

HELPS IN
“Things concerning Himself.”

EDITED BY W. T. TURPIN.

“Christ is all.”—Col. iii. 11.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1892.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
"The First Month of the Year" - - -	I
"Lo, I Come to do Thy Will, O God" - -	3
The Glory of the Son of Man - - -	6
"Comfort One Another" - - -	11
"Take Me by the Hand and Lead Me" - -	13
"That I may win Christ" - - -	14
"Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani" - - -	24
"The Hour is Come that the Son of Man should be Glorified" (Poetry) - - -	27
"Follow Thou Me" - - -	29
"What hath God Wrought?" - - -	40
"One Thing" - - -	45
Groaning "Within Ourselves" - - -	52
Heavenly Springs (Poetry) - - -	56
The Difference between a Millennial Saint and a Christian - - -	57
Under Fire - - -	61
The Lord's Supper - - -	71
Labour and Rest - - -	75
Have You? - - -	78
The Blessedness of the Departed - - -	82
Across the River (Poetry) - - -	84
The Map of Unbelief - - -	85
Heaven and Earth - - -	97
"Seek those Things which are Above" - -	102
The Sin Offering - - -	111
"Till He Come" - - -	112
The Seen and Material <i>versus</i> The Unseen and Spiritual - - -	113
Peace, Grace, and Glory - - -	124
"The Apostasy" - - -	132
God Speaking from Heaven - - -	141
Standing, State, and Practice - - -	147
"The Word of the Lord" - - -	155
Deliverance is a New State - - -	160
New Heavens and a New Earth - - -	163

	PAGE
Home after Labour (Poetry)	168
The Heavenly Comforter and The Heavenly Home	169
The Presence of Christ and Spiritual Intelligence	176
"Old Things are Passed Away"	187
Crucifixion and Mortification	190
Oh, for a Perfect Trust ! (Poetry)	196
"God was in Christ"	197
The Rejected Man	203
God's Workmanship	207
"Not Here" "Taken up"	211
No Side Windows	215
The Lord's Purpose. The Servant's Object. The Saint's Hope	216
"No Wise Cast Out"	223
Quiet Rest (Poetry)	224
Searched and Known	225
The Position and Ways of the Separated Ones	234
The Light and the Blood	239
The Great Supper and Discipleship	242
"The Rejected Lord is the Saviour"	246
Abraham's Double Victory	250
"Master and Lord" (Poetry)	252
The Present not the Future Heaven	253
The Heavens Opened	258
The Mountain, The Plain, and The City	269
Incarnation and Death	278
Mark vi. 31 (Poetry)	279
The Mountain, The Plain, and The City (<i>Continued</i>)	281
The Vessel of the Heavenly Treasure	291
The Path for this Day	297
"Wherefore God also hath highly Exalted Him"	300
"As in the Days of her Youth"	309
"To Reveal His Son in Me"	313
The Lord's People in an Evil Day	320
Asleep among the Dead	327
"At the End of the Days"	330
The Secret of His Presence (Poetry)	332



Helps in "Things concerning himself."

"THE FIRST MONTH OF THE YEAR."

ANOTHER year is past and a new year has begun, verily "We bring our years to an end as a tale that is told." It is well then, standing here just now, to survey for a little in memory the way of the past. There can be but little doubt that at such a season as this, recollections of the past will mingle strangely, and it may be unbidden as well, with anticipations of the future. The past! think of the memories that word recalls! Think of the deep emotions and varied experiences it awakens! With how many is it associated almost through all its months, with scenes of sorrow and suffering, hours of toil and temptation, days of depression, gloom and darkness, times of peril and perplexity.

These must ever have the upper hand with us, if we have not learned by faith to have to do *with Himself outside the scene through which we are passing.*

In the chapter from which the heading of our paper is taken, we find that from the creation time had rolled on *unchanged* as to the mode in which it was reckoned.

2 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

It is striking that not even the flood of waters, the universal grave of the generation of that day, save those in the ark, effected any change ; but now we are introduced to a most important and striking change, and we are justified in saying that all was new that *characterised* this change : they have often been dwelt upon, hence it must suffice just now to enumerate them.

1. The *sacrifice* was new—a *Lamb*.
2. The *time* of its being offered was new—in *the evening*.
3. The *place* was new—Egypt.
4. The *feast inside* was new—a roasted lamb, “his head with his legs and the purtenance thereof.”
5. The *time for eating* it, and the *attitude* and *apparel* of those who eat it was new ; namely, the time *midnight* ; the attitude, *standing* ; the *apparel*, loins girded ; shoes on the feet ; and staff in hand.
6. The *bread* was also new—for it was *unleavened*.

Thus we find the items as we may say of Israel’s *new* history. How blessed, my reader, if the commencement of another year should find you, if never before, in a *new order of things*, as to your soul’s realisation in faith ; oh, to know Christ Himself *in the new and heavenly place* where He is, to *abide* there with Him, finding all your heart’s deepest longings there *fully met*

“LO, I COME TO DO THY WILL” 3

and *satisfied*, so that in heavenly peace and repose and calmness, you can go through this world of unrest and disturbance, as has been so blessedly said, like a rich man amongst the destitute, having everything to contribute, but looking for nothing and wanting nothing here. That in this sense, this year may be the opening up and out of “blessings of heaven above” to all my readers, is the earnest desire of my heart.

W. T. T.



“LO, I COME TO DO THY WILL,
O GOD.”

(HEBREWS X. 9.)

ENTERING more into detail He specifies burnt-offering and offerings for sin, sacrifices which had less of the character of communion, and had thus a deeper meaning; but God had no pleasure in them. In a word, the Jewish service was already declared by the Spirit to be unacceptable to God. It was all to cease, it was fruitless; no offering that formed part of it was acceptable. No, the counsels of God unfold themselves; *but first of all in the heart of the Word, the Son of God, who offers Himself to accomplish the will of God.* “Then, said he, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.” Nothing can be more solemn than thus to lift the veil from that which

4 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

takes place in heaven between God and the Word who undertook to do His will. Observe that, *before He was in the position of obedience, He offers Himself in order to accomplish the will of God*: that is to say, of free love for the glory of God, of free will, as One who had the power, He offers Himself. *He undertakes obedience. He undertakes to do whatever God wills.* This is, indeed, to sacrifice all His own will ; but freely and as the effect of His own purpose, although on the occasion of the will of His Father. He must needs be God in order to do this and to undertake the fulfilment of all that God could will.

We have here the great mystery of this divine intercourse, which remains ever surrounded with its solemn majesty, although it is communicated to us that we may know it. And we ought to know it ; for it is thus that we understand the infinite grace and the glory of this work. Before He became Man in the place where only divinity is known, and its eternal counsels and thoughts are communicated between the divine Persons, the Word—as He has declared it to us, in time, by the prophetic spirit—such being the will of God contained in the book of the eternal counsels, He who was able to do it, offered Himself freely to accomplish that will. Submissive to this counsel already arranged for Him, He yet offers Himself in

"LO, I COME TO DO THY WILL, O GOD." 5

perfect freedom to fulfil it. *But in offering, He submits, yet at the same time undertakes to do all that God, as God, willed. But also in undertaking to do the will of God, it was in the way of obedience, of submission, and of devotedness.* For I might undertake to do the will of another, as free and competent, because I willed *the thing*; but if I say, "*to do thy will*," this in itself is absolute and complete submission. *And this it is which the Lord, the Word, did. He did it also, declaring that He came in order to do it.* He took a position of obedience by accepting the body prepared for Him. He *came* to do the will of God.

This of which we have been speaking is continually manifested in the life of Jesus on earth. God shines through His position in the human body; for He was necessarily God in the act itself of His humiliation; and none but God could have undertaken and been found in it; yet He was always and entirely and perfectly obedient and dependent on God. *That which revealed itself in His existence on earth was the expression of that which was accomplished in the eternal abode, in His own nature.* That is to say (and of this Psalm xl. speaks), *that which he declares, and that which He was here below, are the same thing; the one in reality in heaven, the other bodily on earth.* That which He was here below was but the ex-

6 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

pression, the living seal, bodily manifestation of what is contained in those divine communications which have been revealed to us, and which were the reality of the position that He assumed.

And it is very important to see these things in the free offer made by divine competency, and not only in their fulfilment in death. It gives quite a different character to the bodily work here below.

J. N. D.

Synopsis, vol. V. pp. 306-308.



THE GLORY OF THE SON OF MAN

(JOHN XII.)

IT is impossible for man to prevent God from working, and we have an example of this in John xii. After the display of our blessed Lord's divine power in chapter xi., the opposition of the Pharisees became more fierce and terrible than it had been before. The chief priests consulted to put Lazarus to death (chap. xii. 10); and after Jesus' glorious entry into Jerusalem, the Pharisees said amongst themselves: "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the world is gone after him!"

This brings us at once to our most blessed subject; that is the glory of our Lord as Son of man, according to God's counsels. The Pharisees wished to stop the work of Him who had called Lazarus forth from the grave, by calling into

THE GLORY OF THE SON OF MAN. 7

play their influence with the people, but the grace of God still displayed itself. Alas, that divine power in resurrection, exerted by the Son of God Himself, should have awakened such opposition! But they could no more stop the flow of God's love, than King Canute could stop the rising tide. Not long ago I saw a feeble attempt to bar the passage of a strong mountain stream by some who were ignorant of the force of running water; but this is but a feeble illustration of the passage before us.

At the very moment when the Pharisees found that they could not check the work, the Greeks come up to Philip, desiring to see Jesus. I suppose that the reader knows that these Greeks were *bona-fide* Gentiles; Greeks, not Hellenists or Greek proselytes; and when our blessed Lord sees the Gentiles approach, He mentions that hour when the Son of man should be glorified. He anticipates that day when the universe shall be put under His feet, and He shall reign in splendour as Son of man, as described in Psalm viii. and Daniel vii. In order to accomplish God's counsels, the eternal Son (whose divine power shines out in chapter xi.) became incarnate, and thus we see Him in this gospel, very God, and perfect Man, centre of all glory.

But the path that led to this glory is one of infinite sorrow and suffering, and here the

8 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

blessed Saviour speaks of the stupendous fact of His death: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." How solemn the thought that the death of Jesus was necessary to bring us into life and blessing! We all, without exception, were lying in death, and Jesus would have remained alone, had He not, in divine love for us, entered into the grave, and conquered all the power of the enemy. He is dead and risen, and we are risen and quickened with Him. The grain of wheat bears much fruit and we sing of Jesus' love and glory, and we shall sing eternally of these things. Happy indeed are they who have their part with Him who died and rose again to fulfil God's wondrous counsels; "He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one." Happy too, are those who enter into God's thoughts, in the present time, as to the glory of Jesus! It is not only that we are saved and blessed, but we see in perspective the glory of the Son of man, and of those who shall reign with Him. It is no secret to us; God has made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure (Eph. i. 9-11), that is, to gather together all things under one Head; already by faith we see Jesus glorified, and soon we shall see all things put under His feet.

But I should like to notice the character of

THE GLORY OF THE SON OF MAN. 9

the path that leads to this glory ; a path full of difficulty and suffering—traced by Jesus Himself across this world. “He that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” The true character of this world comes out in John’s Gospel, as the Lord, a little lower down, speaks of the judgment of this world, in connection with His own rejection and the cross. As an illustration, I recollect reading that Gregory of Tours was walking with some one, in view of the palace of the wicked grandsons of Clovis. “See’st thou not something over the top of the palace?” said he. “I see nothing,” said Gregory, “but a new building, forming part of the roof.” The other replied : “But I see, higher still, the sword of God’s wrath, suspended over the guilty house.” And so we see God’s wrath suspended, not merely over the house of the Merovingians, but over the entire world. It is a serious thing to be in such a world, whilst all our treasure, our joys, and our eternal portion are in heaven, in the Father’s house ; the blessed Lord is there, and will soon come to call us to Himself.

The world is become a desert to us ; we have our duties, no doubt, but we perform them as pilgrims, as belonging already by faith to that order of things of which the glorified Son of man is the centre. As to losing one’s life in this world, I recollect well, speaking once to a man

10 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

who, in praising the excellence of his vines, was much disconcerted at the remark that he would soon have to leave them. It is impossible to enjoy present prosperity and to seek it, in the actual state of things, and to be living as dead and risen with Christ, enjoying present communion with the Father and the Son, and waiting for the day of glory. We are called to suffer now, and by the fact of this infinitely higher call to participate in the Lord's glory, we can afford to lose our lives in this wretched world, looking forward to being with Him in the Father's house.

But there is another thing to notice ; the Lord says : " If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be : if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." The introduction of the Father's name has a blessed meaning ; no doubt a faithful soul seeks not his reward in this world, and those who have faithfully served Jesus here, will be crowned with Him in the future, as Paul looked for the crown of righteousness. No doubt the full accomplishment of this verse is future ; " where I am, there shall my servant be ; " but is it not blessedly true that there is a present joy in serving the Lord, and that the Father honours those who follow Jesus ? To be honoured by the Father ! Most wonderful privilege ! We remember what the answer was

"COMFORT ONE ANOTHER."

II

to the question as to what should be done to the man whom the great King of Persia should delight to honour ; it was a great thing in this world, but a very small thing in comparison with the honour put upon an obedient and faithful follower of Jesus, by the Father. May we really know what this means? There is a simple dignity and power in those who follow the rejected Lord, in those whom the Father delights to honour. The blessed Lord took infinite sorrow and suffering on Himself, and in what follows (verse 27) the shadow of the cross lies along His way : He suffered the infinite woe of the cross, and in this He was alone, but He gives us the privilege of following His steps as rejected here, till He come.

Thus we have the glory of the Son of man, in which we shall soon be with our Lord ; and our path in this world leading up to that glory, along which the Father honours those who follow and serve the Lord Jesus.

E. L. B.

 "COMFORT ONE ANOTHER."

"SORROW overmuch is suicide of the heart, and buries a man with his head downwards." Over-anxiety about one trouble is as the grave to bury hundreds of mercies. Rise up, then, oh "dearly beloved," from your despondency, emerge from the dark shadow, do no more dis-

12 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

honour to your joy-loving Lord, and let your heart be as the glad welling fount in the midst of the desert, that the weary traveller may be refreshed even at the sight of you. We are responsible to God to refresh and cheer each other, and to comfort one another with the comfort we have of God ; it is a work and a witness for Him in the midst of a joyless and thankless world.

“ Ask for joy, and have it,
For thy God would see thee happy.”

It has been remarked, that “like the disagreeable saint, the *gloomy* saint is an anomaly in grace.” What a sad spectacle, a child of God, who makes the young feel old, the old feel older, and the sad feel sadder. Some hearts are full of false sentiment and morbid feeling : they appear to shrink from being happy, and prefer being miserable ; others are afraid of being happy, as if God grudged His children happiness ; instead of leaving all things in the keeping of their loving God, they darken the present with the *shadows* of the future, and suffer the many sorrows of unbelief. Others are afraid of being happy, because they look so much to themselves and their failures, and so little to Christ ; they forget that the more they “joy in God,” the more cause for joy He will give them ; that the more they praise Him, the more they glorify Him.

"TAKE ME BY THE HAND."

13

While we retain God in our hearts, there is room for nought else but His peace. A heart full of Christ is a heart full of joy, not my own, but His. Let His joy rule in your hearts, and be—

"A sunshine in the shady place."

T. M. B.

"TAKE ME BY THE HAND AND
LEAD ME."

ARE you persuaded you see more clearly than I? It is not unlikely that you may. Then treat me as you would desire to be treated yourself upon a change of circumstances. Point me out a better way than I have yet known. Shew me it is so by plain proof of scripture. And if I linger in the path I have been accustomed to tread, and therefore I am unwilling to leave it, labour with me a little; take me by the hand and lead me as I am able to bear. But be not discouraged if I entreat you not to beat me down in order to quicken my pace: I can go but feebly and slowly at best: *then* I should not be able to go at all. May I not request you, further, not to give me hard names, in order to bring me into the right way. Suppose I was ever so much in the wrong, I doubt this would not set me right. Rather it would make me run so much the further from you, and so get more and more out of the way.

14 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Nay! perhaps if you are angry; so shall I be too; and then there will be small hopes of finding the truth. If once anger arises, its smoke will so dim the eyes of my soul that I shall be able to see nothing clearly. For God's sake, if it be possible to avoid it, let us not provoke one another to wrath. Let us not kindle in each other this fire of hell; much less blow it up into a flame. If we could discern truth by that dreadful light, would it not be loss rather than gain? For how far is love, even with many wrong opinions, to be preferred before truth itself without love! We may die without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom. But if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails the devil and his angels! J. W.



"THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST."

(PHIL. III.)

THIS epistle is not one of doctrine. We get, of course, in this chapter, the foundation laid (v. 9), but, as often remarked, it is an epistle that gives us the proper experience of the Christian, that is, the power of the Spirit of God working in him in his path; and, consequently, we get the spirit and character in which a Christian should walk down here. In chapter ii. we see the graciousness of the spirit in which Christ walked. He always went down and *humbled* Himself, even down to the

"THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST."

15

cross, and then God exalted Him as man to His right hand: even as Antichrist *exalts* himself, and is abased. Christ is the bright and perfect example of "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." In chapter iii. you get the energy of the Spirit.

Now, we cannot have too distinctly and clearly before our souls the great basis of the completeness of redemption. In the first place, the putting away of sins, and sin too—the putting away of all that the first Adam produces, and then *our introduction into a totally new place*—an entirely new standing—we have peace with God. Jesus "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." That is not all. Our place is *in Christ*, and there is no possibility of condemnation for a person in Christ. We see the efficacy of the work of Christ, we get the certainty of sins put away, are sealed by the Holy Ghost; consequently we are only waiting for Christ to come to take us to glory. That is our place, and all our duties flow from the place we are in, even as in natural things. We are brought into Christ-made children of God, sons of God; then our duties flow from that place. "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as dear children." Again, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Therefore, the first great thing is to know our

16 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

place: not only that we are forgiven (though that is the first thing we need), not only that we were guilty, but the believer finds out a great deal more than that, he finds out that he is *lost*. *Guilty* brings in the thought of judgment; but if we are *lost* we do not think of judgment, because we are ruined already. I speak not only of what I have done, but where I am—outside Paradise, and totally ruined already. We are lost in our own condition. “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” So that I do not say merely that I am justified, but that I am saved, and in Christ. I do not believe we get into full liberty till we understand we are totally *lost* and *saved*—not only what we have done, but what we are.

It is important that the Christian should distinctly get hold of that, for it is what redemption means. As with Israel in Egypt—the blood upon the door-posts saved them from the judgment of God; but besides that, God took them out of Egypt, and put them into Canaan. “We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.” It is a new condition and place altogether, and this is *deliverance*—not only forgiveness and justification, but deliverance; and, therefore, in Romans vii. it is not “How shall I get forgiveness?” but “Who shall deliver me?” The answer is, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” He finds his sins blotted out; defiled, he is washed; having

"THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST." 17

offended, he is forgiven ; guilty, he is justified ; God has made that perfectly clear for ever. But the old man is *dead* before God, and the new man is in Christ. Christ is my righteousness. I *was* lost, without hope in myself, but now I am in Christ before God. That is deliverance. In Romans v. you are justified ; but in Romans viii. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." To find out, practically, that I am *lost*, is a very different thing from finding that I am *guilty* ; because, if lost, I have finished my whole history, and I must get my whole condition made new (thank God it is, in Christ). If I am guilty, I may hope to get forgiveness ; but if I am lost, I must get a new condition altogether—a totally new creation in Christ Jesus. When I have this redemption, the effect is to leave me, as a matter of fact, down here, *being* thus delivered, and then I begin to run the race ; for you and I have in this world to go through the wilderness (to find ourselves in heavenly places too). God has minded that we should be thus exercised to discern good and evil, and what we get in this chapter is power in that course. We have to "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking off unto Jesus." It is the expression, in Philippians iii., of the experience of one who was running the race faithfully.

Sin is never mentioned in the epistle ; what

18 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

you find in Paul was, that the power of the Holy Ghost was there. It was not that the flesh was not there, for he had a thorn in the flesh, but there was power to keep it down. You get complete deliverance here, entire freedom, for he was running his race free ; and another thing you see is power, Christ's power. He was perfectly free, or he could not have run on in that power, and also (which is practically a great thing), he had an object, which gave him singleness of eye and purpose. You get the man set perfectly free : "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The principle of sin, in which I was lost, is dead and gone for faith, because Christ has died, and, therefore, I can say *I* died : "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The life that I have *in Christ*, and as to the flesh, I say, "I died upon the cross." That is the place the apostle was then in, and there was power, because "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" There is Christ's power. His grace is sufficient for us ; therefore we can never excuse ourselves if we commit sin, because Christ's grace is sufficient for us—His strength is made perfect in weakness. It is not that the flesh is not there ; but a dead person does not act. We fail ; but the christian condition is, "Ye are dead." If there is

"THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST."

19

carelessness and want of prayer, failure does come; but there is no excuse for it. If Christ is in me, there is life and power, and the flesh is a dead thing. It is not only that Christ has died for your sins, but you have died with Christ; that is where real freedom comes in, and power comes in too, because Christ is there.

You will always find, that where Christ's power is in us, Christ is the object of our life, as in Galatians ii., "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;" and then he adds, "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." There is the object: wherever Christ is the power of life in us, Christ is the object of that life. Christ having become a man, and gone into glory, God has given the object of *His* delight to be the object of *our* delight also, and given us His Spirit to enable us to make it so. It is a wonderful thing to see that God has so set Christ before us, and given us His Spirit, and a new nature, to be able to enjoy Him, linking us thus with Himself.

The next thing is, "I want to win Christ." That is what he means by "That I may apprehend (or lay hold of) that for which also I am apprehended (laid hold of) by Christ." Christ had laid hold of him, that was all settled; he had learnt Christ, and now he says, "I want to

20 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

possess Him." He is not looking at the salvation wrought out by Christ, but at the *end*; and therefore he says, at the close of the chapter, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." It is the salvation we are *expecting* that he speaks of now.

We have the man freed, and with power; and we have the man with Christ as his object and nothing else: and there is where we all are, and it is just a question of our faith as to how far it is true of us practically. It all depends on how far Christ is our object. You have the graciousness of deportment in chapter ii. Here we get the active energy of the Spirit of God; and mark, it is where there is one single object that there is practical energy and power. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." In some things, he acts like a Christian; in others, he does not. If he has two or three objects, he is unstable, but if he has *one* object, he walks with energy.

Now what characterised the apostle was that he had given up all things; not "*did* count them but dung," but "*do*" now! Can *we* say that? At the moment of our conversion we all felt that all we had in the world had been deceiving us, and leading us to hell and its horrors. The

"THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST."

21

pleasure, wealth, riches, ease, everything that was gain to us as men in this world, can we say of them, "I *do* count them but dung that I may win Christ?" Paul was not satisfied with *having* counted, but he says, "I *do* count," and further than this, "All this will only hinder me." Like a man running a race, he has on a beautiful cloak, we will suppose; he finds it hinders him, and he throws it off.

It is the object we have that always characterises us—blessed be God, we have it in Christ unto everlasting life. It was not any uncertainty with the apostle, it was not that he doubted that Christ had laid hold of him, but he wanted to get Christ. There was this honest purpose of heart—the man was free, he had Christ's strength; and then there was this purpose of heart—spiritual energy and activity. There are two things which go together. The first, "That I may win Christ," and then our resurrection from the dead, that is, our own glory, which comes in as the second thing. First, "That I may win Christ," it was Christ Himself who possessed his heart; still he says, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Well, I can have but one thing as my object. If I am making tents, as Paul did, I shall do it well; it is our duty as Christians to be patient and gracious in meeting with hard men—wrong doers. You will find that everything is judged

22 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

of entirely by the object a man has. If he wants to get a thing, he will spend his money without stint to get it—he estimates everything by his object. An avaricious man will say of a spendthrift, “Did you ever see such a fool!” And the spendthrift will say of the one fond of money, “He might as well have a stone, for his money is no good to him.” The moment I get Christ as my object everything else will be as dross and dung, and there will be no want of lowliness, because the nearer we get to Christ the less we think of ourselves. I want to know *Him*, and the Spirit of God is not grieved. The path of the just grows brighter and brighter until the perfect day. His heart is more *capable* of knowing Christ, and he knows Him better—he is not thinking of self. It is the privilege held out to us that we shall be so perfect that we shall only think of the Lord, and in any measure as we are near Him now, we think of Him and not of ourselves. The Christian looks at himself not only as forgiven, as justified, but as perfect, and going to be like Christ and with Christ. He has a new place; he is in Christ; he has it by the Spirit in faith now, and he wants actually to possess it.

Now now far can our souls say we are actually delivered, not only forgiven, but delivered? I do not mean that if you are careless you will not slip into sin, but there is a positive deliverance; we are not in the flesh at all. The world is

"THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST."

23

there, Satan is there, and I have to watch every moment to have Christ sufficiently before my mind. You will find that nine-tenths of the things that are temptations to us would be no temptations at all if we walked with Christ. See a mother who has heard that her child has met with an accident on the railway, and lies at the station suffering; how she hastens to the spot, and does not even think of the show and vanity in the shop windows she may have to pass. Another time she might linger there, but not now. If our souls are filled with Christ, as I said, nine-tenths of the things that are temptations to us we shall not think of *at all*. It is living as Christ—"By the words of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." The great mass of the temptations we should escape altogether, because we should be thinking of something entirely different. God has called me up to be with Christ and like Christ, and now I am after that, and am looking for nothing else. We all have some object that we follow with energy and life, and can we say that it is *Christ*, and that that is the one thing that governs our hearts from day to day?

The Lord give us, beloved, to know what that true liberty is; "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty"—liberty with God and from the things around: though we still have to contend, and shall have, too, yet it is with the joy of

24 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Christ in our hearts as we go on. God has called us in sovereign grace to be with Himself, like and with Christ for ever, and where the soul is full of the Holy Ghost, there is joy and sustained freshness.

J. N. D.

(Notes of an Address.)



“ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?”

(MARK XV. 34.)

FOR myself—I speak as a man—I never found peace before God, or conscious rest with Him, until I was taught the force and meaning of that cry of Jesus of Nazareth—“Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani?” Never until I understood that He, who knew no sin, had (then and there, on the cross) been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, could I rest as a sinner in the presence of a holy God. And, as I suppose, it is owing to the distinctive peculiarity of that—His sorrow under the wrath of God—*not being understood*—that so many Christians have no settled peace at all.

The questions of sin and of guilt have never been met in their consciences. The incarnation is amazing and beautiful. That the eternal Son of God, the only begotten Son of the Father, should have become a babe, and been laid in a manger of an inn: the contrast between the glory He came out of and the place man assigned to Him, is a contrast!—God and heaven could ex-

“ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?” 25

press their delight over Him, then and there, as well as feel it. (Luke ii. 8-14.) But the bearing of our sins in His own body was NOT in the cradle, but on the cross, and on the cross alone.

The flight into Egypt—the return and settling at Nazareth of the Child, the Youth in the temple and in returning from Jerusalem, the hidden retirement of His early manhood—is beautiful, each in its place ; but none present us with Him as in the act of bearing our sins. Again, when we look at Him as (when He voluntarily identified Himself with those that owned their need of repentance, confessing their sins) at His baptism, in His service and ministries, all, and each part of all, is beautiful and perfect ; but, if heaven could approve Him in each step, heaven, too, could give its avowals of approval to Him. Yet He stood not as sin-bearer under the judgment, at any of these periods.

Again, what a contrast, and who ever felt it as He felt it, between Himself as the seed of the woman and the race of man to whom He had come ! What a contrast between Himself personally and individually, and the house of Israel, His own, among whom He had come ! Himself, not only God manifest in the flesh, but that holy thing that was born of the virgin—holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, apart from sin ; and yet voluntarily, amid sinful men and guilty Israel, the immaculate seed of the

26 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

woman, the King of Israel in His holiness. This brought with it sorrows. So, when He had entered upon service, did not the constant persecution for righteousness, which He endured, and the consciousness that there was none who could sympathise with Him, and that fallen men welcomed not the mercy of which He was the messenger—sorrows He had to endure at the hand of the world and man ; but even that was not forsaking of God. But in none of these parts, nor in the being straitened when His soul turned to His coming baptism ; nor when, in the garden, His soul passed into the scenes which then lay immediately before Him, was there (any more than anywhere else) that which there was when He cried out—“Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani?” Here, too, He was perfect ; forsaken of God, He would not, did not, forsake God. Never did God or heaven see perfection shine out of Him as then and there, when His obedience was at the goal—“Obedient unto death, the death of the cross.” But, if heaven found—in His submission under forsaking, for the sake of others—its delight, for it was the revelation of God as the Saviour-God, there was, there *could be* (just because it was *forsaking for sin*, our sin, which He had to endure) no expression of approval, NOTHING BUT FORSAKING. “Why hast thou forsaken me?”

I do not see how a sinner can find rest until

"THE HOUR IS COME."

27

he has learnt somewhat of that which is distinctly peculiar to Calvary—learnt that, then and there, there was a cup drunk by the Lord, in obedient submission to God—cup of wrath due to us only, undergone by Christ at Calvary. The only spot I turn to, when in conscience the question is about sin or guilt, or sins (of the human family, of myself as an individual, &c., &c.) is Calvary, and to the Lord there crying out—"Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani?"

He bore my judgment in my stead, then and there, in His own body on the tree, in the presence of God, and received the woe of wrath and forsaking at the hand of God. And there is my quittance, clear, and full, and complete, but there alone. The experience of His soul when He said, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" was altogether peculiar and distinct from that which He had to endure and experience at any other time whatever. In that suffering of His, as forsaken, I get the measure and the judgment of my sin against God.

G. V. W.



"THE HOUR IS COME, THAT THE SON
OF MAN SHOULD BE GLORIFIED."

(JOHN XII. 23.)

HE came to a world which His hands had made,
Dwelling here as a homeless stranger ;
Though angel hosts could herald His birth,
Man gave Him no place but a *manger*.

28 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

In lowliest grace He walked among men,
 The "Light" all the darkness exposing ;
 "The Way" and "the Truth" and "the Life" was He,
 Who the heart of God was disclosing.

Yet man no comeliness in Him could see,
 While only the "*Carpenter*" knowing ;
 But ever before the eye of His God
 As a "tender plant" He was growing.

For love He had hatred, yet He ever went on,
 God's glory for ever before Him ;
 Strong crying and tears were wrung from His heart,
 As the cross with its sorrows hung o'er Him.

From every step of His pathway below
 Sweet savour was ever ascending ;
 Obedient even to death He became,
 To "the death of the cross" descending.

Man gave Him a gibbet and on it He died,
 Thus ending in weakness life's story ;
 But God by His power has raised Him again,
 And seated Him high in His glory.

O wondrous the grace that has oped our eyes
 And taught us as "Lord" now to own Him,
 To suffer with Him, His rejection to share,
 While we in our *hearts* would enthrone Him.

For well do we know that God has decreed
 He shall sit on the throne of His glory,
 Exalted, confessed, extolled, and adored,
 Whose praise will be earth's sweetest story.

Creation shall own Him, the Lamb who was slain,
 As "Lord" shall all tongues then confess Him,
 The man of God's counsels shall then be displayed
 The centre and circle of blessing

L. W.

“FOLLOW THOU ME.”

THE first thing needful, in order to walk with God, is to have the conscience perfectly at rest ; the blood of Christ alone can secure this to us. If the conscience is not at rest, and without the sense of being so perfectly purged that it is fit for the presence of God, there is no true liberty ; and all things are regarded in the light of its felt need, and, as yet, unsatisfied demands. A conscience enlightened by the word of life will not rest, and cannot rest, short of full and uncondemning quietness in the presence of God, where He dwells. How blessedly perfect, then, must that work be, which, on the one hand, has so perfectly glorified God, down to the very lowest depths of humiliation and judgment, where the eternal Son of the Father, who humbled Himself to become a man, went and lay for us, and has, on the other hand, so divinely and completely settled the question of sin, in its guilt and power, as regards our consciences, that the believer in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, is both relieved and delivered in regard to his conscience, and blessed up to the full height of that glory where Christ is, in whose once marred, but most blessed face, the whole glory of God now shines.

30 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

My reader, have you such a conscience before God?—until you have, it is vain to speak of other things.

Allow me to shew you, as far as I am able, and with God's help, how this blessed redemption-work of the Lord Jesus thus acts upon the conscience. As born of the first Adam, every man by nature is lost and guilty; the first, or "lost," is common to all men alike as born into this world. The other, "guilty," relates to conducts or acts; and hence, each man has his own guilt, or sins, to account for to God. Now, this twofold pressure on the conscience, is blessedly met by the death of Christ. Scripture declares that "the worshippers *once purged* should have had no more conscience of sins." (Heb. x. 2.) Observe carefully the expression, "conscience of sins:" what does it mean? Why, simply, that there is nothing between me and God; that God has no controversy with me in respect of sins; they are, for me, completely put away, and my conscience is perfectly purged. Now, mark, *consciousness of sin*, which means that I know I have an evil nature in me, is a different thing altogether from "no more conscience of *sins*." Knowing that I have an evil nature in me, need not, and ought not to give me a bad conscience. Yielding to that evil nature, indulging it, or giving way to it, will surely soil my conscience, and make it bad

practically, so that I cannot stand against the accusations of the devil.

But I can well suppose some one of my readers, to whom all this is quite new (and it is for such I write), earnestly asking this question, "How can I ever get that liberty from this evil nature, which I am conscious is in me, and under the dominion of which, I fear, I really am at this moment?" Well, there are few questions more important; and if the answer is not known in the soul, its history is the monotonous circle of self, self, self: the blessed fact is, that, not only are the sins of the believer all put away that his conscience may be perfectly purged, so that there should be nothing between him and God; but his old man has been crucified with Christ on the cross; and God does not regard the believer now as in that status at all, but in Christ risen from the dead, in whose death that old man was judged and condemned. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. vi. 6.) "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. viii. 3.)

Now I quite admit there is a difference in the way in which these truths reach the con-

32 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

science, and I will endeavour to point it out here.

With respect to the first, namely, the question of my sins, believing on the Son of God, I have the testimony of God, in the word, to my conscience, that all my sins are forgiven, never to be remembered any more. This is not, in any sense, *feeling* or *experience*. No doubt such will flow from it, and the more so in proportion as faith is simple; but in no sense do I believe because I experience or feel it; but on the contrary, I feel it as I believe it. The pillars of my faith are the atoning death of the Son of God on the one side; and the blessed witness of the Holy Ghost on the other. "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 15, 17.)

There are three great objects on which the eye of faith rests.

1st. The cross, and the garden with its new sepulchre, hewn out of the rock, wherein the blessed One was laid, and out of which He was raised and glorified.

2nd. The Father's throne in the heavens, on which He who bore my sins, is now seated—soon to be on His own throne. And

3rd. The blessed witness of the Holy Ghost, the record, the testimony of the living God, which endureth for ever.

"FOLLOW THOU ME."

33

With regard to the other truth, namely, how we are delivered from the dominion of sin ; experience has every place, that is, it has to be learned by experience ; and this process leads to discovering these three things :—

1st. That in us, that is in our flesh there dwells no good thing.

2nd. That there is in us a *new nature* as well as (yet quite distinct from) the old.

3rd. That, notwithstanding this, the old is too strong for us, and deliverance from it is looked for outside of self altogether, and from another : this issues in, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord ;" it is the song of the prisoner bird, now liberated—it is its first note as it flies ; it is not its highest, nor its every note ; it is the starting-post of the soul, not its goal or prize. Perhaps many souls have recently found this new liberty and life—if so, the Lord be praised ; but do not, dear reader, allow yourself to suppose for a moment, that it is anything more than the normal state of a Christian. It is not, I suppose, to be wondered at, that those who considered it a necessary thing to be tied and bound with the chain of their sins, for so many years, should regard their newly found liberty (if they have found it) as something wonderfully beyond what any one else had ever known—and the highest and greatest good.

There is one further point, and when I have

34 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

touched on it, I feel I shall have cleared the way for my subject.

Have you ever looked at two scriptures, to which I shall now allude? namely, Romans vi. 9-11: "Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died ^{*}unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be indeed dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now what does that mean? Why simply this, that faith accepts this wondrous fact, that the believer has been crucified with Christ, and he accordingly recognises himself to be dead. The Lord give us thus simply by faith to keep our reckonings with God.

The other scripture is, 2 Corinthians iv. 10: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

What does this mean? Why, this simply, that Paul constantly applied the cross, the dying of Jesus, to himself, so as to keep in the silence of death, sin, that was in him. Oh, how one's soul ought to adore in the presence of such wondrous liberty and power, secured through the precious death of Him who was God over all blessed for evermore. This, then, is the realisation of faith, as the other is the recognition

"FOLLOW THOU ME."

35

of faith. The Lord give us to be established in these realities, that we may be free to listen.

That we may listen to His voice we must be in possession of both liberty and rest. If you have not repose, you cannot give Him an audience. I do not mean to deny for a moment that there is a *previous* exercise connected with the silencing of nature, the fading of other sounds which were wont to fill the ear of the soul ; but this is the dying of what intrudes, in order that the disengaged ear may be turned without distraction to Him instead of a morbid heart that wastes a weary, restless life away by feeding on itself.

There is a repose in one who listens well, that is very blessed to witness—there was something of it at least in Mary, when she sat at Jesu's feet, and heard His word. Her very attitude was restful ; she sat, and heard.

I do not deny the *activity* of life, either in its earnestness to obtain, or its readiness to surrender ; but I contend it ought to be *restful* activity—an activity which is kept alive and sustained by an object outside itself.

" As ground, when parched with summer heat,
Gladly drinks in the welcome shower ;
So would we, listening at His feet,
Receive His words, and feel His power."

36 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

I shall here note one or two results of listening in this spirit.

First, there is *abstractedness* of soul, other sounds which otherwise might influence, now fail to interest. The ear is turned to catch every note of the voice of the Charmer ; and, oh, what a voice that is ! His enemies, even declared, that never man spake like Him.

The bride (when the day of union had not as yet dawned and whose affection is restless) is spell-bound as she listens in the twilight, and announces with rapture "the voice of my beloved," "my beloved spake"—her whole soul turns to hear what the bridegroom of her heart has to say.

Next to abstraction is *absorption*, entire occupation of soul ; the ear, not only bent to hear, but filled with the sound of His voice ; and that, too, not as one who is apart from me, but One to whom I am united.

The eye of the soul is exercised as well as the ear : the voice of the object delights and engages the ear ; the Person Himself delights the eye, as it were of the soul. It is a wonderful thing to know that the heavens are opened to the faith of a believer now, and Jesus in glory, pointed out by the indwelling Holy Ghost, to the one who looks up with steadfast gaze. Oh, it is everything to have the eye on the object. What distinguishes Christianity from what went before

"FOLLOW THOU ME."

37

it, is an object *outside* of us, and power *in* us : Jesus in the glory of God, and the Holy Ghost, who dwells in us.

If the eye of the soul is turned in, the object is not seen. Failure will necessitate this, but self-judgment will clear the way out of it ; so that the object may again fill the eye : self-judgment, will hinder self-occupation, and promote earnestness and purpose of heart. Self-judgment is not an act, once for all performed, but a continuous habit of soul. Oh, what a blessed sight for faith, that transcendent Person, that glorified Man, that mighty Saviour ! Well may we pray,

"O fix our earnest gaze
So wholly, Lord, on Thee."

Let me again impress upon you the fact, that we do not behold the Saviour in glory, as apart from Him, but as those who are united to Him, one with Him. How very blessed to know, I am one with my object. I shall only touch upon one or two consequences of beholding.

First, as we behold we are transformed into the same image (2 Cor. iii. 18) ; that is, as we are occupied with Christ, where He is, we become like Him ; the moral features of Him who is our object, are transferred to those who, by the Spirit, behold Him in glory. Stephen is a beautiful instance of this ; he acted like Christ

38 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

in the midst of the most trying circumstances.
(See Acts. vii.)

Next, we find that the object in glory forms the affections suited to itself. Herein lies the difference between christian affection and heart-longing, and that which is found in the Canticles, in the latter, the bride does not possess the profound repose and sweetness of affection that flows from a relationship already formed, known, and fully appreciated. Previous to the day of union, the relationship sought for, was the consequence of the state of the heart, but now that the day has dawned, the state of the heart, and the affections are the consequence of the relationship. The same is observable in the Psalms ; yearning, panting after God, are all to be found there ; and the earnestness might well put us to shame : but the relationship, as well as the object of faith, and the power to enjoy the one, and behold the other, are wanting. In the Song of Songs, the bride is not united to the bridegroom ; and in the Psalms, the Remnant, whose experience is so blessedly depicted in various scenes and circumstances, is as yet outside of all that which will, ere long, crown their hopes, aspirations, and yearnings.

The feet pursue the path marked out by His blessed footsteps, who has gone before. For this divine energy is needed. The blessed apostle, who knew Christ in glory, heard His voice speak

"FOLLOW THOU ME."

39

to Him from glory, and had seen Him in glory, follows Him. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The mark denoted the spot, as it were, whither he pressed ; the prize was that for which he ran. He did not think of his eye, or his feet. That on which his eye rested, and for which his feet pressed on, was everything to him : purpose of heart, earnestness, energy, there must be, as well as self-abnegation, every step of the course ; diligence of soul and vigilance of heart, too ; but if Christ seen in glory, and known in glory, does not form and maintain these in the heart, I know of no other motive or power. The Lord keep us hearing, and beholding and following His own Son ; that the tastes, suited to Christ, may be both formed and kept alive in us ; and we ourselves thus divinely strengthened to refuse everything of the first man, because we are so satisfied with the Second Man ; and that we may shew forth His virtues, and glories, and excellences, in a crooked and perverse generation among whom we shine as lights (heavenly bodies) in the world, holding forth the word of life.

W. T. T.



“WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT?”

NUMBERS XXXIII. 23.

THE thought here is that our state should answer to the state into which we have been brought. Where the conscience is good this is the case: we enjoy the thing into which we have been brought in the measure in which we enter into it. The soul must be broken down; the pride of man, that would meet God face to face, must be broken down—that pride which is the worst of all. (I am not speaking of brutish sins.) In his natural course man has no idea that sin separates him from God.

But when we come to righteousness, it is another thing. We all know we have sinned, and that heaven is a holy place, and yet we expect to get there. Call it mercy, or what you will, but man would rather be something else than what he is if going to be judged now. The conscience must be awakened by a present revelation of God. The light comes in, and makes everything manifest, and puts us just as we are in the presence of God. There is no pride in the conscience when we are before God; pride of heart is just being without God altogether. Whom am I to be afraid of if God is not in all my thoughts? When I have to do with God there is fear, right fear; that is the beginning of wisdom. There is never any pride in the conscience when we have to do with God.

"WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT." 41

In these verses we find the most absolute justification ; God sees no sin at all.

When you look at it as it is here—an absolute judgment outside of what we have done—what hath God wrought? I do not prescribe any particular course of experience, but the pride of heart must be gone to enjoy this.

All the failures of the wilderness had gone before this. (Chap. xxiii.) Could the enemy, the accuser of the brethren, take up all that Israel had done, and make it a barrier to their entering the land—hinder our getting into heaven?—for this is heaven for us. He could not. (Deut. ix.)

They were there at the same moment as when this question was raised by the accuser, Can you go in or not? Well, what is Moses' account? Incessant murmuring. "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." What is the normal state of a Christian? The Christian's path is clearly living up to his privileges—Christ our life, walking in the Spirit, accepted in him.

We must either be before God in the lowliness of the sense of the grace of God, or meet a God who breaks us down. What is man's place with God?—Lowliness. And that being so, all the man's delight is being nothing, and receiving everything.

The judgment of the Spirit in a saint is

42 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

another thing from the judgment about him. By the Spirit of God I see such a thing was not meekness, not gentleness on my part. The Spirit of God judges me according to what I am ; that is all right, but when *God* judges me it is according to what Christ is.

The Spirit of God judges everything in us that is contrary to God ; but when the question arises with the accuser, you see what God's judgment actually, absolutely, is about me, and that is according to what Christ is and what He has wrought. "God is not a man that he should lie." All the hostility comes to nothing. Why? Because it met God (ver. 21) "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." Why, Moses had seen nothing else! In one sense God *had* seen it all. Why hath He not seen it? Because He hath put it away Himself. There is no such thing seen when you come to the judgment of God *about* us.

It was not that He allowed the evils. He had humbled the people, and proved them, to know what was in their hearts. They had gone all through the wilderness thus. He had chastened them about their sins. You get all God's gracious dealings with them in Deuteronomy viii. But here it rests upon God Himself, and I find Christ there, the Lamb that was slain, in the presence of God. Suppose I am broken down, and

“WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT.” 43

humbled, and go to God about it, what do I find there? I find the Lamb slain there; a man there. What tale does that tell? That Christ has finished the work and gone back there, and put our sins away. “Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” If I come at the beginning or at the end, I find Christ there. God does not see iniquity in me. Why? Because Christ has put it away. It is—what God has wrought, not what I have wrought. He undertook that work, and there I find that “by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Christ could not allow sin. Well, then, did He put me away? No; He put my sin away!

We cannot judge ourselves *too much* and too earnestly. The converted man loves holiness. The question is now, Is God satisfied with what He has wrought? That, of course, is simple. It over-rides all experience. Experience is the work of the Holy Spirit in us, but that is desert work. “Thou hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed.” Experience is right; but when you come to the end of all experience, it is—what has God wrought?

Chapter xxiv. 6: “As the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted.” Well, He has wrought in our hearts that we should follow Him in righteousness and true holiness. When God has wrought, that is the effect. He has taken

44 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

me in hand, brought me out of Egypt. Who is to condemn? Condemn yourself when you are wrong. But what matter who condemns if God justifies ; that is the true side. Are you satisfied with yourself? Then you do not know God at all. Satan may accuse, so as to bring chastisement for our good, but no judgment.

Verse 24.—Now you get strength. “Behold the people shall rise up as a great lion.”

There I get power. “The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Consequent on this we get power against the evil.

Reader, is your heart or conscience on that ground? When you stand before the judgment seat of Christ, are you there in your heart according to what God has wrought? or are you looking to the ground of your acceptance for what you have done yourself? Are you judging of yourself, by yourself, down in the wilderness, or by God, up in the mount? It is *God* that justifies ; the whole thing is God’s work ; that is a blessed thing.

Our hearts are able to rest and see there is an end, an utter condemnation of all that is of the old Adam state. The whole thing for the heart to rest in is, “What hath God wrought.” The human heart kicks against that, for man likes to be something. The more we look into it, the more we shall see the value of it. Let us judge

"ONE THING." 45

ourselves, and walk according to what God hath wrought in practical holiness. I am going to be like Him. Well, I must be like Him here, bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

The Lord break us down thoroughly ; empty us of ourselves, of all thought that we can do anything ; and keep us in His presence, that we may know that joy now ; that we may stand there in peace !

J. N. D.

(Notes of an Address.)



"ONE THING."

THREE times these two words occur together in the New Testament, and it is interesting to trace the connection in which they stand in each place, and the relation which also they bear to each other. We read—

In Mark x. 21—"One thing thou lackest."

In Luke x. 42—"One thing is needful."

In Philippians iii. 13—"One thing (I do)."

In the two first places the Lord Jesus Himself speaks ; addressing two very different states of soul. The first, one whose portion was of this world : the second, one who had found her treasure and rest in Himself. In the third case we have the utterance of the truest and most de-

46 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

voted servant that Christ has ever had upon this earth.

Different as are the persons concerned, and the circumstances in each case, the key which explains them is one. Christ Himself is this key, and the value which each of the three persons referred to in these passages set upon Him, is that which is discovered and brought to light.

Let us look for a moment at the first. One comes running and kneeling before the Lord Jesus, and thus shews earnestness and reverence. But the first word that he utters reveals his spiritual state. "Good Master," he begins, bringing out the gentle rebuke from the Lord's lips, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God." This man could own Jesus as Master or Teacher, and qualify Him as "Good." But he went no further, and He who is God over all blessed for ever, cannot accept a lower title from the heart and lip of man than that which is His due. Either He is God, or He is not "Good Master," for there is none in the absolute sense "good but one, that is God." The man continues, "What shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?" Two things are betrayed in these words, first his ignorance of his own ability, or, we may say, disability; "what shall I *do*," as though eternal life were the reward of works, and not the "gift

"ONE THING."

47

of God :” and secondly, the confession that he had not this eternal life which he desired and sought. “Life,” whether natural or eternal, is a gift. It is not within man’s reach to create or procure it. It is the “gift of God.” The Lord now refers him to the law, as that which he knew to be the requirement of God for man upon the earth, and the man’s answer is both ready and confident, “Master, all these have I observed from my youth.” Strange, that in the very presence of the lawgiver, the human heart can be so deceived, and can be so ignorant of its own deceit, and so little able to measure its workings within, or its fruit in the outward life and ways. For the law as given by God is spiritual, whilst we are carnal. “By the law,” says the scripture, “is the knowledge of sin.” But yet the man, with all his self-confidence, was not at rest : and it is of the very mercy of God that He will never allow self-righteousness to content the heart. We are bold in declaring that not one soul on the face of this earth is, has been, or ever will be really at rest in the presence of God, on this ground alone.

But yet there was uprightness and sincerity in this man. He meant what he said, though he had not sat down, and counted the cost of what he asked for ; and the Lord Jesus, who gives credit for every bit of truth and honesty, while

48 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

He as surely detects and condemns its opposite, "beholding him, loved him." But now comes the test. The Lord loves the man : and who can know the depths of that love, which He who came from God to seek and save the lost, cherishes towards these objects of His grace. But the heart and conscience of man must be searched. Man must learn what he himself is, if he is to know for his blessing what God is in Christ. The two lessons are inseparable, and must go together. The Lord said unto him, "One thing thou lackest : go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, *and come, take up thy cross and follow me.*" The real question for the man was this, Can I satisfy you? Can you resign your share of this world's good and glory, and cast in your lot with Me? Can you take up the cross, bear my reproach, be despised, and looked down upon as a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, and find in Me, and in My love, that peace, and rest, and contentedness of heart, which all that this world has bestowed, or can bestow upon you, can never give? "And," we read, "he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions." We hear no more of him, and the end of that man, with all his good desires, is amongst "the secret things which belong unto the Lord." What we do

"ONE THING."

49

know is that the world kept him from Christ. He could do anything but that "one thing," summed up as we believe in the two words, "Follow Me." And in how many many hearts is this story of approach to, and of turning back from, Christ again repeated. How many an one who knows in some measure the "bitterness of his own heart," desires eternal life; but who when it is offered him as the free gift of God, in virtue of the death and atoning blood of Christ for sinners, and for sin, and of His resurrection life, as the One who has abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light, turns from it, unable to take the low place of a condemned sinner in the presence of God, and bear the reproach of Christ, while he resigns the praise and glory of this evil world. May the Lord lay this to our hearts.

But what a happy contrast is presented in the next passage, though even here we find the intrusion of the flesh (and that in a true saint) in a scene otherwise of perfect communion in the Spirit. For Martha was a saint, a true believer, one whom Jesus loved (John xi. 5), and who herself had faith and confidence in Him (John xi. 20, 21). But she was restless, and mistook activity for service, whilst burdened with self-imposed cares. For the Lord never burdens or overweights His servants. He never lays upon them, whether in trial or service, more than they

50 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

can bear. We assume many a burden too heavy for us, but if we learn of Him, and *share* His yoke we shall ever find it easy, and His burden light. All depends on its being *His* yoke, and not that of the world, whether in its secular or religious aspects.

Martha's question proved her state. "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" Of course He would have cared had this been true. Slothfulness in His work is as distasteful to Him, as a carnal activity ; but it was not true, and had her service been of the right sort, she would have rejoiced in doing that which was allotted to her, and never have conceived the thought that another should share what was her task alone. Then she adds, "Bid her therefore that she help me." Thus ignorance of service, and ignorance of communion go together. As though the Lord would send from His feet, and out of hearing of His word, one who had found her rest there, to share in the unguided activity, and cumbered service, even of a sister in the flesh and of the Lord. How faithful and yet how tender his reply, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." "One thing;" what that is we learn from Mary's attitude. She sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. In Him her

"ONE THING."

51

heart had found its rest, and in His presence she could be content. This was the "one thing" which satisfied her, and where He was there she could abide also. Moreover, the "good part" which she had chosen, should not be taken away from her: "Lo, I am with you alway." "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." "If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Nothing can still the heart and keep it quiet in this present world, but the presence of Christ, known and enjoyed. Energy and activity, whether natural or religious, will not do. The truest and happiest service must come to an end, though it will by no means lose its reward. But communion with Christ, and to be satisfied in His presence, is a portion that faileth not; for that which is the heart's solace here, will be its joy for eternity, when "he shall no more go out."

If we now turn to the third passage, we find the same mind in the servant and apostle Paul, and in Mary the saint. That which kept Mary at Jesus' feet, kept Paul running with eagerness the race set before him. Mary could rest here, because Jesus was here. Paul could not rest here, because Jesus was at the right hand of God. It was "one thing" with

52 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

him, as with her ; the presence of the Lord, known, desired, and sought for. The One of whom Paul could say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me," had now left this scene, and was at God's right hand. The "one thing" with him, then, was "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." The same word of Jesus which could keep and satisfy the heart of Mary in the world, called the apostle from the world, "not as though I had already attained or were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that, for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

The Lord lay this "one thing" to our hearts ; His own presence so known and cherished, that we can forsake the world and follow Him ; can rest in His presence here as He makes it known to us ; and be found pressing on to that day when we shall see Him as He is, and know Him even as we are known. "So shall we be forever with the Lord."

H. C. G. B.

 GROANING "WITHIN OURSELVES."

THERE is nothing so hard for our hearts as to abide in the sense of grace—to continue practi-

GROANING "WITHIN OURSELVES." 53

cally conscious that "we are not under the law, but under grace." It is by grace that the heart is "established;" but then there is nothing more difficult for us really to comprehend than the fulness of grace—that "grace of God wherein we stand," and to walk in the power and consciousness of it.

It is only in the presence of God that we can know it; and there it is our privilege to be. The moment we get away from the presence of God, there will always be certain workings of our own thoughts within us, and our own thoughts can never reach up to the thoughts of God about us—to the "grace of God."

There are two things which may hinder our peace of spirit, and which, being frequently confounded and mixed up together, create a difficulty in the minds of the saints: first, a troubled state of conscience respecting acceptance and salvation; secondly, a groaning of spirit similar to that mentioned by Paul in Romans viii. 23, because of circumstances around, which distress and try us.

But these are quite distinct. The trouble and exercise of spirit which the saints may and indeed will have whilst living in this world, because of circumstances around, is altogether an opposite thing to that which is trouble of conscience respecting pardon of sin. Where the latter is, that love is not in exercise towards

54 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

others, but self is the centre, even if rightly so. But when the trouble is because of the state of things around us, the contrary is the case. How great the burden on the soul of the Lord Jesus in passing through this world! But it flowed from love and from a perfect sense of what the grace of God was.

Grace supposes all the sin and evil in us, and is the blessed revelation that through Jesus all this sin and evil has been put away. A single sin is more horrible to God than a thousand sins, nay, than all the sins in the world, are to us; and yet, with the fullest consciousness of what we are, all that God is pleased to be towards us is LOVE! It is vain to look to any extent of evil—a person may be (speaking after the manner of men) a great sinner or a little sinner; but this is not the question at all. Grace has reference to what God is, and not to what we are, except indeed that the very greatness of our sins does but magnify the extent of the “grace of God.” At the same time we must remember, that the object and necessary effect of grace is to bring our souls into communion with God—to sanctify us by bringing the soul to know God and to love Him. Therefore the knowledge of grace is the true source of sanctification.

If grace then be what God is toward me, and I have nothing at all to do with what I am, the moment I begin to think about myself as though

GROANING "WITHIN OURSELVES." 55

God would judge me because of my sins, it is evident that I am not then consciously standing in grace.

The heart naturally has these thoughts ; and indeed it is also one of the effects of being awakened, for the conscience then begins directly to reason about what God thinks of it ; but this is not grace.

The soul that turns back upon itself to learn God's judgment about it, and what His dealings with it are likely to be, is not leaning upon what God is—is not standing in grace.

I have said that there are two things which, though quite distinct, are nevertheless frequently confounded in the minds of the saints—a bad conscience, and the "groaning" of the spiritual man because of evil around. The moment we get a little way from the sense of grace we shall be in danger of confusing these together. Suppose, for instance, that I as a saint am sensible of the terrible weight of evil which is all around me, and groan about it, soon (unless it be guarded against) this will mix itself up with trouble of conscience, I shall lose the sense of God's love and put myself under law.

But a saint may "groan" thus without at all losing the consciousness of love, nay, for the very reason that he has it.

When the Lord Jesus "groaned in Himself" and wept at the grave of Lazarus, His deep sense

56 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

of the sorrow which sin had brought into the world did not affect that of His Father's love—"Father, I know that thou hearest me always." And so a Christian may be sorrowful, but should not on that account feel as though God were not love, or lose the sense of His grace."

J. N. D.

HEAVENLY SPRINGS.

OH what springs of joy and gladness
Have we in the Lord above !
All on earth is dimmed with sadness,
All in heaven is bright with love ;
Love sustaining,
While by faith we homeward move.

Here, alas ! are grieved affections,
Ever causing tears to start ;
There amid divine perfections
Rest for ever—for the heart—
Rest in Jesus,
Free from all condemning smart.

Clouds below there are of sorrow,
Thorns which pierce where'er we rove,
These to-day, the same to morrow,
And we ask, Can this be love ?
Love unchanging,
Is the sweet reply above.

J. D. S.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MIL- LENNIAL SAINT AND A CHRISTIAN.

A NEWLY constructed man, which the term "converted man" generally implies, is a man for earth. It is interesting to learn from scripture that there will be a man of this order on the earth in the millennium, and the better we apprehend his status, the easier it will be for us to discern the difference between him and an entirely new man; for doubtless many a devoted saint mistakes the former for the latter. First, then, the converted man is "born of water and of the Spirit;" he believes in Christ, as typified by the two goats. (Lev. xvi.) Eternal redemption effected for him in the presence of God, and all his sins carried into the land of forgetfulness, and he is assured by the presence of Melchisedek that God has given to him the things on the earth to possess. Besides this, the law is written in his heart: "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts."

The "converted man" not only delights in the law of God but it is his nature; the resistance within has been removed and there is no opposition from without, and the Holy Ghost on him

58 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

maintains him therein. The "converted man" loves God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself, while touching all the commandments and ordinances of the law, he is blameless ; he is free of any fear of death or judgment ; assured by the presence of Him who has the keys of death and hell. Deuteronomy xxvi. describes him ; he traces all his blessing to the grace of God ; he worships God ; and he rejoices in every good thing which the Lord has given him. In all the sacrifices he calls to mind the death of Christ as the only ground and warrant for all his blessing ; he is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps. i. 3.)

When we have a true idea of a "converted man," we are ready to say that there cannot be anything more, and, in fact, with Christians generally, nothing beyond it is aimed at or expected.

Now the Christian at the start is a man of a different order and type altogether. Here lies the great distinction or difference. The Christian is not after the flesh, he is not earthy ; he is heavenly and spiritual. "As is the heavenly such [are] they also that are heavenly." He has put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN, ETC. 59

him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all. (Col. iii. 10, 11.) There is nothing of the first man of any nature or quality ; Christ is everything and in all. No one can comprehend the nature and qualities of the Christian but as he apprehends the nature and qualities of Christ. We know that because the children were partakers of blood and flesh, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. As Christ died for all, then were all dead that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh ; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more Old things are passed away. All has become new, and all things are of God. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down out of heaven, [even] the Son of man which is in heaven." The Son of God became a man, that through death He might make in Himself of twain (Jew and Gentile) one new man, so making peace. The Christian is a man of new and different tastes and order. The great exercise of a

60 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Christian is to discern good and evil. There is nothing to correct or improve in the new man ; as we put on Christ, we put on the new man ; and the Christian finds that even what was gain to him, as of Adam, he must count loss for Christ. Amiability or the best natural virtue is surpassed by Christ ; and it is only as Christ is formed in him and he is kept by the power of God, that he resists the flesh. The flesh in the Christian is unaltered, and hence, if he does not walk in the Spirit, he is carried away by the flesh. As Christ is in him, the salient traits of his nature are kept in abeyance, and as his conscience is good ; he is sanctified, but he is the same person still. If the Spirit be grieved and hindered, he acts and behaves as he naturally would ; but on the other hand, a Christian led by the Spirit, is an imitator of God ; he surpasses the “converted man ;” he magnifies the law of God. All the duties devolving on the man in the flesh, and all the ordinances of God are better fulfilled by the Christian than by the “converted man” (the man as God required him to be). Under the law there is very little direction as to the domestic duties, save that children should obey their parents ; while the man in Christ is most exemplary in the home circle, as we see in Ephesians v., vi. It is clearly shewn that the nearer we are to God, the more we answer

UNDER FIRE.

61

to every desire of His heart, and this, thank God, the Christian is *par excellence*.

I need not add that the Christian is a man altogether suited to God ; as the Son who is in the bosom of the Father is the Man of God's pleasure, so we, through the infinite grace of God, are of Him—we are of the new man, and as we walk in the power of the Spirit, we glorify God in our bodies which are His.

J. B. S.

 UNDER FIRE.

(LUKE XII. 22-34.)

THERE are two great principles here that are dealt with by the Lord in a two-fold way ; and which will, I trust, be profitable to our souls to contemplate a little. I speak of what I believe few are strangers to, namely, care and fear—two of the commonest influences that are at work to weigh down the hearts of the saints of God. You will find that the two are closely allied to each other ; that is to say, whatever causes you anxiety is that concerning which you are likely to have the most fear ; whatever it is that settles upon your heart, and becomes a pressure or a weight, this produces dread in connection with it. I do not speak of care about that which is wrong, but I speak

62 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

of it in the largest possible sense. There is a care which it is right to have—a godly, proper, prayerful concern, which, if we were devoid of, we should be simply like inanimate things.

I speak now of that which becomes so settled in the soul that it is between us and God ; and there is a mighty difference between having God and my Father's interest between me and legitimate anxieties, if I may so speak, and having these anxieties between me and Him.

I do not know anything more destructive of true, real, spiritual growth in the soul than having distracting care (*μεριμνα*) resting upon it. If I have God between me and them, then they only become fresh opportunities for dependence on God ; fresh opportunities for me to lean on Him ; new reasons for my turning to Him. It was somewhat in that sense that the Lord used that word, when He said, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation."

Trial is a thing that comes sooner or later to us all ; in one sense we are never truly proved till we have been under fire. The Lord's charge to His disciples was this : "Pray that ye enter not into temptation ;" that is, when the moment of trial comes, let it be an occasion for you to turn to God, instead of turning away from Him. We know well that

UNDER FIRE.

63

is the moment when hundreds have turned away from Him ; it was the test that shewed what was in them. It has been said that "testing is the harvest-time of faith." The moment the test comes, we shall reap the harvest of faith. This is the good of having God between us and lawful cares that would oppress us here. Do we each know what it is to have this for ourselves ?

Verse 30. "And your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." Think of what that is ! He says, Do not you trouble yourself ; you do not need to let these things weigh down your heart. Oh what a resource ! "Your Father knoweth." He knows it all from beginning to end.

And while I delight to own the fact that He knows all, that He is conscious of the need of His child, yet let me point out a danger. I sometimes think, in our anxiety to have our need met with the supply there is in God, we are making that need the measure—I do not say of the supply—but of the affections of His heart. There is a tendency in us to do so. Never let us forget this, that our Father God has a father's heart ; that He has the affections that are peculiar to Him as a father. He did not want servants, He did desire to have sons, it was His pleasure to have such ; but I speak now of what is more intimate than sons—of chil-

64 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

dren ; there is a distinction between the terms *son* and *child*. Just for a moment to illustrate it, you have doubtless heard of acts of benevolence ; how the mighty of the earth, moved with compassion, have taken some poor, forlorn little creature, some little waif, and have brought it into their family ; have educated it and given it all it was in their power to supply. But all the power and all the love that person had could never make it a *child*. Such an one might adopt him and make him a son, for that does not of necessity imply a birth-tie ; but when we speak of children, we speak of that which John i. 12, 13, speaks of, and therefore it implies a much more intimate relationship to say that I am a child, than a son. We are both, blessed be God ! and hence we can say, " Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God ;" and also, " As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Do you think God acts the part of a patron to us ? Never ; it might suit us, but it would not suit Him. What God does is this, He has children born of Him, in His own family, with the relationship and position of children given them by Himself, and towards whom He delights to do a Father's part.

Whilst I fully own how graciously He knows

UNDER FIRE.

65

and meets all our need, yet I remember that there are motives and springs in Him apart from every question of our need, but of which our need becomes the occasion of display.

It is amazing how few there are who walk in the knowledge of this relationship. I find there are comparatively few who live in the enjoyment of what God has brought them into. What a wonderful place it is! And yet we actually see those who are brought into all this, walking about with the very livery of anxiety on their countenances. Why, one would think it was all over with them, that there was no Father's hand behind the dark cloud, and no Father's loving care for them. And it is not a question of the way in which He meets our need, I am sure, whatever that may be; that is not the measure of what is in His heart. And yet many people think it is a wonderful thing to be able to say, "Oh, I can trust the Lord, and I know I shall not want." It is a blessed thing to know we shall not want, no question of that; but is that the highest thing God has for me? What is the highest thing He can do for me? My need or necessity cannot be the measure of it; we cannot measure it; the heart of God is its own measure. When I come to Him I find the fulness that is in God. It is a wonderful thing to say you are born of God, and that in

66 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

grace He stands to you in the relationship of Father, with all the feelings and affections of a Father's heart towards you. What am I to do then? Put your hand in His and go on in patience.

What are cares? They are choking things that destroy the rest and peace of the soul; am I to allow them, when there is all this love for me? It is the Lord's object to keep me up; these would drag me down. And what is to keep me up? Not the question of the supply, not the question of the time that intervenes between the need and the supply, not the question even of when He will come in for me; but the blessed fact that *He knows*; so that you can leave time, ways, means, everything with Him.

But now for an instant let us look at the next point. He meets the question of *care* by the fact of our Father's knowledge of us. (Ver. 32.) He meets the question of *fear* by the fact that it is "the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom." It is a little flock, for God's people are very few in number compared with the multitude outside. "It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" that is, it is the Father's good pleasure to do a father's part. Is it not sweet to find that this is the very same word that is used of Christ when the voice from heaven was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom is all my

good pleasure !” It is His good pleasure to act a Father’s part to you, and to give you the kingdom ; and the consciousness of that takes away the fear. So far this affects us in that which is negative ; but there is a positive side as well. He says (ver. 33), “sell that ye have.” He means, Let things here go. Beloved friends, are we up to that ? Many would be glad to say, “Thank God, I need not have any fear ;” but are you willing to let things go ? What I mean is simply this, that the sense of the goodness of His nature, that He, in suiting those feelings of His, so gratifies His own heart that I want no more, and so I can afford to let things go.

But if we were to lose everything ? Well, we would have the less to burden us. There is not a thing on this earth that does not entail trouble. Even the possession of lawful things brings trouble, that is the character of all here. Remember, I am not speaking of things which are wrong in themselves, but of what is perfectly lawful. Take, for instance, the God-given relationships of life, as that of father, mother, husband, wife, sister, brother, child. All we can say is, they are God-given relationships, and the man that despises them, despises that which is of God.

But look, for instance, at a mother and her child. You see how she loves it, nurtures, cares

68 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

for it; but is there any fear in her heart about it? Is she not afraid she may lose it, that it will die? The best thing we can see in this world, there is the moth and the thief to seize upon it. There is death, the thief that enters into every house, and no bars can keep him out. Well, if we have not any of these things, we have the less to promote anxiety and fear.

Or to come down to what is a great deal lower than these—earthly possessions, the same thing holds good. Suppose you were to enlarge the circle of these blessings, to widen the area; would you not only have a wider target for death to shoot at?

How wonderful to have something that death cannot touch, something beyond his dart!

First of all, what is your treasure? I believe with all of us, there is a great deal too much tendency to make Christ the servant of our need. I know He is that. I know He is the willing servant of our need; but too many are satisfied with that, and He is not the treasure of their heart. The question is, where is your treasure? For where that is, there will your heart be also; it is that which must control all the affections.

I feel we are all glad to have heaven as a sort of relief from the storms and trials of the way, but, alas, how little we know of it as our home, the home of our hearts now?

We know it as a shelter from the things that distress us here ; and when everything else is gone, then we turn our thoughts there. And that blessed One is ready to receive us, even though we value Him only as a shelter from the storm. He never refuses any who come to Him. But He desires that the affections of our hearts be set on Himself.

He will not deny us, though we only come when everything has failed here. But it is another thing to say, "Whither thou goest I will go ; where thou lodgest, I will lodge where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried ; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." There is an attractiveness about the person of Christ for the heart, that can lead it above everything, so that even when things are bright around us, we can say there is a brighter thing still that detains all our affections : and this would flow from it—in place of being visitors there, and dwellers here, we should be visitors here, and dwellers there.

You can never know what it is to be *for* God, unless you know what it is to be *from* Him.

The Lord give us to be able to say, I am of God, I am from Him, and now I desire to be for Him.

Verse 36. Here is the second aspect of preparedness of heart ; this refers to Christ's com-

70 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

ing. There is the sense of His absence: I do not think any of us feel the absence of Christ as an affliction to our hearts. I may feel the terrible nature of the world through which we are passing, but do I feel that He is absent? I know He is here in one sense, that is true; but I am not speaking of that now, but of the sense that *He is not here*, and that it is only His presence that can fill up the void His absence creates. And this will lead us to watch and wait; to watch for His coming every moment. Is there not a heartless deficiency about us in this respect?

“And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for your lord.” This is the proper demeanour of the Christian; so that the world might read in our very ways that we are strangers here—waiting for our absent Lord. The world does not understand this; it cannot comprehend doctrines; but the world can understand whether the people who hold these doctrines practise them or not.

Has the world seen this in us? I fear that we have given a poor testimony to it. I fear that the church of God has not backed up as it were the gospel as it ought. The gospel in its entirety is as clear and distinct as can possibly be; but here are people who profess to have believed it and own it; and yet there is not the practical testimony which ought to flow from it.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

71

It is a solemn thing to think that the poor world, that lies in the arms of the wicked one, can turn round and say, I *hear* all this that you tell us ; but I do not see it carried out in practice ; in other words, I do not see any who look like men "waiting for their Lord."

The Lord give us exercised consciences and hearts ; may His own word find such a place in our souls, that we may arise and shake ourselves from the dust and soiling influences of the age, to meet and welcome Him who saith, " Surely, I come quickly."

W. T. T.

 THE LORD'S SUPPER.

I CORINTHIANS XI.

THE thought of God in every revelation of His mind, is that which pre-eminently gives us a clue to its value, and it is also an unchanging source of strength and blessing to us.

Oftentimes His revelations are studied and observed more with reference to the good which may result to us from them, than in order to acquire an idea of His own purpose in giving them. The thought of our Lord in calling His beloved ones around Him, "in the night in which he was betrayed," unfolds to us above all others the true idea of the Lord's supper. *It was the night in which He was betrayed ;* when

72 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

everything here was coming to an end. Then it was, we read, that "he took bread when he had given thanks." He owed to God the grace and favour of giving the bread ; for He Himself was the bread of God which came down from heaven ; and He can give thanks for it—thanks which find an echo in our hearts. But this is not all. He gives Himself to death. The blessed One dies here for those under death. His body broken opens a way for His beloved ones out of the charnel house which all here is. He desires (and this is His purpose) that we, His own, should remember Him in the moment in which His body was broken for us. It is not here (that is, in this remembrance of Him) that He would teach us the benefit of His death,—the *appropriation* of it as in John vi. ; but here He would so connect us with Himself, at this moment, that we might feel and know, that as He has no longer a link to this scene, neither have we. That we, while remaining in this scene, may not resume links with it ; but on the contrary, that our chief expression and joy of heart may be, in remembering Him at the moment when His body was broken for us, and thus opened a way for us out of death, into His own life. The thought of His heart is to connect us who are still in this scene, which is under judgment, with Himself, in that moment, when He by His death delivered us from it.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

73

"After the same manner also he took the cup when he had supped [or after supper], saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

While we are here, and while He is absent, we drink this cup in remembrance of Him. It is not that we come to derive a benefit from His blood-shedding; but we come to remember Him. It is because we are in the benefit of it that we can meet this desire of His heart, that we should remember Him in His death, by which He placed us apart from all that under which we lay.

The desire of the heart of Christ is, that we should remember Him while we are in this scene, at the moment in which he left it. Hence it is *here* that He attaches us to Himself; not that we should be occupied with the deliverance, but with the *Deliverer*; and as we are occupied with Him, we are in heart and spirit rejoicing to be with Him outside of all here, identified with His death.

No one can be truly in this remembrance but as he is apart and outside of all that from which the death of Christ separates him. It is not His resurrection that the Lord brings before us, it is His *death*; to remember Him in His *death* in the scene where it took place, and where I still am and where He is not. It is here and

74 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

at that time that I remember Him. If it were resurrection, it would be rising out of it; it would be passing from the death to the fruits of it; but it is in His *death* (in the scene and circumstances which required it), that He calls me to remember Him; and as I do, I know, and feel that I am outside of all here; I dissociate myself from everything here which required His death.

It is the stones erected in the midst of Jordan. (See Joshua iv. 9). It speaks to the heart—oh! how deeply and touchingly, of that one singular event which separates me from all here, but which connects me with Him, when He ended all natural links with the earth, in order to open out for me “a new and living way through the veil, that is to say his flesh.”

It is impossible for any one truly to remember Him in His death, and to minister to self, that for which He died. If I “discern the Lord’s body,” if I am eating “worthily,” I am remembering Him in His broken body and shed blood; and necessarily, I am not occupied with that which has been judged in His death, I discern His body; I judge myself. If I see Him dying for me, I cannot but renounce myself. The two cannot exist together, the death and the thing judged in His death. If I see Him in His death I must judge, ignore myself. I have not remembered Him in His death, I have not

LABOUR AND REST.

75

discerned the Lord's body, if I have myself before me as my object. In the presence of Christ's broken body, I must judge that self of mine for which it was broken. I must allow it no place whatever, and be occupied with Him apart from, and outside of it.

J. B. S.



LABOUR AND REST.

MARK VI. 31, 32.

THERE is a word here of sweet and precious import, and full of deep comfort.

The context presents a scene of labour and toil. The Lord had called the twelve, and sent them out two by two for their journey, without anything save a staff, "no scrip, no bread, no money." They went forth, they preached, they cast out devils, they raised the sick; it was a time of work and incessant toil, but a time of labour which resulted in fruit.

In verse 30 we find the apostles returning, gathering themselves together, and rehearsing to Jesus all they had done and taught. He had sent them out empty, and they had returned full, and now they spread before the precious Master, as it were, their riches, the proceeds and fruit of their labour and toil; and this draws forth the heart of the

76 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

blessed Lord, ever overflowing in love and tenderness and compassion for hungry multitudes and weary servants—and here are His gracious words, “*Come* ye yourselves into a desert place and rest awhile.” Now let us note how it is not, “*go* and rest,” but “*come*!” Oh! the sweetness of that word “*Come*!” Assuredly it is not the desert place that would constitute the rest, necessary, yea called for as it is at times for all His workmen, but the rest is connected with the *company*, with the presence of Jesus. He accompanies us there, and hence the rest, His own bright and blessed company secures that which neither the comforts of a fertile valley, full of springs of water, could supply, nor the barrenness and aridity of a howling desert, could hinder. May every beloved labourer then remember it is “come and rest.” Then there is another precious thought, the Master knows well the snares of service, He sees how easily the poor weak vessel could be ensnared into giving service that place which alone belongs to Himself, how soon the work would take the place of occupation with Him, hence I am sure He often isolates us, saying, “Come ye yourselves apart into a *desert place*.”

Further we are told that “there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.” In this day of rush and ceaseless toil, how often is it so? But we need to be

LABOUR AND REST.

77

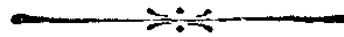
reminded that "preaching is not Christ," and the Lord's workmen must have time for feeding on Christ and meditation in His word, if their service is to be of any real profit. The *quality* of our service we fear is in this day but little thought of compared with the *quantity*; the quality will indeed be poor and wretched in the extreme, if the labourer's own soul is not nourished and fed upon the true Bread that came down out of (ἐκ) heaven. How loving then of our own Master to say, "Come and rest," and how blessed when He takes His poor, fainting, failing workmen by the hand, aside, apart into the desert place, shutting them out from all around, and shutting them in to Himself, that with a mind *undisturbed*, and a heart *undistracted*, they may rest with Himself, thus gathering up new strength and fresh courage to go forth *with* and *for* Him.

But there is also here a beautiful instance of the deep compassion of the Saviour's heart, which was ever touched by distress and want. We are told the people "outwent them and came together unto him." Yes, Jesus was the attraction! They were seeking Him. How many such testimonies do the gospels contain to His tenderness and pity and accessibility! So we see how He yearned over a scattered flock of sheep destitute of a shepherd's care. Though it be a desert place, He will cause it to yield

78 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

bread enough and to spare for them, thus He feeds them and sends them away, He Himself departing into a mountain to pray. Now we have a picture of the present and the future. Jesus has gone on high into the place of intercession ; during His absence the wind and storm and waves of difficulties, vicissitudes, are felt ; yet He is not absent from His own *in interest or heart*. Then His poor disciples proved it, for in the fourth watch (the darkest part of night on the eve of day dawn) He comes to them walking on the water ! Oh ! the majesty of the scene, which sets before us the tender, compassionate, unfailing Friend, at the same time the mighty God, "God—God over all, blessed evermore."

W. T. T.



HAVE YOU?

"DEATH proves the folly of all human wisdom and foresight, of all human grandeur—a common observation, little acted on, but always true. As it is said of wisdom, 'death and destruction have heard the fame thereof with their ears.' They cannot give positive wisdom, but they can negatively shew that only what does not belong to mortal man has any value. Man establishes his family, perpetuates his name, but he is gone ; nothing stays the hand of death. Ransom from

that is out of man's power. There is a morning coming when the *righteous* will have the upper hand of those who seem wise as regards this world. Death feeds on these, or, as neglectors of God, they are subjected to the righteous, when His judgment comes. But the power of God in whom the righteous trust is above the power of death. But further, Christ having died, the Christian's connection with this world has ceased, save as a pilgrim through it. He has the sentence of death in himself. He knows no man after the flesh, no, not even Christ. His associations with the world are closed, save as Christ's servant in it. He reckons himself dead. He is crucified with Christ, yet lives ; but it is Christ lives in him, and he lives the life he lives in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him, so that he is delivered from this present world. Oh the folly of laying up and making oneself great and counting on a future in a world where death reigns, and in the things to which its power applies. Man being in honour abides not. How difficult, even if happy and heavenly-minded in Christ as to one's own joys, not to look upon the things that are seen, to think that the wisdom, and talents, and success, and approval of men is simply nothing, the food of death ; and that all the moral question lies behind, save so far as

80 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

these may have deceived men! The saint has to watch still, not to be afraid when success accompanies those who do not accept the cross. We await God's judgment of things in power; we exercise it in conscience. There is no divine understanding in the man whose heart is in the glory of the world. Men will praise him. How well he has got on, settled his children, raised himself in his position. The fairest names will be given to it. He has no understanding. His heart is in what feeds death, and that death, weighs it. All the motives of the world are weighed by death. After all, in them man is only as the beasts that perish, with more care"—What a solemn witness is this, my dear reader? Is it possible to call it in question? Is it not true? Suffer a poor fellow-passenger on life's great highway to ask you with real concern and affection, what are you living for? Whither are you hastening? If your heart is in the glory of the world, there is no divine understanding in you. Scripture says—"the world passeth away and the lust thereof." (1 John ii. 17.)

Are you a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, your sins having been washed away in His precious blood? If so, permit me to ask you, are your associations with the world closed, by Christ's death, save as Christ's servant in it? Have you learned that as a Christian your

HAVE YOU ?

81

place is thus described—"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." (Gal. ii. 20.)

"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. vi. 14.)

How blessed to have great in our eyes Him who hung on that cross : and to see the world that crucified Him in its true character in that cross ; to glory in it, happy by this means to be dead to the world, to have it ended, crucified, put to shame for the heart—

" His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spread o'er His body on the tree ;
Then am I dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me."

W. T. T.



THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE DEPARTED.

WHAT can I tell you about the blessedness of the departed? I can only answer this by another question: What do you know of the attractiveness of Christ; of the blessedness of being *with* the Lord? For if self and selfishness fill you, why, then *they* find *their* aliment in this world; and if you are full of yourself, of your likes and dislikes, your gains and losses, you will not profit much from the doctrine of the blessedness of those absent from the body and present with the Lord. It does not suit you in your selfishness, and you may not like to be challenged, as to whether you find more attractiveness in Christ than in all else. "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise," was the Lord's blessed word to the converted thief. What did the poor thief know of paradise, or its blessedness? Probably nothing at all. But he had just made a new friend in One whose fellow there was not to be found.

Faith had revealed to him the open and attracting heart of the blessed Lord. His faith had opened the thief's heart to holiness and to confession, and to trust in his Judge, and had drawn into it the sweetness of the promises of inseparableness from that Saviour—"Verily

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE DEPARTED. 83

I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) "With Him," that was enough. "Absent from the body, and present [at home] with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 3) was the *far better* which Paul knew as to the state of a departed saint. Aye, and of the glory; what description comes up to it, like that, "And so shall we ever be *with* the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 17.) But this throws us upon the question of the measure of our knowledge and appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who know and make much of Him will find much in the thought of being *with* Him. They have His Spirit, and they walk in it; and to Him there is for a saint nothing like "presence with the Lord."

If self rules in us, we must have circumstances and details, so as to be able to pick up what suits man when thinking of Himself and His circumstances.

G. V. W.



ACROSS THE RIVER.

In spirit I have passed
This desert world below ;
I rest in heavenly places, where
Eternal comforts flow.

No fear of judgment now,
" 'Tis finish'd," Jesus saith :
My home is where the Lord hath gone,
The other side of death.

As one with Him, I'm raised
Above this earth and sin,
From all that outwardly attracts,
Or sorrow gives within.

Ah, yes ! in risen life,
Beyond His emptied grave,
Is only perfectness and rest,
Which all His members have.

Then why, my soul, the thought
To earth and self oft given,
Where all below is wilderness,
And all above is heaven ?

Soon shall I reach where now
My spirit is on high,
Dwell in the deep eternal love,
With Jesus ever nigh.

J. D. S.



THE MAP OF UNBELIEF.

(NUMBERS XIII. ; JOSHUA XIV.)

IT is most important to understand the moral condition of Israel at this time ; otherwise great difficulty must be experienced in seeking to apprehend why Jehovah permitted Moses to send out spies to search the land of Canaan. A careful study of Deuteronomy will very clearly demonstrate the fact that unbelief on the part of Israel was the *origin* of the mission of the spies, though allowed of God, who can work His sovereign will in spite of all ; just as the demand for a king afterwards, though Jehovah acceded to it and allowed it, was a virtual denial of His regal titles and claims over the rebellious nation. There is one important fact which appears to me to place the question of the searching of the land beyond all dispute. In Exodus iii., where the earliest intimation of His purpose is recorded, there is likewise a description of the character of the land as it existed to His eye—its exceeding goodness, fertility, and beauty, are all there delineated and traced. How, then, could it have been possible for God, having cast Israel on the fidelity of His word and promise to originate that which virtually was a slur upon His veracity and the certainty of His word ? No ; Jehovah permitted it, but never originated it.

86 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

There is a principle of weighty import in the circumstances which attended the searching of the land. First, observe how the testimony of the spies was but confirmatory of Jehovah's word: "And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. . . . And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it." But then, *immediately*, other principles began to work. The goodness of the land was not denied—how could it be, in the presence of the *earnest* before their eyes? But between them where they were and the possession of this goodly land there were difficulties, and these are all mapped out with the accuracy of unbelief; "Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great; and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south; and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the moun-

THE MAP OF UNBELIEF.

87

tains ; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan." And these obstacles and impediments, by occupation with them, obtained such a hold over their hearts, that they were, in their own sight, as well as in the sight of their enemies, but grasshoppers.

Now it is very important to observe how *a sight of the land* tests them ; and, in truth, nothing tests like it. This principle stands true in regard to all God's ways with His people at all times. As soon as ever He discloses His purpose regarding us, His mind and thoughts for the time present, then it is that all the difficulties standing in our way are presented in full array ; and hence it is, at this present time, that those who see what God's great thought is concerning His beloved Son, have difficulties and opposition that all others are strangers to. If any doubt the application of this principle they have only to study the history of God's testimony on the earth, in order to be certified as to its truth. Who, may I ask, are beset with every kind of opposition at this present time? Are they not those who seek to keep the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"? Only give up the truth of Christ's body on the earth as a *practical* one, and you will be promoted to great honour ; stand out as a unit, and you will be let pass. But connect yourself *practically* with the great truth—"There is one body and one

88 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Spirit," and you are at once subjected to all the opposition of men, and the most malignant hatred of Satan. You are surrounded with difficulties on every side ; and if you allow such between you and God, instead of having Him between you and them, your heart will lose confidence, as Israel's did, and the test will become to you an occasion which Satan will use to turn you away from God, instead of being an opportunity to turn to God. Now observe the consequence of failing before this test. First, there is *weeping*, next *murmuring*, then *hard thoughts* of God ; and, lastly they propose a crowning of self-will—"Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." Observe how gradual the nature of their declension—of every declension—is. They had forgotten the living God, and His interest in them as His people ; they had preferred the estimate which their foolish hearts had formed of God's land in the light of the difficulties between them where they were and it ; and now the issue is complete—a captain of their own choosing is their resource. This gradual character of all decline is very solemn, and has a special voice, because of the spurious notion that our falls are immediate, or all at once. Not so, beloved reader ; like everything else, they have their beginnings, and hence the solemnity of the words—"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

THE MAP OF UNBELIEF.

89

But now let us turn for a moment and look at a bright side of this dark picture. The dismal dreariness of unbelief serves ends we should little fancy. The crisis not only brings out the man of unbelief, it likewise calls to the front the man of faith; and this scene is no exception. Joshua and Caleb, men for a crisis, are equal to the emergency; and their united testimony at this moment is very beautiful—"We are well able to overcome," is the language of the one, and "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it us," is the testimony of both; that is to say, the *hand* and *heart* of God are the resources of men of faith in a crisis. How blessed to see a man like Caleb hiding himself behind the power of Jehovah, the arm of God, so that, forgetting the weakness of Israel, and the strength of both giants and walled cities, he rallies, as it were, the broken ranks of his people with these words: "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it," because the right hand of Jehovah's power, which was celebrated on the shores of the Red Sea, as having dashed in pieces the enemy (Ex. xv. 6), was before Caleb's heart and thoughts. He goes back to that wondrous scene in his testimony, and seeks to connect his people thereby with that same Jehovah who always triumphs gloriously.

90 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

And their united testimony in chapter xiv. is not less beautiful. The delight of Jehovah in His Israel—that is, His affections, His heart—is a sufficient plea that He would surely bring them in: in the light of this love, this delight of God, they can say, “The Lord is with us.” Oh, what rich resources of faith a *crisis* calls forth! It is very striking to see how it is all that is in God they testify unto. The springs of delight in God’s own heart, motives there entirely apart from the objects of His favour, are wondrous topics for faith to rest on. And hence it is that even the acknowledged difficulties become tributary to His own, “The people of the land are bread for us.” Our God delights in difficulties, to shew how entirely above and beyond them He is. The faith of God’s elect, these crisis men, look upon them as bread! There is another point of great beauty here. These men of faith are exposed in this crisis to be turned upon by their own—“The congregation bade stone them with stones;” then it is the glory of Jehovah appears, to vindicate the witnesses to the power of His hand and His heart. “The glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.”

Now, ere we pass from this part of our subject to pursue the history of the land possessed, let me point out the immense advantage a saint now has over any of God’s people at any

THE MAP OF UNBELIEF.

91

previous period, but only to take shame to ourselves that so few of us are crisis men in purpose and heart at this present time.

Most blessed as this testimony of Caleb and Joshua was, as far as they could witness to the *ability* and *delight* of God to bring His people into possession of what His heart had in store for them, yet what is it if compared with the witness which a saint now can bear to power and love? Who, for instance, in olden times knew the power of His right hand, in taking the beloved Son out of death and seating Him in highest glory? How blessed by faith to be spectators of the glory of the Father visiting the grave of Jesus, raising Him up and claiming Him as His own! How blessed to-day to be witnesses, in the power of the indwelling Spirit, to such glory! Truly we are they who are privileged to know "what is the exceeding greatness of his 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, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Blessed and wondrous vision this to occupy

16-2

92 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

faith, the Christ of God, the glorious Man, constituting as His point of departure all those things which are termini with us. Principality, power, might, dominion, names, are the *extent* to which poor things like us can reach in comprehension; but when we look at Jesus raised and exalted by the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, we behold Him *departing* only from that which *bounds* our view. So much for the power of His hand. If again we think of His heart, His affections, when were they proclaimed or known until the beloved Son, ever in His bosom, disclosed them? Joshua could say, “*If* the Lord delight in us, he will bring us in.” I hesitate not to say that an “if” now, in the light of the cross, and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the position of the saint by virtue of union and association with the beloved Son, would be the unbelief which casts a slur on the love which has disclosed itself in such a manner as to secure confidence in itself. “All the Father’s heart made known”—marks the wondrous place into which we have, through His sovereign grace, been introduced.

How it speaks to the heart and moves the affections, the thought that this marvellous love of God (His own peculiar love) has been made known in the sorrows of His own Son, His Lamb! The agonies and the blood of Jesus not only measured the distance of ruined

THE MAP OF UNBELIEF.

93

creatures from God, they also measured the affections of God. Is it too much to say so? When you and I, beloved reader, by faith visit that wondrous scene of sorrow, do we not also see the heart of God therein expressed as never before; and we, by virtue of the same agony and blood, standing not only to witness such love, but to adore the source and the channel through which it flowed forth so blessedly to us?

It was a wonderful day for the earth and for Moses, when, in response to the desire of his heart to see His glory, Jehovah replied: "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live. And the Lord said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock; and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by. And I will take away mine hand and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen." Wonderful sight *that* for Moses, hid in a cleft of the rock, and covered by Jehovah's hand; but, let me ask, is that the sight He gives His saints now? Oh, beloved reader, if the eternal Son of the Father emptied Himself to become a man, and as a man humbled Himself down to those depths of agony and grief, expressing *therein* God in His nature, as well as glorifying Him in

94 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

meeting every one of His righteous claims, what could suit either that Son or the Father's heart, save the exaltation of the one to the highest place in heaven, and the manifestation of the other to poor things like us? It was in keeping with Moses that he should but see His back parts ; and it was consonant with Jehovah's manifestation of Himself at that time to disclose no more, but *now* His righteousness as well as His love require the full manifestation of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. I have referred to these facts simply to point out the immense contrast between the testimony of a Caleb or a Joshua, blessed, faithful men though they were, and the witness expected from a saint now.

Let us now look a little at the history of the land *possessed* by the same Caleb whose testimony is recorded in Joshua xiv. Forty-five years of endurance and faith had intervened between this scripture and the one we have already considered, and Caleb is now an old man of eighty-five years, yet with no mark of decay as regards the energy that characterised him at Kadesh. He had turned about and wandered with his nation for forty years in the wilderness, and that for no fault of his. If Israel were the people of God, let them be ever so bad in themselves, that is sufficient to connect them with the affections of the man of faith. But during that forty years of wilderness toil

THE MAP OF UNBELIEF.

95

and trouble, he carried in his heart the beauty of that goodly land which his eyes had for a moment beheld. No protracted period of trial or provocation had prevailed to obliterate from his thoughts or affections Jehovah's land. It is not difficult to conceive how its richness and beauty lived in his heart, and comforted him many a weary day. How blessed to hear him trace up everything to its source in these words, "And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years." The sense of who He was to whom this aged warrior owed his steadfastness as well as his life, is not absent from his soul. Years only bring out with greater distinctness how completely cast he was upon Jehovah, and how his soul rejoiced in this blessed fact, the Lord was as good as His word.

Again, observe here the unfading nature of *faith*, it never wears a grey hair. Though Caleb was now an old man of eighty-five years, he was as fresh and vigorous, as young and as strong as at forty. "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; as my strength was then, even so is my strength now for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to

96 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

drive them out, as the Lord said." Then he receives his inheritance and his blessing. "And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel." How blessed to think of the spot which the faith of this crisis man claims and receives! Hebron was the place where David was anointed king. (2 Sam. ii. 4.) It was a place signalled in many ways. Here it was Sarah died (Gen. xxiii. 2); here likewise Abner was buried (2 Sam. iii. 32); but in no respect was it so remarkable as in the first named instance. In this is there not the sweet and blessed picture of that spot where faith alone can fold her wings? The place that faith gets as its inheritance is where God's beloved one is crowned; *there* and there alone it rests, its repose and enchantment are there.

There is one other fact of great beauty in connection with this faithful servant of Jehovah, which I must not pass without notice; it serves to shew how faith's *surroundings* and *associations* are ever of a like nature with itself. We are told in Joshua xv. how Caleb's *walk* at home was no exception to his testimony abroad; how he seeks to surround himself with associations of a like nature with himself. He will give

HEAVEN AND EARTH.

97

his daughter to one who is not only worthy of Caleb's daughter, but who is distinguished by the same confidence and faith which made Caleb a crisis man. All this has its voice surely for us, beloved, in these days, when so much of the world, in one way or another, is sought after by those who, by profession at least, declare that they have been crucified to it and it to them.

We have thus examined a little of the history of the searching and possessing of the land of Canaan by these faithful, true-hearted witnesses for Jehovah in their day. The Lord grant it may have been with profit, instruction, and encouragement too, according to the power of His own Spirit, who loves to communicate the things of God to the children of His love, the heirs of glory.

W. T. T.



HEAVEN AND EARTH.

(JOHN III. 22-36.)

It has often been noticed that at the end of the third chapter of John we have the contrast between John the Baptist and Christ, that is, the contrast between their respective positions.

Our blessed Lord had intimated to Nicodemus that heavenly things were to be spoken of, and indeed He had alluded to them, though the teacher of Israel had not fully even apprehended earthly things. The close of the chapter is

98 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

very interesting, giving us the contrast between the Baptist, who closed the whole testimony of the prophets (greater himself than a prophet), and the Son who had come from heaven to speak of what was above. It has been noticed also that it is difficult to say exactly where John the Baptist's testimony ends, and where John the Evangelist's begins, in this stirring passage.

Now to proclaim things from above, the proclaimer must have come thence, and this forms the beauty of our Lord's testimony (see verses 31, 32) in contrast with the Baptist's.

I shall never forget as a child reading the account of a lad brought up in a Cornish tin-mine, and his first experience of the upper world; his seeing, for the first time, the sun rise and the beauty of the landscape on the earth's surface. The illustration may serve for us who are already in spirit brought into communion with the Father and Son in heaven; brought spiritually to see things (1 Cor. ii. 9) which we shall soon see actually in the glory with Jesus--in contrast with things down here.

John the Baptist speaks here as the great forerunner of our blessed Lord. The law and prophets were until John, and he bears witness as of the earth, but as having received his mission from above, of the arrival of the Christ. His mission was ended. His joy was fulfilled

HEAVEN AND EARTH.

99

in hearing the Bridegroom's voice, the voice of Him that must increase, whilst John must decrease. The testimony of the last of the prophets, of the one who should usher in a divine Person !

But how great the difference between the two ! In verse 31 we have "He that cometh from above is above all he that cometh from heaven is above all." The sovereign majesty of the Person is presented to us ; the Son Himself was there, and was testifying of what He had heard and seen in the infinitely brighter sphere, and as a general fact, no man received His testimony. Notice the difference between having received a gift from heaven (as John the Baptist had) and *coming from heaven*. Now John's *origin* was not of heaven, though he had a privilege that none of woman born had yet enjoyed.

The Son then was there, and was announcing heavenly things ; thrice happy they who, born of God, received His testimony. Well has it been said that John (the evangelist) presents God to man in His ministry, and blessed are they who listen to the Son's voice ! May the Holy Spirit awaken our hearts to a deeper attention to "the things that are above." God our Father would have us to be really in the enjoyment of these things ; and if they possess our hearts, the glory of this world (of the

100 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Cornish tin-miner in my illustration) will be pale indeed. I recollect a few years ago a traveller, weary and stained, from the South of Europe, arriving in England towards the evening, in July. Though late, the sun was still above the horizon, and lighted up the London parks with his last rays; lighted up a scene of wealth and pleasure, rolling carriages and displayed riches. The poor traveller exclaimed in passing through the brilliant throng: "I am richer by far than you all; I have my eternal treasure where no rust or moth can corrupt; I envy you not!"

But we have more here than imperishable treasure. In verse 34 we have the words of God proclaimed by Him, whom God hath sent. May we be attentive! I call attention to the expression so that each reader may ask himself how far he has received the words brought to us from above. Then two things of the utmost importance come before us: that is, the Holy Spirit, not given by measure; and the glorious title of the *Son*. (Ver. 35.)

The three Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity are brought before us. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One word as to the Spirit not being given *by measure*: I suppose that all have noticed that "unto him" is not in the text. It is a great fact, characterising Christianity—that is, the Holy Ghost is given (not

HEAVEN AND EARTH. 101

only a measure of His power, as in the case of Moses (Num. xi. 17), or of Elisha who asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit), and dwells personally in us. We cannot sing, though the sound is beautiful :

“Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,”

because the Holy Spirit has been given to us (see chapters xiv. and xvi. of this gospel) ; and reveals to us all the love of the Father's heart. We have received the Holy Ghost in virtue of Christ's death, resurrection, and exaltation. Our blessed Lord was anointed by the Holy Spirit for His service (Acts x. 38) on earth, and again received the Holy Spirit to be given to us (Acts ii. 33) after His ascension on high. May we know the power of an ungrieved Spirit !

Then, in verse 35, we find the blessed name of *the Son*. “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.” What an infinite, eternal scene bursts upon us here ! “He that hath the Son hath everlasting life.” The important point for us is that we are already, by the Holy Spirit, brought into the enjoyment of these things from above. We know the Father, fully revealed in the Son, all our joys, our hopes are there with Him ; and soon the blessed Lord Himself shall come, to take us to be with Him in the Father's house for ever.

102 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

The contrast at the end of the verse is very terrible : “ He that believeth not [more properly, ‘ He that obeys not ’] the Son, shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” There is no joy, no blessing apart from the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, by faith, and no portion apart from this, than the wrath of God !

May our hearts, as delivered from this guilty world, from wrath, and from judgment, be fully satisfied in Him whom God sent, our blessed Lord Jesus ! May we seek the things that are above, where He is !

E. L. B.



“SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE
ABOVE.”

COLOSSIANS III. 2.

WHEN Israel had passed through the Red Sea on dry ground, and the waters had returned again to their own place, to the destruction and utter confusion of their enemies, they found themselves in this position : as to the past, separated for ever from Egypt, the land of bondage and judgment, though abounding with all that ministered to the necessities and desires of the natural man ; for the present, in the wilderness, a dry and thirsty land, affording nothing for their sustenance ; as to the future, journeying on to Canaan, the land flowing with milk and

"SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE." 103

honey, the land of God's delight, to which it was His purpose to bring the people of His inheritance. There being nothing in the wilderness itself which could give satisfaction, they could not, as the people of God, be contented with the place, though they might well be contented with God's provision for them in it. If, therefore, not contented with the place they were in, they must of necessity do one of two things ; either press on to Canaan, the land in which every promise of God to them would be fulfilled, or in heart turn back to Egypt, the land of carnal plenty. Settle down in the wilderness they could not.

Though not their rest, the wilderness was however, the place of proof and testimony ; for though the desert produced nothing for the sustenance and refreshment of man, the presence of God was with His people, that they might know His sufficiency, and learn Him as their resource. So He gave them water from the rock, and "fed them with manna which they knew not, neither did their fathers know ; that he might make them 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." (Deut. viii. 3.) Here then they stood, cut off from Egypt by the waters of the Red Sea, with God, in the wilderness, to learn dependence on His hand moving forward to the land of promise, to which He was pledged to bring

104 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

them, and concerning which He had given them repeated testimonies of its riches and its delights.

Morally, their state should have corresponded with this position. Forgetting Egypt, and pressing on to Canaan, their hearts should at once have been rejoicing in their deliverance, their Deliverer, and the prospect of their inheritance. "Now all these things happened unto them for types, and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are come."

The Christian's position is one indeed as real, and infinitely more perfect, than that of Israel of old. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is to him in very fact what the Red Sea was to Israel, and more, it is Jordan also, for the Christian is by faith, already in Canaan, in heavenly places, though this is not our home. Christ's death has separated the believer from the world and from its judgments, from sin and from its results. By faith the believer sees the death of Christ between himself and the judgment of God against sin and against sinners; that judgment which so soon is to come upon the world. In company with Christ, he passes by faith through death, even as the people followed, and were baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, untouched themselves by its dark waters, which overwhelmed their enemies and the

"SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE." 105

enemies of God, who seek to face death without the company of Christ. From the resurrection side of death he looks back, as Israel looked back from the wilderness shore of the Red Sea ; and the world from which he has been delivered is out of sight, while his enemies lie dead upon the sea shore. As Israel of old, God's people can now join in the song, "I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously ; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." Or in their own feebler words, though with true expression of the blessedness of their position, they can say—

" Sin, death, and hell are vanquish'd
By Thee, the Church's Head ;
And lo ! we share Thy triumphs,
Thou First-born from the dead."

Blessed, indeed, are those who, by faith in Jesus, and in His death and resurrection, have thus passed from death to life, from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty, from the power of Satan and the world, into the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

But while this is, indeed, the present portion of those whom God has brought to Himself, by His own right hand and stretched-out arm, while sojourners on earth, it is not the fulfilment of God's counsels on their behalf. They have, even as Israel had, a prospect, and the present mercies

106 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

which they taste of, perfect as they are for the place, are no more to be compared with the glory of the inheritance, than the provision of the wilderness could compare with the abundance of the land of Canaan.

It is a bad sign when the heart of a saint is not going on to the inheritance, for, as it is most certain that it cannot be contented with the world in its wilderness aspect, it must, as we have already said, in default of advance towards Canaan, turn back to the world in its Egypt character. The wilderness satisfies neither the old nature nor the new. The first found its sphere of enjoyment in Egypt. The second will be satisfied only when we awake in Christ's likeness. It is true that God supplies all His people's present wants, ministering Christ, as manna, by His Spirit for the nourishment of the new creation, and in His providence and mercy meeting all their temporal requirements, according to His knowledge of their necessity. He makes all grace abound towards them, giving them all sufficiency in all things. He supplies all their need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. But also He looks for a contented heart in them ; one that can say, "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." Nevertheless the wilderness is the place of faith and patience, not of realisation ; it is the place for learning and labour, not for fruition and rest

“SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE.” 107

The Spirit is given, the earnest of the inheritance, but it is not the thing itself, and the good things prepared are revealed by the Spirit to encourage and cheer the hearts of God's people on their journey heavenward, and the fruition is not here, but in the glory to come. To be contented, therefore, with such a place is impossible, and it will always be found that if the heart of the saint is not earnest in anticipation of that which is before, it will be reverting to the things that are behind ; to the world with its pleasures and vanities, and the comparative facilities which it affords for the ease and satisfaction of the flesh.

Colossians ii. and iii. shew us some of the present relations of the believer ; “dead with Christ ;” not “living in the world ;” “buried with him by baptism into death ;” “risen with Christ ;” the “life hid with Christ in God ;” “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory.” As Israel had done with Egypt, and belonged to Canaan, so the Christian now has done with the world, and belongs to heaven, where his citizenship is, though he has not yet reached it.

While Israel had to experience a literal wilderness, a place producing neither food nor water, so the Christian has to know the world as a moral wilderness, a place which in itself, and from its own resources, produces neither nourish-

108 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

ment nor refreshment for the spiritual man. The manna—bread from heaven—angel's food, the water from the smitten rock, were products foreign to the place of the people's sojourning. Christ and His word are alone given, and are alone sufficient for their every spiritual need. What makes the world a wilderness to the Christian is, that, apart from that which comes to him directly from God, his soul finds nothing to feed upon, while the things of the world, in which he once found his pleasure, he sees only as connected with the scene of Christ's rejection in the past and present, and of His judgment in the future. Therefore he cannot, dare not, set his mind on the things which are on the earth, the place of Christ's death, but upon the things which are above, "where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

If our hearts were more interested in the inheritance, and more thoroughly judged the present scene in its true character, "the things above" would, we doubt not, take more real and practical shape in our minds. Nothing could be more definite than the list of earthly blessings wherewith God promised to bless Israel in the land of promise; a land which the Lord Himself delighted in, and on which His eyes ever rested; where He would dwell with and walk with them, and would be their God, and they should be His people. A land flowing

SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE." 109

with milk and honey. A land of olive-yards, and vine-yards ; of rivers and fountains of water ; of gold and silver, iron and lead ; where every man should sit under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree ; where neither enemy nor evil are occurrent ; where they should eat bread to the full.

Surely the good things which God hath prepared for those who love Him, and which are revealed to us by the Spirit, who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God, are not less carefully enumerated, and are not less real to faith than the earthly blessings recorded on behalf of Israel.

Hebrews xii. tells us some of the things to which we have been brought, of the communion and companies to which we have been introduced : to God the judge of all ; to Jesus, the mediator of the new testament ; to angels ; to the church of the first-born ; to the spirits of just men made perfect. All these are included in "the things that are above."

Revelation xxi. and xxii. give us some insight to that place which the glory of God doth lighten, and of which the Lamb is the light ; in which is the throne of God and of the Lamb ; where His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads.

Everything that is suited to God ; His pre-

110 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF

sence and dwelling place; everything that is suited to man, not merely as in his best estate naturally, but to renewed, redeemed, and recreated man, with every sense and faculty adapted to the highest apprehension. Worship, communion, knowledge, all the best gifts of God, but touched and tasted here in part; there to be lived on, and lived in for ever.

If our hearts are seeking the things that are above, we can gather up something of their reality. Christ is there—our life—and there for us. Even now, “as he is, so are we in this world,” but more, “we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” And then, God and the Lamb, the display of His glory; the unfolding of His counsels; the explanation of the past, the enjoyment of the present, and the anticipation of a future of never ending joy, intelligence, and yet of rest. No guesses then, but certainties, for then shall we know even as we are known.

The Lord so set our minds on things above that, following on with true diligence of heart, each day may add to the catalogue of our discoveries; and thus, not resting in any present attainments, nor even in present mercies, we may go on from strength to strength, rejoicing “in the hope of the glory of God,” the path shining more and more unto the perfect day.

H. C. G. B.

THE SIN OFFERING.

IT is remarkable that nothing was so stamped with the character of holiness, of entire, real separation to God as the sin offering. In other offerings, perfect acceptance, a sweet savour, and in some cases our leavened cakes, are found therewith in the use of them ; but all passed in the natural delight, so to speak, which God took in what was perfect and infinitely excellent, though it supposed sin and judgment to be there. But here the most remarkable and exact sanctions of its holiness were enjoined. (Lev. vi. 26-28.) There was nothing in the whole work of Jesus which so marked His entire and perfect separation to God, His positive holiness, as His bearing sin. He who knew no sin, alone could be made sin, and the act itself was the most utter separation to God conceivable, to bear all, yea, beyond our thought and to His glory. It was a total consecration of Himself, at all cost, to God's glory ; as God, indeed, could accept nothing else. And the victim must have been as perfect as the self-offering was. As a sacrifice, then, for sin, Christ is specially holy ; as indeed, now in the power of this sacrifice, a Priest present before God, making intercession, He is "holy, harmless, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens." Yet so truly was it a bearing of sin that he who carried the

112 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

goat before his letting loose, and he that carried the ashes of the red heifer, and sprinkled the water of separation, were unclean until even, and must wash to come into the camp. Thus are these two great truths in the sin-offering of Christ presented to us in these sacrifices. For, indeed, how can we conceive a greater separation to God, in Christ, than His offering Himself a victim for sin? And, on the other hand, had He not really borne our sins in all their evil, He could not have put them away really in the judgment of God.

Blessed for ever be His name who has done it, and may we ever learn more His perfectness in doing it !

J. N. D.

"TILL HE COME."

"TILL He come," oh, may the echo
 Of these words be heard each day,
 Keeping thee in heart and spirit,
Watching all along the way ;
 May this thought be ever with thee
 While thou dost the desert roam,
 Mid its joys, or cares, or sorrows,
 "In a moment" *He* may come.
 Till He come, oh may He keep thee
 Drinking in His wondrous love,
 Who will come *Himself* to take thee
 To the Father's house above.
 Though it be through tribulation
 Here a little while we roam,
 Soon the path will end in glory,
 It is only "*Till He come.*"

L. W.

THE SEEN AND MATERIAL VERSUS THE UNSEEN AND SPIRITUAL.

IT is solemn to reflect, in this day, on how the *seen* and the *material* are being used to supplant the *unseen* and the *spiritual*. Every art of the enemy, his profound skill and dexterity, his many-sided and deeply-laid plots, are all in requisition at this moment to destroy, if it were possible, and in any case, alas! to deteriorate and tarnish, every testimony to the reality and power of "things not seen."

It is very instructive to note how, even in days when "sight" and "nature" were the ground on which man walked before God, as tested and proved by Him, God had His own independent witnesses to the only path suited to Himself in a world where everything is in revolt, and manifesting the consequences of departure from God. *Faith*, not sight, is that great principle, as we find from Hebrews xi. ; and this path of life and power was maintained by these worthies amid trials and sorrows of no ordinary kind.

The earliest departure from this divine path of faith is recorded in Genesis xii., in the very same scripture which tells us of the call of Abram "*out*" from country, kindred, and father's house. Set free by "death" (see Acts vii. 2-4),

114 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

"glory" had its full weight with Abram ; and very blessedly did he rise and go forth from every visible thing, as expressed by country, kindred, and father's house, "into a place which he should afterward receive for an inheritance. . . . not knowing whither he went." "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise : for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. xi. 8-10.)

As thus brought forth by glory and death, to walk the unseen path of faith, the seen for a time ensnares him. The famine, that was seen, took a firmer hold upon him than the "God of glory," who appeared to him in Mesopotamia, and afterwards when he was in the land of Canaan. Being thus deceived, he sought for help in Egypt, and *found Hagar!* which "answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." (Gal. iv. 25.) Note well in this scripture the contrast between "Jerusalem *which now is,*" and "Jerusalem *which is above.*"

Another instance of the seductive power of the seen, is recorded in Genesis xlviii. Most blessed is it to see faith, the unseen power, triumphing in Jacob over all that marked his previously checkered history, as we behold him

rising superior to nature and its claims, when he laid his hands on the head of Ephraim, the younger of Joseph's two sons, "*guiding his hands wittingly ;*" yet equally distinct is the snare of the seen, manifested in Joseph's displeasure and dissatisfaction thus expressed : "Not so, my father ; for this is the firstborn ; put thy right hand upon his head."

There is likewise a very solemn coincidence between this break-down of faith in Joseph, when being invested with the forfeited portion of Reuben (1 Chron. v.), and the actings of the same Reuben afterwards in Israel's history, when, in conjunction with Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, he erected "*a great altar to see to.*" (Joshua xxii. 10.) But of this more further on.

How blessed and encouraging to see in the last moments of the patriarch on which we are dwelling, the fruit of the patient, gracious ways of God with him ! How cheering to see a man whom *sight* and *sense* controlled in no ordinary degree, now in faith the witness for God, intelligent, subdued, and elevated : "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." And equally comforting is it to hear one who was continually contravening the ways of God by the seen and material, thus accepting death for himself upon it all : "Behold, I die ; *but God shall be with you.*"

116 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Another striking instance of the perverting power of the visible is presented in Moses, when called of God to be the deliverer of Israel. Solemn it is to reflect on what little stay his soul derived from the promised "Certainly I will be with thee," of the "I am that I am." (Ex. iii.) Observe how the absence of the seen and the human, "I am not *eloquent*, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am *slow of speech*, and of a *slow tongue*," are his pleadings to be excused; and this in the presence of the most marked display of the *superhuman*. (See chap. iv. 2-7.) This was not that faith which characterised him at the first, when he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Then the seen was of no account to him; but he has dropped in soul, as it were, since then; and now, as Abraham went into Egypt for help and got Hagar there, so Moses turns to the same quarter and gets Aaron, his trial and affliction afterwards. Very solemn it is to contemplate how this same Aaron, given to Moses in the day when he craved for the outward and the seen, as we have said, was the very man who ministered to the people in their idolatrous craving after the seen, when they "*saw* that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount" (Ex. xxxii. 1); and the same Aaron of whom it is said, with respect to the molten calf which he himself had made, "and when Aaron *saw* it, he built an altar before it."

In the same manner afterwards, in their history in the wilderness, did they crave for "a captain" (Num. xiv. 4), in order that they might return into Egypt, where Abraham went in the famine, and where, alas! many a child of God now turns in like circumstances, in order to find some visible countenance or support. Both "calf" and "captain," the one made and the other desired, are but the ensnaring meshes of the seen and human. We know that "these things were our examples," that is, types (τύποι). (1 Cor. x. 6.) The Lord give us to study it, and take it to heart, as to how far we, as His people to-day, have not dropped down, a thousand-fold more than they, into the perverting line of sight and nature.

It is very solemn to note the *moral* order in which the apostle, in the above scripture, refers to the circumstances in Israel's history, on some of which we have been dwelling. The spring of all was the insufficiency of the unseen, the craving for the seen; then, having obtained the lusted-after object, it becomes their idol; next follows unholy alliance with Moab (fornication); and lastly, the captain is desired, as the calf had been made. This moral, not historical, order is very solemn, as setting forth the course of the professing church of God up to Laodicca, which is the great boaster of the seen (Rev. iii. 17), and which, when full blown, will be spued

118 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

out of Christ's mouth, and then carried by Satan's great visible power on earth. (Rev. xvii. 7.)

But we must turn to Israel's history in the land for a little, to see how this terrible principle ensnared them in all their course. Alas, even when they were *in type* a dead and risen people (across Jordan), and in the land of Canaan, their first failure was from this very principle we are considering. First, observe what a testimony Jehovah gave to his thoughts and ways, in the manner in which Jericho was surrounded and captured. There was the entire absence of any seen display in power, but there was to be that which is the invariable concomitant of real power, namely noiseless equanimity. (Joshua vi. 10.)

Has not all this its own special voice for His saints of this day, who professedly occupy the ground on which Israel stood typically when in Canaan? Has it not a double voice as well? Does it not distinctly tell us what the mind and thoughts of the Lord are, as to the real power of that which is *unseen* and *supernatural*? But does it not also very clearly indicate our true place as across Jordan, namely, *that we are dead men*, and helpless in every human point of view? The Lord give us to ponder the weighty instruction which is here conveyed to faith.

Now the very next chapter is the record of how the seen ensnares, for we read of Achan making confession of his sin in these words:

"When I SAW among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and *took* them." (Josh. vii. 21.) How solemn the rise, progress, and issue of the bewitching effects of the things seen!

We will turn now to another striking exemplification of our subject: it is supplied to us in the history of Reuben's great altar, "TO SEE TO." (Joshua xxii. 10.) This act of the two and a half tribes was in perfect moral accord with the position they had taken. That position is thus sorrowfully expressed, "*Bring us not over Jordan.*" (Num. xxii. 5.) They were under the power of the seen, they possessed "a very great multitude of cattle." What could be more *natural* than that they should seek the spot most suitable to their circumstances? And if in that day there were to be found men of such narrow and extreme thoughts as to press the fact that the other side of Jordan was the true possession of God's Israel, and that taking it this side, or looking for it this side is abandoning the call and purpose of God, how would not Reuben and his associates resent all such visionary and transcendental notions as these? And is it not Satan's great object in this day as in that day, to hinder the people of God, and keep them out of their true and rich blessing, by despising and scorning the unseen land beyond the river, and

120 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

presenting some seen Jazer and Gilead instead? May the Lord give to His saints in this time of sifting, the wing of faith to rise beyond the snares and nets abounding in the land of sight!

But mark the beginnings of this great altar. We read: "When THEY SAW the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that behold, the place was a place for cattle." It was the same principle exactly that operated in Lot, who "lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar." (Gen. xiii. 10.) The sight principle confounds the garden of the Lord and the land of Egypt. Just think of these two put together: "Egypt," and "the garden of the Lord!" What a contrast! The one is *above* and *unseen*; the other is *below* and *seen*. Jordan separates them. And alas! there are not a few to-day who have lifted up their eyes like Lot, and like Reuben, and *seen* well-watered plains, and places for cattle, and are settling down, or are settled down, on *this side of Jordan*. It is thus evident that there can be no security whatever from the seducing effects of the things seen, save as the soul is consciously kept in the light of what is unseen; and that cannot be, if *the other side of Jordan* is abandoned, as the only sphere for faith to rest in.

Thus to turn to this history of the two and a half tribes, we find that their "*great altar to see to*" was in perfect keeping with their choice of what they had seen *this side Jordan*: it was a craving after the seen. It was a subtle wile too. They did not mean or intend to abandon the worship of the God of Israel; but, having made a false choice in settling down in Jazer and Gilead, their human expedient is the erection of the great altar to see to, something *visibly* great, somewhat that appealed to the eye; an attempt in reality to bring God to man's ground, instead of man to God's. How solemn! It is not necessary to pursue the history further, or to point out how the other tribes resented this act of Reuben. My one object in dwelling on it so far, has been to point out the principle involved, and how deceiving and ensnaring the seen is.

It is very instructive also to observe how, in the close of Joshua (chap. xxiii.), the people are warned in the most solemn way against the inevitable consequences of being ensnared by *visible worship* (ver. 7), and *association in a natural way* (that is, yielding to *what is seen*) with the people of the land (ver. 12); and this is precisely what came to pass. How solemn! They were in the *true standing*, yet incompetent to maintain it. Then, in chapter xxiv., it is the same kind of most solemn prophetic exhortations. They had been worshippers of the visible (idola-

122 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

ters), and the snare would be to return to it. All being finished, Joshua "took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; *for it hath heard* all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us."

I shall now turn to one more instance of the power of the seen and its consequences upon Israel, and that is, the way in which it acted upon them so as to hinder the observance of the Sabbatical year. In this instance it is all the more remarkable and solemn how the seen turned them aside, inasmuch as there was a special provision made by Jehovah to meet the case. (See Lev. xxv. 20, 21.) The desire of His heart was that the land should keep a sabbath unto the Lord: "The seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord." Nothing could be more distinct, or beautiful in its import and typical bearings. Did Israel observe and cleave to the mind of Jehovah as to this? Observe the solemn warning of chapter xxvi. 43: "The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them;" as well as verses 33, 34: "And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths,

as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies land ; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths." Such were the prophetic warnings which follow immediately the ordinance of Jehovah as to the sabbatical year, yet how lost upon the nation, ruled by the seen, as it is clear they were, in refusing to keep it ! In vain, as far as they were concerned, did Jehovah promise, " I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth *fruit for three years.*" (Chap. xxv. 21.) The visible work of man's hands, their *sowing* and *reaping*, was greater and better to them than His blessing. Thus they lost their highest favour, and 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 20, 21 records the execution of the predicted sentence in these solemn words : " And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon, where they were servants to him [the king of the Chaldees] and his sons, until the reign of the kingdom of Persia : to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, *until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths ; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.*" How solemn all this ; yet how blessed to see that when they were in Babylon and all visible means of help gone from them, and entirely in the hands of their oppressors, then those, who were really faithful to the Lord, found out where alone their resources were—even in God Himself.

124 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

May His saints to-day have grace to ponder and weigh in His presence, the weighty lessons which this history affords, that, amid the increasing tendency to turn away from the path of life and faith, grace may either preserve or recover for the Lord, broken-hearted ones who, amid sorrow and pressure, cleave to Himself, whom, having *not seen*, they still love. W. T. T.



PEACE, GRACE, AND GLORY.

(ROM. V. I-II.)

THE statements in this chapter are founded on the last verse of the previous one. God is calling back our hearts to have confidence in Himself, confidence which man had lost in the garden of Eden. Eve trusted Satan, and thought that God had kept back the thing which would make her happy. No matter how wicked, or how far a person may be from God, he may trust Him. A person that would be ashamed to shew his face to any one in the world, may go to God and trust Him. The gospel wins back the heart to God, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." What God has done in Christ, is, that before He comes to be a Judge, He came to be a Saviour. He has anticipated the day of judgment, to win our hearts back to Himself, in Christ. If we neglect this salvation, we are

PEACE, GRACE, AND GLORY.

125

doubly guilty. Before ever the day of judgment comes, God has sent His Son, that we might know His perfect grace, and know it in a work which was the most terrible judgment of sin possible.

Having gone through their sinfulness as Gentiles and Jews, in the first three chapters; and in chapter iv., death and resurrection; in the first eleven verses of chapter v. he applies it. He speaks of the abundant and rich grace of God; and then in v. 11, you may joy in God; not merely in the salvation, but in God Himself; I may delight in my Father. It is all peace as regards the past; favour and grace as regards the present; and glory in the future.

The gospel is not, that some of our sins are hidden, but they are all out, and I have peace about them because Christ was delivered for them. We may have forgotten many things that we have done, but the Lord knows everything, and He has given His Son for me; there I get peace made by the blood of His cross.

Peace is a strong word. I may have joy, and some trouble along with it, but with peace I have no trouble at all. Christ has met God alone on the cross, and, in drinking that terrible cup, He has made peace for us. I see that Christ came down here for my sins, and the holiness and righteousness of God dealt with Him about them on the cross, so I get peace with God. Sins are the things that make us guilty. The fact of the

126 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

existence of the flesh does not give me a bad conscience ; it does so only when I have let it act. I am *justified* in respect of guilt ; with regard to defilement, I am *cleansed* ; I have offended, and am *forgiven*. If I am born of God, I see what my sins are ; for when we get into the light, we see how dirty we are. Holiness comes in along with justification, but it is not the subject of this chapter. The moment I am born of God, the holy desires are there ; and then comes in this beautiful chapter ; and I am not merely justified, but I have power. I am before God, not according to my sins, but according to the value of Christ's blood. Nobody *put* it into God's heart to send His Son—Ah, I say, then I find perfect love in God's heart. I have got into God's own perfect favour, that present grace wherein we stand. He loves me as He loves Jesus. God never changes. It is not only that the grace is unchanging, but that I as a present thing am standing in it, and if I look up to God, I have in my soul the consciousness of infinite favour. I know, in thinking of the cross of Christ, that it was God's infinite love which passeth knowledge, that gave Him to die for us. I know God's heart a great deal better than I know my own, for I cannot trust *my* heart and feelings a moment ; but having God revealed to me I know who *He* is. I cannot reckon on myself ; but when I have learnt this love of God

I say, Well I know he is not a poor creature like me, for I know who He is. In that work on the cross, I had no part but my sins ; nothing but the hatred that killed Christ, and the guilt He bore. He was perfect love, and therefore I am on my face in the dust at the sins He should have had to bear, but He was perfect love. It is not only that the sins are cleared, but I also get the sense of divine favour in my soul ; it is my present standing with God. How could poor worms like us talk of being in the glory of God, if God had not brought it about. It is a wonderful thing. Where God has cleared away all the sins, He gives the glory too.

I feel strongly the importance of this present "grace wherein we stand ;" it forms the condition of my soul now ; I am standing in this favour of God. When I look up to God, and I see nothing but the light of His countenance, the only thought I have is, perfect love and favour. "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them." We are first put into our place ; and then it goes on, You are standing there in favour.

Well, what am I going to get ? The glory of God—"Rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also." May be, there is more evil in my heart than I have yet discovered, "He withdraweth not his eye from the righteous." He is always

128 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

looking at me, perhaps to correct me and help me. Job was getting into a subtle kind of self-righteousness. With Job, it is God who begins the battle, not Satan. God corrects and disciplines him, and sends all these things to help him ; until, instead of saying, "When the eye saw *me*, it blessed me," he says, "Now mine eye seeth THEE, wherefore I abhor myself." "Ah," God says, "now you know yourself, and that is all I wanted to teach you ; now I can bless you." That is the end of the discipline. Having this perfect love in the heart, we have the key to all these tribulations.

"Patience worketh experience." If I get my will broken, I know myself better, and I know God better. The effect of all this is to break my will, and to purify me of things that I wanted to get rid of. I get broken and exercised, and at the same time know the grace and love and faithfulness of God.

Then I get back to hope. I have the key in the perfect love, to all that comes upon me, and I say, In that, God has been thinking of me to do me good. I have the certainty of God's love, for He gave His Son for me ; and if I were to ask God to give me a proof of His love, He would say, He must give me a less proof than before, for He has already given me the greatest. The proof of the love is, that He has given His Son. The Holy Ghost is power ; He is given

PEACE, GRACE, AND GLORY.

129

us, so that there is the revelation of this love ; I am in true liberty. In virtue of the blood of Christ, the Holy Ghost comes, and dwells in me. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" How can you go and use your body for sin, when it is the temple of the Holy Ghost? The Holy Ghost makes me know I am a child. I get the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost ; He seals us too, and is the earnest of the inheritance.

Tribulation works patience, because it breaks my will. I kick against the tribulation if I do not see the key to it. A naughty child, put in the corner, knows very well that his father would not put him there if he did not need it. So with us, the Lord puts us in the corner, and there we must stay till He lets us out. I get the experience of God's faithful love, for I am sure He would not put me there if I did not need it. "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous." He is constantly and unceasingly watching for their good. In Job xxxiii. it is inward things that have to be corrected ; it is correcting a disposition, to withdraw man from his purpose. In Job xxxvi. it is actual failure, discipline for positive faults, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." The Lord has laid His hand upon me, and I must bow. It may not be for a positive transgression, but perhaps a disposition to be corrected. He has something for me to learn ;

130 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

there is something wrong, so He puts His hand on me in discipline. The Holy Ghost being given me, I have the key to it all, in the love of God, and I believe in this love. There are many things to correct in me, which hinder me feeling the love. I know it better, the more I am disciplined and exercised ; but I have learned it in God's having given His Son.

We have the threefold blessing ; peace, favour, and glory ; then tribulations. How do I know He loves me ? " For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." He gave His Son for me. If I have the Holy Ghost I am enjoying the love (though that is no proof) ; but I know He loves me because He gave His Son for me when I was alienated. " God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." *His* love is emphatic here. God loved these ungodly sinners, who were in one sense a horror to Him. He gave the best thing in heaven for this vile thing on earth. So we joy in God. I have first got to know the blessings then the patience and goodness of God, and then I say, " Well, but what a God I have ! " And that is everlasting blessedness. So I joy in God Himself. I have got to know God in this. Just think what a Father I have ! My joy is in Himself, and though we have it in an earthen vessel, yet we have it still. Along the

PEACE, GRACE, AND GLORY. 131

road to the glory, He never withdraws His eyes from me. What a wonderful God I have! I do not glory in myself, I glory in the tribulation, because it is a proof to me that God is thinking of me.

"We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." It was a great deal to say, I always got the troubles for Jesus' sake. We get them for our own sake, often. In the thorn in the flesh that Paul had, it was for Christ's sake and his own as well. The highest kind of tribulation is the tribulation for Christ ; only we need other kinds. The principle of sin working in us, often troubles people much. The remedy is, I am crucified with Christ ; I reckon myself dead. I am alive to God in Christ, not in Adam ; and as regards this old man I say, "I do not own you." Not only Christ is my life, but I am crucified with Him. I am the same person living by the life of Christ, not by my own life. As a child of Adam I own myself totally lost. God comes and gives me a new life in Christ. All Christ's death is available for me ; so I reckon myself crucified with Christ. I not only have a new life, but I reckon the old one dead. I say to the flesh, You have been judged on the cross, I have nothing more to say to you. Then I ought to be "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," always living in this way. I am not in the flesh before God ; I am in Christ,

132 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

and I know it by the Holy Ghost. Colossians iii. 3 is God's statement about death. Romans v. we believe it, reckon it true. 2 Corinthians iv., we carry it out in practice.

J. N. D.,
Notes of a Lecture.

"THE APOSTASY ;"

ITS RAPID APPROACH, AND SATAN'S EFFORT
BY IT TO PRODUCE DEPRESSION AND
ISOLATION.

BOTH ARE WRONG, GOD IS ALL-SUFFICIENT.

(2 THESS. II. 3.)

BEFORE the giving up of the truth there is always the existence of a mixed state of things where the truth has been known—a state wholly repulsive to the Lord. It is what is called in Revelation iii. "neither cold nor hot." We find that it was so in Israel. There was the worship of Jehovah going on at the same time as the worship of Baal.

And to come to our own day, the apostasy draws nigh. The giving up of God and His truth by what is now called Christendom is so clearly prophesied in so many passages of scripture—and its dark shadow comes so rapidly upon us in these days that no honest soul but must stand convinced of the awful future that is approaching for this world. The contemplation of it, along with the thought of the utter powerlessness of the efforts of any—and of the best—to stay its progress, must,

apart from the sustaining comfort of the Spirit of God, fill the heart with dismay ; and tend at least to paralyse, if not to nullify, every effort for the service of God and the blessing of the saints.

Yet this fact is the truth, and if we would be for God to-day, the truth must be faced in all its naked entirety ; for in bowing to it alone, shall we be instructed in *what* the path is, and *where* it is, that He would have us in. But what is important for us to understand is the mixed state of indifference which precedes the apostasy which exists to-day. Where are we as to this ?

No heart can exist, which in any feeble measure is true to the Lord, and be unaffected by the fact that indifference to what are the interests of CHRIST is stealing upon us with rapid and silent steps. Its poisoned breath has produced a deadening influence on all around. Adherents and satellites to this state of things, and those newly converted to its doctrines, may be counted by myriads. Nor is it where empty profession without life exists, and there alone, that we find this indifferentism to the truth. No ; all around us are christian men—men who preach the gospel—yet men who are found catering for the masses and providing a preaching and a teaching which will still allow to exist "THE WILL OF MAN," and even more than this. The preaching and the teaching current among Christians to-day not only does not

134 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

refuse the will of man, but openly announces its intention to *use it* to assist the will of God, and to civilise and educate men to receive the gospel!

This spirit of the age—indifference—is fast plunging this so-called “christian world” into open apostasy. The “Vox Populi” which is heard in christian countries (and here ENGLAND takes the lead) is pretty much as follows: “Christianity may *only* exist if it tolerate my will; if it do not this, then no Christianity for me.” Thank God that there are bright exceptions to this, but I speak of the voice of those whose ways are heard to speak even louder than their language, and whose acts prove, not the language of the lip, but that of the heart.

Now the tendency of such a state of things on a “man of God” is twofold. It tends (1st) to depress him, and (2nd) to lead him into isolation. Both are wrong, as we shall try to shew from scripture. Yet in such a time and in such a state of things, the soul has to learn deep lessons with God. Depression and isolation, or the tendency to them, are incipient features of the approach of apostasy; but God has resources for faith, though the approach of a day of open departure from the truth He does not stay.

Having spoken of the “will of man,” it may be well first to ask what place is given to it in the word of God, especially in that part written since the death of Christ. Does God

"THE APOSTASY."

135

tolerate what we call the WILL? If we let scripture reply to the question, and bow to its reply, may we not say that we are taking the only wise and safe course? Now the activity of man's will (all will admit) is the spring of all the actions of unregenerate human life. You cannot confine these actions of the will to those which are justly termed (because infringements of common decency and worship) *wrong* actions. There are other actions of the will than these. We know that there are activities which come from us continually when there is no infraction of human or moral relations. But if the will suggests them, and then acts from itself, without reference to any superior or restraining power and without considering it—this spring of action being there, is what the word of God denominates "SIN." "Sin is lawlessness," that is, it owns no law, human or divine, which is greater than itself. Now this will of man, which is sin, receives no toleration at the hands of God. In Christianity, as it was given to us by Christ and His apostles (which is the only standard, and one to which all must come) we read: "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins," and this refusal of it is found in the same epistle which informs us of *what sin is*. If then to tolerate the will *is* not Christlike, nor apostolic, it *is* wrong to tolerate it to-day. When human will bows to

136 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

no controlling power save itself, it is "SIN," however moral, educated, intellectual, refined, or religious it may be.

This factor then, the will, must be wholly refused in the things of God, though we may regard it from the most attractive side. Man *is* in a state in which he needs help. He is away from God. But all the philanthropic efforts of the will of his fellow-man (admirable as they may be) will never help him Godward. If we introduce them, we do not help on the Christianity of Christ, but the apostasy of Christendom.

The servant of God who in this day refuses to own or to use the "will of man," may, as far as his fellow-servants are concerned, be looked upon with an eye of suspicion, and may even have to walk without their fellowship. *They* recognise some little of good in human nature—that is, in the will. But in refusing to own or use that which God does not own or use, he is not *seeking* isolation from his brethren. If they leave him, and God writes His approval upon him by using him, his danger then commences. The enemy is not slow to see it, and will seek to occupy him with the thought of his own importance. This is in order to lead him to *separate himself* from his brethren. This is the object of Satan, and it is a great evil, but one to which depression may lead. The narrow-

est path with God will be always accompanied by the largest heart for the saints. Let us remember it ever—that the path of a man of God is to "walk with God," and to work "with him;" and if others cannot walk with us in that path (in which we see self-will is refused) we must go on alone.

In the time of Israel's apostasy (1 Kings xix.), the prophet Elijah was a "man of God." We there see that he is greatly depressed at the state of God's people and testimony. "It is enough," he says, as though the poor faithful but depressed heart can bear no more, "and now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." "I only am left"—and with this sorrow in his heart he fled from the face of Jezebel. This is depression. The prophet is dismayed at the dark day which has settled down upon himself and upon God's people. Nor is this depression unaccountable when we see that he is looking at them and at himself, but he is leaving God out of his calculations. Had God changed? Well we know that He had not. He meets the prophet in order to shew him that He was the same. For what was the only thing that would profit God's people at such a time? It was *power*—only power could be of any avail. And power was there, but it was in God. This is what the depressed servant had to learn. It

138 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

was not in the prophet, however faithful—not in a people, however blessed as God's chosen ones—no; it was in God—in a God who was and is unchangeable. This is the blessed and eternal resource of the weakest faith in the darkest day.

Elijah has to learn this, "God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God"—and God Himself condescends to become his teacher. "And he said, Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." All these testified to the might of His power, who was nevertheless allowing things apparently to take their course in that day. But the servant should not have needed this manifestation of the thunder of His majesty—he should have been in the quiet of communion with Him. And Elijah knew this well—his heart at once responded to that still small voice, one well-known in quieter moments. "And it was so that when Elijah heard it he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave."

"THE APOSTASY."

139

Having thus shewn the servant His power, the Lord next shews him that he is not in his proper place. He has fled from his post through depression, and the next word he must hear is "Go, return." He has to retrace his steps with a fresh reminder of the One who is watching over them, and that isolation is not God's path for him. But there is more even than this. He has to learn that in the midst of his own supposed importance (the "I only am left") God has further resources. God's eye is on His future king and on His future prophet. "Elisha shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room"—"Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel." God is not taken by surprise at anything that has happened. All is but working out His own purposes, and what we want is to know *them* better.

These are important lessons for us to learn to-day. Depression is not right: it too often, if not always, leaves God out. Isolation is not right, which is often the result of depression, and which means giving the people of God up. When God does this we may, and not till then. What God's purposes and counsels were at that moment, the depressed and isolated prophet did not know. God graciously instructs him in them, cares even for *the need of his body* by providing the "cake baken on the coals," and putting the "cruse of water at his head," watch-

140 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF

ing near, while the weary servant sleeps! How tender is all this personal care, and then He unfolds to him His own resources as to His people, adequate to meet far more than every thought of His servant's heart! Truly we may say, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

That is, God loves us, even to caring for what we eat and drink, but He can do without us and carry on His work by means of others if He pleases, and He will do so, if we turn out of the path of faith. It is a needed lesson for us to learn, humbling as it may be, and it shews us what we are. It was a bright day when God so mightily used His servant in the destruction of the 400 prophets of Baal, but in Elijah God was the same God still, though unseen in His actions. May we remember this, and not tempt God, for this we do when we distrust Him.

For our day, God's future king is Christ, and God will also continue to speak to His people; but it is by another if we turn away from Him. May we learn the lesson and learn what is in the mind of God to-day in the midst of the rapid approach of the general apostasy of Christendom, and may we remember how Satan wants to work upon us in it all, and so to resist him and be kept, humbly walking in that activity of *faith* which counts only upon Him, for His name sake.

H. C. A.

GOD SPEAKING FROM HEAVEN.

(HEBREWS XII. 18-29.)

THE apostle here contrasts Mount Sinai and Mount Zion, and points out what the present testimony is. It is a mistake that we very often make that we are so many responsible persons going on to judgment, and there must give an account of ourselves. That is true of us, but that is very far from all. There has been a dealing of God with man, and He is *now* dealing with them for the last time ; that makes it the more solemn.

It is not now a question of good and evil in us. What the Lord presents to our souls now is, that that question is all settled ; “there is none righteous, no, not one ;” that is the way He is dealing now. If His grace is refused, judgment is pronounced upon their state ; that is what I mean by settled. Now, He comes either in judgment or in warning, and if that is slighted, there is condemnation. The contrast between the two mounts is exceedingly striking. People do not believe they are in this state of condemnation. There the law is exceedingly useful in awakening—if they judge of good and evil, they cannot judge of what is beyond themselves. Man’s judgment is no higher than the evil he has

142 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

done. A man brought up in dirt sees nothing in dirt; so with the natural mind, it judges according to its own state. God brings in His estimate of what man ought to be. That is what the law is—as a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. Therefore, “Moses said, I do exceedingly fear and quake.” “Felix trembled,” not that he was saved, but the word of God was awakening his conscience, because conscience was there. God has dealt probably with every heart here. The word breaks us up, and shews us we are not what God wants; but that is not the will being converted. The flesh abuses everything. God gave the law to convict of sin; man takes it to work out righteousness. But God is not leaving you to the day of judgment; He is dealing with you *now*, and this is the day of grace.

When the word of God comes home to man—what man really ought to be—who could “answer him one of a thousand”? Wherever the word reaches the conscience, it is a present dealing; not put off to the day of judgment, because it reaches it *now*. Man knows perfectly well he cannot meet it. You know you have not loved God with all your heart to-day; you have not loved your neighbour as yourself one day in your life. My conscience tells me the law is right—though I may kick against it. You must not have any

GOD SPEAKING FROM HEAVEN. 143

thought of your own righteousness in the day of judgment, because you have not got any.

The young man in Matthew xix. 16, did not say, "What shall I do to be saved," but, "that I may have eternal life;" and the Lord's answer perfectly and entirely meets the question that was asked Him. "This do and live." The young man said, "This I have done, and what lack I yet?" "Sell all, and come, follow me." This tested him, for his heart was set on his possessions; he went away from grace. So, in John viii. 9, one by one they went away from grace, because they dreaded the eye that could detect them. That is what people do still—they cannot bear conviction. It is getting away from God, because the heart and conscience cannot bear that which comes out in the presence of God. What a terrible thing that is, if your only hope of comfort is to keep away from God—to keep out of His sight!

Verse 22.—We are come, not to Mount Sinai, but to Mount Zion. Zion is a word of immense import, if we read it spiritually. Zion was not simply mercy and patience. The ark was the only possible means of intercourse with God that Israel had, and they had sent it away; so have we—so to speak—looking at our natural state. The importance of Zion was, that Israel had been already tested and had failed. Eli was a godly man, and when he found the ark was

144 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

taken, and that all was over, we read that he fell backward and died.

You have to be brought to the conviction, like Eli, that it is all over. Then God comes in, not merely in mercy and patience—that He had been all through—but God comes in, as He did then, when all the responsibility was closed by the total failure of man, taking the ark out of the hands of Philistines, and placing it on Mount Zion, by David, as now by Christ, David's seed.

Verses 22, 23.—The whole scene of millennial glory on earth and in heaven is exceedingly interesting, but I do not speak of that now.

Verse 25.—How does Christ speak from heaven? It is not, There is a day of judgment, and you must prepare yourself for it; but He comes and speaks to man, and deals with man on the ground of His being a man in heaven. If He speaks from heaven, He speaks not merely of mercy, but of grace, on the ground of an accomplished work. He appeals to our hearts upon the ground of what He is and has done. Christ is *sitting* at the right hand of God, because He has nothing more to do as to making out a righteousness for us. As to the question of righteousness, that work that He has finished is the righteousness that brings us into glory, who through grace, have believed in Him. *I get these two things—the place that Christ speaks from, and the work that brings the people in.* He

GOD SPEAKING FROM HEAVEN. 145

does not reproach you. He comes and tells you, You must not think I am ignorant of what *sin* is, *I bore it*. He knows what the consequence is as none other can know it. "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Are you learning God in the presence of grace? The hearts of the sons of men are wholly set in them to do evil. Man's history is a terrible one. Because Christ humbled Himself in grace, man profited by the occasion, in order that He should be despised and rejected of men. And is there not a rejection of Him now? Do not some of you reject Him; do not people know that they are sinners, and yet go on sinning? That is despising it. But where the heart has been brought down, what do I find? Suppose I am coming to God by Him, why, He tells me I am in heaven because your sins are put away. And what can God say if Christ, who bore my sins, is in the presence of God? The thing before me is not judgment, but Christ. If I come to God as a judge, why, Christ is there. He cannot but own that my sins are all put away—Christ appearing in the presence of God is the witness of it.

The judgment day would be according to my works, but the present day is according to the efficacy of Christ's work; so we see what a great

146 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

thing it is for Him to speak to us from heaven.

It is an appeal that ought to put to shame and confusion every one that does not bow to it. "By Him all that believe are justified from all things." That is the only faith God will have. Christ is so perfectly glorified that He says, I won't have any other. If I own Christ, *I am nothing*; that is the thing that is wanted. Do you want to have a little share of your own pretension in the presence of a dying Saviour? If you could get in a bit of your own righteousness, it would be like the dead flies, causing the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour. Thank God, that voice, if it is in the soul, is eternal life; it is God's way of communicating life.

Now, have you all taken this ground that God has taken with you, telling you that you are all lost—still telling it in grace? Beloved friends, He is not waiting for the day of judgment, when judgment will be executed. He is speaking to you from the right hand of the Majesty on high, where He sat down when He had by Himself purged our sins. Are you going to refuse Him that speaks? I know our hearts drag us down, and the things around us are contrary to us, but it is Christ who has come and presented Himself before our eyes. Remember how He speaks; and are you going to refuse to hear Him, like the deaf adder? Are you going to take God in

STANDING, STATE, AND PRACTICE. 147

judgment, when you have despised Him in grace?

The Lord give us to see the truth, and taste the unspeakable love of Him who gave Himself for us, of Him who will with Him freely give us all things!

J. N. D.

(Notes of an Address.)



STANDING, STATE, AND PRACTICE.

THE standing is God's free gift to me. It is what He has done for the believer, or what He has given him.

The state is the divine consequence in me through the Spirit, in accordance with the standing. The light is His grace; the consequence is that I have light; that is my state. Practice is that I act in keeping with the state which has been conferred on me by the Spirit in accordance with the standing.

Now let us see how in every case, grace, that is free gift, received by faith, confers a state, and then follows practice in keeping with the state.

The light of the gospel of the glory of Christ shines, and God opens the eyes to receive it. That is pure grace. The state of the sinner is changed. Like the thief on the cross, or like Saul of Tarsus, he fears God, and the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; his

148 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

state is changed ; he believes, the grace is apprehended. The state is quite new ; there is repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Then follows practice ; he prays.

Now suppose a sinner heard of the grace of God, and contented himself with saying, as many have done, I admit it is true, I believe it ; as a blind man might say, I believe the sun shines ; and yet there is no change of state, no alteration. There is not really faith—a divine work, or he would have had as a consequence of the grace, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

He says he believes, but is as before ; in fact contenting himself with being a nominal believer. The mighty work of God in the soul is altogether unknown ; there is no state in keeping with the grace professedly accepted, but there is a practical denial of the greatness and blessing of the grace, because there is no consequence from it, any more than from a dream.

Now the truth is that when grace is received there is a divine work in the soul ; a fear of God at first, and then comes relief when there is faith in Christ, “Whom God hath set forth a propitiation [mercy-seat] through faith in his blood . . . for the remission of sins.” (Rom. iii. 25.) There is then the consequence of grace

STANDING, STATE, AND PRACTICE. 149

in the soul, there is the sense of forgiveness. And when we believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, then we are justified. There is no freedom from the judgment of death and the power of the enemy before justification. It is God that justifieth; and being justified by faith we have peace with God, an entirely new state, which we could not have if we were not justified; but being justified by the grace of God, we have consequent thereon the new and blessed state of "peace." I could not have the state of peace if I had not received the grace that Christ was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. If there were not the grace, the free gift, there would not be the state that is attached to the recipient of it. The grace would be of no use to me if it did not confer a state. If I am not in "peace," a new state, I am not justified. I either have the form of godliness without the power thereof, or I am still seeking peace.

It is clearly impossible that so great a work of God, namely, turning a soul from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, could be without, as a consequence, a remarkable and singular change of state; and this state has two parts: one is, "How God is known through Christ;" the other, "Our place in Christ before Him." The former with

150 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

reference to our being justified, we read of in Romans v. 1-11 ; the other in Romans viii.

Now, it is vain for a man to say he is justified and at the same time to admit that neither is God known to him through the work of Christ, nor does he know his place in Christ before God. It is all God's work ; the grace is His. He has provided the blessing, and He, blessed be His name ! knows it will affect me as He had appointed ; so that, if the blessing is not known, the grace is not apprehended. It is only "a name that thou livest and art dead."

It is evident that the practice follows, as in Romans. How could I please God in my walk and ways before He was made known to me through the work of Christ, and before I knew my place in Christ before Him ? Simply impossible. I do not say that many believers do not try to do good works, and to please Him in their walk and ways ; but it is evident that it must be, however sincere, without any personal and intelligent direction from Himself.

Now, if the consequence or blessing is so marked in the reception of the gospel, which is altogether outside and apart from me, through the work of Christ, and only made known to me in absolute grace, how much more so will it be as we learn our association with Christ, and also our relationship to Him. I do not doubt that in the reception of each there is the state with two parts :

STANDING, STATE, AND PRACTICE. 151

one, as we have seen how God is known ; and secondly, our place in Christ before Him. If I know association with Christ, the Minister of the holy places, who is not ashamed to call us brethren, I have "boldness" to enter the holiest of all through the blood of Jesus. God is known to me as the One whom I can approach in His own unclouded light and unsullied purity.

Thus He is known to me, and if He is not thus known to me, I do not know association with Christ, I have not apprehended the grace conferred on me, even that I am in company with Him as were the sons of Aaron in company with Aaron. I have not boldness to enter the holiest, nor do I know the other part of the state, how I myself personally can draw near with a true heart and in full assurance of faith. Assuredly if I am not in this state, I have neither the heart nor the power to enter on the race to run on to where He is. We find the same, and even more distinctly, if we turn to Colossians. The Colossians had received the gospel, and the apostle commends them for their faith in Christ Jesus and love to all the saints. For these the apostle had a great conflict that they might enter on the state which the knowledge of the mystery would confer on them ; the knowledge of Christ as Head of the body. First their standing : "Ye are complete in him who

152 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

is the head of all principality and power." Secondly as to themselves, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the flesh." The state is described in chapter iii. 1-11, where, as risen with Christ, you enter on a state completely unknown before. "Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." You enter on moral circumcision, virtually accepting what has been effected for you in the circumcision of Christ, the putting off of the body of the flesh; and there is that new state where Christ is everything and in all. Then follows the practice, which becomes such a state both in the assembly and in the domestic circle.

Lastly, in Ephesians we find the same truth and in the same order confirmed and expanded. We have, in chapter i., God's calling; His purpose and will that we should be individually in nature and life suited to Him, "holy and without blame before him in love," together with the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, and accepted in the Beloved, we are united to Him who is Head over all things to the church. This is the grace, His free favour which belongs to every believer. But mark the blessing from this immense favour—God's calling. It is not merely a great elevation, a position, without conferring any sensible benefit or gain on me. Nay, on the

STANDING, STATE, AND PRACTICE. 153

contrary, in chapter iii., I learn the state I am in because of His calling. We get first how God is known to us in Christ. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, and rooted and grounded in love we can survey the expanse of glory; and secondly, knowing the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, we are filled with all the fulness of God. What a state! Then follow chapters iv.-vi., practice of the highest order. The state of power in which we are placed in association with Christ in heaven enables us to be here for Him in every relation, both in the assembly and in our home circle, while, at the same time, to withstand all the power of the enemy.

The more we study this subject the more we shall be interested in it, and also be judged by it. That is light which does make manifest. In this day, when knowledge is assumed to be faith, it is of all importance to own that the grace of God, as it is received, has a peculiar and singular blessing or consequence by the Spirit in keeping with itself. The first epistle of John was written not that the believers should have eternal life, but that they should *know* that they have it: not the grace, the gift merely, but the blessing of the gift. It is said, "Receive not the grace of God in vain."

Each gift has its own distinct blessing. No grace or gift can produce the gain which is derived from another gift.

154 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

The sunlight and the air are natural free gifts, but the sun, however powerful in itself, or however fully appreciated, could not produce the same blessing which the air does ; neither could air produce what the sun does. Each is distinct and peculiar, or in keeping with its nature. This explains much of the condition of each of us. We may think we have entered into the grace of the Ephesians, but in very deed, however we may know it in theory, our state proves that we have only, in a small degree, entered into the grace in Romans. There cannot be the state without apprehending in faith the standing, or the grace.

The defect, though it is seen in the state, is traceable to an imperfect apprehension of the standing, and in order to rectify the state we must be assured of the standing. The one who is occupied with his state in order to correct it, is self-occupied ; on the other hand, when one is exclusively occupied with the standing, he is heady and high-minded. The standing and the state go together.

The Lord give us to see that it is by the grace of God we are what we are, so that positive results may flow from the state consequent on His grace, and we may be able to add, "His grace was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." J. B. S.

“THE WORD OF THE LORD.”

(JER. XXII. 29.)

ASSUREDLY it becomes the Christian, at a moment like this, to hear “the word of the Lord.” In one sense, who else can hear it? He is pleased, in His great grace, to open the blind eye and unstop the deaf ear by such a solemn and loud-speaking call as the present prevailing sickness, we had almost said plague. Oh that this might be the case in many instances at this time, will be the earnest cry and prayer of faith.

The Christian is not of the earthly family *dispensationally*, nor of the world *morally*; by Christ's death the Christian is crucified to the world and the world to him, his resorting to the world is doing violence to the cross, he is not of the world *even as Christ is not of the world*. Alas! how little this barrier of death is owned, even *in doctrine*, and hence the failure *in practice*. Alas! too many of God's saints belong to the world *on principle*; the *church-world* and the *world-church*, is the order of the day; the *religion of the world* and the *world of religion* keep step in giant stride and funeral march in these last times.

The Christian has a *positive* status, as well as a *negative* one; he belongs positively to

156 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

heaven now, he is going to where in *faith* and *spirit* and *affection* he is already ; he is blessed now with all spiritual blessings *in the heavens* in Christ ; this is not the position nor the description of the position of the earthly family. I feel that this introduction must be entered into, rightly to understand the application to a Christian now of the Lord's voice in either pestilence, or famine, or sword.

If I understand correctly what is the singular and unique position of a Christian, I could not apply to him, save *in a moral way*, passages of scripture which contemplate directly the earthly people—yet in a moral way such a passage as that which heads this paper does very distinctly apply, as well as all such kindred passages.

Further, I am assured that in proportion to the departure of the Christian from his own proper position, calling, and hope, so is intensified the call of the word of the Lord in this moral sense.

Is it then not gross darkness to be now insensible to the present rod, His appointed stroke ?

Let us not fear to plainly state the truth. The so-called church and the world have become one Christendom, which is fast ripening for judgment. The world is an empty, lying pageant. The so-called church loves to be patronised by it, and caressed by it, and in

"THE WORD OF THE LORD."

157

return, adopts its principles, habits, and ways. Alas! how many true, beloved saints and servants of Christ seem asleep or indifferent to this. Has, then, the fact that "the Lord's voice crieth unto the city" no solemn moral significance at this time in this direction?

The angel of death has been stalking through the land, neither prince nor peasant is spared; it has been a solemn moment, may God open His people's ears to hear. Oh, is He not saying to us, "hear ye the rod." Shall we listen, shall we hear? One passage of scripture very distinctly comes before me in connection with the Lord's word to Christians, namely, "Hear me, ye Levites; sanctify now yourselves, and carry forth *the filthiness out of the holy place.*" (2 Chron. xxix. 5.) It is in this very especial way, at this present moment, the Lord's voice speaks to Christians. How solemn to see the tendency on all sides to coquette with the world and adopt its ways, both in the worship and service of God. Alas! some who speak loudly against it in worship, seem inclined to adopt it in measure, in service, and christian work. How fully the heart responds to the following words of a servant of Christ, just recently put forth: "Now I desire to profess my full confidence in God's word, as the only means by which God's work is to be done. I believe that it is still 'the power of God unto salvation to every one that

158 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

believeth.' (Rom. i. 16.) That it is still 'able to make wise unto salvation' (2 Tim. iii. 15); that 'it shall accomplish that which Jehovah pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto he sent it.' (Isa. lv. 11.) I am not tempted therefore to adopt any of the modern methods of the nineteenth century, which all proceed on the implied assumption that the word of God has grown weak and has lost its ancient power. No, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.' I have no apologies to make for the truth of His word, and I have no commission to treat with its enemies. I am charged to 'preach the word,' and bidden to have faith in its power, while forewarned that the time will come when men will not endure 'sound doctrine.' (2 Tim. iv. 2, 3.) It is not my business therefore to study the tastes of such by what are called attractive services, which mean that the music is to get longer and longer and the sermons shorter and shorter, because the time has come when 'men will not endure sound doctrine.'"

Thank God for such a faithful, outspoken testimony. The need for a firm front as to this is now plainly seen. Alas! there are Christians who seem, just now, to be "drifting away," an easy but dangerous process; some time back, the scriptures of truth, the word of God, seemed to be their *one weapon*, the word of God and the Holy Ghost their *one confidence*; but now they

“THE WORD OF THE LORD.” 159

seem disposed to go with the times and tide, and the thin edge of the wedge of the world is pressed in in some little way, in some innocent innovation—a musical instrument, or a magic lantern, or some *little beginning*—avowedly to meet the growing taste of the age, which ever is the precursor of greater and further departure. O beloved fellow-christians, let us hear the voice of the Lord at this time! Is He not speaking loudly to His own? Is He not distinctly saying, “Consider your ways;” “Carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place”?

Alas! has not christian position and testimony become neutralised by world-bordering and worldliness, in *the spirit of it* as in *the letter of it*, and is there not a great danger of being seduced by the intoxicating cup that is passing around—the mixed “cup of fornication”?

May the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, called, commissioned, and sent by Him from glory, lift up their voices without fear, may they see that none are out of reach of the danger. They must expect to be reproached and despised as not up to date, and so forth; be it so: may they prefer the contempt and sneer of the world and the worldling to their smile and approbation; it is the part of the servant of Christ to look for and to seek his dear Master’s approval, and to await that day when all shall be made manifest.

160 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

May the voice of the Lord be heard at this time, *in the city*, in the midst of man's proud haunts of business and of pleasure, with the corresponding recklessness and indifference to God; but let us remember that if the saints of God refuse to hear it, in its moral application to them, they are effectually helping to bind faster upon the poor ungodly world the chains of darkness flung around it, as well as to stop the ears of men to the solemn cry addressed to the earth at this time: "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord."

W. T. T.



DELIVERANCE IS A NEW STATE.

DELIVERANCE is a new state—not only the forgiveness of sins of the old—as Israel not only escaped judgment by the blood on the doorposts; but were wholly out of Egypt at the Red Sea—where God was Deliverer.

So we are not only secured from judgment, but out of the flesh, sin and the world, when through the work of Christ, we have received the Spirit through faith—we are not only born again, but have been crucified with Christ and are dead.

Now Christ has become my life—the new "I" which lives to God, and to Him only—and I reckon myself dead.

DELIVERANCE IS A NEW STATE. 161

It is a mistake to say, when we are emptied of self, we can thus live. It is alive from the dead we yield ourselves to God. We discover then our state, what the flesh is—not guilt. I am not a debtor to the flesh, and being set free in the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus—I am able (for Christ's power is there) to hold the flesh for dead.

There is no reason why one single thought in my mind should come from the flesh or from anything but the life of Christ which is in me, in the power of the Spirit. There is no excuse if such do arise. There are two elements in this state, namely, having put off the old man, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, and having the Holy Ghost dwelling in me. Hence God's way of acting is my measure of God—Christ, God manifested in a man, being the expression and model of this. I have perfect liberty in divine favour, loved as Christ was, loved and knowing it, and I may and ought to be occupied with what was revealed in Him, my affections being engaged there, and I filled with the Spirit. But as this is a state of dependence, diligent seeking of grace alone can keep us thus, and, in fact, in many things we all offend. But my normal state is not grieving the Spirit, and so in God's presence being able to think of Him, and not of self.

162 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

No state here is the object of the saint. He is not alive in the world, and he looks, having the life, to be conformed to Christ in glory, and if he thinks of himself at all, it is only to judge himself. But, I believe in *complete deliverance* from the law of sin which is in our members, that I am called to be filled with the Spirit which would not allow thoughts from the flesh to arise in the mind, nor anything that would assail the conscience, but would make us live in the atmosphere of the divine presence. The practical realising this is by always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, and this God helps us by delivering us to death by trial, that this may be fully made good. (2 Cor. iv.)

I allow therefore no captivity to sin, no dominion of it. This, even when *hopeless* as to getting the victory, we find to be ours in Christ, and there all has come from the Spirit, and all is fulness of joy with God.

The only normal state of the Christian then is "unclouded fellowship" with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ—and the *uninterrupted* manifestation of the life of Christ in his body, and when in God's presence, not having to think of sin *in himself*, but freedom to think of God and what He is—he is divinely free through and in Christ. But he has no thought of a present state of *perfection* or purity (only the Spirit is ungrieved), and has not to make him think of

NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH. 163

himself, for his only owned state is conformity to Christ in glory—God having wrought him for that selfsame thing in virtue of which he purifies himself as He is pure, and if he does think of himself he has the consciousness of his not being like Christ as he would, but is glad to have to think of Christ only. But purifying himself is not consciousness that he is pure. His conversation is in heaven, his motives there, and hence necessarily if he thinks of himself and conscious of shortcomings, though he be not troubled by any present thought of sin, but is able to think of Christ, a return to think of himself is for him *already failure*.

J. N. D.



NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH.

“NEVERTHELESS we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

The final part of the second Epistle of Peter is very solemn, and at the same time very blessed to the believer.

The judgment of God is to fall upon the earth, and in such a manner that at the end everything shall be destroyed. The characteristic feature of the last days is alluded to here, and we find scoffers asking, “Where is the promise of his

164 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

coming?" When scoffing and mockery become general, we may be sure that the end is nigh, and the apostle speaks not only of the setting-up of the power of Christ, when He shall come to reign, but looks at the whole period of judgment (embracing the millennial reign) as going on to that day when the heavens shall pass away with noise, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

In the midst of the existing state of things, the believer looks for new heavens and a new earth: he belongs already in spirit to an entirely new order of things, and it is of great importance that all his conduct in the present time should be a practical test to this blessed expectation.

When public mockery as to God's great dealings and the Lord's coming in judgment, becomes general, then we have a certain sign of the last days. In the last century the doctrines of Voltaire carried away the upper classes, but we are living in a time when scoffing has infected every rank of society. The fall of man is denied; the deluge is questioned, and it is publicly taught that the solemn intervention of God by the flood was only a "local inundation" alluded to in tradition as the flood of Deucalion. Men are wilfully ignorant, that is, they *will* not admit that a holy God once destroyed the whole world by water; and that a still more terrible judg-

NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH. 165

ment is yet to come, when the heavens and earth shall be destroyed by fire.

We live in the midst of a scene which shall close in one vast conflagration. I think some one suggested once that a fire insurance company would have said that there was not much to fear for Sodom, there was so much water in that fertile plain; but Sodom was burned, and so shall this earth perish. I recollect, some years ago, passing through Paris with an old Christian, and saying that it seemed difficult to picture to oneself that all the beautiful city should be burned up; still so it is, and we are living in the last days, and though our hope be heavenly, and we are waiting for our Lord to come to call us out of this scene, before judgment fall (our hope is alluded to in the first chapter of this epistle); yet it is a very solemn thing to be living, as witnesses for God, amidst the present state of infidelity.

I should very much wish, if I could say a few words on the new heavens and new earth. I believe that it refers here in Peter to the eternal state; no doubt the passage is quoted from Isaiah lxxv.; and there it applies to the millenium.

But Peter goes further, and to understand the verse that I have quoted, I think we should compare Revelation xxi. 1, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven

166 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea." The word of God opens before us a vista of eternal stability and blessing. This eternal state of things in Revelation xxi. is seen by John, in the Spirit, after the close of our Lord's reign, after the judgment of the great white throne, when the last enemy, death, is overcome. It has often been pointed out that the church is shining in the very pristine beauty that she had before the thousand years began ; no change can take place in the eternal splendour of the holy city, new Jerusalem, and she is represented again here as coming down from God out of heaven in all her beauty.

What I wish to call attention to is this : that great as the blessing and glory of the new earth will be, we belong to a still higher sphere of glory and blessing, and when the eternal state shall have begun, the new Jerusalem is represented as coming down from God out of heaven. With this in mind, we shall be kept from any wish to follow the spirit of the present age, on the earth in its present state.

What a difference between the new earth and the present earth grown old in iniquity ! There shall be no more sea, no more fluctuating uncertainty, no more revolutions, but all established in eternal stability. The judgment is at hand. Men may speak of their eternal city, of the forty centuries of the Pyramids, of the un-

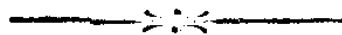
NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH. 167

changing sphinx, &c., but the end is nigh, and all the glory of the earth in its present state is about to perish, and certain judgment fall upon everything.

Are we really looking for "such things," beloved brethren? Has not all God's discipline had this happy effect upon us, that is to separate us in power from all that is perishable, and to make us diligent, that we be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless?

He has formed us already for a new and eternal state of things ; in spirit we belong to it ; we are a new creation. As we go on through this iniquitous world, where every day fresh exercise awaits us, we sigh for the time when righteousness shall dwell where iniquity is now rampant ; we await the new heavens that shall be illuminated by the glory of the new Jerusalem descending from God, and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. May all our conduct, our lives, our words testify that this is indeed the case !

E. L. B.



168 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

HOME AFTER LABOUR.

LORD JESUS, I would dwell in Thee,
And nestle in Thy love ;
Midst desert lands Thou ledest me,
Whilst Thou art still above ;
Though weaker than a bruised reed,
Oft faint beyond a sigh,
Yet "Thou remainest," still "the same,"
Unchanged Thou'rt ever nigh.

My blessed Lord I'd hear Thy words,
Thy heavenly voice so sweet,
When fever'd is the aching brow,
And worn the toiling feet ;
I'd rest with Thee in peace and sleep,
In calmness I'd abide,
My head upon Thy bosom keep,
Whilst watching by my side.

O Saviour, Lord, what joy and rest,
Shut in alone with Thee—
Shut out from all the din and strife,
My Christ my all shall be.
Assured Thy love will perfect soon
Thy work of grace alone,
Then oh ! the pure, unchequered joy
Of sharing Thy blest home.

W. T. T.



THE HEAVENLY COMFORTER AND THE HEAVENLY HOME.

(JOHN XVI. 7.)

IT is very solemn to reflect upon a fact to which attention has been very pointedly directed long ere this, namely, that the more the truth comes out in its clearness and fulness, and the more developed becomes the state of the external professing church, it is only too evident that in the dark ages, prior to the time of the Reformation, the full truth of the gospel, the Holy Ghost as the present power of the church of God, and the present standing and calling before God of the Christian individually, was not possessed or known.

After the long dark reign of Popery, with its records of monstrosity and iniquity, the blessed God in His grace wrought by the Reformation, which was indeed as daybreak after a weary night of darkness. Then it was that a partial recovery was reached, as regards the gospel of His grace; and the value of Christ's blessed work was brought to light; yet how much it was vitiated by what has been termed the "suckers" of Popery, those who have weighed the history must know. It is well known that the theology of justification, at the time of the Reformation, set forth God as an appeased Judge, and Christ as a Saviour, in whose heart

170 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the love was. This was the extent to which it went, there was no thought of the presence on earth in person of God the Holy Ghost, consequent upon full and accomplished redemption, and Christ glorified as Man at the right hand of God.

In these latter times, God has, in infinite grace, again wrought, and the result of His sovereign goodness is the truth now clearly and plainly set forth, namely, that God the Holy Ghost, a divine Person, now has come down to *dwell*, whether in the believer's body individually, or in the whole house of God on earth ; so that Christianity is *characterised* by His presence and indwelling. The scripture is plain and distinct as to this ; so much so, that it is written, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." (Rom. viii. 9.) In setting this forth it is thus described : "It is not a question of what he may be afterwards, or whether he is a sheep, or, so to speak, *αἰτῶ* ; but even if God be working in him to lead him to Christ, he is not yet *His* in fact until he has His Spirit."

..... "All men are Christ's in a certain sense ; all His sheep are His own in another : but none can be said to be His when they have not His Spirit." (Letters of J. N. D.)

Now the first great truth which is presented by the blessed Lord in connection with the promised sending of the Comforter, *is His own*

THE HEAVENLY COMFORTER.

171

departure out of this world. What a thought for the heart—the *absence* of Christ! The manner in which the blessed One speaks of it and refers to it, is worthy of our adoring contemplation. He was about to “depart out of this world to the Father;” again, “I go my way to him that sent me;” “I go away and come again unto you. If ye loved me ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.” Think of all that these precious words bring before the soul as to the Father and the Son; and the infinite grace that gives us to be interested in His own glory, in His happiness, and in it, to find our own.

Alas, beloved reader, how little is it so! What a small thing it seems to say, “He is not here,” and how well we all seem to get on without Him here, save, indeed, when some stormy wind or wild commotion shakes our earth-bound nest; then it may be in some poor sense, selfishness asserts itself in an expressed distress, not because He is not here, but because of the contrary winds and waves. But oh, that we might be conscious of the blank *for His own sake!* Then, and not till then, shall we enter into the greatness of His gift, sent by Himself as the ascended, glorified Man.

Further, it is the sense of His absence here that induces in the heart the affectionate desire to know Him where He is, in His own proper

172 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

glory, which can only be by the Holy Ghost sent by Him from the Father, as well the longing to be with Him, which may be at any moment by His coming again to take us to Himself, or by our departing and being with Christ, which is far better. In this longing, which has Christ for its motive and object, we see the reflection of that desire of His own heart, thus so tenderly expressed, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me : for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John xvii. 24.) Thus then we see how that the absence of our blessed Lord from this world is presented in the forefront of our subject. There are three points in which this expediency of His going away will appear to us.

First : It was only by the Holy Ghost they could know about, and have communion with Him in the heavenly glory He was going into. I need not say that it was only by the Holy Ghost they could be united to Him in heaven ; but that I do not treat of here, as it does not form the subject of John's writings ; it is, as we know, fully unfolded and applied in those of Paul.

Now this is a truth of the deepest moment for the heart sensible of the absence here of its beloved Lord. Its path here is one of increasing *retirement* and *isolation* because He is not

here, not that it would be inactive in His interests, for they, in truth, now constitute the one object of the life of strangership where He is not ; Himself in heaven, His interests on earth.

Next, the expediency of His departing is set forth in the fact that they should have on earth God the Holy Ghost, both *in* and *with* them ; thereby the testimony of Christ's deep affection and love for His own would be maintained, and by the Holy Ghost all this would be both entered into and enjoyed. Moreover, the blessed Spirit dwelling in them would be the source and power of those divine and heavenly affections of which Christ Himself is the object.

Thirdly, by the Holy Ghost alone as the divine power, suited testimony would be given here on earth. This we know on the authority of the risen Lord Himself in these words, " But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.)

Let us note this well, that a *new power* was to fill and energise the vessels of testimony, whether the testimony related to the earthly side of Christ's glory, or whether it pertained to the heavenly glory, in which He, the blessed One, now is ; of whatever character or nature the witness was, the power for rendering it should

174 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

be the Holy Ghost in and with the vessel. The twelve were to testify of what they had seen of Jesus *on earth*, Paul was to witness of Him whom He had seen *in heavenly glory*. We may here well ask how far have we divinely taken in the immensity of this grace? The heavenly Saviour and Lord is, alas, but little known *as such*. The drift of the present tide is *this side* of the cross and death of our precious Lord and Master; the Lord knows how little prepared any of us are for such words as these, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." (2 Cor. v. 16.) Oh that His own voice, in its mighty power by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, might be heard clearly in all our souls, saying as it were to all of us, "Let us go over to *the other side*;" and then assuredly, like the people in John vi., we shall find Him in true heavenly order, "*on the other side*."

There is one other point of real comfort in connection with the presence of the Comforter consequent upon the absence of Christ. It is striking how, in the Gospel of John, the *personality* of the blessed Spirit is brought out, when the absence of Jesus is fully announced by the blessed Lord Himself. He is set forth rather as *power* in the early chapters, but in the last chapters He is spoken of as a divine Person throughout, He is the Paraclete (Παρακλητος), the Comforter.

THE HEAVENLY COMFORTER.

175

This term, Paraclete, occurs five times in the New Testament ; four of these are in the Gospel of John, and applied to the blessed Spirit ; once we find it in the Epistle of John (1 John ii.), and there it is applied to Christ, as we know Advocate there is Paraclete.

All this is most interesting to the heart, as bringing before us in a very distinct and striking way, His *personality*. Oh that our hearts may more sensibly appreciate the companionship of such a heavenly Guide, and rejoice in such comfort as He brings ! Further, this blessed Person is found abundantly set forth as such in the Acts, called those of the apostles, but in reality of the Holy Ghost ; there we see Him ever in *personality*, supernatural, supreme, directing, controlling the servants of Christ in everything, thus establishing, in part, the words of the Lord Jesus Himself in John xiv., "When he the Spirit of truth is come." Some at least, who read this, will note what force His personality derives from the expression "*he*" not *it* : in the language of revelation *ἐκεῖνος* (he).

It is not possible to over-rate, at the present moment the value and importance of this great truth ; the presence here on earth of a divine Person, sent from Christ in His own proper glory in heaven ; this, along with accomplished redemption and the coming of the Lord, form the great distinguishing *present characteristic* of

176 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Christianity, and its *specific future* as well. It is no question of acquirement of knowledge in any sense, but the heavenly position and power of the Christian ; and Christianity cannot be apprehended, or entered into in faith where this great truth has not its place ; and I judge that, at the present moment, there is a tendency to let it slip, and thus to drop down to an order other than what is heavenly, an order which does not "go beyond earthly things, though earthly things with God—the desert now [not Canaan], and the desert to blossom as a rose, but not Canaan." Surely the Lord would have all our hearts exercised before Him as to this, that the heavenly Comforter might conduct our souls in faith to that blest place where Jesus is, fill and satisfy them with Him who is there, so as to detain our affections in that scene itself, and enable us in this world where Jesus is not, without effort of any kind, without a gloomy or sad face, but simply and naturally, in heavenly brightness, to reflect its light on all the darkness and dreariness around. W. T. T.

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST AND SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE.

THERE are two points which are on my mind to say a word about. First, the way in which the Lord's own presence orders the path and gives character to testimony. Secondly, the way in

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST, ETC. 177

which personal attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ gives intelligence in everything. The way to get spiritual intelligence as to all the things of God, is to have Christ as everything to the heart.

I turn to the Old Testament with regard to the first point, for there you get a striking history of the total failure of man. Stephen alludes to it in Acts vii., proving that man, dealt with by the law as responsible, was an entire failure, and at the cross man was fully rejected. Man *is* lost, but the process he goes through is to find it out. To get a clear apprehension of divine things, we must see that we are lost, and if that is the case, we are not in a state of probation. We may get the knowledge of sin by the law, but the thing a man must be brought to the knowledge of is, that he is *lost*! "If one died for all, then were all *dead*." This is a very solemn position to recognise ourselves in, but it is not the first thing we learn; we learn first what we have *done*. If you ask persons if they are sinners, they say, We are *all* sinners: but if you say, Have you sinned enough to be *lost*? they say, Oh dear no, I hope not. In the death of Christ, man rejected the grace that had come in to him, and the One who had all the promises. The Gentiles were lawless, and the Jews broke the law; but when Christ came, there was a despising of mercy.

The condition of man from Adam, was that of sinners outside the garden. When God had given

178 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the law, it was broken—and when there was “none righteous, no not one,” God comes into the world in love, and man turns Him out (though, of course, He fulfilled His own purposes at the same time). *That* was more than sinning against Him, it was positive hatred. First you get lawlessness, lust, and self-will—then lawbreaking—and then the positive rejection of God come in grace. The history of man is thus closed, and God begins on His own footing. It is not now what *you* have done, but as was said to Israel, “What hath *God* wrought?” The only possible relationship with God, depends now on what God has wrought.

First, the people make a golden calf—giving up God: that is always the first thing man does. When God sets up something good, man spoils it. Take Adam in the garden of Eden—take Noah; no sooner out of the ark, than he gets drunk—then the law, it is scarcely given before it is broken. Aaron too, he never puts on the garments of glory and beauty after the day of consecration. So with Solomon, no sooner established in the kingdom, than he brings in idolatry—the same with Nebuchadnezzar, the first great Gentile power. But it is a distinct thing when God comes in grace, for they despise it altogether. Government began on the part of God with Noah (Gen. ix. 5, 6), and went on till His Son came—they rejected Him, and then all was over.

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST, ETC. 179

There was a little supplement in the beginning of Acts ; but when Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, testifies to a glorified Christ, they reject a glorified Christ, as they had rejected Christ in incarnation.

But you get everything in which man failed set up again in Christ—failure in the first man, and God glorified in the second, where He had been dishonoured in the first.

At the golden calf, the trial of man was really over. “Yea, he took up the tabernacle of Moloch,” Stephen quotes from Amos. That was the root that produced such horrible fruit afterwards. One finds in Moses what grace did. The Lord says to Moses, “*Thou* hast found grace in my sight, I know thee by name.” And Moses says, “Consider that this nation is thy people,” he pleads for them. There you get the fruits of grace, in contrast with the effects of sin. Moses is a beautiful picture of grace, but not as Christ was. God says to Moses that He will destroy the people in a moment, and they were to put off their ornaments, that He might know what to do. But Moses says, “If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us ; *for it is a stiff-necked people.*” That is just what we have to do. Why must I insist on having God with me ? Because, unless I have Him with me in His grace, I shall never get through the wilderness, with this terrible

180 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

flesh about me. I give as a reason, *Because I am so bad*; and through grace He can have me with Him, in spite of all my infirmities. I say, In my flesh dwells no good thing; if you do not go with me, I shall never get through the wilderness.

It is in separation that God deals in grace with Moses, in connection with his going outside the camp—the camp was deserted, but God was outside. The tabernacle had not really been set up then: so now, the building of God is not finished. There was nothing established on earth when He said, “I will build my church;” but He *did* establish a church on earth, responsible in its place, which has failed altogether—that is why we speak of ruin. The Lord says, “*I* will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;” they never will against what *He* builds. In 1 Corinthians iii. Paul puts the church under the responsibility of builders; but man fails in that, as he does in everything. Paul says to the elders of Ephesus, “After my departing, even of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things.” He says, As soon as I am gone you will see how it will all be; and we have seen. Not a stone that Christ builds but will be safe in glory. The history of the so-called church is a history of iniquity—if you read the history of the heathen, you will not find such a history as that of the church.

The thing that Moses does, is to take the

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST, ETC. 181

tabernacle and put it outside the camp. What was the effect of this? The *Lord* was in it ; He came down to the door and talked to Moses, as a man speaketh unto his friend. He comes down in the cloud ; *we* have something better, for we go into the cloud. God refers to this speaking face-to-face as a special favour shewn to Moses. When there had been this separation, Moses got such communion as he never had in the camp. When he was up in the mountain, and God tells him that Israel has made a golden calf, and says, I will consume *them*, but will make of *thee* a great nation ; Moses says, No, Thy glory is concerned in that. Why? Because he identified God's people with God's glory ; and when he comes down from the mount, he identifies God's glory with God's people, and says "Slay every man his brother"—you get the very same principle in both cases. If I see God's people in evil, I say, You must be dealt with by the rod. Moses sets up the tabernacle outside the camp, and God owns it. There was no holy of holies then—it was a meeting place with the Lord. "And it came to pass that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle." They sought *the* LORD, that is what governed the whole. The golden calf was in the camp ; the Lord was in the tabernacle, which was not then set up in its completeness.

You will see what the communications were

182 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

with Moses at this time. (Ex. xxxiii. 13.) "Show me now thy way, that I may know thee." There you get knowledge. Then "That I may find grace in thy sight"—not that he had not found grace, but he wanted to know it every moment. "Consider that this nation is thy people." He never forgets God's people, though God would not call them His people. God's presence is the next thing. Moses must know God's way and have His presence. (Ver. 16.) They had sought the Lord when the tabernacle was set up outside the camp, but Moses now wants His manifest presence. Here I find that God's presence was the centre that governed the whole, that stamped the character of the whole thing, and if you have not that, you have *nothing*. It was when the sin was manifested in the camp, that Moses insists on the Lord's presence. It was God's way and God's presence that were to separate them from all the people on the earth. Moses gets bolder in faith, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." But he could not see His glory, there was no atonement then—the cloud was not His glory. We have here two principles—one, the total failure of what God had set up, then we get the Lord's presence and the Lord's rest.

Two characters are brought out here, Moses and Joshua. Joshua did not leave the tabernacle, that is where the difference is between,

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST, ETC. 183

them. Joshua is the figure of Christ spiritually at the head of His people. We must be as near the Lord as Moses was, and the effect of nearness to Christ is love to all the people of God, even if they go wrong ; but, at the same time, if I am near Christ I cannot *go with* any who are going wrong. It is only so far as we know how to separate the precious from the vile, that the Lord says we shall be as His mouth, but we must be close to Christ to be enabled to do it according to His mind. I am speaking now of broad principles.

The first point I desired to shew you was, how the Lord's presence governed everything ; now I will shew you some instances of personal attachment to Christ being the origin of intelligence. I was greatly struck with Mary Magdalene's history in John xx. The disciples go to their own homes, but there was no home for Mary without her Lord, and she stands there weeping. Though she turns and sees Jesus, at first she thinks He is the gardener. Her attachment to Him leaves her all alone with Him ; it will lead to communion with others, but there *must* be the soul alone with the Lord. The other women came early in the morning, but *she* came while it was yet dark. The disciples had gone home, but that would not do for Mary ; she had not got Christ, and her heart could get nothing, if it did not get Him, and she is the first to whom

184 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

He reveals Himself, and makes her the messenger of intelligence, for the disciples as yet knew not the scriptures. To her He says "Touch me not." He did not mind the other women touching Him, but He says to her, That is not for you yet, "But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." This is the first time He calls them *brethren*. Mary got the truth from Himself; He tells it to the disciples, but it is *by Mary* He tells it. There I get the secret of divine knowledge, and so you will always find it. She was wrong in one sense, in seeking the living among the dead, but there was this thorough attachment to Christ, and the consequence is that she gets the first revelation of Christ. She was the vessel of knowledge *because she was attached to Christ*.

Take the woman who was a sinner, in Luke vii., there was thorough attachment to Christ, and what was the consequence of this poor wretched creature's love? There was light, the knowledge of complete salvation, whilst the self-righteous Simon, delighting in his own heart, was in perfect darkness—does not think God's Son even a prophet! But the woman loved much, and the Lord turns to her and says, "Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." One sees forgiveness, salvation, and peace, connected with that poor creature's

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST, ETC. 185

attachment to Christ. Her heart had been won to confidence, and she gets salvation revealed.

Take another instance. There was Martha and there was Mary. Martha was much cumbered about much serving, but Mary was sitting at the Lord's feet, hearing His word: just what He wanted. And what is the consequence of this learning? That she knew His mind. When Lazarus is dead, Martha goes out in the haste of her temper to meet the Lord, but soon returns to call Mary, saying, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Martha had the consciousness that she was not equal to this intercourse with Christ, so she goes and calls her sister. With Martha, there was no entering into the mind of Christ, but when He sees Mary weeping, He is moved deeply and groans in spirit. So when He comes to Bethany, it was this same Mary who poured the ointment on His head—her *heart* did it. The disciples think it a mistake, but He says, "Let her alone"—she knows all about it. It was not that she could have told prophetically what was the meaning of it, but her heart had got the instinct; she anointed Him for His burying.

Now look at the disciples in John xiii. *Peter* could not ask Christ the question about His betrayal. Why? Because He was not on His breast. John did not place himself on Christ's bosom to get knowledge, but in being there he

186 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

got it. As the apostle Paul expresses it, "We have the mind of Christ." John was in the place where he could get Christ's ear—know Christ's secrets. But now all God's wisdom and power are in Christ, and to have the understanding of them, we must *have* Christ; it is when to our hearts He is practically *all*, that we get into His secrets. Then you are in the right place, and the right thing is done as He would have it done. I shall never get "Shew me now thy way," unless I have Christ—unless He is *everything* to me. Whether the habits we indulge in, or the things in which we are walking, are grieving to Christ, or whether they are like Christ, we have to look to; because when we come to the end, there will be no life but what we have lived for Christ. The life that we live, answers to the Christ that we find when it is over. We would not like to be found not doing our duty, but faith makes present those unseen things, so that we live upon them, and we live Christ and can say, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

The Lord give us to find Him everything, beloved friends; He is far more full of love to us than we are to Him. May He lead our hearts closer to Himself, that we may get the secrets of His grace and wisdom, and then go forth in the Spirit, to live a life of practical sanctification to Christ, without losing the judgment of self! J. N. D.

(*Notes of an Address.*)

"OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY."

A CIRCUMSTANCE which aptly illustrates the great truth of Christianity happened not long since in a small village on the west coast of Scotland.

The sewerage of the place needed improvement and cleansing, and in the progress of the work, one of the principal wells in the town, from which pure water had been supplied to families in the vicinity, became polluted by contact with the sewer. As soon as the cause of the disaster was discovered, remedial measures were set going, in the hope of restoring the now foul spring to its original purity. Every effort which skill and ingenuity could suggest was taken into consideration, but to no purpose. It was thought possible to clean and wash out the old well as far as it could be seen ; but this was abandoned as useless. It was next suggested that if the old building of the well, sand, stones, &c., were removed, and a new well built instead thereof, the desired object would be attained. Many conflicting opinions prevailed as to the possibility of success. Should this plan be put into execution? Some were for, others against ; but at last it was resolved to call in a man whose occupation had been that of a constructor of wells, and whose experience justified the expectation that his counsel would

188 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

lead to a proper decision. Nor did he disappoint this hope, for when called and questioned, his reply was unequivocally, "It is not possible to procure pure and sweet water from a spring polluted as this is by sewerage, either by cleansing it out as far as you can see, or by removing the old building and constructing a new one. You must build a *new well*, with *new stones*, *new sand*, and in an *entirely new place*."

I happened to walk in as these facts were being told, and when I heard them, it struck me what a picture of Christianity that is! and it also struck me how little known or understood Christianity is! And now, do you not see, dear reader, how true all this is, that man in his natural state is the polluted *well*—defiled in his *spring*, his *nature* corrupt? What is to be done? God's heart is overflowing in its love for guilty man, while man's heart is overflowing with hatred to, or indifference towards, the blessed God. What is to be done? God must set that filthy well—man—aside. There is nought else for it. The spring is polluted at its *source*, man is irreparable. So God sends His own blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into this world, the scene of the dishonour done to Himself, as well as the witness of man's ruin and degradation, and *here*, where man had utterly failed to glorify God, He, that blessed One, that beautiful and perfect Man,

“OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY.” 189

perfectly glorified God. “I have glorified thee *on the earth*,” and thus exhibited what a *dependent and subject* man ought to be; and not only this, but as He walked this world He manifested God His Father: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” What a wonderful thought, “The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,” is the One who comes into this poor world, which was at a distance from God, to tell out the *secrets* of that bosom *towards poor man* in it; and inasmuch as judgment is resting on man by reason of sin, and that he is, moreover, walking this world an enemy of God, God’s Son bears the judgment, gives up His own life “as a ransom for all,” and at the same time presents His own personal excellency to God. Man’s history is now closed, the old well is declared as to its *standing* and *state* to be irremediable; but this is not all, for He who in grace thus gave Himself “is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,” and becomes now in Himself, thus risen, the new standing for the new well. Therefore is it written, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new, and all things are of God.”

Oh what wonderful words these last six are, “and all things are of God;” the position is of

190 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

God, the building on it of God, the builder God. Even as in the case of the well, the old position, mortar, stones, and sand were all set aside as good for nothing, so in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, man as a sinner, as a child of Adam, is entirely judged and set aside, not only his sins put away, but that which did them, his nature, is condemned, and in the Lord Jesus Christ risen from the dead, the new era or second volume of our history is opened, and on the title page of this volume is inscribed—"All things are of God."

May the Lord by His Spirit open hearts to see the great salvation of God, how He has settled the question of the old well with its corrupt spring, and what a magnificent well He has opened in His Son risen from the dead, the second Man, the last Adam, who has ended in His death the first man, and is now risen Head of the new creation ! W. T. T.



CRUCIFIXION AND MORTIFICATION.

"WHATSOEVER God doeth, it shall be for ever ; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." What rest there is in this ! It is the perfection of God and His work, which is the very essence of the gospel, and which gives such solidity to the heart of the believer in Christ.

CRUCIFIXION AND MORTIFICATION. 191

“By one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” He came, indeed, to do the “will of God ; by the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.” It is a perfect atonement, for it avails for the “sin of the world.” It is a finished work, for it can never, nor need ever, be repeated.

Christ crucified for sinners is the foundation of the gospel message : it is also the foundation of the sinner's peace. His work is indeed the very work of God. One mind and purpose were in the Father and the Son in counsel ; one heart in the carrying out the work of redemption ; and it is “for ever.” “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” The heart that trusts Christ's finished work, trusts that which, for time and for eternity, has met its deepest need.

But not only does the cross represent the death of Christ for the sinner when he believes, it also necessarily represents the penalty due to the sinner himself. If death and judgment be the sinner's due, whether that penalty be borne by himself or by his substitute, it is still his penalty that is paid ; and as the penalty is death, it is virtually his own death. Christ died not for His own (for He was without sin) but for

192 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the sins of others. In believing, then, we acknowledge that death is the "due reward of our deeds," the "wages of [our] sin," and we see the blessed Lord in love dying that very death for us upon the cross. When faith grasps this fuller view of substitution—of the atoning work of Christ—it can say indeed with Paul, "Our old man *was* crucified with him" (Rom. vi. 6); and again, "*I* am crucified with Christ." (Gal. ii. 20.) *His* cross thus becomes *mine*, *His* death *mine*. By faith I identify myself with Him there, and rest in the certainty that the judgment of God which passed upon Him there, has for ever passed away from me. "*I* am crucified with Christ." Can this act be repeated? Never. Christ can never be crucified again. "In that he died, he died unto sin *once*." The work of atonement has once and for ever been accomplished by Him, and God has once and for ever "laid on him the iniquities of us all." "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

Thus we find that the word of God contemplates the believer's crucifixion with Christ as a completed and never-to-be-repeated act. He died *once*, and we were then and there for ever identified with Him; and so it is said, "I am crucified with Christ." "They that are Christ's *have* crucified the flesh." "By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." "Our old man *was* crucified with him."

CRUCIFIXION AND MORTIFICATION. 193

Deeply important it is for the peace and establishment of our souls to grasp these conclusive statements of God's word. The believer is never told to crucify himself or his flesh ; it is always accounted to have been accomplished. "Whatsoever GOD doeth, it shall be *for ever*."

But we may be asked, "Is not sin still to be found within us ; are not the flesh and its workings to be subdued, and is there not a continual and necessary conflict to be maintained?" Yes, most assuredly, is the reply : "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Sin still exists, practically and experimentally, in our bodies, and in our members, and will do so as long as we are in this tabernacle ; but it is to be, and can be, judged and subdued ; and for this very reason, that we can already say we are "crucified with Christ." Because, by faith, we reckon ourselves dead with Him, and so "dead unto sin," we are called on to "*mortify* our members which are upon the earth," but not to *crucify* them.

In the sight of God, and in our own account by faith, we are crucified *with* Christ—never without Him. His crucifixion was ours. If we endured for ourselves what He on the cross endured for us, it would be eternal condemnation to us. But as to the "mortal body" and "members which are upon the earth," they are not said to

194 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

be crucified. The old mortal body and its members, prone to evil, are yet present, and the working of sin in them has to be subdued.

“Mortification” is the process by which they are to be controlled. “If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” (Rom. viii. 13.) “Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth.” To mortify is to *put to death*. We cannot put to death what is already dead. Mortification, then, is a perpetual killing, if one may so say, of the members and of their deeds, and this process goes on until the believer puts off his mortal body.

The believer can say—Because my old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth I might not serve sin, because God in His infinite grace has reckoned the death of Christ to my account, and I am in His sight as one who *has* died to sin—has died with Christ; because also through faith in Him—whose through grace I am—I have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts; because of these precious and peace-giving truths, I will with gladness and determination mortify every motion of sin in these members of my body which are yet upon the earth. By the power of the Spirit who dwells in me through God’s grace, and who enables me to judge between flesh and spirit, between good and evil, between the precious and the vile, I will

CRUCIFIXION AND MORTIFICATION. 195

bring the cross of Christ (whereon He died for me) to bear upon everything with which I come in contact, and on all the motives and desires of my heart and of my mind, and "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," will treat as worthy only of death all the workings of the flesh in my members, whether in thought, or word, or deed.

May God grant, then, to our readers to grasp the difference between "crucifixion"—Christ's finished work for us, the blessed and peace-giving truth of identification with Him on the cross, who hath loved us, and given Himself for us—and "mortification," the daily and hourly subduing, by the only divinely-appointed or possible means, of the workings of sin in the members. For, beloved friends, by death, and death alone, can the old man escape judgment; and this is by crucifixion. By death alone can sin in the members be overcome and subdued; and this is by mortification. "Knowing this, that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield

196 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” H. C. G. B.



OH, FOR A PERFECT TRUST!

(ISA. XXVI. 3; PHIL. IV. 6, 7.)

OH! for the peace of a perfect trust,
 My loving God, in Thee;
 Unwavering faith, that never doubts
 Thou choosest best for me.
 Best, though my plans be all upset;
 Best, though the way be rough;
 Best, though my earthly store be scant;
 In Thee I have enough.
 Best, though my health and strength be gone,
 Though weary days be mine,
 Shut out from much that others have:
 Not my will, Lord, but Thine!
 And even though disappointments come,
 They too are best for me,
 To wean me from this changing world,
 And lead me nearer Thee.
 Oh! for the peace of a perfect trust,
 That looks away from all;
 That sees Thy hand in everything,
 In great events or small;
 That hears Thy voice—a Father's voice—
 Directing for the best;
 Oh! for the peace of a perfect trust,
 A heart with Thee at rest!

“GOD WAS IN CHRIST.”

(2 CORINTHIANS V.)

THERE are two great aspects of the gospel in this chapter, first, That to which we are called, and for which we are made fit ; second, The testimony God has brought out of sin in us, and Christ's work meeting it. It is good to apprehend what the calling of God is, in order to know what is needed to be in it. There is no reconciliation of the old thing as such, but complete reconciliation *in* the new man. The judgment of man is pronounced, “now is the judgment of this world.” God's dealings with man in the flesh are *over*, the flesh is set aside for ever. In the new state of things brought in by Christ in resurrection, “all things are of God.” As to the body we are not in it yet, therefore it is good to be “absent from the body and present with the Lord.” The moment we get hold of our calling “to his kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. ii. 12), we are brought into the presence of God. He is also enabling the soul to apprehend the glory. It sees that a work entirely of God must be done in order that man may enter glory. Could you put yourself into Christ's glory? “He that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God.” The presence of God revealed to the soul, gives true, thorough conviction of sin. It does not mind what man

198 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

thinks, because it knows what God thinks. Sin is a shameful thing, but the presence of God produces thoughts that are beyond *shame*. The moment the soul is before God, it hates, judges sin, cannot think of hiding it, would rather be in truth before God—"there is truth in the inward parts;" shame before man leads to the concealment of sin. God's true light manifests everything, but when the heart is set right, it takes God's side against sin—there is forgiveness; all is right when looking at what we are in the presence of God. We are called to "God's kingdom and glory" to be conformed to the image of His Son. We have a life—divine glory belongs to that life. It is *God* that justifies. He says that is right in my eyes, God Himself pronounces. That is what I want, this full, blessed justification connects itself with glory—"Whom he justified them he also glorified." "We wait for the *hope of righteousness*." (Gal. v. 5.) This is what God is calling us into in Christ. That which is announced in the gospel is Christ as man is in divine glory. It is "the gospel of the glory of Christ." That has been done which has put man into the glory of God. This new thing is man, the centre of all the glory of God. It will be accomplished of course in Christ by-and-by, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are

GOD WAS IN CHRIST.

199

on earth"—or as it is expressed in Revelation, "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." It is to this glory of Christ we are called. It shines in upon the soul. Are you fit for this glory? If not, what are you fit for? You cannot stay here on earth for ever. Where are you going? If not into the light it must be into the darkness, that is opposite to it. There is no medium. We have this in the parable of the king's son—Jesus had spoken of seeking fruit before; now He is speaking of grace that seeks nothing, it is a feast prepared. Those bidden are from the highways and hedges, and no matter what they were before, but they *must* have the wedding garment. The prodigal must have the best robe to enter the house—he must be suited to the house. Have you, my reader, got that. We see what the calling is, can you say, "I have got what is fit for the glory I am going into?"

You may be getting it, the Lord leading you into it, but without it what are you fit for? You must either be outside or with the wedding garment *inside*. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Did He not suit Himself to all to win their hearts? He came with the invitation to turn back to God: but no—they would not: for His love He got hatred—terrible witness of man's entire ruin—he is *dead*; alive indeed for himself and for his fellow men, but

200 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

there is no movement of his heart toward God. "He came to his own and his own received him not." Yet in Christ there is perfect love—*no* reproach. Paul saw the terribleness of the judgment and set about to persuade men. The love of Christ is still pressing upon men the truth we are dead : the link between man and God is broken and cannot be formed again. Does the cross say, "Christ had set the world right?" "One died for all," unspeakable love, "then were all dead." Has your soul been brought to the conviction "that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing?"

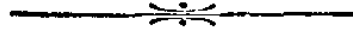
Could you say you would not have put Christ to death? Could you say, "He would not have died for me, He might have helped me, and purified me"? If not, then you must say, "I am dead, lost, I have no link in heart with God!" The old creation is a judged, condemned thing—you, as children of Adam, belong to it, the question is, whether you get out of it? Man has emancipated himself from God ; what infidelity does, is, to justify and proclaim the fact : set up and cultivate man's will. Cain began this world without God. He went and built a city and called it by his son's name. They had instruments of music and artificers there—all to **make** the world a pleasant place without God ; and that is what man is doing still—he says it is with the faculties God has given—true : But what is

the moral state of man's heart? is he not away from God? Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost." I do not ask whether you recognise yourself as *wicked*, but whether you see yourself to be *lost—dead*? By nature we reject Christ, all our thoughts cluster round self. We prefer pleasure—everything in the world, our own will—to Christ. This is the condition of all naturally, was the condition of every one of us, but the One who was not dead, who was acceptable to God, the only One who could be, who was made sin for us. He stood in our place. He, the Holy Blessed One, was made sin. The quickening power of God shews us sin, but we see the whole thing closed on the cross. I see what flesh is, it crucified Christ—but I am not in it any longer, I belong to the new creation; I am in Christ, who is my righteousness, and gives me the title to enter in. We find the calling into God's kingdom and glory. We see the veil rent, and Christ is within as man, and in getting there, He has put away all that we were in the flesh. We have to contend with the flesh daily as an enemy, but as to our standing before God it is ended. In Christ we have entered into the new place—"you hath he reconciled" (Col. i. 21); there is not a thing left between me and God. We are brought into the glory of God. We wait for it indeed as to our bodies, and He has given us the earnest of the Spirit. We have the

reconciliation—reconciliation to what? to God. He did it according to what God is, and we must judge sin according to what God is. When do we know it? now by faith; but we cannot receive it, till we have judged darkness to be darkness. God says, “Where is my Son?” The world must plead guilty of His death; it saw no beauty in Christ, and now prefers pleasure, dress, money, science, anything to Him. I may have to learn a great deal, to go through much conflict, but if I belong to Christ, I am reconciled to God. “The love of Christ constraineth us”—is the ground of all our walk. You may have been living to *yourself*; it may have been very decently, none of what the world calls great sins, but there are plenty of decent enemies of God, and will *reputation* stand in the judgment? A Christian cannot live to himself in *purpose*, but are you living to yourself in *practice*? You may say you are occupied in innocent things, but nothing can be innocent away from God. Have you judged yourself as belonging to a world that has rejected Christ? We have to leave it in detail—the flesh continually showing itself in unexpected ways. But God has condemned sin in the flesh. He forgives *sins*, but the *state* He has condemned, not forgiven. Have you known Him, made sin and yourself the righteousness of God in Him. Can you say, I am reconciled to God, brought back

to Him? Can you say, I am glad to know all about my sin, "search me, O Lord, and try my heart?"

J. N. D.



THE REJECTED MAN.

I CHRONICLES XII.

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

Now with regard to these Gadites, and men of Issachar, it is interesting and blessed to see that the combination of their characteristics supplies us with an example of that *state of soul* in the

204 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

saints now, which alone can act suitably to our Lord Jesus Christ in the day of His rejection.

The first notable feature in the sons of Gad is that they were a *separated* company, they had *gone out*, not *come in* ; how important to see that this is the very responsibility of the saint to-day, in order to his being a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use. (Compare 1 Chron. xii. 8 with 2 Tim. ii. 21.) May the Lord give us understanding to see that *communion* is a greater thing in His eyes than *usefulness*, and that communion is the alone divine spring of all usefulness and service suitable to God. How blessed, how pleasing to Him to find a separated company like the sons of Gad, or a sanctified vessel, whose purest joy and deepest delight is suitability to His Person, to Himself. Then further, it is said of these separated sons of Gad, that they were men of might, men of war ; they could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains. How blessed to see that in their separation was found *strength, courage, skill, boldness, alacrity* ; these are the qualities of a *separated* heart to Christ, and His Person is worthy of them all.

But further, how solemn to observe that ere any of these qualities are found in exercise, Jordan must be crossed, and *that* when it had overflowed all its banks (ver. 15) ; so that these

sons of Gad, separated unto David, filled with *strength, courage, skill, boldness, and alacrity*, must pass, as it were, through death, ere they could serve. And beloved reader, is it not so to-day? "If any man serve me, let him follow me." In very truth, herein is that which gives scope for all true devotedness to the Lord, death must be known practically as *passed and carried by us*. (See 2 Cor. iv. 10.) And so it has ever been, whether in type in other days, or in the power of the Holy Ghost in life and reality to-day—death in the power of life is the secret of all true following of Christ, as well as the secret of all true acting for Christ. Elisha's newly acquired mantle of power, received from the One to whom he separated himself (see 2 Kings ii. 2-14), leads him, ere he uses it, to the same spot as these lion-faced sons of Gad. Oh how deeply solemn and yet how true! May the saints be more really impressed with the reality of it! Jordan alone could open the door for me to reach my Lord in His separated sphere in heaven; Jordan alone can open the door for me to follow Him in suitability to His rejection on earth; and Jordan alone can give to those qualities before spoken of, that subduedness and mellowness so in keeping with the vessels of the Christ, devoted to Him in every turn of the heart, but efficient for Him as death in the power of life is working in them

206 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

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

Thus it is evident that nothing can please the Lord in this the day of His rejection and shame among men, but a *remnant* wholly separated to Himself ; and because so, empowered, in communion with Him by the Holy Ghost—their alone strength, courage, skill, boldness, and alacrity—to walk His path down here, accepting death, *His death*, as the only door out of all visible things, to Himself, whether for rest and enjoyment with Him on high, or for true-hearted following below. May the Lord, in rich grace, find and call out such a company in these days. W. T. T.

GOD'S WORKMANSHIP.

ONE is lost in wonder in studying the scripture at the magnificent position that God in grace has given to the Christian. Not the least marvellous truth in connection therewith is the revelation that "*we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus,*" &c. (Eph. ii. 10), "His work is perfect" (Deut. xxxii. 4), and "Whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever." (Eccles. iii. 14.)

The truth of God's new creation is comparatively little apprehended. The force of scripture statements is only too often weakened in many by preconceived thoughts. And others, through lack of full deliverance in the soul, are often absorbed with their own personal salvation. The consequence is that the fulness of the Christian blessing is not entered into. It is surely a great loss to any soul to be satisfied with the first elements of Christianity, when God in grace has revealed in His word such wondrous truths in relation to Christ and the Christian, of which the passage before us is a sample.

"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." This is something entirely new, differing completely from anything that had gone before. The creation of heaven and earth, of angels, of man, were marvellous exhibitions of the power and wisdom of God, and man is often

258 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

lost in wonder when he considers the heaven, the earth, himself, and all the objects visible to the natural eye. But everything in this universe of wonders pales before the glory of Him who created it. And this is He who became man, and died for His own fallen creature, and is now the risen and glorified One at God's right hand, in whom all Christians are created anew; the blessed, perfect, and eternal handiwork of God.

Satan wrecked the first creation through the fall, by man's disobedience to God. But God has judicially ended the first man's history at the cross, and *creates anew*. All who are the objects of this wondrous work of His grace, were in His eternal purpose ere the world began. (1 Tim. i. 9.) Man has no part in this work at all, "for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. ii. 8, 9.) It is not a question of human responsibility in view of proffered salvation (which we find elsewhere), when scripture treats of the new creation. *It is God's own workmanship*. Speaking of what lies before the Christian, the apostle says in 2 Corinthians v. 5, "He that *hath wrought us* for the self-same thing *is God*," &c. There is nothing connected with the new creation that is not of God. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [there is a new creation]: old things are passed away; behold,

all things are become new. And all things are of God," &c. (2 Cor. v. 17, 18.)

Christ, the risen and glorified Man, is the beginning of the creation of God. (Rev. iii. 14.) "Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead ; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." (Col. i. 18.) The Christian is God's own workmanship, *created in Him*. Adam, who was also God's workmanship, was created in innocence a responsible man, and fell. The Christian is created anew in Christ, after Christ had fulfilled all his broken responsibilities and glorified God as to the whole question of sin and the sinner. On this new ground it is impossible for Satan to obtrude. He did his utmost against Christ at the cross, and He rose victorious over all his power. God creates us in Him on resurrection ground, so to speak. Satan cannot touch us there. The trail of the serpent can never be found on the virgin soil of God's new creation. We are not created anew in innocence, for we have the knowledge of good and evil through the entrance of sin ; but we are *created in righteousness and holiness of truth*. (Eph. iv. 24.) *We are created in Christ Jesus*. What a wonderful thing the new creation is ! The old is completely eclipsed by it. It is of God, it is in Christ Jesus, its rightful sphere is heaven, its characteristics are righteousness and holiness of truth, its duration is eternal.

210 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

No Christian will ever more surely form part of it in the everlasting glory than he does now. It is outside of time, apart from human responsibility, sin and death have no place in it; God can find His joy there, for Christ is His heart's joy, and the new creation is *in Christ Jesus*.

It is an accomplished fact concerning all saved ones, that we have been created in Him over again by the mighty power of God, in His infinite grace, and according to His own eternal, infallible, and perfect purpose. Yet for the moment we are left down here, and there is practical responsibility henceforth flowing from this wonderful position of favour, as we find in the same verse, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, *unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should *walk in them*."

Hence, walking according to God in good works ordained of Him is the outward witness before the eyes of men here, the alone worthy path of all who are a new creation in Christ. It is practical righteousness, morally corresponding with the righteousness in which we are created. Just as the fine linen without the tabernacle of old was visible and suitable to the eyes of all, and all was gold within suitable to Him who dwelt there, so nought but fine linen, the righteousness of the saints (Rev. xix. 7) should characterise the whole church of God in

“NOT HERE” “TAKEN UP.” 211

their visible pathway through this world, in moral correspondence with what we are before the eyes of God in Christ. E. H. C.



“NOT HERE” “TAKEN UP.”

(MATT. XXVIII. 6 ; ACTS I. 2.)

THE above great realities are the truths to which the Holy Ghost would give special prominence in a day like this. The Christ is hidden in the heavens ; His work finished and completed ; the earth, the scene of His rejection and murder, inhabited by the descendants and generation of those who cast Him out ; the course of the age all downward in its ripening progress for judgment. To the faith and affection of the new man the words of the angel are most significant, for they close for it the scene here ; not only is all the bad under judgment in Adam, but all that was beautiful on earth has terminated in His death, whose life was taken from the earth.

The more I meditate on this the more impressed I am with our *general insensibility*. Oh ! how little it seems to affect any of us that “He is not here.” If we were under the power of this stupendous reality, it would operate upon us, as it seems to me, in a two-fold way, namely :

First, it would affect *us* in the place where He was, but is not. The scene of His rejection

212 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

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

Secondly, it would affect *the place* in respect of us ; its brightest scenes and days would be clouded and tarnished by the absence of our Lord.

Alas ! how little it is so ; and yet how well we understand it in our path and history below ! How well we can enter into the blank and desolation which the heart is made conscious of in the brightest day on earth, if we have lost from the heart a beloved object—what is it all to us ? Can any alleviation be found in the place where our Saviour is not ?

May the Lord make His absence such a reality to His beloved people that nothing can comfort their hearts save the presence of the Holy Ghost, whose blessed mission it is to testify of Christ, the glorified One. It is this truth which gives tone and character to the true path and witness of the saint to-day ; in the absence of His Lord, and in the dark night of this world, he seeks to pass on without an

“NOT HERE” “TAKEN UP” 213

interest here save Christ's. What part can such an one take in the projects and schemes, the policies or politics of the age? No citizen of the world is he, but a stranger here—ready, it is true, to be used by all; but absolutely refusing to be made part of the order of things. Alas, alas! how sorrowfully evident it is on every side that this peculiar and separate path is either lost sight of or abandoned by the saints to-day; the Demas spirit rules with an iron sway, and increasingly so. Hearts refuse and resent the truths which spoil their hopes and projects here below, which are now, as it was in another day, advantages and rest this side Jordan. (See Num. xxxii. 1-5.)

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

214 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

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

W. T. T.

NO SIDE WINDOWS.

I HAVE lately very much enjoyed the thought that Noah had only one window to the ark, and that was at the top. This was a great mercy for him. For had there been any windows at the sides, Noah would most likely have been tempted to look out, to see what was going on around ; and then he would have beheld things which would have filled him with sorrow and alarm. The Lord knew this, and in His love He kept him from doing so ; and so provided that he could only look up. This kept Noah in a sweet spirit of dependence, and therefore calm and happy. What a beautiful picture this is for the believer now, while passing through this scene of sin and death ; because his happy position is to be like Noah, always looking up. For if he gets occupied with the things around, that which is going on in the world, or among God's people, then sorrow and weakness will be sure to follow ; and he will be filled with despondency. God has given us His Son to be the joy of our souls, the object of our hearts, telling us that we shall soon see Him, and be with Him for ever. He is saying "Behold my servant, whom I uphold ; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." God would have us find our joy where He is finding His, even that precious One at His own right hand. God is saying, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice."

216 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

May we know the power and blessedness of this joy at all times: so shall we glorify Him as we pass through this world. Happy ourselves, we shall help others to be happy. Therefore let us be careful that we have no side windows.

H. T.



THE LORD'S PURPOSE. THE SERVANT'S OBJECT. THE SAINT'S HOPE.

THE will of the Father, the work of the Son, and the ministry of the Spirit, all tend to one end, as regards the people of God. (John vi. 39; xvii. 24; 2 Cor. iii. 18.) They are to be in glory with Christ, and they are chosen, called, justified, sanctified and preserved to this end. Nothing short of this can satisfy the will of God, nor the heart of Christ, who saves to the *uttermost* all who come unto God by Him. The Holy Ghost also works for the same result. He is "the earnest of our inheritance;" the pledge of, and witness to, the glory for which God's people are destined. Whether by His own direct testimony to the hearts of God's children, or through the ministry of the servants of God, He testifies to this glory, and prepares God's people for it. The "good things" which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, *are* revealed unto them by His Spirit.

The hearts of Christians come greatly short in the apprehension of this purpose of Christ. The present results of His work, the present experienced blessings of their souls, providences, and mercies, occupy God's people much more than the prospect of the glory to come. Christ's present love and care are valued as a solace in trouble, and as compensation for the loss of those things here below, which are inconsistent with Christianity; and so far, this is as it ought to be; for surely nothing can exceed present experience, and that joy in God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, which the heart *now* knows, except the glory to come, of which they are but the foretaste. But it is wrong when these are rested in as the end of our faith; for, as Peter says, the end of our faith is "the salvation of our souls," and that, in the full sense, we have not yet got.

In the purpose of Christ, there is nothing short of placing those whom He has redeemed, in the same glory as He has Himself attained in virtue of His work. To the faithful servant His word is, "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." It is not enough that the servant is rewarded, but he is rewarded by entering into the same reward, and sharing it with Him, "who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Of His saints, He says, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast

218 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world ;” and more, “ The glory which thou gavest me, I *have* given them.” To this end the blessed Lord still labours, sanctifying and cleansing His church, “ with the washing of water by the word,” in order that He may 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.” And, if He has for a season gone away, it is, as He says, that “ I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.”

This then is the purpose of the Lord Jesus ; and the heart of the true servant is in full sympathy with it, not only in looking on to that day for his own reward, with Him and from Him ; but also as to his labours and efforts on behalf of others.

The object of all true ministry is to bring the souls of men, whether of sinners or saints, to the knowledge of, and into the presence of God : for, this accomplished, the servant’s work is done, and he himself retires. Such ministry brings God and His Christ into prominence, and keeps the servant in the background. It is a grievous departure from the true character of Christian ministry, when the servant is more prominent than the truth he pre-

sents. It is not that we would undervalue particular gifts, or qualifications for special characters of service ; such exist, and are used of God to arrest men's hearts and consciences, and divert their minds from the power and attraction of present things. The power of the Boanerges ; the wisdom and spirit of Stephen ; the faithfulness and courage of Paul ; the eloquence and learning of Apollos, can all be turned to account, where the vessel itself is in subjection, and but the channel of communication of the testimony of God to the consciences of men. But man's fairest qualifications or attainments are but hindrances to the work of God's Spirit, in such measure as they are allowed prominence, or are considered as necessary accompaniments of His work. So the true servant's desire for those to whom he ministers, is, that their "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

The full end of ministry of which we have spoken, cannot however be realised here ! So the true servant does not rest in present results, though it is true he looks for these, in the state of the souls of those to whom he ministers. Thus he "travails again in birth until Christ be formed" in them ; he beseeches them not to "receive the grace of God in vain ; giving no offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed." At the same time, no present result

220 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

can fully satisfy him who is in sympathy with the heart of Christ ; and so he “preaches, warning every man, and teaching every man, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, whereunto he also labours.” So also he exhorts them to abide in Christ, that at His appearing he himself may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him. Such a spirit contrasts with much of the work of the present day, when converts are reckoned up by scores, and great jubilations are made over the multitudes who are said to confess Christ. But, alas ! little is heard of their future walk, and small account taken of the number of such, who may ultimately meet the labourer before the judgment-seat of Christ ; still less the manner and state in which they may reach that goal, after their journey through the wilderness, and their wanderings and involvement in all the defilement and corruptions of the great Babylon. There should surely be joy on earth, as in heaven, over every sinner that repenteth ; but the servant who has his Master's mind, will not be satisfied to count up the numbers of his professed converts, and leave out of his account their ultimate attainment to the eternal glory. For those to whom he has been used, are his crown of rejoicing, *not now*, but in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. So a good sportsman only counts the actual contents of his bag.

Now as with Christ in purpose, and His servant in object, so with the individual saint, there is no rest for heart, or feet, short of the same glory with Christ. Peace with God gives tranquillity amidst the sorrows and trials of the wilderness. The love of Christ secures the heart against the power and attraction of a present evil world. The presence of the Holy Ghost gives boldness and ability to walk apart from, and superior to, the ways and fashions of this present scene ; but where the heart is right with God, and the senses exercised to discern both good and evil, the very sense of His grace, and of His work in the soul, makes the present scene the more unsatisfying, and urges the saint more forward in the path which ends in glory. It is true that God gives refreshment by the way, and the waters of Marah are succeeded by the wells of Elim ; but we must not mistake these for the rivers of Canaan, or forget, at the halting place in the wilderness, that rest which remaineth for God's people. The more, then, that faith realises, and the heart finds satisfaction in Christ, the more the desire increases "that I may know him." The more the imperfection of the present scene is felt, the more does the saint confess that he but knows in part ; that he is not already perfect, and presses on towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ

222 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Jesus. The soul that thirsts for God, the living God, will never rest at any point attainable in this present state. The One whom he seeks to win is at God's right hand, and every taste of His grace, and of His care, as shewn to His saints here below, will only make him more diligent in the race. He runs that race, as though he alone must win, as though in fact but one man could reach heaven, and he must be that one, for "they that run in a race, run all, but one obtaineth the prize. So run, that ye may obtain." And a wonderful race is this that grace teaches the saint to run, in which, while every energy is to be strained to reach the goal, every weight and hindrance is to be laid aside, yet there is neither emulation nor strife, as regards his fellow. All his zeal and energy are Christward, "that I may know him." "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." His efforts are not relatively against his brethren, but rather that they should be found as sharers in the onward and upward course. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." "But whereto we have attained, let us walk in the same steps." Thus, therefore, while he runs as if to distance all competitors, in fact he shares the sympathies of Christ, and will not reach the goal alone.

The Lord give us more of the spirit and ways of those who look and wait for glory ; and, both

as servants and as saints, bind our hearts more in sympathy with His own purpose as regards that day, for "a three-fold cord is not quickly broken."

H. C. G. B.



"NO WISE CAST OUT."

(JOHN VI. 37.)

IT is said that the celebrated Bishop Butler was very uneasy when dying, and in moments of special uneasiness and restlessness, thus expressed himself: "Though I have tried to avoid sin and to please God to the utmost of my power, yet from being conscious of my constant weakness, I am afraid to die." "My lord," said his chaplain, "you forget that Jesus Christ is a Saviour." "True," replied the bishop; "but how shall I know that He is a Saviour for me?" The chaplain replied, "It is written, 'Him that cometh to me I will in *no wise* (οὐ μὴ) cast out.'" "True," said the bishop, "and I have read that scripture a thousand times, but I never felt its full value till this moment. Stop there, for now I die happy." It is blessed to see how scripture bears testimony to the person of Christ, and the completeness of His work. Its testimony is to the Christ who is in the glory of God, having by His death settled the question of sin. It is a never-to-be-forgotten moment in the soul's history, when for the first time the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ; from

224 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

that same blessed face, once, more marred than any man's, and His form more than the sons of men, the whole glory of God shines ! And I, a poor weak thing in myself, see it ; and like to look at it, saying, " Let me see every ray of that glory, for it is in the face of Him who bore my sin upon the cross." W. T. T.

 QUIET REST.

IN God I have found a retreat,
 Where I can securely abide ;
 No refuge nor rest so complete,
 And here I intend to reside.

I dread not the terror by night,
 Nor arrow can harm me by day ;
 His shadow has covered me quite,
 My fears He has driven away.

The pestilence walking about,
 When darkness has settled abroad,
 Can never compel me to doubt
 The presence and power of God.

The wasting destruction at noon,
 No fearful foreboding can bring ;
 With Jesus my soul doth commune,
 His perfect salvation I sing.

A thousand may fall at my side,
 And ten thousand at my right hand ;
 Above me His wings are spread wide,
 Beneath them in safety I stand.

Oh, what comfort it brings,
 As my soul sweetly sings !
 I am safe from all danger
 While under His wings. [EXTRACTED.

SEARCHED AND KNOWN.

(PSALM CXXXIX.)

THE way integrity of heart is produced is by grace, and by grace alone. In the beginning the psalmist trusts God. At the close of the psalm, after he is brought to know God, after he looked at himself as made by God, his whole desire is to be searched out.

There is nothing that produces integrity of heart but sovereign grace, reigning through righteousness. There are people not awakened at all, careless people, away from God, who can boast of their delight to gratify their passions : it is folly as well as wickedness. It is the simple folly of the human heart to go on with an eternity before it, looking to get good out of things here, not liking to *think* what is before it, because *knowing* what is at the end of it—judgment, because there is guilt. “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth ; walk in the ways of thine heart, &c. ; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.” This is where the careless young man that hates the light is ; he is gay like a drunken man. He does not know the care of wretchedness ; well, he is drunken, morally drunken.

They say, “If you think of God it will make you melancholy.” Why should the thought of

226 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

God make you melancholy? Because you have a bad conscience. If I saw a child that is melancholy always in the presence of his father and mother, I would say there is something going on there very bad. What kind of heaven would it be if the presence of God made it melancholy?

"All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do," is described in a strong way in this Psalm v. 4-12. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit?" What do souls want to go for? There is a soul before God and afraid of Him. It is a terrible thing, and terrible because it is true. How am I to get out of the sight of God? What a dreadful state, but a great deal better than the state I described before, because I should hope souls would get out of this. What would heaven be to such? "Thou art there." Well, that is enough for one in that state not to desire to be there.

We *know* we are in His presence, because our conscience tells us. We may deny it; but when the conscience is at all awakened, it knows it is. It knows that it has to do with God, with One that has knowledge of right and wrong; and I have got a sense of right and wrong, and God has taken care I should. When man was turned out of paradise he got a sense of right and wrong, it may be very vague, in the mind; but

when the truth comes, there is a distinctness about it; and I know then what I am, and what all things are, "naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." There is not a man in this city that would not be happier now if he could know that he would be happy for eternity.

Here the soul speaks of how it cannot stand in God's presence, and yet cannot get out of it. If God does work, there must be some little sense of goodness, because He is goodness—love, if you please. There is some *hope* in the soul where this is so.

Now, what man always attempts is to make excuse. It does not succeed with you about your children when they do it, and yet you try to impose it on God. The human heart, where it does not get to a thoroughly broken-down state, is always excusing itself. You will find it in the Christian who has fallen and is not really humbled about it: he tries to make excuses even to himself. The excuse was Eve's condemnation. There is no good in an excuse, because it admits the evil. It leads into falseness if we try to excuse ourselves. Did you ever find a child in the habit of excusing itself that did not get into telling lies? Never! We deal with God as no one would let his child deal with him. We try to deceive God, but we cannot; we never did. You will get plenty of

228 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

religion in the world, provided it is not *God*. They may have it from dread: it cannot be rooted out of the heart of man that there is a Being above him, though it may be perverted. There is no truth in the inward parts till we get the conscience thoroughly judged.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart.” Do you think that a person could say that if he knew it was as a judge? I could not do it if I thought I was going to be condemned. You may get carelessness, forgetting God, and you may find an honest heart that hates God’s presence, and cannot get out of it; or the religious heart that is always making excuses for itself. What idea have you of God if you make excuses? Why, you could not put off a sensible man with them.

Well, what gives integrity of heart? Suppose a physician comes to heal you, would not you tell him *all* your symptoms. This produces integrity of heart, and nothing else. “Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” No iniquity! no guile! I do not want to excuse what is all put away. Suppose I am in debt. I do not like any one to see my books; I do not like to look at them myself, and there is no integrity. But when forgiven the debts, I like to look at them and see how much is forgiven. I may blame myself, of course, for getting into

debt ; but a forgiven debt I do not want to hide. The poor woman in the city had got confidence in His love ; the love of God manifested in Christ *attracted* her heart to Him.

The burden of unconfessed sin is a terrible burden upon the heart. A secret is hard to keep, but a sin is dreadful to keep. One is always afraid of its coming out, and yet we know God knows it all. There is a comfort in being honest in the inward parts. And did the Lord ever reproach a poor sinner who owned his sin? Never! Though they had been insulting Him the day before, He tells them He came to seek them. Oh what a comfort to find I can perfectly trust Him! The heart rankling under the burden—and now to be able to bring it all out to One we can perfectly trust! The thief says, “we indeed justly.” He tells it out because he can trust the Lord. I can go to Him and get my conscience perfectly relieved. I tell it out, and find nothing but *love*. He comes and presents Himself to us and says, “You may trust Me.” You say, “No! I have sinned too much.” “That is the very reason for coming to Him ; you cannot escape judgment—so I have come in grace.” I get the two names of God revealed (ver. 12): and when everything is fully revealed, I meet perfect love. God is light : in Him is no darkness at all. Well, here I am in the light, and in the light just as I am ; how came that about?

230 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Why, that He is *love*. What the gospel does is not to allow a single sin to stand in the presence of God, but to have it taken away in grace—and that gives integrity of heart.

There I am weeping (Luke vii. 38.) It is an immense relief, but it is not peace. But then comes another fact. You all know that He died for sins to put them all away. The person of the Lord Jesus Christ brought down to man, in grace lifted up upon the cross, has wrought propitiation for our sins. When I know He has come in grace I can say, "Oh, but He has borne MY sins upon the tree ;" it has nothing to do with any work *in* our hearts. As I have often said, the importance of it is, there is nothing of mine mixed up with it, only my sins ; and He finished the work according to the perfection of God, when there was not a single thought about it in my heart. I find that it was when I was an enemy the work was done for me. Whenever a person believes in God all the fulness of the work belongs to him. The heart that is utterly bad does not like to submit to the righteousness of God—to a work done entirely outside ourselves, it is too humbling. We mix up in our hearts the work *for* us with the work *in* us. Good feelings we ought to have ; as a result we ought to walk in them. God will have right feeling *for* Christ, but no right feeling *along* with Christ.

You say, My heart is not happy about my

debts being paid. Well, the reason is you do not believe it: when you do, you will be happy. If you do not believe what God says you cannot be happy. Feelings are right, for they are the work of the Spirit *in* us: but that is not the work *for* us. We must have Christ and His work, and nothing else whatever. "The worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins." The dread of consequences is not the motive of the Christian's walk. You cannot know the love of God and not love Him. A real love to God is a sense of His love in the soul. Love is shewn in the child's sense of the parents' love to it. The moment I have my conscience cleansed for ever—for ever, because the blood is always under God's eye—I find Christ, who has put them away. Then I take God's side against myself.

Verses 23, 24: "Search me, O God, and see if there be any wicked way in me." I can say to God, I want your eye to search my heart. There is the integrity of the saint. The integrity of the sinner is letting out all before God; the integrity of the saint is, "O God, search me." He does not say, "and see if there is any way of goodness in me." That he found in God. He does not want to find any goodness in himself: God does, for He has put Christ in him. The more spiritual we grow, the more we find out what we are.

232 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

And now, beloved friends, can you honestly say, "Search me, O God?" Are your hearts honestly so before God? Have you so seen the love of God as manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ that you, as sinners, can open your heart to Him? He *does* see it. It will come out in judgment, if it does not come out in your conscience now. The very thing God is exercising us ALL about is thinking "no eye shall see me." A man cares for his character before man, who does not care about what God thinks. A man who would not cheat men is cheating God continually. We cannot, in reality; He knows it all.

Now, do you trust Him enough to tell all out to Him? As Christians, are you able to say, "See if there be any wicked way in me?" I am not afraid of His imputing it, but are you afraid of His taking it away? You may be afraid to say it, because He may cure you of it. There are some Christians that keep their own will in a little cabinet, locked up. They pray and get answers up to that; but that is locked, and they never get on. Such a man is preparing something for himself—decay of soul, if not chastening. Whenever self works in anything Christ is not all: whatever hinders Christ is a wicked way. I am not now speaking of what is positively evil.

If you begin to think of your heart, are you

SEARCHED AND KNOWN.

233

glad that God should bring up what is in your heart, and say, That is the way I look at it? Could you say you would like God to give you *His thoughts* of it all? The Lord give us so to be under the eye that is never withdrawn from the righteous, as to be capable of enjoying Him without hindrance; every Christian in the bottom of His heart does wish it, but practically, if you knowingly keep a part in that way, you are sowing something for yourself that love must chasten. When I can see blessedness in the day of judgment, then I can say, Remove from me everything that hinders.

There is no integrity of heart without a perfect knowledge of grace. The heart cannot be with desire before God, unless the work of Christ is known. The Lord give us to have truth in the inward parts—and that we *can* have, because He visits us in perfect grace—that we may grow unhindered as a garden of the Lord's planting.

J. N. D.

(Notes of an Address.)

The deference and obedience to a spiritual pastor will be just in proportion to the right feeling—to the holiness of mind of the Christian.

J. N. D.



THE POSITION AND WAYS OF THE SEPARATED ONES.

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

THE POSITION AND WAYS, ETC. 235

has not been enough taken account of, and that in every case it must be the *heart* before the *feet*; this must be increasingly felt to be a point of the deepest moment, yet fully admitting all that might be demanded on these heads, it is now very manifest that there are those whose objections and refusal of the path and ways of separation spring from a source and origin far deeper than that recited. For example, when the habits and principles of the world are appealed to as the guide and director of those who have, professedly at least, taken an outside position, when it is said that we must order our homes and families according to our station in life, that we must dress, for example, according to our position in society, is it not evident that the "manner of life" is rudely severed from "my doctrine"?

Now, it is of no use to urge a general inconsistency—I am willing sorrowfully to admit this; but the sad part in reality is an avowed *principle of worldliness* which is fast making those who contend for it, while ecclesiastically holding on by the position of separation, a reproach and a by-word; and when I say a principle of worldliness, I mean a line of conduct drawn from the *spirit* and ways of this age, instead of that flowing from the position of full and complete blessedness in which the grace of God has set us.

236 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

It does often seem to one as if the *cross* in its breadth and magnitude was not apprehended. It is boasted in, and truly, as the ground of forgiveness; but how little is it seen as the end of man and of the world morally before God. How little is it looked at as that "whereby *the world* is crucified to me, and I to the world"!

If, as a saint now, I am truly laid hold upon by Christ, what is my position? Do I not date the birth of my new history from the risen One? Am I not part of the "much fruit" which results from the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying? Am I not united to Christ, the glorified Man? Is not all this a great fact which faith accepts to-day? But if so, are there no ways, habits of life, practice suitable thereto?

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

It is not attempted to be denied that good cause may have been given by some in their

THE POSITION AND WAYS, ETC. 237

ignorance and indiscretion to fear the introduction of visionary and imaginative notions laying hold, in fanciful power, upon morbid minds, and thus really injuring the truth of God ; yet this is very different from the decided opposition to every kind of practical separation now offered by those who, on the contrary, maintain *as a principle* that it is the duty of every Christian to keep their worldly status, and to make it the guide of their ways and habits of life. All who plead for heavenly-mindedness and unworldliness in this respect being branded by some as ascetic, by others as transcendental ; while the true cause of the dislike is, it is feared, to be found in the fact that such are determined to keep the world, and that a species of antinomianism is fast laying hold of souls, under the wings of which credit for a correct ecclesiastical position is both claimed and enjoyed, while all that surrounded those so claiming it, in their previous life and associations, are not only maintained, but contended for and justified as suitable to their class and rank and the requirements of the so-called proprieties of the age.

Now, it is fully admitted that there are differences of relationship, or our natural relationships in the world : there are husband and wife, parent and child, servant and master, and these are all God-ordered and to be divinely

238 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

maintained by the saints. No question is raised as to the continuance of these relationships, nor can they be done violence to without the condemnation of the word of the Lord ; the absence of natural affection is one of the marks of the last days, and any who manifest it are ungodly and unspiritual. But this is not the *real* question, but the *motive* and directing power in which they are to be maintained ; and he who, although strenuously advocating orthodoxy, imports into his responsibilities, in respect of such relationships, either the spirit or ways of the age, is a worldling at heart. The Lord Jesus Christ, the risen and glorified One, is the only true wisdom, motive, and power of the saint, for these as for all else. In Him the saint of to-day is "*a new creation*," and "as many as shall walk by this rule, peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

May the Lord open the eyes of His saints to see the vastness of the field of blessing into which His grace has introduced them, that, as separated to God *positionally*, the character, ways, and habits of it *practically* may be recognised and joyfully adopted more and more amongst us, for His name's sake.

W. T. T.



THE LIGHT AND THE BLOOD.

THAT God is light is a truth more universally recognised, in some sense, than perhaps any other truth of God. We do not mean that it is known or intelligently confessed as God's truth, but we mean that every man's conscience is aware of it, and every man's ways evidence the conviction he has within. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." It is because of this that the wicked hate Him, and natural religion seeks to conciliate Him. A natural man cannot think about God without also thinking about his own sins. Of this we are convinced, that though men may speak of, and in measure recognise, God in goodness, in power, in mercy, yet this thought must intrude, if even it be not uppermost, that if God be all this, yet sin is in them, and they are sinners. The extent of this sense of sinfulness varies greatly from the careless recognition of the fact, to the deep consciousness of it as wrought in a soul by the Spirit of God. But we repeat, no one in his natural condition, no one apart from Christ known and trusted in by faith, can think of God calmly and quietly for many moments without also the thought of sin or sins arising in the mind.

"God is light"! But this great and solemn fact, which makes the sinner's heart and con-

240 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

science quail, is the foundation of the deepest blessing to the believer's heart and mind. But light manifests, for "whatsoever doth make manifest is light." As in natural so in spiritual things ; in the dark nothing is rightly discerned. In a dark room there is no difference between a chair and a table, between a black man and a white. The difference *exists* but it is *not seen*. So in the spiritual darkness of nature, "the natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God." Good and evil, the things of God and the things of this world, all are blended and confused. The evil is there, but apart from the grace of God it is not judged. Bring the light of the sun into the dark room and everything is discovered. Bring the light of God's truth into the soul and everything is spiritually discerned, for "God is light."

It is a terrible moment when the light of God first shines into a sinner's heart, and shews him what he is, and upon the sinner's ways, and shews him what they truly are in God's sight. "In him is no darkness at all." In His light all is light, and darkness is reproved. Man himself is seen and known through and through—not as he has been accustomed to regard himself, in self-complacency, or as his fellows may have regarded him, in ignorance, may be, of the workings of his wicked heart, even as of their own. And who could abide that light, its intense, all-

THE LIGHT AND THE BLOOD. 241

searching power, but for the provision which grace has made in the blood? The blood of Christ is God's provision for, and it is also the peace and the plea of, the sinner's conscience when brought into the light of God. Blessed and perfect, because divine, provision, through faith, in which the sinner is justified and the conscience is at rest.

The light manifests the sin, the darkness, of the sinner. The blood puts away the sin, and sets the sinner at peace in the light. The light, even of God Himself, can manifest nothing which the precious blood cannot put away, "for the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin." "The life is in the blood," and "it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." How perfect the harmony thus existing in all the provisions of divine grace! "God is light," and would have men to be in the light in communion with Himself.

It was not God who hid Himself from Adam, but Adam from God. So now, He hides not Himself from sinners, but poor sinful man, fearful of the light, and ignorant of the blood, withdraws himself from God.

Beloved reader, if the light has not yet shined in your heart, "to give the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," "we pray, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." For "God hath made Christ to be sin for us

242 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Shrink not from the light ; let its beams pour into your heart and conscience, for that word of light which tells you of God's holiness, and of your own sin, tells you also of the blood of the Lamb without blemish and without spot—the blood of that blessed Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, and Son of man, which was shed for you and for me, to save us from sin and the world now, and from the wrath to come, and to fit us for that place in glory where the same Lord Jesus Christ now dwells ; "having abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel," from whence also He will soon descend to take His believing people to Himself, that where He is there they may be also. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."

H. C. G. B.



THE GREAT SUPPER AND DISCIPLESHIP.

THE contrast between the two great subjects of Luke xiv., is both instructive and solemn. The great supper which grace provides, and to which

THE GREAT SUPPER AND DISCIPLESHIP. 243

the most outcast ones are welcome, is followed by a proclamation very momentous, as to what is involved in following Christ in this day of His rejection. For the first, there is no claim, exaction, or demand whatever: for the other all must be abandoned and forsaken absolutely. Let us inquire as to the differences so markedly presented here. The supper is grace, the provision of the blessed God according to the largeness and ability of His heart: not only so, but in its costly and precious providing, it is the expression of His nature, so that therein is unfolded His own satisfaction and delight as well as the surpassing blessedness of that scene where every heart is satisfied with that which it is the joy of God's heart to provide. It would be impossible to conceive anything more wonderful than this, it over-reaches all our narrow and contracted thoughts of His grace, and it rebukes our natural conception and ideas of God Himself. The one whose ejaculation of "blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," gave occasion to the blessed Lord to expound the supper, must have marvelled at the magnificence of the scene described, compared with his own thoughts, but what is it to the soul now taught and led by the Holy Ghost to enter into it by faith? It never can be too earnestly insisted upon that it is not a *part* of grace, but the *whole* which is unfolded in the supper; it is not the

244 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

more relief of a sin-stricken conscience or a jaded heart, but the rich resources of a sphere where want is unknown. Oh the blessedness and satisfaction of lying down here and surveying the vastness of the love, which not only entitles us to all it provides, but makes us welcome even to share the deep and blessed joys of God Himself, where He has His own festivities.

It is sorrowful to see how this magnificence of grace is received by man : he has no *taste* for God's supper, the old wine of nature is preferred to the new wine of grace, and as the one is cultivated, the other is refused. It is true the refusal is not couched in offensive terms, it is polite and refined enough, but it is notwithstanding a genuine and distinct refusal, and "I pray thee have me excused," is a solemn commentary upon the word of God : "No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better."

It is well to observe also, that not one of the good things of nature here named as reasons why the invited guests might fairly decline the invitation of grace, are bad things in themselves ; they are not what are sometimes called unlawful things, on the contrary they are what may be termed good things, and herein lies the snare. Things bad and unlawful would be readily owned as such, and never for a moment placed in competition with grace, and its rich feast ; but

THE GREAT SUPPER AND DISCIPLESHIP. 245

the sweets of nature, and its providing here named, are all the things which are lawfully open to man, but as the heart finds its *treasure and object* in them, Christ is superseded and set aside, there is no taste for the supper. May this have its weight with all our souls at this moment; the joys of *nature* have the tendency to *distract* the heart, and this distraction is the bane of real spirituality and heavenly-mindedness. To him whose heart is in the world, or whose exercises of soul to walk with God are not only on the surface, but scant and shallow, it may seem otherwise; but not to him whose eye is single, and whose heart above all desires to be in the secret of the Lord at this time. May the Lord teach His beloved people the surpassing delight and joy of this rich feast of His.

The next subject is discipleship; and here the contrast with the supper is immense; for clearly to follow *Christ rejected*, involves the breaking with everything; it is impossible to have two hearts, a heart for Christ, and for the world. The deplorable picture which is being presented at this moment is the effort of many to hold the world and Christ; may the Lord in His great grace open eyes to see the impossibility of it! Alas, discipleship as here unfolded is old-fashioned and out of date, and those who seek to follow in this path are reviled and aspersed by the half hearted and the worldling. The conse-

246 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF

crating principle of grace spoken of here, *salt*, that holy separation unto God, alas! at what a discount it is, among the professed servants of Christ, and even among those who *outwardly remain* where it is evident their hearts and affections are not! What a description the Lord here gives of an unspiritual saint—salt that has lost his savour, and which is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dung-hill, but men cast it out. May the Lord awaken up conscience among His people, that they may see the faith and claims of a rejected Lord and Christ amid the confusion and darkness of the present moment.

W. T. T.



“THE REJECTED LORD IS THE
SAVIOUR.”

JOHN XII.

FROM the tenth chapter, we find ourselves historically in the shadow of His death, which made thus an absolute breach between Him and the world, and was also death in all its terror as the judgment of God. He has borne the judgment in our place; but it was there the judgment of a world that should see Him no more. The friendship of the world henceforth would be enmity against God; it had been always so in reality, but now the fact was publicly manifested.

THE REJECTED LORD IS THE SAVIOUR. 247

It is the rejected Lord who is the Saviour. It is He whom man has crucified, that God has raised to His right hand. He had fully revealed the Father, and they had seen and hated both Him and the Father, as He says (chap. xv. 24), and in appealing to the judgment of God, "Righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." To be a Saviour He had to be lifted up from the earth; the Son of man had to suffer and die; a living Christ was for the Jews. The shadow of death only grew thicker up to Gethsemane, where its deepest shades enveloped the soul of Jesus, and where He took in His hand the cup which contained that which had thrown its shadow on his soul all along the way, but which now penetrated it with its most profound darkness.

One only thing remained to Him up to the cross, and even in the sufferings of perfect obedience—communion with His Father; at the cross obedience was accomplished, and the communion was lost, to make His obedience and His perfection shine the more. It was man's hour and the power of darkness which only drove Him on towards the judgment of God, more terrible than the subordinate instruments that darkened the path of obedience and of sufferings, in which He perfectly glorified God, there where He had been made sin for us, and has blotted out our sins for ever.

The Saviour's rejection on the part of the

248 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

world has been the rejection of the world on the part of God. The last effort to find or arouse good in man's heart had been made, and they had seen and hated both Me and my Father. God could save out of this world, in grace ; but the world was lost, it was in a state of enmity against God. He therefore who attaches himself to this world, who seeks his life in it, or who keeps it as a life to which he clings, in contrast to the rejected Christ, loses it. We are not always called upon to sacrifice our lives outwardly, although it might take place, and has often happened ; but morally this applies always ; he who loves his life, who cleaves to it as if it belonged to this world, loses it. It is a life of vanity, alienated from God as the world itself to which it attaches itself, a life which ends only in death ; for here Jesus does not speak of judgment.

The Lord adds, to that which precedes, a most important principle of conduct : " If any man serve me let him *follow* me." (Ver. 26.) It will be in principle through death that we must follow Him—death to sin and to the world ; but the consequence of such a path is simple ; where the Saviour is, there shall His servant be. Such an one follows Him through death into the heavenly glory where He has entered, and, " If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

But the heart of the Lord, if He exhorted

THE REJECTED LORD IS THE SAVIOUR. 249

others to take the narrow road in which one was to deny oneself, and the world that was enmity against God, whilst losing a life identified with the world which rejected the light when it had come into it in grace—His heart, I say, realised what was before Himself, for He was going to meet death, death armed with its sting—the judgment of God against sin, and the power of Satan—but a death in which we find all the more the perfection of Jesus. “Now,” He says, “is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour ; but for this cause came I unto this hour.” It was for this that I came into the world. Then the Saviour goes back to the true motive of everything, a motive always present to His heart : “ Father, glorify thy name ” ! Cost what it might, this was what He desired always. There was no delay in the answer of the Father : “ I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” I have no doubt that this, “ I will glorify it again ” was to be accomplished in resurrection.

The Father had glorified His name in the resurrection of Lazarus, a resurrection in this world ; He was going to do it again in Christ Himself, in a better resurrection, a true answer to death, where the sovereign power of God in grace, and towards Christ in righteousness, has been manifested ; a new state in which man

250 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

had never been, but which was, according to God's counsels, the expression of what He is in Himself, and perfect blessing for man; "Christ," says the apostle, "was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father."

. Remark also here a very important expression. The Lord says, "And I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all men unto me." (Ver. 32.) He is no longer at all in this world, nor in heaven either. It is a Saviour rejected, suffering, dying, who has left the world for ever, a Saviour ignominiously rejected, driven away, cast out of the world; it is He, who, being no longer on the earth, nor in heaven either, I repeat, exposed to the gaze of men, lifted up from the earth and not yet in heaven, but alone between the one and the other with God, like the altar that was neither in the camp nor in the tabernacle—it is He who is the attractive refuge of those who would flee from the world that has rejected Him to enter heaven, to which He thus opens the way for us.

J. N. D.

ABRAHAM'S DOUBLE VICTORY.

TWO victories distinguish Abraham—one over the armies of the kings, and one over the offers of the king of Sodom. The first of these Abraham gained because he struck the blow exactly in

ABRAHAM'S DOUBLE VICTORY. 251

God's time. He went out to the battle neither sooner nor later than God would have had him. He waited, as it were, till "he heard the going in the mulberry trees." Victory was therefore sure, for the battle was the Lord's, not his. His arm was braced by the Lord, and this victory of Abraham's was that of an earlier sling and stone, or of the jaw-bone of an ass, or of a Jonathan and his armour-bearer against a Philistine host, for Abraham's was but a *band of trained servants against the armies of four confederated kings*.

The second, still brighter than the first, was achieved in virtue of fellowship with the very springs of divine strength. The *spirit* of the patriarch was in victory here, as his arm had been before. He had so drunk in the communication of the King of Salem—had so fed on the bread and wine of that royal, priestly stranger—that the king of Sodom spread out his feast in vain. The soul of Abraham *had been in heaven*, and he could not return to the world. That was his blessed experience in the valley of Shaveh. Happy soul indeed! O for something more than to trace the image of it in the book!

Surely, beloved, this is the way of victory in all the saints. The springs of strength and joy are found in Jesus. May you and I be able to look at Him and say, "All my fresh springs are in thee." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." And what are all

252 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

conquests in God's account but such? 'Tis within—

“The fervent Spirit labours. There he gains
Fresh conquests o'er himself, compared with which
The laurels that a Cæsar wears are weeds.”

J. G. B.

“MASTER AND LORD.”

My Saviour, I would own Thee,
Amid the world's proud scorn—
The world that mocked and crowned Thee
With diadem of thorn ;
The world that now rejects Thee,
Makes nothing of Thy love ;
Counts not the grace and pity
That brought Thee from above.

My Lord, my Master, help me
To walk apart with Thee,
Outside the camp, where only
Thy beauty I may see ;
Far from the world's loud turmoil,
Far from its busy din ;
Far from its praise and honour,
Its unbelief and sin.

Oh, keep my heart at leisure,
From all the world beside :
In close communion ever,
Thus with Thee to abide ;
So all Thy whispered breathings
Of love and truth to hear,
And hail Thee with rejoicing
When Thou shalt soon appear.

R. H. T.

THE *PRESENT* NOT THE *FUTURE* HEAVEN.

“AN exceeding good land,” are the words wherewith the two faithful spies, Joshua and Caleb, described the land of Canaan, amid the complaints and murmurs of their brethren ; and who can deny their application to the land beyond Jordan—the place of promise and rest for Jehovah’s chosen people? Yet not only did they bear testimony to the land, but, as regards the competency of Israel to take possession of it, this is their witness: “We are *well able* to overcome it ;” and further, “if *the Lord delight* in us, then he will bring us into the land and give it us ; a land which floweth with milk and honey.” (Num. xiii. 30 ; xiv. 8.) Now this Canaan was a type of the *present* not the *future* heaven—a type of that place into which faith is conducted to-day, and where it finds all its rest, joys and satisfaction. True, we are still, as to our natural life, in this world, and we are called to pass through it as strangers ; the cloud and the manna defining our path as well as sustaining us in it. How blessed to think of this! If it were but adopted, how it would dispose of the many anxieties and cares which, alas! too often weigh down the heart.

254 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

But life in Canaan is not traversing the wilderness, however true and faithful we may be in it; neither is it the needful and salutary exercise of heart and lessons of the way.

Now as regards this land of promise, it is very instructive to see the manner of its description in the Book of Deuteronomy, because it equally applies to that place *above*, where our Saviour is, and where alone true rest and satisfaction can be found. It will be found, then, that the description is twofold: namely, in Deuteronomy viii. it is described in its own essential excellencies, and they are of such an order as to place those brought into that land in a condition of absolute independence in the right and true sense of the term—"without scarceness" and no lack of anything in it. Is it possible to overestimate or unduly to magnify the richness of such "an exceeding good land"? and may I ask, if Canaan, as an earthly rest and portion, was all that to Jehovah's ancient people, is not heaven, the place "where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God," as rich a possession and as satisfying a rest for faith to-day? Is it not sorrowful to think that there are many hearts who are contented with leaving heaven as a reported region of *future* and *postponed* enjoyment? Consequently they never really retire from earth in heart or affection, and while never

THE PRESENT NOT THE FUTURE HEAVEN. 255

rising beyond the wilderness in experience, they never really possess faith or power to carry them even through it according to the mind and thoughts of God. Alas ! that it should be so.

But we find that in chapter xi., this goodly land is described in its comparative and contrasted excellencies ; in Egypt, anxiety and trouble were evinced around its river, the great source of fertility and refreshment ; sowing and watering in the land of bondage, tell their own tale. In Canaan on the contrary, it was drinking water of the rain of heaven, being cared for by the Lord Himself, His eyes resting upon that bright and blessed country from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year ; and such, though in a far more perfect way, is that place into which the blessed Spirit leads faith in conscious realisation and enjoyment to-day. Who can fully or adequately portray the light and glory of that scene where Christ is ? It is *from thence* comes all true energy and divine power to surmount the various hindrances in our way ; we are never really true to our calling in the wilderness, until we have found a home in heaven, and *from thence* come back, as it were, to be practically heavenly strangers in a land that is not ours.

Now, when we go the book of Numbers, to where we find Israel on the eve of leaving the wilderness, and entering this goodly land, we are

256 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

met with one or two striking and solemn facts, which are not without a significant voice for us to-day. In Numbers xiii. is recorded the mission of the twelve spies and the searching of the land—they were sent, they went up, and searched the land, and this is their report: “We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and with honey, and this is the fruit of it”—exhibiting at the same time a branch with one cluster of grapes, borne between two upon a staff, as well as pomegranates and figs. What could have been more convincing or assuring? Yet in the face of all this, arises the wildest outburst of unbelief on the part of ten of these spies, ending with their evil report of the land, and the most solemn and rebellious murmuring of Israel. Observe, there was no question as to the beauty and fertility of the land in itself; still the purport of their witness and report, *save* Joshua and Caleb, was to deter the people from going up and possessing it. And has not this a solemn counterpart in the history of many at the present time? Verily the history of the ten spies is being repeated in this day; the truth as to the Christian's heavenly *position* and *relationship* is admitted, because it is impossible honestly to deny it; but the unbelief which marked the spies, is as prevalent to-day, and as they sought to hinder Israel by mapping out their evil report, so has it been attempted in

THE PRESENT NOT THE FUTURE HEAVEN. 257

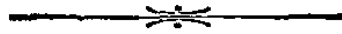
this day to deter souls from entering in and spiritually possessing what divine goodness and grace has made theirs. It is striking to see how set against the mind of God at any given moment, the enemy is ; in the wilderness, while on the very borders of Canaan, he will have tools for his object in the ten spies, while on the other side of Jordan, and in the land, he will seek to accomplish the same purpose and present the same testimony in the two-and-a-half tribes. May the Lord waken up His saints to the design of the enemy, and, in His grace, preserve us not only from being deceived and robbed of our blessing, but also from becoming the tools of the enemy for this end.

It is very cheering to see in the end of this record of the searching of the land, how the faithful, in such a moment, will rise to the height of their calling and openly assert it, and this was the case with Joshua and Caleb in their day ; and beautiful was their testimony. It amounted to this : Jehovah's heart and hand were enough to lead His people into the land of His choice for them, and so it is with faith now. Unbelief may minutely portray its evil report by mapping out the difficulties and dangers, but the Joshuas and Calebs of to-day will be only the more manifested as each such crisis declares itself. May the Lord grant to all His beloved saints more grace and faith, boldly and fearlessly

258 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

to put the soles of their feet upon what He has so graciously made ours—may no evil report of the land, however speciously given, deter them from practically going up; and may there be raised up many true-hearted ones who will stand up earnestly and faithfully at this time, for the true calling and testimony of the saints, and by their practical heavenly ways, as well as by their lips and pens, encourage the hearts of their brethren in this day of trial and difficulty.

W. T. T.



THE HEAVENS OPENED.

(ACTS VII.)

THIS chapter is a very remarkable one in this respect: it is the Spirit of God summing up the whole history of man until Stephen was thus put to death. It is the rejection of the last testimony of God, all the dealings of God with man and the result of it as summed up by the Spirit of God; and what man's condition was as under those dealings; and then the blessed truth that a Christian cut off goes straight into Paradise.

What makes the chapter striking is, that Stephen was the first man that was carried up into heaven this way after Christ; he went to heaven so as to close the then testimony to man upon the earth. It was the turning-

point in the history of man under God's dealings, and of what the ways of God were. Stephen went to join Christ in heaven ; that gave backbone to his testimony. He recounts everything that had passed since Abraham, right on to the death of Christ, and then goes to heaven.

We speak of salvation—the grace of God that brings salvation. Salvation supposes something *lost*; if people are lost, I speak of the necessity of this salvation. It is not *help* we want, salvation meets what is *lost*. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.” It is not merely the change in people, though there is a change in all their ways, habits, and spirit. God had come down and met people in the condition they were in ; they could not meet Him at all, *but He brought them out of that condition*. Christ died “the just for the unjust, that he might *bring us to God*.” We were away from God then, and God has been dealing with us to bring us to Himself, because we are not with Himself at all. The death of Christ has nothing to do with help ; if He had not been the Son of God He would not have done it. The testimony we have of the Lord Jesus Christ is, “He came to seek and to *save* that which was lost.”

Now it is the summing up by Stephen here, that brings this out so distinctly and definitely. Man turned out of paradise—the flood—the law, after that we all know the world that now is.

260 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

There have been these provings, testings, and dealings of God with sinners, which is important, because man fancies he can remedy this. Now God has done everything *He* could do, and the result is man is proved to be *lost*; I do not mean finally lost, for God can save him, but as to the state he is in, entirely away from God. He has not got life. Life through whom? "This life is in his Son." "He that hath the Son hath life." If you have not the Son you have not life, there is nothing to be helped. You have not got the thing which puts us into relationship with God. There may be natural conviction of sin, or the law applied to the conscience, or the wonderful grace of the gospel making you feel confounded that you have lived without it at all. He is on the one side *guilty*, on the other *lost*. As regards his condition and state he has not righteousness. "None righteous, no, not one." You may be extremely amiable, pleasing and sweet to nature like the young man in Mark x.; the Lord tests him, and directly he goes away from Christ, for he loved money. It is very pleasing, of course, to find amiability and the like, but it is a natural thing in man, as you may find in any other animal, one vicious, another well disposed.

Remark the perfect calmness of Stephen before the Sanhedrim, the way in which he goes through the whole history they gloried in (as God can go through your history and tell *you* all that ever you

THE HEAVENS OPENED.

261

did), and brings their own path and conduct to themselves, to shew them what they were and how it had all issued in their state. He begins at Abraham where everything began afresh. People built Babel, not as some have fancied so high that the flood could not reach them, but to make themselves a name that shall not be scattered. Then when they had been scattered they turned idolators, worshipping devils, and then God called out Abraham. Now you must leave your country, and your kindred, and your father's house ; grace comes and calls him entirely out from all this. He *half* went, first, and did not get there. Then when Terah was dead "he removed him into this land." There is no condition whatever connected with Abraham. "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," blessing to the Gentiles. God comes in His own grace and promises His Son. Then He sets about to deal with man in every possible way. Four ways—the law, the prophets, His Son and the working of the Holy Ghost. We sinners are not in paradise, even an earthly one—man has been *turned* out too, for you cannot have corruptions, passions, and lusts walking with a holy God. It cannot and ought not to be. If you could take man and put him into heaven, he would get out of it as fast as he could.

You get these four steps. He gives the law they did not keep it ; the prophets, "which of the

262 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" His Son, "of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers;" the Holy Ghost, "ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." Everything in which God could deal with man had to be gone through and tried, and that is the way it turned out. This grace, this special mercy that spared them on the intercession of Jesus, and now there was a testimony of a glorified Christ if they would receive it, and they sent back the messenger, "we will not have this man to reign over us." They put to death the humbled Christ, and refuse the testimony of the glorified Christ.

There we get the history of man and the history of *your hearts*. Who has not had the law practically and broken it? Who has not had the testimony and neglected it? Who has not had Christ presented to him, and preferred money, vanity, dress, or a thousand things? and the testimony of the Holy Ghost remaining without any effect. It is the very history of the world and of the little world of your hearts. I find I am a *sinner*, that is God's judgment of my state, but there is salvation for the vilest; I should not be here if there were not. But more; when "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," when He came into this ruined world in *grace*, they would not have Him. We forget we are in a world in which the Son of God has been

THE HEAVENS OPENED.

263

and is not. How came that? God says to the world practically, what have you done with My Son? What can the world say but, we have crucified Him. Was there any reason for it, was He really a malefactor? Was He even like John the Baptist, severe? There He was healing all who were oppressed of the devil, removing every sorrow, even of death, manifesting God, for God was with Him. Ah, said the world, we will not have God, and as He willingly gave Himself He could be easily got rid of. And this is what man is! God came in grace into the midst of this world and man would not have Him, and there is this additional fact for us, that He *died* for us.

Go and introduce Christ where men are having their pleasures, quiet, gentle society, or rough society, what would be the effect? It would stop them directly. Take a man aside for a few hours, he will think of his pleasures or his troubles, but you never heard of a natural man thinking of Christ, for it is never on his heart, and if it is brought to him, his natural inclination rejects it. There is God's account of all of you.

What does wisdom do? Justify God, not themselves. I justify God where the testimony of the condemnation comes; I say God is right, I *ought* to repent, and I justify God in the testimony of sovereign grace in His Son, I bow my head with thankfulness. When a man is really taught of God, he justifies God,

264 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF

Now we have to see how God meets this state, which is the gospel. Not what *I* have wrought but “what hath *God* wrought,” and I find “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son ;” also, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.” He saves what was lost, makes propitiation for guilt and gives life to those that have none in themselves. Christ has come into this world to shew what God was to the sinner, that wonderful unspeakable fact that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” God Himself has come as a man to shew His interest in man, and has gone through it, the Holy One whom sin could not defile, to carry the blessedness of God’s own love to every one who had a need. What brought Him here? Did I ask Him to come? Just His own love. We get this blessed love of God come amongst us. I know God not in speculating about what He *may* be, but in the blessed knowledge of what He *is*. If He had not shewn me all my sins, I might say, “If you knew all I was you would have nothing to say to me, I know my own heart but I know *God’s* heart too.”

People call God merciful, which means that they hope God will think as little about their sins as they do themselves ; it is awful how little man thinks of sin. They think it horribly bad to wrong their fellows, but they may calumniate

God as much as they like. God cannot and ought not to be indifferent to sin ; He would not be the holy God if He were. Am I to go defiled into heaven and spoil heaven itself? The love is an idle love that never displayed itself ; where love is thorough and real it measures the wants and takes the case thoroughly into account. He bearing my sins in His own body on the tree was made sin for us ; whether as regards the tree or the fruit, He stands before God and these sins have been dealt with. I do not wait till the day of judgment to own them or to know that they are put away. Where there is faith, " we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and we stand, as God has told us, in His presence as white as snow.

When we look at the cross, the more we weigh it the more we see how perfectly God has been glorified. I own that my sins brought Him there. The only part I had in the cross was the sins that brought Christ there, and the hatred that put Him to death. If it humbles me in the dust, all the better. The work is divinely perfect between Christ and God about these sins. The wrath was such that even in the thought of bearing it He sweat great drops of blood, and while it bows my heart and my conscience, I find that God has already dealt with the sins in the grace that put all away, before ever I come to the day of judgment.

266 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

I may have been attracted by grace or alarmed by the terror of the Lord ; one is the love getting into your heart, the other the light getting into your conscience, and God is both light and love. The work in which He bore my sins and put them away, is perfectly done, in virtue of which God has set Him as man at His own right hand ; there I find salvation. The work is finished, I accept it, I am only too glad to have it, but the thing that gives me peace is that *God* has accepted it, for He has raised Christ from the dead. The glory of God Himself now in the face of Jesus Christ is the witness that the believer's sins never can be remembered any more. Whereas the glory of God formerly alarmed and frightened us, now God has set Him at His right hand that you might be able to look at it in perfect peace. How could I walk with God if I did not know whether He was going to condemn me or not. You cannot if you are afraid of Him ; but I am made the righteousness of God in Him. He is in the glory as *Saviour*. Oh, the thought that He became a Man, that God is unveiled, and came into this world in unbounded love, making the day of judgment a time of triumph for the believer ! I say of *triumph*, beloved. The believer will be perfectly like Christ, " Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." We are left here to have our senses exercised.

" There is therefore now no condemnation to

them which are in Christ Jesus." I am in Christ. Not only the clearing away of all the wretched things that I have and am in the first Adam, but God has put me into all the blessed things in the second Adam, in Christ. I know before God I am as Christ is. People think this presumption—if you ever think to be with God *without* it, it is presumption. If you are in the flesh you *cannot* please God. The Lord Jesus has said (when the Comforter is come), "at that day ye shall *know* that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

It is lovely the way it is brought out to Stephen; he was *full* of the Holy Ghost; I do not say every one is, though we have the Holy Ghost. The effect of seeing Christ in glory is that we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. He who is in the glory is the One who bore my sins. Now let me look upon that glory, let me think of it, let me tell it; He "loved me and gave himself for me," and my heart delights to look at Him. The effect is I am "changed into the same image," my heart gets *full* of Christ. Stephen in a certain sense becomes perfectly like Christ: he says, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" the Lord Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Stephen says, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" the Lord Jesus, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

268 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

When the soul really sees and knows Christ by faith as the One who has saved us, we get like Him, though of course we have to be on the watch against temptations every day. What is very difficult for us in this world is entire superiority to circumstances. There were the people raging against Stephen, and not only that, when they set about dragging him out of the city, while the stones were flying round him, he kneels down and prays for them. Stephen, through the Lord's grace, is the quiet person, entirely superior to circumstances, always himself with his heart in heaven. There I get the effect of realising the presence of Christ. So far as we are above the circumstances we pass through, we are always ourselves, and we are the right thing in them. It is difficult, I grant, and requires communion with the Lord and diligence of heart in seeking Him in prayer. Supposing the world does kill us, why we go straight to Christ in heaven like Stephen did—a witness for Christ here, and a companion of Christ up there, to whom he goes in blessed joy and gladness of heart.

Now, beloved, where are we as to this? Are our souls trusting in that grace in which the blessed Lord came, till He comes to receive to Himself those who have believed on Him. The Lord give us to have our eye fully open to Himself, to know and taste that the Lord is gracious,

THE MOUNTAIN, THE PLAIN, ETC. 269

and then we shall be able to wait for His Son from heaven, the only thought we have, to please Him while here. May we have our eye on Him where He is in glory, so that we may be like Him, and rejoice with our hearts in joy unspeakable and full of glory.

J. N. D.

(Notes of an Address.)



THE MOUNTAIN, THE PLAIN, AND THE CITY.

MATTHEW XVII. 1-27.

THERE are three scenes brought before us in this scripture, and I want, by God's help, to bring them very briefly before you, with the lessons imprinted on them. They are, first, the mountain (what is called the holy mount, where the Lord reached His highest glory as a Man); next, the plain; and third, the city.

I want, first of all, to look at the mountain, and what we find in connection with it. In Peter's second epistle, we get the divine meaning of the transfiguration. It was a foreshadowing, when Christ was glorified there as a Man upon the holy mount, of that glory which would be His as a Man in the kingdom by-and-by. I say this only to give a true exposition of the scripture. But I would like you to take notice of this, that the path of the Lord Jesus in this world was an ascending one as a man up to this

270 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

point. I think there is a mistake made when people speak of Him as going from the manger to the cross. That is true in a certain sense, but not the whole truth. He went really from Bethlehem to the holy mount.

He went on, step by step, as a man in all the glory and blessedness of what pertained to Him as a man, until He reached His highest glory as a man on the holy mount, and there He was held forth as a man, perfect in all the distinctness and blessedness of what belonged to Him as a man ; and yet more than man, because He was the Father's beloved Son. Still, as a man, He was glorified. He reached that height of eminence, and distinction, and glory, as a man, that no other man ever reached. Then He descends from the mount, and goes down, step by step, till He goes down to the depths of Calvary. That is the true explanation of His path and course here, till He reached as man His highest point of glory on Tabor ; then He leaves Tabor by a descending course until He comes down to the lowest depths of Calvary. That is merely looking at the scripture as to the truth set forth in it. But I think I see more in this beautiful scene. Here, His chosen disciples are brought up, where also you find Moses and Elias ; and they are thus all privileged to be in His company on that mount when He was transfigured before them, and appeared in glory,,

THE MOUNTAIN, THE PLAIN, ETC. 271

and they appeared with Him. And Peter, who is always the spokesman, and always ardent in that way, looks upon this scene somewhat as we might—namely, how can we perpetuate it? This is a scene beyond all conception of blessedness—how shall we continue to have this order of things here? Jesus in glory, and Moses and Elias appearing in glory with Him. Another scripture tells us also the nature of their intercourse when there—they spake of the decease He should accomplish at Jerusalem—glory and death were thus brought together.

The disciples were also there, but they could not keep awake in the presence of His glory, any more than they could afterwards in the presence of His sufferings. That is what man is, and what people want to exalt and put on a pedestal to-day. But when they were awake they saw His glory, and then Peter makes this proposition, the object of which was to put the Lord, Moses, and Elias all on an equality one with another. He says, "Lord, it is good for us to be here : let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." Let us have this thing perpetuated in this orderly kind of way. Now mark what comes. "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them : and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him."

272 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

The cloud was the place of the divine presence, the shekinah, or cloud of glory. It was a bright cloud, and there is no brightness except up there. We get the mist here, you must go up there to get the bright cloud—and, with all holy reverence I say it, a bright voice came out of that bright cloud; and a blessed voice it was, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” What is the meaning of that? Just exactly what the disciples found afterwards when the voice was past, when the affirmation of the Father was gone, telling of His heart’s desire to have that Son of His bosom supreme. There could be no equality with Him on that ground. He must be first and last, everything—supreme for time and for eternity, “all things,” and that voice that vindicated the right of Jesus to be first, and to be everything, when past, was found true. They proved what the voice affirmed. “When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only”—Jesus only, that is heaven. Now I think there is no subject, perhaps, that has been more fancifully dealt with, and upon which the imagination has been allowed to play with greater freedom, than the subject of heaven. And I will tell you more—that some of the late ideas and notions on this subject have turned people away from the truth, and turned them away to what I call a specious, wretched kind of materialism which

THE MOUNTAIN, THE PLAIN, ETC. 273

lowers the truth, and brings it down from its own blessed speciality, and peculiarity, and from its own proper glory—and all this has greatly arisen from these fanciful ideas to which I have referred. People have allowed their minds to run on in connection with heaven, and the real meaning of what the enemy is about in all this, the object he has before him, is to make the things down here, which are things of sight and sense, that pertain to this life—his object I say is positively to turn them over, and to give them a sort of exaltation, and thus to level them up, and on the other hand, at the same time, to level the heavenly things down. You never see levelling up, but you see levelling down in proportion. Be assured, as you level up the things of this world, and our life here and all that pertains to it; in proportion as you cry them up, so you correspondingly degrade and bring down the heavenly. And all these ideas about heaven, and pictures of heaven, which are indulged in, even by some in preaching, are simply the outcome of a diseased imagination, which is allowed to run riot in picturing heaven after a material fashion.

What I want you to see, the first thing here, and that which is very comforting to one's own soul, is, that here we get a picture of heaven, here I find what heaven really is, and what I believe the heart that really longs for it delights

274 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

in, and that is, it is "Jesus only." That is heaven, Jesus only. And I will tell you more than that, beloved brethren, the comfort of it to the heart that knows and tastes its preciousness, and that is to hear Him praised, and praised, and praised! That is heaven. You must be conscious of this, that people—and it may be the case with some here to-night—have other thoughts about heaven, I know very well the way people talk about it. They have lost beloved ones on earth, they will meet them in heaven. Their heaven will be a resumption of old ties. All material—that is not the heaven of scripture. I do not mean to say for a moment but that all belonging to Him will be there in supreme blessedness. But do not tell me there is any other object but Jesus only. Mark the jealousy of the Father's heart to make the Son in that scene supreme. "This is my beloved Son—hear ye him." The Lord, in His infinite grace, enable us not only to enter into that now, but may we, in spiritual power, let our hearts go out in all its present blessedness.

Some weeks ago a friend staying at my house, had a bird, and she had a thought that this bird long enough in captivity, would not desire to leave, so she opened the cage and let it out in the open air. Well, this bird had wings on it all the time it was in captivity, but could not use them because confined by the cage, but as soon as

THE MOUNTAIN, THE PLAIN, ETC. 275

ever it was out of the cage, and in the open air, it began to use its wings, and did so with effect, and soon flew away, and who would blame the poor creature that it did so? It found out it had wings that would carry it out of the reach of all who would retain it here, and it used its wings. And there is not a Christian here to-night who has not wings : why are we not all using them? Why, because we have got some cage around us. If you are a Christian, you have the Spirit of God, and you cannot have less than the Spirit of God in its fulness. A Christian is a person who, having the forgiveness of sins through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, is sealed with His Spirit. If you say a Christian has the forgiveness of sins, but leave out the fact that he is sealed by the Holy Spirit, you leave out Christianity. He is sealed with the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is the wings, and the Spirit would carry you to heaven now, in affection and faith to the place where Jesus is, and carry out the Father's desire about Jesus, and make Him everything to you. And that is what heaven is now, and oh, do not say it is a very fanciful idea, and that we cannot be in the enjoyment of that now. Did you never hear of a person being in heart where not in body? A man crosses the Atlantic, or goes to the Antipodes, and leaves wife, and children, relations, and friends behind, and is not that man

276 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF

when he reaches the shores of America or New Zealand, in heart and affection still in England? And if that is true down here, how much more true is it where the Spirit of God carries your heart up to Christ. You have not got the Holy Spirit to carry your heart and affections to your natural relations. But He does carry you in faith, and affection, and heart, to the place where Jesus is; and He makes everything of that blessed One, and "Jesus only" is before your soul, and you love to live there. I remember when I first went to Yorkshire, I was greatly interested in watching the coal mining on such an extensive scale, and I felt the truth very much of what I have been speaking about, when I saw the men go down in the cage to bring up the coal, and when I saw these men drawn up again, knew that they had a home and a circle above that they loved so well—did they not leave their hearts behind them when they went down into the coal mine? And so exactly is it as to what I am bringing before you now. The Spirit of God carries the affections of the new man, and sets them on Him who is the spring and delight of those affections after He has created them. Then you find "Jesus only" fills every eye there; and He only satisfies. But you should continue there, and then you will know what heaven is. And be assured you are not fit to

THE MOUNTAIN, THE PLAIN, ETC. 277

live here till you go there. No one is fit to live in this world till he has crossed over, until he has been lifted up in heart and spirit to be where Christ is. Thus this is a beautiful picture of that place where "Jesus only" is before every one. Oh, that the Lord, in His grace, may give us to know what this is! If we would only use our wings, we might. It is the cage, some of us get, that keeps us from it. Only get the door open, break open the cage, and what a different being you would be. Depend upon it, it is the cage that keeps you. Just remember what the writer of the old hymn felt when he wrote :—

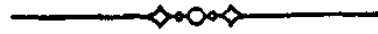
"See how we grovel here below, fond of these earthly
toys,
Our souls, how heavily they go, to reach eternal
joys."

And there is an immense deal of truth in it ; but it is the cage that keeps us down. I never saw a person yet who had enjoyed the smallest taste of it, if he could not gratify it, but was depressed. Do you say you do not know what it is? That is because you are not gratifying your heart and your new affections. Here you are, and you have got new tastes, and you are positively not gratifying them. And that is where so many of us are. They are unsatisfied, and you can see it in their faces. Hence some of them take up the Lord's work in hope of reach-

278 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

ing this satisfaction. But this avails not. They will leave the mark of dissatisfaction on their work.

W. T. T.



INCARNATION AND DEATH.

CHRIST is received in His incarnation ; but though the incarnation preceded necessarily, historically, the Saviour's death, I do not think that one can really seize the bearing of this life of humiliation unless one first enters into that of His death. Personally the new thing, as we have already said, was presented in His Person—a man, God manifested in flesh ; but He in whom was life, He who was this eternal life which had been with the Father, and which was now manifested to the disciples. But in this state the corn of wheat remained alone, however productive it should be ; in order to introduce those whom God gave to Him into the position of the last Adam, of the second Man it was necessary that He should die, that He should give up His life in this world, to take it again in the state of resurrection beyond sin death, the power of Satan, and the judgment of God, after having passed through all these things, and having taken again His life of Man, but in a spiritual and glorified body. Now His

death was morally the end of man driven out of paradise ; His resurrection the beginning of the new state of man, according to the counsels of God.

J. N. D.



MARK VI. 31.

O blessed Lord, Thy voice
 Has callèd me "apart,"
 From all the busy din and strife,
 To speak unto my heart.
 This is a desert place,
 Where dangers do abound ;
 But Thou wouldst have me find my springs,
 Where Thine were ever found.

Each weary, toiling day,
 Each pain and tear and sigh,
 Have all been measured, Lord, by Thee,
 For Thou art ever nigh.
 And though amidst the cares
 I've oft forgotten Thee,
 Thy love has never, never changed,
 Thou still desirest me.

How precious are Thy thoughts,
 The thoughts of boundless love,
 My soul can never reach the depths
 Or mount the heights above.
 Thou tellest me again,
 I'm ever on Thy heart,
 That all Thy grace and strength are mine,
 And nought from Thee can part.

280 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF

O blessed, precious Lord,
This, this indeed is rest,
Encircled by Thy loving arms
And pillow'd on Thy breast.
The fellowship of saints
Is sweet indeed to me ;
But sweeter far the solitude
Of Thy blest company.

Oh, where Thou dwellest, Lord,
There would I ever be ,
While here in patience I would wait,
Thy blessed face to see.
Then in Thy Father's house,
With all Thy loved, Thine own.
I'll share Thy blessed company,
But never more alone.

L W.



THE MOUNTAIN, THE PLAIN, AND THE CITY.

MATTHEW XVII. 1-27.

NOW observe, when they leave the mount and come down to the plain, what do they find? A very solemn thing—they find the devil's work, and his confusion and disorder; affliction, the result of his hatred of God and man, they find a most pitiful and touching case. Here was a poor father with a lunatic child, and he comes to the Lord's disciples, and beseeches them to free him from this terrible calamity. They had the power to do so. We see in chapter x. Jesus had given them the power; and they might have said, Oh, yes, we have the power; then the father says, Do free me from this pressure; yet they could not do it. Then observe he comes to the blessed Lord Himself and says, "Lord, have mercy on my son," &c. And Jesus said—and oh! what a word—in tones so tender, so gracious, and gentle, "Bring him hither to me." Thank God! what comfort to the heart, "Bring him to me."

Now I want to apply this. You may not have got a trouble so heavy as that—you may not have a lunatic child, but you have some

282 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

trouble, the result of the devil's confusion, and what do the Lord's people do in these circumstances? It is a sad thing to see the resources the saints turn to when difficulties arise. What a mournful thing to contemplate the ways of God's people! When pressure or difficulty come upon them they are thoroughly perplexed; they run to this person and that, and what to find? Not any good, just distraction, and just unsatisfaction, and the place where they think most to get help and comfort is often the place where they least find it, and they have to go away vexed and disappointed.

What does Jesus say? "Bring him to me." Have you been to the Lord with your trouble or your difficulty or your affliction? Have you done like John the Baptist's disciples? When their master was roughly and rudely murdered they took up the body and buried it, but it was just a lifeless body, and their burying it did not calm their broken hearts, but they went and told Jesus. Do you know what it is to do that? Down here in the plain the devil makes all sorts of confusion, and turns things upside down for us, but the whole question is, Have you been to Jesus about it? He says, "Bring him to Me." The church may fail, do you think He has failed? Do we say, "Is it not all gone?" I tell you, we are all gone if we say so. The disciples have failed, has He failed? That is just the thing

THE MOUNTAIN, THE PLAIN, ETC. 283

that comes out here, "Bring him to me." And the father brought his child, and again we get the most touching proof of His sufficiency. Oh, how blessed, and what a comfort to see this! He likes us to bring our troubles to Him. Oh, if we could only believe how His sufficiency waits upon our every need! Are you in the most pressing exigency, have you a sick child? "Bring him to me."

He says, as it were, Have you some trouble on your heart, some pressure on your spirit. "Bring it to me." I am the One to come to when all else is broken up, I am unchanged. That is the way He gives us to get the comfort. He is not changed in the least, the same in glory that He was down here.

Now notice when this child was healed, the disciples say, and well they might, Why could not we cast him out? And mark—and I would to God we might all learn from this—they come to Jesus; there is something very noble in the disciples in this matter. They had the sense, they could not do it, and they would like to know why? Now, dear brethren, do not you think we ought to say to ourselves, when placed in circumstances like this, how did I get into this strait, how was it I did not see the path through this labyrinth? Why in that difficulty—why, Master, could I not meet it? We have got the power by the Spirit, and He is here to guide into

284 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

all truth ; but some confusion of the devil has tripped us up. Why is this? The disciples say, Why could not we? He never says, Because you have not power. He says, Because of your unbelief ; because you have not faith. And then He mentions a grand characteristic of faith.

“If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed,” &c. If you had the smallest confidence in God, that is, if you had faith at all ; not strong faith. I think there is a great deal of confusion introduced by the discussion about faith. If you had faith at all you would be able to do things truly impossible to nature. You might say to this mountain, &c., and nothing would be able to stand against you. But He says further, and this is the thing that ought to come home to us, “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” Thus you see it is not only a question of power, as some of our dear friends would make us believe. They tell us it is all a question of standing, and all a question of position ; there is nothing of that here. It is prayer and fasting wanted, the moral state is in question. And beloved friends, that is so important for us in meeting the devil’s confusion, and what he works. If you have moral condition, or prayer and fasting, that is dependence, and that you do not minister to nature in its resources, you cut that off, then you refuse nature

THE MOUNTAIN, THE PLAIN, ETC. 285

as an adjunct or help if you fast. I do not for a moment mean to say that fasting is not scriptural, that abstinence from food was not what was meant here. I believe it was ; I am perfectly convinced scripture does speak of this. And I believe also there may be cases in which it might be an exceedingly helpful adjunct to the moral state of some. But there is great force in this looked at morally. There must be not only dependence on God, but there must be self-denial, or what is stronger still, the denial of yourself—the refusal to minister to the resources of nature, or to take in nature at all in this holy work. “This kind goeth not out,” &c. And is not this a solemn thing for us in connection with our difficulties, our church troubles, and our domestic troubles, and our troubles generally here in this world? How our moral state is revealed thereby! Is it not a sad revelation of our moral state that when the devil creates confusion in the church there is no power to meet it, and people are stranded in a moment? While all is going on smoothly they can swim on as easily as possible, but the test comes, and they are nowhere, and why? The moral state—lack of prayer and fasting. May the Lord by His Spirit teach us this. They had the power, but could not use it ; and they were not able to use it because of their moral condition.

The third scene is the city. And it is a very

286 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

interesting point we get at the end of this chapter, and that it should have taken place at Capernaum of all places. It was the city of exalted privileges, the place most of all expressive of great glory. A city is the result of man's wisdom, and skill, and power. It sets forth man and his glory, all that he is able to collect together.

That made it so solemn for the bride in Canticles to be found in the city. What business had she there? The bride in the city! Was it not right she should lose her veil? She had got into man's circumstances. There are two things here. First the Lord announces His death. Now I am very anxious we should take this in, because there has been a great deal of gratuitous affirmation about what the disciples knew and expected, and what the saints of old time looked forward to; but what did the Lord say here? He announced His death as a martyr, "The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry." Some people would fain persuade us because they were sorry they entered into the thought of his death as a sacrifice for sin. They were exceeding sorry, a very strong word, but why? I never understood the meaning of this passage till I heard a beloved servant of God, many years ago now, explain it;

THE MOUNTAIN, THE PLAIN, ETC. 287

and he used this expression, he said, "it was the death of the heir." That is to say, He was the link as the heir to all the *earthly promises* they were looking for, and all the earthly inheritance, and all their hopes in this world, and His death put an end to all. Oh, but people say, how the disciples looked into His death. It was the very thing they stumbled at. Just as in Luke xxiv. the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, when the Lord met them, and asked them why they were sad. They spoke to Him of His death, and added, "We trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." His death was the overthrow of everything in their minds.

That is how people try to level up and down. What in reality was in their minds? Earthly things ; the very thing that turned them all aside ; they were looking for something here : and there are people to-day looking for something here, and it is a thousand times worse for people to-day in the light of Christianity, for those who profess to have been brought into the fulness of the light of the truth to be looking for things on earth, and yet that is what diverts people, and that destroys the principle of walking in the truth of the heavenly things. The disciples were full of earthly things ; and therefore the death of the heir, the One that linked them with all the promises down here, with all that their hearts were set on—for Him to be slain was intoler-

288 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

able to them. But all our blessings begin with the Son of man lifted up. They begin in connection with the cross. Hence in John iii., you have the earthly and heavenly things contrasted—when do the latter begin? With the Son of man lifted up. Here there was an instance of what I have referred to, how occupation with earthly things turns us away from the heavenly. They were looking for Christ, the Heir to all the promises to David and to Israel to set up the kingdom in this world; and hence, as these hopes were blighted, they were exceeding sorry. And we know as a matter of fact, for the Lord says so, and He says it, too, in the Gospel of John, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now,” &c

The last point is with Jesus at Capernaum. And I touch on this just to bring out a fact of the deepest blessedness for us, viz., that in connection with the payment of the tribute money. “And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, doth not your master pay tribute?” In other words, Is He a good Jew? Peter replies, Yes. When the Lord comes into the house, He anticipates Peter by saying, “What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?” Peter replies, “Of strangers.”

THE MOUNTAIN, THE PLAIN, ETC. 289

“Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.” They were the children of the great King of the temple. They were then to exact from strangers and not from children. “Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up ; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money : that take, and give unto them for me and thee.” “Lest we should offend them.” What a word this is from Him ; see the graciousness of His heart. But again, “Give unto them for me and thee.” How blessed that He should associate His poor disciple with Himself in that act, but that is the kind of association which really takes the heart out of everything here.

For what matters it about things down here in this world if I am associated with Him in that way? You will find the same principle brought out in Psalm xlv., viz., that association with Him breaks off other associations—hence He says there (vers. 10, 11), “Hearken, O daughter,” &c. Association with the King breaks off the other—makes you forget the thing nearest to you. It is a hard thing for some people to forget their own people and their father’s house.

Now I commend these three points to you, and may God give us in His grace to know what the joys of heaven are now. What

290 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

it is to be brought up to the hill-top, for we must be brought up there to get them. Jesus *brought them up*. Just as in Luke xxiv., they were *led out*. You must go up for it, not be sitting down here. He brought them up to the mountain, and they found He was everything up there. He was supreme in the Father's affections, in the Father's heart; there is no one to Him like His Son. "This is my beloved Son," and the Father adds, "Hear him." Listen to His voice, fix your eye on Him, turn from everything else, and let it be "Jesus only." Will you want your natural tastes there? Oh, no, it will be Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus only!

But down here in this world we need to have prayer and fasting, moral condition to use the power He has given us. And what then shall we covet of the great world and its cities, and all the rest, if nourished with Christ Himself?

Oh, may God, by His Spirit, just imprint these great realities on all our souls, that thus we may rise up and go from this place to live from heaven down here. It is not a sort of materialistic heaven, nor a carnal heaven; but it is a sphere of unspeakable blessedness and delight, where God and the Lamb are the divine source of every joy and love.

W. T. T.



THE VESSEL OF THE HEAVENLY TREASURE.

How rich was the grace displayed by the Lord in choosing Saul to be the vessel of this heavenly treasure! At this very time he was in full enmity against God and His Anointed. At his feet the witnesses, whose hands had been first upon Stephen, laid down their clothes. But this is the man that is to be made God's chosen vessel; and such is the way of the Lord in abounding mercy. Before this, man's fullest enmity had been met by God's fullest love; for the cross was at the same moment the witness of both, as the person of Saul now is. The soldier's spear, as one has observed, drew forth the blood and water—sin has drawn forth grace. And now, as we may say, Saul's journey to Damascus was the spear making its way a second time into the side of Christ, for he was now going with commission and slaughter against the flock of God. But it was on this journey that the light from heaven arrested him. The blood of Jesus thus again met the soldier's cruel spear, and Saul is a pattern of all long-suffering.

The sovereign grace that saves the church was thus displayed in Saul. But the heavenly glory that is reserved for the church was also

292 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

displayed to him, for he sees Jesus in it. And by these things his future ministry is formed.

And here I may observe in connection with this, that at the times of calling out new ministries there have commonly been characteristic exhibitions of Christ. Thus when Moses was called forth at Horeb, he saw a burning, but yet unconsumed bush, out of the midst of which Jehovah spake to him. And the ministry which he there receives was according to this vision, to go and deliver Israel from the affliction of Egypt, in the midst of which God had been with them, preserving them in spite of it all. When he and the people afterwards stood under Sinai, the mountain was altogether in a smoke, so that even Moses himself exceedingly feared and quaked. But all this was so because there was about to proceed from it that law which poor fallen man can never answer, and which therefore is but the ministry of death and condemnation to him, though he be such an one as Moses himself. When Moses afterwards drew towards God, standing between Him and the people, he receives (in accordance with the mediate place which he thus occupied) his commission to deliver, as the national mediator, the laws and ordinances of the king. But when, in the last place, he goes up to the top of the hill, far beyond both the region of horrible fire and the mediate place which he occupied as the

VESSEL OF THE HEAVENLY TREASURE. 293

mediator of the nation, and where all was calm and the presence of the Lord around him, he receives the tokens of grace, the types of Christ, the Saviour and Priest; and is from thence made to minister to Israel "the shadows of good things to come." In all these we see much that was expressive of the ministry about to be appointed.

So afterwards, though in a more limited way. When Joshua was about to receive a commission to compass Jericho with men of war, the Lord appears to him as a man of war with a sword drawn in his hand.

When Isaiah was called to go forth as the prophet of judgment against Israel, the Lord was seen in His temple in such terrible majesty that the very posts of the door moved at His voice, and the house was filled with smoke. (Isa. vi.)

When our Lord stood in the land of Israel, the Minister of the circumcision, according to this place and character, He appoints twelve to go forth to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But after the resurrection, when He stood on the earth in a larger character, all power in heaven and earth being then His; He commissions His apostles accordingly: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." And so now. Ascended into heaven and having there received the church to Himself,

294 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

He appears to Saul from that glory ; and in him appoints a ministry formed upon the principle of this manifestation. Heaven was the birthplace of Paul's apostleship ; and according to this, he was sent forth to gather out and raise up a people from earth to heaven.

Thus from the place from whence his call into office came, we, at the beginning, might be prepared for something new and heavenly. But his apostleship was out of due time as well as out of due place. (1 Cor. xv. 8.) It not only did not come from Jerusalem, but it arose after the apostleship there had been perfected. Judas' forfeited bishopric had been filled up by Matthias, and thus the body of twelve, as ordered by the Lord at the beginning, was again complete ; and Paul's apostleship was thus a thing born "out of due time."

But though in this respect "out of due time," yet not so in every respect. The times and seasons which the Lord has taken for the unfolding of His counsels are doubtless all due and rightly ordered, and having the "mind of Christ" (the present inheritance, through grace, of every spiritual man) we may seek to know this, remembering first of all whose counsels we are searching into, and how it becomes us to walk before Him with unshod feet. May He keep us, brethren, thus treading His courts ; and may the haste of inquirers never take us

VESSEL OF THE HEAVENLY TREASURE. 295

out of the place and attitude of worshippers. Let us remember that it is in His temple we must inquire. (Ps. xxvii. 4.)

As, then, to these times and seasons, I observe that our Lord marks successive stages in the divine procedure with Israel when He says, "*The law and the prophets prophesied until John.*" Here He notices three ministries, the law, the prophets, and John. But these extended only down to our Lord's own ministry, and therefore now in the further progress of the divine counsels, we can to these add others.

We are thus enabled to see the dulness of the times in which the mysteries of God have been revealed. It must be so we know, for God is God. But through His abounding towards us in all wisdom and prudence, He gives us grace to see something of this, that we may adore Him and love Him and long for the day when we shall see Him face to face, and know as we are known. For all these His ways are beautiful in their season. Israel was the favoured earthly people, and it was due to them to try whether or not the fountain would be opened in Jerusalem, from whence to water the earth. But this debt of Israel had now been paid by the ministry of the Lord, closed in by that of the twelve; and Stephen's speech in Acts vii. is God's conviction of Israel's rejection of all the ways which His love had taken with them.

296 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

They had silenced, as he there charges them, the early voice of God in Joseph; they had refused Moses, the deliverer; they had persecuted the prophets; slain John and others who had shewed before of the coming of the Just One; been the betrayers and murderers of that Just One Himself; and finally, were then in His Person resisting, to the end resisting, as they had ever done, the Holy Ghost. The Lord therefore only had to forsake His sanctuary, and with it the earth, and the martyr sees the Lord in heaven under such a form as gives clear notice that the saints were now to have their citizenship in heaven, and their home in the glory there, and not on the earth.

This martyrdom of Stephen was thus a crisis, or time of judgment, and the final one with Israel, and a new witness to God is therefore called out. There had been already such times in the history of Israel. Shiloh had been the scene of the first crisis. The ark that was there was taken into the enemy's land; the priest and his sons died ingloriously; Ichabod was the character of the system then, and Samuel was called out as Jehovah's new witness—the help of Israel, the raiser of the stone Ebenezer. Jerusalem was afterwards the scene of another crisis. The house of David had filled up its sin; the king and the people, with all their treasures, were taken to Babylon;

and the city laid in heaps ; and Jesus (for the interval as to this purpose need not to be estimated) is called forth God's new witness—the sure mercy and hope of Israel. But He was refused, and in judgment turned His back upon Jerusalem, saying, “Behold your house is left unto you desolate.” That was a season of judgment, also judgment of Israel, for the rejection of the Son of man ; and another witness is then called out—the twelve apostles, who testify, as I have been observing, in the Holy Ghost to the resurrection of the rejected Lord, and that repentance and remission of sins were provided in Him for Israel. But they also are rejected and cast out. Then comes the final crisis, Stephen is their representative, and he convicts Israel of full resistance of the Holy Ghost ; and then a new and heavenly witness is called forth. Such witness is the church, and of the church, and of the church's special calling and glory, Paul is made in an eminent sense the minister.

J. G. B.



THE PATH FOR THIS DAY.

“THOSE who fight the Lord's battles must be contented to be in no respect accounted of ; they must expect to be in no respect encouraged by the prospect of *human praise*. And if you make an exception ‘that the children of God will

298 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

praise you, whatever the world may say,' beware of this, for you may turn them into a world, and find in them a world, and may sow to the flesh in sowing to their approbation ; and you will neither be benefited by them, nor they by you, so long as respect for them is your motive. All such motives are a poison, and a taking away from you the strength in which you are to give glory to God. It is not the fact that all that see the face of the Lord do see each other. It is not the fact, that the misapprehension of the world is the only misapprehension the Christian must be contented to labour under. He must expect even his brethren to see him through a mist, and to be disappointed of their sympathy and their cheers of approbation ; *the man of God must walk alone with God, he must be contented that the Lord knoweth.* And it is such a relief, yes, it is such a relief to the natural man within us to fall back upon human countenances, and human thoughts and sympathy, that we often deceive ourselves, and think it brotherly love when we are just resting in the earthly sympathy of some fellow-worm. You are to be followers of Him who was left alone, and you are, like Him, to rejoice that you are not alone, *because the Father is with you*, that you may give glory to God. Oh ! I cannot but speak of it. It is such a glory to God to see a soul that has been accessible to the praise of men, sur-

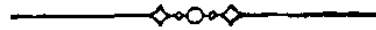
rounded by hundreds and thousands of his fellow-creatures, every one of whom he knows how to please, and yet that he should be contented, yes, pleased and happy, in doing, with a single reference to God, that which he knows they will all misunderstand.

“Here was the victory of Jesus—there was not a single heart that beat in sympathy with His heart, or entered into His bitter sorrow, or bore His grief in the hour of His bitter grief; but His way was with the Lord—His judgment was with His God—His Father—who said: ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ This was the perfect glory given to the Father by the Son, that in *flesh and blood* such a trust in God was manifested; and this is what you are called to, and you are not called to it as He was, but you are called to see God in Him. God has come near to you in Christ, and here you have a human heart—a perfect sympathy—the heart of God in your nature, and to this you are ever carried. And if there be any other sympathy with you in the wide universe, whether on the sea of glass, or still on this earth, it is only as the pulsation of the blood that flows from Christ to His members, that it is to you of any account. Feed upon it, and remember you are thus to walk in the world, not hanging upon one another. Lord Jesus, take my fevered hands in Thine, and keep me with Thee—with Thee, walking above

300 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the worthless din of human praise or disapproval. Then shall it be in mine ear the empty sound which it is in Thine ; and I shall walk in sweet unconsciousness—too far for some, not far enough for others—but with Thee ; putting my whole weight into that which in Thine eyes is service ; no longer offering Thee the blind, the lame, the maimed desires of a spirit dreaming of the great things which it *would* do, but my waking, rejoicing energies. Lord, shine upon Thy poor plant—say unto me with power—‘ Arise, follow Me ! ’ ”

Extracted.



“ WHEREFORE GOD ALSO HATH
HIGHLY EXALTED HIM.”

AWARDED the lowest place, and “ set at nought ” by man, God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that HE IS LORD. In estimating the glory of the “ Man Christ Jesus,” how different was man from God ; how infinitely low was man’s estimation—how high was God’s. Do we not learn, how utterly perverted has man’s appreciation of that which bears the stamp and sanction of God, become by sin ? If we look at the path of the Lord Jesus Christ on

“GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM.” 301

earth, and see in Him all that was perfect as a man, true gentleness and meekness toward others, true love and grace likewise, blended with an uncompromising decision for the truth of God, a maintenance of principle when that principle brought Him into direct conflict with human prejudices and opinions, a “setting His face like a flint” in the support of all that was divine, a bold exposure of Pharisaic pride, self-righteousness, and self-exaltation ; a confession of the truth, in short, which, though productive of His death (for—in a world of apostasy from God, death could be His only fate—albeit in another sense it was the fruit of His love—for He “laid down His life”), yet marked Him out as the perfect man, the beautiful embodiment of all that truly adorns humanity, the personification of virtue and moral excellence. Should we not hang our heads with confusion of face and shame, when we remember that this blessed One was refused, rejected, and crucified? Alas! such is the blinding power of sin ; such its demoralising, degrading, unhumanising effect, that, when “God was manifest in the flesh,” they “returned hatred for His love ;” they “hated him without a cause ;” they “took him, and with wicked hands they crucified and slew him.”

Truly we may say,

“Where God’s seal the fairest,
They stamped their foulest brand,”

302 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

and not, as was once said, "if virtue were only personified, the world would worship at her shrine," but rather that she has thus appeared, and, because the eye of man had become evil, and his appreciation of virtue vitiated by sin, the world expelled her from its presence. Sad testimony, but not untrue, for, alas, the world knows not its own depraved condition. The heart of man is "deceitful above all things," and therefore, by deceit, persuades man that he is not "desperately wicked." Yet, what other proof of his desperate wickedness is needed than the death of this God-man?

"If I had not done among them the works which *none other man* did, they had not had sin," said the Lord Jesus, as though the sin of a Cain, of an antediluvian world, of a Babel, of a Sodom and Gomorrah, of a Tyre and Sidon, of a Pharaoh, of a Jeroboam, or of a Ahab, were not to be placed in the same scale, or to be measured in the same measure; as though every previous act of transgression, disobedience, and blasphemy were now completely eclipsed. "Now," says He, "they have no cloak for their sin." His rejection was the sin of sins—the crowning sin, yea, the damning sin! Bad as it was to "thrust aside" a Moses, "treat shamefully" a Jeremiah, or "slay" a Zechariah "between the temple and the altar," what shall we say of that act whereby the Son of God is disallowed and murdered?

“GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM.” 303

But let us trace His path, and notice how fair God's seal set upon Him, how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost, how He, as man on earth, was yet the supreme delight of heaven. We read, at the time of His birth, of a multitude of the heavenly host surrounding the angel by whom the glad tidings of a Saviour born that day in Bethlehem were announced to the shepherds, praising God, and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good pleasure in men.” Sweet, and rich, and wondrous were their praises; more wondrous far than when, on an earlier day, that same angel host chanted the birth of creation. More sweet were the praises of heaven on this wondrous night, more auspicious was the introduction of the Son of Man by this angel choir. Not less significant was the conduct of the wise men from the east when they, led by His star, came to worship the “King of the Jews,” and, when they found Him, presented to Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Thus we see angels, and stars, and shepherds, and wise men, all interested in the advent of this wondrous Man.

Thirty years elapsed, and history is almost silent, but two facts can be gathered concerning Him from its page; one that “His Father's business” was the foremost thought of His soul, and that, too, whilst in no wise forgetful of the claims of His parents; and also, that His

304 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

custom was to read the scriptures in the synagogue of Nazareth, where He had been brought up (see Luke ii. 49 and iv. 16). Meagre though this detail may be, it is nevertheless grateful to the heart ; it is enough to shew His character, it may be but the barest outline, still the course of the stream is learned from the feather or straw on its bosom, and these two simple yet exquisite traces of His early life make known to us the bent and purpose of His hidden days. "I must be about my father's business," are words which let out the deep spring and seat of that life which was so shortly to display itself in a manner unknown hitherto, and to claim from human tongues the unreserved confession that He was the Son of God.

But at the close of that period, we find Him associating Himself with those of His nation who owned the testimony of the Baptist, and coming to be baptised of John in Jordan. John, conscious of His glory, sought the lower place, but was met by the memorable response of perfect obedience—"thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness ; and he suffered him." What could be lowlier or lovelier ! what condescension ! what a gracious identification with the faithful of Israel ! what perfect submission—and all was seen by God. "And straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon

"GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM." 305

Him, and there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." Glorious recognition of the obedient One; widely different estimate from that of man. On whom, it may be asked, had heaven ever thus smiled or placed its bright and living seal? But of this One, God could say, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In this respect He was therefore peculiar. He engaged the attention of heaven, and drew therefrom its salutation. To none of the children of men had this extraordinary seal of approbation been awarded; but "God gave not the Spirit by measure to him." And yet, extraordinary as such an event may be, this was not its only occasion; for when, on the mount of transfiguration, accompanied by Moses and Elias, and surrounded by the cloud of brightness, we find the same voice saluting Him, and using words almost similar—"This is my beloved Son, hear him;" or, as reported by one of the favoured eye-witnesses, "He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" (2 Pet. i. 17.) Such distinctions mark Him off as peculiar and alone. As a man on earth, He was heaven-honoured as none other. He stands in contrast with all, even as He could say, "The Son of man which is in heaven." It is not that

306 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

men had never been the direct objects of special heavenly communications. We find God talking with Adam, and Noah, and Abraham, and others. We find Elijah carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire ; and Stephen, in a much later day, seeing the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God, but no voice of commendation sounded in his ears, even though there awaited him the honour of being the first Christian martyr. No, all is contrast. There was that in the case of the Son of man which distinguished Him from all, and rendered evident His claim and title to divinity.

“Miracles and wonders and signs” approved Him—and by them, God bare Him witness. His own words commended Him, and He was the truth. Moses wrote of Him : John ran before and introduced Him. Diseases fled at His touch or His word of command. Death gave way to life in His presence, and demons deserted their victims at His word. He was kind, considerate, and un-upbraiding ; at the service of all, and graciously accessible to all ; faithful, but not unkind ; sovereign, but not despotic ; almighty, but almighty in blessing. True to God, and unbendingly faithful to His interests on earth, He suffered and became “obedient unto death,” for death lay necessarily in His path of obedience, and that, “the death of the cross,” and now “God hath highly exalted

“GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM.” 307

him, and given him a name above every name.” It was His due. He never forfeited the glory that was natural to Him ; and, as water ascends to its own level, so now God re-instates Him in His own proper glory, with the addition of that which He has acquired as the wonderful over-comer. Such was the burthen of His prayer in John xvii., “Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son ;” and again, “I have glorified thee on the earth ; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do ; and now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” This prayer has been fully answered, and the blessed One has gone on high. He has been rejected on earth, but accepted in heaven ; refused by man, received by God, even as He speaks from the glory, “I am set down with my Father on his throne.”

A passage in Hebrews xii. bears, with beautiful effect, on this point. “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Here, Jesus is presented to us as the man of faith, the author and accomplisher of the path of dependence on God and testimony for Him, in whom there was no failure, no mistake, no coming short of the will of God, as there has been in others who

308 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

walked in the same path—the Enochs and Noahs and Abrahams, and the vast cloud of witnesses to the power and reality of faith ; of these, though the world was not worthy of them, it could not be said they did not fail. But hence the eye is to turn from each of them to Jesus, and see One who began and completed that path without a single failure. And He, having endured the cross, despising the shame, is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. His race was run ; His bright and unfaltering witness was borne, and now, as victor, He is welcomed to the throne of God. Blessed diversity of judgment. If the cross was meted to Him by wicked men, the throne of glory was awarded Him on high ; and He deserved that throne. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that HE IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father.”

J. W. S.



“AS IN THE DAYS OF HER
YOUTH.”

(HOSEA II. 15.)

THESE are the touching words of the Jehovah of Israel by the mouth of His servant Hosea, describing the future state of the nation, the result of His faithful ways with them in crushing and alluring, then speaking to the heart in the wilderness, and from thence giving them vineyards and hope and song.

It is not without its deep interest to observe that the meaning of Hosea is salvation, thus bringing before us the deep, eternal thought of Jehovah's heart for His poor and afflicted people.

Let us meditate a little on this and the voice it has for us in the moral and spiritual truths it records. Now redemption out of Egypt was the commencement of their history, as brought to God ; on the shores of the Red Sea, which they passed over dry-shod, their first note of song was raised—Miriam, the sister of Moses, and Aaron led that song in those first moments of victory and triumph ; that song recorded the might and power and faithfulness of Jeho-

310 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

vah. "Jehovah is my strength and song. He is become my salvation."

He had secured their *shelter* on the night of the Passover: when He, as Judge, passed through the land of Egypt, in the habitations sprinkled with the blood of Jehovah's appointed victim they were safe and secure; though they were still in Egypt's territory, but yet safe and secure beneath the virtue of that blood which had, as it were, met all the holy, righteous claims of the Judge. But through the judgment waters of the Red Sea they passed out of Egypt for ever—here it is *change of place*, a point of very especial moment to seize—Jehovah, who had provided in the land of Egypt a *shelter*, at the Red Sea became their *salvation*; through its opened waters of judgment they pass out of Egypt's territory, they are brought on to another ground altogether. Salvation ever means this in scripture—as saved they sing. The sea, which opened to let them pass through dry shod, closed in upon their enemies and pursuers in all its strength, when the morning appeared, and swallowed them up, not one being left.

Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore; but they also saw that great work which Jehovah did upon the Egyptians, and they *believed* and *feared* and *sang*.

Now it is to this the words "As in the days of her youth" refer. It is worthy of note that this

“AS IN THE DAYS OF HER YOUTH.” 311

song celebrates Jehovah's victory and glory, *when they were in the result of it*: it did not, save very indirectly, refer to themselves; true they were the subjects of Jehovah's salvation, but they were not the subject of the song—Jehovah, and He alone, was *that*. Thus it ever is, where the Victor fills the vision; and is He not worthy? Where can one be found who has such a claim upon the homage and worship, the adoration and praise of those whom He has for ever liberated and blest?

Now following this song of Exodus xv. intervenes a long and chequered history, the pages of which are filled with the record of this people's departures and backslidings; very solemn are the words of prophetic warning spoken in Deuteronomy xxxi. 20 by Jehovah Himself: “For when I have brought them into the land, which I sware unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant.” Again, “This people will rise up and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from

312 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? and I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils that they shall have wrought, in that they are turned to other gods." Then, following these words, are those of the song which Moses taught the children of Israel, in which the faithful, unchanging Jehovah is celebrated thus: "He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just, and right is he." It was none other than such as He who, in His faithfulness and truth, could bring back to Himself a rebellious and headstrong people.

Verily the gifts and calling of God are without change of mind on God's part; the history of this people is the great evidence and proof of this, and so it will be in that coming day for them, when crushed and allured and broken in His love, from the place least expected, He will give the vineyards and the door of hope, and in the lovely words that head this paper, "She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth."

This truth has its moral force and voice for us, in principle it is just the same: His *faithful grace* brings us back to Him, if, like Israel, we have flitted and wandered away. As it

“TO REVEAL HIS SON IN ME.” 313

was with Israel so it is with us, the valley of Achor is the door of hope.

May He who alone can teach us, lead our hearts into a right apprehension of His own rich and wonderful grace, for Christ's sake.

W. T. T.



“TO REVEAL HIS SON IN ME.”

“THIS is the ground of the church's special dignity, and the gospel which Paul preached. It was not the gospel of Messiah, the hope of Israel ; nor the gospel of the once crucified One, now exalted “to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins ;” but it was the gospel of *the Son of God revealed in him*. The Son had been revealed *to* the disciples by the Father before (Matt. xvi. 17) ; but now He is revealed *in* Paul. He had the spirit of adoption. The Holy Ghost in him was the Spirit of the Son ; and anointed with this oil of gladness, he had to go forth and spread the savour of it everywhere. And upon the Son thus revealed within hangs everything that is peculiar, as I have observed, to the calling and glory of the church. Thus we read : “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God ; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ : if so be that we suffer with him, that we

314 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

may be also glorified together." (Rom. viii. 16, 17.) And again, we read "that we are predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ," that is, as Paul here speaks of himself, *to have the Son revealed in us*. And this being the predestinated condition of the church, there come forth, as in the train of this, all the church's holy prerogatives: acceptance in the Beloved, with forgiveness of sins through His blood; entrance into the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, so as to have made known to us the mystery of the will of God; future inheritance in and with Him in whom all things in heaven and earth are to be gathered; and the present seal and earnest of this inheritance in the Holy Ghost. This bright role of privileges is inscribed by the apostle thus: "spiritual blessings in the heavenlies;" and so they are; blessings through the Spirit flowing from and linking us with Him who is the Lord in the heavens. (Eph. i. 4-12.)

All this follows upon the *Son being revealed in us*, by which the church puts on Christ, so as to be one with Him in every stage of His wondrous way; dead, quickened, raised, and seated in heaven in Him. (Eph. ii. 6.) And of this mystery Paul was especially the steward. The Lord had hinted at it in the parable of the vine and the branches. He had spoken of it as that which the presence of the Comforter was to

effect, saying : " At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you " He spoke of it also to His disciples through Mary Magdalene after the resurrection, saying : " I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God ;" thus telling them that they were to be one with Him in love and joy before the throne, all through this present dispensation. But this mystery did not fully come forth till Paul is sent to declare it It is a calling of exceeding riches of grace, but nothing less could meet the mind of God towards His elect, for He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified were to be all of one. (Heb. ii. 11.)

Thus stood the covenant of love before the world was. A mediator such as Moses, whose best service was to keep Jehovah and the people asunder (see Deut. v. 5), could not answer the purpose of this marvellous love of our God ; but in the Son the elect are accepted ; and while His work and merit are all their title to anything, they have everything by their oneness with the Mediator Himself. (John xvii. 26.) Nothing less than this could fulfil the desire of our heavenly Father's heart towards us ! The partition-wall, whether between God and sinners or between Jew and Gentile, is broken down ; and we sinners stand together on its ruins, triumphing over them in Christ ; our

316 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

heavenly Father rejoicing over them also. This is the marvellous workmanship of the love of God, and the forming and completing of this union of Christ and the church is the husbandry which God is now tending. He is not, as once He was, caring for a land of wheat and oil and pomegranates, that His people might eat without scarceness of the increase of the fields (Deut. xi. 12); but He is the Husbandman of the vine and the branches. He is training the church in union with the Son of His love, till *all* come into the knowledge of Him to a perfect man. It is this union which makes us of the same family with the Lord Jesus, and entitles us to hear of Him as "*the first born.*" (Rom. viii. 29.) It is this union which gives us the same glory with the Lord Jesus, and entitles us to look after Him as "*the forerunner.*" (Heb. vi. 20.) It is this which gives character to that life which we now have, and to that glory in which we shall be manifested when He who is our life shall appear.

Our life and glory are thus both of a new character.

The *life* is a new life. The man in Christ is a new creature, he is a dead and risen man. His powers and affections have acquired a new character. His intelligence is *spiritual understanding*, or "*the mind of Christ.*" His love is "*love in the Spirit.*" The person in Him

“TO REVEAL HIS SON IN ME.” 317

is “*glorious power*,” the power of Christ’s resurrection. And so he knows no man after the flesh, but all things are become new to him. It is not enough that human affections or natural tastes would sanction anything, for being after the Spirit, he minds the things of the Spirit. He serves in newness of spirit, and the name of the Lord Jesus is the sanction of what he does either in word or deed. He has been translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, and there he walks, going forth in assurance and liberty to do service from morning till evening, living by faith on Him who loved him and gave Himself for him.

The *glory* is also a new glory. It is something above all that was seen in previous ages. Excellent things have been spoken of Adam and of Israel; but not equal to what is told us of the church. Christ is to present the church to Himself, as God presented Eve to Adam, to be the companion of His dominion and glory. The saints are to be conformed to the image of the Son. It is “the joy of the Lord” that is prepared for the saints, a share with Christ in the authority of the kingdom, in that which He has received from the Father. They are not so much brought into the glory as made glorious themselves, as we read, “The glory that shall be revealed *in us* ;” and again, “glorified together,” that is, together

318 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

with Christ ; “fashioned like unto his glorious body.” The place of the Son is the scene of their glory. They are not to stand on the footstool, but to sit on the throne. Israel may have the blessings of the earth, but the church is to know the upper or heavenly glory.

And it is *life* and *glory* that make us what we are. The life makes us *sons* ; the glory makes us *heirs* ; and our sonship and inheritance are everything. And it was the gospel of this life and glory that Paul was specially called out to minister. Peter and the others forwarded it, we know ; but Paul was the distinguished steward of it. And Peter and the others did not forward this gospel as being the twelve at Jerusalem. As the twelve they had borne their testimony to Israel and been rejected, like their Lord, and now had become witnesses to the heavenly calling of the church. The vision which instructed Peter in the fact that God had sanctified the Gentiles, might also have told him that God had made heaven, and not earth, the place of their calling and the scene of their hopes. The vessel with its contents was let down from heaven, and then taken up again into heaven. This was, by a symbol, a revelation of the mystery hid from ages. It denoted that the church had been of old written in heaven, and hid there with God ; but now, for a little season, was manifested here, and in the end was to be

“TO REVEAL HIS SON IN ME.” 319

hid in heaven again, leaving her glory and inheritance there. This was signified by the descending and ascending sheet, and such, I judge, is the character of the mystery hid from ages and generations. And according to this, Peter, under the Holy Ghost, speaks to the saints of their inheritance, “reserved in heaven,” and exhorts them to wait with girded loins as strangers and pilgrims on the earth. He presents the church as having consciously come to the end of all things here, and looking, like Israel in the night of the Passover, towards Canaan, having done with this Egypt-world.

But Paul was apprehended in a special manner for this ministry. A dispensation of the gospel was committed to him, and woe to him if he did not preach it. (1 Cor. ix. 16, 17.) Though as he speaks, it were even against his will, yet he must preach it. The Son was revealed in him for this very purpose, that he might preach Him among the heathen. (Gal. i. 16.) For when the Lord converted his soul, He sent him out with this gospel: “Rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee.”

J. G. B.



THE LORD'S PEOPLE IN AN EVIL DAY.

THE prophet Zephaniah in portraying the state of the people of God, and their judgment, which was imminent, also shews how the hand of God would come upon their foes. And in chapter iii. 8 the Spirit of God carries our thoughts on to the Lord's return in power, to judge and to establish His kingdom. It is a deeply solemn passage for the nations. ".... For my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." But how blessed to trace His loving hand of mercy on behalf of a remnant of His earthly people in view of that solemn day, which *hasteth greatly*. (Chap. i. 14.) Verses 10, 11 of chapter iii. shew that when He shall gather them back, the transgressors shall perish. "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land," &c. (Ps. ci. 8.) But He adds, "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord," &c. (Ver. 12.)

Now, these things written aforetime were written for our learning. The people of God to-day have fallen from their high estate. Departure from God and the truth are the great

THE LORD'S PEOPLE IN AN EVIL DAY. 321

characteristics of Christendom. Those who are the enemies of His saints will meet with their due reward. The professors among His people, too, will be judged. But the Lord has a remnant to-day in whom He finds His pleasure. Three things characterise the remnant of whom the prophet speaks—affliction, poverty, and trust. The professing church to-day has sought a path of ease, is rich and increased with goods, and trusts in an arm of flesh. Laodicean principles are rapidly developing, and the Lord is practically outside.

But there is the sure work of the Holy Ghost in souls, and through grace there are hearts which respond to the love of Christ, and are found cleaving to God and to the word of His grace. If true to the position and to the pathway involved, they will meet with rejection. It was our Lord's path, and brought out His perfection. It is impossible to escape affliction in some form, if true to Christ in an evil day. A faithful remnant will be poor in spirit, will refrain from all the display of Laodicea, and will seek to be a faithful steward in all that is entrusted to them. And their *heart's* trust will be *in the name of the Lord*. His name will be the one that they will jealously guard and honour above all others. And He will be their refuge, confidence, and hope till the end of their pilgrim journey here.

322 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Another thing that will reign among them is "*truth*." "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies." One of the most grievous exhibitions in God's house to-day has been the disregard of truth. Iniquity abounds already, and the love of many waxes cold, and those who desire and seek to be faithful to Christ in refusing it, are oft exposed to misrepresentation, and even lying; alas! not always limited to the world, or those who merely profess. It is an opportunity for God's saints, who desire His glory, to manifest the Spirit of Christ in return. All He passed through never once ruffled His spirit nor produced a word out of place. The fine flour of the meat-offering was there in all its perfect evenness, and there was the absence of everything foreign thereto. Blest example for His own! "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." (1 John ii. 6.) And He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." (1 Peter ii. 22, 23.)

Scripture is very searching. In Isaiah i. 13 we read, "It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." In Revelation iii. 9 we find Judaisers who say they are Jews, the covenant people of God, and are not, but do lie; who, in the

THE LORD'S PEOPLE IN AN EVIL DAY. 323

coming day, shall be made to come and worship before the feet of the Lord's loved ones. It is of the deepest moment, then, that we should test all by the sure word of God, and without reserve or compromise refuse unhesitatingly every principle and practice in God's house, which dishonours Christ. "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) And there is also the positive side, "Follow *righteousness*, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Tim. ii. 22.)

"Neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth." "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." (Jer. xvii. 9.) And we are capable of deceiving our own hearts. (Jas. i. 26.) Sin, too, is deceitful in itself. (Heb. iii. 13.) So that we have a powerful lurking foe within, as well as enemies around. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matt. xii. 34.) Hence the need of constant watchfulness. If the deceitful heart is allowed rein, a deceitful tongue will utter its evil. It is only as we walk in communion with God, and Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, that we shall be preserved. What a faithful saint sees in another unwatchful one to-day may break out in himself to-morrow, if he too fails to walk with God.

"For they shall feed, and lie down, and none

324 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

shall make them afraid." How blessed is the portion of God's saints, whether His earthly remnant or His heavenly people! They have food, rest, and peace. The richest of pasture, the most perfect rest, and a peace which passeth all understanding are the gracious provisions of our loving Shepherd. Truly a feast of fat things and wine upon the lees well refined is *the food* of our souls to-day—the whole revelation of Christianity, with the full scope of the rest of the word of God. No soul need starve there, though, alas! how many turn from the pure word of God to feed on the husks of mere human intellect, the traditions of men, bought sermons, and the condemnatory precepts of the law.

And we can "*lie down*." Every reader knows the pleasantness of rest after weariness of body. Here we have rest after weariness of soul. God's glad tidings bring perfect and abiding rest. "He maketh me to *lie down* in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." (Ps. xxiii. 2.) The Christian has rest of conscience when he has come to the Saviour. Then follows rest of soul, to be enjoyed throughout our sojourn here, as we follow Him. "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*." (Matt. xi. 29.)

"And none shall make them afraid." The

THE LORD'S PEOPLE IN AN EVIL DAY. 325

Lord is *our shield*. He protects His people. Our enemies are subtle and powerful. But greater is He that is for us than all that can be against us. (John x. 29.) Following Him, one shall chase a thousand. (Deut. xxxii. 30.) "The fear of man bringeth a snare." The saint's heart should be a stranger to fear. It is mistrust of Christ, who cannot fail. Dependent on Him alone, and utterly mistrusting ourselves, we tread the narrow way superior to every foe. "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Yes; food, rest, and peace are our proper portion now.

"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem." (Zeph. iii. 14.) The Lord's people should be a happy people. *Joy* should characterise us even now. And it will be so, if we are occupied with the Lord, and not with ourselves. Our joy should be full. Thousands of souls are robbed by the enemy of their joy, because he has succeeded in occupying them with themselves and their circumstances. A happy saint occupied with the Lord, will sing and make melody to Him. The remnant of the future are called to sing, and shout, to be glad, and to rejoice with *all the heart*. Shall we do less? If any have a right to be happy, it is a saved people, who know what their portion is, and who know above all, *Him* who gave it them,

326 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMELFS.

and His faithfulness. "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice." (Phil. iv. 4.) He who saves us, rejoices over His people with joy, rests in His love, and joys over them with singing. (Ver. 17.) It is impossible for our souls to have a sense of this, without a response. It is no good looking at ourselves, and trying to feel happy and rejoice, as alas! so many do. But occupied with Christ, and entering into God's thoughts about Him, and us in Him, the effect will be spontaneous, and we too shall sing, and shout in our souls; we too shall be glad and rejoice with *all the heart*.

"On earth the song begins;
In heaven more sweet and loud—
'To Him' that cleansed our sins
By His atoning blood;
'To Him,' we sing in joyful strain,
'Be honour, power, and praise, Amen.'"

A moment more, and our earthly song may cease, and all the Lord's loved ones be found praising His name in glory for ever. May He give us meanwhile, to be faithful in an evil day, and to enter now, more and more into the enjoyment of our blessed and eternal portion in Him.

E. H. C.



ASLEEP AMONG THE DEAD.

IT is a sorrowful sight to see a saint who has the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, using his knowledge to settle down in the enjoyment of things around him ; but it is intensely more sad to see a saint on heavenly ground asleep among the dead, and doubly grievous when that saint speaks thus in his sleep : " I cannot settle down like those who know the forgiveness of sins only, because my position is heavenly." Is not this, in spirit, Laodiceanism ? Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor and naked. " And knowest not ! " What solemn words ! The real condition utterly unknown !

A saint who sets the knowledge of his position against his actual condition as before God, or who expects power from the bare knowledge he possesses, has either never by the teaching of the Holy Ghost apprehended the reality of what he knows, or has sunk down into a low state. A saint acquainted with " heavenly truth " mentally only, and therefore apart from God, is exposed to Satan in a very peculiar manner. The only way to practically occupy the christian standing is being strong in the

328 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Lord and in the power of His might, and as girt about with the whole armour of God, and also in absolute dependence, praying always. We are all exposed to Satan's wiles, but he who abides in God keeps himself, and the wicked one touches him not.

While we thank God for unfolding to His people the facts of Christianity, and for teaching us that the Christian is in Christ in the heavens, let us also pray to have our souls in His presence about this position.

We will borrow an illustration from the things of life, and suppose a gentleman, whose chief idea in life is his position. His father being a younger son, this gentleman has for his position in the world, position and poverty. After recounting his trouble and vexations, it is his wont to exclaim, "But I am a gentleman." He does nothing, and as a man, is for all practical purposes of small value in the world, but the consoling assurance of what his position is eases his path to the grave.

God never gives a saint a spiritual position save in connection with Christ, and with the position God ever gives corresponding wealth. Position and poverty do not hang together in God's gifts. Younger sons of scant means are not to be found in His family. It is a poor consolation to set the knowledge of heavenly position against poverty and leanness of soul,

and to suppose that we are one whit the better for the knowledge of what is, by the grace of God, the common portion of all christians.

What a difference it would make to our friend referred to if, instead of walking about with his head up in reserve and self-consciousness, he descended from this elevation to the practical care of others, or to be of some use in the world before he died.

More is expected in the world from men of position than from common people. If God takes up a thief and sets him in Christ in the heavenly places, making him meet for His presence, God says to Him, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Eph. iv. 28.) The man is no longer to be a taker, but a giver. He is to live out what God has made him in Christ. He is not to dishonour his heavenly calling by his former sins. Again, because the new man is put on, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth, the heavenly man is to put away lying and to speak the truth. We should consider that a man of position in the world had disgraced himself by lying and unrighteousness; we may, therefore, justly apply the principle to those whose position before God is heavenly. Indeed the very character of God is to form our charac-

330 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

ter, for as God has in Christ forgiven us, so are we to forgive one another.

In the world there is a peculiar bearing belonging to its men of position, be their clime or colour what it may: a nobleman is ever known whatsoever his race; and so, too, will it be with the genuine heavenly man. He will be like Christ, at least in some degree. To walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called, there is required Christ-like meekness and lowliness. Such characteristics will surely mark the christian soldier, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. Our heavenliness will be ever the measure of our personal and experimental acquaintance with Christ.

(Extracted.)



“AT THE END OF THE DAYS.”

(DANIEL XII. 13.)

THE closing days of another year are upon us, and that in the last moments of the history of the church on earth. One great event, which is our glad future and hope, would seal the doom for ever of thousands around us. Do we realise it? Are we ready for it? The old year is fast dying out, and will soon be numbered with the past. The rapid flight of time suggests many heart searchings for us all. For us who are children

“AT THE END OF THE DAYS.” 331

of God the word is loud and clear, “It is high time to *awake out of sleep.*” Alas! how drowsy and insensible to the true state of things are so many of us; the condition of the church of God and the world at large seems so little to affect us. Alas! what weakness and feebleness in the former, and what recklessness and wickedness in the latter. Let us awake and arise and shake ourselves from the dust.

The bold and daring rejection of the truth is one of those dials upon which we may read the hour of the world’s age, and the lengthening shadows upon its face seem to intimate that the day is drawing towards a close. The most fitting words to describe the present moment are the heart-breaking and solemn utterance of the prophet: “For *truth is fallen in the street*, and equity cannot enter. Yea, *truth faileth* ;” and as the loyal and faithful heart enters into this, it responds with all affection to the call which reaches into its inmost depths: “But that which ye have, hold fast till I come.”

May the heart of all my readers respond to this, in ready affection and true-hearted devotion to our only Master and Lord.

W. T. T.



THE SECRET OF HIS PRESENCE.

IN the secret of His presence how my soul delights to
hide!

Oh! how precious are the lessons which I learn at Jesus'
side.

Earthly cares can never vex me, nor can trials lay me low,
For when Satan comes to tempt me, to the secret place I go.

When my soul is faint and thirsty, 'neath the shadow of
His wing

There is cool and pleasant shelter, and a fresh and crystal
spring ;

And my Saviour rests beside me as we hold communion
sweet ;

If I tried I could not utter what He says when thus we
meet.

Only this I know: I tell Him all my doubts and griefs and
fears ;

Oh! how patiently He listens! and my drooping soul He
cheers.

Do you think He ne'er reproves me? What a false friend
He would be,

If He never, never told me of the sins which He must see.

Would you like to know the sweetness of the secret of the
Lord ?

Go and hide beneath His shadow ; this shall then be your
reward,

And whene'er you leave the silence of that happy meeting-
place,

You must mind and bear the image of the Master on your
face.

—*Extracted.*

London: G. MORRISH, 20, Paternoster Square.