, nothing can be clearer than the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has been rejected from this earth.

Man at first refused God in the garden of Eden, and doubted His goodness; thus sin came in; and secondly, he refused the One God sent to take that sin away; that was the double sin. Every believer admits the first sin, the sin in the garden of Eden, but there is another sin. Man has rejected the One who came to take the sin away, who came to bless; nor will the world tolerate Him now.

Nothing struck me more when a young man, than when I once ventured to speak to a young acquaintance who was sitting near me about Christ. The man seemed perfectly amazed at the mention of the Name, and said, if I remember rightly, that it was not a fit subject for company. It completely shocked me. But so it is, there is no real acceptance of Christ by the world. They might not be so bad as to put Him to death, but people do not want to be interrupted by words about Him. But, be that as it may, I insist upon it, and I must take it as a settled thing in Scripture, that this is the second sin of man. The first was the questioning of the goodness of God in the midst of

everything to tell of that goodness in the garden of Eden, and man became a sinner. This, every person with a conscience admits. The second is, man refused and rejected the Son of God; wherefore I take the ground now that He has been rejected; and that will lead to my subject this evening. What is to be done in the place where he has been rejected? It is a solemn question! Do you say, Christ died for me, and by Christ's death I am saved and can go to heaven? I quite admit it; I go further, I say the moment you believe you are *fit* for heaven. But I have another question to put to you: Are you fit, according to God, for earth?

There is not a believer on the whole globe to night but is fit for heaven. As a believer he is made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." The prodigal son was made meet immediately he returned to his father. We see three things in his case: he is kissed, he is clothed, he is feasted. But that is the heavenly side of it; the question I have to ask is: Are you fit for earth? You are fit for heaven the moment you are converted. The thief was the moment he believed. But the question is, Are you walking here according to God in everything? Are you walking wholly for Christ here where Christ is rejected? It is a solemn question: What is to be here on earth where Christ is rejected? Merely a people to

be saved and go to heaven, and not a vestige of Christ to be seen on the earth? Is that your thought? Is that the way you look at the grace of Christ? Not a vestige of Christ left on earth? That is what Satan wanted, no doubt. But what Christ says here is, on the contrary, that when He, who is the light should go away, His own people should be lights upon the earth during His absence—a conjunction of lights—which light He was Himself when here. Of course, they would not be the origin of the light; He is the origin of it; but they would be the light here instead of Himself. Hence, He says in this passage: “No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.” He is the light Himself.

This, then, is the time of His rejection. He is gone away, and what will follow? Will the candle upon earth be extinguished? “The light (or candle) of the body is the eye; therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body is light.” Not *full* of light, but *light*. But where is the light? That is the question. Let us see what Scripture says.

First, let me say, there are three things you must always do in reading Scripture. First, accept the truth; next admire it—get the taste of it, say, That is beautiful! Lastly, adopt it. If

you do not do the second, you will not do the third. First, I say, I accept it; I say, That is the word of God. Then, the next thing, I like it; I say, It is beautiful! Then, there is hope for you if you say that. I believe in a person who admires the word of God; he is safe; he has not adopted it, perhaps, but he is safe. There is accepting, admiring, adopting. Now, what have we to learn in this passage before us?

If I wanted an illustration of it, I should say we have it in the children of the captivity, who would not eat of the king's meat, nor drink of the king's wine; that was separation; and yet their faces were fairer and fatter than those of all the children who did. Their appearance was better. Then they were enabled to bear the fire. They first refused the wine, and then they endured the fire. That is the order. The light that is in you shines out.

But now another thing. It is the body itself that is light. It is what is called sanctification, but not sanctification simply as belonging to God. There are two sanctifications. One is the sanctification by the Spirit; the other is progressive sanctification, which is simply this: you are more separate unto God. Practically, you get it in these children of the captivity. The principle is the same; it is the body of light. It is not the body *full of light*, as that tumbler is full of water. There is only

one word used to express it in the original. It is like a glowworm. We get the same idea in Scripture in another place. "Who gave himself for us," firstly, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity," and secondly, "that he might purify us unto himself a peculiar people." The word "peculiar" means something out of the common. The saint ought to be in this world as something *novel*. People may not admire, but they must observe him. As we read of Herod concerning John. It is said he *observed* him, and I think this is quite possible. I believe the rich man observed Lazarus, though he does not seem to have given him anything; yet when in hell, he says, "Send Lazarus." He knew something of him. Why did he not take notice of him? Because the one was for the world, and the other was not; but now he was obliged to confess his virtue. It is an illustration of that passage, "That they may see your good works, and glorify God in the day of visitation." Many a person might pass you by now, and take no notice of you, nor how you walk like Christ. But, by-and-by, they will say, I used to see that person on earth, and I remember how he walked like Christ. "That they may see your good works, and glorify God," not now, but "In the day of visitation." In the day when He comes.

Look at that lamp; see the halo round the flame. It is a circle properly. You see it in the distance like a circle of light. I might compare it to a Christian: in the midst of the darkness, he would be like an apparition. I cannot get an illustration to give the right idea. It is not that people would really like it; not that they might be attracted by it; they might be astonished at it; might dislike it; but there is something peculiar there; it is a body of light, and they cannot but see it.

Having settled this point, I hope with clearness—Christ being rejected—I ask this question, Can anything more strikingly set forth the wisdom of God, than that, when Satan had succeeded in tempting men to drive God's Son bodily out of the earth, and afterward to refuse Him in glory, He should now come out with this wonderful secret, that there should be thousands of bodies upon earth all bearing the light of that very Christ whom they had refused! Would we could see it more! But this is what the Lord sets forth to the disciples when He says, "If thine eye be single"—if you are entirely set upon this—then "your body shall be full of light." "The candle of the body is the eye." What is your eye upon? Upon getting property? That will not give you a body full of light. Is it amusement? That will not do. The eye must be right, to get the

body full of light. Is it upon the One who is not here? Then the eye is single, and the whole body is light.

The apostle speaking on this subject in Phil. iii. has three things before him. First, Christ is his study; he counts all things loss for Christ. Secondly, *where* He is, is his mark. Thirdly, *what* He is; he covets a glorious body like His. He says, I am going to Him. He is my study, my mark, my hope. There is a man who has got a single eye. He is my study. Like a painter taking a sketch: he looks at a landscape until the picture is so impressed upon his eye, that he can transfer it to canvas. I have a study, an object, and that object is Christ; "that I may win Christ." I say, Where are you going? To that Christ in glory. What is your hope? I am hoping He will come, and I shall have a glorious body like His own. That is a single eye. A body full of light. Paul therefore, can say, though in prison, "So now also Christ shall be magnified in my body"—what an expression that is! "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." Paul would so walk here that he would be the expression of the light in the scene where his Lord was not. We should be so separate, so apart from everything here, so bearing out what He was, that we should be setters forth of the very light He was when here, but now absent.

The moon is a beautiful illustration of this. She has no light of her own, but borrows it from the absent sun. And we are to be here, setting forth the light of the absent Christ, until He returns. That is where this subject closes: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning: and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." Like the moon going through this dark night, shedding forth the light of Christ, looking for nothing at all from the earth, but bearing about the light of the absent One, in the very scene where He has been rejected; bearing light from Him who is absent, in the place where He is not. This is the wonderful position we occupy!

Now for the question, How is this to be attained? How is it to be brought about? You say, I bow to the truth—I accept the truth. I trust many of you say, I admire it; it is really beautiful to be in such a position; I see the picture; tell me how it may be brought about; let me see in Scripture the course one should pursue in order that this may be effected.

Take the case of Stephen. Looking at his face they saw it "as the face of an angel." That is figurative of what I mean. A person so distinctly separate, such a peculiar course, something so marvellous, something so morally beautiful!

You find this in John 17, where the thought

is even a higher thing than service. Not that I make little of service, but to represent Christ on the earth is better than any service. He says in the 10th verse, "I am glorified in them." Like a briar grafted with a beautiful rose, so Christ is glorified in a man. What is he by nature? A briar. But I look at him there, and I see a thing that is really fragrant to God, and fragrant to man; he is a beautiful rose, and there is Christ glorified. It is not, I will take them to glory, but "I am glorified in them." Therefore, He says, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

How is this to be brought about? The first thing is—and it is the great lesson for souls—and it divides my subject: first, how this is produced; and secondly, what the effects are. First. It is not simply that Christ is *in* you; He is in every believer; but the question is, has Christ got—I will not say dominion over you—but has He got *the throne of your heart*? I do not ask, has He got some rule? like a king who may own a conquered country, with a few soldiers here and there to keep it for him; that is not the throne; but as the little hymn expresses it:

" Oh ! for a heart submissive, meek,
My dear Redeemer's throne,
Where Christ is only heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone."

That is the way it is brought about. *Christ having the throne of the heart.*

It was just the difference between Himself and the Pharisee, as we see a little lower down. The Pharisee came, and invited Him to dine with him, and he marvelled that the Lord had not washed before dinner; and the Lord takes the opportunity to teach him a solemn lesson. The Pharisee worked on the outside, but Christ on the inside. The Pharisee doubtless thought the Lord and he were agreed, but he soon found out his mistake. No, the Lord says, you work on the outside, but I work from within. When the light works it is from within, and shines outwards.

Every believer has a love for Christ in the bottom of his heart. It must be so. It is the first commandment, and it must be in the heart; but it is not every believer who can say, He has the complete control of me. Can you say so? I say He has the right. There is a time when the heart of the believer does acknowledge His right to rule. "My son, give me thy heart," is the command in Proverbs. Now, it is not that the Lord *takes* the heart; the Lord really looks to you to *give* Him up the reins. Did you ever give up the reins of your heart to Him? He says, There are the reins; give them up to me; "Son, give me thy heart." The Lord will receive anything we give Him; He does not *take* anything.

Like Hannah, Samuel's mother, she says, "I will give him to the Lord," and she brought him up to the temple, and put him in the house of the Lord. He was not a priest, he was not converted, but she says, "I will give him to the Lord," and the Lord says, I will take him. This is where we parents fail too often. We say we give our children to the Lord, but there is a little reserve for the world. The Lord will take anything we give Him. That is the great principle.

Now, let me show you how it comes about. Turn to a passage, Galatians iv., where we get, first, the doctrine of this. In the end of this chapter we read: "But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless, what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." The doctrine there is that, that which the law could act upon was to be cast out. That was not to have rule there. The force of the passage is, that Christ is to have no rival in the heart. There was not to be a bit of flesh there. The *practical* way of it we get from the Old Testament, Genesis xxi., where Isaac, the child of promise, was weaned.

Every believer has Christ in him, but the question is, Has Christ really got the reins? Has Christ got the throne of the heart? Is He the acknowledged sovereign? Has it come to this point—this blessed point in your soul? Do you say there is no rival to exist here? Christ is to reign. If I go into my business, Christ is to reign there. In my home, Christ is to reign there. Am I a worse husband, a worse father, a worse business man because Christ reigns in my heart? Not at all.

Isaac was in the house before he was weaned, and Ishmael was there fourteen years before he was turned out. It is well for us if we can say, We have turned out Ishmael. There is a moment known to the soul when it says, I do not tolerate the flesh. No toleration to the flesh. Why not? Because you have got something better: Christ.

When Isaac was weaned Abraham made a great feast in his house, and the consequence of this festival was that every person in the house acknowledged the right of this little child. Weaning means that he was put on his own account. Every one in the house is doing him honour.

Is that the acknowledged feeling of your heart with respect to the rights of Christ? It is a blessed moment! It is the heart keeping festival in the acknowledgment of the right of

Christ to occupy the throne ; it is the coronation day.

It was a wonderful day in the house of Abraham when Isaac was weaned ! When the three hundred and eighteen servants of Abraham all acknowledged the right and title of that child to his place. Was there anyone who did not acknowledge it ? There was one : Ishmael. " He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit." And now, Sarah says, let him be cast out. The thing was very grievous to Abraham, but God commanded him to hearken to her voice, and do it. A moment comes when Christ must be supreme in your heart ; when you acknowledge that He has the right to dictate to you in every circumstance and relation in life. He has the right to my heart, to every heart ; He has the right to be sovereign.

Have you reached that moment ? I hear people say, This is quite true, but I find the flesh comes back again. I find Ishmael still haunts the corners of the house. Yes, that is true ; nevertheless, I have reached a point where I do not *tolerate* it. Practically you have reached the point described in the language of a poet, when

" He who knows thee well,
Will quit thee with disgust ;
Degraded mass of animated dust."

I do not tolerate it now. Why? Because I have got something better. I have Christ, the One who has the right.

That established, what is the effect now that He is sovereign? What will He do?

I come to Eph. v., and I see what He does. There we read, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify it, having purged it, with the washing of water by the word." There are two things in the latter part of this verse. The first, is the effect of what we get in verse 2, "He loved us, and gave himself for us." I need not dwell upon that. But I ask this question, What is He occupied with now? I ask you, and I ask myself, and the Lord grant us all a deeper feeling of it. What has He been occupied with in regard to you this very day? He has been occupied in sanctifying you. Do you ask me what the Sovereign of the throne of my heart is engaged in? I answer "that he might sanctify us, having purged us, by the washing of water by the word." "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish."

That is the measure of what I am coming to. Let me first get what this Sovereign is occupied with. "That He might *sanctify* us by the washing of water by the word."

This brings out two things: one, sanctification, and the other, washing. One is positive, and the other negative.

Turn to John xiii., where we get the Lord washing the disciples' feet. There is the negative, and there is the positive. Everything in Christianity must go on this ground. There must be negation, because the thing is bad. There must be a positive, to acquire the thing that is good.

Now, mark one thing in connection with these Scriptures. Paul always puts John's statements in inverse order. The cause is this: John is setting forth the Son of God on earth, and Paul is connecting the saints with Christ in heaven. The washing of chap. xiii., is to get rid of the bad; it is for the restoration of communion. You have lost communion with the Lord; you looked into some shop window, perhaps, and your heart has got away from Christ; then He comes with His word, and turns you away from it, and thus communion is restored.

In John xvii., you get the sanctification.

There are two characteristics of those who represent Christ on earth. Alas! beloved friends, we have lost the first, almost never to be recovered. That is, that we all should be one, with the same mind, the same judgment.

There is an erroneous notion abroad that

one form suits one, and a different one another ; that is, that one man is an oak, another an ash, another an alder, another a birch ; that we are all to be trees in the forest, and therefore we should agree to differ ; it is untrue, we should be one ; we ought to be all oaks ; little, big, or middle-sized oaks. That is the meaning of John xvii. ; as the Father and the Son are one. There is no such thing in Scripture as that you and I should have different opinions about any one thing. There may be little and great lights, but they all agree. There might be a thousand lights in this room, but they would all *blend*. There might be five thousand, or five million candles in this room, but not one starts for himself. They all blend. There is union : “ perfectly joined together in one mind.” That is the first characteristic. The other is, you should be separate from the world. In point of fact, if I had none of the world in me, I should have nothing but the heavenly mind in me. When I differ from you, and you differ from me, there is some of the world in one or both of us. We could not but agree if it were not so.

As to sanctification, the Lord says : “ I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” We are here to represent Christ, and to be separate from the world. Then He

adds, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." It is a wonderful thing to say, I am not of the world. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." The truth here is the truth of the Father. That is, I have lost the world, but I have the Father.

Suppose a person offends me in the streets, I will not give him in charge of a policeman. Why? Because I have a Father in heaven who will take note of it. He tells me, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." I have lost the world; I have overcome through Christ; in place of the world, I have the Father. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." That is, Depend now upon me. I have a greater sense of what Christ is in Himself, and this is its effect; I am more separate from the world. Thus I become a light. I take a new course, a novel one, because I have got something instead of the world: a Father in heaven. I have a Father in heaven in lieu of the world. That makes me a distinct person, and I have not only a new nature in Christ, but I am kept here in such childlike dependence on my Father in heaven, that I am separate from the world. This is sanctification.

A person may say, Are you better than you were, with all this separation from the world? Not a bit. But I will tell you what is the difference by an illustration.

In my garden I plant a laurustinus. I plant nothing else; but the laurustinus grows till it covers the whole space. You say, I see no weeds there, nothing but laurustinus. That is just it. That is sanctification: so pre-occupied by Christ, that you see nothing but Christ. No weeds, only Christ to be seen. As the apostle says, "That Christ may be magnified in my *body*," not in my heart. Christ so monopolizing me that there is no room for anything else. It is not that I am better, but that Christ only is there.

Now let me say a word as to the *measure* of sanctification. Every believer admits that he must be separate from something. He used to go to certain places of amusement, but he does not go to them now. He admits that Christianity demands separation: and there is a certain measure of separation in his walk. Another says, That is not enough; I must do this, and do the other; I must keep a more separate path than he does. Now what is the measure of sanctification? "For their sakes, I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

Beloved friends, we must bow to it. I can-

not go behind Scripture. A man may tell me he is sanctified, but I say, Are you as far out of the world as Christ on the throne of God? That is the measure of your sanctification. "For their sakes, I sanctify myself;" for their sakes, I go out of it. If I stay in it, they might have something to connect their hearts with here; but if I go out, there will be nothing for them in it. I go outside the world that they may be sanctified through the truth—that they may be coloured with the truth, just as the worm gets coloured by the leaf it feeds on. That is the measure of sanctification.

You say, I never shall be that. I am not saying whether you will be or not; but I say, Do not assert that you are sanctified until then. I only repeat what a person said lately: "Whatever God asks us to do must be impossible to a man—must be entirely beyond him." The measure of sanctification is, Christ in heaven.

If you have only given up going to places of amusement, natural pleasures, and the like, I say that is only a little bit of the road. We are to learn practically what the Lord meant when He said, "Sanctify them through thy truth." The only thing I have got instead of the world is the Father Himself. Blessed for the heart to know it!

If I want to get the measure it is clearly settled. I must separate from the habits and customs of the world, from worldly ways and principles and practices, from things here, I must be as separate in principle and spirit as that blessed One on high.

But there is another way of sanctification. One is by the word, already dwelt on ; another is by chastening. The Father lays a man sick on his bed, and you go in and visit him, and you find him rejoicing in the Lord. He says, perhaps, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now"—what is the rest of that verse?—"I have kept thy word;" he is sanctified. So that the very chastening brings about his sanctification. He is brought under the ministry of the great Sanctifier, Christ Himself. There is one mode of sanctification by the word, and another by circumstances.

Let us turn to a passage to bring this out—Heb. xii. 10: "For they verily for a few days, chastened us after their own pleasure : but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." This brings out the measure again. How separate are you? As separate as God is? You know you are not; then do not talk of holiness until you are. "That we might be partakers of his holiness." God is using things here with this object in view. I find it so; I do not want anyone to tell me my

besetting sin, for I know it from the word of Christ, and from the chastening of the Father. The word shows what is wrong in you, and a blow comes to correct you in the very thing in which you are failing. God shakes you out of it. You are going on with the Lord, but there is something in the way, and He says, I will remove this, for you would get on better without it. The Lord will take the heart out of the earth, and to do this, He may give you a fit of illness. He says, I see your heart is drawn to the earth; and in the fit of illness, you lose your joy in everything here. You were full of these earthly things, but now you say, I do not care about any of them. Sometimes it is the case with a rich man; he gets ill, and he says, I am so languid, so pulled down with this disease, I really do not care about anything, I cannot enjoy anything. It was thus with Job; he first loses all he could enjoy, and then he gets sick, and loses the power to enjoy.

Christ first presents us in the perfection of Himself before the Father; and now, He says, I will present you as myself before the world. That is our true place.

I think you cannot find it difficult now to see that Christ is really to be the Sovereign of your heart; that what He is bringing about is this separation from the world unto God—separating you for this distinct and peculiar thing: your

eye upon Christ, yourself a body of light going through this world.

If you want to know what Christ's ministry really is, go and read a chapter, and you will find, if you want to know what is the matter with you, that the part of the chapter that speaks to you is the very thing you need. There was a vacancy for that brick, and the Builder says, Bring it up for this vacancy here. The Lord knows all about it. When a preacher says, I will apply the word, he is out of his place. How does he know what is in the heart? All the preacher can do is to bring out the word; he cannot apply it. The Lord applies it.

Now let us connect this part of the subject with Luke ii. The great principle is, that we are here upon the earth a body of light; a luminous body, like the glowworm, like the moon, like the rose, in the beauty of Christ.

One word more as to what sanctification is. People say, We have bodily power, and mental talents, and such like; and Christ sanctifies them for His use. A standard rose shall be my illustration. Go and examine one. Look at the joint between the rose and briar. From the moment you join the rose with the briar, the rose refuses to take any colour or mark whatever of the skin, or any likeness whatever of the briar. It says: I will appropriate every

bit of strength in you—I will appropriate every bit of you as to power, but I will not bear your name, nor be like you. Thus Christ takes all the believer's strength, mental and bodily, not for credit to himself, but He appropriates it all as in the rose. And what is the briar? Nothing but a poor briar still, though it has grown a most beautiful rose. It is in itself as poor a briar as when it grew in the hedge. But the fact of allowing it to partake of the nature of the rose is very wonderful. It is absorbed by the rose.

The subject closes with these words: "With your loins girded about, and your lights (or candles) burning, and ye yourselves like unto men who wait for their Lord"—doing it all for Him. I am the moon going through this dark night, waiting for the promise, the coming of Christ.

What must be the character of the Christian thus set in the most glorious position that ever a saint can occupy in this world! I can contribute to the earth, but I need not look for a single thing from it! We are not as the Jews, receivers from the earth. "He that believeth on me," said the Lord Jesus, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," to this poor world. We are to be contributors to the earth, not receivers from it. That is the wonderful position we occupy! Now, see, that your body is light.

There are two characteristics of this practical light in this chapter. One is that I do not fear them that kill the body; I am as bold as a lion. Stephen is an example of this. He could say, I am not afraid of them that kill the body. The other is, "I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on." There is no fear without, and no care within. What would people say of such an one? There is a body, a light—there is a peculiar man coming down the street! He has no fear, and no care! He is here in this scene, looking for nothing from it, and he is afraid of nothing in it! A man that has no care can occupy himself with the things of God. "Seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." We have not a thing to think of—only the kingdom of God.

The Lord lead our hearts to see what a solemn and yet happy thing it is—the greatest inducement we can have to stay upon this earth. The Lord knew all that would happen to us here, and yet He says, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." I am to be a representation of Christ on the earth.

The Lord lead us to see what a blessed thing

it is to be in the scene where He is not, thus shining as lights in the world.

The great occupation of the One sitting on the throne of God is to sanctify me. I look at the Father's dealings with me, chastening me, and one thing and another as I require. Jacob may go down into Syria for twenty years, but God says, I will bring you up again.

Talk of "exclusivism!" I believe we do not know what it is divinely. Do you know the holiness of God? What sort of exclusiveness should we have if we knew the holiness of God? We do not understand what the holiness of God is. We do not understand what the holiness is that becomes His house. "Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel!"

(J. B. S.)

KEEP your feet in the narrow path, and your heart as large as you can. A Christian ought to be like a horse with blinkers on, going on and looking straight before him.

(J. N. D.)

“TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST.”

PHILIPPIANS i.

“To me to live is Christ.” These words throw immense light on what was the spring of everything in Paul’s mind. He wanted people to see not himself but Christ, “that Christ might be magnified”—made more apparent. To him to live was Christ. The living water flowed through, and out of him : all his life was the flowing out of the living water fresh from Christ, the Rock of Ages. And was not Christ magnified in such an one ?

He took all his trials from Christ ; he not only desired to believe, but to suffer for His name’s sake. It was not a new doctrine, but it was a new light, a certain glory, and the doctrine coming out through it with double effect. Paul had learned the truth of a risen Christ by a direct interview with the Lord Himself. He had said “Saul, Saul.” It was not only the gospel ; it was a certain living Person in glory whom Paul knew as occupied with him in heaven. And Christ must be known to me before “to me to live is Christ” can be taken up. If you and I know Christ as our accepted sacrifice, who has perfected us forever, by His work, is it with us a question of

our sins? No; it is a question of His glory. It is not only a doctrine, but a reality, that He Himself is the life of the believer.

And what was that life? What were His thoughts? One can say with reverence that He was a man of one idea: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." He was always setting forth the Father down here: and, now that He was here no longer, He thought to have Paul to be the displayer of Himself—to "live Christ." As Christ had shown out the Father so he was to show out Christ, and nothing but Christ, as "one spirit with the Lord." Christ, the man in glory, is revealing Himself to believers, giving them to know Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for them, and then saying, Now I look for you to let the light shine ----

There are some v seem as if they had a watchword into the presence of Christ; those who do not know the watchword, of course cannot use it. Have you Christ dwelling in your heart by faith (not by the Spirit), that you may be filled? If He dwell in your heart by faith, have you not got a fulness that passes knowledge? He up there, in a blaze of glory, calling on you to know His love—love that passes all understanding.

That was the Christ Paul spoke of with such ecstasy. It was his one object in life or death to glorify Him, and could he miss his object?

His one object to please Christ, his life could be the manifestation of vital union with Him.

Can you say that one thing—I am for Christ? Do not, I pray you, shirk the question; let it go right into your soul. Paul was entirely and completely for Christ here. Ah, he was a blessed man! He had put down all selfishness; he would only live to Christ in the life He had given him. And if you could say, “To me to live is Christ,” would you not be more than conqueror in all things? Let the trials or difficulties be what they may, having Christ in them would they be loss? Nay, no loss but all gain.

It was the thought of God to present us in Paul a man of like passions with ourselves, to show how such a man could walk with Christ, so as to say “To me to live is Christ.” He was a man of the strongest passions and character of any man on earth, but he mastered all that, and brought everything into subjection to Christ; in everything he dropped into the mind of Christ. We see the vivid perception he had of that for which Christ had apprehended him. The Lord in glory was before him, and he could never rest until he reached Him. “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.”

It is immense strength to get before the soul the reality of a certain Person—a living Man in glory up there—as the prize I am to attain. I may have to go through a dark passage here, but never mind; there is that One in glory, and I am pressing on to win Him—to reach Him. It was not a doctrine with Paul; it was the working of his heart's affections about a *Person* he was going to be like, and to be with.

How little are the saints exhibitors of Christ! We are to be moulded into the same image. Do you think of Christ up there, and what His thoughts are whilst looking at you? Not the working of your mind going up to Him, but His working towards you, as a Shepherd on the top rock, looking down on a certain people for of a whom He laid down His life. Do you ever think of seeing Christ with those eyes of yours—of hearing His voice with those ears? Yes! of soon seeing Him at the goal, and of being made like Him? No more for you to do then; only to enter into all the seen and felt reality of fellowship with Him which faith even now enjoys.

Ah, we want exceedingly to have our hearts occupied with that Lord Jesus up there! Nought can give such brightness of face and heart as being able to say, "To me to live is Christ."

(G. V. W.)