

HELPS IN
“Things concerning Himself.”

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“Christ is all.”—Col. iii. 11.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1894.

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Helps in "Things concerning himself."

"THY SUN SHALL NO MORE GO
DOWN."

(ISAIAH LX. 20.)

THESE words describe in vivid reality the coming time of blessing for poor scattered Israel, when the daughter of Zion, who now dwells, as it were, in dust, shall awake, and arise and shine, her light being come, and the glory of the Lord be risen upon her.

But they also describe *morally* and *spiritually* all that lies before us, as we by faith survey the coming, nearing day-dawn of the bright Morning Star, in contrast with the fading, falling shadows on our life of pilgrimage below.

As with the New Year opening upon us, we turn over a fresh leaf in the book of history, is it not well to challenge our hearts, and ask where this new date finds us, and what is really before us?

The Lord Jesus Christ is not only the Day-spring and Morning Star, but, blessed be His name, He is the Sun of the one eternal day, and the clearer and brighter He is before our hearts, the greater the ease with which we retire from all down here. All that is eternal and unfailing

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is on His side ; all below and around us is in reality but sunset, the brightness and beauty are gradually but surely fading. If our poor eyes are turned there they are only on what is sinking below the horizon, but when they are fixed like the martyr Stephen on Jesus in the glory of God, how different it all is ; then the outline, beautiful beyond all conception, of the eternal realities, unfolds itself before us.

There is one great and blessed fact which stands out to the eye of faith thus fixed on the nearing, heavenly sunrise : it is the blessed establishment of communication between the heart and its *absent object*. This too by the Holy Ghost, the heavenly messenger and glorifier of Jesus, who conveys to the soul the sense and comfort of His love and His blessed thoughts about us—thus are we really invigorated and revived, thus do the things above display themselves in all their own blessedness before us. We live then in His own sphere with Himself, in all the calm and rest of that blessed region of satisfied desire, and in the peace and power of it we are carried through the raging storms on our own side, superior through His grace to the watery waste around us, *the heart already in the place* where its treasure is, where the sun no more goes down, but where the everlasting light of His presence enfolds it around for ever.

May our hearts, dear readers, turn more than

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ever there during this new year; be it days and weeks and months, few or many, and may we be more intently looking up to, as well as abiding in, Him who came and died and rose again, and sits at God's right hand for us, and looking forward to that blessed moment when His shout shall be heard by all His own raised or changed, who shall follow Him into the Father's house, and there share His heavenly bliss and joys, of which we sometimes sing, when we say :—

“ There with unwearied gaze,
Our eyes on Him we'll rest,
And satisfy with endless praise
A heart supremely blest.” W. T. T.



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(COL. III.)

THE whole of the exhortations here are founded upon this, that the believer is put into an entirely new place. Indeed everywhere, though there are different aspects of it (in Ephesians—seated in heavenly places; in Romans—walking down here; in this epistle—not going further than resurrection) we are in an entirely new place. Christ in every case is our life. Romans always looks at the Christian as down here. In Colossians we are called upon to walk as being in Christ. In Ephesians, we are called upon to be “imitators of God as dear children;” that is, as

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coming out from heaven in our walk here. In Corinthians, it is, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation," that is, a totally new thing. At any rate it is always a new thing, founded on the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If I look at the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, I say, it is not only that, but I am risen with Him; that is what we find in Colossians, but the cross, as the foundation, has closed all that man was in the flesh. God has not executed judgment yet, but He has convinced the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment—it is treated by God as a lost world. The death of Christ was that point where God Himself had come into the world in goodness: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," and He was rejected. It was not simply that God had to turn man out of Paradise down here, because he was a sinner; but when God came in grace into this world, man turned Him out. In Hebrews it is, "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared," and it was the end of the world morally speaking. But God is now dealing in grace with this poor world, the fulness of grace meeting the perfect sinfulness of man. Just where man's sin was complete, the work of grace was complete. Where the highest sin was, the highest love was. It was the full blessedness of that work

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which brought salvation. It was the work of the Lord Jesus Christ which gave a character to the cross, for there everything came out completely : what man was, what the devil was, and what God was. You have the complete sinfulness of man in rejecting God come in goodness ; then you get Satan thoroughly against Christ, and on the other hand Christ giving Himself up in love. When we come to dwell upon the cross, we find everything there ; the perfect sin of man, and the perfect obedience of man in Christ, and the perfect love of God, and His righteousness even against sin, when Christ was made sin. The glory of God was effected there, and everything depends on that ; while it throws one world out, it begins a new creation, a new state, which Adam innocent was no more in than Adam guilty. Man altogether was brought out and judged (not that judgment is executed against sinners), but then on the other hand, that work is accomplished by which man gets a place in the glory of God—that is the basis of all. Satan is never called the prince of this world till the cross, for until then it was not shewn that he had that power in turning the whole world against Christ ; the carnal mind is enmity against God. “ O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee.” He appeals to the righteousness of the Father in speaking of the world.

We have to learn what it is to be associated

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with a rejected Christ in glory, when they have not got Him on earth. Of course I do not see the things in glory, and we must walk by faith, with our eyes fixed on Christ, going through this world by the power which we see outside, with the consciousness of the relationship that is made for us by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not now a question of whether I can meet God in the judgment. I know I cannot, I give up all thoughts of it; and I then come as a poor sinner to the cross of Christ, to find that I met God in Christ. Instead of going on, as a responsible sinner, to see how it will end, I see that it is all ended, but that God has stepped in, in grace, and saved me by sending His Son. He sent Him because I was a sinner, and now He is become my life; and my part with God is in virtue of what He has done. People will be judged according to their works; Christ had the fruit of what I did, and I have the fruit of what He has done.

Then we get another truth, that receiving Christ as our life, "ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," that is, we are completely associated with Christ where He is. He is our life, and it is hid with Christ in God because He is our life, and God thus identifies us with Christ. We all know His connection with this earth was closed when He died and went to heaven; they will see Him no more, except when He comes in judgment. Now the

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risen One has become my life, and I say Oh then, I am risen, for He has become my life. He has associated believers completely with Himself, not only put away their sins as guilty persons. The Christian starts with "My Father and your Father, my God and your God," only in a poor earthen vessel of course. Being a son, I have now Christ, the second Adam, to be my life, instead of the first Adam.

Now you will find how completely the apostle unfolds this practically. It is not *our* estimate of the blood of Christ that gives settled peace ; the thing is that *God* estimates it rightly. The question is whether the offended person has accepted it. Oh yes ! that is settled, for Christ is at the right hand of God. He gave it in love, and God has accepted it in righteousness. I am crucified with Christ. Then you are dead ? Yes, thank God, I am. If you are dead, what is your life ? Oh, I have a totally new life, and that is Christ ; I am born again.

The apostle takes up this point, "In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them." People make religion out of these ordinances ; it is not owning that we have died with Christ. We belong to heaven, though we have not got there yet. Now I say, I look at the second Adam, my life is hid because He is hid, and when He appears I shall appear—you cannot separate the two things. Having Christ as my life, I have

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power against evil. He does not talk of dying to sin, but that we are dead to sin. Christ having died, I have the title and duty to reckon myself dead ; when I have Him, I have power. I had no power, " In due time, when we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly," but now I have Christ as power. I could not succeed in being anything I ought to be, but He has come and redeemed me out of that state. I find out my weakness, but I find I have Christ as strength. In the new life in Christ, there is power, " My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." " What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh ;" it required righteousness from me, but never produced anything in me. It was a perfect rule for man as a child of Adam, but as he was a fallen child of Adam, it condemned him because he was a sinner. Did the law give life? Oh no ! for then we should have had righteousness by it. Did it give me strength, righteousness, or love? It tells me to love God with all my heart. Why? Because you will be cursed if you do not. Christ comes and does the very opposite : instead of imputing the sins, He takes them, and becomes my life, my strength, and a blessed object for my soul to live by, " that I may win Christ." The law could do none of this. By faith (Christ being my life) I can say to my flesh, You have not one word to say to me, you were

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condemned on the cross. Where is the condemnation? In His death. Oh, then it is gone. The flesh will be there trying to act, and the apostle goes through these gross sins in verse 5 ; but you have not to die, you are dead, "mortify therefore," and now that you have power and life, do not let the flesh act. I live in Christ, and therefore I must not walk in these things which are contrary to Him.

Now in verses 8 and 9, you find another thing, where there is no lust. There are three characters of sin here. One is lusts (ver. 5), another is violence (ver. 8), and the other falsehood or lying. (Ver. 9) Corruption we have looked at: it is "mortify therefore;" but now it is not a lust, but "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy." My flesh is unsubdued and unbroken, "but now ye also put off all these;" not only lusts, but an unsubdued will, which will not do for a Christian. And the third thing is, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;" I have done with Adam. The exhortation is founded upon this: seeing I have put off Adam, I have the title and right to say, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin," what the scripture calls flesh. By faith I hold it as a thing that is not to stir. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus"—the power of death, the sentence of death in myself, that I should not trust in myself, but in God

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which raiseth the dead. I am carrying about the dying of the Lord Jesus, and I am not going to let the flesh stir.

Mark the blessed consequence of this ; now I have a new man, I have put off the old man. If I am a Christian, God looks at me (and faith takes this as a truth), not as a child of Adam at all in this world. What are you then ? A child of God. The law was a perfect measure for the first man ; and now, what measure do we get for “the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” ? I know God. As in Ephesians, “which of God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” It is a new nature which is like God, in fact it is Christ as my life. It is the same kind of life as He had (*we speak now of that which is communicated*). What is the measure of this “knowledge” ? Why, what is in God—true spiritual knowledge—I am called to walk according to that ; we are to be followers of God as dear children. I get the knowledge of what God’s nature and character are in Christ, in a Man ; well, then that is the way I am to walk. Did not He love His enemies ? You go and love your enemies. Was not He holy ? You go and think holiness. Was not He kind to the unthankful and evil ? You go and do likewise. There is of course growth in likeness to Christ. The Spirit of God takes of the things of Christ, and shews them to me ;

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very well, that is the way you must walk. It is not merely that I avoid gross sins, but I have to put on the new man. This apprehension of how God has revealed Himself in Christ is a perfectly new thing. I have the mind and spirit of Christ, the new man, and Christ as my life, and the perfect pattern of it, according to which I am to walk. What I get in Christ is alone and unique, perfect goodness in the midst of evil—go and walk like Him.

In verse 11, "Christ is all and in all," "Christ is all," the whole and sole object, and He is "in all" as the power of life and strength. "Christ liveth in me, that is "in all," and "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," that is "Christ is all." He is *all* to me, and if He is all, there is nothing else. We have various duties, but the question is, is our motive in them all, serving Christ? If you get distracted from that, you get away from Him. I get sonship in John. In Ephesians it is, "Be ye therefore imitators of God as dear children;" it is as dear children we are to follow. God puts us into this relationship, and then tells us to behave according to it. A child could not make himself my child, even if he were to behave like an angel.

Verse 12, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." I am bound, in walking as a Christian, to

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carry along with me the consciousness of this ; I am sanctified as "the elect of God, holy and beloved," God delights in me, I am His beloved one, He has sanctified me. In what measure and degree? What do I mean by holiness and righteousness? I mean what Christ was to God. What is righteousness? Why, what Christ was ; well, then, what is redemption? Why, you get that fully at the end in glory. God puts us into this place first, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God ;" now you go and behave like that. What a blessed thing it is to see where He does put us, the present consciousness of relationship. "He died, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves ;" Christ gave Himself up for a parcel of sinners. It is the standard that is given to us, not to "live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again:" but He does not call on us to walk according to this, until He has put us in the conscious relationship. Verse 12 is just what was in Christ. Do you get wronged and injured? You go and take it patiently. He forgave the people : you go and forgive them. You are the epistle of Christ. The world is reading Christ in us, just as they read the ten commandments off the tables of stone ; and scripture does not say, you *ought* to be the epistle of Christ, but, you *are*. Duties flow from that place. It is not merely a "kindness" among

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men, but it is "charity," which is God's love. Charity tests everything, whether it is up to the mark or not. We are so apt to degenerate, poor creatures that we are, that God Himself has to be brought in (ver. 13), to keep up the measure of the love in its true, real character : divine love, which must be holiness.

Verse 15. " And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." What sort of peace do you think Christ had? Besides peace of conscience, there was the peace of an undistracted heart. Your heart is often distracted, and of course you have not Christ's peace. If He has brought us into the relationship of sons, we must walk in the peace in which Christ walked. What I feel so important for us is this, that it is not only forgiveness, but the mind and purpose of God is, to bring us really, livingly, and consciously into the place where Christ is. By the Holy Ghost I know I am in Christ ; then I know that Christ is in me. I am perfectly accepted as Christ is ; then my part comes, which is, Christ to be shewn out, " That the life of Jesus should be manifested in our mortal flesh." He has left His own peace with us ; and now, beloved friends, are we walking in the peace that Christ had in this world? It is perfectly true that we are to judge ourselves ; we find we can do nothing without Him, and if we have been careless, we shall discover that we have not power and strength ; but still

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what He has done, is, to set us consciously in His own place.

Verse 16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." Here I have the positive enjoyment of all the divine things which are revealed. Do not think that we cannot know and enjoy all the things that belong to us as God's heirs. Live like Christ, and you will certainly find something of the Master's reproach. If the spirit of the world is active in me, of course I do not see clearly ; but the Spirit of God is given to us, that we may know these things. I have the word of Christ dwelling in my heart, and the Holy Ghost takes the things of Christ and shews them to me. When I know that every saint will be perfectly like Christ in glory, I say, What a blessed thing that will be. Whilst we have universal joy, there is a special link a person has with Christ's joy, which no one knows but himself.

"Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Ver. 16.) Spiritual songs to enjoy the Lord in. I have the word which brings all these precious things—the love of the Father—into my soul, and my song goes up in praise to the Lord.

Verse 17 is a very simple direction, but how it sweeps things away: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." If you are going to buy a house—are you doing

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that in the name of the Lord Jesus? It is the motive that governs us. My life is not made up of heroisms, but of a hundred different little things; do them all in the name of Christ: it is everyday life. Supposing I am living three-quarters of my day without Christ, I then have to make an effort to get back. At the bottom of my heart, Christ, and at the top, blameless conduct, perhaps no one can reproach me, but a man in between the two. When I look back over to-day, has it been for Christ? Never do anything except for Christ; you will find it will keep the heart fresh.

Now let me ask you, Are you willing every day to take the place of being an epistle of Christ in this world? If you are, then of course you ought to do everything in His name. There is no growth in acceptance, for it is "in the Beloved," but there is growth in the Christian as to his path. I know Christ better, and I imitate Him better. If I am in earnest, I am very glad to be kept close to Him. When Christ is in the heart, the whole thing is easy, but it is not easy when the world is in the heart. If you get a pretty bit of dress, that is more than Christ. It is the question of what is near the eye of the mind. If I am walking with the peace of Christ in my heart, I get the word of Christ to dwell in me richly in all wisdom. Who gets the knowledge of the highest privileges of the Christian in John xx.?

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Was it the apostles? No, it was Mary Magdalene, for her heart was clinging to Christ: the disciples could do without Him; she could not, and He reveals Himself to her, and tells her to go to the disciples and say, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." In the measure in which we keep close to Christ, the word of Christ dwells in us richly. The affections of the heart are up there, and the Holy Ghost takes of the things of Christ and shews them to us, and my responsibility is in everything to shew forth Christ.

The Lord give us to see, very distinctly and clearly, that we are put into an entirely new place. If the Spirit of God is dwelling in me, my place is not as a child of Adam at all: I am in Christ, and Christ is in me, and my responsibility is to walk not as man ought to walk, but as a child of God ought to walk. When we see the perfectness of grace in Christ, we shall soon see how far short we are. Are your hearts set upon Christ, so that your one, earnest desire is to glorify Him? If the life of Christ is manifested in everything I do, the world will soon find it out. God has left us the consciousness to walk in His favour as Christ Himself. Then the motive of anxious love to Him is to seek to glorify Him in everything we do: dead with Christ, risen with Christ, entirely associated with Himself, and a witness for Him here.

J. N. D.

ASCENSION.

“Touch me not; for I am not yet *ascended* to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” (John xx. 17.)

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of these thrice-blessed words of our Lord, spoken to Mary Magdalene on the resurrection morning—the first of a new week, and the first of an entirely new order of things.

All agree that a new era in God's relationship with men commenced at this moment; but how few, alas! see one-thousandth part of its blessed and solemn import!

Resurrection has changed everything.

When going to the cross, the blessed Lord had said, “*Now* is the judgment of this world.” (John xii. 31.) Its history before God ended then and there, as really as the history of the antediluvian world came to its close in the flood of Noah. Then God had said, “The end of all flesh is come before me;” and the death of Christ as really closed man's history before God. But now He who had descended at God's command into death under divine judgment, having perfectly glorified God to His entire satisfaction, has been raised from among the dead “by the glory of the Father,” the express answer of God to the completeness and perfection of His sacrifice, and a Man is

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seen in resurrection, God having "loosed the pains of death, because it was impossible *he* could be holden of it."

Here He is manifested and declared to be—

1, The Son of God with power. (Rom. i. 4.)

2, The Second Man, the Lord from heaven.

3, The last Adam. (1 Cor. xv. 45-47.)

4, The Firstborn from the dead. (Col. i. 18.)

5, The Beginning (of the New Creation).
(Col. i. 18 ; 2 Cor. v. 17.)

6, The Head of the church. (Col. i. 18.)

7, The Head over all things to the church.
(Eph. i. 22.)

Well may we meditate on these things, seeking to learn what they mean, that they may take deep root in our souls by the power of the Holy Ghost.

As the last Adam, Christ becomes the Head of a new race, who in Him have passed through death and judgment, "from [out of] death to life;" and He sends to them by Mary this blessed word, "My brethren." This explains Hebrews ii. 11 : "For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Compare also, Ps. xxii. 22.)

Here we have the beginning of the new creation founded on death and resurrection—a new relationship established—and the Son of God, as the risen Man, claiming His re-

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deemed ones on the earth as His brethren, and giving them the wondrous privilege of looking up to heaven and knowing His Father as theirs, and His God as theirs, the beloved children of the Lord God Almighty. What a result accruing from an accomplished redemption! With what joy does the Lord make this marvellous revelation to His sorrowing disciples! We can understand that the stupendous character of the announcement, if in any measure understood, may have been in itself one reason why the disciples found it difficult to receive the testimony of those "who had seen him after he was risen." (Mark xvi. 14.) But this, wondrous as it is, is far from being all the truth.

Christ has not only risen but also ascended. He has left this scene altogether, never more to return till He comes in glory, and then only to judge it. He was once a Man in the midst of the surroundings in which man is placed. The earth is the sphere prepared and designed for man in innocency. By the fall he has forfeited everything, and death closes for him his history and robs him of all that was originally provided on the earth for his comfort, enjoyment, and gratification.

Through redemption *another sphere is opened*—heaven. The sacrifice of Christ does not regain for us an *earthly* paradise, or indeed

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anything on *earth*. The dying thief was taken to paradise indeed, but it was the paradise of God, not here but there. The heavens which always, except on one awful occasion, opened on the Lord, are now open to us. Jesus, eternally the Son of God and God the Son, is now also the risen Man. He has passed through this scene and out of it through death, and is now no longer to be known after the flesh. (2 Cor. v. 16.)

He is still Man, but in a new condition, that of resurrection, a condition into which man had never passed before, and as risen has ascended into heaven ("where he was before as Son of God") now there as man. Since His ascension we can look up and by faith see Him, the risen Man, on the throne of God. Because He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore God also hath highly exalted him." (Phil. ii.)

This heavenly scene or sphere is the place to which we as believers in Him now belong. As is the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly (1 Cor. xv. 48); and thus He says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be truly sanctified." (John xvii. 19.)

This is ascension; He is no longer here, He has gone on high. He has returned from earth to the place to which He belongs, and has told us we belong to it too. His Father is

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ours, His God ours, His home ours, and He Himself, the Beloved of God and of our souls is there. Soon He is coming again for us, that we may be with Him there, and like Him for ever. We are predestinated (marked out beforehand):

1, To be conformed to His image. (Rom. viii. 29.)

2, To be owned as His brethren, He the Firstborn. (Rom. viii. 29.)

3, To the adoption of children (sons). (Eph. i. 5.)

4, To the prepared inheritance. (Eph. i. 11.)

How precious to know that the purpose of God the Father has predestinated us for this, the perfect work of Christ the Son has given us a title to it ; and now consequent upon His ascension the Holy Ghost has been given to bring us practically into it. "Wherefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he [Christ] hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts ii. 33.) We can only apprehend these things by the Spirit of God, and live in the power of them by His gracious leading and energy, and it is most precious to see how scripture connects Him and His work with each of the above-named privileges and blessings.

1, If any man have not the *Spirit of Christ* he is none of His. (Rom. viii. 9.)

"But we all, with open [unveiled] face be-

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holding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) Thus are we made morally like Him by the Spirit of the Lord.

2, 3, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the *Spirit of his Son* into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Gal. iii. 6; Rom viii. 16.)

4, "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest of our inheritance*." (Eph. i. 13, 14.)

We are here for one purpose only: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (John xx. 21.) And again, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." (John xvii. 18.)

These words imply, what is blessedly true as to our origin, that it is from above, we are born of God and sent from above into this world to be here for our Lord during His rejection and in His absence. Can any portion be more blessed than to be left here a little while, to live for Him, "who loved us, and gave himself for us." He has set Himself apart from the earth and from earthly scenes by ascension, in order that we also may be entirely separated from it (1) in spirit, (2) in affections, (3) in hopes, and (4) in conduct and ways.

CHRIST'S POSTHUMOUS SENTENCE. 23

The Lord give us to enter more into these truths, that we may be exercised before Him as to how far they are practically true of us, and governing us and our motives and actions, while we wait for His return. J. V.



CHRIST'S POSTHUMOUS SENTENCE.

"AND to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts xx. 35.)

Where or when the Lord may have said these words we cannot tell, as they are not to be found, specifically, in any of the four gospels, wherein His blessed sayings are recorded; but that He did actually use them we may gather from the above statement of the apostle Paul in his address to the Ephesian elders.

In point of fact he calls upon them to *remember* the words! They must, therefore, have been familiar. It was, no doubt, a sentence known and loved by these early Christians; and perhaps it had assumed a kind of proverbial form in their minds.

Of such a form it was fully worthy. In it we find the principle of the whole life of Jesus. We read that "*He gave Himself.*" He was the voluntary burnt-offering that ascended as a sweet savour from the altar of absolute consecra-

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tion. His wondrous self-surrender knew no bounds nor measure. Each step He took from the glory to the manger, and then onward to the cross, was but an ever-deepening evidence of the completeness of His "devotion to God and love to man." "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 6-8.)

What a summary of that giving life do these inspired words supply. Now, in the form of God, then suffering death, the death of the cross! And He this same blessed Person in each case, though in circumstances how widely diverse. This is the mind that was in Christ Jesus. Let us ponder and meditate thereon. We learn the free and hearty giving of Himself—Himself! True, He left the glory, He refused each earthly dignity, and place, and honour, but besides that which was negative, He accepted the hatred and scorn of man, and He bore the judgment of God against sin—He gave Himself! He found amid all the sorrow and anguish of His path the supreme blessedness of being a *giver*!

And Calvary witnessed that act in its infinite fulness. There He laid down His life, there He

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cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" There in the silence of that awful solitude, unrelieved by one single ray of comfort, or sustainment from that God, whose favour was better than life, but whose holiness was intolerant of sin, there as "made sin for us" (blessed Saviour), He went every length in the path of *giving*. He withheld naught that He had or was. And He it was who, in such appreciative grace, could applaud the poor widow, who had given, as He said, "all her living." Wonderful! But is He to be second in the path of self-surrender? He did not only that, but He gave His life as well. Munificent Donor, Thy Name shall head the list of all benefactors!

David may have given his thousands of millions toward the construction of the temple, but Thou, for the salvation of the church, hast given that which could be measured by no amount of gold! "Hereby perceive we LOVE, because he laid down his life for us." (1 John iii. 16.) May the mind that was in Christ Jesus be also in us.

J. W. S.

THE CROWN OF LIFE.

(REV. II. 10.)

IF we go back to the period represented by Smyrna, we shall find ourselves in a time of spiritual prosperity.

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“Thou art rich”! said One to Smyrna, One who was pleased to live in great temporal poverty on this earth, and Who knows the real value of everything. Christians were poor and persecuted, and the times were hard even under some of the more enlightened(?) emperors; but they were rich in Christ. One proof of it is that they loved one another in the Lord. “See how these Christians love!”

Tribulation and poverty form the very best school for the church upon earth: the first keeps the saints in a true state of dependence, the second precludes the buying of idols in the world's fair (and after all it is “Vanity Fair”). The sword, the stake, and the wild beasts produced an admirable effect; and then the saints were despised religiously. To use a vulgar expression, the pretentious Jews were having it all their own way, and Christians were thoroughly contemned. It is always so where there is true testimony. May it be more simply known now!

But to look for a moment at the promise made to Smyrna: what is the meaning of the crown of life? It will be said, no doubt, that it is a special promise made to martyrs. They should lose their life here, and be amply compensated, nay infinitely rewarded, by the reception of the highest, the most blessed enjoyment there, where He (the blessed Martyr)

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is alive, He who once was dead. A splendid coronation truly, and I have no doubt that the suffering saints at that time entered into it.*

But does the expression, "crown of life" apply to others than those who have actually lost their lives at the stake, or in the Colosseum, &c.? Yes, certainly I believe it does, as James i. 12 would teach.

I suppose that most of the saints admit that the crown, which each shall wear in the Lord's presence, is (to use an illustration) a kind of triple tiara ; that is, of righteousness (2 Tim. iv. 8); of glory (1 Pet. v. 4); and of life (James i. 12; Rev. ii. 10). At the same time there may be special features in special cases (for example, "glory" predominating for those who have acted as in Peter, and who should receive the crown of amaranth as a reward ; "life" being conspicuous in the martyrs).

This once admitted, and I conceive it to be scriptural, we shall be able, with such a passage as that quoted from James, to bless the Lord for the trial and present affliction (I mean by "present" the whole length of the way), and be animated, whilst patiently suffering, with the thought of the crown of life. One may lose one's life in this world without actually going to

* The emblems of the Catacombs, &c., would shew this ; some of the martyrs' graves are interesting, though, alas ! man is always given to materialise everything.

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the stake or to the lions ; and I suppose all the followers of Jesus understand His words in Mark viii. 34, 35. I was told by an old Christian that some time ago there was a hymn sung commonly and with some reality :

“ Jesus ! I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee,”

and I suppose that this should be the true spirit of the present testimony, whatever one's course in life may be here ; that is, that all ambition as to worldly success and glory is excluded. A man of the world who has no ambition to succeed is not worth much (in the world) ; but the Christian has quite another life, and can afford to lose everything that the world can give him. It is a losing game, where he who loses, wins.

We shall thank the Lord throughout eternity for the severe trials, and crushing troubles here. We should indeed be of all men the most miserable if all were to end at the tomb ; but already in spirit, by the Holy Ghost, in the power of what is eternal, we can endure temptation, knowing that soon we shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.

How often in the New Testament do we find the word “ endure ;” and what a glorious promise is that of the crown of life !

E. L. B.

LOOKING UP AND WITHIN.

THE question asked has awakened a real desire to be, if possible, some comfort as to it. I think I know where many are as to this and such like subjects. Alas! we are all but poor ones as to deep and real heart exercise before the Lord concerning these things that trouble many. Let me first endeavour to emphasize the fact that what so many are longing after, as feeling they have not got, is the consequence of something else.

What is longed for, and rightly too, "affections satisfied," "tastes imbibed," "Christ living in us," "eternal life working"—all this, and much more akin to it, results from, flows out of, something else. I will try and shew what I mean by that *something else*, presently. Now observe that *produced effects* or *consequences* cannot *create* themselves, and if our mind or thoughts dwell much on their absence or possession, we are correspondingly depressed or elated; it is good to be *convicted*, but it does not help us to *dwell* much on our shortness of stature in divine fellowship or realisation; and it does not comfort us to see certain qualities and joys which we know ought to be there, but which we are sure

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we have not. I think I hear the words, "Tell us what is that something which begets all this in the saint." Well, I will try.

1st. The Christian is of a new order, and united to the Man at God's right hand; the Christian is one with Christ in heaven. Wonderful, blessed fact that! Faith accepts it in all simplicity, and in the measure of faith, and in the power of the Spirit, is realisation, communion, and joy.

2ndly. He to whom the Christian is united is a Man in glory, and the whole glory of God shines from Him; *there* he knows Him, *there* he sees Him, *there* he has intercourse with Him; it must be so, because if we have to do with Christ *it must be where He is*, then as it is so, that is, as He Himself in glory occupies the whole soul, we are changed into His image. Diligence and purpose of heart on our part there must be most surely, not in the direction of what is produced in us, as if we could secure these, but in being absorbed with Him, who by His Spirit forms in us, as we are engrossed with Himself, all those *fruits* which are seen and noticed by men. Again I repeat it, nothing can produce results corresponding to heaven but occupation with Christ, who is there; that we while here are changed into His image as we are impressed by Christ *there*; that the beloved Son filling the entire vision of our soul, shapes and forms us in moral likeness to Him as He was here. This is all

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blessedly true, yet I feel that there is a danger of the heart valuing this rather for the effects and consequences which are produced by it, and flow from it, than because of His own inherent and captivating blessedness. I do not of course mean to say that one would say so, or even allow oneself to think so; yet there can be no doubt that if effects or consequences are prominent in the soul, what produces them is valued rather in reference to them, than absolutely in itself.

With us it *ought* to be Canaan first and then the lessons of the wilderness. These have a very different character when this is the order, yet I am assured it is the *divine order* for us; *working to* heaven, and *living from* it, are two very different things; starting from heaven would not make the wilderness of this world less the wilderness than it is, but all about it would be gilded, the clear, soft, blessed light of heaven would gild the dreariness of earth's wilds.

We get an illustration of all this in Exodus xxxiv. Moses' face shone *after he had been in the mount with God*, and the effects were seen and felt after he came down among the people; the object in heaven forms in those whose object He is all those holy affections and tastes suited to itself. Stephen in Acts vii. is the New Testament instance of this truth: "full of the Holy Ghost," he looked *up*, not within or around, but up into heaven, and Jesus in the glory of

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God met, and filled his vision ; in the power of that sight he bears his testimony, and acts like Christ Himself.

Paul, in Philippians iii., tells us the same story, the Man in glory as seen and engrossing the soul, formed in the vessel the affections and tastes suited to Himself. The power of an object is wonderful even in earthly things ; if our object be superior to us we derive from it, it imparts to us ; if inferior, we drop to it.

Oh, to dwell much on the fact that we are one with Him ! Oh, to be much in His company where He is, and thus to exhibit Christ *subjectively* ! Remember the words, "looked up stedfastly unto heaven." There cannot be too much purpose of heart and anxiety to look up stedfastly into heaven, but no purpose of heart or diligence can *secure* to us the effects of looking up : there will be the bringing the air and the rest and the power of Christ in glory to bear upon every step of the way ; but we must not forget that for this two things are needed :

1st. The power of faith that looks up and *takes possession above*.

2nd. The power of *death* that displaces all that would dispute His right below. I would add, that in Philippians iv. we see the heavenly Man's superiority to *all around* Him : he can "*stand fast* in the Lord," when general weakness and declension abound ; he can "*rejoice* in the

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Lord" in a scene and circumstances full of sorrow and grief: he can be without a care in a world full of cares, because he casts them on One who can carry them and not feel their weight, and thus he has "the peace of God" where all is unrest and disquiet around him: he can let things go here, because he has an eternal certainty in that place where Christ is, and who is "at hand;" he can occupy his heart with what is good amid abounding evil, and so find the God whose peace keeps his heart, walking beside him; he can be abased, and not be disheartened; he can abound, and not be elated, because Christ is his sufficiency in the dark day, and better than the best in the bright day; nothing stands in his way, he balks at nothing, he is seated on the power of Christ, and "can do all things;" though he has nothing, yet he possesses all, though empty, yet he is full: he has a *source*, and a *supply*, a *measure*, and a *channel* equal to the heart of God. "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, through Christ Jesus."

W. T. T.

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THE Epistle to the Hebrews is a wonderful unfolding of the contrast between Christianity

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and Judaism. The Holy Ghost brings out in forcible relief the glories of the Son of God, the infinite perfection of His sacrifice, and the abiding character of His priesthood, &c. Christendom of to-day is a striking witness to human perverseness, in that its general character (more or less pronounced in different circles) is a denial of this invaluable epistle. It contains the most striking contrast between the only two systems which God ever set up, the one suited for an earthly people, the other for a heavenly. Professing Christendom has blended the two, and thereby lowered the whole character of Christianity. We are surrounded to-day with the mixed elements of Christianity, Judaism, and heathenism.

But, blessed be God, the truth remains, for we have His word. This is the brilliant lamp which sheds light on all. And notwithstanding the departure, He still works in souls, bringing the truth before His own in His grace, and bowing many hearts to it. Happy he who, receiving light, forsakes the shadows for the substance, values the Person and work of Christ aright, and enters into the holiest now, and bears His reproach without the camp.

The whole of the magnificent fabric of Christianity is built on Christ alone as its foundation. No Hebrew could break with Judaism, the earthly system, and enter into Christianity, the

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heavenly, without a due appreciation of Him whom Israel had refused. Nor can any of the nations learn what Christianity is without the same. Hence the presentation of His varied glories as Son of God and Son of man in the opening of the epistle. And what a marvellous display it is !

The moral grandeur of the opening verses can scarcely be surpassed. The Hebrews who had received the law by the disposition of angels, and had been the objects of their ministry from the throne of Jehovah their God, were accustomed to hold them in the highest reverence, and needed this special unfolding to lead their thoughts away, and to centre them on Him who infinitely eclipsed them all. Hence we read, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds ; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." (Heb. i. 1-4.)

In these first four verses we have, so to speak,

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a wonderful panorama, in simple and yet most expressive language, of the presentation, power, glory, death, ascension, &c., of the Son. God spoke to His people in Him, the Heir of all, the Creator of all. God was there.* He was the brightness of the glory, and the exact expression of the substance of Israel's God. His people were stone blind and saw no beauty in Him, and in accomplishing Christ's death, sealed their own guilt, and fulfilled the scriptures of their own prophets. But there was God's side in it all. The One in whom He spake, who upholdeth all things by the word of His power, was there *to make purification for sins*. This He wrought alone, and sat down, His work completed, at the right hand of the heavenly Majesty. The Son is seated in glory's highest height. Passing through the heavens, and above all the angelic hosts, *He took a place* by so much better than they, even as He inherits a more excellent name. Who can fathom the depths of mercy and grace which flow from, and who can fully enter into and enjoy the eternal fruits of this marvellous revelation?

Judaism is set aside. The substance is here; the shadows have found their fulfilment. Hence we have Christ, and the introduction of Chris-

* The force of the original, well known to many, is "God . . . hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in (His) Son." (Chap. i. 2.)

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tianity. In the following verses the Holy Ghost brings before us one after another of the varied glories of Him who was and is God's delight "Unto which of the angels said he at any time Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" He is the only-begotten. Not one in all the ranks of the heavenly principalities and powers, from the archangel Michael (who is in a special way connected in scripture with the service of the earthly people (Dan. x. 13, 21; xii. 1) to the last among the angelic host, did God ever address as *My Son*. "Thou art my Son." Jesus only is that, *the only-begotten*.

And not only so, but again: "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." Here is the Son of the Father. The Father's bosom is His abiding dwelling-place. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John i. 18.) God calls Him, "My Son." The Son calls Him, "My Father."

"And again, when he bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." God Himself calls upon all the angelic host to worship the One whom He introduces, the First-begotten. Every glory is found in Him, and every creature must bow to and render to Him His due. And there is not one of those holy beings, the angels,

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in the whole creation of God, but who delights to respond and render that tribute to Him.

“And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he said, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom : thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity : therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Vers. 7-9.) The angels, blessed though their position and portion may be, are but creatures and called to serve. *The Son* sitteth on the throne. He is both God and Man. “*Thy throne, O God.*” (Heb. i. 8.) “God, *thy God*, hath anointed *thee.*” (Heb. i. 9.) His throne abides, it is for ever and ever ; His sceptre righteousness. How blessed for all who turn to Him, when He shall sway it ! “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity,” &c. He is God’s anointed Man. He has fellows, the fruit of His own grace, but in all things He has the pre-eminence. “God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness *above* thy fellows.”

“And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thine hands : they shall perish, but thou remainest : and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed ; but

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thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail," (Vers. 10-12.) And He in whom all these varied glories are combined is the Lord Himself who created all things. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." (Prov. viii. 23.) He it is who spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast. The earth on which we dwell owes its foundation to Him, the heavens above are His almighty and skilful handiwork. Sin has marred them, and a moment cometh when they shall surely perish. But He who made them shall remain. Like a garment shall they wax old, and shall be folded up and changed altogether from their state. But He who shall thus deal with the work of His own hands, abides. "Thou art the same." How blessed to know it! Yes, He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. "And thy years shall not fail." He liveth for ever.

"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Vers. 13, 14.) He is the glorified One. God has given Him the place at His right hand. There He is seated now, 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. (Eph. i. 20, 21.) Soon

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God will make His foes the footstool of His feet. He is gone into heaven itself to appear in His presence for us, but to reappear to the destruction of every enemy. Meanwhile the angels, all ministering spirits, minister to them who shall be heirs of that great salvation which He has wrought for us.

Chapter ii. further unfolds His glory, bringing before God's saints His humiliation and death, His future glory, and His present position, crowned with glory and honour on high, and the wonderful truth that He and His sanctified ones are all of one. (Vers. 7-12.) This is He who is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession (or confession).

But to follow out all these glorious truths would involve more space than is at our disposal. The Lord has come and has died. His work is complete. He ever liveth on high to serve His people. *The heavens are opened now. God Himself rent the veil.* All distance is removed for every believer. We have boldness to enter into the very presence of God in the holiest of all. (Heb. x. 19.) Christianity is revealed. What a wondrous position of grace is ours, the fruit of His humiliation and death alone. All glory be to His name!

It is the height of folly then for His people in this day of grace to fall back to the distance and ceremonies of Judaism. All such are dead

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works. (Heb. vi. 1 ; ix. 14.) The blood of Christ purges the conscience from these to serve the living God. May His saints wake up to what Christianity really is and to the position of favour that Christ has won for us. It is the appreciation of His Person, the learning what He is to God, and the infinite work of His sacrifice before Him, that alone can lead souls out from what Christendom has lapsed into. The lines of demarcation between Judaism and Christianity could not be more clearly marked than in this epistle. Shall we make it of none effect by floating with the stream, and by the justification of a lapsed condition of things, or shall we draw near to God through the blood of Jesus, knowing He is in His presence for us, and learn to serve Him according to His mind.

This must necessarily involve rejection here. But if we know what it is to enjoy the privileges of the holiest, we shall be content to bear the reproach of Christ in an outside place, for it was there that the sacrifice was offered, and there that we shall enjoy the presence and company of Him, whose glories pass before us in the opening of this wondrous epistle. May the gracious Lord give understanding to many.

E. H. C.



NEW WINE IN NEW BOTTLES.

THE end of Luke v. is composed of three short parables, none the less important because of their brevity.

Grace had come into the world in the Person of our Lord, and before his final rejection, it was evident enough that the religious forms then existing could not contain it. An entirely new thing had come, involving new joys and new power, and the worn vessels of Judaism (for I suppose the old wine-skins represent this) were not strong enough to resist the new force.

I wish to say a few words, especially as to the two last parables; merely noticing that in the first one (that of the old garment and new piece of cloth) we have an entirely new thing—that which had not existed before—and that this sole fact is enough to condemn the old garment. Much has been said of all this; I only wish to notice that many, of different religious views, are still endeavouring to patch up the old garment, the old religion where man's ruin is not known; and it must be confessed that sorry patch-work is the result, and there are more rags than ever.

But when we come to the parable of the new wine in old wine-skins we have a further

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truth. For does not the new wine represent divine joy and power by the Holy Ghost? And does not the word *new* in this case, different as it is to the adjective used in the case of the garment, denote rather freshness and vigour?*

The force of the new wine would burst the old bottles; and I think we have a notable example of this in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, when the power of the Holy Spirit broke through the forms of the Jewish religion, and, unrestrained by man, overflowed in joy and blessing to all who were present. Some might, in bitter mockery, attribute the phenomenon to material new wine, but the fact still remained, that mighty strength had been put forth, and that from above.

Indeed, all the earlier part of the Acts of the Apostles (which should be called the Acts of the Holy Ghost) proves to us the weakness of the leather of the old wineskins; it was not strong enough to contain the new wine.

I was once greatly struck by a remark made by an old servant of Christ, now no more. He said: "There are very few Christians who understand what *grace* is." Some astonishment being expressed, he added: "I do not mean

* See again the interesting note on *καὶ* and *καί* in the New Translation, Col. iii. 10.

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that there are few Christians who understand that God is gracious, but that there are very few who have understood the real meaning of an entirely new place and power."

This brings us to the second part of our parable, where we have, new wine in new bottles. There must be new recipients for the new force, and this is exactly what we have in Christianity; that is, it is not an improved edition of old religious forms, but an entirely new thing. It is not a religion in which the sons of Adam are refined and improved; but begins when the hopeless ruin of man has been clearly proved, and the whole race set aside; a new race, too, has begun in Christ risen and glorified, and there are now upon earth new recipients, new bottles (and notice that this time it is *καινός* — that which had not existed before—very interesting) to receive the fresh vigorous power of the Holy Ghost.

Thus, instead of the forms and ordinances of a religion where man in his natural state is looked upon as capable of improvement, we have him entirely set aside at the cross (and if it be asked if his history be ended, it may be replied: "Yes, and for ever!"), and a new man, a new order, and the Holy Ghost given to those who are of it.

I suppose that the symbol wine always denotes

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joy in the word of God ; and that in this case there is the joy flowing from Christ, in a new place, by the Holy Ghost ; and that joy and power go together.

And, although this may go rather outside our subject, is it not too true that each time that men have endeavoured to limit the power of the Holy Spirit, and to employ the "old bottles," there has been a similar occurrence to that described in the first part of the parable? I believe that throughout the church's history, it has been found that Jewish ordinances cannot contain the free power, joy, and blessing of the Holy Spirit.

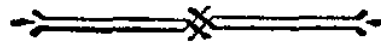
And the following parable shews us how difficult it is to change one's tastes. There is always more difficulty for those who have drunk of the old to receive and like the new wine, than for others who have not been impregnated with it. Witness the number of believers who still clung to Jewish ceremonies and forms in Acts xxi. 20: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe." And again I suppose that many of us who are brought up in a modified form of Judaism (Judæo-Catholicism), have had great trouble in having our tastes formed for the new wine ; and indeed we may still regret, and like the old more than we suppose.

It is difficult to lose our taste for a religion

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where all our old associations and thoughts were formed, and whose liturgy and ceremonies we so much admired; but the Lord's grace is great, and we may look to Him to give us more fully to understand His words, at once so simple and so deep, where He unfolds to us the true meaning of new wine in new bottles, and the true worth of the new wine.

E. L. B.



JUDE.

No other epistle opens with such predications of believers as this.

In the opening and close of this graphic epistle we have the highest and most pungent expressions in regard to the people of God and their profession, while the middle portion of it gives the most energetic and concentrated account of the corruption of the so called christianised world.

The darker the night the brighter the smallest luminary will appear; so here, when salvation has become common, and nominal Christianity corrupt, the faith of the elect is called MOST HOLY.

And while that which is divinely designated as not having the Spirit, being natural and virtually denying the ruin through *the fall*, and

claiming superiority, and so separating themselves (for nature however refined always separates from the people of God), the elect are told to build up themselves on their most holy faith, praying in the HOLY GHOST. And what is the faith upon which we are to build ourselves but the full salvation of God contained in the thrice precious words, SANCTIFIED, KEPT, CALLED, and *presented* faultless before the presence of His glory with exultation! This to us is what salvation was to the psalmist (Ps. xviii. 5), only ours is the fullest measure carrying us into the glory itself. Surely this is the Shield wherewith to quench all the fiery darts of the enemy!

How precious to be reminded by the Spirit in the sacred writings that there are those to whom such words can be addressed as sanctified by God the Father, kept in Jesus Christ, and called.

This epistle is not addressed to any local church nor to any particular branch of the human race as other epistles, but to those who are sanctified, kept, and called; and the epistle, as borne by the Holy Spirit, will surely reach all such, when, where, and whosoever they are.

Oh! may it indeed penetrate by the Holy Spirit's power into the dark corners of this Babel and awaken the called to its strains!

Sanctified by God the Father. This points out

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to us the sovereign love and holiness in God the Father, which was put in motion on our behalf at the start as setting us apart for Himself (Ps. iv. 3), even as His beloved Son said, when speaking to the kindred whose end we have in our epistle, "Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world," &c. He was conscious that God His Father had set Him apart, and in like manner we who believe in Him are chosen in Him, and are sanctified to and by Him (See Heb. ii. 11), who in love sent the Son to save us, and in holiness has given us to Him, in whom we are kept, that is, in Jesus Christ, who is the sent One of the Father. Compare soberly, John xvii. 3, 8, 11, 17-19 with our epistle and John x. 36. And as a diadem upon it all we have the glorious end before us in being called, for scripture assures us that God has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus. (1 Pet. v. 10.)

The question, What hath God wrought? will then be fully answered, when poor blameworthy creatures of the dust and corruption will be presented *faultless* before the presence of His glory with exultation. Oh! what a realisation awaits us, and what exultation will be His to see the full effect of His work in presenting us unblameable before Him in love.

What a refuge for our trembling hearts in a day of sorcery and treason, is the knowledge of

the ability of God to keep us, while treading the way, unknown to fowl which soars the air, unchecked by matter, unseen by the vulture's superior vision, and untreadable by the most powerful in creation! This path is undiscoverable, invisible, and impracticable to nature, therefore nothing but the love and power of God can take us along and through. Of these the Spirit assures us in the holy scriptures.

Is it asked, How can we keep ourselves in the love of God? Would you have any difficulty if in a storm you were told to keep in your house? The heart of God has been fully opened to us by His well-beloved Son, as no heart ever has. The nearest friend could never afford to have his heart exposed; but God's heart has been fully declared by the One who knew it as none ever could. "God so loved that He gave." (John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 8-11.)

And if this love is known and enjoyed there we may abide. (1 John iv. 16.) There also we have the light, for God is Light and God is Love. There then the path is discovered, hidden from nature's view. Apart from these we miss our way. (Job xxviii. 21, 28.)

The more the sacred new scriptures are weighed the more apparent it is that the path of God's beloved is ours; He trod it alone without faltering, and as one said, He passed through the thorny hedge first—we follow on after Him.

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“But ye, *beloved*, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.”

“Oh, keep us, love divine, near Thee,
That we our nothingness may know ;
And ever to Thy glory be,
Walking in faith while here below.”

E. H.

Jude unmasks the enemy, and leaves the evil one without a covering, and separates the precious from the vile. All is exposed to our view before the final judgment.



“WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE JUST.”

WE may say of this, as of truthfulness, surely no Christian would be anything but just! Ah! but we have very large meshes in our net sometimes, and let things slip through too easily.

We are not sufficiently careful about the “things that are just.” It is not merely paying our bills, but dealing justly with our *neighbours’ characters and feelings*. Sometimes when we do not like certain persons, we are inclined to set them aside, and condemn them altogether, when there may be much that is really

DECLINE AND ITS ANTIDOTE.

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valuable which we might discover. It is not right, because we see a flaw in a character, to bring a sweeping clause of condemnation against the faulty person. We want to pray for a very discriminating judgment, and to learn that the just weight, which God loves, has to do, not with buying and selling alone, but with the men and women among whom we dwell.

C. P.



DECLINE AND ITS ANTIDOTE.

WHEN we first receive the knowledge of life in Christ we are absorbed, we readily admit all else to be "dung and dross." (Phil. iii.) But when decline comes in, we get old motives into action again. Little by little, we are not absorbed, and then a hundred things begin to be motives—things of which I took no notice, which did not act before. People say, "What harm is there in it?" When I begin to inquire, "What harm is there in this, or in that?" there is the tendency to decline. There may be no harm in the thing, but the thought about it shews that I am not absorbed with that which is heavenly. "Thou hast left thy first love." It is not in great sins, but here, that decline in the saints is manifested.

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When the sense of grace is diminished, we decline in practice. Our motives must be in God. Sometimes effort is made to press conduct, works, and practice, because (it is said) full grace was preached before ; and now that there is decline in practice, you must preach practice. That which is the rather to be pressed is grace—the first grace. *It is grace, not legalism, that will restore the soul.* Where the sense of grace is diminished the conscience may be at the same time uncommonly active, and then it condemns the pressing of grace, and legalism is the result. When conscience has been put in action through the claims of grace, that is not legalism, and there will be holy practice in detail.

We may fall into either of two faults—that of (because fruits have not been produced) preaching fruits ; or that of getting at ease, when certain things come to have influence over us again, through thinking what we approved of before was legalism. We shall not get back by dwelling on detail. Christ is the great motive for everything, and we must get up into the knowledge of resurrection in Christ to remedy detail. Here there is wonderful truth and wonderful liberty.

Another very important point is, the tone and spirit of our walk. Confidence in God, and gentleness of spirit, is that which becomes the saint. For this we must be at home with God.

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The effect of thus walking in Christ, setting the Lord ever before us, is always to make us walk with reverence, lowliness, adoration, quietness, ease, and happiness. If I go where I am accustomed to be—if I get, for instance, into a great house, I may have much kindness shewn me there; but when I get out again, I feel at ease, I am glad to be out. Had I been brought up in that house, I should feel otherwise. The soul is not only happy in God for itself, but it will bring the tone of that house out with it. Because of its joy in God, anxieties disappear, and it will move through the ten thousand things that would trouble and bring anxieties to another, without being a bit troubled. No matter what it may be, we bring quietness of spirit into all circumstances, whilst abiding in God.

If a man be risen with Christ, if he be dwelling there, it will show itself thus. We shall not be afraid of the changes around. We shall live, not in stupid apathy and listlessness, but in the exercise of lively affections and energies towards the Lord. One great evidence of my dwelling in Christ is quietness. I have my portion elsewhere, and I go on. Another sign is confidence in obeying.

This connects itself with fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ—fellowship not only in joy, but in the thoughts of the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost, the

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third person of the blessed Trinity, is our power of entering with the affections into the things of God.

“The Father loveth the Son.” What a place this puts me in, to be thus cognisant of the Father’s feelings towards His beloved Son.

In our proper place we get our mind filled and associated with things that leave this world as a little thing—an atom in the vastness of the glory which was before the world was.

J. N. D.



WISHING FOR THE DAY.

In the horror of great darkness,
 In the starless midnight gloom,
 'Mid the shrieking of the tempest,
 'Mid the hissing of the foam,
 When the sons of men are quailing,
 When the strongest faith is failing,
 Sailor! cast an anchor,
 Wishing for the day!

When the chilly sea-fog curtain
 Gathers close with stealthy tread,
 While weird voices strangely whisper,
 “Breakers, breakers close ahead!”
 In the agony of keeping
 That stern watch that knows no sleeping,
 Sailor! cast an anchor,
 Wishing for the day!

WISHING FOR THE DAY.

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When a more than midnight darkness
 Hangs its heavy pall of clouds,
 When a worse than ocean tempest
 Rattles thro' the shivering shrouds,
 When the life-blood is congealing,
 When the heart and brain are reeling,
 Christian! cast an anchor,
 Wishing for the day!

When the icy hand of sorrow
 Lays its grasp upon thy heart,
 And the very thought of thinking
 Makes the inmost being start,
 When the pulse of hope is failing,
 When the last faint star is paling,
 Christian! cast an anchor,
 Wishing for the day!

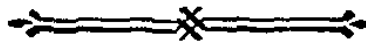
When the One who's gone before thee
 In the bitter, thorny road,
 Bids thee trace the bleeding footprints
 Of the wounded Son of God,
 When the willing spirit chooses,
 And the writhing flesh refuses,
 Christian! cast an anchor,
 Waiting for the day!

When the corn of wheat is dying,
 In its dark, forgotten tomb,
 And the glowing, golden harvest
 Scarcely glimmers through the gloom,
 When the hand that sows is weary,
 And the barren land looks dreary,
 Christian! cast an anchor,
 Wishing for the day!

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When the sound of coming judgment
Falls on many a startled ear,
And a voice is on the mountains,
Lo ! the Bridegroom draweth near !
When earth's bravest sons are quaking,
And the world's foundation shaking,
Christian ! ride at anchor,
'Tis the break of day !

C. P.



“THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.”

I TIMOTHY II. 5

THERE are two great realities, two great divine facts, which constitute the basis of all true religion.

We have them both stated in the verse before us, namely :—

“*One God*”—“*one mediator.*”

God was pleased in former times to make one nation (the Jewish) the depositary and testimony in the world of the truth of the unity of the God-head : “Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Lord is one Lord.”

We learn from Joshua xxiv. 2 that the world had lost the knowledge of the one true God even the family of Shem, and the position which belonged to God alone in the mind and heart had been usurped by Satan, for the gods they worshipped were *demons*. (See 1 Cor. x. 20, where Deut. xxxii. is quoted.) It was then that God *chose* and called out one man for Himself, to be *separate* from his country and kindred, and his father's house, a witness both in the world and against the world for God. In Abraham God had separated to Himself a family, a

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nation, Israel, and as we have observed, with the purpose of their being His witnesses among other realities to the fact that there was *one only God*. In due course this nation were further separated to God Himself from the world, of which Egypt was the figure, by a typical redemption, and became His dwelling-place on the earth.

But now be it observed this great revelation and witness of *one only God* was not sufficient to bring men into relationship with Him, and as to fact, God abode within the veil, as it is said, "In the darkness which shrouded his majesty." (See Deut. v. 22 ; 1 Kings viii. 12 ; 2 Chron. vi. 1 ; Lev. xvi. 2.)

Now it is in the second great fact, which is the distinctive truth of Christianity, that we learn how God can be in relationship with man. Note it well that whilst Christianity fully reveals the one God, it alone presents the fact of *one Mediator*. I would here record the testimony of another witness to the greatness and preciousness of this truth : "Two things here characterise the Mediator. He is a man ; He gave Himself a ransom for all. The time for the testimony was ordered of God."

"Precious truth ! We are in weakness, we are guilty, we could not bring ourselves near to God. We needed a Mediator, who, while maintaining the glory of God, should put us into such a

position that He could present us to God in righteousness according to that glory." . . . "But He must be a man in order to suffer for men and to represent men. And this He was. But this is not all. We are weak—here, where we are to receive the revelation of God; and weak with regard to the use of our resources in God and our communion with Him—even when our guilt is blotted out. And in our weakness to receive the revelation of God, Christ has revealed God, and all that He is in His own Person, in all the circumstances wherein man could have need, either in body or soul. He came down into the lowest depths in order that there should be none, even of the most wretched, who could not feel that God in His goodness was near him and was entirely accessible to him—come down to him—His love finding its occasion in misery; and that there was no need to which He was not present, which He could not meet.

"It is thus that He made Himself known on earth; and now that He is on high, He is still the same." . . . "He is still a man in glory and in divine perfection." . . . "No tenderness, no power of sympathy, no humanity like His. No human heart that can so understand, so feel with us, whatever the burden may be that oppresses the heart of man. It is the man, the Christ, Jesus, who is our Mediator."

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It is blessed to dwell upon His Person as both God and man, and our wisdom and blessing is to hold fast both, not the one to the setting aside of the other. It is a poor and contemptible piece of Satanic deceit to so blind any by the pride and vanity of a supposed orthodoxy, as to lead men to obscure, and in some instances even to set aside practically, the great truth of His manhood. How blessed for us that "the Word *became* flesh." The eternal Word who was ever with God and was God, was pleased to become man. Let me here notice a point of great beauty in John i. We read that the Word was God and was with God, but we equally read the positive statement that His presence as man was with men. This will help to shew the equal preciousness to God of His Person as both God and man.

But further, it is important to guard against a system from which the mediatorial character of the blessed Lord and of His work, almost entirely disappears or is destroyed ; it is not possible for instance to have true divine understanding of eternal life, if this mediatorial character of Christ is denied. Oh, how easily we can be both cheated and deceived by the enemy ; his wiles are most dangerous when they are of a *religious nature*, and when pride rules the will, the soil of the heart is ready for his seed. Alas ! what is unmortified and unjudged flesh not capable of ?

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"Full of light, full of Satan," is an awful possibility.

Now on no side of His mediatorial character is it more needful to be clear than on that of life; I do most thankfully adopt the words of another and say: "If they did not eat His flesh and drink His blood, they had not life. . . . For that it was necessary that a divine and heavenly life should descend from heaven and communicate itself to souls, and that in one man; it was necessary that that man should die and terminate every relation between God and the fallen race, and risen should begin a new race, possessing (having through grace appropriated to themselves Christ) divine life."

"How blessed to dwell then on the precious Lord's '*emptying Himself*' (ἐαυτον ἐκένωσε). (See Phil. ii. 7.) Oh, to receive into our souls the full significance of this amazing grace, how He 'took on him the form of a servant,' and so being dependent and obedient, a position He most carefully and in perfection continued in. . . . The Father has 'given to the Son' (so incarnate) to have life in Himself. *This is not true of Godhead.* You could not say God lives *δια* any being. Christ says, I live *δια του Πατερα* (by the Father). (John vi. 57.) And the subject here is just this descent of life and our living by Christ, and the flesh of Christ is distinctly brought in and His death. In John's

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Gospel this reception from the Father is most carefully everywhere retained, while His own proper Deity shines all through most strikingly."

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the mediatorship of our precious Lord, both as regards *life* and *propitiation*. Further, the fact of a mediator between God and man is, as we have observed, the great and distinctive truth of Christianity, "His coming from on high, His divine nature, His death, His life as man in heaven, all point Him out as the one and only mediator." The loss of this mediatorial place of the blessed Lord would be the loss of Christianity.

Lastly, it is very solemn to ponder and dwell upon the fact, namely, that in coming times, Satan's great personification of wickedness will deny Jesus Christ come in flesh. (1 John iv. 1-3.) The confession of Jesus Christ come in flesh was "not merely to confess that He is come, but to confess Him thus come." The denial of Jesus come in flesh is the spirit of Antichrist, and is also "that (power) of the Antichrist."

Oh, for hearts true and loyal to His blessed Person in all that constitutes the God-Man, holding fast His divine glory with all holy reverence, but equally holding fast the perfection of His humanity and its servant form, the "one mediator between God and men, the man-Christ Jesus."

W. T. T.

A CLUSTER OF FRUIT AND HOW TO BEAR IT.

PHILIPPIANS II.

THIS chapter furnishes us with that aspect of the death of Christ in which His followers may share ; it is the martyr's side of the death of Christ.

It also gives three names of men who followed closely in the steps of their Lord, two of whom were ready to lay down their lives ; the other in principle does the same ; it was natural for him to think of the things of others when all sought their own. And if three saved sinners, Paul, Epaphroditus and Timothy, by drinking richly and freely at the Spring, yielded such a bunch of fruit on the vine for the husbandman, may not we in our day who are recipients of the same grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though He were rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich ? When too, it might truly be mourned over, that all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ, may not we, I say, drink and drink again, and so by grace supplied, like fruit be produced ? The spring remains—so does the Vine ; if we abide in Him, fruit will be produced, and by the skilful hand of the husbandman all that hinders fruit-bearing removed.

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It is salutary to be reminded of the fact that we were at one time sinners of the Gentiles, and children of wrath even as others, and that but for the sovereign mercy of God we must have perished for ever in unutterable woe, a feeling of gratitude is produced which manifests itself as it did in Paul, in the deepest interests for the objects of the saving love of Christ, "Therefore I endure *all things* for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus unto eternal glory." (2 Tim. ii. 10) He who at one time was the chief of sinners is now in no wise behind the chiefest of the apostles, and shews it in the most demonstrative manner along the road his Master took, which led to prison, chains, and death. (Compare Is. liii. 8, 9; Mark x. 32; Acts xxvi. 29.) Jesus Christ took the *downward* way before He took the *upward*; so did Paul; and so must the Christian now. (Compare Luke xxiv. 26; 1 Pet. v. 10; Phil. ii. 7.) Jesus emptied Himself, took the *lowest* place, and as man has acquired the *highest*. (Ver. 9 compared with Eph. i. 20-23; Prov. xviii. 12.)

In principle it must be the same for every true servant of God. Christ gives the example to follow His steps. We see in the opening verses of Philippians ii, Paul's lesson, and how well he learned it, and in the end of the chapter how he taught it to others.

Let us now examine the traits in these men, and firstly the principle of which their course was fashioned. The Son of God emptied Himself. He left what was natural to Him, the majesty and glory that were His—He does not surrender His glories, nor give them to another ; but He humbled Himself. Though Creator in His own creation, takes a creature's *place*, is in servant's form, and in it is obedient unto the death of the cross. The more we ponder these verses the more we are lost in wonder at the combination of humility and glory, not knowing which shines most in the obedience ; it is like a rich seed-bed in which the servant may be rooted and get encouragement ministered to him when moving amidst the seed-beds of carnal prosperity and spiritual barrenness.

From chapter iii. we see clearly that Paul worked on the same principle, and trod the same path, taking the Teacher's yoke, and learning of Him. He emptied himself of all that was his by right, and that gave him distinction, counting all loss that put him out of the reach of men, all that rightly made him superior to others, for let it be remarked that they are not sinful things, but things estimable which he gives up—the "Man in the glory" eclipsed all else. What was of the flesh or in the flesh is not now recognised by him. (Compare 2 Cor. v. 16.) He is constrained by the love of Christ. This epistle

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is the experience of those in the power of the Spirit. Flesh is not mentioned in it, but to say (it is not wilderness experience) that they put no confidence in it. In Paul it is like a man bringing the joy and power of Canaan into Egypt; he had reached the land, and had come back with the joy and power of it into Pharaoh's kingdom, heralding grace and glory, becomes a prisoner for it, and is ready to be offered upon the sacrifice and service of the faith of the redeemed, and in it joys and rejoices with them, and calls upon them to rejoice. He is superior to it all—he despises the shame. *As the Father* had sent Jesus Christ into the world, *even so* has He sent His servants into the world, and Paul was one of them; he starts from the same point, treads the same road, shares in the sufferings, has a martyr's death, and through grace reaches the same glory. (2 Thess. ii. 14.)

And may I not say that he reaps some of the fruit? for such a service would produce effects corresponding to its *nature*. Timothy learned in Paul's school lessons which fitted him for the service of unselfish love. Paul could say of him, that "he had no man likeminded who would *naturally* care for your state." Surely no language could speak more plainly than this of Timothy's state. What characterised him? "Naturally care for your state." Self-seeking was absent, and his natural element was to care

for the interests of others. Precious fruit of grace and glory! May the Lord produce breathings even in our prayer-meetings of a kindred sort!

Then comes Epaphroditus, and beautiful traits manifest themselves in this saved sinner—self-seeking entirely absent. Paul tells the Philippians of seven things that he discovered in him. ‘A brother,’ a companion *in labour*, a fellow-soldier, their messenger, and his minister (or servant), and also one that longed after them all, and was full of heaviness, not because that he himself was sick, but because they had heard that he had been sick. Truly nothing but grace and glory could produce such an effect in the heart of any one!

And this is not all. There is the martyr’s crowning point. He is willing to risk his own life to serve Paul. Oh, is this not a rich bunch of fruit on this fruit-bearing branch! Lovely and admirable picture indeed! How may the like be borne now? Abide in the Vine! Refuse not the pruning-knife; the husbandman is still the same. He must purge away the dross; and the thing we cherish most is what hinders the fruit ripening. Little by little He will purge away the dross. His hand is gentle, nor will He withhold what will minister succour in the hour when the most cherished thing is removed. Paul did not reach the point all at once, where

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he could say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content."

In the circumstances to which the apostle here alludes (chap. i. 2), we get the result of the overruling hand of God in His power and ways toward the church. There is nothing so good for us as the hand of God coming in and leading us, as he did Paul, in a path altogether contrary to his will. But the flesh always tears away from the hand of God; and even the renewed will dislikes to be thus under it. There is nothing that we more shrink from than from the hand of God. When Paul wrote this epistle, it was exactly his case. For if the things which happened to him fell out for the furtherance of the gospel (as he says) nothing at this time happened to him, according to his prayers; but they were the hand of God upon him, keeping him from his longed-for service. But this very thing is used of God to set the saint in Christ far above the services he is occupied in—precious in its place as that may be—and to give the greater blessedness of the enjoyment of Christ Himself. Paul, at Tarsus, for a while rested from service; afterwards he laboured more abundantly than they all. The early part of his course sent him into activity, and he "conferred not with flesh and blood;" but on he went in the power of the Spirit in him. But here we see him the subject of another process in his soul. In Romans we

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find him saying, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judæa." (Rom. xv. 30, 31.) There he prayed to be delivered from ungodly men, yet they put his feet in the stocks. While there was *service to be done*, there was another matter with Paul. He was idle two whole years at Cæsarea from service. He was a prisoner ; but as a prisoner was able to teach them all. All this time the hand of God was upon him. The Lord was meeting the remainder of self-will in his servant. The value of being alone with the Lord is, that he Himself gets more thoroughly into the presence of God ; and then he knows what the saints are before God, from being in the presence of God himself. Paul advances in the joy of being with the Lord, that he might know the difference of the joy of being with the Lord, and in service here. He uses the joy of being here or there, as "far better ;" and so dwelt in God's love, that when he saw service to the church, he says, "I know I shall stay here." Though in a strait, yet he had no doubt, because he knew what was in God. It was "far better to depart and be with him ;" but, in seeing the other principle of God's active love, "to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." God is ever acting in love ;

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therefore we should never be disturbed at anything which can happen to us, as though some strange thing had happened to us. The things which happen to us, always happen from God, and are all perfect, being of God.

Never a time when God more deferred acting in Paul than the two years at Cæsarea. Paul was entirely and painfully set aside by these circumstances. If your soul is in communion with God, you will know God's mind about the saints. But you are not to be content unless "changed into the same image." That which is wellpleasing to God, *should be wrought in us.*—(Extract from "The Present Testimony," Vol. ix., page 119)

God in His wisdom has recorded such biographies as would suffice for the help of His people during their sojourn upon earth, to follow so as they had them for an example who followed in the footsteps of the Master—He suffered in the flesh—they armed themselves with the same mind.

In mechanics patterns are kept for the use of workmen, that each article may be made as nearly as possible to the original. A good workman would prefer the "standard pattern" to any article however accurately made to it, because the least deviation from the standard might be enlarged in his own.

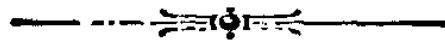
So in the goodness of God He has wisely

PEACE.

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given us not only the path of the Master, but transcripts in men of like passions with ourselves, so that the church in all ages may have a standard wherewith to test every servant. (Compare Phil. iii. 17 ; iv. 9 ; 1 John iv. 6 ; Rev. ii. 2.)

E. II.



PEACE.

"PEACE WITH GOD." (Rom. v. 1.)

"PEACE OF GOD." (Phil. iv. 7)

"MY PEACE." (John xiv. 27.)

"PEACE ONE WITH ANOTHER." (Mark ix. 50.)

PEACE is an essential mark of true Christianity and it is important for every saint to see how far he is living in the enjoyment of it. "Live in peace" (2 Cor. xiii. 11), comes in with other exhortations. The scriptures above quoted speak of Peace, but each presents a different form of this great privilege.

Let us look at them in the above order, as that is the usual way persons learn them in their souls.

The Gospels, Acts, and Epistles were all written after the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, and after the subsequent descent of the Holy Ghost. The Gospels are mostly occupied with Christ's life and teachings on earth, tracing His rejection by

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His own nation, and ending with His death and resurrection, and (in some) His ascension. The Acts record the descent of the Holy Ghost (after the ascension of Christ), and how the testimony began afresh in the hands of the apostles, and others who preached the gospel of a glorified Christ, and testified to the value of His person and work. This they preached as the basis of all God's subsequent dealings with men, and the blessings began with forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, which brought peace and joy to those who believed.

What does peace with God really mean? That the believer knows that every question of his sins has been settled to God's satisfaction. This is a deeply important matter, and we should look closely into the word of God to see what He says about it.

Why did God send His Son?

"To be the propitiation of our sins." (1 John iv. 10.)

For what did Christ die?

"For our sins." (1 Cor. xv. 3.)

Not a portion of them, but the whole is included in those words, "our sins." Evidently the question of sins must be settled either *in the day of grace* or *in the day of judgment*. If in the day of grace there is forgiveness, because of the satisfaction God has found in Christ's finished work. If He died for sins, it must be evident He has

put them away, because He is in heaven without them. When He was on the cross God laid the believers' sins on the sinless One, who, as Isaiah prophesied, was wounded for our transgressions, was bruised for our iniquities, and was forsaken by God on account of having those sins put to His account. That work ended by the Holy Sufferer going into death, thus bringing everything He had undertaken to an end and finishing the work God had given Him to do. Then God came in, in the power of the resurrection, and raised to His right hand the One whom He had forsaken when on the cross, because He had put away the sins God had forsaken Him for.

The gospel of God declares the established fact of a finished work, and those who receive this testimony get the result of it now in their souls, even peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This peace is found by looking at Christ where *He now is*; and where *He could not be* if He had not put away the sins of those who believe on Him. The answer to any accusations of Satan, or my own unbelieving heart, or even a caviller is, *my sins are gone, because they are not on Jesus now*. Thus for the believer this question is settled in the day of grace, and he can bless God for it. But the day of grace will soon close, and then those who have slighted it will find that their sins must be settled, not by God's forgiveness through Jesus the Saviour,

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but by God's judgment through Jesus, who will then be Judge, and not Saviour. This matter of peace with God is the foundation of all other truths, and needs to be carefully laid in the soul, as nothing else rests well unless a real sense of peace with God is enjoyed.

We find in the word, that God has a great deal to teach believers, but there is no foundation in the soul till peace is known. When it is really known it will bear looking at, and bear talking about. This peace was made "by the blood of his cross" (Col. i. 20), and the divine testimony concerning it is received by faith; as it is said, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.) Thus seeing this deeply serious question settled entirely outside myself on the cross, by the One who is now in the glory, I have peace with God within my own soul, real peace, and deep peace. God is satisfied, and I *find rest in His satisfaction*.

PEACE OF GOD. (Phil. iv. 7.)

This is spoken of in the Philippians, which is the epistle of *true christian experience*.

It is the proper experience of all believers who walk in the truth, and the more carefully they walk the more true experience they will have. The beloved apostle Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter (see chap. i. 13, 14), yet we do not find any restlessness of spirit, but he writes

as one who was entirely *above* his circumstances, and so in chapter iv. 4, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice." This does not suppose the absence of trials, but is the experience of one who knows how to dispose of them in a godly way. "Be careful [or anxious] for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

We all acknowledge that God is undisturbed by things down here on the earth. He is above every disturbing influence, nothing shakes the peace of His throne. So we read of the "peace of God," and more, "which passeth all understanding;" it is quite beyond human thoughts and comprehension. We are naturally in circumstances of change and surrounded by disturbing elements, so that it is beyond our natural thoughts to have perpetual peace. So here is something outside of man altogether, but not outside the reach of the consistent believer. But this peace can only be enjoyed as we walk in the power of the truth of the gospel. Scripture supposes saints, so long as they are on earth, to be in circumstances of difficulty, such as bodily sickness, or infirmity, or poverty, or family trials, or business trials, or even real persecution; whether these

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trials be the result of Adam's sin, or of special opposition to Christ and to the testimony the saint is bearing. Ever since Christianity began saints have been in like circumstances. What has always been the word for them? "Be careful [or anxious] for nothing . . . let your requests be made known unto God." (Mark, it does not say, the Father or Christ here, but God.) Then the wondrous result, "the peace of God . . . shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. iv. 7.) The saint is thus lifted out of his troubles, because the peace of God has come into his heart. The trouble may still remain, but he is morally above it, instead of being crushed by it. Now let us not doubt the truth of this blessed scripture; let it not only be a truth in our Bibles, but let it be known in our souls in the power of the Spirit. How scripture tests saints and proves how little faith they have. So little have they apprehended the real interest that God takes in the smallest matters. When sorely pressed and every refuge fails all know what it is to go to Him, but He would have us *first go to Him*, before we go to any other, and then we should have little need to go to any other one. It is one reason why saints have so little confidence in God in times of great trial, because they do not prove Him in their *little trials*. He could say of old, "prove me now." May we know more of what it means,

and then we shall be able to exhort others to it, because we know it so well in our own souls. "The peace of God keeping our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

"MY PEACE." (John xiv. 27.)

The peace of Christ. (Col. iii. 15, New Trans.)

In John xiv. the Lord was about to leave this world and go to the Father. His service as man in this world was nearly ended, but he was going to leave His disciples to continue the service, so He says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

One thing had specially marked His service, He was never disturbed by opposition, nor in a hurry. Whether called a gluttonous man and a winebibber (Matt. xi. 19); or accused that "He cast out devils by Beelzebub" (Matt. xii. 24); or, whether the Jews tried to throw Him over the precipice (Luke iv. 29); or, to stone Him (John viii. 59); we always find Him in peace. Now He left His servants to carry on His service during His absence, and He desires they should be equally above every disturbing element in connection with their service, and possess His peace.

Doubtless we must know the peace of God *in our own circumstances*, before we can know the peace of Christ *in our service*. What moral superiority we see in tracing the service of Christ, nothing moving Him except the will

of His Father, and then ever ready to do that, cost what it would. Not that He did not feel things. When He saw the multitudes, "He was moved with compassion." (Matt. xiv. 14.) When He saw the result of death at the grave of Lazarus, "He wept." (John xi. 35.) His moral perfections came out in all this.

We are called "to walk as he walked." (1 John ii. 6.) "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii. 5), when this is so with us, then we shall be in the position to understand what His peace, to which we are called, is. "Unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.)

"HAVE SALT IN YOURSELVES, AND HAVE PEACE ONE WITH ANOTHER." (Mark ix. 50.)

In this scripture the Lord was carrying the thoughts of His disciples beyond the time of His being with them, and preparing them for the difficulties that would arise in His absence.

In the three former scriptures which we have looked at, it was peace in connection with God and Christ, and therefore any difficulty could only be on *our own side*; in this scripture we have to do with fellow believers, and now difficulty may be on either or both sides. We read in Romans xii. 18, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men." "If it be possible" could not apply to the former scrip-

tures, but has a place in this. But difficulty is not to daunt us, but we are to "follow peace with all men and holiness," etc. (Heb. xii. 14.) Here in doctrine we get what the Lord taught His disciples in figure. Salt is a preserving substance and keeps good whatever it is in contact with. Believers are "the salt of the earth." (Matt. vi. 13.) They, as manifesting the truth in their lives, preserve the testimony in the midst of a corrupt world. The truth through believers has the power *morally* of preserving, like salt *literally*.

In seeking to go on in fellowship with fellow-believers, we must "have salt in ourselves," that is, maintain the truth in doctrine and practice. There must be no compromise with evil, but a very distinct refusal of it. Wherever there is corruption, there must have been an absence of salt. Salt and corruption cannot exist together. In maintaining the character of salt, one is kept apart from corruption. To compromise is to be salt without its savour, and fit for nothing in testimony for Christ. "Let us follow after peace and things wherewith one may edify another." (Rom. xiv. 19.) This will necessitate careful godly walk, and constant watching and praying. The enemy is always trying to sow discord amongst brethren, and when he has succeeded in that he would heal the breach he has made by compromise of the

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truth. From the outset of Christianity this has been the way of the enemy. Having robbed the saints of one truth and healed the breach which it caused, he soon attacks another truth, and then another, till at last the saints are robbed of every truth *as it was given at the beginning*. They may still have their Bibles, but the truth of the Bible has been lost, and consequently has no power over the lives of the saints, but they submit to traditions of men instead. This the enemy does not mind, for if the salt has gone, what is left is fit for nothing. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." (Col. iv. 6.) Salt is never to be lacking in us because of what we are in ourselves and because of what we are surrounded with. Believers are to be dispensers of grace, but not to be as some who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness (Jude 4), that is, make the grace of God an occasion for gratifying their lusts. This shews the importance of always having "salt in ourselves, and peace one with another." Those who love corruption will avoid the company of those who have salt, unless it be for a little while to see if they can rob them of the salt, and get them to hold grace without salt. There is hardly anything that strikes one so much to-day in the profession of Christianity, as the effort to have grace without salt.

PEACE.

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Let us sum up these four aspects of Peace :

Peace WITH God. Is the result of the knowledge of His full satisfaction in the finished work of Christ, so that the believer knows God has nothing against him, because He has nothing against his Saviour. Christ in the glory is the abiding proof of this real fact.

This is obtained by faith in the testimony of God concerning the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. v. 1.)

Peace OF God. Is the possession of God's peace in the soul, although as to circumstances the saint is still in trial and distraction, but unmoved by things below, because of what he has got from above !

This is obtained by making all these pressures known to God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.

MY peace. Is the peace Christ had in His service when down here, and which He would have His servants to possess, so that they may be unmoved by the opposition or indifference of both saints and sinners, and thus go on quietly without being either fretted, vexed, or cast down.

This is obtained by considering Him in His service as seen so beautifully in the gospels. In taking His yoke, rest is found, and thus moral conformity to Him. (See John xiii. 13-15 ; Phil. ii. 5-8.)

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Peace ONE WITH ANOTHER, is the result of saints going on together in the truth, and edifying one another in love, while diligent in maintaining the salt or preserving principle of grace.

This is obtained by constant watching and praying, while judging in *oneself* the roots of pride, and whatever else of the flesh that seeks to assert itself. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. v. 16.)

May God's grace so abound toward us, that each one may know something of each of these precious portions of truth, and thus "be found of him in peace without spot and blameless" (2 Peter iii. 14), for His name's sake.

G. W. GY.

"A NEW CONDITION."

CHRIST took human life in grace and sinless; and as alive in this life He took sin upon Him. Sin belongs, so to speak, to this life in which Christ knew no sin, but was made sin for us. But He dies—He quits this life. He is dead to sin; He has done with sin in having done with the life to which sin belonged, not in Him indeed but in us, and alive in which He was made sin for us. Raised up again by the power

of God, He lives in *a new condition*, into which sin cannot enter, being left behind with the life that He left. Faith brings us into it by grace.

It has been pretended that these thoughts affect the divine and eternal life which was in Christ. But this is idle and evil cavil. Even in an unconverted sinner, dying or laying down life has nothing to do with ceasing to exist as to the life of the man within. All live to God, and divine life in Christ never could cease or be changed.

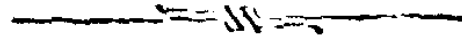
He never laid that down, but in the power of that, laid down His life as He possessed it here as a man, to take it up in an entirely new way in resurrection beyond the grave. The cavil is a very evil cavil. . . . The doctrine itself is vital truth. . . . Jesus is the resurrection and the life in the present power of a divine life. And observe that life coming by resurrection, delivers from all that death implies, and leaves it behind—sin, death, all that belongs to the life that man has lost. Christ having died for our sins, has borne their punishment—has borne *them*. *He has died*. All the power of the enemy, all its effect on mortal man, all the judgment of God, He has borne it all, and has come up from it in the power of a new life in resurrection, which is imparted to us ; so that we are in spirit alive from among the dead, as He is alive from among the dead. Sin (as made sin and

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bearing our sins in His own body on the tree), death, Satan's power, God's judgment, are all passed through and left behind, and man is in a wholly new state in incorruption.

J. N. D.

Synopsis, Vol. III. pages 452, 453.



“TO BELIEVERS IN CHRIST.”

A LETTER bearing the above title has just come to hand, and in view of the subtle misuse of scripture which pervades it, as well as the utter ignorance of the word of God, and confusion of the writer's own mind, evidenced therein, some notice of it seems called for, as a warning to any who may be deceived by a crafty counterfeit of the enemy. It is, as the writer himself says, with *principles* not with *persons* we have to do.

First, there is a painful absence in the letter of any divine conception of the true nature and character of the church, the body of Christ. I cannot find once in all that is written, a sentence which conveys the thought of a divinely Spirit-taught mind as to this great secret and counsel of God before the foundation of the world ; he seems never to rise beyond the association of believers on earth, and inasmuch as every association, according to the scripture thought of it, has the fact of one body for its basis, the writer is even in what he treats of, entirely apart from the thoughts and mind of God.

The letter is professedly issued as an exposition of the reasons which led the writer to sever his connection with a company of Chris-

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tians with whom he had been for some time in fellowship.

But the object of these comments is to point out the perversion and misapplication of scripture which underlies the whole.

On page 2, last paragraph, a number of scriptures are put together, and it is said that these designate in various ways *a principle in the New Testament*, namely, "Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love." (Col. i. 13, R. V.) The scriptures so put together are 1 Cor. i. 9 ; iii. 16 ; Heb. iii. 6 ; 1 Tim. iii. 15 ; 1 Peter ii. 5, R. V. ; Eph. ii. 21, 22, where it is said, "a similar thought is found." A more sad confusion and perversion of scripture could hardly be found than this. In order to set up what is called a "conditional" fellowship or association, "the kingdom of the Son of his love," which is a precious unfolding of the Father and the Son, the counsels of the Father accomplished by the Son, the sovereign operation and power of God placing us in an entirely new position and relationship with Himself, this we are told is the same as the "house of God," where the responsibility of man as a builder is seen, where we are justified in "looking at the outward thing in this world as a building which in pretension, character, and responsibility, is God's building—yet has been built by man, and built of wood and stubble, so

that the work is to be burnt up in the day of judgment which is revealed in fire." Though he may not be aware of it, the writer of the letter is in the darkness of that confusion and error on which Popery, Puseyism, and the whole ritualistic system is built, namely, he confounds that which Christ builds with that which man builds ; but the confusion is seen at its height when it is asserted that 1 Peter ii. 5 "leaves no doubt as to its being a conditional state!" It would be difficult to find a more flagrant perversion of scripture, than to apply to what is called "a conditional state" a passage which speaks of the building in its true perfect adjustment, *without any instrumental builder*. However differently viewed according to the ministry of each, Paul in Ephesians ii. 21, 22, and Peter in the passage in question, as well as Hebrews iii.—Christ's house, all speak of the same building ; never is it said of that which men build on the foundation laid by Paul the master-builder, that it is "fitly framed together;" there responsibility of builders is found, and man never yet "fitly framed" anything. This confusion loses sight of the true distinction between God's house, His habitation by the Spirit on earth in its normal condition, and the building the work of man, where wood, hay, stubble are found, what is commonly called Christendom.

Further his statement that the "first principles

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of gathering " with what he calls " the seven-fold order " are found in Acts ii. 41, 42 has no foundation in fact. It is well to bear in mind that the Acts is rather a divine record of *facts* and the *actings* of the Holy Ghost after His descent at Pentecost, than a book of *doctrines* and *principles*.

Now in the passage in question, we find that all was there that God had given ; the blessed Spirit had come down, but was in fact circumscribed within the limits of Jerusalem and among Jews : no Gentile had as yet been received, *nor was the unity of the body taught*, all was yet undeveloped and the union of Jew and Gentile in one body was not, as has been said, " in evidence." It is very evident from the application of this scripture that the author does not understand the meaning of verse 47. "*To the assembly*" here is evidently a gloss, and the word found in chapter iii. 1 should come in here ; it will thus read, " and the Lord was adding day by day together those that were to be saved," that is, the spared ones at the close of the Jewish dispensation. It is beyond all question a lovely picture which is here presented to us, and that too for but a brief moment ; there never had been seen such a picture previously on earth ; it was the effect of divine grace, and it was in the name of the once crucified, but now glorified One ; yet it was of a *transitional character*, and as to fact was

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confined to Jerusalem and Jews, so much so that if the nation had repented, Acts iii. might have been fulfilled. It is not until we come to Paul that we are instructed as to the body of Christ ; as soon as the blessed One is rejected entirely, both in humiliation, and from glory, then the great secret is revealed, and the words "Why persecutest thou me?" told out the great fact that Christ was here on earth in His body, the church ; now as all church association and fellowship must be on the ground of "one body," how can any one be clear in respect of the principles of gathering, if they have no true conception of the heavenly nature and character of the church the body of Christ ?

Another sad confusion as to scripture is found on page 4, middle paragraph, where John i. 13 and x. 28, 29 are adduced as evidence of the Lord building His church Himself, and "that we are added thereto unconditionally and eternally." There is perhaps no part of the letter in which the total absence of any spiritual apprehension of the body of Christ is more apparent than here.

There is not a word in either of these passages in John of the Lord building His church, or our being added thereto ; such is not the subject of John's ministry or apostleship ; it is specially and characteristically that of Paul ; further, we are not "added thereto," as the letter asserts ;

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we are, by the Holy Ghost, united to Christ as Man glorified in heaven, and equally united together in one body ; the distinction between "*adding*" and "*uniting*" is of every importance. It is very certain that independency is hostile to the whole principle of one body. The church is not a voluntary system, not a trace is to be found of the principle of independency, it everywhere speaks of one body on earth, whose unity was, as has been truly said, "the foundation of blessing in fact, and its maintenance the duty of every Christian." Let the writer of the letter we comment on take care that he is not in principle and in fact on the lines of a new and subtle independency, which is a crafty counterfeit of Satan. "There is *one body* and *one Spirit*," is the divine ground and principle of all gathering and association of saints together, and all who are gathered to His name, would act as one simply *because they are one*.

To Paul was committed this special ministry. He tells us he was a minister of the church to complete the word of God, and so we are prepared to find the doctrine of the church as the body of Christ, fully set forth in his writings ; we find full and detailed unfolding of it in Ephesians i., and chapter iii., in 1 Corinthians x. and chapter xii., and also in Colossians, yet there will not be found therein any such thought as building a body ; what we do find is that the risen

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glorious Man exalted at the right hand of God is the head of His body, the church, and that He was given by God as such to be this—The thought of a building, a habitation of God, is distinct in itself, in it there is no thought of head, or body, or union at all. It is important to see that in Ephesians we have Christ as the glorious Man raised and exalted in glory, Head over all things to the church His body; next we find those dead in sins, whether Jews or Gentiles, children of wrath, quickened together with Christ, raised up together and seated together in Him in heavenly places, as His body, all this being the fruit of the purposes and counsels of God before the foundation of the world; but when we turn to I Corinthians xii. we see the body of Christ *on earth*, and maintained in unity by the power of the Holy Ghost. This it is which gives such force to verse 27, "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular," that is, they were so *in principle* as gathered together at Corinth, but not in any wise as separating them from the whole body on earth, but as forming part of it, and on the basis and ground of it *in principle and constitution*.

As feeling the deep importance of the truths called in question in this letter, as well as the great truth of the moment, *the body of Christ on earth*, now the object of Satan's direst opposition in various ways, but chiefly by counterfeit and

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imitation, I have entered thus into detail, with the earnest desire and prayer that God may open the eyes of the hearts of His people to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

W. T. T.

“LOVE IS OF GOD,” AND “GOD
IS LOVE.”

(1 JOHN IV. 7-21.)

THE great subject of this epistle is not the grace manifested towards us as sinners, dealing with us as such, and justifying us; but another side of Christianity, and that is, the life of Christ, “That eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us,” that is, *in* us; and then “which thing is true in him and in you;” we live by this life of Christ. Then the apostle unfolds this life of Christ in two great principles—righteousness, practical righteousness, doing God’s will and commandments—and the other, loving the brethren: just what His own life was; so when we have this life, it bears the same fruit—perfect in Him of course—still, characteristically, it is that same life of obedience and love to the brethren.

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The difference between Paul and John is, that Paul speaks of man being presented to God, justified and accepted in Christ ; but John has a great deal more of revealing God to man. In verse 9, he does speak of the work done for us—not in us—for he goes to the way in which it has been manifested and done. In the Gospel of John you get, first, eternal life in the Person of the blessed Son of God down here—God Himself manifested ; and then, in the epistle, he goes on to the expression and re-production of this life in us. Paul is much more upon justification and acceptance—the two things we want—eternal life and acceptance with God.

This fourth chapter takes up what God is towards us in love. In speaking of the life, it goes through the whole condition of man, from the time of his utter sinfulness since he was born, to the day of judgment ; and then life, and how we are brought into the blessed knowledge of what it is. The fact of having life, does not in itself enable me to say, I am perfectly accepted in the Beloved : even supposing it is really there, it does not do for righteousness before God. The effect of being quickened and having life, is to make us understand that we want righteousness. We look on ourselves, and see that this will not do for God ; and if it will not do, how are you going to be accepted of Him ?

The first thing is, "Beloved, let us love one

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another: for love is of God;" v. 7, one of the traits of this new life, the nature only. An angel cannot understand what is passing in my mind; we must have a divine nature to know God, and if I have, I know God. An animal has the same nature as that of which it is born. There is the spirit of love in us—we are born of God, and know God, and therefore we know what love is. If I am only partaker of this divine nature, I see faults in myself, and know nothing of righteousness. When a person is quickened, he sees the difference between things, and consequently is uneasy and restless, and finds a root of evil in himself—flesh working in him—even when he has known forgiveness; for he has to learn what he *is*, as well as what he has *done*. Well, then, the apostle turns to what is not his common subject. "In this was manifested the love of God *toward* us." (Ver. 9.) Not a bit of what is *in* us, but he turns round to shew what God has manifested Himself to be towards us: so he begins at man's utterly lost condition, and goes on to the day of judgment. "God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." All my Adam-life gone and judged, and another life come in, that I might live by it. God sends Him into the world that we might live through Him, and I am looked at consequently, as *dead* in sins. If a man *is* dead, there is not a movement in him towards

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another ; and what is more, if you try to awaken it, you cannot : there is nothing spontaneous, and nothing to be awakened—and that is a sinner's natural state. Nothing in them towards God ; in fact, God has tried everything—promise, law, the prophets, His Son, and the Holy Ghost—and it is all no use. And now He sends His only begotten Son, and I get another kind of life, "that we might live through him," because we were *dead*.

Verse 10 is entirely another thing. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Now I have my *guilt* met, for we were guilty in our sins ; He sends His Son to make propitiation for them. I was dead, and guilty, lying in my sins, and God has thought upon me, and has been willing to spend the best and most blessed thing in heaven His own Son, that I might get life in this new way—life, when I was dead, and propitiation for my sins, that they may be all cleared away. I find Him beginning where I was, expecting nothing from me. The only time you find the Lord pronouncing a curse upon anything, was, when He came to look for fruit upon the fig-tree, and there was nothing but leaves, and He said it should never bear fruit—man is judged in his condition. Man, the thing cultivated of God, brought forth wild fruit. "Let it alone this

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year also." God, in Christ's ministry, so to speak, digging about it, and dunging it, but at the close of His ministry, it withered away. That was man's condition ; and, having judged the Adam-life, He sends Christ, that I might live through Him.

As regards my state, He has met my whole case in Christ ; God has manifested His love. But my soul wants to *know* this love. Well, if I look at myself, I cannot. I may say, I do think there is something in me, for I love His saints and His word ; but it is sinful nature that makes me discomfited and in uncertainty, and there can be no settled peace. But here is God's love manifested towards me as guilty and dead ; and the blessed Son of God came, that we might live through Him : there is nothing but evil in your heart, so He comes and brings life. Yes, I say, but I am defiled and guilty all this time. Oh, He says, I am come to be the propitiation for these sins. The blessed manifestation of God's love is, that I find what is in God's heart about me ; that He has done what was needed for my state, and revealed it too. It is what is in God's heart that is my comfort, not hunting anything out in my own. I know that God has acted on His own love, and revealed this love to me, where I was in all my sins. There I get this manifestation of God's love ; He knew everything that

was in me, and He sent His Son to put it away—He has acted from His own heart, unasked and unsought, and sent His Son. I insist on this word "manifested," because I have it demonstrated. How do I know what is in God's heart? Because He has given His Son—the very best thing He could give. There we have the first thing in which His love is shewn out, both for life and propitiation: another life, which produces what is good in me, and not what is bad; thus it comes out in love to the brethren. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

Verse 12. "No man hath seen God at any time." How can I know a person I have never seen? What makes this passage more striking is John i. 18. What is the answer to it there? That the only begotten Son has declared Him. If a person wanted to know God really (divine teaching for it of course), there was Christ to reveal Him, manifesting Him in love. "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. In His place of Son, He would necessarily know God as Father, infinitely and perfectly. He who knows God in the closest affection, He has revealed Him, and He must of course tell you what He was as He knows Him. There you get the way He was presented to the world.

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Now mark the difference here. "God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us"—not the love to the sinner, but the love enjoyed in the saint: it is another step on. When I see the manifestation in the midst of the world, if anybody had eyes to see, there was the Father to be seen—but here it is "God dwelleth in us," that is the way "we know," and "His love is perfected in us." Well, if I have God dwelling in me, I can see His love; the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts—what more can I ask? It is a wonderful truth, God dwelling in us.

Verse 13. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." The Holy Ghost dwells in us, as Paul says to the Corinthians, even when they were going on badly. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," how can you go and use it for sin?

Verse 15. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Of course He is not speaking of hypocrites; but if there is the real confession of Christ as the Son of God, God dwells in me, and I in Him, by His Spirit. There I get the love, not manifested to the sinner, but the direct, positive enjoyment of it by the saint. It is the presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the believer, which distinguishes and characterises him. The working of this verse is

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most blessed. Supposing I find a timid soul, why, I say, God is dwelling in you—do you confess that Jesus is the Son of God? Of course I do, he says, it is my hope and joy. Then you have God dwelling in you. But see how it acts on the conscience, supposing it is a person who has known these things only in the conscience—I say, You have God dwelling in you, but how far have you thought of Him to-day? Perhaps not once; Well, is that the way you are treating God? You know the truth that God dwells in you, and yet you are not even taking the trouble to think of Him once the whole day! It rejoices the feeble soul, but on the other hand, it tests the conscience; for how have you been treating this wonderful Guest—how much have your hearts been upon Him—watching not to do anything to displease Him—but to glorify Him? How far short it puts the low idea of christian life you are dragging through—not to scandalize the world!

That is the second way I get the love known—it is shed abroad in my heart as a saint. God has taken me up, and cleansed and adopted me, and now He comes to dwell in me: and that is the condition of every Christian, “*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God.*” We cannot think too much of what characterises the Christian, that the Holy Ghost dwells in him.

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Verse 16. "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us:" and no wonder, if He is dwelling in us. If a person asks me, How do you *know* that God loves you? The proof is, that He has given His Son for me when I was a sinner. But if he asks me, How do you *enjoy* it? Oh, by the Holy Ghost which He has given me. It is a practical point with the Christian, because I have never to grieve this Spirit. He is not uncertain about the love—he knows very well he does not live up to it, though that is no excuse; still we do fail, and often; he knows he is not all he would wish to be—but he knows God is all He could wish *Him* to be for him. There I get this blessed effect, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us"—we know and understand it, divinely, through the Holy Ghost, and there is not a doubt or a cloud. If we wish to know the measure of it (for it is His love, not mine to Him), the soul walks in the consciousness of this blessed, divine favour, and the measure is, that the Father has loved us as He loved Christ.

Verse 17 is a further step, which is often a hindrance to people. It goes on to the day of judgment—to the end. "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." There I get the

christian condition. It is a great thing to connect experience with the absoluteness of grace. A person living on experiences is always doubting; the mistake is not in having the experience, but in looking at it. You must have the experience, for something must pass in our hearts about divine things; the harm is in looking at it. The effect of the Holy Ghost working in me is to make me look at Christ: He makes me in this experience to look at Christ as my only resource. He does not set me looking into my own heart, but He shews me that Christ is the answer to all the wants my experience gives me. Faith never leads me to look at my state, but it leads me, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, to look at Christ. Wherever there is divine faith in what I believe, there is no doubt at all. For instance, if I ask a person, Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Of course I do, he says, but that is what is making me so miserable, for I never care about Him as I ought—there is the experience you see. I may reason about it, but where there is faith in exercise, I set to my seal that God is true; and if I set to my seal that God is true, I am absolutely certain. The moment I think that God has said, "This is my beloved Son," and through grace I *believe* it, I am divinely certain. A doubt may come into my mind about something else—how can God have

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me when I have gone on in such a way—but I am not doubting that He is the Son of God. The word of God is brought into my soul as true, and I set to my seal that God is true, “God that cannot lie.” The prodigal was perfectly certain that there was goodness in his father’s house, but he doubted whether he could have it. There was no doubt about the house, or about the goodness in the house, but when he thinks of the consequences of his sin, he begins to doubt. When he comes to his father, he does not say, “Make me as one of thy hired servants,” because he is perfectly certain of his father’s heart, for he is on his neck. If I say, Look what I am, I do not see how God can receive me—there comes in the doubt, but, I am certain about this other truth, that “Jesus is the Son of God.”

Many a soul whose trust is in the blood of Christ, if he thinks of the judgment-seat, is not quite sure where he is. You say, the cross just suits you, but can you say you are a poor sinner, and the judgment-seat just suits you? It is another thing, and brings up this—that when God is exercising judgment, it is a question whether I can stand in that day. If I have my sins upon me, of course I cannot, and there is uncertainty and cloud.

Well, God has thought of it for us: it is not *hope* in the day of judgment, but “boldness.” It

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is always wrong to hope about the day of judgment, for this reason, that if God entered into judgment with us, it is certain condemnation. "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." It is true that when God works in a soul, you never get a case where there is not some hope: if He brings the light of His truth into the soul, He is light and love, so there is some revelation of love. When the prodigal was perishing, it was the recollection of the love of his father's house—though he did not know whether he could have part in it—that carried him to his father:—love that was sufficient to draw him to the very place he feared he had no right to. When God deals with the sinner, and makes him feel his sin, it is always the attraction of His love. With Peter in the boat, in Luke v., he says, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." What did he go to Him for then, if he tells Him to go away? Because his heart was drawn. We all go through that state, for there is the attraction of the love of God, and the effect of the light.

But when I look on to the day of judgment, I cannot rest on that, for it is judgment—it is righteous dealing with sin, and not love. If I have not righteousness, I cannot stand. "There is none righteous, no, not one." There always will be some hope in the soul really taught of

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God ; but I am perfectly certain that if God deals with me in my sins, it is all over with me. I know I am a child of wrath, and I am not looking to myself to answer for my sins. You could not judge Adam when innocent ; but since Adam departed from God and listened to Satan, he has turned God into a Judge who condemns him. There would be no judgment at all, if we had not departed from God. They thought Satan more kind and good than God, and turned God into a Judge by sinning, and therefore it must be condemnation. If I think in that way of judgment, I become of course, unhappy. But supposing I am "the righteousness of God" in Christ ; how can I be afraid of judgment, if righteousness is the thing he is judging by ? "There is no fear in love : but perfect love casteth out fear." I can say now, that when I look up to the day of judgment, there is no time that I am so clear ; the ground is the cross.

But in what state shall I come before the judgment seat of Christ ? Christ will come and fetch me, to have me with Him. The next thing, He will change my vile body, and fashion it like unto His glorious body. When He shall appear, He will judge the quick and dead, but I shall be like Him. The moment I have the full effect of Christ's work, I shall be perfectly like the Judge. What God has done is, first, to

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shew us that the One who is the Saviour is the One who is to be the Judge ; and besides that, I find I am in Christ—the righteousness He judges by, I am in Him. That is where we are for judgment. God has thought of me as a sinner, He has given His Son—given me life in Christ—put away my sins, and put me in Christ, and given me the Holy Ghost ; and now in the day of judgment, I am as Christ is ; I am like the Judge, even in my body. True, we shall all have to give account of ourselves, but we are in glory when we do.

Take another aspect of it. Paul has been eighteen hundred years in heaven with Christ—are you going to take him out of heaven to judge whether he ought to be there ? Before God, "as he is, so are we in this world : " well, then of course I have boldness. Is there any good in myself ? No, I have no good in me—I was totally lost, I had no hope, but God has redeemed me out of that place ; Christ is my life and righteousness, and the Holy Ghost in me makes me know it, so that I enjoy it ; well, as Christ is so am I. So the apostle at once gives the consequence, "There is no fear in love." (Ver. 18.) The whole world is convicted of sin, because they have rejected Christ ; then I cannot look for righteousness anywhere in the world ; but God has set Christ at His own right hand, and that is where I look for it now. This

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love of God has settled the whole thing, from the time we were dead in sins to the day of judgment.

And now mark how blessedly the effect comes in in verse 19. "We love him, because he first loved us." It does not say, we ought to love God—of course we ought—for the Spirit of God is giving us this sense of love—God's love for sinners, and enjoyment of it as saints. What a blessed thing it is that God has loved us in this way! Well, then, I love God. Supposing a child were to say to me, I love my mother quite enough! I should say, You are a wicked child, you do not love her a bit. But supposing that child came to me and said, Oh, if you only knew my mother, all her patient kindness and unwearied ways, and I am so naughty and often grieve her—well, then, I say that child loves his mother. The sense by the Holy Ghost of all this perfect love from the time we were utter sinners to the day of judgment, tells me that I am to be loving Him. This saying that God dwells in us, gives me a measure and motive for walking, which nothing else ever could give me; as to whether I am behaving myself as if God were dwelling in me; and then I find myself thus surrounded infinitely in everything, by all that God is. I am nothing compared with the space, but I know I never can get out of it, dwelling in

God who is love—He may have to chasten me ; but I do not go and chasten all the little children in the street, but my child. I am in that favour which is better than life.

Do you just ask yourself, and see whether you can, in thus putting yourself before the judgment seat of Christ, be perfectly at ease? Are your hearts simply rejoicing and bright in the consciousness of the day of judgment? If there is any fear, we do not know the love of God fully. I am not afraid of God loving me too much. "If God be for us, who can be against us," and He is for us in every detail of our life, too.

The Lord give us in exercised and humbled hearts (there cannot be too much exercise) to have the sense and consciousness of divine love ; the proof of it being in Christ, and the enjoyment by the Holy Ghost ; and then to look up and see that He is coming to take us to be with Him. The Lord give us, as emptied of self, judged self, to find what it is to have Christ in us, and we in Christ :—to do nothing to grieve the Spirit. If we thought of God dwelling in us, how careful and watchful we should be to do nothing to displease Him.

J. N. D.

Notes of an Address.



CAN THE BLIND LEAD THE BLIND?

(LUKE VI. 39.)

THIS is a very serious question, for most men have answered it, since our blessed Lord asked it, in the affirmative. It is no exaggeration to say that we are living in a world of blind people led by blind guides in general, and that ditches abound.

In material things it would be admitted, I think, that to lead a blind man one would need a conductor not deprived of sight; but in moral and spiritual affairs, it has, alas! been assumed that no such sense is required, and that to lead a blind person a blind guide may be employed.

Speaking in broad and general terms, nowhere does man's natural blindness appear more clearly than in John's gospel: it has been much noticed—man is morally blind, and does not really *wish* to see, and surely there are none so blind as those who will not see.*

I wish to call attention to the warning given by our Lord as referring to the dangers of the time when the words were spoken,

* Notice the difference as to seeing, in John vi. 63, and 40. See the note in the New Translation, third edition.

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and which are applicable to our time in a very general way ; and then to look at another and more particular case, where the disciple, following his teacher, finds himself suddenly in the ditch with him.

Notice that *both* fall into the ditch ; and morally speaking, it is one thing to fall into the ditch, but quite another to get out of it.

The pretension to teach was not wanting in our Lord's time. The religious heads of the nation claimed the right of lead ; and similar pretensions exist in the present day. The Pharisees had destroyed the force of the word of God by their traditions ; the unbelieving Sadducees had a large number of followers. There is nothing new under the sun, and the claims to be able to lead on souls are loud in the present day, whether of the school : "Hear the church !" or, "Listen to reason !" Blind leaders of the blind ; alas ! for the many who follow them into the ditch !

There never was a day in which a personal walk with the Lord needs to be insisted upon as in our own ; and blessed though it be to find others with whom we may have communion (and, thank God, there is still such a thing), nothing will ever make up for the lack of dependence upon Him, who alone can guide, by His Spirit, at all times of the church's history upon earth.

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The moral state of the leaders is brought out with great clearness in this (Luke's) gospel; and in Christendom, too, is not the great lesson that of the importance of *seeing clearly oneself* before endeavouring to guide others? Can the blind lead the blind? It is a very serious thing to take the place of a teacher, when spiritual perception is lacking; and I do not think that there is any true teaching unless there be true spiritual application of the word of God to souls according to their actual need. Verse 40 no doubt is connected with verse 39.

I shall never forget the effect produced upon my mind by a master endeavouring to give a lesson upon a subject beyond him; it was a mere question of applied, or rather misapplied, mathematics; but in the things of God it is far more serious.

Why? Because they *both* fall into the ditch. Leader and follower, teacher and pupil! It might be said that it is rather hard upon the followers of the blind guide; but the fact is, it is God's own wisdom to allow this, for surely the whole word of God condemns the practice of blindly following the first blind guide who appears.

Thrice blessed they whose hearts are exercised in the present day, and who, mistrusting man's mind, have really the Lord as Guide by the Holy Ghost. It is easy to say: *Dominus*

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*illuminatio mea!** the danger is that the motto remain, and that there be no true light. The Lord will never fail us, and when there has been true individual exercise with Him, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit truly accepted, there will be a prepared state of heart for a walk *with others* along the same blessed path (Phil. iii. 15, 16), as led and conducted by the blessed all-seeing Guide.

May He lead our hearts more and more into His thoughts!

E. L. B.



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THE first disciples saw and believed, but then fuller light came in. Between that fuller light and Thomas's confession, which represents Israel in the latter day, the difference is evident.

In the message by Mary Magdalene, where it was faith by hearing, the testimony is of the Son of God going on high as man, and placing His disciples in the very same position as Himself: "I go to my Father, and your Father; my God, and your God." Thomas's confession of Christ is a remarkable one, owning Christ as his Lord and his God; but he looks

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up to Him in the divinity and glory of His Person. He is not associated with Him in His own blessed position in relationship with the Father, and the place He has taken as man before God.

This latter is Christ's own communication in grace to the disciples, as giving them part with Himself—Thomas's, his recognition of His glory when it is forced upon him. And this is all in its place.

J. N. D.

 FRAGMENT.

NOTE in 1 John v. 18, 19 we have the opposition of the new nature to the whole trinity of evil ; whosoever is born of God sinneth not—the will and nature of *flesh* ; he that is born of God keepeth himself, and that *wicked one* toucheth him not ; and we know that we are of God, and the whole *world* lieth in wickedness.

WAS ALL CHRIST'S LIFE DOWN HERE ONLY A MANIFESTATION OF GOD TO MEN?

I DO not believe it would be possible to exaggerate the importance of a true and divinely taught reply to the above question. The truth as to it involves so deeply a holy appreciation of the relations into which the blessed Lord has been pleased to enter as man with regard to men, as well as His glory in connection with them, that I feel the Lord would have His own alive to their precious import and blessedness. In order to promote this I will here transcribe the words of the beloved servant to whom the whole church of God owes so much, though but little recognised, or it may be remembered by many now. The reader will remember that the italics are mine wherever found, except the contrary be stated :—

“ There is one other point to which, though I have noticed it, I return, as of vital importance. Dr. W. holds that Christ represented God before men, not men before God.

“ The first part is most blessedly true, but even that not to the extent of the inferences Dr.

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W. would draw from it, that there must be identity of operation. The Son did not send the Father, nor not spare Him, but deliver Him up for us. The thought would be utterly anti-Christian. He accepted His part of the work of grace. 'Lo I come to do thy will, O God ;' and a body being prepared for Him, He took upon Him the form of a servant and was found in the likeness of men. I may return to this point elsewhere ; I merely take note of it now, and turn to the question of representing God to men and man to God. Now in His life down here, he that had seen Him had seen the Father, a most precious and sanctifying truth. John xiv. is express in stating it, as the whole life of Jesus is the verification and illustration of it. He is moreover, in His Person the image of the invisible God, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His being, His hypostatis. As to this scripture is plain ; and I have no controversy with Dr. W. Further, that He was true God and true man, united in one person, is not in question either ; it is believed by both of us. The question is, Did He stand for men before God as well as for God before men. That He does in heaven is quite clear. He is gone into heaven now to appear in the presence of God for us. (Heb. ix. 24.) But was all His life down here only a manifestation of God to men? When He took His place with the godly remnant

in Israel, being baptised with John's baptism, assuredly not confessing sins as they did, but fulfilling righteousness, having emptied Himself and taken the form of a servant and entered upon the path of obedience, *ἐν σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος* (that is, 'being found in fashion as a man'), saying to John, 'Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.' When He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, did He represent God to men? Was it not, as the first man was tempted and fell, the second man held fast and overcame? Did He not overcome, saying, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, and overcome by *refusing to go out of the place of a servant which He had taken*, though challenged by Satan to do so as being Son of God? Did He not *hold the place of man* when He said, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God'? Did He not, when He dismissed Satan, saying, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve'? He was always the obedient man before God, as Adam was the disobedient one; and though He abode alone, until redemption was accomplished, the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying, yet He stood in this world *as man before God*, as well as God before men. Who was the obedient man, did always such things as pleased His Father, pleased in Gethse-

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man when His hour was come in the days of His flesh, with strong crying and tears made His supplication unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared, *απο της ευλαβειας* (that is, for His piety), was this representing man or God?

“That He was alone till redemption was accomplished I fully recognise, but alone as the sinless man amongst men, to accomplish what was called for from man for God. If He tasted death for every man, was that as representing God to men, or standing for men before God? When God laid our iniquity on Him, was it representing God before men? When it became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, to make the Captain (*αρχηγον*) of our salvation perfect through suffering, whom did He represent? When He cried in deep agony, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ did He represent God to man? That He must have been God to be fit and able to do it is most true; but He was not representing God before men, but drinking the cup given to Him. When He was made sin, for whom was He made sin? Did He represent God to man then or stand for men before God when He took up the cause of man? (Heb. ii.) He did not represent God to men, but it is written in a certain place, ‘What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of man that thou visitest him?’ Thou madest

him a little lower than the angels, thou crownedst him with glory and honour.' He was the second man, the last Adam. He was the *αρχηγον* (Captain) of our salvation, the obedient, sinless, suffering man, who overcame Satan as man for men, was made sin *for us* (italics the author's), died for our sins, that is, represented us before God, our iniquity being laid upon Him, and drank that dreadful cup, taking it from His Father's hand, 'the curse of wrath.' Was *suffering* (italics the author's) the curse of wrath representing God to men or man as made sin under the righteous *judgment of God*? I add, that though the priesthood of Christ be now in heaven, where He appears in the presence of God for us, yet all His life was in every sense a preparation for it.

"He had so taken up man, that it became God to make Him perfect in that *heavenly* place through suffering; He was tempted, suffering being tempted, that He might succour them that are tempted. Not only so, but He was made like to His brethren in all things, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in all things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. And so in chapter v. of the same epistle, comparing Him with the Jewish high priest, though shewing the difference; and it is clear that the priest represented the people before God, confessed

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their sins on the scapegoat, and went into the sanctuary for them, as Christ has done into the true sanctuary for us. The priesthood of Christ is no doubt for believers ; but to deny that He represented men, stood there as man for them before God, and that on the cross, as in Hebrews ii. 17, *as man, alone indeed* but for men, is a ruinous error."

I do not make any apology for the length of this extract, its truth and deep importance at the present moment will be apparent to every soul taught of the Spirit of God. May God our Father, in His rich grace, grant to all who read it the "*understanding*" which His Spirit alone can give, to apprehend the precious truth it conveys, and its most marked and significant bearing on the times we are now passing through.

W. T. T.



"THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD
WHEREIN YE STAND."

GOD is made known to us as the "*God of all grace*," and the position in which we are set is that of tasting that He is *gracious*. How hard it is for us to believe this, that the Lord is *gracious*. The natural feeling of our

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hearts is "I know that thou art an austere man;" there is the want in all of us naturally of the understanding of the *grace of God*.

There is sometimes the thought that grace implies God's *passing over sin*, but no, grace supposes sin to be so horribly bad a thing that God cannot tolerate it: were it in the power of man, after being unrighteous and evil, to patch up his ways, and mend himself so as to stand before God there would be no need of *grace*. The very fact of the Lord's being gracious shews sin to be so evil a thing, that, man being a sinner, his state is utterly ruined and hopeless, and nothing but *free grace* will do for him—can meet his need.

We must learn what God is to us, not by our own thoughts, but by what He has revealed Himself to be, and that is, "*the God of all grace*." The moment I understand that I am a sinful man, and yet that it was because the Lord knew the full extent of my sin, and what its hatefulness was, that He came to me, I understand what *grace* is. Faith makes me see that God is greater than my sin, and not that my sin is greater than God. . . . The Lord that I have known as laying down His life for me, is the same Lord I have to do with every day of my life, and all His dealings with me are on the same principles of *grace*. The great secret of growth is, the looking up

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to the Lord as *gracious*. How precious, how strengthening it is to know that Jesus is at this moment feeling and exercising the same love towards me as when He died on the cross for me.

This is a truth that should be used by us in the most common every-day circumstances of life. Suppose, for instance, I find an evil temper in myself, which I feel it difficult to overcome; let me bring it to Jesus as my Friend, virtue goes out of Him for my need. *Faith* should be ever thus in exercise against temptations, and not simply my own effort; my own effort against it will never be sufficient. The source of real strength is in the sense of the Lord's being *gracious*. The natural man in us always disbelieves Christ as the only source of strength and of every blessing. Suppose my soul is out of communion, the natural heart says, "I must correct the cause of this before I can come to Christ;" but *He is gracious*; and knowing this, the way is to return to Him *at once, just as we are*, and then humble ourselves deeply before Him. It is only in *Him* and from *Him*, that we shall find that which will restore our souls. Humbleness in His presence is the only real humbleness. If we own ourselves in His presence to be *just what we are*, we shall find that He will shew us nothing but *grace*.

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It is Jesus who gives abiding rest to our souls, and not what our thoughts about ourselves may be. Faith never thinks about that which is in ourselves as its ground of rest: it receives, loves, and apprehends what God has revealed, and what are God's thoughts about Jesus, in whom is *His rest*. As knowing Jesus to be precious to our souls, our eyes and our hearts being occupied with Him, they will be effectually prevented from being taken up with the vanity and sin around; and this too will be our strength against the sin and corruption of our own hearts. Whatever I see in myself that is not in Him is sin, but then it is not thinking of my own sins, and my own vileness, and being occupied with them, that will humble me, but thinking of the Lord Jesus, dwelling upon the excellency in Him. It is well to be done with ourselves, and to be taken up with Jesus. We are entitled to forget ourselves, we are entitled to forget our sins, we are entitled to forget all but Jesus.

There is nothing so hard for our hearts as to abide in the sense of *grace*, to continue practically conscious that we are not under 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 con-

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sciousness 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 thought *of God* about us, to the "*grace of God*."

Anything that I had the smallest possible right to expect could not be pure, free *grace*—could not be the "*grace of God*." . . . It is alone when in communion with Him that we are able to measure *everything* according to *His grace*. . . . It is impossible, when we are abiding in the sense of God's presence, for anything, be it what it may—even the state of the church, to shake us, for we count on God, and then all things become a sphere, and scene for the operation of *His grace*.

The having very simple thoughts of *grace* is the true source of our strength as Christians; and the abiding in the sense of *grace* in the presence of God, is all the secret of holiness, peace, and quietness of spirit.

The "*grace of God*" is so unlimited, so full, so perfect, that if we get for a moment out of the presence of God, we cannot have the true consciousness of it, we have no strength to apprehend it; and if we attempt to know it out of His presence we shall only turn it to licentious-

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ness. If we look at the simple fact of what grace is, it has no limits, no bounds. Be we what we may (and we cannot be worse than we are), in spite of all that, what God is towards us is LOVE. Neither our joy nor our peace is dependent on what we are to God, but on what *He is to us*, and this is *grace*.

Grace supposes all the sin and evil that is 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.

In Romans vii. the state described is that of a person quickened, but whose whole set of reasonings centre in *himself* he stops short of *grace*, of the simple fact that, whatever be his state, let him be as bad as he may, GOD is LOVE, and only love towards him. Instead of looking at God, it is all "I," "I," "I." Faith looks at God, as He has revealed Himself in Grace. Let me ask you, "Am I—or is my state the object of faith?" No, faith never makes what is in *my heart* its object, but *God's revelation of Himself in grace*.

Grace has reference to what GOD is, and not to what we are, except indeed that the

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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.

The triumph of grace is seen in this, that when man's enmity had cast out Jesus from the earth, God's love had brought in salvation by that very act—came in to atone for the sins of those who had rejected Him. In the view of the fullest development of man's sin, faith sees the fullest development of God's grace. I have got away from grace if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love. I shall then be saying, "I am unhappy because I am not what I should like to be:" *that* is not the question. The real question is, whether *God* is what we should like Him to be, whether Jesus is all we could wish. If the consciousness of what we are—of what we find in ourselves, have any other effect than, while it humbles us, to increase our adoration of what God is, we are off the ground of pure grace. Is there distress and distrust in your minds, see if it be not because you are still saying, "I," "I," and losing sight of God's grace.

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It is better to be thinking of what God is than of what we are. This looking at ourselves, at the bottom is really pride, a want of the thorough consciousness that we are *good for nothing*. Till we see this we never look quite away from self to God. . . . In looking to Christ it is our privilege to forget ourselves. *True humility does not so much consist in thinking badly of ourselves, as in not thinking of ourselves at all. I am too bad to be worth thinking about.* What I want is, to forget myself and to look to God, who is indeed worth all my thoughts. Is there need of being humbled about ourselves? We may be quite sure that will do it.

Beloved, if we can say, as in Romans vii., “In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no *good thing*,” we have thought quite long enough about ourselves; let us then think about Him who thought about us with thoughts of good and not of evil, long before we had thought of ourselves at all. Let us see what His thoughts of grace about us are, and take up the words of faith. “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

J. N. D.



THE LORD ON THE WAVES ; AND PETER.

(MATT. XIV. 22-36.)

THE general Jewish character of the Gospel of Matthew has often been remarked upon ; but at the same time we get in it many lovely glimpses of the ways of God outside the pale of Judaism, in consequence of the rejection of Israel's Messiah. Matthew xiv. 22-36 includes one of these.

The Lord had graciously fed the multitude of five thousand, "and straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away." Twelve baskets full of fragments remained over after the multitude were fed, figurative, doubtless, of the portion of the spared in the coming day of blessing ; but meanwhile the disciples, the remnant of His earthly people, must pass across the waves of this world. Jesus constrains them to enter the ship, but it is *to go before Him*, and it is *unto the other side*. It was a safe journey for His people, for His ever watchful eye would be upon them, and His own blessed lips had spoken of the shore beyond.

But He Himself in the meanwhile left them,

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and "He went up into a mountain *apart* to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there *alone*." (Ver. 23.) This is His blessed occupation, whilst His loved ones are toiling across the deep. He is praying on the mountain; and who can doubt but that He prays also for them; but He is alone. It is a beautiful presentation of the position He takes on behalf of His people during the hour of His absence from this world. He is on high, and He is praying. He is the Intercessor in the presence of God. Whether it may be the disciples, as at first, or as scripture unfolds concerning the Jewish remnant in the future day of trial (Rev. viii. 3-5), or His saints in the interim, He ever liveth to make intercession for His people (Rom. viii. 34.) The wicked are like the troubled sea (Isa. lvii. 20), and His own must pass through this restless scene of evil, whether to an earthly or a heavenly shore. But Jesus has gone up to pray.

"But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid." (Vers. 24-27.)

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And now it is in the hour of trial, in the dead of night, when tossed by the waves, and the fury of the wind is opposed to their course, that Jesus comes near to them. Toiling against the opposing elements, at the moment of their deepest need, Jesus is there ; Jesus, with words of encouragement and cheer. Seeing Him walking on the waves, they are troubled, and cry out for fear, exclaiming, It is a spirit. But Jesus straightway said, "Be of good cheer ; it is I ; be not afraid." Blessed scene ! How precious for His tried ones, when we consider what it surely may be likened to, figuratively, whether for the remnant of His earthly people, or for His own to-day ! The night may be dark, the power of evil raging all around, the prince of the power of the air opposing the progress of God's saints ; but Jesus is nigh. He who is superior to the elements, He who can walk upon the waves, or ride upon the wings of the storm : the Creator, the Sustainer, the Controller of all, saith to His loved ones, tossed by the enemy's power on the journey home : "Be of good cheer ; it is I : be not afraid."

But there is more. Peter was there ; bold, impulsive, loving, but failing Peter. And Peter, as he heard his Master's word, "answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come.

And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus."

Here we have a further illustration of the true christian position and pathway. With faith in the Lord's word, Peter left the ship altogether. Jesus said, *Come*. That was enough. When he was come *down out*, with the eye fixed on Jesus, he walked where and as He walked, superior to the elements, and every moment drawing nearer to Him. We, too, have the Lord's word to come *to Him*. The ship, in this sense, is no longer our place. There is nothing like a ship to cross water, but clearly, if we can walk on the water itself, we can do without it.

The Jewish remnant were in Judaism, but Jesus left and went away on high; and ere He is found with them again, all now who know Him are called to leave all earthly system and to walk in the pathway of faith. When Jesus says, "Come," His word should be enough, and He bestows the grace and power to respond. With the heart occupied with Jesus, and the eye of faith fixed on Him, we can leave all that man would naturally cling to, to carry them through this restless scene, and walk the same path as Jesus, sustained by divine power, every step bringing us nearer and nearer to Himself. We must come down, and come out, to tread this path; but we "*go to Jesus*." If governed by sight, we shall assuredly remain in the ship;

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if the eye is not single, we shall still hold on to it in some way or other, though our feet may already be on the waves. But with Himself alone, with Christ realised as all, our only portion, we shall step forward without hesitation or faltering, tread the waves as on solid rock, and prove all the way till we reach the goal, the all-sufficiency of His sustaining power and grace. We walk by faith and not by sight. (2 Cor. v. 7.) We have neither seen Jesus, nor shall we see Him with our natural vision. Soon we shall hear His voice, calling us on high, and see Him face to face. But now by faith we behold Him, and abiding in Him we walk as He walked (1 John ii. 6), superior to the winds and waves, the whole power of Satan and men.

And how precious to realise that each step brings us ever nearer to the eternal joy of His own blessed presence. This is the divine path marked out for us, the only true path to-day for the whole church of God. Jesus was the Messiah, but walking on the sea was a manifest proof that He was more. He is the Son of God. From the lips of Peter, a little later, we have the confession of both. (Matt. xvi. 16.)

“But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid: and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord save me! And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and

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said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Yet another scene, full of divine instruction, passes before us. All went well, so long as Peter's eye was single, fixed alone on the Lord; but taking his gaze off Him, he saw the wind boisterous. In a moment *fear* took the place of *faith* in his heart, and he began to sink. So is it with thousands of Christians to-day (and alas! speaking generally, how true of the church at large); the eye has turned from the true and only Object of the soul, and seeing the awful power of the enemy, the heart has yielded to the pressure, and instead of treading happily and confidently in the pathway of faith, superior to all here, being filled with fear, they have sunk more or less to the level of the evil around. Their Christianity may be summed up in the words, "Lord, save me"! as denoting that, notwithstanding all, and that Jesus is there, the soul is still *uncertain* of eternal realities.

But immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him. Poor Peter's faith might fail, but not so the faithfulness of his Master. Ah, fellow-believer, you who have started joyously in the path of faith, but have succumbed before the enemy's power, and sunk down more or less to the wretched level of this poor world, your heart may tremble, and you may stand in doubt of reaching the goal; but God be praised,

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the whole power of Satan and the wicked together can never pluck you out of His hand. (John x. 28.) His everlasting arm is around you to preserve and save you from the gulf of hell, and His gracious voice reproves your unbelief, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

And blessed be His name, the same divine power that sustained Peter on the waves, and the same mighty arm that caught him from the devouring element, and that sustains and catches all His own to-day, will soon catch us all up together from this scene, to meet Him above on the heavenly shore. Not one of His own shall fail to reach the other side. (John xvii. 12 ; 1 Pet. i. 5.)

"And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." (Matt. xiv. 32, 33.) And there is a day coming in this poor world, when the heavenly saints, having been caught up to glory, Jesus will rejoin His beloved earthly people, the power of Satan shall cease to be contrary, the waves of the wicked shall cease to swell, and taught by the Spirit of God, the whole of His spared people shall worship Him, and confess, "*Of a truth thou art the Son of God.*"

"And when they were gone over, they came

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into the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased ; and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment : and as many as touched were made perfectly whole." (Matt. xiv. 34-36.)

And following upon that day, when Israel shall again be on the shore, men shall have knowledge of Jesus. Yea, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xii. 9.) And they shall send out unto all, and bring unto Him all who will, and He of whom it is written, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. liii. 4), shall minister bodily as well as soul blessing to all who come. Yea, every soul of man, who *only touches* the hem of His garment, who comes in faith in contact with the skirts of the glory of His Person, shall be made perfectly whole.

E. H. C.



EITHER ETERNAL LIFE OR SATAN'S SUBSTITUTES.

I SHOULD much like to direct the attention of Christians to the *fact* of our present blessing, and to the way in which Satan acts so as to shut out in souls all present knowledge of it. He does not reject it, but he presents a substitute, and one which no one can deny is a good thing in itself. But a good thing in itself is really an evil, if it subverts God's present thought for His people.

He (Satan) has also sought, and seeks now, either to occupy souls with the *past* ways of God or with His *future* ways. You see he chooses good substitutes, the object being to shut out the *present*. Those in the truth of eternal life will overcome this snare, they will resist the devil, who will "flee," as the word says he must.

Eternal life is God's present blessing for man. The Life, never here before, was brought into this world in the Person of Christ, and made available for man in His death. (See John i., vi.) Never known in the Old Testament times, it is now "brought to light in the gospel." It is freedom TO LIVE, and to live as sons in all the liberty of the children of God. "If the Son shall make you free, then are ye free indeed."

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We want to know more of this great grace of God to us.

Moreover it is to be on earth in *power*, for the Holy Ghost is down here and dwells in the believer. (John xiv. 1.) The Holy Ghost is the Comforter of the soul, ministering to us CHRIST, and He is the power which carries us on amid all the oppositions of the scene here. The outcome of these is life—that is, this eternal life which is to be *lived*. “Never thirst” is connected with this state.

We know that there was never a portion on the earth for saints like this. “God having provided some better thing for us” than they ever knew in the brightest Old Testament times. We know that even saints then were “all their life time subject to bondage,” through the fear of death, for death ends everything earthly, and we must remember that the blessings of saints before Christ came were all in the land and earthly. “If I have told you earthly things [new birth] and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things [eternal life].”

If the devil can make an Old Testament saint of a Christian (earthly blessings), he has made him *legal*—there is no liberty in that. (See Gal. iv. 9–v. 1.) He has turned the soul away from God's present grace for man, namely, “eternal life and heavenly blessings.” On the other hand

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if he can engross one with the future, that is, with what we shall be *in heaven* by-and-by, he makes you proud and *sentimental*. In both cases he has succeeded, you are not in the present blessing of eternal life.

In Eden he acted thus, and it is our first introduction to him, "a liar from the beginning," he is the same still. He holds up the future to Eve. He says to her, You have a good prospect, take of this tree and you "become as gods, knowing good and evil." Do you notice the subtlety of this lies in the fact that he is ignoring her *present* blessing, by holding up to her gaze something *future*? and I never knew a saint go off into ecstasies about heaven and our *future*, who knew much about the PRESENT—that is about present "eternal life in Christ." I do not think we know much about heaven and the future, nor that much is unfolded of these, and to sentimentalise about them will not help any one. We know (if we study the epistles, and get the teaching of the Holy Ghost upon them), a great deal about the *present*, and that is what the enemy seeks to get rid of. The Colossians sentimentalised about heaven, or were in danger of it. (Chap. ii. 18.) And the apostle will have none of it, but will have "life" in the power of the Spirit of God to be lived out on the earth.

All the systematised rules and regulations for

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the conduct of "public worship," &c., have gone back to Judaism, and are taking the saints there. All the dreamy speculations about heaven are but sentimentality. Satan's effort is to shut out what we *are*, and what we should live here now, in the great and infinite grace of God, and through His word and Spirit. It is a salutary exercise to sit down alone, and to reflect on what I am, if a Christian at this moment before God!

What is the key to the discontent of quickened souls? This. When the soul is first awakened there is the desire to please God without the power. The finding out of powerlessness wrings from us the cry of Romans vii., "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" A life of good intentions, but all failure, since there is no power to do good. It is not "eternal life" in the power of the Spirit. He says he *cannot be* what he *would be*.

But when the gospel in its blessed fulness is accepted, everything is changed. Christ is received, and the wearied one has now another Man instead of himself. Life is there, and also the Holy Ghost. (Eph. i. 13.) He no longer says, "I ought to be what I am *not*." His language, on the contrary, is, "By the grace of God *I am what I am*." Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, and what blessed liberty! The liberty to be down here, conscious of what

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I am before God, and to live and act in the enjoyment of that. The hidden joy of this inner life of the soul with God! If a Christian, I am now in God's sight on this ground, but am I in the joy of it? It would not be Christianity to say, "What I would, that do I not; and what I hate, that do I." The Spirit is in me to REVERSE all this, He is in us, "in order that we may not do that which we would." (Gal. v. 17.) This is power. The Spirit is stronger than the flesh.

If we consider the future (as to our bodies) it is not true that "we shall be some day what we are not." We shall in that day *be what we are*. We *are* the sons of God, and "as he is before God [as Man, the perfect Son], so are we in this world." Our bodies then will be suited to this Satan seeks to occupy us either with *what we were*, or with *what we will be*. I think we want to know a good deal more of *what we are* now in Christ before God, and with the fact that on earth we have Christ's place and portion.

H. C. A.



EXTRACT.

THE most gifted men that I have known have been the least addicted to depreciate either friends or foes. Your shrewd, sly, evil-speaking

fellow is generally a shallow personage ; and frequently he is as venomous and false when he flatters as when he reviles. He seldom praises John but to vex Thomas. Those that find fault are most often the ones in whom the fault can easiest be found.

They know from personal experience the quality of the evil they condemn in others, because they possess such a quantity of it themselves. At the same time they are hopeful that in drawing the attention of critics to their friends they themselves will escape. “ Judge not, that ye be not judged.”



“WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?”

Oh, say not that the Saviour's smile
Is hid from thine uplifted eye ;
Say not that His unerring hand
Shall ever pierce thee willingly.

Oh *can* it be, when every thorn
That He has ask'd His child to share,
Was bound upon His bleeding brow,
And buried half its sharpness there?

Oh can it be, when every tear
That starts to thine imploring eye
Can find within His sinless soul
The full response of sympathy ?

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It may be that thy wound lies deep,
And thou wouldst fain weep all alone ;
It may be that thy bosom shrinks
From *any* hand *except* His own.

Yes ! and when friendship's gentlest voice
Speaks all too rudely to thine ear,
His has a tenderness of tone
That e'en a breaking heart may bear.

Ah ! well He knows each pilgrim path—
There was but one too rough for thee ;
He gazed upon that path of blood,
And onward press'd to set thee free !

And wilt thou, canst thou, ever deem
That there is harshness in the blow,
When once thy trembling faith has seen
The *wounded* hand that lays thee low ?

O fainting sufferer ! trust that hand,
Trust it with all thy weight of care ;
Then lean upon the outstretch'd arm,
And rest thy weary spirit there.

C. P.



THE COMFORTER.

I THINK we might profitably look at the way the Spirit is presented in those three chapters—John xiv., xv., xvi.

John xiv. 15-19, 25, 26 ; xv. 24-27 ; xvi. 7-13. —In the early chapters of this gospel the Spirit is presented more in the aspect of power—divine power. (Chaps. iv. and vii.) The Lord said to the woman, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." He evidently points to eternal life in the power of the Spirit, so in chapter vii. 37-39, and I think all through in the early chapters. When we come to chapters xiv., xv., xvi., the Spirit is spoken of as a divine Person who comes into the world consequent on the absence of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is both *power* and a *Person*. If Christ personally leaves this scene, and He does, a Person comes from Him into the scene, and is identified in that way as "*another* Comforter," Christ Himself remaining one, though in heaven. The Holy Spirit has come into this world a divine Person. He is power in the absence of Christ. He is here personally in us, and with us. The force of "*another* Comforter" is that Christ

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remains still that for us in heaven, does not give up the place of being a Comforter there. The Comforter is really paraclete; the meaning of that word is, one *called to your side*. The Holy Ghost is a divine Person, yet called to our side. How blessed!

This is consistent with the character of the gospel: it does not take us to heaven where Christ is, but brings heaven down to us. It is this that makes this gospel difficult. Paul takes us up to heaven. John brings heaven down to us.

The source of the mission of the Comforter in these chapters is very beautiful. In John xiv. the Father sends Him, and that is very much in keeping with the chapter. The sorrow spoken of in chapter xiv. is really *heart sorrow*, trouble of heart, and no one can meet that except the Father. The Father, knowing the sorrow and trouble of heart caused by Christ's absence, sends the Comforter. When the Lord speaks of sending Him, He sends Him "*from the Father*." The co-operation of the Father and the Son is thus blessedly kept up in that expression. When the Lord speaks of going away out of this world He does not speak of His death *as such* in this gospel, but that He is going to the Father.

"He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Those are the Father's things really.

It is blessedly *pictured* in the case of Abraham and Isaac. Eliczer said, "Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old, and unto *him hath he given all that he hath.*"

We ought to recognise the presence of the Holy Ghost that He has come in the name of the One that is gone. He has come to tell us of the One that is gone.

Then we come to chapter xv. There He comes from Christ in glory. Here in chapter xiv. He comes from the Father. In chapter xv. it is the *witness* the Spirit bears to Christ, the glorified One. In chapter xiv. it is the *comfort* the Father ministers by the Spirit to bereaved hearts in the absence of Christ. I am sure we do not feel in its force and reality the absence of Christ, that He is not here, else we should value the presence of the Spirit in a different way. The trouble of chapter xiv. is heart trouble. The heaviest sorrow in the world is nothing to the desolation of a heart bereft of the one that is everything to it. One longs to know Christ more in that way, so as to feel bereft of His absence. We could not feel it quite like the disciples; they had known Him on earth with them. We should feel it *if we came back from the place where He is.*

The presence of the Spirit, as in verse 17, would have a very separating character. The world cannot receive Him, it cannot enter into

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anything we have in connection with the Spirit's presence, so that if there is any drawing near to the world it must be entirely on the side of the believer in failure.

Another thing comes out in chapter xiv. When we lose loved ones on earth we can have no more communications with them—they are with the Lord. The Lord says, as it were, I am going away, but there is One coming who will keep up the communications with you, who will bring all the blessedness of the absent One into your hearts.

Observe the force in verse 18 of "I will come to you." It is not a manifestation of the Spirit, but the spiritual manifestation the Lord gives to His people in His absence. It is *realised* by the Spirit. It is like Paul in the shipwreck (Acts xxvii. 23), when the apostle said, "There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve." It was a distinct spiritual manifestation to him at that moment by the Lord Himself.

Another incident resembling it was when Paul was in the prison, and "the Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer, Paul." (Acts xxiii. 11.)

We find the same kind of thing further down in this chapter (vers. 21, 23), and this tells us the way in which it is enjoyed. Our enjoyment depends on our keeping the Lord's commandments.

Is it not very striking that everything in Christianity, and the enjoyment of its blessings, is connected with the Spirit and the power of it?

And that is why there is so little enjoyment of it because the Spirit is grieved and *hindered*. The presence in person of the Spirit is the great mark of contrast between what existed previously and what is now. When one understands the real power of the Spirit one can understand the deficiency the disciples had in not knowing it. There was no *indwelling presence* of the Spirit in Old Testament times, but an *operation*. The Spirit came upon them *in power*, but not *in Person*. Now a believer is really indwelt by the Spirit. It is the personal coming of the Holy Ghost, and it is just as distinct and real as the coming of Christ in incarnation. I do not think people realise that the Spirit is a distinct Person. He is thought to be an influence, not a Person.

There is a good deal of talk in the present day about getting the second blessing. What does it mean?

I believe what is really meant by it is what we call *deliverance*. If a person has received the full blessings of Christianity, that he was entirely purged by the blood of Christ from every spot and stain, and that his old man was crucified with Christ and the Spirit dwelt in him, I do not know what second blessing there could

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be after this. All that kind of thing tends only to occupy you with yourself—a sort of introspection which leaves you in weakness. A mystic is full of desire. Love has an object. Christianity presents an object to you. We are a great deal more mystics than we have any idea of. What characterises a mystic is desire, not love—desire, a longing for something you have not got. The real proof of the Spirit of God in power in a person is, that Christ is before the soul. Observe the all things of verse 26 include everything they failed to enter into and apprehend while the Lord was with them.

The special character, as we have noticed, of the Spirit's presence in chapter xiv. is that He is here in the absence of Christ as a Comforter from the Father. Then in chapter xv. it is what we might call a supplementary witness. "He shall testify of me" of *Me* in heaven. The Lord contemplated His ascension, His exaltation, and as ascended and exalted He sends the Comforter. The testimony of the twelve which we have in the gospel history was to what Jesus was *on earth*; the testimony of the Spirit is to what He is now *in the glory of God*.

I believe we have that testimony in Acts v. 30–32. He would bear witness in the disciples as well. But we have this witness of the Spirit to Christ in heaven, especially in Paul's epistles, because he presents a man gone up into the

glory of God. In John it is more God come down here into this world. Is there not much to be gathered from the order in verses 26 and 27? Must we not receive the testimony to a glorified Christ before we trace His path on earth?

I believe we must, we could not enter into the full character of the gospels if we have not received the truth of the epistles.

The real word for witness is martyr. Martyrdom is the meaning—the witness sealed his testimony with his blood. A witness is a person who not only bears testimony by word of mouth but suffers for it. If a person maintains the truth and suffers for it, it is martyrdom really. Two words are used to Paul—"to make thee a minister and a witness," and there it is *martyrdom*. It is one thing to be a minister, but very difficult to be a witness. A minister is one who makes the thing known—a witness, one *that is it* in his own person. Minister in that verse could only apply to the apostle.

When we come to chapter xvi., it is not a question of the mission, the truth brought out there is not who sends the Spirit, *but the fact of His presence on earth*, and the effect of His presence. "When he is come he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." His presence is the demonstration of these things. The Spirit will bring demon-

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stration to the world of these things. We must be either with the Spirit as witness, or with the world and against the Spirit. It shews how impossible it is for us to occupy any position but an outside one, because if we are in company with the Spirit we are bound to be outside. Is not this the reason why we get so much about the world in John?

The whole system of the world is in opposition to the Father. There is nothing in the world that I can be an object to. If the Father's love is in my heart, the love of the Father in me, it gives me the sense that I am His object:

“The object of His love I am,
And carried like a child.”

In Joseph's history, that was the compensation for the hatred of his brethren—his father loved him. It is a very blessed thing to have the sense that I am the object of the Father's love, I am an object to Him. What would preserve you from the love of the world would be that you are the object of the Father's love.

It should read in verse 13, “the Spirit of *the* truth.” It is very important, because He is the One that maintains it, and the truth therefore will be maintained while He is here. He is the only One by whom it can be received, too. The truth can never be lost. The wonderful thing for us is that He maintains the truth through us,

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but if we are unfaithful, He will maintain it as long as He is here.

Apart from the Spirit you could not bear the communications of God. He is the servant of the Father's glory.

I Corinthians ii.: You get three things here that are very striking in connection with the Spirit—revelation, inspiration, and reception. You could not take in things but by the Spirit—you must have receptive power by the Spirit—"All things that the Father hath are mine," the identity of interest between the Father and the Son in the possession of those things. You could not learn the Father's things apart from the Son. Any truth pressed apart from Christ is barren.

W. T. T.



FORTHWITH THE DOORS WERE
SHUT.

PAUL, the great apostle of the Gentiles, the chosen vessel of God to unfold to His saints the revelation of the great mystery, though bearing a wonderful testimony in the power of God, was slow to break away *completely* from Judaism, in which he had been trained, and to wholly follow His unseen Lord and Master, *totally apart* from all the visible things

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suited to man in the flesh. This is remarkably instanced in Acts xxi. 17-30. But the treatment he received at the hands of his kinsmen after the flesh served to shew how utterly incompatible it is to mix Judaism and Christianity, and that the full acceptance and publication of the latter necessitates a complete separation from the former. The upholders of Judaism (or any religion more or less based on it, and suited to the natural man) will never brook the introduction of the heavenly light of the gospel, and will shew plainly what their estimate is, both of it and its introducers. And if we for a moment lower our colours, and in any way compromise the truth through the fear of man, or the consequences for ourselves, we may be assured the enemy will not be slow to take advantage of it.

Paul, in the very city outside which Christ was once offered, the perfect sacrifice, and to which he had already borne far and wide a faithful testimony, finding himself surrounded with *thousands of believing* Jews, who were all *zealous of the law* (Acts xxi. 19-25), followed the advice of the christian elders under the same influence, and allowed himself for the moment to be turned aside. Purifying himself with four others who had a vow upon them, "he entered into the temple to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification,

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until that an offering should be offered for every one of them." (Ver. 26.)

"And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help: this is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and *forthwith the doors were shut.*" (Vers. 27-30.)

This false step nearly cost the apostle his life. "They went about to kill him." (Ver. 31.) If he for the moment lost sight of the impossible union of Christianity and Judaism, he soon met with a rude and practical proof of it. The Jewish law zealots of Asia very soon gave him a little of their mind, and great was the stir. Paul's faithful Master, behind all the scenes of this world, and moving all the scenes which He is behind, allowed him to pass through an experience, which might have been avoided, but which recorded on the page of the inspired word, should teach all His saints, as well as the

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apostle, that Judaism and Christianity are utterly at issue. God had rent the temple veil, and ended the law at Christ's death, and Paul knew it. Grace lingered over the guilty nation who had killed their Messiah. (Acts vii. 52.) They had further resisted the Holy Ghost (Acts vii. 51), and the only path now for the faithful among the Jews was outside the temple and Judaism. And the break must be complete. None understood this better than Paul. A little later he writes to his kinsmen, and tells them plainly and faithfully that the path of the Christian was outside. "Here," says he, "we have no continuing city"! Jerusalem would be destroyed, which shortly after came to pass. "Let us *go forth* therefore UNTO HIM without the camp, bearing his reproach." (Heb. xiii. 13, 14.)

"*Forthwith the doors were shut.*" These words have a deep moral significance. Judaism was shut in, so to speak, in the dark (the glory had long departed), and the witness and champion of the full-orbed light of Christianity was shut out. He had to follow his Master. Jesus suffered without the gate, died, rose, and entered glory. Paul had received light from that glorious heavenly region, from the Lord Himself. Jesus had met him, the glorified One. Light above the brightness of the sun had shone round about him, light that eclipsed

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all beneath it. Saul, the bigoted Jew, was blinded; Paul, the Christian, with his eyes wide open, preached straightway at Damascus, that *Jesus was the Son of God*. God Himself had set aside Judaism till the return of His Son. In the interim the heavens were open. The blood of Jesus had spoken in all its infinite worth before God, and boldness and access now were the portion of the Jew and Gentile who believed.

But the offering up of God's holy Lamb proved the worthlessness of all sacrifices under the law, except so far as shadowing it forth, and being God's appointed means, coupled with priesthood, for His going on with His chosen earthly people. But now, the veil being rent, the way into the holiest has been made manifest, the way into the presence of God Himself. The heavenly things themselves (already existing, the earthly being but patterns and shadows thereof) are introduced. But for all those to whom the inner doors of the unveiled presence of God are opened, the outer doors of the place of His veiled presence are closed. Going in to God means going out as regards man.

Israel had a time of perfect probation. From the beginning of the ministry of Christ till the destruction of the temple were forty years. Christ and the Holy Ghost ministered the whole

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of that period in their midst, but the mass were hardened and impenitent. Then judgment came. God foreknew how they would treat the testimony of the Holy Ghost; and on the same day that He came, introduced an entirely new order of things. At Pentecost we get Christianity, with saints on earth united with a glorified Christ, and with each other, although the doctrine of it was revealed later. (Acts ii.; 1 Cor. vi. 17; xii. 12-14.) From then till the year 70 Judaism, still lingered over by God in grace, remained side by side with Christianity. Many were the offers of mercy during this time to His guilty people (Acts iii.; iv.; vii.; xiii.; xxviii.), but all was in vain. Paul, the chosen vessel of God for the testimony of the full revelation of Christianity, is led on step by step by His ever faithful Master; and under his blessed ministry the believing Jews had to learn the difference between Christianity and Judaism, and the superiority of the former over the latter. The Gentiles also, receiving the gospel of the glory, turned to God from their idols and wickedness. (1 Thess. 9, 10.)

The Jews from Asia themselves drew Paul out of the temple, and forthwith the doors were shut. It illustrates the completeness of the breach. Christianity is heavenly, for a heavenly people, and those who confess it must learn that that involves an outside place on earth. Tens of

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thousands of believers to-day have gone back to the temple in principle. The temple itself is destroyed. But Christendom has followed the sad example of Israel in Hosea viii. 14; she hath forgotten her Maker, and buildeth temples. If a soul can find rest there, we may be assured that something is wrong. Either their lamp of profession burns so dimly that it sheds no light on the darkness around, or infidelity has so taken the place of professed zeal for God, that those they profess to worship with are utterly indifferent or occupied with other things, so that they do not trouble their heads about them. But only let the lamp be trimmed, pouring in oil from the vessel, if possessed, and let it shine, so that the consciences of men around are aroused, and that soul will soon find that the temples of the nineteenth century, with all their poor glory and feeble imitation, are no place for it.

"The doors were shut," and we do not read of their being re-opened. Soon after, the temple itself was burnt. Who gave men leave to rebuild adorned ecclesiastical buildings whilst Christ is away? "The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord." (Acts vii. 49.) And what poor temples our eyes behold, when compared

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with Solomon's, covered with gold, exceeding magnificent; and Herod's, forty-six years in building, though ostensibly to the glory of God!

Christ is heavenly, and in heaven. And the Christian is heavenly (Acts xv. 48); so also is Christianity. The visible things are ended for the time. God rent the veil, and invited His people in where He is, not in a visible building, which was about to be swept away, but in the holiest of all, His own glorious presence. Men drew Paul out of the visible building (a representative saint), and shut the doors behind him, when he was out. The Christian's place is inside the veil before God (Heb. x. 19, 20); and outside the camp, with a rejected Christ, as regards men. Blessed place! Blessed portion! May many more understand and value it.

The privileges connected with the new place God has given His saints are immense; but alas! how few enter into them, and how feebly even those who profess to know and enjoy them. What can be compared to communion with Himself, where He is, in the holiest, and worship there in the power of the Holy Ghost! The Christian, cleansed by the blood of Jesus, set apart by the word, has capacity for both. The Holy Ghost dwells in Him. We can therefore enjoy now, and be occupied in doing that which

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will be our portion and occupation to all eternity. Every obstacle has been so perfectly removed, and every hindrance so completely taken away, and the saint so wondrously blessed, that he is now introduced into the very presence of God without a veil, capable of enjoying and worshipping Him acceptably in spirit and in truth.

But this, as we have seen, involves an outside place here. Any other is inconsistent with it. Christ suffered without the gate, and is the rejected One now as ever. But if we really enter into what we are called to, where is the Christian who would not readily own that such a path is alone consistent with it? And what more blessed path could we tread through the scene of His death and grave, with the doors of man's religion shut against us, in company with Him who has risen above it all, bearing and sharing His reproach till He come?

E. H. C.



THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON AND ITS DEDICATION.

(1 KINGS VI. ; 2 CHRON. V., VI., VII. I-II.)

FOUR hundred and forty-seven years had passed away since Israel had kept the Passover on the plains of Jericho to this occasion of Solomon's

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completing the temple by observing the day of atonement, and celebrating the feast of the seventh month, for evidently the temple was not looked at as complete until this had been fulfilled. (Compare 2 Chron. v. 1, 3 with chapter vii. 10, 11.) It is Christ's acceptance that gives character to the church as the dwelling-place of God.

Save incidentally, no mention is made in scripture of a feast being kept to the Lord by the nation, from the early days of Joshua to these of Solomon in the seventh month of the fourth year of his reign; and it will be seen that the feast celebrated by Solomon is not the same as the one celebrated by Joshua on the plains of Jericho. This was in the first month, that in the seventh. This was the first feast as the basis of all the hopes of Israel, that the last as the fulfilment of all those hopes. (Lev. xxiii.)

The feast of the Passover would not have accorded with the glory that filled the temple consequent upon the acceptance of the sacrifice, when, too, the royal priest stood forth and blessed the people; but the feast of tabernacles most blessedly harmonised with all this, because it was the positive testimony that all was realised of the blessings that God had promised to His people.

Though but for a season, Israel were in

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possession of every blessing they were entitled to when they celebrated the Passover in the past. They now enjoy not the *title* only but the *possession* of all the promises of God to the fathers, so far as they could be realised under Solomon as a type of Christ.

We have in the palmy days of Solomon a glimpse of the days that await this earth when the true Solomon, David's Son and David's Lord, shall reign as Priest sitting upon the throne.

But we must leave much that is interesting and instructive of this picture, in connection with God's earthly people, and seek to get some instruction out of it for God's heavenly people, for God is raising a spiritual structure, not a material one.

Faith had raised a song of praise, and uttered not only the desire of the redeemed (Ex. xv. 2), but the purpose of God (vers. 17, 18); Solomon's day is the fulfilment of this as a shadow of what Israel is fully to enjoy under Christ, and serves as a figure of what the church is and may enjoy *now* while Christ is concealed in the heavens, as Aaron was on the great day of atonement.

Now, it is this great day of atonement that Solomon observes so solemnly at the dedication of the temple, and which gave character to that material building as the dwelling-place of the God of Israel.

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As Moses and Aaron united were a figure of Christ in Leviticus ix. 23, so is Solomon in person when he performed the function of royal priest: compare 1 Kings viii.; Leviticus ix.; Exodus xxviii. 33, 35, with this difference, that Solomon is not out of sight; it is as if the thick darkness had passed away (chap. viii. 12), to let the worshippers see the glory, for no mention is made of the veil that shut the God of Israel in, and the worshippers outside the holiest of all.* And this is what makes the occasion so instructive to us, for the Holy Ghost, having come down consequent upon the exaltation of Christ as man to the right hand of God, testifies to the acceptance of His atoning sacrifice, and of His fruitfulness before God, as the bells and pomegranates on Aaron's garments were to Israel when he went within the veil on the day of atonement.

But Israel did not know of the acceptance of the offering until Aaron came out and blessed them, neither will they know of the infinite value and acceptance of the atonement in the offering up of Christ, through the eternal Spirit, without spot, until He comes out from the heavens which now conceal Him from their sight. But not so with the church, she is in all the enjoyment

* That is, in the account given in the Kings there will be a veil in the earthly temple typified by that given in Chronicles.

by faith of the acceptance and savour of that sacrifice before God. She stands in it now, "accepted in the beloved," "as he is, so are we in this world." The Holy Ghost takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us. "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. . . . Ye shall *see* me: because I live, ye shall live also." (John xvi. 14, 15, 16.) So Stephen looked up, and saw the earth-rejected Man to be the accepted Man in the glory of God; he saw the true Aaron on the day of atonement, while He was within hidden from the Jewish people, who were persecuting him; and this is exactly the position of the church now—the day of atonement—to look up and know all is done, and see Christ in the glory of God as man by virtue of the blood of atonement. (Heb. ix. 12.)

The day of atonement was the only day throughout the year that Aaron went within the holiest of all, a yearly renewal of Israel's relation with God; when Aaron came *out* they had the witness of their acceptance and favour with God. The Holy Ghost is the witness to us while Christ is *within*.

No doubt the day of atonement was observed in its order by those who came after Moses and Aaron, but the Spirit of God has reserved the scripture account of the next for Solomon's day,

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when he dedicated the temple as the dwelling-place of God.

For the Spirit delights to reserve what so pre-eminently prefigures the glorious work of Christ for the brightest day, passing over years of failure, when clouds and tempests passed over the earth, and those also marked by wars, conflict, and bloodshed, to the day when there was no adversary and evil occurrent for the display in figure of the results of the atoning death of Christ and His acceptability before God.

Joshua had divided the land and put the feet of Israel down upon their inheritance as victors ; they failed to secure it, but David subdues every enemy under their feet, wars are at an end, rest is enjoyed ; and Solomon his son builds the temple, brings in the ark, draws out the staves, so that they are unseen witness to rest ; the wilderness journey is over, and wars are also ended, and the language of Psalm cxxxii. 8 is used : " Arise, O Lord, into thy rest ; thou and the ark of thy strength."

There was now no more to be done, and there was the glorious display of the fullest earthly blessing and glory ; the manna had disappeared, and Aaron's rod that budded is no more needed, for the wilderness with its murmurings has ceased, not only " before God," but the people are in the sanctuary itself, and blessed rest is realised.

But let us return for a moment to the wondrous

structure, and view some of its materials and workmanship. If we go inside, nothing is seen but gold and figures of beauty and glory. If we go outside, no particular mention is made save of the two pillars of brass—strength and support—so that nothing engages the mind but what is purely of gold ; for no stone was visible in the temple, what characterised the material in the quarry was left there, and when it was joined to the building it was merged in the building. So when our Lord unfolds to Peter His purpose to have a structure, He said : “ I say unto thee, That thou art Peter [a stone], and upon this rock I will build my assembly ;” Peter was to be of the same kind as the Rock—suitable to the builder.

Let us proceed to the spot where Solomon got the stone for his temple (supposed to have been a great way from the spot where the temple was erected), and what do we see ? men toiling to detach hard stone from the earth, the noise of hammers and steel bars are heard, mingled with the voices of men to detach a stone from the mass to which it is so tightly joined ; it however yields to the power of the levers, and is drawn out of its old position, and put into the hands of the stone squarers (these are skilful and useful men). The stone has not a single flat side, but is long-sided, pointed, and ill-shaped. What have these men to do with it ?

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It cannot be joined to any other stones in the temple in that shape, for it would fit nowhere. Ah! they must *square* it. What a lot of work has to be done, and what a lot of noise, may be, will be heard as this process is in operation of sawing off this long end or chipping off that sharp point with the hammer and chisel, for the stone must be perfectly *square* before ever it is taken to the building: for no noise of the hammer must be heard in that temple. A long-sided stone would disfigure the whole building, therefore there must be diligent, skilful men who know not only how to apply the square, but having applied the square to the stone to see what has to be done, to know how to cut off the corners, rough places, and sharp points, and make the stone equal; his tools must be perfectly sharp, for a blunt tool would be likely to make a hollow place where once there was a lump and so damage the stone altogether and unfit it for the building. The patient use of the saw must be resorted to where the hammer and chisel would be dangerous; the skilful squarer would know the material he was working, and the choice of tools would be according to the stone under hand.

Now the word of God is like the square in the hands of the squarer; but he must be a skilful workman else he will spoil the stone the evangelist has taken out of the quarry by

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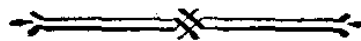
hard work. For while it is true the word must be applied to see how to shape the soul who is plucked out of the mire of this world ; he must not use the word to shew up to the soul its uncomeliness, and thus discourage, but use the word so as to fit that soul for the building : seeing the ugliness of the stone with the square is one thing, removing the ugliness is another ; so seeing this opinion and that doctrine or notion to be wrong according to the word is one thing, the opening of the eyes to them by the word is another.

The square was for the eye of the squarer, not for the stone ; so the word *as a detective* is for the eye of the workman to use as *good* for the saved sinner.

In all this work nothing is more called for than the grace of patience. The squarer might have many times thought that the stone brought to him was a rough one indeed ; but this was the stone for him to shew his skill upon. May the Lord make us good squarers, so that no noise be heard in the building !

E. H.

(To be continued if the Lord will.)



THE WORTHINESS OF CHRIST.

(REV. V.)

THERE are two words in this scripture, which are blessed words (ver. 2), "I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is *worthy* to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon," and (ver. 5), "Weep not, behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath *prevailed* to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof." Here we have the fact of worthiness, and the fact of power and ability to do it, and neither of these were answered by any one save Christ. "Who is *worthy*" and "The Lion of the tribe of Juda hath *prevailed*" are wonderful words for us, because they relate to the inherent excellency of Christ's Person. He was worthy, in the glory of who He was, and He made a claim upon God to open the book. No one except Himself in the worthiness of His Person could make a claim upon God; it refers to that, so that He was entitled both in His Person and in the rights which He has secured to open the book; and then the other is a very affecting word, "He hath prevailed." He prevailed through sorrow, death, the afflictions of the cross, being

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forsaken of God, despised by men, enduring suffering, and as the words of the hymn have it, "By being trodden down," "He hath prevailed." It is a blessed word: to think that the ability of Christ, in that sense, consisted in His voluntarily going down and enduring everything, becoming, in that sense weaker than everything, giving Himself up to sorrow and the judgment of God, because of sin, and receiving everything, even that which was connected with man, from the hand of God.

"By weakness and defeat,
He won the meed and crown,
Trod all our foes beneath His feet,
By being trodden down."

I look at Him there by faith in heaven now, and see Him wearing the crown and sitting for a little while on the Father's throne, and by-and-by He will give the overcomer to sit with Him on His throne—and how do we overcome? Is it not true that we overcome by what is called defeat; giving up everything, surrendering everything. When I hold to Christ, I am the loser, not in the true sense of the word, but in another sense I am; but what a wonderful thing to look up and see Him there, and hear to-day those notes that are sounding in His ear in heaven, "Worthy," and to know that God will move every created intelligence

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to do Him homage ; because that is what I understand by Revelation v., there shall not be a created intelligence that God will not move to do homage to the One who gave Himself up to suffering and death, the object of all heaven's worship—what a precious thing to think, that the One who gave our hearts to praise Him in time will sustain the combined worship of heaven through all eternity. The Lord give us to dwell upon His personal worthiness to-day, and to remember more unceasingly what He passed through, and that He has a right and claim and title over everything, as in Ephesians i. He has acquired a right and title over everything, He is Head *over all things* to the church which is His body ; that which He will own by-and-by, as bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh ; as Adam owned Eve fruit of his mysterious sleep, so will Christ own that which was formed out of His sleep of death as bone of His bone, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

The Lord keep us waiting for Him, and in our measure delighting and rejoicing in Him now.

W. T. T.



FORGETFULNESS AND FRUITFULNESS.

GENESIS XLI. 51, 52.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

When the eye is single, that is when Christ alone is filling its vision, all is lost sight of; not only our toil and father's house, but even our *progress* in pressing on to Christ in glory; hence says the apostle, "*forgetting* those things which are behind," from the same word as is found in Genesis xlv. (See Septuagint.)

What a wonderful and surpassing power, which by its own excellence and blessedness, turns out every claimant or rival that Christ alone may rule and reign there. Reader, have you so found and known Him in this land of exile and strangership, that you can inscribe on all as your motto in part, Manasseh!

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

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

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

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

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

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

W. T. T.

Of all obstacles to the progress of truth there is none so powerful as an un-Christlike Christian.



BREAKING THE HEART OVER THE TESTIMONIES OF GOD.

OH that the flow of love were broader and fuller and fresher, and communion with Himself deeper and happier. How one's soul longs to dwell in a fairer element than it is acquainted with! Some simple souls, not known in any way to draw observation or mention, have more liberty and power in thinking of Him, and turning to Him in spirit, and then gazing and worshipping; and all that is high attainment. It is priestly and heavenly, while much of my business may be in courts outside.

"He that keepeth my word, he it is that loveth me." Such keeping of His word is not *studying of the Bible*, or teaching or writing about the things found there; but a hiding it in the heart and in the memory, because He is loved of whom it testifies. Oh what a more blessed thing that is. "I opened my mouth and panted, I hoped in thy word." What a fervent breaking of the heart over the testimonies of God! How one covets such experience! It is but vain to renew our lamentations over the state of the church of God. The watchman on the walls and the messenger on the hills are not seeing "eye to eye." (Isa. lii.) I grieve at the thought that

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so much among us remains for the judgment seat of Christ to set right. Would that the light and virtue of the indwelling Spirit were anticipating more of this goodly business, and kindred spirits were hastening towards each other. But *God* is jealous, and how righteous that it should be so. How fitting is it that He should be jealous, that the light of a brother's countenance do not do for my heart what He proposes the light of His countenance should do for it. Rather let the atmosphere around me be clouded and dull, than the sun above it all be less than it is. "It gives, but borrows none"—the light is its own.

The *religious* principle is doing its work of persecution on the continent, the *secular* thing is making "exhibition" of itself in these islands of ours.

What divers and yet what powerful principles—and that, too, at work in the same generation. I suppose we shall see a certain character of complacency or combination between them—for the secular thing will court the presence of the religious, to give it ease and security while pursuing its end; and the religious thing (Popery) will own anything for its own end. In Matthew xvi. 1 we see the Pharisee and the Sadducee together challenging an *unworldly* Jesus.

The "Great Exhibition" is here. The building will be completed and the mighty sham

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open, it is expected, next Thursday week. The city of Enoch in the land of Nod could display its capabilities and resources, though Abel's blood was shed and God's presence lost!

J. G. B.

Dublin, 1863.

 DISCERNMENT.

THERE can be no doubt that we are in a world of counterfeits and false appearances, and that we (Christians) need to distinguish between what is real and what is false.

Now God has given us His Spirit whereby we know that He abides in us, and immediately after this blessed statement we find the Holy Ghost's discernment of what is going on in the world around us. (1 John iii. 24 to iv. 6.)

False prophets have been preaching false Christianity for eighteen hundred years; and with great success. Gnostics and Arians, Deists, Socinians, all have had their turn, all of them attacking our Lord's Person; and during all this time some souls have been kept in the truth as to Jesus Christ come in the flesh.

If we ask *how* they have been kept, there is but one answer, and that is: "By the Holy Ghost."

The Holy Ghost is infallible, and one of the great characteristics of a Christian in this

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part of John's epistle is precisely this, that he has received the Holy Ghost. It is then that he is called upon to prove the spirits, whether they are of God. It is no mystic proof, no false inspiration,* but a spiritual judgment drawn from *outward facts*. A false spirit will not confess Jesus Christ come in flesh; and of this I wish to say a word or two.

All the enemy's attacks have been and are directed against the Lord Jesus Christ; should any one touch His Deity or His perfect humanity, he is of the enemy, and not of God.

The confession here is very striking, for it is not a mere orthodox creed that is in question, but the recognition of Jesus Christ come in flesh: the real presence of a perfect Man upon earth. This perfect Man was at the same time the eternal God, whose divine power was displayed in emptying Himself (Phil. ii.) and in going down to the very lowest point. His Deity shines through the whole gospel history, but the great point here is His having come in flesh; and this is the test given to us for the different spirits which are in the world. Surely men's views are stranger than ever as to our Lord's perfect humanity, and we need to know

* Are we not living in a day when men mistake impulse for a kind of inspiration? And should we not beware of this?

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more and more the true meaning of the "fine flour mingled with oil," the perfect manhood of Christ. Men's views are wrong, and the sad thing is that there is spiritual influence behind spirits of false prophets, who are much listened to on all sides.

We are living in a time when men talk of spiritual liberty and enlightened religion; we have got out, say they, of the trammels and narrow views of the preceding centuries, and we must allow free teaching according to each one's light. Yes; and in the meantime the false prophets are having it pretty much their own way; the light which is there is darkness, and many, alas! receive it.

As a proof of this, take a well-known (Protestant) country, where lately half or more of the people have been carried away by wrong views on the atonement.

But shall none be kept? This is a question which concerns each one of us. The point is that God is able to keep us, and that He has given to us His Spirit that we may discern every imposture. Greater is *He* that is in us than he that is in the world; and we shall be kept in the faith, if we are dependent.

The false spirits and prophets prepare the world for the Antichrist; and they have used outward Christianity to hasten on the development of him who shall lead the opposition to

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God and His Christ. It is perfectly true that Christianity has done much outwardly for the world; had the gospel never been preached in Great Britain we should still be savages, dyed purple with woad—this is true, but all this has been used to exalt man.

There is nothing morally wrong in civilisation, but it is used to magnify human nature, and to prepare the way for the Antichrist, whose power is already in the world; such is the world we are living in, and its end is not far off. The question is how we are to discern God's mind and will where there is so much counterfeit and imitation.

Now the Holy Ghost is still upon earth, and answers every question by directing a simple believer straight to the word of God: the Person of Jesus Christ come in flesh is the touchstone, and again we have the inspired word of the apostles (ver. 6) to whom God gave this special revelation of the glory of His Son's Person.

Whilst a babel of voices of false prophets, animated by false spirits, call us to listen to their discourse, we turn away to God and the word of His grace, we listen to those who were inspired to write to us of Him who was "from the beginning;" and we may well say that if the prophets of the world speak not according to the scriptures, it is because there is no light in them.

E. L. B.

LABOUR AND REST.

THERE is a word of great sweetness and comfort in Mark vi. 31, 32. We are introduced to a scene of real labour and toil. The Lord had called the twelve, and sent them out two by two, without anything for their journey save a staff. They went forth without scrip, or bread or money : they preached, they cast out devils, they raised the sick ; it was a time of diligent service and incessant toil, but a time of labour which resulted in fruit. After this we find the apostles returning, gathering themselves together and rehearsing to their blessed Master all they had done and taught. He had sent them forth, as it were, empty handed and destitute of all man's resources, and now they have returned and are spreading at His blessed feet their acquired treasures, the fruit of their work and toil ; He, with all that tender grace and kindness which were ever His own, accepts it all, and in the divine and blessed love which ever sought the good of His own, He says, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." Let us note it well. He does not say, "Go and rest," but "Come and rest." Ah ! it is not the desert place that could furnish the rest, if so it might have been "Go," but it is Himself there, *there* where no distraction can intrude, no surge of

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worry, no blast of care can for a moment enter. Oh! how blessed His company in that sweet retreat, made so by Himself alone! How well may we sing of that—

“No soil of nature’s evil,
No touch of man’s rude hand,
Shall e’er disturb around us
That bright and happy land.
The charms that woo the senses
Shall be as pure, as fair,
For all while stealing o’er us
Shall tell of Jesus there.”

But there is a further precious thought here. Our own Master and Lord knows the snare of active service, even for Him—the danger of giving it that place which alone belongs to Himself—the temptation to His poor, weak child and vessel to be more absorbed with it than with Him; hence how often do we hear Him say, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile.” We are told that “there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.”

In this busy day of ours, with its confessed and crying needs on all hands, how true the picture before us is; yet while recognising fully our clear, distinct duty to the church and the world, and not in any wise seeking to clothe our *indifference* or *selfishness* with a religious sancti-

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monious garb, let all who love His blessed service, which is indeed perfect freedom, bear in mind the lesson of our passage, which is plainly this, that the *quality* of our work will be poor and attenuated indeed, if it be not *connected with Christ, from Christ, for Christ*. Those who really and truly work for Him, must first of all be sustained and fed by Himself, as they hear Him say, "Come and rest." And oh! how gracious of Him to take His poor wearied worker by the hand, as it were, aside, apart into a desert place with Himself, shutting Him out from all but Himself, that with mind undisturbed and heart undistracted, all may be gone over with Himself, in rest and quietness, and fresh thoughts of Himself and His love thus impressed upon the heart, producing renewed vigour and energy for further service for Him.

After this we have recorded a delightful instance of the deep compassion of that heart which was ever touched by distress and need. We are told the people "outwent them and came together unto him." Oh! how He did attract the weary and wanting ones! How He also met and taught and filled them! How He made the desert place to yield bread enough and to spare, and then having finished all in His compassionate tenderness and goodness He Himself departed into a mountain to pray; His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him

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and to finish His work. But we must bring these thoughts to a close by a glance at the end of the chapter. In the departure of Jesus into the mountain, we are shewn in figure His taking the place of intercession on high ; His disciples cross the water in a boat, and we have their *vicissitudes* ; it is such a comfort to think of what is said here, "He saw them toiling in rowing." Not the shades of night, nor the earnest vigil which He kept in prayer on the mountain-top, nor the storm-lashed lake that they were crossing, none of these could hide His poor servants from the Master's eyes. Then He who "saw them" came to them in the darkest part of the night, walking on the water in supreme majesty, *but in love*, and spoke such words of comfort, "Be of good cheer," "It is I" (*εγω ειμι*), "Be not afraid."

"In darkest shades, if He appear,
My morning is begun"—

Lastly, observe it is said, "He talked with them." How blessed the *rest* of that intercourse after all the *toil* and *labour*.

W. T. T.



WHAT DO I WANT TO BE HAPPY? EVERY MAN IS IN ONE OF THREE CONDITIONS BEFORE GOD.

1. WHEN the *unconverted* man is consciously in the presence of God he does not speak, his mouth is stopped, he is "guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 19; Rev. xx. 12.)

2. The *converted* man is a step farther on the road. His face is Godward. He is born again; hence he speaks, but he is not *quite sure* how things will turn out. He lacks confidence in God. (Luke xv. 18, 19.)

3. The *Christian* is in the full liberty of the Son. He speaks, for it is the Spirit of the Son who speaks in Him. He is "always confident." (Gal. iv. 6; 2 Cor. v. 5, 6.) "Perfect love" (God's love) has cast out all fear. Which of these is the position of the reader, before God? Man is only fully and perfectly happy when he is in the last, that is, thus consciously and without a question, in the presence of God, and knowing well that GOD is delighted to have him there.

We may remember that conversion (new birth) was as necessary in Old Testament times as now. (Ps. xix. 7; li. 13; Isa. vi. 10) But saints were not always when (consciously) in the presence of God in Old Testament time, *happy*

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to be there. There was a measure of occupation still with self, and this was of necessity so, for the first man had not been then judicially set aside in the cross. I think that Job xlii. 5, 6 and Isaiah vi. 1-6 will sufficiently illustrate what I mean. Both were converted men, and were high in the esteem of *our* God, both really born again, but neither was indwelt of the Spirit. This is the difference which I see between a converted man and a Christian, as the word makes that difference known to us.

For the man who is "of the earth, earthy"—the guilty head of a ruined creation—the more *he* is conscious of God's presence, the more also is he conscious of his own utter unfitness to be there for one moment. Like Jacob of old, he exclaims, "How *dreadful* is this place," or "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." "Woe is me, for I am undone, for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of hosts." For rest and joy in God's presence we must have a new man there. Thus alone can man be perfectly *happy* in God's presence. The New Testament reveals to us this. Its subject is *the accepted Man*; as the testimony of the Old Testament ever pointed to man's *rejection*, and God's need of a substitute, so this discloses the heart of God at rest in the Man of His own providing.

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The testimony of the New Testament, that which underlies every page in it, as the careful reader of it must have noticed, is this, that *there is a Man now in God's presence and in the eternal favour of God*. What a change and what a relief to the heart it is to turn from the testimony of the Old Testament, whose burden is that man could not be there! Here we have rest and peace, for there are those that are OF HIM who is raised up "far above all principality and power." *Of Him*, as Eve was of Adam, for while Adam slept (Christ in death) God took of *his substance*, and therewith builded He a woman and brought her to the man. When I am instructed by the Spirit as to what Christ is before God, and now as Man, I have found my own portion and rest. For how can I then be occupied with myself in any way? How can I think of my own unfitness, or of myself at all? I see Him, God's CHRIST, and His fitness, not as Isaiah and Job saw themselves, and therefore their own unfitness. There was no other man there to rest on when Isaiah and Job looked, but there is such a Man there now—a perfect, blessed Man, though ever Son of God, too.

Now the Holy Spirit, present on earth since the day of Pentecost, and indwelling *all* believers, has Christ as His theme. "He shall testify of me." Therefore He ever seeks to occupy the saints with the absolute and intrinsic value as

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before God of Christ and His work ; that is, with Christ's *perfection*, and not with our *imperfection*. It should be an accepted truth with us that the first man has no place nor standing before God. It was the burden of the Old Testament, but have we learned it even now? Have we done with that man, and so ceased to have him before us? And on the other hand, as I have said, the burden of the New Testament is as to the One who as Man is even now "crowned with glory and honour." The first man is eternally displaced, has no place in the presence of God, and I as a believer, or rather as a Christian, have my union now before God with Christ, and am no longer identified with Adam. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

It is clear from all the testimony of the word of God that the man whom Isaiah and Job saw in the presence of God never was there, is not now there, and never will be there. This could not be revealed to them in that day. It was reserved for us to be led into this blessed secret and into the knowledge of union with Christ, and to be formed in Him "one new man."

The more then that we are now in the presence of God thus *the happier we are*. In one sense we are *always* in His presence, but I mean *consciously* in His presence. As we read in the passage to which I draw your attention, "But

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we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." The more we contemplate Him, the more we see how that blessed One, who went down under the whole weight and judgment of our sins, has introduced in Himself as Man, what is, as to this race, wholly new, and eternally delighting to the heart of the blessed God! As Man, God has raised Him to the highest place in heaven; and, as Man, there He has crowned Him "with glory and honour." There He bears "a name that is above every name," *and there He is for me*, and I am invited to contemplate Him there in this passage (as ever) all along the road I travel here. We have title, and what a relief it is, to be only and always occupied with that Man.

In the Old Testament (and always even now, where we think of ourselves) what is before us is the Man REFUSED. The veil is stopping the way unrent. There is no veil now. In the New Testament (dating from His birth, see Luke ii. 14), the subject is THE MAN ACCEPTED. This, I take it, is simple Christianity. Whether on earth or in heaven, one story is before us. Christ is always the same, the Man accepted, and He, in all the consciousness of this, treads the earth for three-and-thirty years, where we also now walk in His footpath, and according to

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His own blessed word to Peter, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Thanks be to God that the believer is able to say, "I am of *that* blessed Man, and no longer looked at by God as of Adam. His place is mine, and His acceptance is mine." "As He is, so are we in this world." I take it that the difference to be seen in believers now and believers in the Old Testament, consists in the fact that the Spirit of God *dwells in* believers now (Eph. i. 13), and he ever testifies to the worthiness of Christ if ungrieved in us. This could not be the work of the Spirit on earth until Jesus was glorified. "The Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified." (John vii., New Trans.) See hymn 25 in "Little Flock" Hymn-book, which I take it is the language of a believer as of Christ, and so *indwelt of the Spirit*.

H. C. A.



COUNSELS TO YOUNG CONVERTS.

CLEAVE to the Lord with purpose of heart. Depend on Him. Some are allowed a long season of joy on first believing. But God knows our hearts, and how soon we begin to depend on our joy, and not on Christ. He is our object—not the joy. Sin no longer remains *on* you, but the flesh is *in* you to the end: the old stock will put forth its buds, which must be nipped off as they

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appear. No fruit can come of it. It is the new nature that bears fruit *unto God*. But though the flesh is in you, do not be thinking of this, but *think of Christ*. As you grow in the knowledge of Christ, a joy comes, deeper than the first joy. I have known Christ more or less between thirty and forty years, and I can truly say I have ten thousand times more joy in Him now than I had at first. It is a deeper, calmer joy. The water rushing down a hill is beautiful to look at, and makes most noise ; but you will find the water in the plain deeper, calmer, more fit for general use. Cleave to Christ with purpose of heart. A distracted heart is the bane of Christians. When we have got something that is not Christ we are away from the source of strength. When my soul is *filled* with Christ, I have no heart or eye for the trash of this world. If Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, it will not be a question with you, "What harm is there in this and that?" but rather, "Am I doing this for Christ?" "Can Christ go along with me in this?" Do not let the world come in and distract your thoughts. I speak especially to you young ones. They who are older have had more experience in it, and know more what it is worth : but it all lies shining before you, endeavouring to attract you. Its smiles are deceitful, still it smiles. It makes promises which it cannot keep ; still it makes them. Your hearts

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are too big for the world: it cannot fill them. They are too little for Christ: He fills heaven, He will fill you to overflowing. You will have indeed to learn what is in your own heart. Abide with God and you will learn it with Him. and with His grace. If you do not, you will have with bitter sorrow to learn it with the devil, through his successful temptation. But God is faithful. If you have been getting away from Him, and other things have come in, and formed a crust, as it were, over your hearts, you will not at once get back the joy. God will have you deal with this crust, and get rid of it. Remember Christ bought you with his own blood, that you should be His, not the world's. Do not let Satan get between you and God's grace. However careless you may have been, however far you may have got away from Him, count on His love. It is His joy to see you back again. Look at the sin with horror, but never wrong Him by distrusting His love. Talk much with Jesus. Never be content without being able to walk and talk with Christ as with a dear friend. Be not satisfied with anything short of close intercourse of soul with Him who has loved you and washed you from your sins in His own blood.

J. N. D.



THE SHEKINAH.

THIS glory had guided them (Israel) from the first, and had set up its throne of power in their midst. It had judged Pharaoh and his legions to the deep, and had smitten the nations of Canaan, dividing the land for Israel, His inheritance, having His throne and temple in Jerusalem. He did not seek any other spot on earth; but being disturbed at Jerusalem by the defilements there, He returned to heaven. (Ezek. xi.) From thence in due season He came back, yet in another form. But He had a special character in which to shew Himself—one equally worthy of itself—I mean, in the form and character of grace. Accordingly this same glory or divine presence—God Himself—returned veiled in the Person of Jesus; and as a rejected Galilean, a carpenter's Son, not having where to lay His head, went about in the land of Israel in fullest grace—healing, preaching, toiling, watching; poor, yet enriching others; thirsting and hungering, yet feeding thousands; and in everything as simply and surely declaring itself to be the glory, as it did when it divided the waters of Jordan or threw down the walls of Jericho.

But in this form Israel, or the earth, forfeited it also, though it did not leave the earth in the same way. Of old, when rejected in its power,

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it left the earth of itself, in righteous anger, resenting the affront done to its majesty, and withdrawing itself in judgment. (Ezek. i. to xi.) But now being rejected in its grace, it remains still to bless the earth, if haply man would own the love, and is at last rather sent away than withdraws itself. But still, whether we see the glory in power or in grace, the earth for the time has forfeited it, for He is still unchangeable, and it is now hid in the heavens.

But there is another stage in its history still. Ezekiel sees it returning to the very spot from whence it set out. It had, as said, never sought any other place on earth. If Zion be unprepared for the glory they must lose it, for of Zion alone has He said, "This is my rest for ever;" but the glory does return, as we see in that chapter in Ezekiel. And then will arise the system commonly known as the millennium, when Jesus will become the centre, the true ladder which Jacob saw, the Sustainer of all things in heaven and in earth, having now reconciled all by His blood, and then gathering all in Himself to spread His divers glories over all.

J. G. B.



MAN.

THERE are eight leading positions occupied by man from his creation to the eternal state. Some of these periods are brief, others more prolonged, but all are marked by a definite and distinct dealing on the part of God. Surely it is solemnising to learn what man *is*, and how he displays himself under those dealings. Blessed, too, the knowledge thereby gained of God, and of His ways in grace, in glory, and in government.

I.—*Man* in Innocence. (Gen. i. 26-31, and chap. ii.)

II.—*Man* lawless, restrained only by conscience; this period was from the fall till the flood. (Gen. iii.-vii.)

III.—*Man* placed under civil government; this period dates from Noah (Gen. ix.), and runs on till the Lord returns to the earth in power and glory.

IV.—*Man* tested by promise and testimony; dating from Abram—root of the olive tree (Rom. xi.)—till the millennium. Genesis xii. shews the commencement of this period.

V.—*Man* tried under law, of which Moses was the representative (Exod. xx.); then tested under kingly power, Saul being the choice of the people. (1 Sam. x.) It is important to remark that the law is *not* dead, being found as a witness of Israel's guilt in the day of the world's judgment.

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(Rom. ii. 12-16.) Kingly power and government having passed from the hands of the Jew to the Gentile (Nebuchadnezzar), will be found in the closing days in open revolt against Jehovah and His Anointed. The coming of the Lord in judgment will close up "the times of the Gentiles." (Dan. vii. ; Rev. xix.)

VI.—*Man* under the full grace of God, from the death of Jesus Christ till He comes into the air to fetch His people to Himself. (1 Thess. iv. 13-18.) During this quickening or life-giving hour (John v. 25), God is working for the heavenly glory of His Son—by calling out of the world by the Spirit's testimony to His risen Son and His infinitely precious work on the cross, a people to whom is conferred joint-heirship with Christ, and constituted by the Spirit "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

VII.—*Man* in the age of glory, or millennium. This period will last 1000 years. (Rev. xx.) The earthly glory and blessing of this age is, in general, the subject of the prophets ; while the heavenly glory is fully detailed in Revelation xxi. 9-27, and chapter xxii. 1-5. There will be a revolt of the nations at the close. (Rev. xx. 7-10.)

VIII.—*Man* in the eternal rest of God. (Rev. xxi. 1-5.)

"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

W.

THE *PRINCIPLE* AND *PATTERN* OF ALL TRUE GREATNESS.

(LUKE XXII. 24-27.)

SAVE for that blessed knowledge of Himself and the knowledge of the utter alienation of the carnal mind in its enmity against God, as proved in the rejection of Himself, it would be difficult to conceive how there could have been a "strife" in such a scene as is shewn us in this upper chamber. The *nature* of this strife adds its solemnity to the fact; the word "strife" really means an ambitious contention, or love of quarrel; *the word only occurs here*. The dispute may have arisen while they were taking their places at the couches where they reclined, and may have perhaps been occasioned by some claim made by some for official precedence. Be this as it may, it is very clear that self and pride filled their hearts. Alas! it is all too evident that in the midst of all these deep solemnities, the thoughts of the poor disciples were about their vanity. Then the tender, gracious way He meets all is so blessed, there is no reproach of any kind, yet He so precious sets them right: it was as though He

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said to them, "You are seeking for a *high* place, but I have taken a *low* one."

What should we have said if so circumstanced? Would it not have been something *severe, hard, wounding*? Ah! nothing of that kind ever passed from His blessed lips. First, He tells us His verdict on the world—in it the proud are flattered, it likes the haughty and the great; but you shall not be so.

Oh what a comfort and solace to the heart it is to come to the mind of Christ! how precious to dwell upon His beauty and upon His lowly, perfect grace! He was among them as One that served; whatever high place they sought, He took the low place.

Thus we have the principle and pattern of all true greatness in His blessed words and Person here. No doubt with the disciples thoughts of the kingdom filled their minds in a carnal way, and led to the strife spoken of here for pre-eminence; it is in the presence of His coming and foretold sorrow all this takes place, as another so solemnly and blessedly says: "And this, in the presence of the cross, at the table where the Lord was giving them the last pledges of His love. Truth of heart was there, but what a heart to have truth in! As for Himself, He had taken the lowest place, and that—as the most excellent for love—was His alone. They had to follow Him as closely as they

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could. His grace recognises their having done so, as if He were their debtor for their care during His time of sorrow on earth. He remembered it. In the day of His kingdom they should have twelve thrones, as heads of Israel, among whom they had followed Him." Oh! how perfect and precious is this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, how tender and gentle are His rebukes; these never separate, never put us at a distance from Him, indeed they bring nearer to Him, as here, where, as we have seen, He speaks of them as *companions of His temptations*! In connection with all this, may we not say with another, that one feels too sadly in one's own heart, that it is one thing to render to Jesus the tribute of admiration, or even of tears, and another to join one's self with Him for better or worse, through good and through evil, in the face of the present world; one thing to speak well of Him, another to give up all for Him. Lastly, observe all this is on the way to the great end, the great consummation of all His blessed love and grace. It is striking and solemn to see how this blessed end is related in scripture. In the Gospel of Luke it is the Father as with Him, communion with Him, dependence on Him with the assurance of His support and acceptance. In Matthew and Mark it is God as absent from Him, and hence the cry of conscious abandonment and desertion.

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In John it is a divine Person everywhere, in the garden and on the cross, with His own hand He simply seals the accomplished work with the words, "It is finished," and gave up His Spirit as having power over it (*παρεδωκεν το πνευμα*).

How truly is it said that "He gives up His spirit Himself. No one takes it from Him; it is He Himself who gives it up. A divine act. . . . He Himself separates His spirit from His body, and gives it up to God His Father; a divine act that He had the power to accomplish."

As we thus trace the blessed One through these varied scenes of sorrow to the close, are not our hearts responsive to the words:—

"O Lord! Thy wondrous story
My inmost soul doth move;
I ponder o'er Thy glory,
Thy lonely path of love."

W. T. T.



THE LIGHT FROM BEHIND THE SCENE.

LUKE XXII. 3-6; JOHN XVIII. 1-9.

It is a solemn thought that the nearer to Jesus, if there is not spiritual life, the more a man resists God, and the more sure and sad instrument of the enemy he becomes. If truth has

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been presented and not received, nowhere has Satan so much power. Covetousness was the means used ; but though they plotted to betray and crucify Him in a corner, this could not be : they were obliged to accomplish it according to God's purposes. Then the light from behind the scene makes a passage. It is the Lord ; and no matter what He suffers, or what is before Him, *yet we find the divine knowledge and power.* There is the chamber ! What calm and peaceful dignity ! It is no effort, nothing to display a character. All yields before the unwitnessed authority of this rejected Saviour—all but that to which it had been most manifested, the unrenewed heart of man. To the householder, unknown it seems to every eye but one, it was enough to hear, "The master saith to thee." How blessed to see such *perfect human affections combined with His divine knowledge of all things.* "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," like one leaving his family and first desiring a farewell meeting.

When we see the divine glory in the Person of Christ, we find the human affections shining out. (Compare Matt. xvii. 27.) It is this which gives Him a power and a charm which no object else has ; so that God can delight in man, and man can delight in God.

The few verses that tell us of Gethsemane,

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present to us the Saviour in His divine power, there giving Himself for His own, and finally perfect in obedience as man. Nothing is said of what passed before the arrival of Judas, but then the whole band, upon His voluntary avowal that He was Jesus of Nazareth, fall to the earth, *confounded by the divine power which was revealed in Him.* He could go away to escape from them; but He was not come for that, and declaring again that He was the One whom they sought, He adds: "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way;" that *that* word, so precious for us also, might be fulfilled: "Of those whom thou hast given me, I have lost none." He puts Himself in the breach, that His own may be sheltered from harm.

J. N. D.

From Notes on Luke and John.



THE TWO HEADSHIPS.

(ROM. V. 12-21.)

THE subject of this passage of scripture, the headship of the first man, Adam, and the headship of the last Adam, Christ, is a very important one. In this chapter (Rom. v.) Christ is viewed as raised from among the dead, and thus to have taken His place as last Adam before God and for faith, a new source of life for man, though

not yet displayed as last Adam, and therefore in this sense He is yet "to come." (Ver. 14.)

It was by "one man" that sin came into the world; he is not named in verse 12, though it is known who he is, the point in the passage being that it was by "*one man*" that it came in, and, as the consequence of it, death, and death has passed upon all his posterity, for that "all have sinned." The sin of the head has involved the whole race which is of him in the ruin. The sin of the "*one*" has resulted in death passing upon "*all*." All distinction between Jew and Gentile and man and man vanishes here. "There is no difference." But the Jew had privileges, he "rested in the law and made his boast of God" (chap. ii. 17), the Gentile being idolatrous. How did this affect the question for the Jew, for he was of the race of the first man as much as was the Gentile, and equally involved? In the parenthesis (vers. 13-17) the apostle shews the bearing of the law upon this question. "Until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed (that is, particular faults put to a person's account) when there is no law. But *death reigned* from Adam until Moses, even upon those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression." From Adam until Moses covers a period of two thousand five hundred years!

Here we must distinguish between sin and

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transgression. In chapter iv. 15 it says, "Where no law is there is no transgression," not "Where no law is there is *no sin*," for chapter v. 13 tells us that for 2,500 years before the law was given *sin* was in the world, and the reign of death during that period was the terrible proof of it, for death is the consequence of sin and the judgment of God upon it. Transgression is an aggravated form of sin and therefore made the case all the worse for the Jew, whom alone God had placed under law. (See chap. ii. 14.) Hosea in chapter vi. 17, of his prophecy charges the house of Ephraim and the house of Judah, the two nations of Israel, with having "*like Adam* (see margin) *transgressed* the covenant." And now Adam having been named, is said to be a type or figure of "Him to come," and thus we get the two heads of races fairly introduced. By the first *sin* came in with all its terrible consequences, by the last (for there is not a third) *grace* came in with all its blessed results. And now the apostle shews the surpassing character of grace, grace which goes out *to all*, Gentile as well as Jew, on the ground of what Christ has done; just as Adam's sin reached *to all*. It is grace overbounding, the excess of grace, for "not as the offence so also is the free gift," the one was not to be measured by the other as though it *simply met our need*. In the argument, in verse 15, the *persons*, the respective heads,

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Adam and Christ, are referred to, if through the offence of *one* (or "the one") many (or "the many") have died, *much more* the grace of God, and the free gift in grace which is by *the one man*, Jesus Christ, *has abounded* unto the many.

Yes, the grace of God has abounded by the one Man, Jesus Christ. He is last Adam, and as such is the blessed channel through whom all the good that is in the heart of God for man flows to him. Which man of the two do you prefer, dear reader? Remember that you come under the headship of the one or the other. By nature all were under the headship of the first Adam, and therefore death was upon all; but many through grace have changed their man. Have you? All who in faith have accepted Christ as dead and risen have changed their man; His death for them has broken the link with the first Adam, and in resurrection He has become to them a new source of life; a life against which sins never can be charged, and therefore over which death never can hold sway, for Christ "being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him."

In verse 16 it is the *acts* or conduct of the respective heads that are treated of, "And not as it was by one that sinned so is the gift, for the judgment was *of* [not "by"] *one* to condemnation," that is, it [the judgment] had its founda-

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tion in, was grounded on one single thing or act, "but the free gift is *of many offences* unto justification." Mark the contrast, when grace came in it had "many offences" to deal with, shewing that the apostle has the Jew before his mind, for the result of his being placed under law was that many specific offences were put to his account. He was not simply lawless, as was the case with the Gentile, but was a law-breaker. And here we might refer to that verse in Galatians iii. 21, "If there had been a law given which could *have given life*, verily righteousness should have been by the law," which shews that death as the present judgment of God upon sin was already lying upon man, the Jew, when the law was given, so that, as another has said, "the law came in a day too late." The law could not give life to man already dead as before God by sin! But to return to verse 16. Justification here is not the act of justifying that we get in chapter iv. 25, for which a somewhat different word is used, but refers to the state of accomplished subsisting righteousness before God in which justification places us. Against a justified man no charge of sin can hold good. God has justified him, who then can condemn him? He is not merely a pardoned sinner, he is estimated by God, judicially estimated, as a righteous man on the ground of what Christ has done, the efficiency of which is demonstrated by the blessed

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fact that God raised Him from among the dead. The offended One has been satisfied, to say the least, and righteousness is thus accomplished, and it is in that righteousness that the believer now stands before God.

In verse 17 it is *the consequences* of the acts of the respective heads that are in view, and again we find the expression "*much more*;" "much more they who receive *the abundance of grace* and of the free gift of righteousness shall reign in life by the one, Jesus Christ." Note that in the one case it is said, "*death reigned by the one*," but that in the other case it is we who reign, *reign in life* by and with the one through whom we have righteousness. Blessed fruit and consequence of Christ's accomplished work. If it is seen that verse 15 refers to the persons, verse 16 to their respective acts, and verse 17 to the consequences which flow from these acts, great help will be obtained for the understanding of the passage.

The connection of verse 18 is with verse 12, "Therefore as by the offence of one," or rather as it is in the margin, "by one offence, *towards all* men to condemnation, even so by one righteousness *towards all* men to justification of life." It should not be "*upon all*" in this verse in either case, for then *all* would get justification of life, and thus the passage be contradictory. The force of the word "upon" is *application*, that

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of the word "unto" or "towards," *aspect* or *bearing*. Romans iii. 22 will help us here, in which verse we get the two words "unto" and "upon," "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ *unto all* (aspect), and *upon all* (application) them that believe." It is the bearing of the act, whether of Adam or of Christ, that is, the consequences of the act are not confined within the limits of their own persons, but reach out to all, but clearly the consequences are not applied to all, for *all* are not condemned in the one case because of grace, the intervention of grace, and in the other case all do not get justification of life because of unbelief. It is in verse 19 that we find the application, and there the word "many" is employed in contrast with the word "all" of verse 18: "For as by one man's disobedience *many* were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall *many* be made righteous." It is not what happens to the many as the consequence of their own conduct, but what they become or are constituted by reason of the conduct of the head with whom they stand connected as before God, Adam or Christ. If in Adam, then condemned; if in Christ, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus." (Chap. viii. 1.) How important it is then that we should face the question as to which man it is that we stand connected with as before God, as to whether we

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have changed our man ! I may be never so moral or religious before men, "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless," but nevertheless a sinner in the sight of God in consequence of the disobedience of the one who is my head if still a child of nature ; while on the other hand a Saul of Tarsus, although the chief of sinners, was accepted before God and constituted righteous, on the ground of the obedience of the One, Jesus Christ, on whom through grace he had believed. The obedience of Jesus Christ is looked at here as a whole, " He became obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross " to establish God's glory and to secure the salvation of sinners. How perfect, how equal, how righteous are all God's ways ! Should any complain that it is through the fault of another that they are what they are, sinners and subject to the condemnation of death, it is certainly their own fault if they remain in that condition, for grace through righteousness has provided a way by which they can pass out of that state into all the acceptance and righteousness before God of the Man who perfectly glorified Him in life here below, and in death bore the judgment which was lying upon them as children of Adam, and thus removed it for faith, while as risen He becomes a new spring or source of life to the believer. And this is "justification of life." I have life in the One who bore my sins in His

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own body on the tree, who was delivered for my offences, one and all, all being future as far as I am concerned at the moment of His being delivered for them. All my sins, connected as they were with Him as alive down here in flesh, on this side death, all gone with the life to which upon the cross they were attached; the condemnation of sinful flesh (a different thought to that of sins of which I have been guilty) borne by Him, God's own Son, whom He sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, when a sacrifice for sin, and thus the whole question both of sin and sins once and for ever settled never to be reopened, settled to God's infinite satisfaction and glory, and He now, as raised from among the dead, alive on the other side of death and judgment, become my life—life of another order and in another sphere or scene, life in Christ Jesus, a life to which sins never were and never can be attached, which is outside the sphere of sin and death and Satan's power, victorious over all, for being "raised from the dead he dies no more, death hath no more dominion over him, for in that he died he died to sin once for all, but in that he liveth he liveth unto God." Hence the word to us, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God *in Christ Jesus*," as the passage should read. Is this your life, my reader? Have you this "justification of life?" It is as much for you as

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for any other ; will you now believe on him unto eternal life ? (1 Tim. i. 16.) It is thus that we change our man, pass from Adam to Christ.

And now in verse 20 we have why the law came in, it came in parenthetically, as it were, to make the offence to abound, not to make *sin* to abound, mark that, for *sin* had already been reigning for 2,500 years in the power of death ; moreover God could never do anything to make *sin* to abound, that which is so abhorrent to His nature. It came in in the way of testing man to see if it were possible for him to recover himself out of the state of ruin in which *sin* had plunged him, it being the perfect standard for a child of Adam ; but so far from being any benefit to him, it only aggravated the case for him, he being already a sinner and under the judgment of death as the consequence when he was placed under it ; it put specific offences to his account. But where *sin* abounded, grace has overabounded. How blessedly is it thus shewn that grace has no limits, cannot be confined within the narrow channels of Judaism ; it is suited to our need and meets it assuredly, but is not to be measured or bounded by it, it is in excess of it ; that it is adequate to our need the parable of the good Samaritan in Luke x. beautifully shews by the "inn" and the "two pence" ("the testimony of *two* men is true," that is, it is "*adequate*" testimony, thus shewing the force of "two," while

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“in the mouth of two or *three* witnesses shall every word be established”—*three* is “abundance.”) Shelter for the time being and adequate provision during our stay here until the return of our Benefactor; while on the other hand, the parable of the younger son in Luke xv. shews that it is grace *in excess* according to God’s own heart and the great love wherewith He loved us, as the best robe and the ring and the shoes and the fatted calf in the father’s house blessedly testify. “That as sin has reigned unto death even so might grace reign through righteousness,” not righteousness reign, that will be the case in the millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as a consequence sin will be summarily dealt with should it dare to shew its head; but now it is grace which reigns, but “through righteousness,” not at its expense, for righteousness has been fully maintained and all its claims against us as sinners fully met by the cross, so that God is now just while He justifies every one that is of the faith of Jesus; and grace reigns unto eternal life, has that in view for us and nothing less than that, for according to God’s purpose we are to be conformed to the image of His Son “that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” We are to be like Him and with Him in the heavenly glory where He now is. And all is “through our Lord Jesus Christ,” for He as Lord and as last Adam is the great

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administrator of all the good that is in the heart of God for man. May my reader know the blessedness of being found under His Headship.

T. H.



“THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND
TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER.”

IN that rich and precious Epistle to the Hebrews, in which we have so large an unfolding of the present place at God's right hand on high of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as of the value of His atoning death, there are several exquisite touches by the Spirit of God, which bring before us what He is *morally*, and some of these I desire to point out in their order.

First, we read in chapter iii. 2, “*Who was faithful to him that appointed him.*” Now, this beautiful record does not relate so much to what was outward in His blessed ways as it does to the inner springs of His devoted life: “He was faithful.” The effects were, of course, visible to the eye of God, as also to others opened of Him; but this is the secret working of a deep, hidden spring, that upon which all that was outward revolved.

What characterised Him in the path He had taken as Man was faithfulness to God. Not

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only was He dependent, but the Spirit bears the testimony that He was *faithful*.

Now, it may seem superfluous to say that He was marked by such a quality; how, indeed, could He be other than faithful? That may be true; nevertheless attention is drawn to the fact that He was so. And we are therefore invited to examine each detail of His perfect life and read therein but one living truth, namely, that He was faithful to God. His life was one bright unbroken course of this; and hence its moral beauty.

And when, beloved, we have learned ourselves a little; when a few years on the same path have sufficed to shew us, under God's gracious teaching, to how very, very small an extent that term can be applied to any of us, and how that, if perhaps faithful on one occasion or in certain circumstances, we fail, alas! in others, how all this only leads us to admire and seek more closely to follow One, of whom it was only but always true, that "He was faithful to him that appointed him." Yet it is a welcome testimony.

Passing on now to chapter iv. 15, we read that He "*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*"

He was tempted. Now, temptation must be viewed in two lights: first, as mere outward trial; hence, "Count it all joy when ye

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fall into divers temptations," the effect of which is to try our faith; then, second, as an evil seduction, and as to this we read that "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." (See James i. 2-13.) Such temptation is of the enemy. We know it well, and there is in us that which responds only too readily to evil. There is in us the flesh, and outside us there are both Satan and his mighty weapon the world, between all of which there is a close affinity and an intimate correspondence. Hence, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed."

Now, He was tempted—yes, tempted of the devil, too—but never tempted with evil. There was no response in Him to any outward snare, "and in him was no sin."

Therefore our passage runs, "In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Now, this does not merely mean that He, when tempted, did not yield to it, or was without sinning; but it means that sin was apart, that it did not exist either in practice or in essence—it was not there. And yet He was tempted in all points like us!

Not that He had to learn patience by the trial as we have; but which of His most devoted followers ever trod the path of trial and sorrow, and tears and privations and desertion as He

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did? None. He was pre-eminent in trial as in every true accompaniment of the divine life and path.

And now He has passed through the heavens, and is our High Priest above. May we not say correctly, that He has learned how to sympathise with His poor tempted ones below?

“He knows what sorest trials are,
For He has felt the same.”

Then, third, in chapter v. 5: “*Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest.*”

And yet, after all we have seen, who had such a right to the honour? He had been faithful, had passed through infinite trial; but now He glorified not Himself to be made High Priest! Ah! what an evidence of perfect humility—He sought not His own glory in this or in any other respect. No; but “He was called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.” God installed Him in that place of honour. There is something specially charming to the renewed mind in this self-denying quality of our blessed Lord. It is a wonderful thought that He, who had claim to all, renounced everything that He might receive it again at the hand of God in a new condition. The surrender was absolute, the reception anew a hundred-fold.

He made Himself of no reputation—He

emptied Himself of all outward place and glory—and humbled Himself to the death of the cross—self-abasement could not have gone further; but now God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name. The exaltation is proportionate, and more.

Such abnegation is lovely! It is natural to elbow our way upward, and hustle others out of our path, so that we may exalt ourselves at their expense. With our Master and Example it was just the opposite. His was the love that sought the good of others at all cost to Himself. "He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich."

"He glorified not himself." May we all, beloved, sit a little longer under His shadow, and catch His lowly spirit.

Fourth, in chapter vii. 26 we read: "*For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled; separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.*"

Leaving out what He has become, as higher than the heavens, we find in the first four qualities a galaxy of moral glories. He was *holy*, a word which here signifies the fulfilling properly of each relation. That was true of Him—and of Him alone!

Beloved reader, as you review your life and

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think of your varied relations, Godward and manward, can you say that you have fulfilled each correctly? Certainly not! You have failed in every department of life, and the more you have honestly striven to do your duty in it, the more you must own to failure. But He was "*holy*."

Further, He was "*harmless*." "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter." "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." "When he suffered, he threatened not." He never did an injury, He healed multitudes, He wounded none. He supplied the need of crowds, He impoverished no man. He spoke words of truth, strong and searching, but never falsely. He was the Truth, and made it known.

Naturally we are harmful and hurtful and noxious; we grow, like dank and poisonous weeds, infecting the very ground beneath us. He was "*harmless*."

Further, He was "*undefiled*." He passed uncontaminated through this defiling scene. He could touch a leper and remain perfectly clean. He could hear and see all the evil around, and yet be untainted—a fuller proof, if proof were needed, that in Him there was nought responsive to external evil. Keenly sensible and alive to it, and deeply pained, as we may see at the grave at Bethany, by the dire effects of sin, He was morally outside its influence.

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In the very midst of it, in grace, He was absolutely unaffected by it. He was undefiled.

And lastly, He was "*separate from sinners.*" Yet in His separation there was no element of Pharisaism, no rigid philosophic standing aloof. True, neither was there any approach to identification with them. Psalm i. was always true of Him, as the blessed Man; yet He was "the friend of publicans and sinners." The poor sinner, as such, ever found a friend in Him, who was separate from them. The man or woman who owned guilt and took a low and repentant place at His blessed feet, was never spurned thence, nor sent unpardoned away. "Thy sins are forgiven thee," said He in divine authority to a "woman of the city," who had thus drawn near Him. "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," to the penitent malefactor!

Now He is actually separate from sinners; then, though in our midst, He was separate from them morally. Such an High Priest became us!

Finally, turning on to chapter xii. 2, we read: "*Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.*"

Of the many faithful acts in His ever faithful life, the cross alone is adduced here as the brightest of all! There the fire burned the hottest, and there the test fell the heaviest.

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Endurance was strained to the utmost, and shame, reproach, and scorn combined together—yet He endured all the agony and despised the shame. He had a joy in prospect.

That “cloud of witnesses” that compasses us about presents many a fair and devoted example to the power and reality of the faith by which they lived and in which they died. One little parenthesis in the long chapter which records their testimony, places at once a glorious encomium upon them and a fearful condemnation on those of the other part ; it says, “*Of whom the world was not worthy.*”

No ; the world could stone them, could saw them asunder, could tempt, and slay them with the sword, could treat them shamefully—for so has *faith* ever been treated, whether in Old or New Testament times ; but, if faith should please and glorify God, as it surely does, what must be the condition of those who have none ; nay, who cruelly oppose it ? The lack of faith in God is the deadliest of all sins.

Yet, however admirable may be the witnesses who form that cloud, we are told to look from them to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith—who in lowly grace trod the same path from first to last, its brightest and most honoured Witness !

The cross was both His greatest trial and His most glorious triumph !

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There wicked man had his hour ; there Satan exerted all the power of darkness ; there sin was borne ; there judgment was exhausted—God’s judgment in its infinity—but there love, the love of Christ, prevailed over all. He endured the cross and despised the shame !

Ah, beloved, we are His debtors for salvation from an eternal hell, to all the endless joys of the Father’s present favour and everlasting home !

What a mighty spring wrought in that tender heart, and how rich the outflow ! “ He endured.” May our spirits, in this vain and foolish day, become more deeply interested in the enduring of Gethsemane, of the palace, of the Prætorium, and, most of all, of Calvary. Such an intimacy must lead to a fanning of love’s flame, and to an endearing to our hearts of our lowly, self-emptied Saviour.

And then, as if to crown all, the Spirit adds, in chapter xiii. 8, that Jesus Christ is “ *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*” “ *The same.*” The change of His circumstances to the right hand of the Majesty on high has by no means affected His heart. What He was, *morally*, He is to-day, and will be for ever ! The lowly One of Bethany is the exalted One of heaven ; but He is just the same now as then. What fulness and depth of meaning are to be found in that wondrous word, “ *the same.*” J. W. S.

LAST WORDS.*

“I HAVE three words to leave with you, an *inspiration*, a *fellowship*, a *sacrifice*. I knew one most powerful preacher, one who has been much used of God in the salvation of souls ; and whenever you heard that man preach you would often discover that just as he looked down at what you would think to be notes, he seemed to get some fresh inspiration, and if you were to go and look at those notes you would see just one word—Jesus.

“I want you, beloved gleaners, to get a fresh inspiration to-night from that loving One, Jesus. Look upon Him, that you may get a fresh inspiration for the year's service. And then a *fellowship*. I do not know if you have ever read the remarkable passage in the life of Henry Martyn, in which he gives an account of how he spent a night in agonising sorrow, which was the result of a thought coming to his mind of the value of a soul to God. He began to think of the various outcasts in India as being quite as dear to God as the kings of Britain ; and that night he spent in prayer, in tears, in sorrow over souls. Beloved gleaners, I pray God that this

* Bishop Hill's last words in London, ere going out to the Niger, where he laid down his life in the service of Christ.

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year you may know something of the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ in His sorrow for souls.

"And now that other word, *sacrifice*. A noble youth of Rome, who discovered the riches of God's grace in Christ, and became a follower of the Lord, went to Hermas with a desire. 'What,' said he, 'can I do in return for such love as this?' Hermas took out the noble young fellow and shewed him something of the sin of Rome, and as he pointed out here and there something of the need of its souls, he said, 'Here you will find an altar, and there become the sacrifice.' Look upon the fields white unto the harvest. Look upon the millions that are without Christ in the world to-night, in their awful sin, and you will find an altar; and may God help you, beloved gleaners, to be a sacrifice."



"ALL THINGS ARE OURS."

EVERY possible glory indeed is ours. The blessedness that is in God Himself, as far as it can be communicated, for we dwell in God and God in us. Relative blessedness, for we are children. Associated blessedness, in union with the blessed One, for we are the bride. Official nearness and glory, for we are kings and priests. Human blessedness,

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for we shall be perfect men, after the image of the second Adam. Corporate blessedness, for we shall have joy together. Individual, for we shall have a name given which no one knows but he that receives it; and we shall have the fulness of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, unhindered by these poor bodies; yea, clothed upon by a vessel suited to the power of the divine inhabitant, so as to be able in full largeness of heart to enjoy all this.

J. N. D.



THE DIVINE METAMORPHOSIS.

(2 COR. III. 18.)

WE hear the expressions continually, a transformed life or the transfigured life, and the word in the original language, given by the Spirit (μεταμορφούμεθα) gives us the English word metamorphosis, and is used, as in this chapter, of the Christian who beholds the Lord in glory without any intercepting veil, like Moses of old upon his blessed face; and is also used of the blessed Lord Himself when He reached His highest glory as a man on earth, and was transfigured on the holy mount. (See Matt. xvii. 2.) (μετεμορφώθη)

Before looking at this great reality itself, and how it comes about, I would remark that it is not said our life is transfigured or transformed, but that *we ourselves* are, no doubt the life of such will manifest this, the evidence and proof of the metamorphosis will be seen in the life; but it is of all importance to see that it is of the Christian himself it is said the transformation takes place—the Christian, who is God's workmanship, a *new creation, dead and risen* with Christ, and in whom God the Spirit dwells. It is blessed beyond all expression to know we are thus "in Christ," and to know we are actually

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united to Christ in glory ; a Christian is of Christ's generation and suitable to be united to Him, in that sense he is of His kindred, *fruit of His death*. (See John xii. 24.) As such he is fit to be united to Christ in heaven by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

The first great reality set before us here is the blessed Person on whom the Christian's eye is turned, the divine object here presented, the Lord in glory without any veil on His face ; here He is the contrast to Moses who had to put a veil on his face. The reason they were afraid to look at Moses was that the glory was there—*they could not look to the end* ; they did not know when they offered a sacrifice that it was typical of Christ.

How blessed to see the contrast in the face of Jesus Christ, every ray of glory shining there attracts and assures the heart. There is no veil on His blessed face, and there is no veil on the Christian's heart. The object then is the Lord *in glory*, He, who having made atonement, has gone up into heaven, and is *in the glory of God* ; on Him we gaze with joy, with affection, with intelligence, then as we gaze on Him *there*, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, by "the Lord the Spirit."

From glory to glory conveys to the heart the thought of *progress*. Thus, as we think

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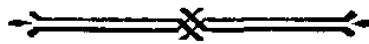
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of the divine metamorphosis, we have these blessed facts :

1. *The Object*—the Lord unveiled.
2. *The place where He is*—heaven and in glory.
3. *The power*, by and in whom the beholding is effected—the Holy Ghost—the Lord the Spirit.
4. *The effect produced*—a metamorphosis, a transformation, a transfiguration of the Christian who beholds.

How blessed, then, in the power of the Holy Ghost to fix the eye of faith simply and fully on Him where He is. Oh, that Himself in heaven may be more the one Object of the hearts of His own here below.

W. T. T.



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IN the faith of our souls we must hold fast the truth of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The importance of it is seen in the way God has guarded it in His word, and in the way in which Satan seeks to undermine it. Rob us of the truth of His blessed Person, and you have robbed us of all; for if He is not God, as well as man, divine as well as human, then, as a matter of course, we have no sacrifice to expiate our guilt, no blood to purge our conscience and bring us nigh to God. Reduce Him to a mere man, the best of men if you

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please, and you have no revelation of God, no shelter from His just judgment, since that which is of no more value than the blood of bulls and goats can never screen from His just judgment, even as it is infinitely inadequate to meet the claims of a righteous God against sin.

But, thank God, we are not left to the imaginings of our own minds on such a subject, so infinitely beyond us; but we have in God's word the fullest and clearest statements of who the blessed Person is, and ever was, whom we, through God's grace, can with adoring hearts call our Saviour.

We will for a few moments consider Him in His own eternal Being and divine glory; in His work as Creator, for it is attributed to Him; and in His humanity, and glorious work of redemption, and consequent ascended glory.

Every one who is at all acquainted with the scriptures must have been struck with the way in which the Gospel of John commences. John, by the Holy Ghost, presents to us the divine aspect of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore in his opening words at once presents to us the divine glory of His blessed Person: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.*" (John i. 1, 2.)

Who but the Spirit of God could have enabled a man to write such words as these? The very first clause taking us back into that silent eternity, before time and creation were, and there we see, in the eternity of His own glorious Being, the Son of God as the everlasting Word—the uncreated expresser of God.

In the second clause His distinct personality also: “*And the Word was with God.*”

In other scriptures we read: “I was set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was.” “When he prepared the heavens, I was there. . . . When he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.” (Prov. viii. 22–31.) “Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” (Micah v. 2.) After His incarnation, when here on earth, he said of Himself, “Before Abraham was, I am.” (John viii. 58.)

In the third clause of John i. 1 we have a statement which every child of God delights to meditate upon, and by which he refutes the horrible insult of thousands, who, because of His voluntary humiliation in becoming a man to accomplish the counsels of God, would rob Him of His divine glory. Let it stand out in golden letters before the soul—“AND THE WORD WAS GOD.”

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In the presence of the growing apostasy from the truths of Christianity, may God help us to hold them faster than ever, and “earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints.”

“*And the Word was God.*” God claims Deity for His blessed Son. “Unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom;” then speaking of what He was as a perfect man here below—perfect in all His ways—He says, “Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Heb. i. 8, 9.)

The Holy Ghost, too, in Philippians ii., speaking of His voluntary love in His path of self-surrender, commences with Him in the place which no creature could occupy, and traces Him until we see Him in the lowest depth of self-abasement—“even the death of the cross.” “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself”—mark that!—“of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

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Mark, it was not what He was *made*, but what He *became* in His voluntary love. He emptied Himself of His divine glory, without ceasing to be divine, which He had with the Father from all eternity, became a man, and took a servant's form, and submitted to the death of the cross, so that the claims of the divine glory, and our desperate need, might be met, and met for ever. And what heart but that filled with the poison and enmity of Satan would, because of His voluntary humiliation and sufferings, deny His divine glory? It was because He was divine He could thus stoop, and having accomplished the work the Father gave Him to do, He could ask back the glory that He had laid aside, and which He had shared with the Father from all eternity. (John xvii. 5.)

"The same was in the beginning with God." In that beginning, before anything was called into being that has a being, when the Godhead dwelt alone in its divine glory, when no creature existed, *He was with God*. In the bosom of the Father the eternal Son dwelt; in the joy, intimacy, and delight of the only begotten with the Father. He was God's eternal Son.

With unshod feet and adoring heart would one dwell upon a scene like this, infinitely beyond the creature's grasp, and which, but

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for divine revelation, would be entirely hidden from our view.

In the third verse of John i. we learn that creation was brought into being by Him. "*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*" Also Colossians i. 16: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things subsist." (Col. i. 16, 17.) In Hebrews i. 2, 3, we read that He is the Maker and Upholder of all things by the word of His power. He is invested with creatorial glory. "By him were all things created."

This glorious Being, the everlasting Word, the eternal Son of God, the Creator and Upholder of all things, became flesh, as we read: "And the Word was made [or became] flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten with the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John i. 17.) Beyond the fathomings of human thought is this blessed and glorious fact, yet that which simple faith receives as the revelation of God. "*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles,*

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believed on in the world, received up into glory."
(1 Tim. iii. 16.)

He came into this world, born into it of a woman, in fulfilment of that scripture, "This day have I begotten thee." (Ps. ii. 7.) "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i. 35.) His name was to be called "*Emmanuel*, which being interpreted is, *God with us*." (Matt. i. 23.) The prophet had said, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, Father of eternity, The Prince of Peace." (Isa. ix. 6.)

It was a wonderful moment when the Word became flesh, the eternal Son became the Son of man, born indeed in a stable and laid in a manger. As He lay there an infant, He was none the less the Mighty God, the Father of eternity. Great indeed is the mystery of it, and infinitely beyond our little minds to comprehend ; yet, blessed be God, a glorious fact that faith receives and delights in.

God is now revealed in the Person of the Son. In creation His power, goodness, and wisdom were displayed ; in providence His inscrutable ways, and in the law the principles of His moral government ; *but in Christ God Himself was revealed.* "No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the

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bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John i. 18.) Man by His scientific researches never found out God ; for the scripture saith, "Who by searching can find out God?" "But the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of Father, he hath declared him." Therefore Jesus could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" and, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John xiv. 6, 9.)

In the light of this, how solemn are the words : "*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father*": let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." (1 John ii. 23, 24.) Let a man live and die in his denial of the Deity of the Son of God, and he will find that he "*hath not the Father*": that he has nothing to do with him in that relationship, and that he will meet a God of judgment only. Tremendous discovery for those to make who have talked much about the universal Fatherhood of God, which is a denial of the family of God proper, while they themselves have never been born again, and therefore are not the children of God.

The cross : the very mention of which touches a chord in the Christian's heart, and fills it with

gratitude and praise! Displace that cross, and what have you but the dark and awful judgment of a righteous God? Give it its proper place, the great central place it has in the word of God, and all is changed. God is glorified about sin, the just demands of His holy law met, the imperishable ground of our justification and peace with God laid, and the righteous ground upon which the new creation will rest for ever. It was there that divine love provided what divine justice demanded; it was there the heart of God was told out in the infinite depths of its love for poor, sinful man; it was there the heart of man expressed its enmity to God; it was there the power of Satan was broken; it was there that Christ's love for His own was told out, and His perfect love and obedience to God His Father culminated in those infinite sufferings, which reached their climax when the holy Sufferer cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii. 4, 6.)

We shall never forget the cross, nor the sufferings of the One who died there, He and they will ever be before us. Eternal ages will not lessen the sense of His love to us in our souls, nor the feeling of our infinite indebtedness to Him. And as the mind of heaven is one, so our hearts will ever be one in singing of that new song, and in our ascriptions of praise to

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God and to the Lamb. (Rev. v.) Everlasting bliss will be ours, but we will never forget that it is the fruit of the bitter agonies of the cross, and but for those agonies and blood we should never be there.

It is our joy to know that the sufferings of the cross are over, and that the Sufferer is now the risen and exalted Victor. He has exchanged the cross and the crown of thorns for the throne of God and the diadem of heaven; and the mockings and insults of poor, sinful men for the adoration of the assembled hosts above. He sits as man upon the throne of God; but we must not forget that He, who sits as man upon the throne of God, is nevertheless "over all, God blessed for ever." (Rom. ix. 5.)

How the true Christian's heart loves to treasure up the precious truth of the Person of the Son of God, and to utterly refuse anything lower than the Deity and spotless humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ—God and Man in one Person. And we know that the Son of God has come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. "*This is the true God and eternal-life.*" (John v. 20.)

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten with the Father,) full

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of grace and truth." (John i. 14.) "*And of his fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace.*" (Ver. 16.)

"Thou art the everlasting Word,
The Father's only Son ;
God manifest, God seen and heard,
The heaven's beloved One.
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow."

E. A.

THE COUNSEL OF GOD AS TO
CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

WE live in the day of the carrying out of God's eternal purpose. That purpose is fully revealed. Through the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, dwelling in the saints, we have capacity to apprehend the revelation given. No saint should remain in ignorance. The calling according to His purpose widely surpasses both in magnificence of design and execution in power all His ways with His creatures, whether with angels or men. The purposed blessing is in relation to heaven and eternity, though the objects of it are first found in time on earth. The One in whom the purpose centres is Christ, and it was formed before the foundation of the world. All other ways of God in relation to man and the earth are in comparison but secondary. *The great mystery* is His masterpiece. (Eph. v. 32.) The

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glory connected therewith outshines and eclipses them all. None but the divine mind could ever have conceived such a purpose, and divine power alone can carry it out.

“O God ! the thought was Thine !
(Thine only it could be)
Fruit of the wisdom, love divine,
Peculiar unto Thee.”

Passing over His moral dealings with the first man, from the fall onwards for some four thousand years, we come to what scripture calls *the fulness of the time*, when God sent forth His Son. This was the great manifestation of His love. But the barrier of sin obstructed the fulfilment of the divine counsel. None but the Son could remove it. To this end, He must receive sin's wage ; the holy One must bear its judgment. Hence the cross, with all its agony and shame and death. The Son of God lifted up as man upon the tree, the unblemished Lamb, in giving Himself thus a sacrifice for sin, consumed in His own most holy Person the whole fire of the just judgment of God. His glory was vindicated, His righteousness maintained, His claims satisfied. The enemy's power was broken, death annulled, atonement wrought, and eternal redemption obtained. Made sin on the cross, Jesus was forsaken of God, and poured out His soul unto death, finishing once and for ever the work given Him to do. God's answer thereto was the glory.

Buried in the sepulchre, it was not possible that God's holy One should see corruption. (Acts ii. 31.) Claimed by the glory of the Father (Rom. vi. 4), He was raised and exalted by His mighty power "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 fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 21-23.)

All this must come to pass ere the counsel of God can be fulfilled. There could be no union of saints with Jesus in incarnation. "Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii. 24.) Christ, the true corn of wheat, went into death and the grave. Wondrous fruitfulness results. Raised and exalted, all headship is given to Him. He was not presented *as Head* on earth. God *gave Him* to be Head. The first man being set aside, and judicially dealt with at the cross, the second Man, the last Adam, exalted to glory, becomes the Head of a new order altogether. His headship has a double character. He is *Head over all things* and *Head to the church*.

Now it is an immense thing to get hold of this. The Head must be in glory ere the church

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could be formed. There were many saints in Old Testament times, but no union with a glorified Christ. There could not be until the Son had become man, glorified God as to sin through death, and entered into glory as Man. A body without a head would be a monstrosity. A head needs a body for complement. God set Christ in highest glory as Head, and then the church was formed, which is *His body*. The church proceeds from Christ, and the body is one with the Head. It is formed of sinners saved by grace, through the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost proceeded from Christ, and through His presence in them, first Jews (Acts ii.), and then Gentiles were united to Him in glory, and to one another on the earth. No union could be more intimate. The thinness of a gold leaf (to use a figure) between a head and a body would be death to both. No possible separation can exist between Christ and the church, the Head and the body. Christ annulled death ere He received headship. He lives on the other side of death, to die no more. He is Head as the living One in glory, where there is no death. The life of all in the church comes from Him. All His saints of this day of grace have life in Him, who has come forth from the grave, victorious over death. We have eternal life in the Son. (1 John v. 11.) And the Holy Ghost, shed forth by Christ from glory, dwells in

us ; thus we are united to Him, and the union is complete and eternal. We are indissolubly one. Moreover, "as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body ; so also is the Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.)

This wondrous union of Christ and the church is called "the mystery of the Christ." (Eph. iii. 4.) In other ages it was *not made known* to the sons of men. You might search the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi, and the thought of such a truth would not enter the mind. There was no such revelation. It was *hidden in God*. (Eph. iii. 9.) But God having been glorified in Christ's death, and Christ having entered the glory, the moment for the unfolding of His eternal counsels and purposes had come. He revealed the mystery to His holy apostles and prophets *by the Spirit*. The believing Gentiles become joint-heirs, and of the same joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel. (Eph. iii. 6.) And God is now making known *His manifold wisdom by the church* to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, and that *according to the eternal purpose* which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Eph. iii. 10, 11.)

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Now that we have the revelation of His purpose, and the teaching of the Spirit of truth, we can look back into Old Testament scripture, and learn how God, ere He made His purpose known, had already *shadowed it forth*. Coming events cast their shadows before. The most striking and complete is that of Adam and Eve. "The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept : and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof ; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh : she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife : and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. ii. 21-24.)

The woman was made or builded of a rib taken out of Adam when he slept. Brought to him, he said three things of her. Firstly, "This is NOW* bone of *my* bones, and flesh of *my* flesh." Secondly, "She shall be called woman, because she was *taken out of man*." Thirdly, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and

* Compare this word "*now*" with the same word repeated four times, in Romans xvi. 25, 26 ; Colossians i. 26 ; Ephesians iii. 5, and 10, 11. As Eve was bone of Adam's bone, after his deep sleep, so also is the church one with Christ after His death, as is *now* made manifest.

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shall cleave unto his wife : *and they shall be one flesh.*" And hence, Christ having gone into the deep sleep of death, we get the revelation of His counterpart in the church, the true Eve. The Spirit of God, through Paul, exhorting the saints in Ephesians v. in relation to the marriage tie, says, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hateth *his own flesh* ; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, *even as the Lord the church* : for *we are members of his body*, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and *they two shall be one flesh.*" (Eph. v. 28-31.)

What was true of Adam and Eve in the type, is true in the highest sense of the great antitype, Christ and the church. The church, brought to Christ after death, is composed of sinners saved by grace, and sealed with the Holy Ghost. They are *members of His body* ; the church *proceeds from Him* ; she is *one with Him*. "This is the great mystery," says the apostle, "I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Eph. v. 32.)

Now it is one thing to receive this marvellous revelation doctrinally in our intelligence, but it is quite another thing to enter into it experimentally in our souls, and to realise and to walk in the power of it. Even in the apostle's day, saints were in danger of not holding the Head,

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and consequently of letting slip this precious truth. (Col. ii. 18, 19.) For if we fail to hold the Head, we shall begin to lack nourishment ; and hence, instead of increasing with the increase of God, soon get weak and misty in our thoughts as to union with Him and each other, and all that is involved in it. If Christ does not get his rightful place in our souls, we are certain to fall into one or the other of the enemy's snares, and put some creature or thing between Him and ourselves. But when the thoughts of God concerning Christ as Head are held fast, we shall enter, at least in some measure (at best our thoughts are but very feeble), into the glorious portion and the privilege and responsibility of the church as *one with and inseparable from Him*. Christ and the church *are one*.

And mark the wide bearing of this great revelation in relation to men in general. After unfolding the gospel of God in the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle adds a postscript in which he just touches upon it, saying, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to *the revelation of the mystery*, which was kept secret since the world began, but *now* is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, *made known to all nations for the obedience of faith* ; to God, only wise, be

glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen." (Rom. xvi. 25-27.) Not only is there responsibility on man's part in relation to the gospel, but also to the mystery. It is made known *to all nations for the obedience of faith*, according to the commandment of the eternal God. How important therefore that all who have entered into it, should not limit their testimony to the gospel, but, according to our several ability, make known the revelation of the mystery.

Already united to Christ, one with Him in glory, His own possession, He only awaits in the long-suffering of God the fulfilment of His counsel in the call of His elect of this day of grace, to descend from the throne of God to claim His own. Shortly after He shall present the church to Himself, glorious, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. (Eph. v. 27.) The marriage of the Lamb shall be celebrated, all heaven rejoicing, and giving glory to Him; and then shall the now hidden One come forth from the opened heaven in manifest glory, surrounded with all His own. Reigning over the earth, He will display His bride for a thousand years before a wondering universe, and giving up the kingdom to the Father at the close, God shall be all in all, and the church His tabernacle evermore.

E. H. C.



WHAT THE CHURCH IS TO CHRIST.

(MAL. XIII. 45, 46.)

WE are perhaps more frequently occupied with the truth of what Christ is to the church, His Headship of it, and nothing can be more important, would that we all were more in the truth and in the faith of the blessed fact that "He is *the* head of *the* body, the assembly," and of His fulness and sufficiency as such, the glory of the Head as set forth in the Epistle to the Colossians ; but the other side of the truth is equally as important, what the assembly is to Him, the glorified Man, that it is "His body, the fulness of him which filleth all in all," as another has said, it is proportioned morally to Himself and the only vessel that will adequately display Him. I think Colossians gives us the one side, and Ephesians the other. What it is to Him morally is brought before us in Matt. xiii., in His eye it is a "pearl of great price ;" He is there occupied with its uniqueness, its beauty, its perfectness, and in order that He may acquire it, He is prepared to part with everything that belonged to Him as Man, all His rights according to the flesh, and even life itself, and does so. We see here His perfect and absolute self-surrender on behalf of that which is so precious in His sight, the church looked at according to what it is in the counsels and purposes of God. It has been said, and

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I doubt not truly, that "the church has no past sinful history," the individuals of which it is composed, Jews and Gentiles, most surely have, but the church, as such, none ; it never was anything else than what it is, "*a pearl of great price.*" Nevertheless, whatever may be its beauty, it is from Him that it is derived, it is but what His love has made it, according as it is written, "Christ loved the assembly, delivering himself up for it, in order that he might sanctify it, purifying it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present the assembly to himself glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any such things, but that it might be holy and blameless."

There are three lovely types of the assembly, in respect of what it is to Christ, in the book of Genesis. The first is in chapter ii., in verse 18 of which we read that "the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone ; I will make him an help *meet* for him." We then find (vers. 19, 20) all the inferior creation subjected to him, and he gives names to them all ; and then again we have the thought of the help *meet* for him introduced, "but for Adam there was not found a help *meet* for him," shewing the great thing that was in the mind of God for him. "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept ; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof ;

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and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." Here we have a type of the Lord Jesus Christ in the deep sleep of death, reminding us of Ephesians ii., and of the power of God in quickening us with Christ, so that we derive our being from Christ, as Eve did from Adam. That deep sleep is the source whence the assembly derives her existence, and there is no type in the scriptures which furnishes us with so fine and true an idea of union, of the real nature of the church's relationship to Christ as this; as Adam said of Eve, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken *out of Man*." Here union is not in the sense of being added to but of deriving from. The church is thus, as the antitype of Eve, the help meet provided of God for the last Adam, His companion and *solace* in what otherwise would have been His loneliness ("it is not good that the man should be alone") as Head over all things. It is what *she is to Him*.

The second type is in chapter xxiv.—Rebekah and Isaac, and Isaac after he had in figure been received from among the dead, and looked at as the heir of all the father's things. The first thing to notice here is the qualification for union. There must be affinity; as we have been so frequently reminded of late, the only thing

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that the servant was made to swear to was, that he would not take a bride for the Son "of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my country, and to *my kindred*, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." No doubt this chapter sets forth the soul's history, as being conducted by the Spirit into the conscious knowledge of union with Christ, and as this was not reached in the type until Rebekah was brought to Isaac in the place where he was, so in the history of the soul this point is not reached until it is in spirit conducted to Christ in the place where He is, the heavenlies; but first of all it has to learn that it is akin to Him, that there is affinity, and so fitness for union, as we have it in Hebrews ii. 11: "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." In verse 67 we read, "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac *was comforted after his mother's death*." Sarah, as the mother of Israel, is a figure of Israel after the flesh; and as Rebekah was Isaac's comfort after his mother's death, in this respect she is a type of the church, *Christ's comfort* during the time that He has lost Israel. It is what the church is to Christ.

Genesis xli. gives us the third type of the

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church which we have in that book. It is the day of His rejection by His brethren, as Joseph sold into Egypt reminds us. Christ, as the rejected but risen and exalted One, is brought before us here; only in the throne is God greater than He. "And Pharaoh gave to Joseph to wife Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On." The names which Joseph gave to his children which he had by her, tell us of what she was to him in that day. Manasseh, *forgetting*: "For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house;" and Ephraim, *fruitful*: "For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." She was his compensation in that day, and such the church to Christ, *His compensation* in this the day of His rejection by Israel; He can afford to *forget* (Manasseh) all His toil, all His sorrow, all His humiliation, yea, for the moment, His Father's house, Israel, "of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came," though He be "over all, God blessed for ever;" for the assembly is *His compensation*, blessed and immediate *fruit* (Ephraim) of accomplished redemption. We do not get in Asenath what we get in Eve, the true idea of *union*, nor what is given us in Rebekah, *affinity*, she is simply the *Gentile* bride of the rejected man, exalted to the right hand of power, and as such is a figure of what the church is, characteristically Gentile,

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though composed of both Jew and Gentile, "to create in himself of twain *one new man*," still she is characteristically *Gentile*.

Thus we have in Eve a type of the church in what she is to Christ—*His companion and solace* in what otherwise would have been His loneliness ; in Rebekah—*His comfort* in the days when He has lost Israel ; and in Asenath, the Gentile—*His compensation* in the day of His rejection by His brethren after the flesh. While in Adam, awakened out of his deep sleep, we have a type of Christ as last Adam, exalted to be the Head of all creation, which place He took in resurrection, though surely that in counsel and purpose from all eternity ; in Isaac, after He had passed through death, and had in figure been received from thence—the Heir to whom the Father hath given all that he hath ; and in Joseph, delivered out of the dungeon and exalted to the right hand of power—Christ in His present position at the right hand of God.

May God give us a better understanding of these things, and may we be more in the faith of them and the consciousness of them, for if we are, wonderful will be the effect that they will have upon us.

T. H.



HE HIMSELF.

MAY He Himself be more personally with and before us! A *nearer* and *more* real object than ever! Truth that gives *thoughts* is not fully the right thing; but truth that gives *Himself*—that is the thing.

Jesus once here—now in the heavens—again to be here and with us for ever—the *same* Jesus known throughout—known for eternity, as He was known in His track through the cities and villages of Israel—this is the mystery that gives us Himself. And it is the business of *faith* to reach *Himself*.

The centurion pierced the cloud, the thick cloud of His humiliation, and got at the *divine glories* which lay the other side of it or under it.

The poor sinner of the city pierced the cloud, the dark cloud of her own sin and misery, and got at the *divine love* that could heal it all. Faith may thus find various excellencies in Him, but it is Himself it reaches. . . .

Had I even Simeon's righteousness, piety, revelations, and every gift he possessed, I would with him (Luke ii. 25-32) willingly forget and forsake them, living or dying, in order to exchange them for the Child Jesus—Israel's only consolation.

J. G. B.



PEACE—POWER—PLENTY.

(PHIL. IV. 7, 9, 12, 13.)

WHAT an immense comfort it is to know that the word of God leads our souls on the one hand up to the most exalted thoughts of the revelation of God, on the other hand down to the commonest things a child of God has to pass through. We have a striking instance of it here ; the close of chapter iii. sets before us most blessedly how that our body of humiliation shall be fashioned like unto the body of His glory then in the beginning of chapter iv. we see how the same grace can come down to the details of the pathway of two women, who were not walking evenly together ! How blessed to see that there is no *forgetfulness* in grace of even the smallest thing, "Pray that your flight be not in the *winter*," shews us that the thought of the *weather* was present to His gracious mind. The word then is, "Rejoice in the Lord," and the fitting person to express this is a poor prisoner in Nero's dungeon. This shews how entirely it is *outside* and *beyond* all around us here. Again observe it is "*alway*" as well as "in the Lord," or perhaps it would be more true to say it is *alway because it is in the Lord*. Clearly then his song is "Rejoice in the Lord *alway*,"

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and it furnishes us with a blessed illustration of 2 Chronicles xxix. 27, "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began."

"Let your moderation be known unto all men." This will be the *proof* to all, that our *conversation* is in the heavens ; if we are seen to stick up for ourselves, it is the very opposite of *yieldingness* : this, along with *subduedness* and *unresistingness* is our true pathway through present scenes. This brings us to the "Peace of God which passeth every understanding." What a blessed resource is this peace of God, and what a wonderful exchange for our cares ! these it is our privilege to make known to Him, bringing all to Him and *leaving all with Him*. Alas ! many try to keep the peace of God instead of its keeping them. Oh, that such of my readers may prove what a blessed sanctuary and retreat His peace brings us into.

But not only have we *peace* here, but also *power* ; this flows from the occupation of the heart with *good* ; what a mercy it is in a world of evil, that the heart may be free to find its delight and pleasure in what is good ; we are not only living in a world of evil, but we have it in our own hearts, and must judge it where it is tolerated, yet to be ever occupied with it is a fruitful source of weakness. Even when we judge it, it defiles, it is soiling to the mind even as such. The real power is in taking delight in

those things in which God delights, to be living now as with God in heaven, doing those things that please Him, and also being in that condition of mind in which He takes delight.

Here, then, is the true pathway of power, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things and the God of peace shall be with you." May our hearts more and more know what it is to go in the blessed company of "the God of peace" through a restless scene.

But then further, we have also here *plenty* as well as *peace* and *power*, and so the apostle says he had learned it, learned to find in Christ both *competency* and *fulness* ; it was a real state for Paul ; it is not here, as we say, *an abstract proposition* : if *full*, he was preserved from all self-satisfaction and self-elation ; if *hungry*, he was preserved from despondency and *dissatisfaction* ; for him Christ was all embraced all in Himself. May we know and enjoy more fully this blessed *peace, power and plenty*.

W. T. T.



[THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

THERE are certain grand truths which in themselves put to the test the walk of believers ; and one of these is the unity of the Spirit.

I shall attempt to explain what I mean in this case. In speaking of the unity of the Spirit, it is not meant merely that there is one Spirit, but it implies the present action and power of the Holy Ghost, so that, by Him, the truths of the one body may be recognised.

The Holy Spirit cannot have two or more different views about any single thing ; and if all Christians were truly subject to Christ, and endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, they would all be of one mind.

We may take as an example the multitude of believers in Acts iv. 32, where it is said they were one heart and one soul.* Five thousand Jews with only one heart, what a miracle ! Generally with five thousand Jews we should have five thousand ways of thinking ; it would be much the same with five thousand Gentiles.

And alas ! how soon this was interrupted ; failure in keeping the unity of the Spirit came

* Notice that it is not merely "of one heart and one soul." There is no "of," and the expression is very energetic.

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in at an early moment in the church's history, and if one were to ask, in the present day, where such a thing may be seen, I believe that many would say not only that it has no existence, but that it is impossible to endeavour to keep this unity in our day.

And I think such sentiments often proceed from not understanding what the expression means. We are living in days of "unions," that is, when men are trying to unite themselves in different ways and for divers objects. And I suppose that many may think that endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit is some futile attempt at a church union, some society where people agree to differ on what they call minor points, saying that they are agreed as to salvation, and that is enough.

It is not an attempt of this kind. We may notice that what men call minor points are very often of the greatest importance. It would be a selfish thing to talk of being saved as an essential truth, and to treat the glory and worth of the Saviour as though it were of little importance ; yet this is what we are come to. Now, that which is most precious to Christ is His assembly, and to be allowed to enter into His thoughts about it is a very great privilege.

We are called upon to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, and we find at once lowliness as before God (for we shall feel

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more and more the depth of the grace that has given us such immense blessing), and then meekness and long-suffering to others. The fact is, when there is true lowliness in God's presence, and such a place truly kept, there will be meekness towards and bearing with others.

I have invariably found that those who are not severe for themselves are inclined to be hard upon others, and to lack in the virtue of long-suffering. While we are still here upon earth we are called upon to exercise this grace, and in order to accomplish this there must be the "lowliness" of which Ephesians iv. 2 speaks, and that in God's presence.

It is not merely natural modesty; a man of merit, though unconverted, will very often be free of boasting and noisy self-approbation. It is far more than this, for here there is a state of soul which nothing but true godliness can procure; the true preparation for long-suffering towards others, and bearing with one another in love, is to be truly small in God's presence.

I recollect some one saying that "he felt like a little insect" in the presence of several more advanced than himself; and the answer being made to him: "Would that you always had similar sentiments!" It must be a habit of soul before God.

Then comes the bearing with one another in

love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.

Much has been said as to the possibility or impossibility of endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the present day. A true-hearted Christian cannot be blind to the state of the church upon earth—the ruin, the dispersion of the members of the one body, will be keenly felt. Again, there can be no pretension to *be* the “one body” to the exclusion of other believers; but with all this, I believe it to be possible, on the ground of this blessed truth, to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The question, eminently suggestive to each reader will be as to how far he responds to the exhortation to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called, in all true lowliness. If this be answered aright, that is, if there be true humility and long-suffering, he will be in a fit state to understand what keeping the unity implies; and of this (D. V.) we may speak again, not to prolong too far at one time our research.

E. L. B.



THE LORD'S SUPPER.

(MATT. XXVI. 26-28 ; MARK XIV. 22-24 ; LUKE XXII. 19, 20 ;
I COR. XI. 23-25.)

HAVING found much profit from a comparison of the historical accounts of the supper of the Lord with the special revelation as to it given by the Lord Himself, from the glory in which He now is, to Paul on behalf of the assembly, I desire to draw the attention of saints to the subject, and to quote the passages in full which relate to it, in order that they may have them together immediately under their eye for meditation. For the sake of greater clearness and exactness the quotations are given from the New Translation by J. N. D. As Matthew and Mark are, with one special exception, substantially the same, and as Luke approximates pretty closely to Paul (Luke in general confirms Paul, and was much in his company), the quotations are given in that order. I think that one result of the study of the subject will be that the great point in the supper in connection with the assembly will be distinctly brought before us, and may the Lord grant that it may lead to a deeper and fuller appreciation of it.

Matthew xxvi. 26-28 : *"And as they were eating, Jesus, having taken [the] bread and blessed, broke [it] and gave [it] to the disciples, and said, Take, eat : this is my body. And having taken*

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[the] cup, and having given thanks, he gave [it] to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood, that of the [new] covenant, that shed for many for remission of sins."

Mark xiv. 22-24: "*And as they were eating, Jesus, having taken bread, when he had blessed, broke [it], and gave [it] to them, and said, Take [this]: this is my body. And having taken [the] cup, when he had given thanks, he gave [it] to them, and they all drank out of it. And he said to them, This is my blood, that of the [new] covenant, that shed for many."*

Matthew is the only one of those who were present at the supper who gives us an account of it, and there is nothing in his narrative, nor in that of Mark's, which would give us any intimation that it was the Lord's mind to have it perpetuated, nor to warrant the assembly celebrating it, as the words, "this do in remembrance of me," do not occur in either gospels; hence the importance of the revelation given to Paul.

What is peculiar to Matthew is the expression, "for remission of sins." But we may well inquire, why do we get it here? We must bear in mind that the first celebration of the supper was not in *remembrance* of Christ: we do not call to mind one who is present with us, but one who is absent from us, and He at the moment was before their eyes, in their company, yea, their companion. He was the centre of the little

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circle ; He had formed it around Himself, but it was going to be broken up and they scattered. He could not continue with them ; death was coming in, must come in, for the purposes of redemption and the accomplishment of divine counsels, and death breaks all links here. How often had He told them that He was going to be put to death, and would rise again the third day, but how little if at all they had grasped the stupendous fact. But now He brings His death before them in a most vivid way, and compels them, I might almost say, to enter into and appropriate it. He commands them, saying, "Take, eat ; this is my body," as He hands them the bread which was the symbol of it, and again as He puts the cup into their hands, "Drink ye all of it." Solemn moment indeed it was for them ; they were about to lose Him, and the Lord, as it were, thus forces the realisation of it upon them. And if they were to know and enjoy remission of sins, one of the blessings connected with the new covenant about to be made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, how was it possible apart from bloodshedding ? for "without shedding of blood is no remission," and hence the words, "This is my blood, *that of the new covenant*, that shed for many *for the remission of sins*." Note how much more peremptory the Lord is in Matthew than in Mark. In the latter we have not the word "eat," it is simply

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'Take, this is my body,' and again, instead of the command, "Drink ye all of it," we have "and they all drank of it;" merely a statement of a fact, confirming the view taken of it in Matthew's Gospel.

As to the question of remission of sins, it is a purely individual one. The disciples at the table were there as individuals, so many units, and too, were the Jewish remnant of that day, as distinguished from the nation at large about to crucify Him. Now it is not so at the celebration of the supper on the part of the assembly, those who compose it celebrate it *as the assembly*, their individuality being merged; it is not as individuals we remember the Lord, but as in a corporate relationship with Him, His body, as akin to Him, deriving our being from Him, as it were, existing only as *a new creation* by the surpassing greatness of God's power, and as such have no past sinful history like the nation of Israel, and each one of us individually, and hence the reference to sins at the supper is out of place on the part of the assembly; nor is it in keeping with its out of the world condition, and position as in the Holiest. Would that when we were thus convened we could stand more outside ourselves and our individual history and circumstances in the realisation of what the church is to Christ, and not come down to the level of the disciples

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before the accomplishment of the work of redemption, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. The church does not know Christ *after the flesh*, she lives in association with Him as quickened with Him out of death, and in death He had done with that order, "Therefore if any man be in Christ there is new creation."

I turn now to compare Luke with Paul.

Luke xxii. 19, 20 : "*And having taken a loaf, when he had given thanks, he broke [it], and gave [it] to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you ; this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after having supped, saying, This cup [is] the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.*"

I Corinthians xi. 23-25 : "*For I received from the Lord, that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was delivered up, took bread, and having given thanks broke [it], and said, This is my body, which [is] for you : this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after having supped, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood ; this do, as often as ye shall drink [it], in remembrance of me.*"

In Luke's account we have for the first time the words, "this do in remembrance of me," but only occurring once, intimating nevertheless that the celebration of the supper was to be continued in His remembrance ; but still

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there is nothing actually to shew that it was to go beyond those who were present, the apostles.

Luke is very special and personal, as the addition of the words imply, "which is given *for you*" after "this is my body," and likewise the words "which is poured out *for you*" in connection with the cup, in contrast with "*for many*," as in Matthew and Mark. It would seem as if the Lord were allowing His affections free play towards them, He is indulging them, is demonstrative, beautifully in keeping with the aspect under which He is presented to us in this Gospel, Son of man and grace displaying itself in Him, and in keeping too with the words, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." He would thus testify to them of His love for them personally, and would have it continually before them. What must it have been to Him to set this proof of it before their eyes, so soon to be verified, and thus to gratify His affection for them! How little do we think of what the supper is to Him! It was a true solace to Him at the moment, soon to be confronted with Satan, who had the power of death, and who would seek to use that power to deter Him from pursuing His path of obedience, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me, but that the world may know that I love the Father,

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and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do."

We come now to the revelation as to the supper which Paul received from the Lord on behalf of the assembly, and which is the assembly's warrant for celebrating it. The first thing to note is the repetition of the words at the giving of the cup, "This do in remembrance of me," with the additional words on the second occasion "as often as ye shall drink it." Luke has the expression only once. This evidently marks the great point in the supper, that it is in remembrance of Christ, and in remembrance of Him *as dead*. Not in remembrance of His sufferings, for while He suffered He was yet alive; nor in remembrance of His death, but in remembrance *of Himself*, though as dead, His sufferings over, and His life after the flesh ended. Mark the omission of the words, "Take, eat," as in Matthew, and of the word "given," as in Luke in connection with the bread; also of the words, "which is poured out for you," as in Luke, Paul simply saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," introducing the elements in as brief a way as possible, while on the other hand repeating the expression "this do in remembrance of me," with an addition on the second occasion; all marking, as it seems to me, the great point in the supper.

How strikingly is His death brought before us,

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the loaf in a broken condition when it is received to be partaken of, Christ as slain ; and the wine in the cup, His blood poured out, " His life was taken from the earth." It is *a dead Christ*, not a suffering Christ, we remember, and remember not as individuals, but as the assembly, and as thus in the closest and most intimate relationship with Him as risen and in glory. It is the response of affection on the part of the assembly which is His body, His bride, to His love as testified of by the fact that He went into death for her in order that He might acquire her, that she might have her being. She owes her existence to His death, even as Eve owed her existence to the deep sleep which fell upon Adam, the first and finest type of Christ and the church. If this is seen, and the consequent fact that the church as such has no past sinful history, was never anything else but what it is in His estimate, " a, *one*, pearl of great price," looked at in its unity and beauty and preciousness, it will not be difficult to see how all allusion to sins, which is a purely individual question, is out of place in connection with the assembly's remembrance of Christ in the supper. No allusion to the question is to be found in the revelation given to Paul ; it is simply, " This cup is the new covenant in my blood," the principle on which blessing has come in, from God to man, on the ground of what Christ is and has done, not

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merely for the satisfying but for the glorifying of His righteousness, yea, all that He is in contrast with the old covenant, on the principle of which, namely, what man is for God, no blessing could be obtained.

The supper is simply the testimony of love on the part of Christ for the assembly, presenting as it does the great proof and display of it, and what is wanted on our part for the worthy partaking of it is affection for Christ, in response to the love wherewith He hath loved us. That His love is true and unchanging is to be found in the fact that He desires our remembrance of Himself and values it. It is the love of an established relationship.

May the Lord give us a fuller entrance into His thoughts and object in the supper, and what it is to Him as well as what it is for us, that there may be a more ardent desire for it on our part.

I would just desire to call attention to the fact that verse 26 of 1 Corinthians xi., "For as often as ye shall eat this bread and drink this cup, ye announce the death of the Lord, until he come" forms no part of the revelation given to the apostle, but is his own addition to it, called for by the state of things at Corinth, and as a corrective to it. One who was really entering into the import of the supper and partaking in a worthy manner, would not need to be

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reminded of the fact that in partaking of it he was, while it was not exactly his object, "announcing the Lord's death," though the word has its further importance in shewing that the celebration of it was in view of His coming, and to continue till then. T. H.



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"I have seen God face to face." (Gen. xxxij. 30.)

WHAT a moment in one's life when it could be said by any of us, "I have seen God face to face"! Let us see how this came about with Jacob. An interval of considerable time had elapsed since he had said, "this is the gate of heaven," of the place where he is seen as a poor, weary wanderer at sundown with only the stones of the earth for his pillow. His *circumstances* have changed considerably since then. Now he is full, now he is rich, he has a stake in the world. While in Laban's country he has grown and increased, "oxen and asses, flocks and men servants and women servants," declare his wealth and possessions, but his faith is poor and his heart oppressed, "greatly afraid and distressed" tells the sad tale of him who dreads Esau's host, and how like us oftentimes when we look at him, *fearing* and *praying* and *calculating* and *settling* all with human skill and to the best of man's device.

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It is well for us to remember that there is such a thing as an exercise of spirit, which is the product of *pure unbelief*; under its influence we are awake in nature's dread, and *we pray in unbelief and want of confidence*. Oh how often is it with us like the disciples in the storm, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?"

Now this state brings us under discipline, our God and Father is at issue with this, yet so wonderful is His grace that He makes that which calls forth the discipline the occasion of our blessing; such is His grace that all is laid under tribute, as it were, for *His own glory* and His children's blessing.

But to return to the history before us, so full of profit and instruction to the soul. It is well to observe that in poor Jacob's mind and thoughts it was quite otherwise to seeing God face to face. He was full of the dread and horror of meeting Esau; this, and this alone, engrossed his mind, hence it is he has recourse afresh to the *means of unbelief*. Wives and children are sent on before, and present upon present prepared for Esau: "I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face: peradventure he will accept of me." This is Jacob's plan and hope. Alas! how vain, his strength was not there; neither human wisdom, nor carnal stratagem, nor skill of craft, can supply this. God Himself now draws nigh

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to deal with Jacob, He delivers him from Esau's hands, but, blessed be His name, He takes him in His own blessed hands, as He wrestles with him. Oh what a sight! a poor weak worm grasped by almighty power under the mystic form of a man; here is Jacob, in the crisis of his life, singly and alone, face to face with the Invisible, Himself!

Again, observe how blessedly God sustains his faith in the wrestling; it was needful, nay, it was indispensable that Jacob should be withered, pulverised, crushed; how blessed to see that all this is accomplished, yet Jacob is *sustained—withered, yet sustained!*

Oh that our hearts may rightly take in the precious wisdom and grace unfolded to us here!

Further, observe how he is victorious—he is made to feel his weakness *for life*; God touches him in the hollow of his thigh, the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with Him; this closes the scene of wrestling, as soon as the limb commences to shrink it is over. Yes; but victory is his with God who wrestles with him. Jacob is, as a crippled, withered man, a prince with God, and prevails with God and with men.

Let us note well here *the nature of the blessing*—in figure and type all is *new*; we have here a *new day*, a *new name*, and a *new kind of conqueror—a halting victor.*

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Oh that our hearts may be made sensible of the glory of all this—all, as it were, new and all of God. It may be, some who read this page have proved it, how their God and Father has brought to an end *practically* the strong nerve and muscle which has been their stay and resource—how He has said to us, as He wrestled with us: “My child, all this must come to an end.” No more self-dependence, no more self-confidence, no more human skill and craft, and carnal, worldly wisdom; but simple, guileless, childlike weakness, that casts itself wholly on and waits only on Me.

Lastly, observe how that here it is *victory* but not *communion*—there is no revelation of His name, it is a secret and hidden; it is a blessed scene here in the grace witnessed, but how unlike the calm and peaceful and restful communion of Abraham with Jehovah, *interceding* for others instead of wrestling for himself.

May we know what it is to be halting victors, but also having the joy of communion with Himself.

“Lame as I am, I take the prey;
 Hell, earth, and sin with ease o’ercome;
 I leap for joy, pursue my way,
 And, as a bounding hart, fly home—
 Through all eternity to prove
 Thy nature and Thy name is Love.”

W. T. T.

“TRY THE SPIRITS.”

(1 JOHN IV. 1-3.)

IN the last days seducing spirits (not so much opposing ones) form the active army of Satan (1 Tim. iv. 1 : 2 Tim. iii. 13), and much sorrow and departure from the simplicity of the faith is the result. This would be avoided were believers more alive to God's provision for His saints to meet these spirits.

That which is unmistakeably of “darkness” (see chap. i.) a believer has nothing whatever to do with. The case is simple, for a believer is light, and “of the light,” and he has to abide in it. “He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.” The exhortation, “Try the spirits,” does not apply the moment I see that the spirit acting causes “darkness.” My only safety and wisdom then is to have nothing to do with it. On the other hand, all that is of the teaching of the apostles—“He that is of God heareth us”—I can unhesitatingly accept as of the light.

But there are cases of greater difficulty, in which it is not so easy at once to discern, and to such cases the exhortation we have here, “Try the spirits,” applies. The exhortation here is connected with prophecy, that is, what has to be tested claims to be so good, and to be so advan-

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tageous to the soul as to be a real message from God. "Try the spirits whether they be of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world." The evil spirit is not now opposing but seducing, that is, leading into by-paths. He comes now clothed in a religious garb, for he knows that without it he would gain no ear at all. He is none the less evil of course, but he wields thereby a great increase of power to deceive. Ample provision is given to us all to meet him. The believer in Christ is the possessor of the Holy Spirit (chap. iii. 24), and he is thereby fully empowered to "try the spirits."

It is well to be clear as to this. It is no mystical assumption of power in myself (which is after all only "*me*" in a more subtle form). We are speaking here of the Spirit of God, and a man may be possessor of the best tools and yet be very unskilful in the use of them, or even never use them at all, in the sense given us here. No aptitude as a learned and skilful theologian is necessary in order that the child of God may not be seduced by the enemy. Those who are such, relying on their supposed ability, may be the first to be deceived. "But ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know all things" is enough. God Himself dwells in us by His Spirit, and it is by Him we must *try the spirits* (of which I will speak more presently), but I think that many a slip in our "divine"

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history may be traced to a neglect of this exhortation!

The spirit at work at any given time must be tested by finding out *what is his testimony regarding Christ*. If the *Holy Spirit* is working, that testimony will be clear, and give no uncertain sound. "Every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in flesh is not of God." What this confession is, and what it means, demands I think some little examination.

The perfect work of Christ for the believer, and the exaltation of Christ as Man to the right hand of God—there to wait God's time for the full display in glory of all His purposes concerning Him—these form the basis on which the Holy Ghost is down here, and dwells in believers on earth. (Eph. i. 13.) Now I have the conviction that the Holy Spirit, since He is God, is always true to God's thoughts and purposes respecting the Son. ("He shall glorify me.") Hence if tested by this divine standard, there will always be found a response from the Holy Spirit in keeping with these truths respecting the Son. This we have to look for and expect. The subject of the Holy Spirit, in His communications to the believer, is Christ and only Christ. The *object* of the Holy Spirit, looking up from the saints in whom He dwells, is Christ still—Christ in glory—eternal Object of the Father's delight. Thus all revolves around His one blessed Person, work,

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and present place in glory. Now the test is, what has the Spirit in question to say to these things? It is the moral (internal) character of what is presented that we seek to discover. No mere lip confession that "Jesus Christ is come in flesh" is the proof of the Spirit of God. It is what is involved in this great fact that we have to consider. I have to "walk as he walked" (chap. ii. 6), and Jesus, the humbled, rejected Man, He who once, *as rejected*, walked here, was during all that time in fullest perfection under the eye of God in all His ways. He is now Lord and Christ. He is exalted to the highest place of glory and eminence in heaven, and all God's delight and purposes still have their centre in Him. (Acts ii. 36.) The Holy Spirit is down here to maintain in our souls the knowledge of all these things—to unfold them more and more to us, and to form us by them. Again I would ask, Does this spirit thus confess Jesus Christ come in flesh? If not, I am directed to reject it, it is another spirit, that is, one "*not of God.*" What then is it? "This is that spirit of Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world."

Since the devil therefore now is religious (he professes to be an angel of light), all that is religious must be tested. That which has no thought of God in it at all, no Jesus, and NO

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CHRIST, is clearly of darkness and cannot minister to the soul. But Satan is religious, that is, he and all his host are acting now on the lines of the "seducer." Perhaps we do not reflect upon this as much as we should. A spirit, working *persistently* but *ceaselessly* behind the scenes, either for good or for evil, is moving ALL the machinery of this life, and through it the believer has to thread his way, a way illumined by the light of the word and the counsel of the Spirit of God. "That wicked one toucheth him not" is the result. He is thus equipped to meet the subtleties of the foe. We do not wrestle with flesh and blood. The vessel used *may be* flesh and blood, it matters little about that. But the Spirit working (invisibly to human eye) is the important matter, for it seeks to prompt me to *action*, and to act as led of an *evil* spirit, is no little matter for a Christian. May we all be more conversant, then, with the words, "Try the spirits, whether they be of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world." All that is in harmony with and confesses Jesus Christ come "in flesh" is of God, and all else is of another, and is ANTICHRIST.

I notice that a sister, living alone, is responsible in this matter, and uses this test for strangers in John ii., *and refuses them* as led of God to discover the seducing spirit. I notice also that Gaius in 3 John "receives strangers," as

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led of God to discern the Spirit of God in those who came to him. Again, let me repeat the word to my reader and to myself—what assumes to be religious both in doctrine and practice *must* be tested by us if we would be preserved from the wiles of Satan in these days, and thus alone shall we practically be adding our “AMEN” to John’s three epistles.

H. C. A.



“BEHOLD THE MAN!”

(Luke ii. 11, 12 ; John xix. 5 ; Acts vii. 56 ; Rev. v. 6.)

THE city slept beneath a silent sky ;
Night was upon the land, and very nigh
To Bethlehem, some shepherds watchfully
Guarded their flocks.

When, lo, an angel came upon the night,
The angel of the Lord, and glory bright
Shone round about, and they, with dazzled sight,
Were sore afraid.

“Fear not,” the angel said, “to you I bring
Glad tidings of great joy, for Christ, the King,
Is this day born, a babe, in Bethlehem.”
“Glory to God !”

Fill’d with these tidings, brought from heaven to earth,
In haste the shepherds sought the place of birth,
And there beheld the Child of wondrous worth,
“Emmanuel.”

* * * * *

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It was the morning of the Passover,
 Those in Jerusalem were all astir
 In preparation, while stood 'midst them there
 The Lamb of God.

And came He forth, wearing the crown of thorn,
 With which in mock'ry they had sought t' adorn
 The King of kings. Then rose a voice of scorn—
 "Behold the man!"

They that could say, "Hosanna to the king,"
 Could only cry, "Away, away with Him!"
 When, in His lowly grace, He stoop'd to bring
 "Good will to man."

For, with their blinded eyes, they did not see
 The veil'd Shekinah; but, rejecting, they
 Award to Him a cross and Calvary.
 "Crucify him!"

* * * * *

The great among the people gathered were
 In solemn council, and before them, there,
 Stephen was standing, ready to declare
 The ways of God.

And as they gazed, stedfastly, on his face,
 They saw it shine as with an angel's grace,
 As, full of power, he looked beyond that place,
 Up into heaven.

Seeing the glory of the mighty God,
 And of the Son, who on His right hand stood,
 Willing e'en then to make His purpose good,
 "Behold the Man!"

Would they indeed accept His own witness,
 Might the great King in gracious triumph bless?

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Nay, in His servant, was God's righteousness
Again cast out.

* * * * *

On the lone isle of Patmos, far away
In spirit from surroundings ; so, to-day,
Entering by the door of faith, we may
See as John saw.

The rainbow-circled Throne ; the worshipped Name.
And, in the midst, the centre of heaven's fame,
" There stands a Lamb, One, as it had been slain."
" Behold the Man !"

Perfect in power, and wisdom, His the Hand
That takes, as ever, the Divine command,
He, the deep counsels by the great God planned,
Prevailed to do.

" Worthy art Thou ! Redeemèd by Thy blood
Thou, Thou hast made us kings and priests to God."
To reign with Thee, making those counsels good,
Amen. Amen.

L. J. M.

“HIS (THREE-FOLD) GLORY.”

(JOHN I. 1-12, 14, 18, 29-32.)

LET us adoringly meditate a little on this blessed theme.

First. *The glory of His Person* in all the deep depths of it comes before us. The first twelve verses have been called, and appropriately, too, “the golden preface” of this gospel; the Lord Jesus is here set before us in all that is *personal*, so that with reverent and holy love we may *contemplate* His glory, “a glory as of an only begotten with a father, full of grace and truth.” It were difficult to exaggerate the blessedness of such true, reverent contemplation, the Spirit of Christ alone can be the operator in, and power of this. The mind is here above all an *intruder*; when it asserts its usurped rights, within this sacred enclosure, it does so with an eagle eye and icy heart, proving itself, as it ever does, entirely destitute in regard to love and hope and joy, revelling in analysis and glorying in dissection. But our blessed theme just now is entirely apart from all this; we are dwelling on the glory of His Person in all its positive blessedness; *it is what He is in Himself*, as has often been remarked, He is not set before us here in His *relative character*. Another has said that Christ was the earliest thought from God that rose

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upon the moral darkness and chaos of apostate man. The Christ of God was the earliest revelation that arose upon the ruins and darkness of Adam, and though for a season that divine depositary of all light, that great source of all vivifying beams, remained unmanifested, yet effulgence worthy of Him, and which belonged to Him, came forth to cheer and guide.

Let us further remark in our contemplation of Him how it is said, "In the beginning was the Word." At the beginning of all things He was there without any beginning; this, as it is said, is formally expressed in the words with which the chapter opens: so that we are now here in presence of *the eternal existence of Himself*. "In the beginning the Word was." How blessed thus adoringly to dwell, Lord Jesus, on Thy Person as "from everlasting!" In connection with this we are also told of His distinct Personality and the eternal nature of the Word. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." I feel it of great moment on this subject to quote here the words of another. "The distinct personality of the Word was not as people have wished to make it, a thing which had a beginning. 'In the beginning the Word was with God.' His Personality is eternal as His nature. This is the great and glorious basis of the doctrine of the gospel and of our eternal joy, what the Saviour is in Himself, His nature, and

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His Person.” So that in our adoring contemplation of Himself we can say in His existence He is *eternal*, in His nature *divine*, in His Person *distinct*.

Now let us dwell on another glory here, even the revelation of God and the Father in Him: this we have in verses 14 and 18 of our chapter: this is connected with what the eternal Word became (*εγενετο*) up to verse 14. We have what He *was* as well as the state of the sphere in which He was manifested: at verse 14, as is said, *historical* Christianity begins. The Word became flesh; it was not an *appearance* as in olden days, but a real man in the midst of men; then we are introduced by the Spirit to the two great things resulting from His becoming man, first *grace* and *truth* have come in Him; secondly, the only Son in the bosom of the Father reveals Him as known by Himself in that position. Oh how well it is that we can say as here we wonder and worship, that there is nothing like that, and how surpassing all knowledge is the thought of it! Further, how much higher (if we are permitted so to speak) is this to what Revelation xix. or Psalm xlv. unfold to us; in these we are instructed as to His relationship to man *in government*, but in what our hearts are now contemplating, we see Himself in His *essential relationship* to the Father; and may we not again say that as we behold Him so revealed

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and revealing as in it, the bosom of the Father, we fall at His blessed feet and worship and adore. The third glory found here is that of His blessed work in its two parts.

He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, this is its blessed first aspect ; it is well to note that this passage does not treat of the *guilt* in which men are, that is a subject of the deepest moment and interest, and has its own place as such in scripture ; but here we are instructed as to the *state of things before God*. The *majesty* and *holiness* of God both demand that sin be removed from before His eyes. Jesus is the Lamb of God, He comes, as it were, from God's side, He was perfectly suited to the glory of God, He and He alone could establish it, and that too where sin was found. Another has most blessedly thus expressed it : "The cross is the basis of this blessing. All the moral elements of good and evil have been clearly brought to light, and have been shewn each in its proper place, and Christ is at God's right hand, as Man, in the divine glory, in virtue of having resolved every question that was thus raised."

How blessed thus to contemplate with adoring heart and affection His glory as the Lamb of God ; its *full import* is most precious set forth in the words, "And I beheld, and lo in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been

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slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy. . . . for thou wast slain,” &c. How precious to the heart that has been taken into His love, are these words, “Thou art worthy for thou wast slain ;” and in its worshipping homage, it delights to treasure up the fact that has been stated, namely, that as in His deepest humiliation, His glory was not veiled from the opened eye, so the glories of His heavenly throne do not conceal the tokens of His sufferings. Thank God, He never can be hid, be the scene what it may.

The other aspect of the glory of His work is that He baptises with the Holy Ghost, and this of course implies His ascension into the heavens and His being glorified. Oh how blessed to contemplate Him in this, from the “*lower parts of the earth*” to “*far above all heavens*,” so that as Man victorious, Man in the glory of God, He might receive the Holy Ghost for others, and thus the blessed Spirit of God, third Person of the adorable Trinity, He Son of God, in due season did

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shed forth on others. Lastly for His own the deep significance of this second aspect of His blessed work is apparent; it is thus they are brought into an *entirely new position*, and this too as the result of His glory as the ascended Man. Now may we not ask, What subject could be more precious than this to the hearts of His own? Oh that the affections of all that are His may be not only called forth, but also detained in true worship and adoration, as each part of His glory passes before our souls.

“Yet sure, if in Thy presence
My soul still constant were,
Mine eye would more familiar
Its brighter glories bear.

“And thus Thy deep perfection
Much better should I know,
And with adoring fervour
In this Thy nature grow.”

W. T. T



IMITATORS OF GOD.

(EPH. IV. 20—V. 21.)

CHRISTIAN conduct, as does every duty, flows from the place we are brought into; and is spoken of in scripture in different ways. Its *motive* and energy we find in Philippians iii.—Christ in glory as the object we are following after, and in pursuing which everything else is counted as loss and dung. And we get the

spirit of our conversation in Philippians ii., and the pattern, too, even *Christ come down*, and even going down, in lowliness. And then, as representing Christ in the world, we are the "*epistle* of Christ." It does not say we *ought* to be such, but we *are*. (2 Cor. iii. 3.) The epistle may be sadly blotted by us, but still, that is what we are "manifestly declared to be." Here, in Ephesians, we are viewed as brought into God's presence, holy and without blame; that is, with a nature and character that suit Him, and are the reflection of what He is. And we are seen sitting in the heavenlies "in Christ;" not *running* to get into glory, as in Philippians iii. Moreover, we are in the same relationship to God as Christ is, and hence, christian conduct is spoken of in this epistle as what suits this place, and flows from it.

Through the grace and power of God I am *brought into* His presence, not seeking to get into it, and my duties flow from the place I am in. People speak as though men were on probation, and the day of judgment would prove how it will turn out with them, whether they will be saved or lost. This is all wrong. Of course each is tested individually, by the presentation of the gospel; but the gospel comes to man and addresses him as one already lost, and needing salvation. Men have not to wait till the judgment to know how it will turn out. It has already

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turned out that I am a lost sinner. God turned man out of paradise when he had sinned ; and as far as he could man has turned God out of the world when He came into it in grace, in Christ. Of course God can come into it in power, and will do so ; but as far as man could he has turned Him out. Man is now lost in himself, but God has acted in grace, so that he who believes in Jesus is *saved* ; just the opposite ; and it does not need the judgment to prove either the one or the other. Judgment is for *my* work (Rev. xx. 12), and on that ground all are already lost. But salvation is of grace, and is *God's* work. What hath God wrought ! (Num. xxiii. 23.) God takes up man as dead in sins, and quickens him : he has a new life, and is "made the righteousness of God," being brought *to God*, and set in His presence, in the same relationship as Christ.

Christian duties (and there are such), flow from the new relationship thus formed by grace, and in Christ, and we must first be *in* the relationship before the duties are there. People make a grievous blunder here : putting the duties as a means of *getting into* relationship with God. Such a thing would never be thought of in natural things. Men's minds are clear enough about their own matters ; all is simple to them : but when they come to divine things, and having to do with God, all sorts of blunders

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are made. How absurd it would be for all you people to *get* to be my children! You might be never so earnest and diligent; but no amount of earnestness would avail to form the relationship. But if you *were* my children, all would be simple enough, and the duty, too, to act *like* children. You cannot fulfil the duties of a child till you are one, or shew the love of one either. How unbecoming of a servant to jump up and kiss his master! Quite proper in a *child*. And if we are children of God, then we are to behave ourselves as such; but our duties as children of God do not commence till we *are* in that place. Of course there *are* duties that we have as *men*, but on that ground we are lost. God makes us His children, and then says, Now imitate your Father. "Be ye followers [imitators] of God, as dear children." We are brought into God's presence, and we are to go out into, and through, the world, and shew whose children we are: to shew His character, and "walk worthy" of Him. "To walk worthy of *God*." (1 Thess. ii. 12.) "Worthy of the *Lord*." (Col. i. 10.) "Worthy of the *vocation*." (Eph. iv. 1.) God Himself is our pattern, and we are to imitate Him. He loved us when we were *enemies*, and He causes His rain to descend "on the evil and on the good," and we are to act in the same manner toward men. I am to be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, for instance: so here, "tender-

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hearted, forgiving," and why? because my Father is. I am to forgive as, in Christ, He *has* forgiven me. In all things I am to look to Him, as revealed in Christ, as my pattern, and imitate Him.

But all this, of course, flows not only from the fact of a new relationship, but there is a "new man." The nature we had, as children of Adam, was proved to be utterly bad, and nothing would do but the entire setting of it aside, and a new "creation." In this Epistle men are seen as "dead in sins;" not alive in sins, as in Romans. And Christ goes down to the lower parts of the earth, putting away our sins on His way there, namely, on the Cross. So that before He lies there, our sins have all been atoned for; and then God comes in, and raises up Christ, and us with Him, our sins being all left behind. It is not simply that we are quickened, but we are quickened "*together with Christ.*" (Eph. ii. 5.) When it is simply quickening, as in John v., Christ is the *Quickener*; but in Ephesians, Christ is seen *in death*, where He had in grace put Himself for us. *We* were there through *sin* and disobedience. *He* came there in *grace* and obedience. And now, as quickened together with Him, we are, so to speak, raised by God out of *His grave*, and taken up into the heavenly places in Him. It is a new creation, the sins of the "old man" being all put away and gone. In

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Colossians we get the same thought: "Quickened together with him, *having* forgiven you all trespasses." (Chap. ii. 13.) It is a new creation, and the trespasses all forgiven.

We have put off the old man, and put on the new. In principle we have done this in Christ's death; and now we realise it in knowing that we have died with Him. It is carried into effect in practice in bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus. The new man is after God (Eph. iv. 24), that is, it is like God, and is "created in righteousness and true holiness." Adam was created in *innocence*; neither righteousness nor holiness. Holiness supposes intelligence as to good and evil, though absolute and perfect separation from evil. Adam had not the knowledge of good and evil, and so is never said in scripture to be holy; nor righteous either, because righteousness is a judgment of, or walking in, ways consistent with the obligations in which we or others stand, and involves also the knowledge of good and evil. Adam was, of course, sinless, for this is one respect in which he was made in the "likeness of God." But the "new man" is 'renewed in *knowledge* after the image of him that created him.' (Col. iii. 10.) The old man is put off in the Christian—in him who has the truth as it is in Jesus, and the new man, which is after God, is put on. God Himself is the pattern, and it is in *Christ* that we learn what He is.

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We have got a new life, and the Holy Ghost in us, as the power to be followers of God.

In Romans vii. we have the experience of a man *with* the new nature ("delighting in the law of God after the inward man"), but *without* power in the Holy Ghost ; and he finds the old is master of the new. It is one who, as to his experience, is under the law, not knowing redemption or liberty in the Holy Ghost, and learning what the flesh is ; and it makes him cry, "Oh ! wretched man that I am," and long for deliverance. He does not say, How can I get forgiveness ? or, how can I get better ? but he wants some one to take him clean out of the place of bondage and helplessness where he finds himself, and says, "Who shall deliver me ?" The moment he comes to this he finds it all done, and exclaims, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." There are three things learnt in that chapter. First, that there is *no good* in the flesh. Second, that it was not himself, but sin dwelling in him, that did the evil (ver. 17) : he learns to distinguish between the "I" and the "sin that dwelleth *in me*." Third, he yet finds the law of sin in his members *too strong* for him ; for he always does the evil, though he wills the good. Nothing will do but to be taken out of it ; and this is what he realises in the next chapter. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus *hath made me free* from the law of sin and

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death ;" and "Ye are not in the flesh, but in Spirit." (Chap. viii. 2.) But here the man is looked at as "in Christ," not in the flesh, and the Spirit of God dwells in him, *producing* righteousness, which is different from the sin dwelling in him, *preventing* him from performing the good he consents unto and delights in. But, as we have seen, besides the new man, there is, in order to our being imitators of God, the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. We are told (Eph. iv. 30), "*Grieve* not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are *sealed*," &c. It is not only that there is a new nature, but the Holy Ghost comes into the vessel, as we see in the case of the cleansed leper, in Leviticus xiv. ; and leprosy in scripture is a standing type of sin. He was washed in water, sprinkled with blood, and then *anointed* with oil. The water is the word applied in power ; Jesus said to the disciples in John xv., "Now ye are *clean* through the *word* that I have spoken unto you." The word of Christ had been applied to them in power through grace, and by the Holy Ghost, and they were washed. Then we have the blood of Christ applied to the conscience ; and next, as here in Ephesians, we are *sealed* with the Holy Ghost, the "holy anointing oil," the "unction from the Holy One." And this is the second great principle of christian practice, as brought before us here. We have the "new man," the new nature from God, and

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according to God; and also the Holy Ghost, God Himself, comes and owns the person. He seals him and abides there, and we are not to grieve Him, but to walk as though God were seen by us at our side. Everything should comport with God's presence in us; and if we are walking with a good conscience, according to our measure of light; we are then free to think of Christ. The Holy Ghost occupies us with Christ, and leads us on in the knowledge of Him. (Eph. i. 17.) And it is in this there is growth; as to acceptance and relationship there is no growth; all is perfect from the first, but in the fuller knowledge of Christ, and conformity to Him, we are led on by the Holy Ghost. If walking up to the light we have received, we have, in coming into His presence, communion with Him, and we enjoy and grow in the knowledge of Him. If, on the contrary, we are not walking godlily, the Holy Ghost will make us think of ourselves and judge ourselves. So when we are, not only living in the Spirit, but walking in the Spirit, all we are and do will represent Christ. His aim and purpose is that we should be, in all the moral features of His character, the reproduction of Himself. See Philippians ii. 15, where every clause may be applied to Christ, though it is given, as the Spirit's desire, for every Christian. "Blameless and harmless" — so was Christ. "The sons of God"—He was the Son

of God. "Without rebuke"—so was He, and so on.

It is a wonderful thing to know myself accepted in Christ before God, that He represents me there ; but if He represents me before God, I am to represent Him before the world. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and *ye in me*, and *I in you*." (John xiv. 20.) You say, I am in Christ before God, "accepted in the beloved." Well, thank God, it is so : I do not doubt your acceptance, but if you are *in Christ*, He is *in you*, and let one, let the world see Him and nothing else. The new man then (the old being put off), and the Holy Ghost are subjectively that in which we walk ; where is then the pattern we walk by ? God Himself, God in a man, in *Christ* ; and in Him we get a love that *gives up Himself*, and that for His enemies. This goes infinitely beyond the law, which only requires that a man should "love his neighbour *as himself*." If every one did that, it would make of this world a sort of paradise, but that is the measure for man as a creature, mutually recognising each his neighbour's claim. It does not suit a sinful world. Every one does *not* love me as much as he loves himself, and if I am to represent God in such a world as this, I must have a kind of love that will get above people *hating* me, and this we see in Christ. And we are to be "imitators" of God as seen in Him, "as dear children." Not in order

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to be such, but *as* such. The same in Colossians iii. 12, "Put on therefore, *as* the elect of God, holy and beloved," not in order to be the elect, &c., but *as* the elect. The Lord Jesus (in this love we are called to imitate), gave Himself "*for* us," but it was "*unto* God." (Chap. v. 2.) God was His object, though it was for *us* He gave Himself. Divine love, as manifested in this world, takes up its object by its need, and looks at it in grace, and above its evil, so it was in Christ. As having become a man, He must have an object, and God was that object. Man must have an object, to keep him free from and above the evil of those he occupies himself with. What a man loves, and makes his object, gives him his true moral character. If he loves money, he is a covetous man. If power, an ambitious man; so with pleasure, or dress, it is the same: we are morally characterised by what engages our thoughts and affections. Suppose, for instance, I love a great rogue, I seek his company for its own sake, I make him my object—my affection is a low one. If a beautiful character, the affection is a noble one. Christ offered Himself *for* us, that was divine love, but it was *to* God: was the rule and perfection of man. Christ is our measure: God has now given His Son that we *may be* like Him not kept back the fruit, *lest* we *should* become as God, as the serpent insinuated to Eve.

"Walk as children of light." (Ver. 8.) Here

we see our relation to God as "Light." He is said to be "Love" and "Light." (John i.) He is not said to be anything else, as to His nature. He has righteousness, holiness, majesty, almighty power, &c., these are His attributes; but love and light He *is*. Now, we have been told above to be imitators of Him, and walk in love: here we are addressed as children of light, which we must be, if children of God, who is such, and we are to *walk* as children of light, and Christ is the measure of both to us. Though both these essential names of God are used, we are not said to be love, because God is sovereign in goodness, and that does not suit us, but obedience in the walk of love, as Christ. But light we are said to be, because we are partakers of the divine nature in its purity and consequent manifestation of all impurity around. And while the light, shining out, reprove the "*works* of darkness," we are to be bringing forth the "*fruit* of the light" not "Spirit." (Ver. 9.) Light is perfectly pure, does not mix with the darkness, but makes manifest everything that is not of it. Walking as children of light, "*proving* what is acceptable unto the Lord." We do not learn all at once what is acceptable to Him: it is a thing in which we make progress. *Is* this our simple purpose? To *prove* what is acceptable? (Rom. xii. 2.) In buying or selling, or any common act of life, our question should be, *Is* this acceptable to the

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Lord? In purchasing an article of dress, it should not be simply, will this suit me? but is it acceptable *to the Lord*? Does it suit *Him*?

In verse 14, a sleeping man is called to "awake," not a *dead* man: he is a believer, but alas! in what a state. A man, when he is asleep, is no better than a dog asleep. They are both insensible to everything around. Dog and man snore together. But when the believer, who has sunk down into worldly associations, is thus aroused (for he is not dead, but among the dead, and grievous to say, apparently one of them), nothing short of Christ Himself is his light. "Arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." The light is there when he awakes, and Christ is the measure of it for him. We must have an object. *Sanctification is objective, and not subjective only.* A man is holy to something, that is, it is not merely a state in itself, though it be such, in ordering and regulating my ways; *but in the occupation of heart and mind with an object, my heart is consecrated to that object, and so sanctified*, one outside of me, into whose image I am transformed as I contemplate His glory. Christ should ever be that object, and the secret of real progress is personal attachment to Himself. Mary Magdalene is an example of this; others waited till sunrise to come to the sepul-

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chre, but *she* came "while it was yet dark." It was ignorance, of course, to seek the living among the dead, but it was ignorant affection. She tells the disciples, and they come too, and then go back to their homes—to their breakfast: but will this do for *Mary*? No; she has found her way back to the sepulchre again. All the world to her was but an empty sepulchre, if Jesus were not there, and her heart, full of Him, was lonely in it; and to *her* Jesus shews Himself, sending her with that wondrous message to His brethren, which told them of the new relationship in which they now stood—He was ascending to *His* Father and theirs, His God and theirs. (John xx.)

The woman in the Pharisee's house, in Luke vii., is another example. Her heart was won by Christ—*light* had shewn her her sins, but *love* and grace in Christ had attracted her, bringing her into that fine Pharisee's house, a poor sinner that, where Jesus was not, would have been ashamed to shew her face anywhere. Look at Simon! What does he know about Jesus? He is pitch dark: has got God in his house and does not know it. But the "woman of the city" knows, and Jesus answers her faith. She loved much, and she got from the Lord those blessed words of *forgiveness, salvation, and peace*: "Thy sins are forgiven;" "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace"!

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This attachment of heart to Christ is what we so much need. Not mere intelligence in truth, which may puff up, but that knowledge of Christ by the Holy Ghost which makes Him my object. And now in company with this blessed One we have to walk through the world, finding a way in which we can glorify and represent Him, and enjoy fellowship with Him. But how is it we have got to *find a way*? Because we are not yet at home. Adam had not to find any way, but simply to abide in the place where God had put him, and enjoy it.

J. N. D.



DIVINE LOVE.

(1 JOHN IV. 7 ; V. 5.)

WE have in these verses a beautiful episode on divine love. Saints are exhorted to the exercise of love one to the other, because love is of God, and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God ; thus love and the knowledge of God are two characteristics of those born of God, of His children. Not to love is to be ignorant of God, for God is love, it is His nature. In verse 19 we have *the manifestation* of God's love in respect of us, in that God sent, unsolicited by us, His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. It was when there was

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not a single pulse of life in us for God, not a single movement of our hearts towards Him, when moreover we were in our sins and defiled by them, that God sent His Son to be the propitiation for them. How sovereign then this love, how motiveless so far as we are concerned ! It was its own motive, the "because," for it was not in us but in Himself, because of what He is. What a powerful argument for us to manifest love one towards another, and so the apostle adds, "Beloved, if God *so* loved us, we *ought* (it is obligation) to love one another."

Verse 13 is very remarkable if we compare it with John i. 18, where we have the same expression: "No one has seen God at any time ;" there it is, "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father," who has made Him known ; but He is not here now to make Him known, that blessed light has been extinguished. He was refused here and put to death ; how then is the unseen God to be known now ? "If we love one another God abides in us." What He is is known through us, and He is love, and thus His love is *perfected in us*. Verses 7-10 give us the *manifestation* of this love towards us, here (ver. 12) it is *perfected in us*. How *we know* that we abide in Him and He in us is because He has given to us of His Spirit, the alone power for the reproduction in us of what God is as manifested in Christ, so that what was

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true in Him is now true in us. His abiding in us and we in Him is not therefore dependent simply upon our loving one another, but upon His having given us of His Spirit. His abiding in us and we in Him is connected with four things :—

1st. Keeping His commandments, “He that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him.” (Chap. iii. 24.)

2nd. Loving one another, “If we love one another, God abideth in us.” (Chap. iv. 12.) “He that abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” (Ver. 16.)

3rd. The Spirit given to us, “Hereby we *know* that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” (Chap. iii. 24.) “Hereby we *know* that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.” (Chap. iv. 13.) It is by the Spirit that we have *the knowledge* of this wondrous privilege, as we find also in John xiv. 20, “At that day *ye shall know* that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”

4th. The confession of Jesus, “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.”

Faith in Jesus as *the Christ* and the confession of Him as *Son of God* are two characteristics of a Christian, though the latter seems to be an advance upon the former ; the first a proof that such an one is born of God, and hence His

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child ; the second, of such an one it is said that "God abides in him and he in God;" though I judge that this supposes all Christians, for John always contemplates a Christian normally or abstractly—what is true of one as such.

Verse 14 is the testimony of grace to the world in which we are privileged to have part. How blessed to be a confessor of Jesus—as the Son referred to, "The Father sent the Son [as] Saviour of the world" (not of the Jews merely), and Jesus is that Son and Saviour. It is the aspect of divine love toward the world, whether in God absolutely, or in us as born of Him, and hence partakers of His nature.

How blessed to be consciously the objects of this love, to be able to say "We have known and have believed the love that God hath to us," to taste it by the Spirit which He has given to us, to know it not only objectively as in verse 8, but subjectively as in verse 16; as in the communion of it to say, "God is love, and he that abides in love abides in God, and God in him."

Now this love covers the whole period of our existence in this scene, from its *manifestation to us* when we knew not God, to its being *perfected in us* as saints, and its being *perfected with us* in view of the day of judgment. "As he is, so are we in this world;" as He is as man in glory before God's face, so are we even while here in this world. What then have we to fear from

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judgment! Is He past it, so are we, for we are in Him. It is perfect love, love which has left nothing undone to secure our blessing, love which leaves no room for fear, which casts it out. Would that the hearts of all God's children were *perfected in it*. Shall God have perfected it with us and our hearts not be perfected in it? "He that fears [what room for it in love, and especially perfect love] has not been made perfect in love." "We love *because*." Ah! love is not sovereign in us, it is in God; there is no "because" for His. "*We love because he first loved us.*"

Verse 20. The pretension to love God is tested by love to the brethren, "If a man say [or, if *any one* say], I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar: [how often does John use this word "liar!"] for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" It is a commandment of His, "That he who loveth God love his brother also," and every one that believes in Jesus as the Christ is a brother, for such an one is born of God, faith in Jesus as such being one of the seven characteristics of those born of God. The apostle does not say, "Every one that loves him that begat" *ought to* love, but "*loves* him that is begotten of him;" it is natural for him to do so, that is, natural as a child of God, love being one of the features of divine life in its display in

man. So that we know that we love the children of God, and we know that we love the children, because we love the Parent. Moreover the love of God when we love God and keep His commandments. If we love the Parent we love the children, in that we keep His commandments, and He has commanded us to love one another, and obedience is another feature of the divine life in us ; thus His commandments are not grievous. How incontestably has he thus shewn the falsity of the pretension to love God if the brethren, the children of God, are not loved. How can the one be loved and not the other? It is a lie. The nature of the child of God delights in the commandments of God, they are not grievous unto him. How blessedly is it thus shewn that what was true in Jesus is now also true in us, the same nature demonstrated by the same fruits. The believer, as such, has not two natures, though sin be still in him, for to God and to faith he has no existence save as His child ; he has come "out of death into life," and does not sin and cannot sin, because born of God. (Chap. iii. 9.)

The world does its own will in independence of God, does not keep his commandments, would not be the world if it did ; in fact it is opposed to God, is His rival, and if it had the power would overthrow His government altogether ; and because the world is opposed to God it is

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opposed to the Christian who has to overcome it, and does overcome it, because "he is born of God," for whatsoever is born of God gets the victory over the world, and this is the victory that gets the victory over the world, even our faith. If a Christian is overcome of the world it is because he is not walking as a Christian, as one born of God ; is not walking in faith, in the faith of Jesus as Son of God, for who is he that gets the victory over the world but the one believing that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the characteristic of such an one, and it is the characteristic of a Christian as such, what is abstractly true of him, and to be made good in practice. It is the standard to be maintained. Even as Paul said when speaking of his responsible life down here, "In that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Surely it we have such an object before the eye of our soul, the Son of God as Man in glory, Jesus, the One whom the world rejected and crucified, we must break with it, part company with it, and thus be morally victorious over it, even though it put us to death even as it did Him.

Having spoken of the seven characteristics of one born of God, that is, of a true Christian, I would now give them, in order that we may have the divine standard before us, see what is abstractly true of such an one, and so getting

the divine idea of a Christian, may seek through grace to realise it, remembering that God has given us of His Spirit, and that walking in the Spirit is the alone power for it.

1st. Chapter ii. 29, "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one who practices righteousness *is begotten of him.*" *Practical righteousness* is a characteristic of a Christian.

2nd. Chapter iii. 9, "Whoever has been begotten of God does not practice sin, because his seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, *because he has been begotten of God.*" *Holiness* is therefore a characteristic of a Christian.

3rd and 4th. Chapter iv. 7, "Beloved, let us love one another ; because love is of God, and every one that loves *has been begotten of God,* and knows God." *Love of the brethren,* and the *knowledge of God* are characteristics of a Christian.

5th. Chapter v. 1, "Every one that *believes* that Jesus is the Christ *is begotten of God.*"

6th. Chapter v. 4, "All that has been *begotten of God gets the victory over the world.*"

7th. Chapter v. 18, "We know that every one *begotten of God* does not sin, but he that has been begotten of God *keeps himself,* and the wicked one does not touch him." Thus faith in Jesus, overcoming the world, and watchfulness over oneself, are characteristics of a Christian. Such is eternal life in its moral features.—T. H.

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“THE HOUR.”

“Father, the hour is come.”

ONE hour there is in history's page
Pre-eminent o'er all the past ;
Twill shine and shine from age to age,
While earth, while heaven itself, shall last.

O'ercome by time's oblivious power,
While earthly glories all decay,
The memory of that blessèd hour
Shall never, never pass away.

A watch-fire on a lofty hill,
Conspicuous o'er the waste of years,
That friendly beacon, blazing still,
The weary, way-worn pilgrim cheers.

Thou'lt say—What deed of glory gave
Such lustre to that single hour ?
Go, ask the earth, the sun, the grave—
These all confess'd its thrilling power.

Aye, wrapp'd at noon in deepest night,
The trembling earth it shook with dread,
The sun at mid-day lost its light,
The opening grave gave up its dead.

Child of the world, 'tis not for thee
To feel its heart-consoling power ;
Dead—dead to God—thine eye can see
No glory in that wondrous hour.

Christian, 'tis thine alone to know
And prize it more than all beside ;
So bright with love, so dark with woe—
The gracious hour when JESUS died.

J. G. B.



“WE SPEND OUR YEARS AS A
TALE THAT IS TOLD.”

(PSALM XC. 9.)

THE shadows of the expiring year are lengthening upon us, the end is fast approaching, another milestone in life's journey will soon have been past. The sunrise and the sunset belong to this world, the eternal day lies *beyond* it all and *above* it all.

Let us then, standing on the verge of the closing period, pause and listen to the voice which speaks to us to-day.

Wherever we turn the eye, one great fact is clearly seen, namely, that we have reached in very earnest the era of universal instability and change. “The foundations of the earth are out of course.” The great moral obligations, which in times past have bound society together, are all in a state of dissolution.

In every department of life here, the same sad sight forces itself upon us.

The two spheres on which the eye is most fixed at the present moment are the church and the world. In the first, the symptoms of approaching judgment are thick on every side.

The apostasy from *the faith* has well-nigh

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reached its summit, so complete and far-reaching has the surrender of truth been, that but little remains to be given up. Blasphemy against God and His Christ is the pervading atmosphere of the professing church, and the blasphemy is nourished by *pride*; "proud blasphemers" abound on every hand; verily we are in a far-spent night, and a *very dark night* as well. Those who occupy this standpoint, and who witness from its elevation, are decried and refused as alarmists, pessimists, and so forth; in this, as in all else, history repeats itself.

Further, external *appearances* are all against them it is said, there is the increase of knowledge, the tremendous strides of science, the rapid growth of philosophy, the clear light of a deeper and more enlarged scholarship. All these are flung in their faces, and they are bidden to be silent in the presence of such indisputable testimony; thus the word of the living God is set aside, and its solemn and precious contents scattered to the winds—these as not worthy of this enlightened age, are characterised as puerilities, composed for a bygone ignorant generation and unworthy of present credit. Oh what a sight does the professing church exhibit! *Superstition* and *rationalism*, hand in hand, overflow the face of the land, carrying the great bulk of people on their flood-tide. In view of all this how solemn are the words of our blessed Master

and Lord : " Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find *the faith* [την πιστιν] on the earth."

When we turn and look at the condition of the world, how ominous the signs on the horizon. The lull of the armed peace is already broken, and a conflict for the *existences* of kingdoms is looming in the *near future*. Who can tell what complications may be at hand, what embroilment of nations may arise out of this present struggle between China and Japan? It needs but an open eye to see the dark cloud which overhangs the world; it will ere long burst, then oh, what a crash when the war fever asserts itself! Weapons of deadly power and magnitude are prepared, and in hand, too; man's inventive powers having been all exercised to their utmost in devising the most effectual engines of destruction.

Amid all these time marks, and above and beyond all this upheaving, that is in sure progress, the bright and blessed *heavenly hope* shines in all its own brilliancy and warmth before the eye and heart of the *watcher* and *waiter* for the One who is coming for His own. The *heavenly hope* is the heart's affectionate longing for Himself, it is not to be absent from the sphere and scene of trial, but to be *with Him for His own sake*, to be in His *blessed presence and company above and at home for ever*; this has ever been the hope of the

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church, her *heavenly hope*. She will be no doubt *associated* with Him in other scenes, and her heart delights to know that He who was cast out *here* will reign *here* and have His rights here; but above and beyond that, her own special bright prospect and longing is to be *with Himself where He is*.

How near is this to faith and affection! How blessed to think that ere another year runs its course, we and all His own, so scattered here, may be gathered to Himself, raised or changed, and caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so to be ever with the Lord. May the Lord awaken, by His grace, the slumbering hearts of His own to go forth in greater distinctness and affection to watch for Him.

W. T. T.



THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

(PART II.)

So far, we have noticed the character and state of soul that are indispensable to keeping the unity of the Spirit.

Without lowliness, longsuffering and forbearance it would be useless to speak of using diligence in this. Now let us go on to see what the unity itself implies.

It is the present power of the Holy Spirit, by which the reality of the one body is recognised

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and known ; and the first question that will be asked by a soul that desires to answer to the calling will be, "How are we to try to keep the unity of the Spirit?"

Can such an attempt be made in the present state of things, when the divisions in Christendom are a favourite theme of the enemies of the truth? Thus Bossuet's clever book ably exposes the different schools of thought in Protestantism ; and I once heard of a crafty Red Indian on the borders of the backwoods referring a missionary to a small town, full of rival sects, on the frontier, and saying, "Your Book declares that you ought all to be one ; and you are divided into many different parties. When you shall all be agreed, I will listen to the gospel, but not before !"

The enemy makes great use of the divided state of Christendom ; and the question is whether it be possible, in the existing state of things, to walk according to the exhortation which is before us.

We must take the simple truth as it stands, first of all : "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye have been called in one hope of your calling." It is an immense thing when the great fact of the unity of the body is apprehended ; when a soul understands, as a simple and divine truth, that all believers upon earth at this moment form one body by one Spirit.

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I shall never forget the complete revolution which this caused in my soul, overthrowing once and for all, the preconceived ideas of "churches" and "bodies." There are many such in Christendom, of which several are of high renown, but before the simple revelation of the unity of the church of God, their glory falls, their very existence is a denial of the one body, and they become splendid monuments of religious man's construction. Faith refuses to acknowledge them ; and the believer finds his heart suddenly enlarged to apprehend what the whole company of fellow-believers is formed into by one Spirit, one body. The hope of the calling becomes wonderfully distinct.

Bright and blessed day when we emerged from the narrow church views, limited by some Roman, Greek, or Anglican horizon, and caught a sight, by faith, of the glorified Head in heaven, and of the whole church upon earth, the one body.

The two other unities which follow have often been noticed. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism : it is evident that in Christendom there is but one Lord, that is, Christ is outwardly owned as supreme—many, alas ! only too glad to confess that He is over all in heaven, provided that He come not down here to trouble them. One Lord is owned outwardly, and where His authority is truly acknowledged and submitted to, there is great blessing.

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Then there is one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in us all.

One Spirit, infallible, one power to lead all hearts of believers in one direction, that of the divine truths connected with the one body.

The unity of the Spirit then becomes clearer to each one of us, as these blessed facts are revealed to our souls, and we shall endeavour to walk so that nothing may hinder the power of the Spirit ; so that should we meet with other believers disposed in their turn to be subject to the word of God and the authority of the Lord, nothing on our side may be an obstacle.

Surely if all Christians were to submit by faith to the true Head of the church, and to allow the Holy Spirit to act in power, the unity would be known in the whole church of God upon earth.

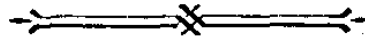
It may be said that this unity was interrupted from the very beginning and that the murmurings of the Hellenists against the Hebrews (Acts vi.) was the first sign of discord.

Granted ! And the discord has become universal since. The *odium theologicum* is very terrible, and the animosity between rival sects as strong as ever. But this cannot efface the blessed truth of "one body and one Spirit ;" nor the holy obligation of each one of us who is a member of the one body to endeavour to keep the unity in the bond of peace.

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May the Lord awaken us to these things, and give us grace to attempt at least to walk in them!

E. L. B.



FROM OLD TO NEW, OR, OUT OF DEATH INTO LIFE. ILLUSTRATED BY THE HISTORY OF NOAH.

“If any man [be] in Christ [there is] a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.” (New Trans., 2 Cor. v. 17.)

IT is readily admitted by all, that the events recorded in the Old Testament are intended by the Spirit of God to illustrate New Testament truths, and that now, having the *substance*, we are able by His guidance to trace the resemblance of the *shadows* to it, and thus by comparison, to estimate better the fulness of the revelation we are privileged to possess, and the reality and preciousness of the new position into which we are brought in Christ risen from among the dead. God Himself adopts this method of comparison and contrast, for the Epistle to the Hebrews is a book of contrasts comparing or contrasting the old with the new, and shewing how much better is Christ and the christian position than all that preceded Him.

It is proposed to consider the history of Noah's *deliverance from judgment and entrance into a*

new place, as an illustration of the scripture at the head of this article.

(1) *Sheltered from the judgment.* "All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth and God said, The end of all flesh has come before me and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." (Gen. vi. 13.)

Thus the dark pall of pronounced judgment rested upon the world, and it but waited for the moment to come, when God's "longsuffering" (1 Pet. iii. 20) being exhausted, that judgment should be unsparingly executed. We look forward from this time more than two thousand years, and again the wickedness of the human race has culminated in the murder of God's Son.

The cross proves unmistakably man's irremediable ruin, and the desperate enmity of his heart. Forty centuries God has patiently borne with him, and now the last scene in his evil course is enacted. Jesus, going to the cross, said, "Now is the judgment of this world." (John xii. 31.) But God is longsuffering to usward, and the cross makes way for the presentation of God's marvellous grace; hence the present dispensation of the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ, while the church He loved and gave Himself for is being gathered out.

When this is accomplished, and He has received it unto Himself, "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels

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in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. i. 7-9.)

But as now, so in Noah's day, God provided a way of escape from the impending doom, which, though unseen and unlooked for by the human race, busied as they were with eating, drinking, marrying, building and planting, was nevertheless about to break in irresistible destruction upon them. "Make thee an ark of gopher wood . . . and thou shalt *pitch* it within and without with pitch." (Gen. vi. 14.) Such was the direction given to Noah. The word pitch is in the Hebrew "kaphar," the root from which the words for "mercy-seat" and "atonement" are derived.

Noah was to put the atonement (so to speak) between himself and his household and the raging waters of death and judgment.

God had provided a refuge in the atonement His beloved Son has wrought on the cross of Calvary :—

"In the refuge God provided,
Though the world's destruction lowers,
We are safe, to Christ confided,
Everlasting life is ours."

How exactly was this emblematised in the ark of Noah. There was but one ark, there is but one Christ. Absolute safety was the portion of those inside, for "Jehovah shut them in" (Gen. vii. 16); certain destruction befell all who were shut out, and there was no escape, for Noah only remained alive and they that were with him in the ark. (Gen. vii. 22, 43.) As the blood on the lintels and door-posts of Egypt stood between Israel and the destroying angel, and the pitch inside and outside of the ark of Noah between him and the roaring waters, so the atonement which the Son of God has wrought averts all God's judgment from the believer—nay more, as the raging billows of the flood fell back harmless from the battered sides of the ark and were themselves exhausted, so He who went to the cross for God and for us, exhausted in His own precious Person all the storm of divine judgment which must otherwise have swept over us eternally, and not only so, but the completeness of his obedience, the intensity of His devotedness, the depth of His love and every other perfection of His Person and work rose as a sweet savour to God gratifying the divine nature even at the moment when He was "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree," and being made sin for us, He who knew no sin. Thus He glorified God about the whole question of sin and sins, and met fully

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all the claims of the throne while Himself bearing "the chastisement of our peace." Precious Saviour! Oh, what a salvation, what a refuge has God provided!

(2) *Risen with Christ.* "And God remembered Noah . . . and the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat." (Gen. viii. 1-4.) It is a remarkable fact that this seventeenth day of the seventh month was the identical day on which the Lord Jesus Christ many years afterwards rose from among the dead. The seventh month became the first at the institution of the passover for all *sacred* purposes (see Exod. xii. 2), while for civil purposes it still remained the seventh.

The fourteenth day was the passover day which Jesus kept with His disciples, the fifteenth He was crucified, the sixteenth His body lay in the tomb, and on the seventeenth He rose from the dead. Upon the top of the mountain the ark with its favoured freight rested in perfect safety. The storms were over, the judgment was passed, lifted above all the curse, and above all possibility of destruction, they rested in the deliverance that God had wrought. Carried in the ark through the storms of judgment, it was all passed for them. The sky above them was bright, and a new scene of resurrection was before them. What a picture of the place in

which the resurrection of Christ has set the believer. He says, "Because I live ye shall live also," and His resurrection is God's righteous answer to the perfection of His work accomplished here to God's entire satisfaction. If the word Ararat signifies (as some say) "the curse of trembling," the position of the ark resting upon it indicates surely that the curse is gone, and thus the believer's place is now far removed above all causes for doubt or fear, since He who bore our sins and went down into judgment for us has passed out of it all, and "having been raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him." A Man has gone through death, and is now in a new condition, namely, resurrection, a Victor over all the power of the enemy, and in perfect grace God gives us a part with Him there.

(3) *A new Man in a new place.* "And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made." (Gen. viii. 6.) This window looked *upwards* and the cloudless heavens were opened to his view. What a prospect now spread before Noah resting in perfect safety and peace upon the summit of the mountain of resurrection! Ararat is said by another authority to mean "Creation or Holy Land." If so, surely its very meaning would suggest the new creation in resurrection which spread all around. Oh, it

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is blessed for the believer to learn that not only is the judgment borne and past, and the descendants of the first man (Adam) gone in the death of Christ as before God as really as were the antediluvians in the flood of Noah, but that there is the commencement of a new race in the second Man (Christ risen), illustrated by Noah after the flood, from whom a new race of mankind (so to speak) sprang (Gen. ix. 19), and that too in a new place on the ground of resurrection. Ponder this well, believer; deliverance and perfect liberty are the result of learning this by the power of the Holy Ghost.

(4) *The gift of the Holy Ghost.* “And the dove, came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive-leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.” (Gen. viii. 11.) We all know that God has chosen the figure of the dove to represent the Holy Spirit. (See Matt. iii. 16; John i. 32-33.)

Consequent upon the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, and His ascension on high, the Spirit of God came down at Pentecost. (See Acts ii. 33.) The blessed Lord received the Spirit of God personally as Man for His own life-work and service. This was illustrated by the anointing of Aaron alone and without blood (see Levit. viii. 10), but consequent upon the work being accomplished, and He who performed it so completely

to God's satisfaction being received into the glory *as a risen Man*, the Holy Ghost is given not only to Him the Head, but to every member of His body, and they are thus brought into this unity and oneness with Himself as such. This was emblematised by the anointing of Aaron and his sons after the consecration sacrifices had been offered (Levit. viii. 30), and perhaps by the precious ointment upon Aaron's head reaching down to the skirts of his garments. (Ps. cxxxiii. 2.)

But why did the dove bring back an olive-leaf in its mouth? In itself it was a witness of resurrection, for the trees so long submerged under the billows of judgment, were budding again. It signified however much more than this. In Jotham's parable, the olive-tree is represented as saying, "Shall I leave my fatness wherewith *by me* they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" (Judges ix. 9.) Christ is the true Olive-tree; of Him, and of Him alone, can this be said in verity and truth. Listen to His own words in John xiii. 31, 32, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." He is the blessed Man whose perfect obedience unto death, and devotedness to the Father's will, involving as it did the perfect settlement of the whole question of sin and sins,

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and that in all the value of His person as Son of God, completely and absolutely glorified God, and as a result was Himself (as Man) glorified by God as His righteous answer to all His blessed Son was, and had done.

Of this the Holy Ghost bears witness. He is here to bear testimony to this most blessed and eternal fact, that God has been perfectly honoured and glorified by our Lord Jesus Christ, and that in consequence "He has highly exalted him," and "crowned him [as man] with glory and honour." May we meditate upon these things, so infinitely precious, so soul-satisfying. Do they not lift us entirely out of this scene in spirit, and lead us by the Holy Ghost to have our hearts set upon Him who has thus wrought for His God and Father, and for us? What wonder then that He sends this message from the resurrection side of the vanquished tomb on the first morning of the new creation; "Go to *my brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father: and to my God, and your God." (John xx. 17.)

(5) *Liberty*. "And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark . . . and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth." (Gen. viii. 15, 16.) "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." (2 Cor. iii. 17.) Noah is now brought out into a new creation, founded on resurrection. "If any man be in Christ it is a new creation."

This is to be in the liberty of the Spirit. Set free not only from my sins, but delivered from the nature that did them, having seen this gone from before God as really as the former things had passed away for Noah ; and not only so, but also brought through death and judgment, out into a new place in Christ risen from the dead. Thus in resurrection He breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive ye Holy Spirit." Our life now is His, or rather, "He is our life," and "the life that we live in the flesh [body], we live by the faith of the Son of God," henceforth for us to live is Christ. Here surely we may be fruitful and multiply. The sphere into which we have entered is the sphere of grace. Here grace is fully displayed, and we are exhorted to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. iii. 18.)

The apostle prays for the Ephesians to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as follows :—
 "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ; that [the] Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in him, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with [into] all the fulness of God." (Eph. iii. 16-19.) This is surely

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to be fruitful and multiply in the new creation, where all things are of God.

(6) *Worship.* "And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings unto the Lord. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour." (Gen. viii. 20-21.) Now, brought out into liberty as a risen man in a new scene, Noah can worship. It is only as thus consciously "brought out" and "brought in" "out of death" "into life," free from the old, and enjoying the new, at liberty from self, and occupied with Christ, that the believer can worship. Now the sweet savour ascends to God, and God is satisfied, but it is all Christ. There are indeed perfections in Him as Son of God from all eternity that only God can fathom, for :—

" The higher mysteries of His fame
The creature's grasp transcend ;
The Father only His blest Name
Of Son can comprehend."

But we are privileged to meditate, as led of the Spirit, upon His Person, His work, all that He was for God, and for us, as the blessed Man on earth. His perfect obedience unto death, His entire devotedness to His Father's will, His humility, His patience, His tenderness, His long-suffering, His perfect grace manifested in every step of His devoted, lonely path on earth under the eye of His Father. How precious to be

occupied with Himself alone in the presence of His God and Father, and ours, and telling out into His appreciative ear all the beauties and perfections He discovers to us in the Son of His love, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

This is worship, and it is children that the Father thus seeks to worship Him. (John iv. 23.)

(7) *An object in the heavens.* But there is even more than this. Noah had now set before him an object in the heavens upon which both Jehovah and he were looking. "I do set my bow in the cloud . . . and the bow shall be in the cloud and *I will look upon it.*" (Gen. ix. 13-16.) To him that bow, displaying the various colours which mingled form the light, was an abiding token that the judgment was passed, and God was satisfied. It was God's answer to the sweet savour of the sacrifice which had ascended to Him. We, too, have an Object in the heavens to occupy our attention, and attract our gaze. He who was the sacrifice, the ever blessed and eternal Son of the living God, who became Man, and glorified God perfectly here in every thought, word, and deed, is now a risen Man in the glory of God, and in His face shines all the glory of God. He is the Light, and all the varied perfections of God and man, like the various colours of the rainbow, are concentrated in Him. In Him God is well pleased, and to

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Him we look. He has seated Himself as Son of God, and has been seated as Man at the right hand of God. No wonder then that the heart of God Himself being satisfied, and resting in Him, He should say to us by His Spirit, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection [mind] on things above, not on things on the earth." (Col. iii. 1, 2.)

Oh, what a portion, believer, have we in our risen Lord.

- (1) Sheltered from judgment by atonement.
- (2) Risen with Him above all curse and trembling.
- (3) Introduced into a new scene, the past all judged.
- (4) The Holy Ghost given us a witness of risen life in Christ.
- (5) Liberty in the Spirit and fruitfulness through Him.
- (6) Worship, Christ a sweet savour to God.
- (7) An Object in the heavens on which to fix our eye.

The Lord lead our souls more into these things, that they may become practically ours here, and bring forth fruit in our lives and ways, to His praise and glory.

J. V.



MINISTRY, AND INCREASE OF THE BODY.

IT is a happy thing to understand that no power can intervene between the Head, ascended up above all the heavens, and the members of the body upon earth; of this the word of God assures us.

There is one great end to which the bestowing of the gifts tends, "for the perfecting of the saints."* It is very comprehensive, and the whole thing is looked at by the Holy Spirit as reaching the term—the perfecting of the saints. How important to have the Head's own thought about ministry, and how wide and grand is the view of it here. The two dependent clauses also should not escape our notice: "With a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ."

There can be no true stability, as we find further on, without this work, and although here no doubt we have the question of gifts and ministry viewed as a whole, yet in practice we

* The note in the *New Translation* is very helpful as regards the prepositions, both of this sentence, and of the two which depend upon it. In the first case, the sense is that of the *reaching* of the object; in the second (that is, in the two following clauses) it is what is in the mind.

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shall find many who have but little entered into God's thoughts as to it, and are not stable.

I recollect, not long ago, visiting a part of the country after a sudden flood, when a small river had burst its banks and rushed through part of a pine forest ; there were many prostrate trees lying about, and when I examined them I found that the fallen firs had *insufficiently developed roots*. They resembled certain Christians.

The gifts and ministry tend to produce stability ; but we must not pass by verse 13. It has been much spoken about ; let us notice, however, the peculiar character of the term (end) set before us. The "unity" governs both "the faith" and "the knowledge of the Son of God," and evidently such an expression could not be applied merely to isolated individuals. The body is always understood here, though no doubt there is the development of each individual member ; and the measure could not be higher, "till we arrive at the full-grown man, at the measure of the fulness of the stature of the Christ."

Two kinds of cheating characterise the wrong teaching which might overthrow the unstable :

First, if I may use the term, sleight of hand of a low kind (literally, dice-playing), as in figure we see in base adventurers at fairs and such places. Thus here words are distorted and wrongly used by some who would lead us

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astray, as dice might be by an unprincipled conjuror.

Secondly, we have more methodic craft, systematic formation of wrong doctrine, with skill and pains worthy of a better purpose ; elaborate error.

Both these evils are constantly met with in the present time ; and it is not for nothing that the whole scope of the donation of the gifts and the perfecting of the saints is thus brought before us. God would have us to be no longer babes, tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

But there is more than this ; there is the growing up to Him in all things, who is the Head, the Christ (holding the truth in love) ; and now the working of every* part (in verse 16) is brought to our notice.

It is perhaps that into which we enter least, for though it be not difficult to *speak* of the body of Christ, the Head, the joints and members, yet when it comes to the point of answering to one's place in the body, as being connected with and subservient to the Head, and of working thus in one's measure, not out of proportion to the other members, I believe we must confess that we have not much known the reality of it.

* Notice that this is very emphatic and individual : "each one." Not one of us can elude the important fact of being a member of the one body.

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Still we must not give up the blessed truth, nor lose sight of the entire body in verse 16, which works for itself the increase, according to the working in its measure of every part. We can at least look to the Lord to give us to enter into His thoughts (the Head's) as to the body, and to have grace to carry them out at all cost. Growing up to Him, who is the Head, the Christ, is a marvellous progress; may we truly answer to it!

There are special gifts, no doubt, which we should receive, and by which grow; and then there is the working of *each* part. May the Lord Himself bless His word to us!

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