

SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

A Monthly Magazine.

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the **Word**, that ye may grow thereby.”—1 PETER ii. 2.

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the **Word** with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. **Therefore** many of them believed.”—ACTS xvii. 11, 12.

“The **Word** of the Lord endureth for ever.”—1 PETER i. 25.

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SIMPLE TESTIMONY.



OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST FROM THE CROSS TO THE GLORY.

I WANT to ask you to look at a few scriptures which unfold to us with great clearness and simplicity our identification with Christ from the cross to the glory.

We often find, in course of conversation, that people do not know the difference between "sin" and "sins." Were you asked what the difference is, perhaps you would say, "'Sin' is singular, and 'sins' plural." Such an answer is frequently given, but that is not what Scripture means by "sin" and "sins." Sin is the evil nature we brought into this world; sins are the things which that nature is guilty of committing. Sin is like a crab-tree, and sins the fruit that appears on it. It is just as much a crab-tree if it has only one crab-apple on it as if it had a thousand. When you are clear as to the difference between sin and sins, you will find that the Epistle to the Romans will help you in a remarkable way. The first part of Romans, from chap. i. to v. 11, is

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about sins we have been guilty of. From verse 12 of chap. v. it is a new subject, and the question of *sin* is taken up, not "sins." In chap. vi. sin is mentioned seventeen times; "sins" not once. Death is also presented in one form or another seventeen times in the same chapter. The moment the Holy Ghost mentions sin, He mentions in connection with it *death*! Why is this? Because nothing short of death would meet what is due to sin—nothing but the death of Christ.

Have you found out that your evil nature is so bad you cannot make it any better? "Oh, no," you say. "I pray, fast, and do all kinds of things to improve it!" Well, have you succeeded? You know you have not. If Satan has not stupefied your conscience with some of his opiates, you will have to own, like the woman in the gospel, that you are nothing better, but rather grown worse. Perhaps another says, "I have tried, and I find that I *cannot* make it any better." Like the man in Mark v., it cannot be kept bound with chains, or tamed, no matter what restraint you put it under. And this just proves the incorrigible badness of the first Adam nature. Now we come to a second question more startling than the first. Have you found the flesh to be so bad that *God* cannot make it any better? "No." Well, you will have to own this to be true if you bow to God's word. "Where is your scripture for it?" you say. In Rom. viii. 7. The natural mind—the

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natural man, if you like—the mind of the flesh, is not “*at enmity*,” that would be bad enough, but it is “enmity against God.”

For 2500 years, from the time Adam and Eve were exiled from the garden, man was on his trial, and became so bad that God had to sweep him away by the flood. Afterwards He put man under law for 1500 years, and finally sent His Son, when they said, “This is the heir; come, let us kill Him.” God had said, “Thou shalt not commit murder,” and they murdered God’s Son, the Saviour of sinners. With that deed the world’s probation ended, and man, guilty and lost, is only awaiting the hour of judgment.

Why the cross if man could be made better? Why the propitiation for sins and substitution for sinners if the flesh could be improved? It is an awful, solemn demonstration of the fact that man cannot improve the flesh; and God cannot; so He brought it to an end judicially in the death of Christ. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin.” We were the serfs, vassals, slaves of sin; tyrannized over by it, but we have died to sin in the death of Christ.

Rom. vi. 6 is the broad statement of the fact that our old man is crucified with Christ; Gal. ii. 20 is the soul individually believing it, planting the foot of faith firmly on the magnificent fact,

and getting out of it all that God intends. It is intensely individual, the soul making it its own. It is true of all believers, though not enjoyed by all. A man may have a fortune left him of £500 a year, but if he does not believe it, he may go on trying to eke out a miserable existence on 6d. a day. The fortune is his, but he gets no enjoyment from it because he does not credit the fact. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me"—is just the soul saying, "I believe what God says about me in Romans vi., and I live in the enjoyment of it."

A crucified man is a man come to an end on a cross of wood. I am crucified, and now I have a new life, entirely outside and apart from Adam, a life that he had nothing to do with. God utterly ignores my standing in the first man Adam, and does not recognize me in it. If I am a child of God, I am before Him in Christ. Christ is my life; "This is the true God and eternal life," and Christ lives in me. I feel how great a thing it is for any of us to be able to say, "I am crucified," yet I am alive; I have got life, I am a living being, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Well may we ask, What manner of persons ought we to be? And, in regard to our practical life, What is to come out? Simply what is in Christ—one

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ceaseless flow, in all our words, our work, our ways, of Christ, because He is in us. It is intensely individual. Can you look up to heaven and say, "He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*"?

When preaching in Ireland, I once mentioned that verse, and a young lady said to me, "If only that had been pointed out to me years ago what I might have been spared! I thought that *I* had to love *Him*. I tried one thing and another without success; but when you were preaching in my brother's cottage you said, '*He loved me.*' I can rest there. I was incapable of loving Him, but He was capable of loving me. He has done it, and I believe it." Is your faith anchored there? Do *you* believe it?

I don't know that I need say more on the first point, but pass on now to the other identifications with Christ. The first is in death; we, "our old man," crucified with Christ. If you accept that, you will never try to make the old nature better. The people who do are to be pitied. If you had a piece of land, and sowed it with seed, and got no crop, what would you do? Get fresh seed. Then supposing you got no crop the second time, what would you do? Get fresh seed again. And supposing there was no crop the third time, after you had manured and husbanded the land in every way, you would say, "I will waste no more seed upon it, it is bad ground and produces nothing." That bad ground is the old nature. Don't sow a

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thought, or word, or look upon it; for God has set it aside as a worthless thing. Why then should you try to get any good from it?

Rom. vi. 11. The flesh is incorrigibly bad, and the only remedy is to reckon to have died "*unto*," not *through* sin, or *in* sin, but "*unto*" sin. You have died, and now you are risen. God reckons it true of you, and if you want to be in the power and enjoyment of it, you must reckon it true as well. Did you notice that little word "*also*"? You will get no blessing if you don't reckon with God. Now I pass on to the second. You are *dead*. What do you do with dead people? Bury them out of sight.

Having died, and been buried out of sight at Christ's burial, and buried with Him by baptism, which is a figure of death, we are raised with Him, and that brings us to our third identification.

In Romans man is looked at as alive in sins; in Ephesians ii. he is "dead in sins," in the lowest possible condition. Think of God coming to us there. We are quickened with Christ; it is a most wonderful thing! Not only is Christ quickened, but I am quickened too. In connection with the first Adam you come in for death, judgment, and condemnation; in connection with the last Adam you have life, righteousness, and glory. I don't ask you if you fully understand it. Who does? But we can just pause and think over such a love to you and

me, not more true of the oldest than of the youngest, not less of the youngest than of the oldest ; we are quickened with Christ.

Fourthly, “we are raised with Him.” (Col. ii. 12.) We are risen with Christ. (Col. iii. 1.) There is the life of the believer who has died in the death of Christ—“Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Did God ever say that of anybody before the death and resurrection of Christ? How could any one have died with Christ when He had never died Himself? That is a characteristic of Christianity. It was not known, and was never true before Christianity, that our life is hid with Christ. Do you believe that you are raised together with Christ? That is the point. Would it not have power over you if you believed it? What a power to separate from the world! I long for the Holy Ghost to apply it, and make it good in our words, our walk, our ways, and our lives. We are resurrection men and women—not risen as to our bodies; for that we wait till He shall come, and take us to Himself; but we are in resurrection life *now*.

How am I to prove that I belong to the resurrection family, that I am a child of resurrection? “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above.” Why? Because we are dead;

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our life is hid with Christ, and this is the practical effect of it.

Eph. ii. 6 : "Raised us up together ;" that is, He has raised up Jew and Gentile. "And made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "We are seated." That is our position, not standing, but seated in restful enjoyment of our present blessings in Christ.

You will find the sixth, seventh, and eighth identifications all in one verse—Rom. viii. 17—"And if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." "Co-heirs," or "heirs together." Think of that. It never says that of the archangel ; never does He say of any of the heavenly intelligences that they are heirs together with Christ. But we, poor dogs of the Gentiles, who are the tail and not the head, afar off and not nigh, think of it—we are heirs with Christ.

Perhaps there is some very poor saint reading this, who has hard work to make both ends meet, and does not know how to face rent-day. You are an heir with Christ, and all He has is yours.

"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John xvii. 23.) The same love that the Father bears to His

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beloved Son is the love with which He loves us who are one with Him. "All things are yours." Why? Because ye are Christ's. Life, death, &c., *all things* are yours, because you are heirs together with Christ. Don't talk about your poverty; you are richer than the archangel—heirs of an inheritance in which the archangel will never share; we are heirs with Christ. We don't half count up our possessions and blessings through being one with Christ. We have received the Holy Ghost and everything in Christ. Now it is only as you are consciously enjoying your oneness with Christ in the heavenlies, by the Holy Ghost in you, that you will be proof against the attacks of Satan against the truth. May God give us to hold the magnificent fact that we are one with Christ—co-heirs.

Every child of God taught by the Holy Ghost accepts what the Father says about him in the first six; but when we come to the seventh—"suffering with Christ"—people begin to question, Why must we suffer? Why should we make ourselves singular, and bring down suffering on ourselves by being peculiar? "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Just in proportion as we represent Christ, we shall be hated by the world as He was. Are we so living as to represent Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost that people can say of us, "There is a man representing Christ"? That is what we

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get in Phil. i.: "To me to live is Christ." Nothing but Christ; feeling nothing that touches self, only what touches Him. How many there are who cannot bear a word! They are exquisitely sensitive as to what touches self; but when anything is said touching Christ, they feel it no more than would a marble statue—they are not touched at all by it.

"Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." It is a real gift. The apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Him; and in Heb. xi. we get, "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

Are you going to shirk rejection with a rejected Christ? You will never have such a moment again; you are left down here to share in His rejection. "If we suffer we shall also reign with Him." Suffering and reigning go together. Many kick vehemently against this, but you don't know what a loss it is not to get it. It is a real gain to suffer for Him. On the road to glory we are left down here to share His path, and to say—

"Master, we would no longer be
Loved by the world that hated Thee."

Can you say—

"I'd not have joy where He had woe,
Be rich where He was poor"?

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Have you got hold of those words, "They are not of the world"? It is true. God give us to accredit it!

Lastly, "glorified together." What an end to the chain of our identifications with Christ! What a prospect! When I hear saints talking of their trials and troubles, I say, What are they in comparison to glory? Who has ever been through what Paul went through, and what does he say? "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed." Everything you can see is passing away; are you living in the changeless, eternal things which are yours? You are going to be glorified together with Christ.

"We two are so joined,
He'll not be in glory, and leave me behind."

He will not be in glory alone. Look at Rom. viii., and see those five links stretching from eternity to eternity. Think of it. "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate . . . whom He did predestinate, them He also called: whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." There it is, a wonderful chain, hanging from side to side of the throne, beginning with foreknowledge and ending with glory. Do you believe it? Are you in the enjoyment of it? Receive it on the authority of God's word, and then you will have the enjoyment of it, and power to carry it out.

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Now let us just go over these eight points of identification :

- 1st. Crucified together with Christ.
- 2nd. Buried together with Christ.
- 3rd. Quickened together with Christ.
- 4th. Raised together with Christ.
- 5th. Seated together in Christ.
- 6th. Heirs together with Christ.
- 7th. Sufferers together with Christ.
- 8th. Glorified together with Christ.

This last is our sure unfailing prospect, and we were never so near the glory as now. A few more steps through the trackless, waste, wild, howling wilderness, and then the Father's home.

“And how will recompense His smile
The sufferings of this little while.”

The Lord give us to live in the enjoyment of the wonderful things which are to be ours throughout eternity, for His name's sake. H. M. H.

“WORTHY of death, O Lord, we were ;
That vengeance was our due ;
In grace Thy spotless Lamb did bear
Himself our sins and guilt and shame ;
Justice our Surety slew,
With Him our Surety we have died,
With Him we there were crucified.

“Quickened with Him, with life divine,
Raised with Him from the dead ;
His own, and all His own, are Thine,
Shall with Him in His glories shine,
His Church's living Head !
We, who were worthy but to die,
Now with Him, ‘Abba, Father,’ cry.”

APPROPRIATION.

It is as necessary for the salvation of the soul that we should *appropriate* the remedy God has placed within our reach as it would be for a hungry man to eat the food set before him, or for a drowning man to seize the rope thrown out to him.

You may *know* the way of salvation, yet be lost after all, because you do not *take* that way. You may know that Christ died for all, yet perish in your sins, because you have never *appropriated* that death to yourself; as the Lord says, "Except ye *eat* the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John vi. 53); that is to say, if you have never by *faith* appropriated the death of Christ to yourself, as for *you*, so as to be able thankfully to say, He died for *me*, you are still dead in trespasses and sins. Naaman would have remained a leper, though he knew of the river Jordan, if he had never gone down *into* Jordan, in the obedience of faith; and you may remain in your sins for ever, though knowing well that there is the blood which cleanseth, if you have never "washed your robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Many people say, week after week, "I believe

in the forgiveness of sins," and yet they do not believe in the forgiveness of *their own* sins. Of what use would it be to me to say, "I believe in the forgiveness of Peter's sins or Paul's sins," if I could not have the satisfaction of knowing that *my* sins too were forgiven? You say, I believe every word in the Bible—"Thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." (James ii. 19.) You believe, for example, that verse, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) Have *you* then received the remission of *your* sins? If not, what is your belief worth? The fact is, you believe *in* God (as the devils do), but you do not believe God; for the same God who tells you that you are a sinner tells you that Christ died for sinners, and rose again, and tells you also that "whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." You do not *appropriate* God's word; you do not take it home to yourself as God's voice to you, and perhaps you even think it would be *presumption* to do so.

Now here lies the difficulty with many a convicted soul, "How am I to know that I *may* 'appropriate' the benefits of Christ's atoning death? Would it not be presumption for one so *unworthy* to think God would receive *me*?" I ask, Is it presumption to say you are a sinner? Of course not, you reply; we are all sinners. Is

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it then presumption to suppose that Christ *died* for sinners? No; for the Bible says so. Is it presumption to believe that Christ *receives* sinners? No; for the Bible says that too. Then where would be the presumption in coming *as* a sinner, *because* a sinner, to One who *died* for sinners, and *receiveth* sinners? No, my friend; the presumption is in refusing, delaying, hesitating to *appropriate* what God offers, and this unbelief (which the devil persuades you is humility) is the very sin that will seal your condemnation if you die in it; for it is written, "He that believeth not is condemned already, *because* he hath not believed." (John iii. 18.) And again, "The fearful and unbelieving" (those who are afraid to trust God, to take Him at His word, and to appropriate salvation) "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." (Rev. xxi. 8.)

What then is this "appropriation" but *taking home to oneself* the truths we have believed, in a certain way, from our very infancy, and when we have taken our true place as guilty and helpless sinners, accepting all that God offers us, and *making it our own*? Of course we could not make it our own if it were not ours to do so; that would be *mis-appropriation*. But God says to those who take Him at His word, "All things are yours . . . and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. iii. 21, 23.) And nothing delights Him more than for His children to *help themselves*

to "the things that are freely given to us of 'God.'" (1 Cor. ii. 12.)

But we must remember that it is only by the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit we can rightly appropriate Scripture; for the devil always aims to make people misapply it. He will get a hypocrite to appropriate texts that are meant only for the comfort of true believers, and he will try to fill sincere believers with doubts and fears, and, if possible, to drive them to despair by applying to themselves those parts of Scripture that are meant for the warning of hypocrites.

What a wonderful Book is that which we call the Bible! It proves itself to all who appropriate it as the Word of the living God, and it contains portions that are applicable to every sort of person and every state of soul. For example, if a man is a thief, a drunkard, or covetous—"Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. vi. 10.) It says to a murderer, "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John iii. 15); to a hypocrite, "The hypocrite's hope shall perish" (Job viii. 13); to a careless pleasure-seeker, "Know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Eccles. xi. 9); to one who is trying to keep the law, and says he has never done his neighbour any harm, "Yet lackest thou one thing" (Luke xviii. 22), "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is

guilty of all" (James ii. 10), "By deeds of law there shall no flesh be justified" (Rom. iii. 20); to one who goes to a place of worship, says his prayers, reads his Bible, and yet has never seen himself a *lost sinner*, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. iii. 1); to one who is wrapped up in business, or absorbed in the cares of life to the neglect of his soul, "Thou fool!" "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36); for those who think themselves good, or are trying to *be* good, "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 10, 12), "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6), "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one" (Job xiv. 4). But to an awakened, anxious, sin-burdened soul the word is, "Come unto Me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I *will* give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28), "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37); and for all those who, seeing their sinfulness, plead only the blood of Jesus, "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11), "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7), Thy sins *are* forgiven . . . Thy faith hath saved thee; go in PEACE." (Luke vii. 48, 50.)

May God enable the reader to *appropriate* such of the above passages as apply to his or her case.

E. B. G.

THE SURE RESTING-PLACE OF FAITH.

IF my soul rests entirely on the work of Christ and His acceptance, as the One who appears in the presence of God for me, that is a finished work and a perfect acceptance. "As *He* is, so are we in this world;" so that "herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." (1 John iv. 17.) Now what men too often substitute for this is the examination of the effects of the Spirit in me. The effects of regeneration are put as the ground of rest in place of redemption, whence I sometimes hope when I see those effects, sometimes despond when I see the flesh working; and having put the work of the Spirit in place of the work of Christ, the confidence I am commanded to hold fast never exists, and I doubt whether I am in the faith at all. All this results from substituting the work of the Spirit of God in me, for the work, victory, resurrection, and ascension of Christ actually accomplished—the *sure* (because finished) resting-place of faith, which never alters, never varies, and is always the same before God. If it be said, "Yes, but I cannot see it as plainly, because of the flesh and unbelief," this does not alter the truth; and to

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whatever extent this dimness proceeds treat it as unbelief and sin, not as the state of a Christian, or as God hiding His face. The discovery of sin in you, hateful and detestable as it is, is no ground for doubting, because it was by reason of *this*, to atone for *this*, because you were *this*, that Christ died; and Christ is risen, and there is an end of that question.

But it will be said, "I fully believe that Christ is the very true Son of God, one with the Father, and all His work and grace; but I do not know that I have an interest in Him. This is the question, and this is quite a different question." Not so; but the subtlety of Satan, and bad teaching, which would still throw you back off Christ. God, for our comfort, has identified the two things by stating, "That by Him all that believe are justified from all things." In a word, to say, "I believe, but I do not know that I have an interest," is a delusion of the devil; for God says it is those who believe who have the interest; that is His way of dealing. I have no more right to believe that I am a sinner, as God views it, in myself, than that I am righteous in Christ. The same testimony declares that none is righteous, and that believers are justified.

J. N. D.

"THE sinner who believes is free,
Can say, 'The Saviour died for me ;'
Can point to the atoning blood,
And say, 'This made my peace with God.'"

“THERE IS ONE BODY.”

EPH. iv. 4 ; 1 COR. xii. 13.

NOTICE in these passages of Scripture the word ONE. There is *One Body*—not two or more, but *one*.

It is the Church that is thus spoken of. The Church is One Body. (Col. i. 18–24; 1 Cor. xii. 12–31.)

By the Church we mean that great company of individuals gathered out from the world since Pentecost through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. (2 Thess. ii. 13.)

Of this One Body the risen, ascended, glorified Christ is Head. Of Him it is written, “And He is the Head of the Body, the Church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.” (Col. i. 18.)

Christians often speak of Christ as Head of the Church, much as a general in command is head of his army, a king head of a kingdom, a master head of a school. It is evident no thought of *union* enters into such a use of the word “head;” nor is this the sense in which Scripture employs the term. Scripture speaks of Him as “Head of *the Body*, the Church.”

The figure here used is that of a human body—Head and members forming ONE—the members

united by the Spirit to the Head and to each other are One Body.

The Church was formed by the coming down of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost (Acts ii.), and baptizing all believers into One Body, and uniting them to Him who is the Head in heaven.

The Body could not be formed until He who is “Head of the Body” was glorified. Not till then did the Holy Ghost come down to abide here, and to baptize all truly saved persons, whether Jews or Gentiles, into One Body. (John vii. 39 ; 1 Cor. xii. 13.)

To that One Body all the saved on earth now belong. They are members of it. Other membership Scripture knows nothing of.

Each member is needed for the completeness of the whole, and not one can be done without. The head cannot say to the feet, “I have no need of you.” (1 Cor. xii. 21.)

Independency is rigidly excluded. “Those members, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.” (v. 22.)

It is God who hath set the members, *every one of them*, in the Body, as it hath pleased Him. The members do not set themselves there. (v. 18.)

The Church is the object of Christ’s unwearying love, and because He loved it He gave Himself for it.

He nourishes and cherishes it as a man his own flesh—“For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” (Eph. v. 29, 30.)

He sanctifies and cleanses it with the washing of water by the Word. (*v.* 26.)

Ere long He will present it to Himself “a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” (*v.* 27.)

The oneness of the Body can never be broken. It exists to-day as truly as in the first bright days of Christianity. Its oneness depends not on man’s faithfulness, but on the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost.

The outward oneness of God’s people is gone, never to be restored on earth.

And this work of the enemy was not only foreseen, but foretold. (Acts xx. 29, 30.)

To think and attempt to restore things to their original condition is but to manifest our folly. Such efforts, like those of Israel in Numbers xiv. 40, 45, could only end in further defeat and disaster.

But in 2 Timothy God has given directions for the path of His servants in a day of increasing disorder and failure, such as ours is. What each believer is responsible to do is also named in chap. ii. 19–21.

And the blessed fact stated in Matt. xviii. 20 ever remains, coupled, as it surely must be, with Eph. iv. 3.

And the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost is assured until the Lord shall come to call His Church away. (John xiv. 16.)

“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” (John xiii. 17.)

MAN'S RUIN AND GOD'S PURPOSE.

WHAT a wonderful thing the death of Christ is! In it we see the ending up of the trial of man in the flesh. Adam's race, sinners and transgressors, is set aside; nothing but death and judgment is their due. But if death and judgment should overtake all, heaven would be empty of sinners saved by grace, and the counsels of God remain hidden and unfulfilled. *This could not be.* God, who knew the end from the beginning, has secured *all His own in Christ*. Hence Christ it is who dies for men, the Son of God, securing God's glory, vindicating His righteousness, meeting all His claims, annulling the whole power of Satan, and bearing the judgment of sin.

God's answer to this glorious work is the Man Christ Jesus in the glory of God; the cross vacated, the grave empty, the Son of Man at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. Man, in his folly and blindness, duped by Satan, persists in trying to improve the flesh—a thing that God gave up at the cross as utterly incorrigible and worthless. But what is God Himself doing in the midst of all the ruin? He has commenced a new creation. *Believers* in that blessed, glorified Man are, *in Christ, a new creation* (2 Cor. v.

17); *created* in righteousness and true holiness (or holiness of truth); *created in Christ* Jesus unto good works (Eph. iv. 24; ii. 10); and God's counsels in Christ are revealed. (Eph. i. 3.) What are *you* doing? Vainly endeavouring to patch up the old man, or *have you believed on Christ in glory?*

E. H. C.

AN HONEST AND GOOD HEART.

LUKE viii. 15.

AN honest and good heart is the heart that loves Christ. That man has an honest and good heart that finds Christ so precious that He would not give Him up for anything.

We may have to suffer for Christ's sake in this world; but no suffering can take away from us any of the blessings that we have got in Him.

We have *all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*; and neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

They that received the seed on the stony ground had not an honest and good heart; for they gave up Christ in the time of persecution and affliction.

They that received the seed among thorns had not an honest and good heart; for they tried to

keep the love of money and of pleasure in their hearts together with the love of Christ; but this cannot be. The love of money and of pleasure will prevail over the love of Christ, if we try to keep them both in our hearts at the same time.

Neither money nor pleasure could get for us what Christ has got for us; and therefore they should never be allowed to have a place together in the same heart.

We could not by pleasure or money get pardon and life, but we have got them through Christ.

We could not by pleasure or money get a treasure in heaven, but we have got it through Christ.

He is the Word, which is the seed of life to us.

No man can have an honest and good heart who does not keep Christ as the Word of life.

But if he keeps Him, then he will bring forth fruit.

Everything we do by which we show that Christ is precious is fruit.

To confess His name is fruit.

To give thanks to Him is fruit.

To suffer for His sake is fruit.

To show kindness to one of His disciples for His sake is fruit.

This fruit is brought forth with patience, because we have to bear His cross and endure many things.

FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.

I MUCH question if the bare idea of forgiveness, apart from the solid groundwork on which it rests, viz., the infinite atonement of Christ—"forgiveness in His name"—would ever satisfy the conscience. The grovelling thought of escape is, indeed, the careless thought of the unbelieving mass; without one just thought, either of the character of God, or of the evil of sin.

Alas! our narrow minds and dull hearts deprive the gospel of its glory. It is the glorious gospel of the blessed God; it represents God in the gracious place of the Giver, and sets man in his only place of possible blessing, that of a simple recipient.

It is well to keep this principle constantly before the soul: It is not what we *renounce*, any more than that which we *do*, which makes us Christians, but that which we *receive*.

How has the gospel been degraded in being regarded merely as a remedy for sin, which it assuredly is; but it is far more. It is the manifestation of God Himself in such a way to man as a sinner as to make him happy in God, whilst God is glorified in thus making him supremely happy.

To be conformed to the image of God's Son, the firstborn among many brethren, is the blessed destiny of those whom God has already justified. It is upon the certainty of this that the Holy Ghost acts in our conscience and on our affections, not making what we shall be to depend on what we practically are, I mean as

Christians ; but, taking the divine certainty of what we *shall be* as the mighty moral lever, now to elevate our affections ; and even now, “ beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

An over-sensitiveness about our own character argues a state of soul little occupied with Christ. If our care be His glory, He will in due time vindicate us ; and what is not cleared up now, will be in that day. (1 Cor. iv.)

To be crucified to the world is not so highly accounted of by us as it should be. How heavenly a thing is it to be deaf and dead to this world’s sweetest music ! (See Gal. vi. 14, marg.)

Make others to see Christ in you—moving, doing, speaking, and thinking. Your *actions* will speak of Him, if He be in you.

Go where you will, your soul will find no rest but in Christ’s bosom. Enquire for Him, come to Him, and rest you on Christ, the Son of God. I sought Him, and I found in Him all I can wish or want.

The day of the Lord is at hand, when all men shall appear as they are ; there shall be no borrowed colours in that day. Men borrow the lustre of Christianity, but how many counterfeit masks will be burned in the day of God !

Put Christ’s love to the trial, and put upon it burdens, and then it will appear love indeed. We *employ* not His love, and therefore we *know* it not.

Samuel Rutherford used to say, in speaking of Christ, “ I am put to my wits’ end to get His name made great.” Beloved young Christian, can you say so ?

ASSOCIATION WITH CHRIST.

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

COLOSSIANS iii. 3.

“YE are dead!” What depths of meaning
In these wondrous words I see !
Jesus bore in His own person
All the judgment due to me :
He has suffered in my stead,
Thus I reckon *I* am dead.

Dead and “buried” too with Jesus,
Full deliverance now I know ;
Freed from sin and Satan’s power,
Having died to all below,
In the cross of Christ I see
God has made an end of me.

“Quickened” now and “raised together,”
Faith believes what God hath said ;
He my Life is now in glory,
Seated there my risen Head :
Old creation things are o’er,
All things new for evermore.

Now ’tis Christ, and Christ for ever,
That mine eyes desire to see—
Him in whom all fulness dwelleth,
Centre of God’s counsels He ;
For through grace I now belong
To that place where He has gone.

With Himself my life is hidden
Safe in God, in heaven’s retreat ;
’Tis in Him, that man in glory,
That I’m perfect and complete ;
And when manifested He,
Like and with Him I shall be.

L. W.

THE CONSCIENCE PURGED AND THE HEART WON.

BLESSED as the knowledge of forgiveness of sins and acceptance in Christ is, it is not enough in itself to make us perfectly and always happy.

To say so may occasion some surprise, yet the writer has before his mind certain living witnesses to the truth of what he says.

Were you to question these individuals, they would assure you, in the most positive way, that they had no doubt of their souls' salvation. Nor might you be able to discover anything that would lead you to suspect the reality of their faith in Christ. If they knew you well enough to give you their confidence, you would find that their Christianity is a sunless, joyless thing, and that their hearts, instead of being like the well-watered gardens of God, rather resemble wide stretches of desert sand—barren, cheerless, and bare.

Some anxious reader of these lines, whose conscience has not been purged by the blood of Christ, may wonder at this. Such an one might exclaim, "If *I* only knew that my sins were forgiven, and my soul saved, happy indeed *I* should be." And there is truth in what you say. You would be happy. The happiness of relief from the pressure of a burdened conscience would be yours. The happiness of knowing you were saved

III.

from all that your sins deserved—hell and its endless misery.

Your conscience would be set at rest in the presence of God through the divinely-given apprehension of the perfect work of Christ, by which the believer's sins have been for ever put away. You would see how groundless were your fears, inasmuch as God had said that your sins and iniquities He would remember no more. But why, let me ask, is not this happiness yours?

Remember that the true and only ground of peace is the finished work of Christ, upon which God has set His seal in raising Him from the dead. It is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul—the precious blood of God's own Lamb, and nothing else.

If you will pause and think for a moment, you will perceive that no inward experiences or outward acts could possibly affect in any way whatsoever that great and glorious work. Even if you felt all you could wish to feel, and loved the Lord as you would wish to love Him, and served Him with the most fervent zeal, it could add nothing to the value of those infinite sufferings of Jesus or to His resurrection, which in themselves are the sole ground of peace, to the exclusion of anything and everything else.

You have been looking within for evidences of a work of God's Spirit. Such evidences as you would fain find you have as yet failed to discover,

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though you are not without hope. But let us suppose that you had found every mark of a real work there; yet even that would not have been a true source of peace. To think so would be to put regeneration and its effects in the place of redemption—the work of the Spirit in the place of the work of Christ—a finished work, complete, accepted of God, against whom we have sinned, a work to which nothing can be added nor anything taken from. Your sorrow for sin, your tears of contrition, your prayers, your repentance, your faith, your good works, add naught to that precious blood—infinately and eternally efficacious—whereby God justifies the ungodly, and by which He is justified in justifying them.

We linger over this point because of its supreme importance. When Abel obtained testimony that he was righteous, we are told that God bare testimony to his *gifts*, not to his piety, not to his faith, though faith was the spring of his action, but to his gifts. Yes, the firstling of the flock, and the fat thereof—precious shadows of good things to come—it was to *that* God had respect, and to *that* He bare witness. It spake in that ear divine of Christ in all His personal excellency, and of His atoning death, in virtue of which Abel was reckoned righteous. It is the same still. Ah, dear anxious soul, if God forgives, and endows the believer with infinite blessing, He in doing so testifies to the preciousness of that one offering of

which Abel's was a type. God loves to have occasion to express His delight in Christ and His work. Such an occasion God finds when a poor sinner believes in Jesus. Though his sins are more in number than the leaves of the forest, and blacker than a thousand nights, God justifies him from them all, and challenges the uplifting of one condemning or accusing voice. (Rom. viii. 33, 34.)

And if in your heart you receive this testimony as the very word of God for your soul, what can hinder your having peace at once? Nothing.

Still, as we have already said, when these things are known and for a time enjoyed, they are not in themselves enough to yield constant joy. Yet though we say this, no one will be so foolish as to think there can be any true spiritual happiness if the soul is a stranger to them. With these it must begin.

But then we are not all conscience, we have a heart too; and those of whom we have spoken in an earlier part of this paper, and for whose profit we write, may have peace of conscience, but their heart has not been won and satisfied. Unless the heart is gained and set on the one precious, peerless, all-satisfying object—even Christ in glory—there will be weariness and disappointment, though the needs of the conscience have been fully met.

Clearly it was otherwise with Paul. His letter to the Philippians is proof of that. "Ah," you say, "Paul was an apostle." So he was; but I do

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not speak of Paul the apostle, but of Paul the Christian. As a Christian, a sinner saved by grace, what had he that you have not? The same Saviour, the same open heavens, the same citizenship, the same high calling, the same heavenly hopes and associations. There is no difference in your portion, the difference lies elsewhere. And if asked to point it out, we should say it consists in this, that the Saviour in glory, whose work on the cross had given rest to his conscience, had possession of his heart also. A living Person, once dead but now alive again, and in whose face all the glory of God shined, had made *Himself* known to Paul. That revelation revolutionized him. It changed the current of his whole life. Henceforth all that had been gain to him as a man in the flesh he flung away as so much dross; and in his eyes, everything that hindered his growth in the knowledge of Christ was to be hated, cast off, shunned, as a man would shun a poisonous vapour or turn away from a viper that crossed his path.

Have *you* ever seized the great fact that there is a living One in heaven—Jesus the Son of God, the eternal lover of your soul, who gave Himself for you on that cross of shame and agony? Let your lingering thoughts ascend to where He is in the glory of God. Gaze upon that heavenly Man. Do you know Him?

Challenged thus, you can but own Him to be

your Saviour. Saviour from what? An eternity of darkness and cloud, of storm and tempest, of judgment and wrath, and banishment from that home made glad by the smile, love, and presence of God. And what has He saved you for? That you might be God's child, brought near to Him now in love with the Spirit's cry of "Abba, Father" in your heart and on your tongue. An heir of God too, joint-heir with Christ, soon to be glorified together and to share with Him all that He is heir to. And has this great salvation been accomplished by an arbitrary act of power? Nay, but at an infinite cost you have been redeemed, even by the sufferings, blood-shedding, death of that Saviour now in heaven, alive for evermore.

Is there nothing in all this to win your heart and to bind you with the golden chains of love to Him and to His blessed service here on earth?

Can you turn coldly away from such a Saviour as if you did not care for His companionship? You were glad to get His salvation, and having got it, do you think you have all?

Would you be like the lepers of Luke xvii. 12-19, of whom only one, when he saw that he was healed, turned back to give glory to God, and he a Samaritan? "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" Would you, like them, so soon forget Him who has had mercy on you, and be so content with the blessing as to lose sight of the Blessor?

When you reach heaven—home—will you have anything apart from Christ? Will He suffice *then* to fill your heart? and is He not enough *now*? You would find Him enough and more than enough, if you had a thousand hearts instead of one. But He does not give His company to those who value it not. When of old He drew near and went with the two disciples to Emmaus, “He made as though He would have gone further. But they *constrained* Him, saying, Abide with us. And He went in to tarry with them.” The result we know. He whose words had made their hearts burn within them, while as an unknown stranger He talked with them by the way, now opened their eyes that they should know Him. What a manifestation! How it led them back to their own company, there to tell their wondrous tale, and in common with the others to receive a still further revelation; for as they spake, “Jesus Himself stood in the midst.” (Luke xxiv.)

It is the same to-day, only with this difference, that we know Him now in heaven. Through the Word and the power of the Holy Ghost it is that Christ is made known to our souls. Seek to know Him whom none but the Father knows, search into those riches which are declared to be unsearchable, and blessing after blessing will flow to you. And as Christ Himself becomes more intimately known, He will displace all other objects, and fill your heart with joy and peace unutterable and divine.

THE "I's" AND "ME's" OF ROMANS VII.

THERE are three things in this chapter. In the first six verses, we have the doctrine—we have died to the law by the body of Christ, and we are married to another, even Christ risen from the dead; then verses 7 to 13, the conclusion, with the enquiry, Is the law sin? Does it work death? and verses 14 to end, experience, before being delivered from the law. And here it is of importance to mark how the apostle uses *I* and *we*. When he says *I*, he is taking us in our individual state; but when he says *we*, then it is as Christians, as believers in Christ, that he is speaking of us. If he says *I*, then he is beginning to deal with individual members; for if I begin to talk of myself, then I find sin in myself every day. It is a personal, practical consciousness of what is working in my heart. But that is not my place in Christ, and there is the difference. And this gives us the key to the passage. It is one, who has Christian knowledge, judging what flesh is, but what it is in its effect on me in the presence of, and under the law. It is what I am in myself, that is, in the flesh. I am carnal; in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing; therefore, in this part of the chapter all is *I* and *me*, and they are used some thirty times; but he never speaks

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of Christ or of the Spirit at all until the close of the chapter. It is the experience of what the flesh is, viewed in the light of the requirements of a spiritual law, deliverance being yet unknown, and not the knowledge by faith of what I am in Christ. It is the personal experience of myself in flesh, but mixed with the clear knowledge of a Christian, who looks back at it; but not the state of a man in Christ, whom the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made free.

Then, what is described in the seventh chapter is not simply the effect of conflict between the new and the old nature, but the effect of being under the law when *both* are there. It does not say that Christ is good; but it takes much lower ground, and says, the law is holy, just, and good. The seventh chapter is the discussion of the law applied to the practical experience of a man struggling to live righteously under it. A natural man cannot delight in the law of God with his heart, the new nature does; but then, according to that nature, we see he always wills what is right, yet he never does it, because he has no power. Now, don't you find, in a vast majority of cases, that what you want is power to do what is right? Well, then, the law will never give it you; for the law is as weak to give you power to do right, as it is strong to condemn you when you do wrong. The secret of it all is, that when in the flesh there is no power,

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and it is all self till we see that. Till Christ is known as the deliverer from the law, it is always *I, I, I*, and we shall be floundering about, and only getting deeper and deeper into it, like a man in a morass, who, attempting to lift one leg out, only sinks the other deeper into the mire: there may be a desire to get out, but he must have a deliverer; there is ever the desire to be this or that, or to do this or that, thus being occupied with self instead of Christ. It is true you ought to desire holiness, but how are you to get power to be holy?

Suppose you were, what will never be, a great deal more holy than you are, would that give you peace, when you have not been brought to a righteous standing before God in Christ? If you think your own holiness could give you peace, you are not even depending on His blood, and certainly you do not know yourselves. What, then, is all this struggling meant for? Just to let you know you can't have peace in this way, nor righteousness and holiness in the flesh and by law; that you may know yourselves, and what flesh is.

There is such a tendency in us to be thinking of these *I's* and *me's*, thus to set up *self*, in God's place, that God says, Well, you shall have so much of *self*, that you shall be thoroughly glad to have done with yourself, and, to this end, God often suffers us to be brought through all this, to

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be put under the law, with a new nature and a good will, which only leads to "O wretched man that I am," for it is only man. There is the love of good, but no power to do it, for man is as powerless as he is wicked. He is brought, through labouring to do, to cry out, "Who shall deliver?" He is looking for another to deliver him; he gives it up as a hopeless thing, yet cannot, dare not do without it. It is not that man is to get a better *self*, but a deliverance from self. This may be the work of a day or years, according to circumstances: man is brought to his own level, and then God in grace can come in. Then comes thanksgiving, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (v. 25.)

The only way by which man gets power, is by being shown that he has none of himself, and then he is not delivered by getting victory, and so peace, but by finding he is in Christ, has died to and is out of the flesh, and only in Christ, through whom he lives before God. Then God can give him power. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Man must know God as his Saviour, before he knows Him as his strength. There must be salvation, then comes peace and progress. J. N. D.

May we still, God's mind discerning,
To the Lamb for wisdom go :
There new wonders daily learning,
All the depths of mercy know.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

“WHEREFORE laying aside all malice . . . as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” Such is the exhortation in 1 Peter ii. 1-3. But before there can be any true growth we must be brought into relationship with God as His children, and thus *know Him as our Father*. Without this, though awakened through grace, we are sure to be found struggling in legal bondage.

In nature all are children of wrath and disobedience, estranged from God, sinners guilty and lost; but through faith in His beloved Son, we receive the forgiveness of sins, and pass from death unto life. (John v. 24.) “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall *receive remission of sins*.” (Acts x. 43.) And “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but *have everlasting life*.” (John iii. 16.) Henceforth we are the children of God by faith, and the Spirit dwells in us, whereby we can address God as our Father. “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself

beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 15, 16.) And again, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.)

How deeply precious—a poor sinner reconciled to God, standing in grace, His own child by faith, looking up into the face of God, and crying, "*Father!*" It is the first lisping, so to speak, of a true child of God. All distance and estrangement gone—brought right home to God, to know Him as Father, and to enjoy for ever the Father's love and care. This blessed truth came from the lips of Jesus immediately after His resurrection. "Go," said He to Mary Magdalene, "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.) Well may the beloved disciple John, who leant upon the bosom of his Master, and knew what was dear to His heart, exclaim, "*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us*, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 1, 2.)

And now, before we proceed further, let us ask

the reader of these lines in 'all love, "Are you a child of God? Do you know what it is to be at peace with God? Do you know Him as *your Father?*" Many, through self-occupation or defective teaching, shrink from what they consider self-confidence, and do not like to be too sure. This is nothing less than Satan's device to rob God of His glory, and the believer of the knowledge of his proper portion and relationship. He whispers that it is *true humility*, whereas it is simply the pride of our fallen natural heart. It is true humility to thankfully take God at His word, and joyfully confess the relationship and place of privilege into which His grace introduces all His own.

In the very epistle from which we quote the verses at the head of this paper, the apostle addresses the people of God as "elect according to the foreknowledge of *God the Father*," &c. (1 Peter i. 2.) And again, "If ye call on *the Father*," &c. (1 Peter i. 17.) So that Paul, John, and Peter alike bring before us the blessed truth, that God is the Father of christians, and that He would have His children know and enjoy their relationship.

Now, as every earthly father desires that his children should grow from babyhood to manhood, so also is it the desire of God our Father that His children should grow spiritually. But if a child is to grow healthy and strong, he needs

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three things—*good food, light, and air*. And if a Christian would grow in soul, he requires the same; that is, he needs to feed upon the word of God, to depend upon the Spirit of truth to give him light and understanding, and to keep himself separate from the world whose evil atmosphere when imbibed always checks growth.

Nothing but the Word is true food to the soul. Why is it that many make but little progress in divine things? Because only too often they are feeding on all kinds of light literature, instead of delighting in the Scriptures. Oh that there may be an increased desire in all who read these lines to drink in more of the pure mental milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby! There is nothing so sweet, nothing so satisfying; and the spiritual appetite increases instead of diminishes as we feed thereon. Our capacity grows. We find out too our ignorance, and desire to know more of the One who is revealed in the precious pages of truth.

But in reading the Word, it is all-important that we should be found accompanying it with prayer, that the Spirit of truth may unfold its hid treasures to our souls. He alone can teach us aright, and lead us to a deeper acquaintance with the mind of God.

And nothing is a greater hindrance to spiritual growth than tampering with the world. We are surrounded with it on all hands, and it is a very

evil atmosphere. The flesh in us, if allowed for a moment, immediately feeds upon it; and Satan is ever watchful to present his gilded baits in the most insidious ways. But "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John i. 3.) Blessed be His name, we can never again be children of wrath when once we have become children of God; but it is very easy to fall into a cold, carnal condition. And with carnality, delight in the sincere milk of the Word departs, and the Spirit is grieved. A more miserable condition one can scarcely conceive than that of a carnal Christian. He is spoilt for this world; and an accusing conscience will not let him enjoy the pleasures of sin. He cannot indulge in its follies and vanities, though he may endeavour to put a good face on matters in the presence of man; but God, who knows the heart, knows all the misery that lies beneath. Of such how truly can it be said, "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." If the eye of a poor carnal wanderer from God should light upon this paper, may the tender love of an ever-gracious Father draw his poor heart back to Himself in true repentance, deep self-loathing, and confession of his sins. Surely then he shall know and enjoy again the light of His countenance, and the joy of a Father's love.

And next we would call our reader's attention to the three stages in the spiritual growth of the

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children of God, as brought before us in 1 John ii. 12–18. We will quote the passage, as it is full of instruction :

“I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.”

Now verse 12 is written to all Christians. The sins of all God’s children are forgiven for Christ’s name’s sake. Next they are divided twice into three classes—fathers, young men,

and little children (or babes). The fathers denote those who have grown up to full spiritual manhood; the young men those who have made good progress in divine things, but are not yet full grown; the babes those who have been recently brought to a knowledge of the truth.

The fathers have known Him that is from the beginning; that is, they know Christ from the beginning of His manifestation; their souls are grounded in the knowledge of that blessed One in the fulness and glory of His Person and work as unfolded in the word of God. The same is repeated in verse 14, as this knowledge embraces the whole truth about Christ, and Christ is all.

The young men have overcome the wicked one. This is very blessed in a world overcome by the wicked one. It shows the mighty power of grace in the soul, separating the children of God from that which is of the enemy. But in the second address, it is added, "*Because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*" Weak and feeble at first, they have increased in strength, through reliance upon God, and having His word abiding in them. This is one great source of strength. It is the word of God that fortifies the soul against the attacks of the enemy. You may rely upon it, we shall be weak and powerless against his subtleties and attacks without it. But the Spirit of God adds a solemn warning to those who have only progressed

so far as to be called young men, and who have not yet come to full growth, saying, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." We have not space in this paper to go into all the details of these verses, which form a subject in themselves; but it must suffice to put our readers on their guard. They are not out of danger yet. The world, and the things that are in it, are very ensnaring. The fathers are looked at as matured with such a knowledge of Christ, that they have learnt the vanity of man's world. Blessed indeed for the soul when it is so. But, alas! how many who have run well for a time, and have progressed to a certain point, have been inveigled away from occupation with Christ through the lust of the flesh or of the eye, or through the pride of life, of which the world is formed. Take care!

And lastly, the little children, or babes. They know not much of the word of God, or the character of the world; but they know the Father. And in the freshness of the first love of Christ, and new-born sense of the Father's love, they so enjoy their newly-found treasures, that instinctively they would shrink from that which is opposed. But in the second writing, the apostle warns them it is the last time, and puts them on their guard against the opposers of Christ.

Furthermore, in the families of men we often meet with children who are suffering from various

maladies. And God takes up these things in His word to convey to us the defects that are too often found in His children. For instance, there are some who suffer from deafness; and in Heb. v. 11 the apostle styles those whom he is addressing as *dull of hearing*, referring to the moral condition of their souls. Speaking of Christ, he says, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are *dull of hearing*. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

How many are found in this state at the present day! Always feeding upon the elementary truths of Christianity, without going on. He compares them to babes who have need of milk,* and not of strong meat. They lack the spiritual capacity to grasp the fuller unfoldings of the

* We would call attention to the different manner in which the milk is used in this passage, and in 1 Peter ii. 2. Here the milk sets forth elementary truth for babes, in contrast to the full truth, or strong meat. Whereas in 1 Peter all alike are exhorted to desire the pure milk of the Word with the simplicity of new-born babes.

truth ; for “strong meat belongeth,” he continues, “to them that are of full age” (or grown men), who by reason of habit have their senses exercised, so that they are enabled to distinguish good from evil—that which is of God, and that which is of Satan. May God in His grace keep us from dulness of hearing, and our ears open to the whole truth, so that it may sink into our hearts, and form our lives.

Again, there are other children who are blind ; and in 2 Peter i. 5–9 we read : “And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue ; and to virtue knowledge ; and to knowledge temperance ; and to temperance patience ; and to patience godliness ; and to godliness brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things *is blind, and cannot see afar off*, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” Now nothing is easier than for a Christian to lack diligence, and fail to add the qualities here enumerated, which alone could make him a fruitful branch for God. And the consequences are blindness and short-sightedness. The spiritually-minded Christian is apt to wonder that some believers see so little. Here is the secret. A bad moral state clouds the spiritual vision. We are not to think for a moment that it means that

one whose eyes have been opened to see beauty in Christ can ever have them closed again. No, it indicates a bad state of soul, through the lack of obedience to this exhortation; a condemning conscience in consequence, and hence seeing nothing clear. So dark indeed do some get, that one raises the question whether really they ever had their eyes opened; but "the Lord knoweth them that are His." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) It is a sad state to be in. The Lord said to the Jewish disciples, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matt. vi. 21-23.) Solemn word!

And again, we often meet with lame children. And sad to say, lameness of walk and conduct is a most prevalent malady amongst the children of God. In Heb. xii. 13 we read: "And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is *lame* be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." Lameness is manifest to all, and the world soon detects a lame Christian. It takes many forms; crooked words, crooked walk, crooked ways. How sad to find the name of Christ reproached through the lame walk of those who profess it! May we all be found taking earnest heed to the exhortations of Christ and His apostles,

that we may walk evenly for His glory through this scene.

Jesus said, "Follow thou *Me*." (John xxi. 22.)

Paul said, "To me to live is *Christ*." (Phil. i. 21.)

Peter said, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow *His steps*." (1 Peter ii. 21.)

John said, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as *He walked*." (1 John ii. 6.)

May every beloved child of God, who knows these things, be preserved from deafness, blindness, and lameness, and "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and *increasing in the knowledge of God*." (Colos. i. 9, 10.)

E. H. C.

"THOSE that seek me early shall find me." Many seek who do not seek *early*. "Early" indicates that the One I seek is a paramount object before the mind. When you are induced to set an object superior to all others, to forego your sleep for it—your act declares that it is the chiefest, and that it governs you, you rise to seek it. The Lord values this act; He sees you make Him first, and would sacrifice your own personal gratification to enjoy Him, and He accordingly will delight you with Himself.

J. B. S.

CHRIST AND HIS CROSS.

“BE sure that you take Christ Himself, and take Him with His Father’s blessing. Your lines are well fallen, it could not have been better, nor so well with you if they had not fallen in these places; in heaven, or out of heaven, there is nothing better, nothing so sweet and excellent, as the thing you have lighted on, and therefore hold you with Christ. Joy, much joy, may ye have of Him; but take His cross with Himself cheerfully. Christ and His cross are not separable in this life. Howbeit Christ and His cross part at heaven’s door; for there is no house-room for crosses in heaven. One tear, one sigh, one sad heart, one fear, one loss, or thought of trouble, cannot find lodging there; they are but the marks of our Lord Jesus down in this wide inn and stormy country—on this side of death. Sorrow and the saints are not married together; or, suppose it were so, heaven shall make a divorce. I find His presence eateth out the bitterness of sorrow and suffering. I think it a sweet thing that Christ saith of my cross, ‘Half mine;’ and that He divideth these sufferings with me, and taketh the largest share to Himself; nay, that I and my whole cross are wholly Christ’s. Oh, what a portion is Christ! Oh that the saints would dig deeper in the treasures of His wisdom and excellency!”—*S. Rutherford.*

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BELFAST.—We cannot agree with your correspondent in thinking there will be two distinct stages in the coming of the Lord for His saints. The idea is by no means novel. It is alleged by those who hold it that only those who are watching for the Lord will be “caught up” at first, while the unwatchful are left to go through *The great Tribulation*. The effect of this, it is said, will be their purification; this perfected, they too will be “caught up” prior to His manifestation in glory *with* His saints, in which the whole Church shall have her part.

We may now briefly state our reasons for dissenting from this view. First, that the Scriptures which speak of *The great Tribulation* distinctly declare who they are that pass through it, and the language used precludes all thought of the church, or any portion of it. These Scriptures are four in number—Jeremiah xxx. 7, Daniel xii. 1, Matthew xxiv. 21, Mark xiii. 19. The first reads thus: “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.” Remark, it is *Jacob’s* trouble, and out of it *he* shall be saved. But neither Jacob nor Jacob’s children are the church. The second intimates that this “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation,” is to Daniel’s people. (see also Dan. x. 14.) Does anyone need to be told that Daniel’s people are not the church? they are Jews

of course. In the third passage the Lord connects the events He foretells with Daniel's prophecy, and plainly says He refers to the same time and things, while in Mark almost the same words occur. Besides the details are Jewish beyond question, as the most passing glance at Matthew xxiv. 15-21 will show.

In addition to these four passages there are two others which speak of the same thing, only in a more general way. These are Rev. iii. 10 and Rev. vii. 14. The former is addressed to the church, and contains the specific promise that she shall be *kept from* the hour of temptation that is coming—not kept through it, but *from* it. Rev. vii. takes a wider range than the prophecy of Jeremiah or Daniel, or of the Lord Himself in Matthew and Mark, and reveals the fact that others besides the seed of Jacob go through it. But it is important to remark that the white-robed multitude are carefully distinguished from the crowned elders, who themselves never came out of the great tribulation. They represent another class. A figure of all this we have in Enoch and Noah. The one was translated that he should not see death—caught up before the judgment flood came—and the other preserved through the flood. Enoch was taken to heaven, and Noah found his place still on the earth.

And we may further say that the passages which speak of the Lord's coming for His people lend no support to the notion that only a part of them will be taken first. The five wise virgins went in with the Bridegroom to the marriage, and they went in at one time. So in 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall *all* be

changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Observe that this finds its place in an epistle sent to those of whom Paul had to say they were carnal, and walked as men. (1 Cor. iii. 1-3.) So in 1 Thess. iv. 17: "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up." Surely such words are not to be narrowed down, but taken in all their breadth, as embracing every saint alive when the Lord comes. Then in the end of the Revelation we find the Spirit and the Bride saying, "Come." Now this "Come" is addressed to the Lord, not to the sinner; but it is the Bride who says it, and it is hardly needful to remark that the Bride is not a part of the living saints, but the whole. Others besides the church will share the joys and glories of Christ's kingdom, according to Rev. xx. 4, though forming no part of the Bride.

We add in conclusion that probably some confusion of thought arises from its not being seen that the coming of the Lord for His saints is never spoken of as the coming of the Son of Man. Matthew xxv. 13 may seem to be a contradiction, but the verse properly closes with the word "hour." This has long been noticed, and the words that follow, to the end of the verse, have been omitted in the Revised Version.

"THE everlasting One *means* us to go through the world finding plenty of difficulties in which He will answer the faith of His people. Look back a year, two years, *which* have been the happiest times—those in which God was waiting on you as your servant, or those in which you did not want Him? the time written over with His interferences on your behalf, or those in which He made no entry?" G. V. W.

FATHER, I KNOW.

FATHER, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me,
And the changes that are sure to come
I do not fear to see ;
But I ask Thee for a present mind,
Intent on pleasing Thee.

I would not have the restless will
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do,
Or secret thing to know :
I would be treated as a child,
And guided where I go.

So I ask Thee for the daily strength
To none that ask denied,
And a mind to blend with outward life,
While keeping at Thy side ;
Content to fill a little space,
If Thou be glorified.

There are briars besetting every path,
That call for patient care ;
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer ;
But a lowly heart that leans on Thee
Is happy anywhere.

In a service which Thy will appoints
There are no bonds for me ;
For my inmost heart is taught the Truth
That makes Thy children free ;
And a life of self-renouncing love
Is a life of liberty.

“SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS;”

OR,

FORGIVENESS, ACCEPTANCE, AND SONSHIP.

EPHESIANS i. 1-7.

THERE had been a mighty work of the Spirit of God in the city of Ephesus.

For two years or more Paul had laboured there. First in the synagogue; and then daily, in the school of one Tyrannus, he testified both to Jews and Greeks repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

From among the immense multitudes of that corrupt and idolatrous city, whose temple was one of the wonders of the world, God called out a company of believers who owned the saving and gathering power of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The sincerity of their faith soon declared itself. “Many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.” (Acts xix.) The seed had fallen on good ground and brought forth fruit.

III.

It was to this called-out company that the letter commonly known as the Epistle to the Ephesians was first addressed. To all that dwelt at Ephesus it certainly was not sent; for what had the worshippers of Diana to do with a Christian epistle? or how could they be spoken of as “saints and faithful brethren in Christ”?

But those who had received the gospel were thus described, whether at Ephesus or elsewhere. They were saints by divine calling, and not because they were very holy persons. It is so still. Anyone searching the New Testament Scriptures as to this will find that God’s people are oftener called saints than anything else. How strange it is, seeing that this cannot be spoken against, that so many imagine that there are no saints on earth now!

All spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ are declared ours in verse 3. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath blessed us with them. This is the common portion of every saint. Viewed from such a standpoint, the believer of yesterday is as richly blessed as the most mature Christian. If *all* spiritual blessings are mine, no one could have more. But then it is one thing to have an indefeasible title to all these, and another to intelligently possess them. All are ours; but the knowledge and conscious enjoyment of them would depend much on the spiritual understanding of God’s Word, and the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

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Among these blessings there are three revealed in these lovely verses of which we would make special mention. Let us look at them, not in the order in which they stand, but in the order in which most of us perhaps learn them. We begin with **forgiveness of sins**. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (v. 7.) This is a great spiritual blessing. It was the first we needed when awakened to a sense of our guilt. Then we were led to see that God was for us, not against us; and that He had raised up unto us a Saviour who had died for our sins, and we believed in Him and were forgiven. From that happy hour we have been reckoned among the forgiven and justified ones whose sins shall be remembered no more, and to whose charge nothing shall be ever laid. This one gracious act of forgiveness, this shining deed of divine mercy, is never repeated. It is not an act the blessedness of which vanishes away the moment we break down, and which has to be done over again as often as we fail in thought, or word, or deed. It is *eternal* forgiveness, an act of divine beneficence that covers the whole of our life. So it is said, in 1 John ii. 12, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake."

How slow of heart many are to believe in God's forgiving love! Though they may have said,

times out of number, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins,” yet they do not believe in the forgiveness of their own sins. Some are waiting for a change, hoping thereby to know they are forgiven. Others feel they must live nearer to the Lord before they could dare to think that their sins were blotted out. Such individuals fail as yet to understand that God connects forgiveness with *faith*, not with feelings, according to Peter’s word in Acts x. 43: “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever *believeth* in Him shall receive remission of sins.” None ever believed in Him without being forgiven. The two things go together. And if God speaks so plainly, ought we not to receive His testimony, and set to our seal that God is true? Not to do so is to make Him a liar. (1 John v. 10.)

The Father’s forgiveness is distinct from the other, inasmuch as it has to do with those who are already eternally forgiven. Without the first we should perish for ever, without the second our communion with God could not be restored if it should be broken through want of watchfulness, want of prayer, or want of reading the Word, by reason of which we may have been drawn away in heart from God, even if not enticed into outward sin. When a saint sins against God, it is much more serious than the sin of one who knows Him not, for it is sin against light and love. But we must not confound communion with salvation, nor

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think that when the former is hindered the latter is lost. Do I say this to make light of a believer's sin? God forbid! That sin cost the Saviour unutterable woe upon the cross—how then could we think lightly of it? But let us distinguish between things that differ. And if I sin as a saint and child of God, there is One in heaven quick to detect it, blessed be His name; and in answer to His work there the Holy Spirit here brings that sin home to my conscience, that in sorrow and repentance it may be confessed, and that I may know a Father's forgiveness. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.) "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.) What a word of encouragement for any who may be mourning over broken communion! And when thus forgiven, and cleansed in spirit by the purifying action of the Word, communion is restored, and the soul seeks a closer walk with God in lowliness and deeper self-distrust.

There is yet a word to be spoken on what has been called **governmental forgiveness**. For a saint may pursue a wilful course, and bring himself under the chastening hand of God. This chastening might go so far as to end in the death of the offender, and his removal thus from the place of honour and faithful witness for

Christ in which he might have secured his Lord's “well done” by-and-by. “There is a sin unto death.” (1 John v. 16.) But there are also sins not unto death which nevertheless place the doer of them under the correcting rod, ever held, be it remembered, by the hand of Infinite Love. And such a case is contemplated in James v. 14, 16. The man, “chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat,” sees his faults, and with brokenness of will commits himself to God, and seeks the prayers of the elders of the assembly with this blessed and assured result, that the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins—sins which brought this chastisement—they shall be forgiven him.

But these two latter aspects of forgiveness are not in view in Ephesians; and we have only briefly referred to them by the way to meet thoughts that sometimes arise in connection with this subject.

Then from verse 6 we learn that we are accepted, or **taken into favour in the Beloved.**

This is a most gracious thing, and it brings us into a circle where forgiveness alone would never place us. An offender might be forgiven, and the offended never wish to see his face or hear his name again. The Queen might pardon, in the goodness of her heart, a man who had been a

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rebel; but to take that man into her favour would be a further act of royal grace. And this is what has been done for us. We stand in the favour of God, and we are there in the Beloved, in Him who is the supreme object of divine love, and the centre of all God's counsels. The ineffable favour in which He stands, when viewed as the risen and exalted Man, is the favour in which we have part. Such a place was ever His, and, as man, was due to Him who had glorified God on the earth, and finished the work given Him to do. We share it through the rich grace of our God, and in virtue of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Forgiven, taken into favour in the Beloved, it might be asked, What more could grace do for its objects unless it be to bring them to glory, which shall yet be most surely done? But in verses 5, 6 we are told that God's purpose was not only that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, but that He had predestinated us unto **the adoption of children** by Jesus Christ to Himself. This place of near relationship is ours now. We are brought to God; but the God to whom we are brought reveals Himself as our Father. This is more than forgiveness, more than being taken into favour, blessed as that is. The children's place is ours. It was according to the good pleasure of His will that we should have it, and He has set us there.

Thus God has dealt with us, not measuring His blessing by our need, but acting towards us according to the riches of His grace. The difference is great. When the prodigal returned, a place among the hired servants would have satisfied his necessities, and his thoughts went no higher than that. Bread enough and to spare would have been his ; clothing and a home too, and every need met. But the kiss, the best robe, the ring and shoes, the fatted calf, and the father's house, tell not merely of need met, but of the riches of the father's grace.

These are the things with which Paul begins his Epistle to the Ephesian saints, and they are the things on which the Spirit of God would have our hearts set. Are you, dear Christian reader, in this place of nearness, of favour and relationship with God ? Do you know that your sins are all forgiven, and that you are a dear child ? It is all yours by a title that can never be made void. May you in simple faith stand in this true grace of God.

YEA, in the fulness of His grace,
 God put me in the children's place,
 Where I may gaze upon His face,
 O Lamb of God, in Thee !

Thy precious name it is I bear ;
 In Thee I am to God brought near,
 And all the Father's love I share,
 O Lamb of God, in Thee !

USEFULNESS.

IN the present day we hear on all sides of work for the Lord, and of devoted workers. The general thought seems to be, "What *can* I do for Christ?" and not, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6.)

Now I maintain it is very wrong to merely say, "What can I do for Christ?" for there are many things I might be able to do for Him, and do well too, that perhaps He does not want me to do at all.

Paul, for instance, might have said, "I can serve the Lord as a tradesman at Tarsus; I can show them what it is to be a Christian tent-maker." And no doubt he *could* have done so; but that was not what the Lord wanted him to do. On the contrary, he was chosen to bear the Lord's name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. (Acts ix. 15.) Again, a tradesman might say, "I cannot serve the Lord here, I must go and preach," when perhaps he is not sent. (See Romans x. 15.) Or a Christian woman might say, "I *can* preach, and to be useful I must go and do it," overlooking what is said in 1 Tim. ii. 12 and Titus ii. 5. Now, everyone is a vessel chosen for some purpose, to fill some niche, prominent or obscure, as the case may be, in the

house of God. Hence the need of asking, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

After the vessel has been taken up, it is prepared for use. First it is emptied, then filled. It is *full vessels* He uses, sanctified and meet for His use. On the other hand, we must remember He deigns to employ all kinds of *instruments* to accomplish His will (one cannot call them vessels). Even Satan is used as an instrument by Him, as we may learn from Job and Paul. (See Job i. and 2 Cor. xii. 7.)

It is important to remember in these days, that because God uses anyone as an instrument for blessing, it by no means follows that the person so used has His approval, either personally or in service. (Compare Numbers xx. 7-12.)

In Phil. iii. 4-8 we may see of what a chosen vessel was emptied.

Paul was a man full of self-righteousness, who might (if anyone could) have had confidence in the flesh. All had to be renounced that Christ might fill him. In Acts xxvi. 13 we get his own account of how this came about. "At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, *above the brightness of the sun*, shining round about me," etc. Till that moment Saul had seen no one better than himself, henceforth he knew no one worse.

The sight of Christ in glory—the Man who had emptied Himself, and whom God had exalted, as

detailed in Phil. ii.—for ever emptied Paul of what was once gain to him.

He once prided himself on his religion, inherited from his fathers—and what a snare mere family religion is without Christ; on his birth—and what a terrible hindrance pride of birth is; on his zeal—and how remarkable it is that fleshly zeal is always opposed to the assembly—the body of Christ; on his character—and how the flesh glories in having a good character; but now *all* these things are loss instead of gain; he counts them but dung that he may win Christ, that he may be like the Man in the glory.

I would ask you, Have you got Christ in glory as your object? Has the light “above the brightness of the sun” so shined into your heart that formal family religion, pride of birth, etc., have all lost their value? yea, more, can you say, with Paul, “What things were gain to me, those I *counted* loss for Christ”? and can you say now, “I *count* all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord”?

Now, dear reader, let us see how the vessel is filled.

In Ephesians iii. 14–21 the apostle prays that the saints may be in a condition to be filled. Just as you examine a vessel to see if it is in sound condition, and can hold what you are going to put into it. Well, what we need above all is Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. Every

believer has Christ in him (Rom. viii. 10); but here it is to have Him dwelling in the heart.

In this epistle I find the breadths, lengths, depths, and heights of the counsels of God unfolded. The breadths (chap. iii. 1-10); All things created (the platform); principalities and powers in the heavenlies (spectators); the Church (the material), for the display of God's manifold wisdom. The lengths (verses 11 and 21), that show us, first, God's "eternal purpose;" and, secondly, "unto Him glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages." The depths (chap. ii.), and the heights (chap. i. 19-23), "which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

But the counsels of God, wonderful and blessed as they are, are not enough to fill the vessel. For this we must know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and so be *filled* with (or to) all the fulness of God.

That is, we are united to Christ, and are now to learn the love of the relationship in which we stand to Him. This is unfolded in Ephesians v. 22-32.

Now we have the vessel chosen, emptied, and filled, it remains to be seen how it is sanctified and used. Turn to 2 Tim. ii. 15-22. In 1 Tim. iii. 14-16 the Church is spoken of as "the pillar and ground of the truth." It was the only place where the truth was to be found. In the second epistle we find it had become,

through man's failure, the place where error as well as truth was taught. What do we see in the professing church now? why, all kinds of heresies. Some deny there is a God at all, others say the Bible is not the word of God. Others, that Christ was not God manifest in the flesh, only a good man, and are too short-sighted to see that if He was not God He could not have been a good man; for He took the place that belongs to God alone. The state of things now is like what the Lord found when He went into the temple, and said they had made His house "a den of thieves." (Luke xix. 46.)

Though "a den of thieves" it was still His house. In spite of all the evil in Christendom it is still God's house on earth, and will be till the Lord comes and takes His own out of it; then that which is left Christ will spue out of His mouth. (Rev. iii. 15, 16.)

"In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour." (2 Tim. ii. 20.)

Because a vessel is of gold, that is no reason why it may not be a vessel to dishonour. A very gifted prominent person in the Church may teach error.

Now what are we to do in this state of things? It is not a question of whether the teacher is the Lord's or not—"the Lord knoweth them that are

His"—but is he a vessel to dishonour? If so, I must separate from him and his following. We cannot leave the house (we cannot cease to be Christians), but we are called upon to purge ourselves from those who by doctrine or practice are vessels to dishonour; that is, we are to separate from them. I hear someone say, "That would be too exclusive for me. What would become of my usefulness? I like to be broad." Well, hear what Scripture says, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." What could be broader? and what greater sphere of usefulness could anyone desire? Prepared for the *Master's use* unto *every* good work, is surely broad enough.

In verse 22 we find our company, and, remember, they must not only call on the Lord out of a pure heart, but follow "righteousness" (purity as to morals), "faith" (purity as to doctrine), "charity and peace," or we may not be of their number.

Next we find, in 2 Cor. iv. 6-11, how the vessel is used. A Christian is one who is *in Christ*, and *Christ* is *in him*. He should manifest Christ, and Christ only; this is the normal state of a Christian according to Scripture. (1 John ii. 6.) We can only manifest the life of Jesus by bearing about in our bodies His dying. We have died with Christ; and this truth must be practically carried out in our every-day life. Not only what we

think bad must go, but what we think good and amiable. Remember it was *you* who were crucified with Christ. Thus the man with the nice amiable temper needs to bear about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus as much as the man with the bad temper. Are you manifesting the life of Jesus? It is the highest form of usefulness, and what God loves to see in us. It is more precious in His sight than the exercise of the greatest gift, and the most eloquent preaching. (Compare 1 Cor. xii. 31 to xiii. 13.) Charity is love, or the divine nature; in fact, that which the life of Jesus was always.

If you are living Christ in the place where God has put you, depend upon it He will extend your sphere of usefulness. By-and-by He will say, "Well done, good and faithful [not *useful*] servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. xxv. 23.) "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. xv. 22.)

Reader, are you in the path of obedience and usefulness? M.

WHAT wonderful grace shines out in that verse, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee!" The thing that troubles is the burden. Cast *that*; in addition the Lord will sustain *you*. A. B.

A FEW HINTS ON READING THE SCRIPTURES.

“ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) “Search the Scriptures.” (John v. 39.) These passages set forth the all-sufficiency of the word of God, and the importance of searching into its hidden depths. Two things are necessary in order to do this with true profit to the soul. The one is prayer, and the other dependence upon the Spirit of truth. Without these we shall surely search its pages in vain.

The natural man, even the most learned or religious, may acquaint himself with the letter of Scripture from cover to cover, and yet be as far from God as if he had never seen it, though far more responsible. (Luke xii. 47.) He may attempt, and often does, to follow its precepts; and his moral character may be affected in measure by it, but he is not one whit nearer God and heaven. The flesh, however moral or religious a man may become, is flesh still, and they that are in it cannot please God. (Rom. viii. 8.) On the very threshold of true Christianity are inscribed the searching words of Jesus, the Son of God, “Ye must be born again.” (John iii. 7.)

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The believer, born of God, may, and often does, read the Scriptures regularly, and yet gets but little profit, through lack of prayer and dependence. Many seek to make its teachings accord with their own traditions, and hence most sadly wrest them, and remain in much darkness and misapprehension of truth. You may read a chapter in a formal, religious way, and not receive one bit of spiritual food for the soul. But where there is real, true waiting upon God in prayer that we may know His mind and will, and dependence upon the teaching of the Spirit of truth—one of whose blessed offices it is to guide us into all truth, and to receive of the things of Christ and show them unto us (John xvi. 13, 14)—we shall find the richest veins of spiritual wealth laid bare in this inexhaustible mine. It teems with *Christ* from Genesis to Revelation. With the soul in communion with God, and having Christ as the object of his heart, the dependent and diligent student of this priceless volume will be richly rewarded by the spiritual apprehension of His unsearchable riches. (Eph. iii. 8.)

“‘Tis a vast, exhaustless treasure,
Saviour, we possess in Thee.”

It is only thus that the soul of the Christian can be in a truly healthy condition, and that he will become a channel of blessing to others. If we only receive the truth intellectually, we shall only reach the intellect of others when we attempt

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to tell out what we know. But if our souls are in the enjoyment of the living water, the well thereof springing up within us (John iv. 14), the life-giving rivers will flow out from us, carrying blessing wherever they go. (John vii. 38.)

To *search* the Scriptures would be to sound their depth. We are very apt to read the Word carelessly, and to think that all its wealth is on the surface, so to speak. But not so; we must examine, weigh, consider the Word. We must, as it has been well put, “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest” its precious contents. “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things [or depths] of God.” (1 Cor. ii. 10.)

It is sad to hear many speaking as though it were only important to read certain parts, and those the passages which more immediately concern their own salvation and individual walk, and coolly setting aside many others as “non-essential.” Beloved reader, to treat the word of God thus, is to dishonour its all-wise Author. All is essential to His glory, and for our blessing. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matt. iv. 4.) There is no such thing as a non-essential sentence or word in the whole Book. The whole is God’s word to man; the Holy Spirit is the interpreter; and if depended on He will enable the children of God rightly to divide the Word of truth. (2 Tim. ii. 15.)

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We would further remind our readers of the importance of always carefully examining the context of any given passage. Numberless errors have arisen—by which multitudes have been misled—through taking isolated passages without any regard to their connexion.

Again, if we are occupied with ourselves and our blessing instead of with Christ, our understanding of the Word is sure to be feeble and imperfect, and many passages will be applied to ourselves, which refer more directly to others. There are different dispensations in the Scriptures, and no one can rightly apprehend their contents without recognizing this. God has distinctive dealings with the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church; and dispenses different characters of blessing at different periods of the world's history.

Another fruitful source of misapprehension of the truth, leading to various errors, is that of putting our own thoughts *into* a passage instead of seeking to get God's thoughts *out* of it. Our minds are filled with thoughts that are not in accordance with the word of God; and it is only by correcting them by Scripture, and having our minds formed by *it* instead, that we progress in the knowledge of God. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah lv. 8, 9.)

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We fear many Christians sadly neglect the study of the Word. Paul enjoins Timothy to "give attendance to reading." (1 Tim. iv. 13.) It is very blessed to attend meetings, and hear the public reading and ministry of the Word; but we are assured that if private meditation thereon is neglected, there will be a defective state of soul. Just as good, natural food, taken regularly, strengthens and invigorates the body, so also is it with the soul. It is impossible to feed upon the Word, in communion with God, and not to grow.

The remnant of the Jews in Nehemiah's day read the book of the law of the Lord their God one-fourth part of the day. (Nehemiah ix. 3.) What an example to us! Many may say that it is impossible for them to spend so much time as that over the Word. This may be; but if our souls are in the enjoyment of Christ, it will surely be our joy too to use every opportunity of learning Him more fully in its wondrous pages.

Some complain of not understanding when they do read, and, sad to say, almost entirely neglect it in consequence. Hence the importance of what we said in the commencement of this paper—prayer for light, and dependence on the Spirit of truth. No soul ever fails to reap blessing when the Word is read thus; and as we continue therein, our spiritual understanding increases.

How deeply important too that those who have families should be found accustoming their chil-

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dren to the perusal of Scripture; reading it with them, and storing their minds with its precious precepts. God will surely honour it sooner or later in their blessing. Thousands have been led thereby to the knowledge of Christ. Paul said to Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii. 15.) And Christian parents are exhorted to bring up their children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4); which can only be fulfilled by seeking to instil the precious truth of God into their young hearts and minds, and bringing in the authority of the Lord.

May every reader of these lines be led more diligently to "search the Scriptures."

E. H. C.

HYMN.

SAVED by Thy grace, O God,
And made an heir of Thine;
Joint-heir with Christ—O wondrous thought!—
All things are mine.
Loved with the self-same love
Wherewith Thou lov'st Thy Son;
In Him accepted—precious grace!—
With Him made one.

Soon with Him I shall dwell,
For ever in His home,
And never more shall wander forth,
Nor from Him roam.
Himself my one delight;
My joy the voice to raise,
And sing, in burst of holy song,
Eternal praise.

H. S. T. B.

“THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—GALATIANS vi. 14.

WHAT wondrous things crowd into the mind as we dwell upon this scripture! One has said, “The cross is the moral wonder of the universe;” another, “There is nothing like the cross.” How truly does the Christian’s heart respond to such statements! For God there is nothing deeper, for the sinner there is nothing more precious. In that cross God is made known, and man, and Satan too, manifest themselves.

Dear reader, if you have never studied that scene of all scenes, follow me a little in my meditation, and may God open your eyes to the wonders of that cross. Then with an adoring heart you will exclaim, “There is nothing like the cross.”

Man was fully revealed there. The alienation of his heart, the enmity of his mind, the total depravity of his being, his incapacity to comprehend or to appreciate the moral beauties and perfections of the Lord Jesus, all was seen in what he did with the lowly, unresisting Lamb of God. The prophet had said, “He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him

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there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” Such words disclose man’s inability to discern the moral perfections of Christ—they saw no beauty in Him. But more, “He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief : and we hid as it were our faces from Him ; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.” Here is man’s open enmity towards Christ, which ended in His crucifixion. But more, “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows : yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” In this we perceive a sad phase of man’s sorrowful condition. The blessed Lord when on earth bore upon His spirit, in sympathy and grace, all the dreadful afflictions that had come upon man in consequence of sin. He was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” He is never said to have smiled. Yet all this is sometimes perverted as if God’s hand had been upon Him for something in Himself ! “We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” Oh, what a scene that is for teaching us what we are ! The very best, the most moral and religious, were capable of spitting in the face of the Holy One, condemning the innocent One, and crucifying the Lord of life and glory. The cross is thus the full display of man—of his whole being when left to himself to work out the purposes of his heart. Lord, our place is in the dust before thee, in the confession of our vileness !

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But, thank God, there was something else made known there. If man's heart and nature and what he was capable of doing were then revealed, God's heart and nature and what He was capable of doing for man were revealed also. If man's hatred showed itself, if in that awful act he said, "I hate God," God, on the other hand, made it the deepest, fullest expression of His love to man. It was God's love meeting man's hatred. Man said, "I hate God." God said, "I love man." "God is love." "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." (1 John iv. 8-10.) "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." (John iii. 16.) "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans v. 8.) "God is love," it is His nature; and in the gift of His Son to die on Calvary we see His nature revealed, the flood-gates of His heart flung wide open, and His love in all its ocean-fulness flowing forth to meet and overwhelm the hatred of man. Man hated Christ without a cause, and God answered back in the infinitude of His love.

But not only does His love for man shine out in that wonderful scene. His holiness, His abhorrence of evil, His righteous judgment of sin also are most forcibly demonstrated there. There we learn how God views sin, what He thinks its

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desert, and what was necessary to put it away, and deliver the sinner from its dominion and awful consequences.

See the holy sufferer, the Lamb of God, hanging in that accursed place—upon the tree of Calvary—with all our iniquities laid upon Him (Isa. liii. 6), bearing our sins (1 Peter ii. 24), made sin for us (2 Cor. v. 21), made a curse for us (Gal. iii. 13), wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace upon Him (Isaiah liii. 5), bruised of the Lord (Isaiah liii. 10), His soul made an offering for sin (Isaiah liii. 10), the sword of Jehovah awaking against Him (Zech. xiii. 7), darkness enveloping Him (Matt. xxvii. 45), God forsaking Him, drawing forth from that burdened, agonized soul the bitter cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. xxvii. 46), and finally, the spear entering His holy side, “and forthwith came there out blood and water.” (John xix. 34.)

What a view do these scriptures give of the blessed Lamb of God as the sinner’s substitute, the sin-bearer! What a view, too, of God, in the intensity of His holiness, in the righteous judgment of sin, when His blessed Son in grace was burdened with our sins, was made sin for us, that we might be freely justified from all things and made the righteousness of God in Him! (Acts xiii. 37–39; Rom. iii. 24.)

Thus the love of God was fully manifested, and

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the holiness of God displayed, and His righteousness established with respect to all that stood against us, so that He is free, in righteousness, to bless and save eternally all who believe. The peace of our souls is immensely deepened by seeing that God is "a just God and a Saviour," and that He is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Isaiah xlv. 21, 22; Romans iii. 26.)

God has vindicated His Son. Man trampled upon His glory, and gave Him a malefactor's death; God took Him out of death, raised Him by His power and glory, and set Him at His own right hand, saying, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Ps. cx. 1; Matt. xxii. 44.)

God has set His seal upon the mighty work of redemption accomplished by Christ upon the cross. In the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, God's satisfaction in, and acceptance of, the work of Christ are clearly seen. "He raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. iv. 24) in answer to the glorious work in which He so fully glorified God. (John xiii. 31, 32; xvii. 4, 5.)

In that same resurrection the *assurance of our souls* is fully established that *naught now stands against us*, that every foe is vanquished, and that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we

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stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation.” (Rom. v. 1, 2, 11.)

Our place, too, of wondrous acceptance is told out in Eph. i. 6, 7: “To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

Fellow-believer, what marvellous things wherewith to engage our hearts do we find in the cross of Christ! What a scene opens up before us as we dwell upon it! but a scene resulting in the full glorifying of God in the putting away of sin—in vanquishing Satan, and the accomplishment of His gracious purposes in our everlasting blessing.

With adoring hearts shall we not exclaim, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”? (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

E. A.

OH, the peace for ever flowing
 From God's thoughts of His own Son!
 Oh, the peace of simply knowing,
 On the cross that all was done!
 Jesus, Saviour, we adore Thee!
 Christ of God—Anointed Son!
 We confess Thee, Lord of Glory;
 Fruits of victory Thou hast won.

A GRACIOUS INVITATION.

“COME” is the loving, gracious, winning word that falls from Christ’s lips to-day. It is a word of invitation to the sinful and weary to encourage them to come to Him. He promises to give them REST.

You need rest. Where can it be found? In the pursuit of pleasure? in the race for earthly honour? in the eager scramble after gold? or in the serener paths of science and philosophy? A million voices answer “No.” These indeed may suffice for awhile, but will not always do so; more, much more will be needed when you reach the narrow gate through which men pass from this world of shams and shadows into that world where all is real and everlasting.

REST, in the presence of the shroud, the coffin, the grave in the lonely cemetery, with judgment and eternity overshadowing all! Ah! who can give it? Christ: no one and nothing else.

Is He speaking now? Yes. To whom? To you. Listen to His words. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. xi. 28.) Are they not sweet?

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Isa. i. 18.)

“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John i. 7.)

“NOTHING TO PAY.”

“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors : the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?”

LUKE vii. 41, 42.

FEW and simple in the extreme are the details of this short but lovely parable. Two brief sentences suffice to tell the story of the creditor and his two debtors, of their need and his forgiving grace. It is a rare jewel fixed in the simplest setting; a garment of exquisite texture, and of ample fold, woven out of material that might seem scanty and coarse. If the framework of the parable is slight, it will be found strong enough to bear the weight of great truths of universal application—truths that are not always clearly seen, nor sufficiently borne in mind.

There cannot be two opinions as to who is meant by the creditor. It is of course none other than God Himself. Nor is it hard to understand who are the two debtors. They are the reader and writer of these lines, and indeed they represent all; for there is not a just man under heaven that doeth good and sinneth not. There are but few, if any, that would deny this; for every man's conscience bears witness to that

IV.

solemn word, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." It is needless to discuss the point, for the most self-satisfied individual would acknowledge himself a sinner. But it is not everyone who sees that there is no difference in the sight of God between man and man. Yet such is the fact stated in Romans iii., and it is a cardinal point in our parable. A difference there is as to the extent of our sins, and this too our parable recognizes; for one debtor owed five hundred pence, while the debt of the other reached only a tenth of that sum. But this in no way affects the argument, for both debtors were in precisely the same condition—they had "*Nothing to pay*;" and in that respect the one who owed the smaller sum differed nothing from him who owed the larger. Both were in the mire, and neither could get himself out.

"*There is no difference.*" This is what so many fail to understand. Among the inhabitants of your town, what social and moral differences exist! There are those who ride in their carriage, and others who break stones for the street; there are polished gentlemen and ignorant upstarts, high-born ladies and the vulgar crowd. Some are kind, generous, sympathetic; others hard, miserly, and unfeeling. Some mingle oaths and curses with their common talk, and others are of pure and blameless speech. Yet in the sight of God "*there is no difference,*" for all have sinned, and

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come short of His glory. The best are bad enough to be lost, and the worst are confessedly so. Five hundred pence debtor, fifty or five, no one has anything wherewith to pay ; all alike are in a hopelessly ruined state.

Every mouth stopped, and all the world guilty before God (Rom. iii. 19), is only another way of stating what is expressed in those three words, "*Nothing to pay.*" Both statements show the utter ruin of man, and how helpless is his condition. See to what a point these men had been reduced. Goods and chattels they had none. Not a stick that could be seized and put under the hammer of the auctioneer. Penniless, possessing nothing, it was beyond their power to offer the smallest composition. One shilling in the pound would have been as impossible to pay as twenty. The extent of the debt does not touch the question. The fifty pence debtor had "*Nothing to pay,*" and he who owed five hundred could not possibly have less. Both were ruined, and we know it matters little to one who cannot swim whether he is thrown into the water one mile from shore or ten ; in either case he will be drowned.

Oh, my reader, have you in your conscience, and in very truth, taken your place before God as one who has "*Nothing to pay*"? This is a different thing from owning that you are a sinner. The man who fell down at his lord's feet and

cried, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all," confessed he was in debt. But he professed his honest intentions, and pleaded for time. He would do better in the future than in the past, and if his lord would only be patient with him, every farthing should be paid. Ah! there are numbers like him. Sinners they know themselves to be, but not ruined sinners; debtors, but not hopelessly insolvent; undeserving, but not hell-deserving; hardly good enough to be saved, but certainly not bad enough to be lost. Such persons have yet to learn the meaning of "*Nothing to pay*," and until that is learnt, how is it possible to know aught of divine forgiveness?

And it was the deplorable condition of these debtors that furnished the occasion for their generous creditor to show the kindness of his heart; for when they had "*Nothing to pay*," he frankly forgave them both. So our very sins have opened the door for God to display His glory as the Saviour-God. Had we not been sinners, having "*Nothing to pay*," we should never have known the depths of that love which can only be measured by the cross of Christ. And that same love that manifests itself in the gift of Jesus is seen in the sinner's forgiveness. Why did the father run and fall upon the neck of his prodigal child, and kiss him? It was because he loved him with a love which even the dark waters of the prodigal's sins had failed to quench. There are

no limits to the grace of God. The greatest sins may be forgiven, and the blackest clouds of iniquity blotted out. But then *grace* can only savingly bless those who have "*Nothing to pay.*" If anyone declines to take that ground, he places himself beyond the circle where grace acts. A man who is only partially ruined, needs only a partial salvation; a helper, not a Saviour, will do for him. Now Jesus is a Saviour.

Let us enter the house of Simon the Pharisee, where this parable was spoken. Behold the Saviour, and see the woman of the city weeping at His feet. Mark the face of Simon. What looks of haughtiness and self-complacency are there! He has made a grand discovery—Jesus had less than a prophet's discernment; for no one knowing the character of this woman would have received the tribute of her tears, and suffered a hand like hers to defile his feet with a touch. Such were Simon's thoughts. But in the presence of His host, and of the assembled guests, Jesus does not hesitate to declare Himself the sinner's Friend. Their religious prejudices might be shocked, and their holy souls be moved with virtuous indignation. But what cared He for that? He had not come from heaven to pay homage to the pride of man. Fixing the eyes of each upon this woman, "who was a sinner," He declared in the presence of them all that her sins which were many were forgiven. Startled they

were, no doubt, for such words seemed to them like blasphemies. Immediate forgiveness, and for such a sinner, without the intervention of priests, or act of temple service, was something they could not understand. She had done nothing to merit it. Why then should her sins be forgiven? Besides, who could ever know this on earth? It could not be. It must be a deception, a lie, a blasphemy against God. With all their giving of alms, and saying of long prayers, they did not know their sins were forgiven. How then could it be possible for such a degraded creature as this, who never did good in her life?

So reasoned they, and so reason men still. Ask that zealous worker, who labours to get souls to baptism, confirmation, sacrament, and such-like things, whether he knows the forgiveness of his sins? He will probably tell you he does not, and that he does not believe in those who say they do. To such an one it is as if forgiveness were found on the summit of a mountain, whose lofty peak enters the solitudes of eternity. "Baptism," according to him, places you at the mountain's foot; "confirmation" conducts you a step up its rugged sides; "holy sacrament" may help you reach yonder crag; and the ten commandments mark the road you are to follow. Continue therein. Heed what your religious guide tells you, and when you reach the mountain-top, and have passed into eternity, you may have a hope (not the

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certainty) of securing the prize. What a mockery is all this! Mere mirage of the desert, a Satanic delusion, a yawning gulf, into which multitudes stumble and fall! How different is the gospel, which speaks of righteousness without works, which brings forgiveness to those who have “*Nothing to pay*,” which reveals a Saviour who has died for the *ungodly*, and who says to every poor bankrupt sinner who comes to Him believingly, “Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

Yes, unknown reader, present forgiveness, present salvation, and present peace—these are the portion of the believer in Christ, these are the rich gifts that the free favour of God brings to those who have “*Nothing to pay*.” Who but the blind would cling to the wretched rags of human righteousness, when they might be clothed with such garments of glory and beauty? If thou hast them not, wouldst thou have them? Come then empty-handed to Jesus, come as one who has “*Nothing to pay*,” and all shall be thine. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and *he that hath no money*; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk *without money* and without price.”

Then come, ruined sinner, no longer delay,
Nor in bondage and misery live;
If you own, with repentance, you’ve “nothing to pay,”
He will freely and frankly forgive.

GOD, MAN, AND SATAN,

AS SEEN IN GENESIS III. AND JOHN XII.

GENESIS i. and ii. give the account of the creation. Everything appears in beautiful order; the "very good" of God is expressive of the satisfaction which He finds in the perfect work of His hands.

Genesis iii. presents an entire change of scene; the desolating hand of the enemy of God and man has been laid upon the fair creation, and everything is marred.

Three objects fill the background. *God*, dishonoured and offended by sin; *man*, ruined, with the sentence of banishment and death passed upon him; *Satan*, triumphant. His schemes have succeeded.

But amid the moral ruin and darkness there appears a ray of light. God has in reserve that which shall more than retrieve the disaster. For a moment He lifts the veil of the future, and reveals His remedy in the *seed of the woman*. The veil falls, and the man is driven out of paradise to die.

In her desire for deliverance from the consequences of her sin Eve anticipates the promise of God, and hails her firstborn as having been gotten from the Lord; but, alas! instead of being the promised seed, Cain proves a murderer, the be-

ginner of that violence which rapidly spread over the earth. Creation must groan under sin's deadly reign, till the hour of her deliverance shall come. (Rom. viii. 19–21.)

John xii.: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. . . . Jesus said, Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

The promised Seed has come, and the three central figures of Genesis iii. are before His soul—God, Satan, man.

God's claims and glory are His first concern: "*Father, glorify thy name.*" God's majesty had been outraged and insulted by the sin of His creature. Jesus had devoted Himself to bring glory to Him, but to do this He must die; for God's glory demanded that sin should be judged, and that could only be by His death. But with the full knowledge of this He accepts the work. He voluntarily and unreservedly surrenders Himself to endure everything which the putting away of sin might involve. He would not ask to be saved from that hour, because for that very cause He had left the joy and glory of heaven, and become incarnate, entering upon a state in which

He could die. The anticipation of the moment when He should be made sin and judged as such filled His soul with horror and anguish unutterable; but God's glory hinged upon it, redemption depended upon it, and He submits. God rests for ever in that death. He who was dishonoured by sin in Eden has been for ever glorified at the cross, where the Son of His bosom, as a Man, offered Himself without spot to meet and satisfy every claim of righteousness concerning sin.

But the Seed of the woman does not stop there. God's glory having been cared for, the author of the dishonour is dealt with. "*Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*" At the fall the devil acquired a place in this world and a power over man; he became the world's prince and god, and man became his victim and slave. Jesus appears upon the scene, and in His life proves His superiority over Satan, who has nothing in Him. He dies ~~that~~ the sin introduced into the world by the devil might be put away, and in resurrection deprives him of his empire. At this moment Jesus sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high, having right and title to the kingdoms of this world, awaiting the appointed moment to assert that right in resistless might, when, as God's Anointed, He rises from the Father's throne to reign as King over the whole earth; but He will inaugurate His reign by dethroning and casting out the usurper.

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” (Rev. xx. 1, 2.)

But man, the victim and sinner, the third figure in Eden’s wonderful scene, yet remains ; and Jesus proceeds : “ *Now is the judgment of this world . . . and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*” Judgment upon the whole scene is announced as imminent. The trial of man is ended ; the Seed of the woman becomes the sinner’s sole hope and refuge, the only ark of safety from the coming wrath. Sin’s penalty was death and judgment. Christ had come Himself to pay it, that He might deliver sinners from it, and take them into the glory of God. At the cross He endured the judgment and yielded up His life. With this in prospect, He presents Himself as the point of attraction for a world of lost sinners. Did any desire to be relieved from sin’s awful penalty, and thus escape eternal misery ? Then let them come to Him, and they would find One who had *already* borne the judgment to redeem them. As the crucified One, He would attract Adam’s lost offspring to Himself, the Saviour and Giver of everlasting life. He was the promised Seed, the One upon whom and upon whose work depended the fulfilment of God’s purposes of grace on behalf of the sinner. To

His cross should the gaze of all be directed ; for there atonement was made, there death and judgment were endured, there salvation was wrought out, there infinite love and unchangeable holiness were fully displayed. Wonderful centre, wonderful refuge, wonderful answer to the ruin that entered paradise ! Jesus, the promised Seed, stands in the midst of a fallen, ruined world, and points to Himself and His death as the only hope of a ruined race.

And from that day onward to the present moment, throughout the intervening centuries, out from the world to that crucified One, there has been attracted a countless multitude of sin-stained, broken-hearted mortals, who have found in His blood salvation and cleansing from sin, and in Himself eternal life and the pledge of endless glory.

That wonderful cross, like a beacon, still sheds its soft beams of grace and mercy athwart the darkness and gloom of this unhappy world ; and the human stream still flows onward to its kindly light, to find rest for evermore. W. H. S.

“WHO LOVED ME.”

THE sun its rays o'er earth and sea

And countless myriads has thrown ;

And yet it shineth upon me

As if it shone for me alone.

Thus, Lord, Thy bright effulgence beams ;

To *all* Thy saints Thy love is shown ;

Yea, o'er the world Thy mercy streams,

And yet Thou art my very own.

A. B.

THE PURPOSE, POWER, AND PRESENCE OF GOD.

I DESIRE to point out three things that should be laid hold of by the people of God if they would avail themselves of all the comfort and joy within present reach: (1) that God has had a definite *purpose* concerning us from before the foundation of the world; (2) that He has almighty *power* to keep us, and to carry out that purpose; and (3) that His *presence* is with us all the way to secure the full accomplishment of that purpose in glory.

We will briefly consider these three things as they are illustrated in the history of God's earthly people, the children of Israel, from Egypt to Canaan. Let us, however, bear in mind that the purpose of God for Christians far transcends His purpose as to Israel, that His power is displayed in an infinitely more wonderful way, and that His ~~presence~~ presence is known in a manner no type could fully express. Let us lay hold of the fact that as God had a *purpose* for Israel, so are Christians "the called according to purpose" (Rom. viii. 28); that as God by His *power* delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, and brought them into the promised land, so has He wrought to deliver us from this present evil world; and though still awaiting the final display of His power in "the redemption of our body" (Rom.

viii. 23), we are “*kept* by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed” (1 Peter i. 5); and lastly, that as “the angel of His *presence*” (Isa. lxiii. 9) accompanied the children of Israel through all their wanderings until they got safe to Canaan, so is the presence of God with His heavenly people (nay, *in* them by the Holy Spirit) to sustain and guide them all the way, and to secure the final accomplishment of God’s purpose for body, soul, and spirit in glory.

Now, turning to Exodus iii. 1–8, we see how God’s *presence* is manifested, His *purpose* declared, and His *power* engaged, on behalf of His chosen people, who were groaning under the bondage of Egypt. The presence of God in the midst of His people was as a flame of fire in a bush; for, whether Israelites or Christians, the people of God are nothing better in themselves than a dry and insignificant bush that could be burnt up in a moment, and “our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. xii. 29.) Yet the bush is *not* consumed; and why? “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” (Mal. iii. 6.) God had bound Himself to Abraham “by two immutable things” (see Heb. vi.), and He was now come down, not to destroy, but to deliver His people; His own unchanging character and faithfulness being the guarantee that His presence is salvation and not destruction to the objects of sovereign grace.

And mark the extent of the purpose made known in the eighth verse. Jehovah says, "I am come *down* . . . to bring them *up*." Not simply to rescue the people from Pharaoh, and then let them shift for themselves, and perhaps perish after all; no, but to bring them right up into the land of promise. And did not Christ come down, right down into death, not only to deliver us from sin, Satan, and the world, but to bring us up, right up, into the Father's house on high?

Having declared His purpose as to Israel, God proceeds to display His *power*; but first must He lay a righteous basis for the grace He was about to show. The people had to be redeemed not only from the power of Pharaoh, but also from God's own judgment against them as sinners; and for this nothing could avail but the death of a substitute, the paschal lamb, type of the Lamb of God, "foreordained before the foundation of the world." (1 Peter i. 20.) Of this we read in chap. xii. But turn now to chap. xiv. 10-12, and see the state of abject terror the people were in. How is this to be accounted for after all they had seen, heard, felt, and experienced? Ah! seeing, hearing, feeling, and experience are no ground of peace, no safeguard against the doubts and fears of the natural heart, our "evil heart of unbelief."

The children of Israel, like many blood-bought children of God in the present day, failed to lay hold of the *purpose* of God, forgot His *power*, and

had no sense of His *presence*. They had heard His word, seen His power, proved His love, and had before their eyes the token of His presence in the pillar of cloud and of fire. But doubts and fears prevailed, because they had not *faith* to lay hold of the word of the living God, wherein His purpose had been plainly declared. And have not you, my reader, heard the word of God, and the statement of His purpose as to all who are now redeemed by the precious blood of Christ? Read Rom. viii. 28–31, and see the extent of God's purpose—that it does not stop short of glory. So sure is it of full accomplishment that God speaks as if it were done, as if all those who are “the called according to purpose” (v. 28) were not only justified, but already glorified, or conformed to the image of God's Son in glory. Would there, I ask, be any room for fear if we laid hold of the purpose of God as thus made known to us? Just because we find ourselves *between* the call and the glory, shall we, who are resting on Christ, have any doubt that we are justified, and must eventually be glorified? But truly the people of God in this day are sadly like the children of Israel in their day, as we find them in Exodus xiv., and indeed in many other stages of their journey.

Nevertheless God proves true to His word and purpose. The children of Israel are told to stand still—they could do nothing else—and God puts

forth His power. His people see the salvation of the Lord, and their enemies dead upon the sea-shore.

Redeemed by the *blood* of the Lamb from death, they were now (at the Red Sea) redeemed by the *power* of God clean out of Egypt. God had said He *would* deliver them out of that land, and so far He had made good His word. “*Then* sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.” (Read Exodus xv.) When they had seen “that great work which the Lord did,” they believed that God was *with* them, and that God was *for* them. *We* can say, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” And Israel said their enemies would melt away, and be as still as a stone until the people whom God had purchased had passed over—right over Jordan—into the land. Now at last they rise in faith to the full height of God’s purpose, and say that He will bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of His inheritance. And cannot faith say now, “Whom He justified, them He also glorified”? “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath* blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ . . . in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the *purpose* of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” May we all be enabled by the Spirit of God, in the energy of faith such as we see afterwards in Caleb and Joshua, to lay hold

of the full *purpose* of God, and “the exceeding greatness of His *power* to us-ward who believe.” (Eph. i. 19.)

But the children of Israel did not get into the land of Canaan all at once; they soon found they were in a terrible wilderness. Neither do Christians usually go to heaven like the thief on the cross, as soon as they are converted; but are left down here to witness for Christ, to learn themselves, to learn “the ways” of God, “and to wait for His Son from heaven” (1 Thess. i. 10), “who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.” Then, and not till then, will the purpose of God concerning us be accomplished, and we shall be “conformed to the image of His Son.”

What Israel needed in the wilderness between the Red Sea and Canaan was the constant *presence* of Jehovah—and this they had—to meet their wants, to prove their hearts, to defend them from their enemies, and to lead them safely through as a shepherd leads his flock.

From the moment when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, He had in one way or another been present with His people—providentially, we may say, when contending with Pharaoh, and pouring out judgments from which He sheltered Israel; present on the night of the passover as a God of judgment against sin, and a Redeemer of those who were sheltered by

the blood of the Lamb; present in delivering power at the Red Sea, and present in the pillar of cloud and of fire to guide and protect the ransomed host throughout their wilderness journey, suiting Himself in grace and power to all their varied needs, whether in giving manna, as in Ex. xvi., in giving water from the smitten rock, and power for conflict, as in chap. xvii., or dwelling among them between the cherubim upon the mercy-seat when the tabernacle was set up, or finally going before them in the ark of the covenant to dry up the waters of Jordan, and "bring them in" to the land He had promised.

We too, in our wilderness journey, both need and *have* with us the *presence* of our God; and let us see to it that we never tempt the Lord by saying, as Israel did, "Is the Lord among us or not?" For "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. xiii. 5); and "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end."

Whilst our great High Priest is within the veil, ever living to make intercession for us, He has sent us "another Comforter, that He may abide with us for ever" (John xiv. 16); and He will shortly present us to Christ in glory as the Bride whom He is safely conducting home to her Lord.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come," and until that moment may we be kept mindful of the eternal *purpose*, the almighty *power*, and the gracious *presence* of our Saviour God. E. B. G.

A

HELP TO DISTINGUISH THE DIFFERENT GLAD TIDINGS OF SCRIPTURE.

AFTER the fall of man, the gospel (or glad tidings) was announced, that *the seed* of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. (Gen. iii. 15.)

Promises were also made to Abraham, that *in his seed* all the nations of the earth should be blessed. (Gen. xxii. 18.) These promises were confirmed to Isaac and to Jacob. (Gen. xxvi. 4; xxviii. 13, 14.)

Moses foretold of the coming **Prophet**—*i.e.*, Christ. (Deut. xviii. 15.)

David sang of the coming **King**. (Ps. lxxii., xlv.)

All the prophets gave witness to the **Redeemer**, who should come out of Zion, and bring in the blessing of the kingdom. (Isa. lix. 20, xi., xii.; Zech. xiv. 9.)

John the Baptist, the forerunner of the **Messiah**, announced *the kingdom of heaven* as at hand. (Matt. iii. 1, 2.)

Christ announced *the same*, and presented Himself as *King* (Matt. iv. 17; Luke xix. 38); He also sent out the twelve to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but forbade them to go to the Gentiles (Matt. x. 5-7); and later on other seventy, but only to every city and place where He Himself would come. (Luke x. 1-9.)

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Finding He was rejected, He foretold *the mysteries* (or secrets) of the kingdom during His absence at the right hand of God. (Matt. xiii. 11.)

Being crucified *as the King* (Matt. xxvii. 37), the establishment of the kingdom in power and glory is put off *until His second manifestation*. (Luke xxi. 27; Ps. lxxii. 11; Dan. vii. 13, 14.)

Meanwhile, having been raised and glorified, the gospel is published to every creature. (Mark xvi. 15; Acts viii. 4; Col. i. 23.) This has already gone on for nearly nineteen hundred years. Believers now enter the kingdom, but partake of *heavenly* blessing instead of earthly. (John iii. 5; Acts viii. 12; Matt. xiii. 43; Col. i. 12, 13.)

Moreover, a further and *distinct character of testimony* comes out, especially committed to Paul, which he terms "**My gospel**" (2 Tim. ii. 8; Rom. ii. 16), and also speaks of as—

1. THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF THE BLESSED GOD.¹
2. THE GOSPEL OF HIS SON.²
3. THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST.³
4. THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.⁴

So that believers from Pentecost until the rapture of the heavenly saints (1 Thess. iv. 15-18) are now partakers of, and will share eternally, *the highest blessings revealed*, being the recipients of the abundant grace of God (Rom. v. 17; Eph. i. 7), identified with (Col. iii. 3), and united to Christ in glory (1 Cor. vi. 17); and shall also be manifested

¹ 1 Tim. i. 11. ² Rom. i. 1-4, 9. ³ 2 Cor. iv. 4. ⁴ Acts xx. 24.

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in *the heavenly sphere* of the kingdom when displayed. (Rev. xxi. 9–27.)

In Rom. xvi. 25, 26, we also get the term "*My gospel*," and the apostle shows that it further embraces the revelation of *the mystery* (i.e., the union of Christ and the Church), kept secret since the world began, but *now* made manifest. (Eph. iii. 3, 9; v. 32; vi. 19; 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7; Col. i. 26; ii. 2.)

After the rapture (1 Thess. iv. 15–18), and during the period which elapses between that event (Dan. ix. 27) and the reappearing of *the King of kings* (Rev. xix. 11–16), the Jewish remnant (Rev. vi. 9–11; Matt. xxv. 40) will preach again "**the gospel of the kingdom**" (Matt. xxiv. 14) as a witness to all nations, and then will the end (of the age) come, and the millennium commence. This testimony will be to the fact that the rejected *Son of man* is coming to set up His kingdom over the earth. (Rev. xi. 3, 4; xx. 4.) The result is the conversion of a great multitude of Gentiles to be blessed with Israel *on the earth* for the thousand years. (Rev. vii.; xxi. 24.) Hence it is also called "**the everlasting gospel**" (Rev. xiv. 6), as the kingdom of Christ, unlike all the kingdoms of the world, which rise and fall, will last to the end of time. (Dan. ii. 44; vii. 27.) The term embraces the glad tidings that were preached from Adam's day onwards, inasmuch as it will tell of *earthly* blessing through Christ, but is *perfectly distinct from the gospel of the grace of God*.

E. H. C.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PARDON AND JUSTIFICATION.

PARDON and justification are not the same thing. Pardon is the favour and kindness of a person wronged passing over faults against himself, an act of prerogative goodness; so that kindness flows forth unimpeded by the wrong, though in this case it be by the blood of Christ. Justification is the holding not chargeable with guilt. The latter refers to righteous judgment; the former to kindness. Where one is a sinner against God, they approach one another, and run together in fact, but are not the same, nor is the effect the same in the heart. Justified, I do not fear judgment; pardoned, my heart returns in comfort to Him who has pardoned me; but by His blood we have both. It is another aspect, not another act. So, when we connect our risen position with justifying, it is not logically exact. The justifying is always holding discharged from accusation. The way in which we so stand is not simply holding us to be clear, but by the resurrection of Christ putting us in a new position; for if He be risen, and God has acknowledged therein the satisfaction made in Christ's death, He has therein discharged or justified us. But that which justified us implies, therefore, more

than pardon, an introduction into God's presence as Christ stands there. If Christ be not raised, we are yet in our sins; but if He be, we are cleared by a work which brings us into the glory of God in perfect acceptance. This is not properly justification, but it is the justification we have got, seeing how we have obtained the justification; for we are justified by being the righteousness of God in Him, and are warranted practically in taking what Christ is as the measure of our justification.

"The merits of Christ," though a most justifiable and true expression, has misled, as it is in another order of ideas from justifying. It is not by meriting that we are held free from charge. Christ has merited that we should; and so it is all well. But meriting has respect to reward. Now no merits could have cleared us before God without death: *that* was the wages of sin, and "without shedding of blood there is no remission." And this leads us to see the wisdom of God, because, being thus, there is also a putting away, an end of the old evil, and the introduction in a new life into a wholly new order of things, pure and excellent. Finally, the heart wants pardon, the conscience justifying. J. N. D.

"THE first epistle to Timothy gives directions for the order of the Assembly; the second, for the path of the servant of God when in disorder and failure."

THE LAST INTERVIEW.

SADLY altered was the poor, worn-out body, pillowed in an easy chair, but his spirit rejoicing in his much-loved Lord. He said, "Two months ago, when I felt this sickness was unto death, I asked Him to reveal Himself to me in increased loveliness and nearness. *He did*; He filled me with Himself. I know the blood has done its *blessed, blessed* work for my soul. It is His *love*, His beauty, His perfection, that fills my heart and vision." He then spoke of feeling a little better that day. "But ah! that is no pleasure to me." Then, clasping his dear, thin hands together, he said, while tears flowed down his face, "My precious Lord Jesus, thou knowest how fully I can say with Paul, 'To depart and be with thee is far better.' Oh, how far better! I do long for it! They come and talk to me of a crown of glory—I bid them cease; of the glory of heaven—I bid them stop. I am not wanting crowns, I have HIMSELF! *Himself*! I am going to be with HIMSELF! Ah! with the Man of Sychar; with Him who stayed to call Zacchæus; with the Man of the eighth of John; with the Man who hung upon the cross; with the Man who died. Oh to be with Him before the glories, the crowns, or the kingdom appear! It is wonderful—wonderful! with the Man of Sychar alone, the Man of the gate of the city of Nain; and I am going to be with Him for ever. Exchange this sad, sad scene, which cast Him out, for His presence. Oh, the Man of Sychar!"

DEPENDENCE.

IN weakness one learns dependence. To depend on our fellow-creatures is often to invite disaster, or at least disappointment. In *us*, necessary love, care, and strength are sometimes wanting when most needed by those dependent on us ; but God's love, care, and strength are unfailing. He never grows weary, and may safely be depended on at all times, and under all circumstances. Even in sorrows, brought about by our own folly and wrong doing, He will hear our confession, accept our heartfelt contrition, and bring us out of our distresses (Psalm cvii.) in the way best suited to the glory of His great and blessed name, and to the securing of our utmost good. May we trust Him, and be imitators of Him as dear children.

A. B.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SHEFFIELD.—2 Cor. v. 16. To know Christ after the flesh in no wise implies the personal knowing of Him when here on earth, for probably no one at Corinth had ever gazed upon the face of Jesus here below, not even Paul himself. Now the Christian assembly at Corinth was not composed exclusively of Gentile believers, as we may see in Acts xviii. ; converted Jews were there also, and these would have learnt from the Jewish Scriptures what great blessings

were to follow the advent of Messiah. Even the gathered disciples after the Lord's resurrection enquired of Him whether He would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel. To have such hopes, and such hopes only, this was to know Christ after the flesh. But Israel's king was rejected by Israel. Christ died and rose again; and in resurrection He takes a new place, and enters into new and heavenly associations, altogether distinct from those prophesied of in the ancient writings. It is in this new place, and in these heavenly associations, made known in the New Testament Scriptures, but not revealed before, that we Christians now know Christ. Have any of us known Him after the flesh? Have we thought of Him in the way He is presented in the prophets in relation to earth, and a throne on earth? If any at Corinth or elsewhere had known Him thus, henceforth they knew Him so no more. But if Christ, as man, in resurrection takes a place never predicated of Him of old, save in the counsels of God, we also, for we are *in Him*; and if any man be in Christ, not only is he a new creature, but there is a new creation in which he has part. Old things are passed away; in that the man *in Christ* is no longer in the things in which he once was, all things are become new, in that he is in a new circle, a new order, a new creation, where all things are of God. Henceforth he knows no man after the flesh; being in Christ, he views men and things from a new stand-point altogether.

In verse 14 we get the fact that "one died for all," from whence he argues that all were dead. Such was and is the condition of man as man—dead in sins, and

the wide world a great graveyard over which death held its empire. But into death the Saviour went; for He died and rose again; and we believers, who were dead, have been quickened by the same mighty power that brought Christ out of the grave. We are now spoken of as "*they that live.*" And if we live, it is not only that we have been quickened, but quickened together with Him. Thus we are associated in life with the risen Christ; we are in Him who is "the beginning of the creation of God."

We trust, dear friend, these simple remarks may help you in the understanding of this important passage. Only one word needs to be added; viz., that these verses present to us Christian *teaching*, and not experience. No doubt our experience ought to harmonize therewith, and great practical results should follow. This surely will be so if *the teaching* be first received in simpleness of faith.

TWICKENHAM.—We agree with you in thinking the subject about which you write far too serious for speculation. If called to speak of such a matter, we would seek to do so in the very words of Scripture, and let them have their own weight on the conscience of those who heard. Nor would we dare to take it upon ourselves to tone down in any way the solemn and affecting statement of Rev. xx. 15.

J. W. D.—We thank you for the paper you have so kindly sent us. A full, perfect, present, and eternal salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the privilege of every believer to be free from doubts and fears are matters on which we have dwelt, and still hope to dwell, by God's help, in the pages of this magazine.

FOUR GREAT CHANGES.

WE would say a word to our readers about four great changes spoken of in the word of God. The first is the *salvation* of the sinner. We read, "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." (Acts xxviii. 28.) No one can possibly enter heaven unless saved on earth first. We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. ii. 8); and a marvellous change takes place in every soul who is the subject of this blessed work of God.

Many discover their unfitness for the presence of God, but have recourse to remedies of their own. These usually consist in the observance of certain religious forms, or scripture institutions, combined with an effort to improve *self*. Some tell us we are saved by baptism, or, at least, that our salvation commences then, and is consummated by confirmation and the observance of the Lord's Supper. Others virtually say it is in belonging to the true Church, that is, to what is *their idea* of the true Church; that we are saved.

But, beloved reader, the salvation spoken of in the Word is the portion only of that sinner whose heart is open to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and who is the subject of the operations of the Holy Ghost. It is not the improvement in any

form or way, of the old evil nature inherited from Adam ; but the sinner saved by grace receives a new life, and is justified by God. He is born of God, of incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, and is accounted righteous, by faith without works, by God Himself. (Rom. iv. 6.) He also receives the Spirit, and henceforth finds his joy in God and the things which please Him, instead of in the follies, vanities, and sins of this world. He is brought to God in all the infinite value of the finished work of Christ, and set in His presence in all the favour of the accepted Man, Christ Jesus, *the Beloved*. (Eph. i. 6.) In short, he is no longer a sinner under the judgment of God, but a Christian, in the scriptural sense of the term. *Wondrous change !*

But ere we are taken to the glory into which Christ has already entered, God leaves us in the world a little while for His own glory. And whilst here He is looking for *a second change* in His people. We shall see in 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18, how this is effected : “ 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, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

It is *a moral change* produced in the believer by occupation with the Lord. The New Translation renders the passage thus : “ We all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face,” &c.

It refers to the open or unveiled face of the Lord in contrast to the face of Moses (*v.* 13), which had to be veiled when he came down from Mount Sinai with the law. There is no thought of a mirror, or looking-glass, as many have supposed from the language used in our ordinary English New Testament, but simply *looking on*, or, as many often sing with grateful heart—

“*Gazing on the Lord in glory,*
While our hearts in worship bow.”

The effect is a marvellous moral change in the soul. As every man carries with him the moral impress of the objects that govern his heart and life, so is it with the Christian. He is changed, or transformed, into the same image; that is, the image of the Lord. This change ever increases as the soul is engrossed with its object. Looking on *the glory of the Lord*, he is changed into the same image *from glory to glory*. Blessed change! And this, remark further, is not by any effort on our part, but by the simple all-powerful operation in us of the Lord the Spirit,” which is the force of, “Even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Moreover, this is not the portion of a few advanced souls, but of *all* the Lord’s people: “But *we all*,” says the apostle. Every Christian should be occupied with the Lord in glory. From His face the glory shines, and as we gaze upon Him our souls catch His beneficent

rays. Wondrous indeed is the effect upon all whose eyes are fixed upon that glorious Object. So steadfast was the occupation of Stephen, that not only was he affected morally, but even outwardly, for "all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." (Acts vi. 15.) Beloved reader, are you looking upon the glory of His blessed face? Is this change going on day by day in you?

But there is a moment coming, and that shortly, when the Christian will no longer tread this world of sin, engaged with the Lord in glory, but shall *himself be changed* into His image, and share that glory with Him. This is our immediate and blessed hope. "Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall *all be changed*, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be *changed*." (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) Whilst you read these words this wondrous change may occur. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," "suddenly," "quickly"—such are the terms employed by the Holy Ghost to describe the manner of the Lord's return for His people, although we are not told *when* it will be.

All who have undergone the first great change of which we have spoken will also undergo this

third great change. If the Lord were to come now; not one of them would be left behind. The sleeping saints will be raised, and the living ones shall *all* be changed—*all*. Not some changed, and some left behind, but *all* changed. Some have thought that only the watchful ones will be taken, but this is a great mistake, often arising from occupation with self and one's own faithfulness, instead of apprehending that it is all pure grace on God's part from beginning to end. In Matt. xxv., which is a parallel passage, we find that the five wise virgins who were *ready* went in with the bridegroom. (Matt. xxv. 10.) But what constituted their readiness? Not their watchfulness, but the possession of oil in their vessels with their lamps. Oil is a figure of the Spirit of God. Every one who is wise unto salvation, and has the Spirit, will enter in; every one who is a mere professor, lacking the Spirit of God, will be shut out. There should be a practical readiness as well; that is, a condition of soul answering to our privileges. But it is not on the ground of what we are in ourselves that we get a title to enter, but what God has done for us, and in us, by the finished work of His beloved Son and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

A fourth change is mentioned in Heb. i. 10, 12: "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 Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

In this wonderful passage we find the glory of creation ascribed to the Blessed One of whom we have been speaking; and then that there is a day approaching when a vast change shall come upon the whole scene, though His years shall not fail. This change is compared to the folding up of a vesture. *Primarily*, it will take place at the commencement of the age to come, or the millennium, when Christ, having claimed His own, and presented the Church to Himself (Eph. v. 27), shall come forth in power and great glory to reign; but, *finally*, at the end of all things, when He shall give up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all. (1 Cor. xv. 24-28.) A vast change indeed will be effected *when He appears*, as we learn from Isa. lxxv. 17-25. The heavens above will be cleared of their present occupants, Satan and the wicked spirits (Rev. xii. 7-9; Eph. vi. 11, 12), and the curse removed from the earth, and God will gather together in one all things in Christ. (Rev. xxii. 3; Eph. i. 10.) A totally different state of things will be established to anything known before in the world's history. (Ps. lxxii.; Haggai ii. 6; Heb. xii. 25-29.) But, *at the end* of all things, we read that "the heavens shall pass away with a great

noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Peter iii. 10.) And again, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter iii. 12, 13.)

All who have part in the first three great changes will appear with Christ in glory, and be displayed in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom over the earth. And when the heaven and the earth shall be dissolved and flee away at the close, they shall have their portion of eternal blessing when God is all in all. Vast as *this fourth change* shall be, our eternal lot is bound up with Him, who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, and whose years shall not fail. (Heb. xiii. 8, i. 12.)

In view thereof we would close with Peter's admonition: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (2 Peter iii. 11.) And again, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Peter iii. 14.) May we all be found seeking to walk in obedience to these exhortations, as with joy and patience we look and wait for the coming glories.

E. H. C.

THE PURE IN HEART.

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

MATT. v. 8.

ONE of the most honoured evangelists this country has ever known was wont to say to young converts, “Study your own heart, and Christ.” Now, while we should scarcely feel free to put it in these very words, we fully go with the importance of the thought that a believer should not be negligent as to the state of his heart. Nor do we believe that those who are taken up with Him who loved them, and gave Himself for them, can be wanting in deep concern as to how they are seen by Him who is the Searcher of hearts.

But we cannot hide from our minds the possibility of being engaged with truth which speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, without the heart being occupied with Him of whom it speaks. Many who are eager in the pursuit of knowledge may unconsciously be betrayed into this; and, when this is the case, it is scarcely to be wondered at that there is a low and inconsistent walk, while they are, perhaps, giving utterance to the highest doctrines of Scripture. It is surely not too much to expect that those who hold the heavenly side of truth should manifest heavenly-mindedness and

heavenly ways. If Christ be known as our life, and the One in whom, through marvellous grace, we are filled full, where should our minds be set but on things above, where He sitteth? When the latter is wanting, the conscience becomes damaged, the heart grows hard, and, it may be, imperceptibly slides into the world.

Nor should it be forgotten that God's solemn testimony of His ancient people was, "They do alway err in their heart." Every *outward* dishonour could be traced to their *inward* state. Failure really began within. Peter got away from the Lord several steps before he denied Him with an oath and a curse. And all who are born of God may be sure that, if they watch and judge by the truth the motives and desires of their hearts, there will not be much to judge as to walk and conduct. Who does not know that God looks to have our hearts? "My son, give me thine heart." Besides, are we not by divine grace espoused to Christ? And is not purity of affection, and an undivided heart, that which becomes a chaste virgin? Satan's aim, no doubt, is to insinuate suspicious thoughts of God, stir up unbelief, and decoy into paths of unholiness and self-will; but when our hearts are set on Him who loveth us, and has washed us from our sins in His own blood, are we not constrained to follow Him who always did those things that pleased the Father, and who said, "My meat is to do the

will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work"? How often have we looked up to our Lord by faith, and earnestly sung—

"Take Thou our hearts, and let them be
For ever closed to all but Thee;
Thy willing servants, let us wear
The seal of love for ever there."

The statement that "pure in heart" means that sin is rooted out of the believer is not only untrue, but opposed to the whole system of Christian doctrine. When the aged apostle John was inspired to write to the "little children," "young men," and "fathers" in Christ, he said, "If *we* say that *we* have no sin" (observe "we," including himself), "we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." That is, if one supposes himself to be so inwardly pure that he has no motions of lust, pride, or self-will, he is self-deceived, and has not *the truth in him*. It is impossible to mistake a statement so plain, or to be indifferent to an assertion so solemn! (1 John i. 8.)

In turning to this scripture the Christian reader will observe it does not say, If we say we have no *sins*, but "If we say that we have no *sin*;" that is, if we say we have no evil principle within us, so often in Scripture called "sin," as distinguishing it from its evil fruits, which are "sins." "Sins," or offences, are referred to in the next verse, which, when confessed, are forgiven, and communion with the Father is restored. But

“sin”—that is, an evil nature—cannot be forgiven but must be judged and set aside by God judicially. This was done when Christ was “made sin for us,” and God “condemned sin in the flesh” in Him for us. Thus while sin has been judged and set aside *substitutionally* by the sacrifice of Christ, it is still in us *actually*. But we know we have been crucified with Christ, have been dealt with judicially by God in the sacrifice of His own Son, so that the knowledge that the flesh is still in us is no hindrance to our fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, though we have no confidence in it, but reckon ourselves to have died with Christ “unto sin,” and to be alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. vi. 6–11.) This is the way faith reckons, as instructed by the truth and strengthened by the Spirit of God. Still the word is true—“Blessed are the pure in heart;” and certainly cannot mean such purity of nature that we are incapable of sinning.

It cannot either mean mere *sincerity*, because we cannot doubt that many evil things are done by those who are most sincere, and totally unconscious of their wrongdoings. Did not Saul of Tarsus, the chief of sinners, in the height of his wicked career, say, “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth”? Being sincere then, however laudable in a true course, is not the same thing as being “pure in heart.”

Uprightness of heart is highly commended in the Word. We read that "the prayer of the upright is His delight," and that "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." But many an erring Christian who has gone sadly astray has been comforted with the thought that God loves and encourages an upright soul, and has been thus constrained to pour out his heart in true and thorough confession of sins, keeping back nothing, and refraining from all excuse and self-justification, because God is righteous in all His ways, holy in all His works, is a righteous God that loveth righteousness, and has said, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." But however commendable walking uprightly may be, it is a different thought from being "pure in heart."

We read also of believers having *purified their hearts by faith*. Thus their burden of sins has been removed, their guilt is gone, and their consciences have been purged by the blood of Christ. They are therefore at ease in God's presence. No longer at enmity, but reconciled to God by the death of His Son, they have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Like those of old, whose bodies were washed with pure water and sprinkled with blood, they have been so completely under the action of the word of God, as made known to them by the Spirit, and have received God's testimony to the eternal efficacy of the blood of

Jesus Christ His Son as cleansing them from all sin, that they can now draw near to God as those whose hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience, and are clean through His Word.

The apostle Peter speaks also of those who *purified their hearts in obeying the truth*. But this does not include the truth, "Blessed are the pure in heart;" yet it shows that the proper action of the truth on the heart is purifying when it is obeyed. And is not this constantly the case all through the believer's history? Are we not told that this is the effect of the Lord's coming when held by us as our hope? "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself." It does not say has purified, but the normal influence of the hope of seeing the Lord and being like Him "purifieth;" for how is it possible that impure and sinful thoughts and desires can be encouraged by us while looking and waiting for God's Son from heaven? There is no doubt then that "the truth," when held in the love of it, is the great power used by the Spirit for inward purity; and this is the important fact we gather from the inspired instruction, as to purifying our hearts in obeying the truth.

Timothy was admonished by the Spirit, through an apostle, to *keep himself pure*. (1 Tim. v. 22.) He was not only to preserve himself from evil doctrines, false ways, and unholy associations, but to "flee also youthful lusts," and "follow righteous-

ness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Tim. ii. 22.)

The same word is for us. As to unbelievers, we are not to be yoked with them ; as to professing Christians, we are to purge ourselves from vessels to dishonour—our associations must be according to God's mind ; as to the truth, we are to speak the things which become sound doctrine, and to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints ; as to our ways, we are to "walk in the truth," and, as God's children, never forget that our Lord has said, "Blessed are the pure in heart."

We believe that another expressed the truth when he said, "Living to God *inwardly* is the only possible means of living to Him *outwardly* ;" and if this be so, how indispensable is it that the thoughts and intents of our hearts be carefully watched and faithfully judged by us ! Very much that rises within is at once overcome by regarding it as the motions of the old man which was crucified with Christ. Thus knowing we have died, the sin of the old man from which the thoughts and reasonings spring has been judicially dealt with on the cross ; so that our present position before God is not in the flesh, though the flesh is in us ; not in Adam, but in Christ Jesus. In this way, as strengthened by the Spirit and instructed by the truth, we detect and cast down reasonings and high things which exalt them-

selves against the knowledge of God, and bring our thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. x. 5.) But if foolish and evil thoughts and desires are encouraged, and we yield our members to such suggestions, we cannot be inwardly pure. Communion too with the Father is broken until we have judged ourselves, and made confession of our sins to Him, who, in virtue of the atoning work of His Son, is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

But besides the disallowance of evil workings within, it is being occupied with the Father's love, and the favour and blessing in which He has set us by redemption, and with our Lord Jesus Christ as the *object* of our hearts, which delivers us from much, and fills us with positive good. When the Lord is so before us that we can truly say, "Whom having not seen, we love; in whom though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," then He dwells in our hearts by faith, and evil influences have no power. Beholding the Lord where He now is, we become morally like Him; we are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. (1 Peter i. 8; 2 Cor. iii. 18.)

When Christ is the *food* of our souls—His flesh and blood truly meat and drink, as revealed in the Word—our inward man is strengthened. When His perfections and worthiness attract our

hearts we see no beauty elsewhere. We find every need of our souls met—faith grows, love abounds, hope brightens, and we are satisfied with Him, and constrained by His love; so that other objects lose their influence, and we cannot but love Him because He first loved us. And, as we have seen, the *hope* of His coming for us, our seeing Him as He is, and being like Him, so purifies that we cannot but live *upon* Him, and therefore *to* Him, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

May the Lord Himself be so before us where He now is, that we allow nothing of evil inwardly or outwardly while remembering His own words, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

H. H. S.

A PRECIOUS THOUGHT.

“I AM less,” wrote Mr. Judson, of Burmah, “than a speck on earth. Few know of my existence, and soon shall I pass away and be forgotten; but if I have been truly washed in the blood of Christ, I shall not be forgotten by Him. I am as dear to Him as though I were the only intelligent creature in the universe—as though I were the only being created, and the only being for whom the Son of God came into the world and died.”

ONESIMUS.

THE incidents of this man's history, as recorded in the epistle to Philemon, give us a glimpse into the heart of Paul the apostle, and the way in which the grace of Christ was manifested in him. But besides this they furnish a beautiful presentation of the grace of God to the sinner, and it is with this side I would occupy the thoughts of the reader for a moment.

Onesimus was a slave in the house of Philemon, a Christian living at Colosse. A kind and considerate master we could but suppose him to be, from the seventh verse of the epistle; and it was under his roof Onesimus was called to labour and to live. Alas! how thankless and deceived is the human heart; for Onesimus, insensible to his privileges, and deceived by the enemy, runs away from his master. Evidently he had been a worthless servant, whom none but a Christian master would care to be troubled with, and it is not unlikely he closed this unprofitable chapter of his life's history with some theft or other evil, which disgraced him in the eyes of others, and led to his flight. From his master's home he wanders, possibly at dead of night ("for he that doeth evil hateth the light"), and becomes a fugitive and vagabond in the earth. Homeless

and friendless, he makes his way to the vast city of Rome, where many like him sought to hide themselves in its dens of darkness. Oh, what a picture of degradation does he now present!—his character gone, a companion of outcasts, with nothing but want and misery staring him in the face, yet the pitying eye of heaven was upon him. God had marked his downward steps, and with a love altogether divine was bringing about His wonderful purposes. Whether as a street beggar he at length found himself knocking at the door of Paul's prison-home, or was taken there by some compassionate heart, he is brought face to face with the beloved friend of his dishonoured master, and from his lips hears the wondrous story of God's love, and of the Saviour's precious blood. His heart is touched and broken, as well it might be; for hardened indeed must the heart be that could listen to such a story and remain unmoved. Gratefully and eagerly he drinks in the tidings of divine grace, so suited to one so guilty and unhappy. He rests his soul on the precious work of Christ, and enjoys the peace of pardon, receives the gift of eternal life, and becomes a monument of that grace which has no respect of persons; grace that blesses and saves alike the kind master and the worthless slave. Matchless it is, and worthy of the God from whom it flows, and of the Christ who is its channel to the guilty sons of men.

As soon as Onesimus is brought to God the

fruits of grace begin to manifest themselves in him. He devotes himself to serve the apostle, and share with him some of the afflictions of that gospel which had been the message of life to him. The apostle esteemed and valued him, and would have gladly retained him for his fellowship and service; but no, Philemon had been wronged and defrauded. It was also good for Onesimus that he should himself own all his wrong to his master as well as to the Lord; and so Paul sends him back with the brief but touching epistle to Philemon, whose grace he counts on to receive Onesimus, not now as the once unprofitable slave, but as a brother beloved in the Lord, and as a fellow-labourer of the apostle himself. Strange and wonderful are the ways of God. Sin and shame had driven the fugitive slave to the dark and depraved capital; thither, too, according to divine counsels, the faithful apostle had been led, who meets with the guilty one, charges himself with all his responsibility, and says to Philemon, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on my account; I will repay." How like the blessed Saviour whom divine love brought down into the very place of our misery and sin, and who in grace made Himself chargeable before God with all our guilt, and bore the judgment of it on the cross.

" Who paid in blood the dreadful score,
The ransom due for us."

Onesimus now returns to his master. What a

changed journey! How light the step! how happy the heart! How fearless too! What a contrast to the journey of that never-forgotten night when his face was towards the far country! Everything is changed; for he had met with Jesus, and this does change everything for mortal man, both for time and eternity. Arrived at his master's house, he eagerly tells his sorrow and shame, with such evident sincerity as to win at once the confidence of Philemon, who could but receive him back with joy greater than the sorrow which the past had caused; and, moreover, the letter of Paul puts his own worthiness forward as the ground and measure of the slave's acceptance and favour. What joy lighted up that Christian home, as the once unprofitable slave was seen to be a monument of divine grace!

How wonderful that the guilty sinner, having run his evil course, should at the end of that course meet with the One, the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who makes Himself chargeable with all the sin—offers Himself by the Eternal Spirit, without spot, to God, so that the poor guilty one might be able to stand before God in all the beauty and acceptability of the Saviour Himself, as the apostle touchingly puts it in verse 17, "Receive him as myself."

The Lord deeply touch our hearts with such grace as wholly to sanctify us, and to make us, who were once so unprofitable (Rom. iii. 12), to be profitable both to Him and to all! H. A. C.

“ME YE HAVE NOT ALWAYS.”

JOHN xii. 8.

IT is evident that the primary application of these words has passed away, with the circumstances that gave occasion to them, never to find their parallel. But I am persuaded that a very real and solemn application of them remains to us, beloved brethren. Often as we turn to the familiar scene, precious to all that love Him, we find it yields some fresh aspect of blessing.

Testimonies were accumulating at this point in the gospel, on the part of God, to the glory of Him whom men despised and the nation of Israel abhorred. The sickness of Lazarus had been to “the glory of God, that the *Son of God* might be glorified thereby”—in the midst of death manifested to be the resurrection and the life. Just now He was to be presented to the daughter of Zion as her King, coming sitting on an ass’s colt, while multitudes greeted Him with “Hosanna; blessed is the *King of Israel* that cometh in the name of the Lord;” so soon indeed to be changed into the cry, “Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him.” The Greeks too desiring to see Jesus was the occasion of bringing out that He was *Son of man*, and bespoke the day when He should be glorified as such, in a wider sphere of glory that

belonged to Him than as Israel's king. And this threefold testimony to the glory of His person was ordered of God as the answer to the definite rejection of His words and works in chaps. viii. ix. (See chaps. x. 25, 37, 38.)

Still there was that which lay nearer to the heart of the Lord. There was a path He was about to enter, necessary indeed to the full manifestation of His glories that had been borne witness to, but in which He should be glorified in a deeper way in glorifying God (chap. xiii. 31), and laying, in the cross, the foundation for the accomplishment of God's eternal counsels. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” His death was full in view. Had it not been very present to His heart when He walked with Mary to the tomb of Lazarus? Feeling the sorrow and desolation of death that was upon all, but as none else could, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. Jesus wept!—precious tears of perfect human sympathy, of divine love that had come down thus to have its part to the full in human sorrow! “Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the tomb.” Was not that deeper groan the expression of how He felt that which had brought in the sorrow—sin the source of it all—entering into this as He alone could, for He was in the way Himself to be made sin, and to endure in infinite depths of sorrow, the judgment of God that was due

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to it? Yielding Himself up to death for the glory of God, He was the perfect object of the Father's delight, and would ever give Him new ground for it. “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again.”

Was there to be no testimony of this deepest character of His glory? Impossible that it should be wanting! But how shall it be rendered? How blessed the fruit of His grace that had prepared a suited vessel for it in one, if there was but one, who in heart entered in any measure into the true character of what was transpiring. It was Mary—she who had learned to know Him as no one else seemed to have known Him in the Gospels. Her heart, formed by the object of God's heart, in the instincts of this communion, anticipates what lay deepest in His, even before it had found expression in His words. She *felt*, what perhaps she could not have defined to any, the shadow of His death was fallen upon her while men were compassing it, and He could say, in giving Himself up to it, “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” The secret of the Lord was with Mary, as with all who fear Him; and so, with intelligence of the suited moment, she took “the ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair.” “Because of the savour of thy good ointment, thy name is as ointment poured

forth.” So it was that day—“the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”

But what is especially before me, in seeking this little word with the Lord’s beloved people, comes out in the way He expresses His estimate of the act of her devotedness, in contrast to the thoughts of His poor disciples who understood nothing. “They had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?” Judas adding, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?” Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but *Me ye have not always.*” He will receive no more the anointing of our hands; He has passed beyond the reach of such, though not beyond the expression of our love. Yet there is a sense in which His own will have Him for ever, and in a more blessed way than they had Him while He was yet with them upon earth. The part that Mary chose by His grace we know shall never be taken away from her. Still there is a way in which we have Him now in this day and scene of His rejection that we shall never have Him in glory. There is a fellowship of His sufferings, more intimate and sweeter if possible than the fellowship of His glory. *What if we were to miss it?* This is what affects my heart, beloved brethren. If Mary had failed to seize that last night, to render love’s adoring testimony to His preciousness, she never could have recalled it through eternity. How

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exquisitely suited to the moment that testimony to the perfect fragrance of His death before God, whom men counted worthy only of a malefactor's cross. She had come beforehand to anoint Him for His burial. How soon the opportunity would have been for ever lost! It is not that love will not find new and as perfectly suited ways of expressing itself to Him in the everlasting glory; but it will not be in the way in which He looks for it now, and misses it if wanting.

For has He not come, and died, and risen again, to win our hearts for Himself? Does He not state it as the express object of the grace that has brought us the full and free forgiveness of our sins? “When they had nothing to pay, He frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love Him most?” He looked for nothing short of this to be the effect of that grace. It sufficed to distinguish the forgiven one in Simon's house, even before she knew all that His grace had come to bring her. “Seest thou this woman?” He had not seemed to notice her before, but now He recounts every token of her love, for it was precious to Him. Is it thus with us, my beloved brethren? I put it to myself as I do to you. Can we, as His forgiven ones, be known in a cold, heartless world as plainly as she—even by love that seeks to lavish its expression on this precious Object, our life this, and nothing else? “To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” He looks for it in glory, and makes so

much of what nothing but the love that drew it forth would appraise as of any worth. Not that the action of this dear woman in Luke vii. is to be confounded with the outwardly somewhat similar one of Mary of Bethany, as though it were of the same order of intelligence. But they were alike as the expression of love, of real devoted attachment to the person of the Lord Jesus, that gave what they did, its spring and perfect suitability and acceptance, each in its own place and measure. The former, the first awakening and fresh gush of love, as when first He attracts the heart to Himself by all His blessed grace ; the latter, the fruit and expression of the deep-tried experience of what He is in Himself, the heart satisfied, that marks and in itself constitutes the growth of the believer.

We love Him then because He first loved us. And can it be that we shall not seek to express it? But do any ask, How can we know what would suit Him now? Ah! love finds it out, because it studies its object, as Mary did, sitting at the feet of Jesus. Thus she gained the instinctive intelligence with which she acted. Thus the Lord says, “He that *hath* my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” The possession of intelligence of the mind and will of the Lord is the first-fruit and proof of love. And love needs to be guided by the intelligence it thus gains in order to express itself acceptably to the Lord. Mary of Magdala needed it when she conceived the thought of carrying away the dead body of

the Lord. To what end? But she loved Him, and this detained her in the place where she acquired the intelligence in the richest way. Then again love has its own way of expressing itself, that no mere intelligence could imitate, the Word indicating generally that obedience is that way. (1 John v. 3; John xiv. 21, 23, xv. 14.) But into how many innumerable details the principle enters, love finding its joyful liberty only in carrying out His will under His eye, into every particular of the life, love giving its peculiar character and acceptance to the obedience.

The very way we have Him now as in the presence of the world that has cast Him out, affords constant opportunities that love will be quick to appreciate and seize, as Mary did, to express itself. In the glory there will be no self to deny, no cross to take up, no world to refuse; no breaking of the dearest ties of kindred; no misjudgment of fellow-believers to face; no loss of any kind to encounter for love of Him. All hearts will flow together to Him there. Now, according to His word, any or all of these things supply the test of our estimate of Him, afford the privilege of proving what the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord is to our souls, as he found it who could say, "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse."

Alas! in the base treachery of our hearts it is too easy to escape it all. Go with the ordinary profession of His name; use the security that

infinite sovereign grace has given you from judgment to come, to settle down at ease in the world that has rejected Him; do good to men, as with the ointment sold for so much and given to the poor; these things will gain for the Christian the favour and esteem of the world, and the reproach of Christ will be unknown. But at what incalculable loss His touching words remind us, “*Me ye have not always.*”

When the glory is come “His servants shall serve Him,” perfectly then, as surely as we shall “see His face,” love finding new ways to express itself to its object in the glory; but if He came to-night to take us into it, never, if we have missed it here, would He call us to go forth to Him outside the camp bearing His reproach; never ask again, “This do in remembrance of me,” leading our hearts to announce His death; never look for or receive from bridal affections formed by the Spirit the cry that bids Him “Come;” never look for us to be identified with His interests in the Church and His testimony to the world. All this and much more is over for ever, and the opportunity past if we miss it now. “*Me ye have not always.*”

Oh to know the power of these words to stir up our souls to more devotedness that will make the most of days numbered as they come, and so quickly passing, never to be recalled! Oh to be found for Him, in the face of everything, accounting anything in which we taste the fellowship of His sufferings our greatest present gain and glory!

J. A. T.

SIMON PETER'S CONVERSION: HIS FALL AND RESTORATION.

“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”—LUKE xxii. 31, 32.

THERE is a notion abroad among many professing Christians that Simon Peter was not converted when he denied his Lord thrice in the palace of the high priest. Two things lead them to this conclusion. First, they think it impossible that a truly converted man could ever commit a sin so great; and, in the second place, there is the text at the head of this paper: “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren,” implying, so it is said, that he was not converted then.

This seems reasonable enough on the face of it until we examine the previous history of Peter, when we feel this ground cannot possibly be maintained. We believe him to have been savingly converted to God long before he fell into this terrible snare of the devil; and he is therefore a solemn example to us of how a saint of God may fall through overweening confidence in his own strength to stand in the hour of temptation.

But when we speak of his being converted, we use the word to signify that mighty change which we see illustrated in the parable of the prodigal, when he not only resolved to return home, but when “he arose and came to his father”—such a change as only takes place once in a lifetime.

III.

Who, with the Spirit-given history of Simon Peter before his eyes, can doubt that he was the subject of this great change, which divine power alone can effect? Do any ask for proofs? Behold him, then, in his boat on the lake of Gennesaret. From its deck Jesus preaches to the thronging crowd. Under the power of that searching word, and of those earnest calls to repentance, we may believe that Peter's conscience quailed, while his heart was drawn to the Saviour by the silken cords of love. The discourse over, at the bidding of the Lord he launches out into the deep, and letting down his net, incloses a great multitude of fishes. Up to this moment, whatever were his feelings, he succeeded in concealing them; but now he can restrain himself no longer. Now this hard toiler of the sea, this unlettered Galilean fisherman, falls down at the feet of Jesus and owns aloud that he is a sinful man—too sinful and too unworthy, as he thought, for the Lord to have aught to say to. What a sight! A sinner at the Saviour's feet! Did ever anyone get there and not receive eternal blessing? And shall it be otherwise with Peter? Nay, for He who wrought thus mightily in Peter's soul now stilled the storm that raged so fiercely there. "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men;" and when they reached land, Simon forsook all, and followed Him. Was there no conversion in all this? no work of God for eternity? Who would dare say so?

Later events place this beyond disproof. Numbers

had enrolled themselves as disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, this "prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." The ranks of His followers were swelling fast, soon, however, to be thinned, not by violent gusts of persecution, but by the doctrines of the Master they professed to follow. "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" was the angry murmur of many of His disciples as He spake of the eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood as the only means of life. (John vi.) Startled, stumbled, offended, they went back, and walked no more with Him. Their discipleship was on a par with the belief of the "many" in John ii. 23, which Jesus did not trust. The flesh, which profiteth nothing, was equal to such discipleship and to such belief. And when the Lord said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter was the one who answering said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Whether this was the confession of an unconverted man, or the blessed utterance of one who had heard, and had learned of the Father, the reader himself shall judge.

And at the time when many speculations were afloat as to who the Lord really was, some saying he was "John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets," He asked them, "But whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter was the first to answer, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. xvi. 16.) Who had taught Simon that? Who had given him eyes to

see the Christ, the Son of the living God, in the lowly Jesus of Nazareth? The secret of it all the Lord discloses, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." This recognition of Jesus, as Son of the living God, did not come in the way of human understanding. It was a revelation from on high. Passing by the wise and the prudent, it pleased God to reveal this stupendous fact to one of the world's babes, even to Simon the fisherman of Galilee. Was then this revelation made to an unregenerate man? or to one who, having heard the word of Jesus, had "passed from death unto life"? (John v. 24.) Who with an atom of spiritual intelligence can have any doubt upon the point?

If what has been advanced already be not enough to satisfy the reader's mind, his incredulity may be rebuked by a reference to John xiii. But what need of further proof? for we require not to go beyond the verse in Luke with which we began to see that Peter was a man who had been born again. "I have prayed for thee, that thy *faith* fail not," said the Saviour. Then faith was there. Yes; and such faith as always goes with the new birth; for it is written, that "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." (1 John v. 1.)

From all this we learn that the word "conversion" may be used in different ways. Peter had been already converted, in the primary sense of the word. Conversion to-day, if by that is

meant a work of God in the soul, by which the sinner is led to own himself ruined, undone, lost as in the sight of God, and to trust in the atoning blood of Christ, in virtue of which he is justified and saved, and made the possessor of eternal life, cannot be annulled, and therefore can never be repeated. But the man thus converted has many lessons to learn, and may have to learn some of of them in a painful way, as Peter had. Conversion, as applied to such an one, is the soul's *restoration*, the turning back of a poor wanderer to the One from whom he had strayed, whose mighty hand however still held him, and would to the very end, in proof of which see John x. 28, 29, and Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Nor is Peter's sincerity to be questioned when he avowed himself ready to go with Jesus both into prison and to death. He meant what he said, for he truly loved the Lord. But he was self-confident, and thought if others forsook their gracious Master, he never would. And this confidence in his own power had to be dealt with and broken down, and ground to powder, or it would be a life-long snare. How little did he know in what slippery places his feet were then found! But the Lord foresaw and knew everything, and He had prayed for Peter, not that he might be spared the sifting, but that his faith might not fail. This act of the Lord is full of unutterable grace. He had taken the name of Peter upon his lips, and borne it upon His heart in the presence of His God and

Father. Therefore Peter's *faith* failed not. He himself failed, miserably, utterly failed ; for he swore with oaths and curses, and with bitter emphasis, that he knew not Jesus. Alas ! alas ! But when the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, he remembered the words that had been too readily forgotten, and he went out and wept bitterly.

But this was only the beginning of Peter's restoration ; nor are his tears to be regarded as conclusive evidence that his faith had not given way, great as had been his sin. In process of time Peter declared his intention of returning to his former occupation. "I go a fishing," said he, and other of his fellow-disciples volunteered to keep him company. All night they toiled and caught nothing, and when the morning dawned they discerned the figure of a man standing on the shore. They knew Him not, and even when He spake to them they did not recognize His voice. To them He was a stranger whom they had never seen before. Impelled by a power they were not conscious of, they at His bidding cast the net at the right side of the ship and it became full of great fishes. Then that disciple whom Jesus loved said unto Peter, "It is the Lord." Will Peter's conscience make a coward of him ? Will he be the last to leave the ship when land is reached as if he dared not meet the Lord for very shame ? If Peter's faith had given way, this might have been the case. But the intercession of Jesus had prevailed, and Peter's faith stood fast. Therefore

he cast himself into the sea to get first to the risen Lord. He knew and was sure that in the Saviour's heart he had still a place, and that his sins, so black and base, had failed to chill the love of Christ. Precious faith ! divinely given and divinely sustained ; and still more precious Saviour, whose love alters not when it alteration finds !

The rest is soon told. The fitting moment had come at length for the Lord to deal with Peter's conscience, so that the work of restoration might be thorough and complete. Thrice had he denied his Lord, and thrice must the searching question be asked : " Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me *more than these ?*" the latter words being dropped in the second and third instances. What would Simon say now ? He had said, " Although all shall be offended, yet will not I." Did he still think that his love would bear a greater strain than theirs ? Nay ; for he who had been the most confident was the first to fall ; but in that fall he learnt this priceless lesson, that " the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." The flesh, which profiteth nothing, may lead a man with sincerity to say that he is ready to suffer and to die for Christ's sake ; but when the hour of trial comes the courage of the flesh is nowhere to be found. He who trusts it leans upon a broken reed, which will only pierce his hand. A bubble floating in the summer air, such is carnal confidence, of which Peter's fall furnishes so striking and sorrowful an illustration. This truth had now

been learnt. Therefore, in Simon's reply, he turned aside from the word *love* and made use of one that was not so strong. "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I am attached* to thee." Nor did the double repetition of the question lead him to take other ground. And when, finally, the Lord adopts Peter's word, and says, "Simon, son of Jonas, art thou *attached* to me?" he can only fall back on the omniscience of the Lord: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I am attached to thee." Who but He who knows all things, whose eye searches the secret chambers of the soul, could have known there was any love to Jesus there? Had we been seated at the fire in the high priest's hall when Peter thrice denied that he knew the Lord, and, to convince them the more that he was no disciple of that Holy One, began to curse and swear—if we, I say, had been there, what should we have thought? To us he would have seemed another Judas, whose heart had never known either faith or love. Had any told us that that man truly loved the Master, whom he then denied, and would in years to come seal his faith with a martyr's blood, we should have refused to credit it. Yet such was the truth. Yes, he in whose conscience the Lord had wrought on the shores of the sea of Galilee, and who had left all to follow Jesus; he to whom it was revealed by the Father in heaven that Jesus was the Son of the living God; he who was with the

* See New Translation and note to Revised Version.

Saviour in the holy mount, and was an eye-witness of His majesty when He received from God the Father honour and glory; he who, with James and John, was nearest Christ in lone Gethsemane, he is the man who in the hour of temptation fell! But now we see him fully restored; and He who was the Restorer of his soul, as well as the Saviour thereof, could commit to him the blessed work of feeding His sheep and His lambs.

What lessons may be gathered from these divine chronicles of Peter's conversion, his fall and restoration! Here we may see that "the flesh" in a saint of God is not one whit better than "the flesh" in anybody else; that the highest privileges and the richest gifts are no safeguards against the wiles of Satan. The danger of self-confidence is also seen, and its feebleness in the day of battle. On the other hand, we learn the faithfulness and enduring nature of the love of Christ. "Having loved His own which were in the world, *He loved them unto the end.*" No breakdown on their part can ever cause a breakdown on His. The faith of the feeblest He will sustain; and if any of "His own" stray from Him, He will cause them to return, though it be by a way watered with bitter tears of repentance and self-judgment. But let us remember that the secret of strength is in the consciousness that we have none. "Without me ye can do *nothing*;" and, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

“HOW GRAND IT IS TO BE SAVED.”

SUCH was the glad and free outburst of a young heart to which Christ was evidently precious. It came spontaneously, and was the rich overflow of a soul that was more than full.

“How long have you been saved?” I asked.

“About five or six years,” he replied.

Sufficient time, thought I, for a fair trial of his faith.

“Have you any doubts or fears?”

“I had at first,” he said.

“And how did you overcome them?”

“By faith in Christ, and then occupation with Him.”

“Quite right,” I replied; and the whole story was told.

Now, it is most cheering to meet such a case—one that can give a reason for his hope, and make you feel that he knows what he is about.

What struck me most was the last three words, “*occupation with Him* ;” for they let me into the secret of his appreciation of salvation. None can speak in gladsome terms or with thankful heart of the grandeur of salvation, except they are maintained in happy intercourse with Christ. When heavenly streams fail to flow into the heart, then sad leanness inevitably follows. It

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is just in proportion as we walk with God that the freshness of His grace and love fills our hearts. The cares of the world do not canker them, the thorns do not choke, nor the “little foxes” spoil. Care is cast upon Him, thorns are rooted up, and foxes driven away. “*Occupation with Him*” is the true preventive, the blessed panacea for all the evils of the spiritual life. It is the divine provision and safeguard, the haven from storm, health from sickness, sunshine from cloud and shade and gloom. Blessed resource, and always within reach!

But this “occupation” is not legal effort, nor monkish toil. It is not dreary servitude, nor the work of a “hired servant”—so much labour for so much bread. Neither is it a dreamy sentimentalism, without nerve or bone or muscle. It is bright, active, hearty companionship. It links you in sympathy with Christ in glory; it brings you into His sphere of interest; it elevates you above the monotony of earthly things; it calls for self-denial, but it points to the reward; it detaches from many an old association, but it places you in the centre of others, purer, nobler, and more enduring. The Master said to His trusted servants, “Occupy till I come;” or, as otherwise translated, “Trade while I am coming.” Now, this trading implies anything but idleness. You are entrusted with your Master’s money, and He expects the same with interest. What a trust!

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such a trust as no angel ever knew; and it is a small matter that we, so honoured, should seek to bring Him large returns. As surely as we belong to Him, so surely is some grace entrusted to us—some privilege, or opportunity, or means of witnessing to, or suffering for, Him. All this, and much more, is embraced in "occupation with Him."

Now, it is this that keeps the lustre on the soul, that prevents dulness and the ten thousand ailments that flow from its opposite—*self-occupation*; for no greater plague ever assailed the Church than this. If Christ be the object, all is healthy; if self, then all is practically over.

We should doubtless hear fuller praise, did Christians live in more constant occupation of heart and life with Christ. Things divine would largely displace things of this world, and out of the abundance of the heart would the mouth speak.

It is quite true that "faith in Christ," and that alone, puts the soul in possession of "peace with God." This must be clearly understood. To confound the diligent activities of life with that which lays hold of that life is fatal. Eternal life is the gift of God—a gift received by faith; whilst the activities referred to are its outcome—the fair fruit of that wondrous tree.

How many a heart is drooping, how many a lip silent, that would be filled with joy and praise were "*occupation with Him*" the one business of

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life. How can such silence be otherwise accounted for? Christ is known, His work trusted, but the heart turns elsewhere, and the feet fail to follow Him. This is the trouble. When one turns to the “epistle of Christian experience”—that to the Philippians—he finds abundance of *joy*, the mere word occurring some twelve times; and the whole point in that epistle is “pressing toward the mark for the prize.” It has Christ in glory for the one bright commanding object of Christian life, and the result nothing but joy.

Nothing but joy? Well, plenty of suffering too. “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” (Chap. i. 29.) But, then, the suffering enhanced the joy. They who do not suffer for Christ’s sake have very little of Christian joy. The anthem in Europe received its key-note in the Philippian gaol. The dungeon, the scaffold, the pyre, have struck the Church’s loveliest harp-chords. Suffering and joy, tears and smiles, death and life, have always balanced each other. “Sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing,” is one of the contradictions of Christianity which perplex the infidel, but are as clear as noonday to the believer.

Well, “Philippians” presents Christ in glory as the object of the heart and life. How glorious! He lived and died for me; He is risen and seated on the Father’s throne. He lives for me; and

now, by grace, I would live for Him. That is Christianity. The law of old made “self” my object: “This do, and thou shalt live.” Self, wretched self—all one’s thoughts had to circle round self, like the wheel round its centre. Now, self being dealt with—that is, sins being pardoned, the soul justified, the old man crucified, every question settled—the happy heart is free to live for another, to please Him, to serve, worship, and adore Him, soon to be with Him.

Yes, over and over again, dear fellow-Christians, depend upon it that “occupation with Christ” is the one only means whereby you can continue to enjoy or speak gladly of the moral grandeur of salvation.

J. W. S.

“IT IS FINISHED!”

“The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”—ISA. liii. 6.

ACROSTIC.

“*The Lord*” hath done it, ’twas not left to me ;
 One of a thousand I could not have told ;
 But He who knew before what they would be
 Their judgment on my mighty Saviour rolled,
 And from their cursed toil and Satan’s hold
 His precious blood and death has set me free.

“*Hath laid.*” It is not something to be done ;
 It is not now an unaccomplished hope,
 I wait not for a promised powerful One
 With the destroyer of the race to cope,
 And death’s dark, doleful prison-door to ope,
 And lead me out into the noonday sun.

"*On Him.*" Jehovah come in grace to save,
 The spotless Son of the eternal God :
 What other could have borne that mighty wave
 Of 'whelming wrath and foaming judgment-flood,
 Or the fierce stripes of the Almighty's rod,
 That in the hour of judgment Justice gave ?

"*The iniquity.*" Those sins of deepest dye,
 Their crimson flaming in the face of heaven,
 That far for ever from His holy eye
 Me to eternal torment would have driven,
 But from His blessed side, 'by spear-thrust riven,
 Welled that red stream of blood that brought me nigh.

"*Of us.*" Blest objects of eternal love,
 To whom is granted faith that we might lay
 Hold on that lowly One, who from above
 Came among men, a man, the bright display
 Of Him who, dwelling in unclouded day,
 To man His love unbounded yearned to prove.

"*All.*" Let the clouds of unbelief depart,
 Like midnight shadows from the morning dawn ;
 The chilling vapours that enfold the heart
 Vanish, as mists before the sun are gone ;
 And in the bosom of that blessed One
 I hide me from the tempter's fiery dart.

Oh, praise the grace that stooped so very low
 To pick such worms from out the mire of sin,
 And whiter than from heaven the falling snow
 Washed in the Saviour's blood till spotless clean !
 And but "the twinkling of an eye" between
 My coming Lord and me is all I know.

J. B.—BELFAST.

THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.

MANY vague and often most erroneous ideas are abroad in regard to the humanity of our blessed Lord. It is a matter of the deepest moment that Christians should be clear upon this all-important subject, and to this end we would look a little at what God has revealed in His word thereon.

In Gen. iii., after the fall, the Lord God in pronouncing the curse upon the serpent, added, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall *bruise thy head*, and thou shalt *bruise his heel*." This clearly points to Christ, the seed of the woman, and the work that He should accomplish. In Isa. vii. 14, the Lord gave a sign to king Ahaz, saying, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name *Immanuel*." Again, in chap. ix. 6, the prophet says, "For 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, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." And Micah v. 2 points out the place where the child should be born: "But thou, *Bethlehem Ephratah*, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet *out of thee* shall *He* come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose

goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

In turning to the New Testament, we find the circumstances attending the birth of the promised child recorded in two of the gospels, Matthew and Luke. The former presents Him more especially as Son of David, the latter as Son of man, and accordingly the genealogy is traced up to Adam, which was the son of God. (Luke iii. 38.)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise : "The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David ; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary : for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and *bring forth a son*, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest : and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David : and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man ? And the angel answered and said

unto her, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee*, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also *that holy thing* which shall be *born of thee* shall be called the Son of God.” (Luke i. 26–35.)

Now in the days of the taxing “Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David :) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she *brought forth her firstborn Son*, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Luke ii. 4–7.)

Space will not permit us to refer to the interesting incidents of His early life, beyond citing two scriptures, “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him. . . . And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” (Luke ii. 40, 52.)

Nothing can be clearer from the above passages than that Jesus was both Son of God and Son of man; the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, who became Son of man by being born of the virgin into the world. “The Word was made [or became] *flesh*, and dwelt among us,

(and we beheld His glory, the glory as of *the only begotten of the Father*,) full of grace and truth." (John i. 14.) "No man hath seen God at any time; *the only begotten Son*, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (John i. 18.) "God was manifest in *the flesh*," &c. (1 Tim. iii. 16.) "Who are Israelites . . . and of whom as concerning *the flesh Christ came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." (Rom. ix. 4, 5.) "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth *His Son, made of a woman*," &c. (Gal. iv. 4.)

The person of Christ is most jealously guarded all through Scripture, whether it be in type or shadow, or Himself personally, lest the evil tongue or pen of men should tarnish His glory, or touch the spotless purity and holiness of the Son of the Blessed. (Mark xiv. 61.) And yet, in the face of the most careful wording of Holy Writ, many, carelessly or wickedly, have committed themselves to most fearful heresies concerning His perfect and holy humanity. The statements of the word of God are plain and unmistakable. There is no excuse for going astray. Mary "was found with child *of the Holy Ghost*." (Matt. i. 18.) "That which is conceived in her is *of the Holy Ghost*. And *she shall bring forth a Son*," &c. (Matt. i. 20.) Joseph "took unto him his wife: and knew her not till *she had brought forth her firstborn Son*: and he called His name Jesus." (Matt. i. 24, 25.)

"*That holy thing which shall be born of thee* shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i. 35.)

What could be plainer? This wonderful child was "of the Holy Ghost," but born of the virgin; *a child in every sense of the term like other children, sin apart, "that holy thing."* As another scripture saith, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise *took part of the same*" (but without sin) (Heb. ii. 14.) Adam and Eve before the fall were innocent, not knowing good and evil; but after the fall they were sinful, and all their posterity are conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity. (Ps. li. 5.) But this babe, Jesus, was *holy*; His human body was conceived in the virgin's womb by divine power. She was "found with child of the Holy Ghost" is the distinct statement of the word of God. Although, when come to manhood, in the course of His blessed ministry He says, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John vi. 50, 51); yet it would be most erroneous, and utterly contrary to the whole teaching of Scripture, to say that His human body came from heaven. God sent His only-begotten Son, and He became flesh. The ex-

clamation of the centurion, when Jesus cried out on the cross, and gave up the ghost, expresses the truth very simply, "*Truly this man was the Son of God.*" (Mark xv. 39.)

And now to glance for a moment at His blessed pathway through this world. As the prophet had foretold, He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." The faithful and true witness for God, Jehovah's righteous servant (Rev. iii. 14; Isa. liii. 11), surrounded by evil, Himself wholly apart from it. He was the holy, harmless, undefiled, separate One; perfection shone in all His ways. His delight was in the will of God; every act of His life was wrought in communion with the Father. He was the light of the world (John viii. 12); the light shone in the darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not. (John i. 5.) His presence manifested the true condition of men, and brought out the deep-seated enmity of their hearts and minds against Him. (Col. i. 21.) The moral glory of that meek and lowly man rebuked the selfishness, worldliness, and wickedness of all around. Both His words and His works witnessed who He was, but men saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. (Isa. liii. 2.) And Satan, ever active, stirred up the religious leaders, the chief priests and Pharisees, to seek His life. The manifestation of the Son, who in His own person was the substance of all the shadows of Judaism, exposed the hollow-

ness of their religious pretensions, and the selfish formality of their religious doings.

Jesus, however, passed through their midst until His hour was come. Grace and truth fell from His blessed lips, and divine power went forth from His person—for He was and is the Son of God. He not only blessed the souls, but also the bodies of men, casting out evil spirits with His word, and healing all that were sick, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.” (Matt. viii. 17.) Sorrow and grief and weariness He knew as none other could know. But sin, with its load of misery, wretchedness, degradation, and disease, which had and has dominion over the whole human race, was not in Him. *He knew no sin.* (2 Cor. v. 21.)

But if any quote, “He took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,” and enquire, “Does not that mean that He was subject to them on our account?” Impossible, we reply. It is true that in deepest, fullest sympathy He entered in spirit into all the misery of the sufferers, whilst in mercy He healed them by His word or touch; but Himself, the Holy One, was *absolutely free*. He was neither personally subject, nor could He become liable, to such. In Him *is no sin*. *He knew no sin.*

How blessed to contemplate the pathway of such an one as this—the only sinless Man that ever trod this earth, the Father’s delight, His well-

beloved, in whom He was well pleased. (Matt. iii. 17.) Satan leads all his forces against Him, only to bring out His perfection in greater relief. The threefold temptation, plied with such signal success against the first man in Eden, is utterly powerless against the second Man, the Lord from heaven. (Matt. iv. 1-11; 1 Cor. xv. 47.) The first Adam fell, but Jesus vanquished that mighty foe, and annulled in death him that had the power of death, triumphing in resurrection life and power—the last Adam. (Heb. ii. 14.)

Rejected of men, He yields Himself into their hands. They see no beauty in Him that they should desire Him; the robber Barabbas is preferred to the Christ of God; and both Jew and Gentile combine to crucify the Lord of glory. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 8.) Alas! poor world, thine awful day of reckoning is nigh at hand! Never did the perfection of God's Beloved shine with greater lustre than in the last scenes of this awful drama. Compassion in the case of Malchus, patient forbearance with Peter, love to His enemies, care for His mother, grace to a dying thief, utter forgetfulness of self in all, complete devotion to and delight in the will of God His Father, were all exemplified to perfection in the last hours of Jesus—the *Man of sorrows*.

And why did this Man die? This Man who,

as testified by Pilate, His judge, was *a just person* (Matt. xxvii. 24), and who, as borne witness to by the dying thief, had *done nothing amiss*. (Luke xxiii. 41.) The answer is simple. It was to fulfil the inscrutable counsels of the everlasting God, by glorifying Him in His finished work, annulling the power of Satan—the god of this world—and meeting the deep, deep need of the lost and guilty race of men on the road to the lake of fire, by bearing in His own spotless Person the judgment of sin. Blessed Saviour, thou didst it! “It is finished.” Sinners, hear it! Yes, blessed be God, the work is done, for Jesus died. And now, beloved reader, where is this blessed Man? Buried in the sepulchre? The guarded cave could not retain the Christ of God. What claim had death on the Man who knew no sin? What had corruption to say to Him? Nothing, nothing. Voluntarily He laid down His life for us. He bore the holy judgment of God *against sin*, and gave up His spirit. (Matt. xxvii. 45–50.) God “hath made Him to be *sin for us*, who knew no sin.” (2 Cor. v. 21.) He “bare *our sins* in His own body on the tree.” (1 Peter ii. 24.) He “once suffered *for sins, the just for the unjust*, that He might bring us to God.” (1 Peter iii. 18.) He “died for *our sins* according to the Scriptures.” (1 Cor. xv. 3.) Death was the sinner’s wage for sin, *not His*. Hence, when buried in the grave, the glory of the Father claimed Him, and in

resurrection life and power He robbed death of its sting, the grave of its victory, and lives to die no more. By many infallible proofs He showed Himself alive after His passion. Again and again *the risen Man* appeared to His beloved disciples after His resurrection. On one occasion He ate a piece of broiled fish and an honeycomb in their presence. (Luke xxiv. 42, 43.) He said, "A spirit hath not *flesh and bones*, as ye see me have." (Luke xxiv. 39.) To unbelieving Thomas He saith, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold *my hands*; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into *my side*: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God." (John xx. 27, 28.) When forty days had elapsed, He was taken from the earth, and a cloud received Him out of the sight of His disciples. Heavenly witnesses appear and testify that *this same Jesus* which is taken up into heaven shall so come in like manner. (Acts i. 10, 11.) Stephen, His faithful servant and martyr, saw the heavens open, "and *Jesus* standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and *the Son of man* standing on the right hand of God." (Acts vii. 55, 56.)

To this Man all authority is given to execute judgment, as He Himself declared, because *He is the Son of man*. (John v. 27.) And as Paul testified at Athens, the day is appointed when God shall "judge the world in righteousness *by*

that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 31.) But ere judgment comes—"Through *this Man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and *by Him* all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Beloved reader, have you believed? Are your sins forgiven? Are you justified from all things? Or are you still exposed to the coming wrath? Receive Him as your Saviour now, and you will never meet Him as your Judge (John v. 24); but refuse Him as your Saviour in this day of grace, and as a Judge you will most surely meet Him. (Rev. xx. 12.)

And oh! how blessed the prospect of those who believe on Him! Soon He will come again, and all His own shall share in glory above the eternal fruits of His victory on earth. He is the Man whom God delights to honour, the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely, fairer than the children of men. But children of men, saved by grace, and become the children of God, shall share in glory at that day (Lord, haste that day!) the company of God's Beloved. Yes, they shall be like Him, and see Him as He is. (1 John iii. 2.) Caught up to meet Him, Jesus the Lord Himself, (1 Thess. iv. 15-18), they shall surround Him in the day of His manifest glory. (John xvii. 23.)

The Son of man shall appear in a cloud with power and great glory, and with Him all His saints.

(Luke xxi. 27; Zech. xiv. 5.) When He shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory. (Col. iii. 4.) *At the name of Jesus* every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that *He is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father. *As Man* He shall be exalted in that day, and sway the sceptre of the universe. "The Lord shall be *king* over all the earth: in that day shall there be *one Lord*, and *His name one*." (Zech. xiv. 9.) "And there shall be no more curse . . . and His servants shall *serve Him*: and they shall *see His face*; and *His name* shall be in their foreheads." (Rev. xxii. 3.) Blessed, glorious prospect! Oh, dear reader, will you be one? Surely you shall, if you will but believe on His name.

Yes, God shall make all His promises good at that day. The first man Adam utterly failed, and all his race; but God will make all His purposes good in the person of Christ, the second Man. All things shall be gathered in one in Him, in heaven and on earth. (Eph. i. 10.) "*He must* reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." (1 Cor. xv. 25.) For a thousand years the earth shall be blessed under the peaceful sway of *the man Christ Jesus*, Son of David, Son of man, Son of God. (Rev. xx. 6; Psalm lxxii.) At the close He shall give up the kingdom to the Father, and then the Son also Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, and *God shall be all in all*. (1 Cor. xv. 28.)

E. H. C.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. L. C.—We think you are mistaken in believing the scene in Luke vii. 36–50 to be the same as that in John xii. 1–3, and in the kindred passages of Matthew and Mark. When Mary of Bethany anointed the Lord the cross was at hand, and the premonitions of what was about to befall Him filled her heart, and led her to act in a way so suited to the moment. It would mar the beauty of this exquisite and touching picture to suppose that it was the act of one who, though her heart was taken captive by the Saviour's grace, yet knew not that her sins were forgiven, as was the case with her of Luke vii. Mary of Bethany had sat at the feet of Jesus, and heard His word. She had been through all that is narrated in John xi. ; and now in this house where “they made Him a supper, and Martha served,” and Lazarus was one of those that sat at the table with Him, Mary is seen bringing her costly treasure to pour it on One whom the nation was conspiring to kill. The scene in Luke vii. was an earlier one. Simon the Pharisee, who is not to be confounded with Simon the leper, had given the Lord no kiss of welcome, no water for His feet, no oil for His head. Would this have been so at Bethany, where the supper was made for the Lord, and He the chief guest? Would Martha serve in the house of one who esteemed her Lord so lightly, or Lazarus have been among His guests? We think not. The two scenes differ in many a feature, though each has a beauty entirely its own. Whether the dear woman of Luke vii. was Mary of Bethany we are not able to say. Scripture is silent, and we shrink from mere conjecture ; but that the scenes are different we have not the smallest doubt.

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WHEN the Lord Jesus was about to leave this world He prepared His disciples, who had been with Him for three years and a half, for the great change that was about to take place. Their hearts had been irresistibly drawn to Him, and His presence with them had held them together. He had made Himself indispensable to them.

True, their intelligence in the truth was exceedingly small, and their apprehension of His person most feeble. Still they had, as the fruit of His own grace, heart and love for Him. The result of this was that when they heard He was about to depart from them they were filled with sorrow.

The Lord lets them know, in John xiv. 15, that their love to Him was to be shown by obedience rather than by regrets. If they loved Him, they were to keep His commandments.

He then tells them that they would not be left, like fatherless children, forgotten and uncared for. In their selfish sorrow this doubtless is what they had supposed would be their case. No; He who while with them had been their Comforter would pray the Father, who would give them *another* Comforter, who would abide with them *for ever*. (v. 16.) The Lord Jesus had not come to *abide*; He had come to die. He must leave them; but,

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then, His going away would be to their advantage in many ways. So far from their *losing* by His departure, it would be a positive *gain* to them, and to saints in all ages, till the Lord come.

Let us see a little from the Word how, and in what way, the disciples were better off after the Lord left them than when He was with them.

It has been already noticed, that when the Comforter should come He would abide with them for ever. God would be with them, and abidingly so; as much so as when the Lord Jesus Christ was with them. He was God manifest in flesh. "God was in Christ."

Now, it was a very blessed thing for those who were *with* the Lord at any particular moment. They had His company—the presence of God with them. But inasmuch as the Lord Jesus was man as well as God, He was only in bodily presence in one place at a time. If Jesus were in Judæa, He was not in Galilee. It was only those with whom He was who had the joy and blessing of His company. But now that He was about to leave them He tells them that the Comforter who was coming would be not only *with* them, but *in* them; so that wherever they, or saints since, may have been, they have had God with them. The Holy Spirit dwells within us.

Nor let anyone suppose that this is a truth of small importance. It is one that is at the same moment profoundly blessed and deeply solemn.

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A believer indwelt by the Spirit of God can never be without the company of God.* What must the effects of such a truth be when the heart is rightly affected by it! How it must control the life of the saint in his thoughts, words, and ways! Moreover, what cheer and comfort to the heart; God Himself, the Holy Ghost, dwelling with us and in us! He guides into all truth; He takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to us. We are cared for and sustained by Him who deigns to dwell within us. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?" (1 Cor. vi. 19.)

But this is not by any means all; for God, in giving us His Holy Spirit, has put His seal upon us. He thus marks us as His own. Where there is in the soul faith in Christ and His finished work, so that remission of sins is known, God seals that person. In Acts x. 43, 44, we see this actually taking place. Cornelius and those with him heard just what they wanted to know. They *knew*, as Peter says in verse 37, the word that God had sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; but they were Gentiles, who dared not hope that such rich and good blessings were for *them*. The apostle now lets them know that Jesus is Lord of *all* (not of the

* I speak not here of the believer's *enjoyment* of this truth, which depends upon his walk and his going on in communion with God.

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Jews only), and that through His name *whosoever* believeth on Him should receive remission of sins. This just met their case. "Whosoever" took them in. They at once received the truth, and the Holy Ghost thereupon fell upon them. They were *sealed*. God had marked them as His own.

In Eph. i. 13, 14, we find the same order observed. *After* they believed they were sealed in Christ (note the expression, "in whom") with that Holy Spirit of promise. Not only is the Spirit God's mark upon us, but He is the earnest of our inheritance; that is to say, we have not got the inheritance yet, but we have already a foretaste of it. The farmer does not bring all his corn to the market; he brings a sample of it in a little bag. The buyer receives that little bag, and can taste and enjoy what he has even now in his hand before he receives the bulk. He can use this earnest of what is to come, which tells him of the character and quality of what he waits for. So with us. The Holy Ghost not only shows us things to come (John xvi. 13), but His very presence with us is the pledge of the reality of all that is promised. We are sealed *until* the redemption of the purchased possession. Christ has purchased all things, but we see them not yet in His hand. A usurper holds possession still—Satan, who is the god and prince of this world. But the Lord will redeem by power that which He has purchased, and we are sealed *till that day*. See again

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Eph. iv. 30. It is not, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, or else He will leave you." No. We are sealed by Him "*unto* the day of redemption." Romans viii. 11 makes this still plainer; for as surely as the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in us, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (or raise up) our mortal bodies, *because of* His Spirit that dwelleth in us. That is, the fact of the Spirit's dwelling in us now guarantees to us that our bodies shall be raised in the first resurrection. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." It is not only in point of *time* (for there will be a thousand years between the resurrection of the just and that of the unjust, see Rev. xx. 5), but in *character*, that the first resurrection differs from the resurrection of "the rest of the dead." Of the latter it could not be said, as here, "because of" (see margin) "His Spirit that dwelleth in you." No passage could more forcibly assure us of the complete and *persevering* manner of God's blessing. The indwelling of the Spirit is the pledge that we shall not only be carried safely to the end of our course here, but that (if we fall asleep) our bodies will be thought of and saved.

The prayer of an Old Testament saint (Psalm li. 11), "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me," may perhaps present a difficulty to some minds; for it might be therefrom inferred that one in the

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present day might lose the Spirit through sin or carelessness. This is in no sense to be gathered from Scripture. David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, had the Holy Spirit, not as dwelling in him as seal and earnest, but to inspire him in his compositions. He had sinned grievously against God, as he owns; and fearing lest God should, in consequence, cast him aside as unfit for His use, he prays that the Holy Spirit might not be taken from him. It was not till the day of Pentecost, as we find in Acts ii., that the Holy Ghost was given to dwell in us. This could not take place until Jesus was glorified. Those who before that event had believed were obliged to wait for its accomplishment ere they could receive the Spirit. (See John vii. 39.)

But the Lord Jesus came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. (John x. 10.) That is, life according to the power of that life which is in Jesus, the mighty victor over death and the grave. Thus, after His resurrection, He breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive ye [the] Holy Ghost." It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that makes us free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. viii. 2.)

It may perhaps be interesting and instructive to turn to a few passages of Scripture in order that we may see in how many and in what various ways the Holy Spirit is now indispensable to us. We cannot get on for an hour without Him,

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because if it be a question of *power*, we need to be *strengthened with might* by God's Spirit in the inner man. (Eph. iii. 16.) In ourselves as weak as water, what a comfort it is to know something of the power that worketh IN us. (v. 20.) We need, therefore, never be at a loss for power; for while we daily learn that we are not sufficient to think anything as of ourselves, we learn proportionately that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of us. This wondrous power is displayed in the earthen vessel, so that God, and not the vessel, gets the praise. (2 Cor. iv. 7.)

Again, as to *liberty*. There can be no real liberty of soul save where the Spirit of the Lord is. (See 2 Cor. iii. 17.) There could not be any looking up and beholding the Lord's unveiled face with delight of soul—while being changed into the same image from glory to glory—save as by the Lord the Spirit.

Then it is by the Spirit of adoption that we cry "Abba, Father"—the special, peculiar cry of relationship. Often, indeed, this very point shows where the soul is as to its state before God. Let the reader ask himself if this is the way in which he delights to address the Father when he is alone with Him—no ear to hear but the ear of God. Does he find such an occasion one of the happiest he knows this side the glory? Or, when he gets alone with the Lord, is he full of confessions, and inditing hard things against himself?

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Is the cry of the heart more like that of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner"? Is there the sense of distance and discomfort in the presence of the Father? If so, then note what Rom. viii. 15, 16 tells us. *The Spirit* would lead the saint, not into doubts, and fears, and distance, but into the precious liberty of soul that would evoke the cry of "Abba, Father."

In Gal. iv. we are taught that, before Christ came, the people of God were in the condition of children; *i.e.*, not of full age. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," or *sonship*. Now sonship is a position, not merely a relationship. In order to be a *child* of God one must be *born* of Him. It is of this 1 John iii. 1, 2 speaks, for the word there should be "children," and not "sons." He does not speak of our position, but of our relationship. But in Gal. iv. it is not only relationship, but the position of sons come of age that he speaks of; and so God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father." This is deeply blessed. Bondage, and the sense of it, all over for ever! As sons we get a certain rank, and are no more servants. Thank God!

The whole walk of the believer is to be in (or by) the Spirit; so that "if we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." (Gal. v. 25.) This

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is a simple but most blessed "rule of life." It is the sure and only way to be preserved from fulfilling the lust of the flesh. (v. 16.)

The Galatian saints, like many in our own day, were seeking to introduce the law as *an addition to Christ*. They were foolishly seeking, having begun in the Spirit, to be made perfect by the flesh. (iii. 3.) This was a serious error. It was turning again to the weak and beggarly elements—again getting into bondage. (iv. 9.)

How vehemently the apostle protests against this! It was the sapping of the very foundations of Christianity. God will have nothing added to Christ, any more than He will have anything taken from Him. The moment the law is introduced, that moment there is a recognition of the flesh—the old man—whereas Paul, in chap. ii. 19, 20, tells us we are crucified with Christ and dead to the law. Faith receives what God says, and is satisfied. But when this truth is not accepted there will always be a turning to the law; for the effort will be to regulate and keep in order the flesh, which God declares has been made an end of judicially at the cross of Christ. To make the law, therefore, the rule of the believer's life, must mean that the flesh is not put an end to in the sight and by the judgment of God, and therefore it must be directed by the law how it is to behave. All such effort on the part of man is but to give a place

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to the flesh, set aside the Holy Spirit, and thus practically deny Christianity. No wonder, therefore, that the Spirit calls the poor misled Galatians "bewitched." (iii. 1.) All they had suffered for Christ was in vain, if they put themselves under law.* (v. 4.) Paul was afraid of them, lest his labour bestowed on them was in vain. (iv. 11.) He even stood in doubt of them (v. 20), because of their having added the law to Christ. Would that saints in this day laid more to heart the teaching of the Spirit in this epistle!

To walk, then, in the Spirit is the sure secret of victory over all the works of the flesh. If led of the Spirit we are not under law. (Chap. v. 18.) Is it to be supposed for an instant that because we are free and not under law that there will be an open door for lawlessness or the working of the flesh? How, let it be asked, can the flesh work if it is reckoned *dead*; *i.e.*, if faith accepts God's reckoning as to it? Impossible. But more than this. If we *walk* in the Spirit, where or how can the flesh assert itself? If we are *led* of the Spirit, what will the Spirit lead us to do? Surely *the*

* It is not merely *the* law, but *law* as a principle. We are in the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." To be under law would be to have the flesh put under restraints of one kind or another to keep it in order. Whereas God calls upon us to take His side against it, and treat it as a thing He has judged. Instead of seeking to regulate it, therefore, we have to apply the cross of Christ to it daily.

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will of God. The Spirit will never lead a saint to do aught contrary to the law. Nay rather, the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans viii. 4.) Is my reader afraid that there is less power with the Holy Spirit to keep him right than there is with the law? The fact is, the law gives no power at all. It says, "Thou shalt do" this, "thou shalt not do" that; but it gives the poor powerless sinner no strength to do what it commands. On the other hand, the Spirit strengthens us with might in the inner man; and He is the instrument and power by which we are enabled to do the *will of God*, not as expressed in the law only, but as expressed in every part of the divine word. No service can be rendered by saint or angel more pleasing to God than the doing of His will, nor can any service be higher. No creature in heaven or on earth can do anything higher than the will of God. The Holy Spirit leads us to do this. Let this be well remembered. No commands nor threats of the law could ever empower us, or give us the desire of heart to obey God. But as led by the Spirit we do His will—we delight to obey—and yet we are not under law, but under grace. (Rom. vi. 14.) Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Moreover it is through the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body, and not through any legal

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rule of life which, after all, could only address itself to the old man that has been judged and ended (judicially) at the cross. God is not looking for good in, or from, that which He has condemned. Faith takes *God's* thoughts, and therefore neither looks for good from, nor applies a rule of life to, that which, root, branch, and fruit, met its doom in the death of Christ. To be led by the Spirit ensures, not only a *godly* life (like that of an Old Testament saint), but renders the one so led *spiritual*, which is more than godly.

The normal, proper condition of a saint now is to be *filled with the Spirit* (Eph. v. 18), and that as contrasted with what excites and exhilarates naturally. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 4.) This was not, as some supposed, the effect of new wine, but the result of the Lord Jesus having been exalted by the right hand of God. He had received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, to give to His people. (v. 33.) See now the power, boldness, and intelligence of the disciples, as compared with what they had had but seven weeks before! The poor, timid Peter, who had denied his Lord before a little maid, now confesses Him before the multitudes of Jerusalem. This was a great change. The disciple who in Matthew xvi. 22 sought to keep his beloved Master from the cross, now sees that He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. All things

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that they had before but feebly, if at all, apprehended, are now seen with divine distinctness and intelligence. But is this marvellous change to be wondered at, when it is remembered that they had now, not Christ *with* them, but God the Holy Ghost both *with* and *in* them ?

We cease to wonder at this change in the poor, dull disciples, though we shall never cease to wonder at that which produced the change ; for how can we be but astonished, and growingly so, as the marvellous truth is better apprehended by us, that God deigns to take up His abode in us !

We have thus found, in going through the teaching of the Word on this subject, that the Holy Ghost as dwelling in us is the *Comforter* who is to abide with us for ever. He is also the *seal*, marking us as belonging to God till the day of redemption. He is, moreover, the *earnest*, in our hearts, of the inheritance. By Him we are united to Christ on high, and through Him we *know* that we are in Christ. Further, His being in us is the pledge that *our mortal bodies will be quickened* at the first resurrection. Besides, where He is there is *liberty*. It is by Him we cry "*Abba, Father,*" and *walk*, and are *led*. Likewise, it is by Him we are *strengthened with might in the inner man* ; with Him, too, we are to be *filled* ; by Him we *mortify the deeds of the body*. It is also by the Spirit that there is *fruit* for God ; and by Him we *worship*.

We have but rapidly glanced at this wondrous

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truth and some of its effects; but as the reader ponders this weighty and blessed subject, with his Bible open before him, he will be led increasingly to see that the fact of the Holy Ghost's presence on earth permeates every truth of Christianity. Nor are we to be surprised at this; for if God be thus on earth, this stupendous fact must necessarily lend its colour to every department of truth—all must be marked by it. How could any truth be unaffected by it? How could any effect be produced in our hearts by any truth, no matter how precious, apart from Him? All that is well-pleasing to God in our walk is of the Spirit. (Gal. v. 16.) All fruit that is acceptable is of Him. (*vv.* 22, 23.) All true worship is rendered by Him. (Phil. iii. 3.)

The Lord impress our hearts deeply with the blessed reality of such a fact as we have been considering, so that there may be effects produced in us by His Spirit to the praise and glory of God.

In this paper I have not touched upon the distinct line of teaching as to the Holy Spirit's dwelling in the church corporately, and His operations there. I would, however, notice that in Acts ii., besides the cloven tongues as of fire that sat on *each* of them, there was the sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, which *filled all the house where they were sitting*. THEY were filled with the Holy Ghost. The *individual* saints were filled, as was the *company* of saints, with the Holy Ghost.

F. C.

ISHMAEL AND ISAAC.

FIRST, ISHMAEL IN THE HOUSE; SECOND, ISHMAEL AND ISAAC; THIRD, ISAAC ALONE.

GAL. iv.; GEN. xxi.

ISHMAEL is a type of the natural man, "he that was born after the flesh" (compare John i. 13); but Isaac presents to us the new man, "him that was born after the Spirit." Ishmael was born before Isaac, so we are born of the will of the flesh before we are born of the will of God. Thus 1 Cor. xv. speaks, "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." It should be noticed that Isaac is not Ishmael, nor *Ishmael improved*. He is quite another person, a being quite distinct, and so the new man has no affinity with the old.

But for a time both Isaac and Ishmael inhabited the house, and so oftentimes it is with us. We have to learn that in God's reckoning Isaac is to be everything in the house, and we all learn it sooner or later.

What is the house? It is the place they dwelt in. Christ dwells in us, and the old nature dwells in us. "In my flesh there dwelleth no good thing." (Rom. vii.) In the *assembly* too Christ dwells—"There am I"—and there the flesh also comes. (1 Cor. xiv.) It is therefore to be refused both individually and collectively.

For fourteen years the struggle had been going on in that house, as to who was to be chief. Isaac was persecuted. It was the trial-time of Ishmael, the testing whether he could possibly be kept (by means of the regulations of his mother) commonly decent in the house. Hagar typified the regulations of Mount Sinai. "This Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia;" that is, the law. It was *Hagar* that tried to keep Ishmael still in the house, by putting him under certain regulations and restrictions—the law.

But it was all no use. He was not to be improved. God's judgment of him, pronounced long before, was true, and all his actions proved it. God had said, "He will be a *wild* man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him." And so it came to pass.

What a commentary is Gal. iv. 29 on this early statement of the word of God, "As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is *now*." (Compare this with Titus iii. 3.) How we learn from this that there must be a *total* refusal of the flesh, in order for us to be walking according to the mind of God—no amendment, no improvement; but a new man, who *alone* is to occupy the house!

Ishmael hates Isaac; this we see, and Ishmael's persecution proves it. Not only is Ishmael himself beyond all control (lawless), but he is a *persecutor*. Look at Saul of Tarsus. (Acts xxii. 8.) It came out distinctly on the day when Isaac commenced

in the house *an independent existence*. “Isaac was *weaned*,” and all in the house, except Ishmael and his mother, *rejoiced* on that day. Isaac was to be *free* now. And what does it teach us?

The flesh and Christ cannot go on together, and the flesh says Christ shall not have the place of supremacy. As long as this struggle goes on there is no peace in the house. Ishmael must go out. It is God’s mind.

Worldly friendships, whether relative or not—yes, everything worldly—savours of Ishmael. Do not let us be found striving *how much* of Ishmael we can retain in the house, and profess Christ at the same time; for *one of them must reign there*. Oh, to watch more assiduously! How prone we are to *apologize* for Ishmael, instead of putting him out! “Cast out the bondwoman and her son” is the scripture for all of us.

And then think of the joy, whose outflow (both for *you* and for *others*) is hindered as long as strife is there. God gives this joy. We little know its *fulness* when we do not act on the Word, because the struggle is still going on within; and this great feast has not come to *you* yet which Abraham made in the house the day Isaac was *weaned*. May the Lord lead us into the understanding and joy of all these things, to His eternal praise, and for our blessing too; for blessing to the whole Church of God, and for a living testimony in this evil world.

H. C. ANSTEY.

“THIS SAME JESUS.”

MOST believers are perhaps more familiar with our Lord's words and ways from the manger to the cross than after His resurrection from among the dead. We delight to trace Him in His perfect obedience and faithful testimony, His compassion on the multitudes, His tender-heartedness for the widow, His tears of sympathy with the bereaved, His readiness to give sight to the blind, to cleanse the leper, and even raise the dead; His unwearied care of His disciples, His perfect wisdom in putting adversaries to silence, and, above all, His matchless grace in dying for the ungodly as a sacrifice for sin. Throughout Scripture “the death of the cross” stands forth in incomparable prominence, as that on which all our present and eternal blessings are securely founded. Truly it is written, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John iv. 10.) But all through His path on earth He was “alone,” and on the cross He did “by Himself” make purification of our sins—

“*Alone* He bore the cross,
Alone its grief sustained;
 His was the shame and loss,
 And He the victory gained:
 The mighty work was all His own,
 Though we shall share His glorious throne.”

But God raised Him from among the dead. Divine *love* provided the Son of His love as the sacrifice, divine *righteousness* unsparingly dealt with our sins in judgment in His suffering for us on the tree, and divine *power* wrought to us-ward in raising Him up from among the dead, and exalting Him as Man in righteousness to His own right hand. (See Eph. i. 19-23.) Thus God is for us, and in Christ risen we have an order of things essentially different from all that had gone before.

Though our Lord's resurrection was the mightiest victory ever accomplished, it was noiselessly effected, and in the most orderly way. It was on the third day, according to the Scriptures; and the napkin that had been about His head was found in the sepulchre, "wrapped together in a place by itself." Every thing our Lord did, both before His death and after, was in the most perfect order. If He fed the multitudes, He would command them first to sit down by fifty in a row. If He gave thanks, it was on taking the bread, and always before He brake it. If He had to meet the twelve, we are told that He sat down with them "when the hour was come."

But it is blessed to look at this same Jesus, who rose from among the dead, and left the sepulchre, unknown and unnoticed by any one, as to where He goes and what He does. He might have gone quietly up into heaven without intercourse with any one on earth, but that would not suit His

heart, or be according to the Father's will. The Lord had interests on earth of the dearest character. His loved ones given Him of the Father, for whose sins He had died, were dear to Him. True, the world had hated, rejected, and crucified Him, and was to see Him no more till He came in flaming fire. Therefore no one unconverted saw Him after He was taken down from the cross and laid in the sepulchre. But disciples were in Jerusalem and around, sad and perplexed at losing their Master, whom they thought would have redeemed Israel; and as they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from among the dead, they were much distressed.

Now what does our risen Lord do? Whose company does He seek? Where does He go? He knew that Mary's heart was well-nigh ready to break, that she lingers around the sepulchre, and He marks her tears. Angels seek to comfort her, but still she weeps. There was only One who could relieve her sorrowful spirit, and this our Lord well knew. So He Himself draws near, and with one word—"Mary"—makes Himself known to her. She knew His voice, and longs to greet Him with faithful homage as her Messiah; but this cannot be. He says, "Touch me not." As Messiah He has been refused by the nation, but as Saviour of sinners He still lives. He therefore would not only comfort her heart with the precious assurance that He is the same Jesus, but that

others are associated with Him and with the Father in nearest and unending relationships. He said unto her, "Go to my brethren" (yes, having redeemed us He is not ashamed to call us brethren), "and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Never had such utterances been heard on earth before. Redemption accomplished, peace made, God glorified, and righteousness established, the eternal purposes of divine love can now flow unhinderedly through Him who has done all for us, and He would have us know that we are associated with Himself as "brethren," and with His Father and our Father as sons. Wondrous grace! To be known and enjoyed too; for the will of the Father was that He should declare His name unto His brethren, and be associated with us in such sweet companionship as to be able in the midst of the congregation to sing praises. Thus the first act we observe after our Lord's resurrection was His comforting a weeping one, and using her to minister blessing to others by the communication of His testimony.

But there are wandering ones. There are those who are going away from Jerusalem instead of abiding in it, and they are sad indeed. What about these? Our risen Lord goes after them. They were on their way to Emmaus, about seven miles and a half from Jerusalem; but He soon overtook them, and, in His perfect wisdom and love,

by a searching question or two, readily elicited from their own lips what their sadness was about. It was "concerning Jesus of Nazareth," whom they had heard was alive; but no one they thought as yet had seen Him. This made it clear that they were not resting in what was written in the prophets, but on their own thoughts of the case. Our Lord therefore first rebuked them for their folly and slowness to believe what prophets had spoken; secondly, He expounded the Scriptures, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, and gave them God's testimony concerning Messiah; and thirdly, He revealed Himself to them. What an hour that must have been! What a marvellous exposition of Scripture! What labour too for only two hearers, and with what blessed results! And we may be assured, if the love of Christ were more constraining us, we should, like our loving Master, go after erring ones in the power of the Spirit, and count no labour too much to set them right by the truth of Scripture, and the ministry of Christ. Perhaps there never was such an exposition of Scripture as that, and they were conscious of its searching and comforting power; for they said, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" *But it was when they had to do with the Lord Himself that new energy sprang up in their souls.* They had seen the Lord; and though

it was only one glimpse of Him, it wrought mightily in their hearts. They had walked to Emmaus. It was toward evening; but when they saw the Lord, the very first thought was about their brethren. But they were seven miles and a half off. What of that? Their hearts were filled full with the love of Christ, and what do we think of then? Is it not always His saints, how we can be near them, serve them, comfort them, for His sake? Late in the day as it was, and weary as they were, we are told they at once set off for Jerusalem. Such was the effect of personal intercourse with the Lord Himself over His precious word, that we read, "They rose up *the same hour*, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." This opened the way for the two to speak of what they had learnt from the Lord Himself. "And they told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread." Thus the wandering ones were restored, and so drawn out in the Lord's service as to be able to comfort others.

Then the Lord comes into the company of the eleven, and the others with them, and "stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." They needed to be established in the present truth, and the Lord knew they were timid ones, and easily perturbed. We find, though

the Lord had thus so graciously met them, yet "they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit;" but He was able to remove their fears, and to turn their sorrow into joy. He saith unto them, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?"

Here again were troubled ones dear to our Lord's heart, and He instructed them, and revealed Himself to them that they might be comforted. Again, He traces their fear and trouble to *their own thoughts*, and not having scriptural thoughts of Himself. He said unto them, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. . . . He shewed them His hands and His feet." And further to convince them that He was the same Jesus risen from among the dead, "He said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them;" and again instructed them out of the scriptures, saying that "all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." We know how glad they were when they saw the risen Lord.

It would be interesting to trace other ways of our Lord with His disciples, after His resurrection from among the dead, in their various dispensational and individual bearings, as recorded by the different

evangelists ; but whether as regards the restoration of His fallen apostle, or His ministry to others, we find He invariably wrought for their blessing and comfort, and always by the Scriptures and personal presentation of Himself. Not the Scriptures apart from Himself, but Himself made known to the heart as revealed in the Scriptures ; and the point is of all importance in the present day, when there is such a tendency to allow the mind to work intellectually on the Word, and to be satisfied with this, apart from personal communion with the Lord. It is well, however, to notice that Matthew's gospel concludes by showing Christ risen, but not ascended. In Mark we have Jesus ascended, and sitting on the right hand of God. Luke abundantly sets Christ before us as the risen Man, who was seen carried up into heaven, and disciples taught to tarry for the gift of the Holy Ghost—“power from on high.” Whereas in John the risen Saviour is viewed as to His ascension to His Father and our Father, thus making known the relationships into which His redemption-work has brought us. He breathed on His disciples, saying, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” and alluded to His coming again ; while, typically, we have a millennial scene in the last chapter.

It is moreover blessed to observe that the results of our risen Lord's gracious ministry were, that all were so set right and cheered, that even after they saw Him ascend up to heaven, they

had "great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." Nor can we fail to be struck with His loving care and labour for the distressed and erring ones of the flock ; and surely one lesson to be gathered from this brief view of His gracious ways and perfect ministry is, *that those who have most to do with the Lord will most resemble Him in real concern and care for the members of His body.* And let us carefully note that our Lord's ministry here was not merely benevolence, or present supply of temporal need, though He did say, "Children, have ye any meat?" and provided for them ; but it was the communication of such lasting blessing by the truth, and the personal revelation of Himself, which not only dried up tears, allayed fear, banished distress, delivered from folly and unbelief, but so instructed the mind, and set conscience and heart at rest, as to be priceless in its value, and, we may almost say, unlimited as to blessing. It is not then our present business to be getting our heads filled with Bible knowledge and the mysteries of Scripture—most important in their right place—so much as personal communion with the Lord, that, constrained by His love, we may seek the honour of His name, and the true blessing of His saints, in walking and acting as He walked and acted while waiting for His coming. Our earnest prayer is, that God may so work in the hearts of all His saints in every place.

H. H. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R.—1 John iv. 2: “Every spirit that confesseth [that] Jesus Christ [is] come in flesh is of God.” If you will look at the new translation of J. N. Darby, or of Dean Alford, you will see that the two words enclosed in brackets are omitted, and the omission certainly makes the text more easily understood. The point before the apostle’s mind is not whether a man is converted or not, but whether he who speaks does so by God’s Spirit or a demon; for there were and are many spirits abroad, and these wicked spirits, under whose impulses evil men spake, were not to be confounded with the Holy Ghost. The means of distinguishing one who spake under the influence of the Holy Ghost from those animated by a demon was the confession of Jesus Christ come in flesh. Not the confession of the fact of His coming, for that would be simply owning a truth which even a demon might not deny, but confessing *Him* as so come. Now, for a man to confess Jesus Christ come in flesh is to own the person and authority of Jesus. Many to-day believe that Jesus Christ came in flesh without *confessing Him* so come. (See Romans x. 9, and Matthew x. 32.) In 1 Cor. xii. 3 the same question is dealt with, and a somewhat similar test is given, whereby to discern between the promptings of a demon and the leading of the Spirit of God.

As to the words in 1 John v. 1: “Whosoever

believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," we hold them to be as true now as when first written. But how many miss the fact presented to our faith, and understand not what is involved in believing! When Simon Peter confessed Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Lord declared that flesh and blood had not revealed that truth to him, but His Father in the heavens. To own the lowly, despised Jesus of Nazareth as none other than the Christ of God was, in those days, a true mark of having heard and learned from the Father Himself. (John vi. 45.) Nor is it otherwise now *when the heart is engaged in the thing believed*, else it is the mere assent of the mind, an educational belief, which only serves to increase the responsibility of those who hold it, and to subject them to far more solemn consequences than if they were heathen, to whom the name of Jesus was utterly unknown. We may add that it is evident, from this epistle and the following, that the Person of the Saviour had been assailed; and this may have led the apostle, under guidance of the Holy Ghost, to give prominence to the belief and confession of the truth concerning it.

ANONYMOUS.—We have no doubt there is a reason why the ascension of the Lord is not recorded in Matthew and John, for the omissions of Scripture are often most significant. The closing paragraphs in the third paper of our present number may furnish you with help; but we are free to confess that at present we have not sufficient light thereon to warrant our expressing a judgment with any measure of confidence.

ZACCHÆUS THE PUBLICAN.

LUKE xix. 1-10.

JERICHO city was all astir when Jesus entered there. A notable miracle had been wrought; for blind Bartimæus, whom everybody knew, had received his sight. Rapidly spread the news, and the streets and courts and alleys sent forth their curious crowds to see Him who had done this mighty deed. The great concourse grew greater, and jostled closer together as each individual sought to see Jesus. Zacchæus was among them, but being little of stature, his chances of beholding the gracious Saviour were small indeed. The man, however, was in earnest; and earnestness overcomes difficulties, and finds ways to secure the end in view. He frees himself from the crowd, he runs before it, he climbs up into a sycamore-tree, and, hiding himself among its branches, waits till Jesus should pass by.

A word on this man's occupation. He was a tax-gatherer, and chief among them. This class was regarded with peculiar dislike; for the sight of a publican reminded the Jew of his being under the hated Gentile yoke. Nor were their actions, in the main, likely to win them favour. Whatever their virtues, honesty was not one of them. Zacchæus may have been an exception to the rule,

III.

and doubtless was; but whether so or not, we may be permitted to look upon him as a picture of a sinner—a great sinner—but one who through divine grace desired with his whole heart to see Jesus.

Are we as earnest in this thing as Zacchæus was? There is no matter beneath the sun that calls for such fervent thought, yet, alas! how seldom is it considered. We live in an earnest age. All around us men of the world are seeking eagerly enough to reach the goal of their ambition, be it wealth or fame, or place or power; but who among them cares to think of eternity and the things connected with it? Yet what is all and every earthly gain in comparison with Christ and the saving knowledge of Him? Earth's choicest gifts are but fading flowers, that die and are no more.

“What is the passing scene?

A peevish April day!

A little sun, a little rain,

And then night sweeps along the plain,

And all things fade away.”

Christ is not like that. The soul that has Him for its portion possesses eternal treasure, and to miss Him is to lose everything. Hold in your hand what you will of earthly good—money at the bank, houses in the town, land in the country, well-chosen investments at home and abroad—all must be left behind. Death's door is too strait for aught but the individual soul to pass through.

Naked we came into the world, and naked we must go out.

But see! On comes the surging crowd. The place is reached where Zacchæus is, and Jesus looks up and beholds him. Was it by chance that He looked up at that very moment—a mere coincidence, and nothing more? From such a conclusion we instinctively turn away. He who in an earlier day had seen Nathanael under the fig-tree saw Zacchæus in the boughs of the sycamore, and He knew too what had led him there. Not to gratify idle curiosity had this man of wealth climbed, like a school-boy, into this roadside tree. What he had heard of Jesus had more mightily moved his heart than perhaps he himself was conscious of, and an unseen power had led him to that spot where he was to be blessed with the joys of God's salvation. "He looked up"—the eye of the seeking Saviour meeting the eye of the seeking sinner. Who shall tell us what that look did for Zacchæus? We know that a few days later a look from the same eyes sent Simon Peter out of the high priest's house to weep bitterly, and it cannot be supposed that this look was without power or meaning. What hopes it may have begotten in his heart, hopes so strangely sweet; and He who had kindled them would take care that they were more than crowned.

And now the Saviour speaks. Burdened as we may believe Him to have been—for He was

going up to Jerusalem, and all that should befall Him there pressed upon His soul—yet he would pause once again to pour into a sinner's empty heart the choicest treasure heaven's hand could give. "Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Thus He calls this "chief among the publicans" by name, as if He had long known him; and it is not hard to picture Zacchæus trembling for very joy and wondering as he heard these gracious words. Had he desired to see Jesus? He should be abundantly satisfied; for the Saviour would be his guest, and enrich him with eternal blessing.

Is my reader one whom God has made anxious about salvation? Like Zacchæus, do you desire to see Jesus? to see Him as your own personal Saviour? Perhaps the deep sense of your unworthiness has hitherto kept you from Him; you have feared He would have naught to say to a sinner like you. Hark! Jesus calls thee by thy name. By this printed page, by these words of an unknown friend, Jesus calleth thee. He knows whom He calls. Thou art not too bad for Him; and lest thou shouldst think so, He says, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*." Lower than *lost* thou canst not be. Make haste then, and come down, down at the Saviour's feet; for Jesus would abide at thy house to-day.

"*Make haste!*" Simple words, but how solemnly

significant! Aged man, the evening of thy days has come, and the deepening shadows warn that night is near, and thou art still unsaved. "*Make haste!*"

"There are no pardons in the tomb,
And brief is mercy's day."

And thou, dear sick friend, whose life is ebbing fast away, *make haste!* Dark indeed will be the valley of death to thee if thou hast not Jesus to brighten it with His presence and the knowledge of His love; and that dark valley leads to a darker land beyond. *Make haste*, lest the Saviour pass by, and then thou mayest wait in vain for His return.

And thou too, dear youth, or gentle maiden, to whom life is in the opening bud, and the world seems so fair, *make haste*, and answer to the loving call of Christ. Let there be room in thy heart for Him, and take thou upon thyself His sweet and easy yoke. It will not make thy house less bright to have Jesus there, and His company will bring nought but gladness with it. Strange that any should say nay to Him, or not make haste to receive so great a guest!

In Zacchæus we behold the obedience of faith; for "he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully." Note those two words—RECEIVED HIM. The door swings on that hinge. How much is bound up with the soul's simple reception of Jesus! Salvation came to Zacchæus in that one

way, and so with us; and it is thus we become children of God. “As many as *received Him*, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” (John i. 12.) Do any anxiously enquire, What is meant by receiving Jesus? We reply, It is to believe in Him; for both terms are used in this verse to express the same act. But we must receive Him as the Scriptures set Him forth before our eyes. A stranger knocks at our door; he hands us letters of introduction from dear friends across the sea. Those letters tell us the stranger’s name, his occupation, his object in coming to this country, and other things concerning him which our friends think we should like to know. Having read the letters, we shake the stranger warmly by the hand, we bid him welcome, and receive him, not as one of whom we know nothing, but as one about whom the letters of our friends have fully informed us. So is it in our receiving Jesus. The inspired letters which God hath sent speak to us of His Son. Do you ask His name? It is Jesus—Jehovah the Saviour. His home? The heaven of heavens. His mission to earth? “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” He has come to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind (Luke iv. 18); He has come, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and

to give His life a ransom for many (Mark x. 45); He has come into the world to save sinners, even the chief (1 Tim. i. 15); He has come to bear our sins in His own body on the tree, to be wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, to bear the chastisement of our peace, that by His stripes we might be healed. (Isaiah liii.) It is as such that we must receive Him; and to those who receive Him thus the Saviour says, "This day is salvation come to this house."

Angry were the murmurs of the multitude when they saw what was done. "He was gone to be guest with a man that is *a sinner*," they contemptuously exclaimed. We owe much to their complaints. Jesus was wont to answer them by some of the sweetest sayings and parables of grace, and thus He showed the objectors that there was no harmony between heaven's thoughts and theirs. The act that stirred their anger made all heaven rejoice. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Zacchæus was a sinner; he did not pretend to be anything else. And Jesus knew that He was inviting Himself to a sinner's house, and, as a sinner, Zacchæus received the Saviour. Reader, go and do thou likewise.

Nothing less than salvation did the Saviour bring, and anything short of it would have left Zacchæus where he was before—a lost sinner, and nothing more. A tender conscience and a generous

heart this "son of Abraham" had. If it chanced that he exacted more than was his due, he restored it fourfold; and with an open hand he gave to the poor, even to half his goods. But with these admirable qualities he needed salvation as much as the most iniquitous publican that ever breathed. He belonged to a class which the Son of man came to seek and to save—a class to which we all belong, and which that word *lost* so faithfully describes. How suited to each other were these two—the lost sinner, and the Saviour of the lost. Is it not so still? Yes; there is a full Christ for empty sinners—bread enough and to spare for those who are perishing with hunger. In Him there is rest for the weary, health for the sin-sick, freedom for the slave, riches for the poor, pardon for the guilty, cleansing for the leprous, life for the dead, and salvation for the lost. All fulness dwells in Him. Whatever your need, the answer to it is found in Christ. The free favour of God has treasured up in Him all that any can possibly require, and infinitely more. In receiving Him, we receive all.

Only a word more need be added. If Zacchæus had not received Jesus that day, he would never have had another opportunity. The Lord would pass that way no more. It was to-day or never with him. So with us. The last invitation comes, the last appeal, the last warning, the last offer. It comes without our knowing it to be the last.

We hope and think others are to follow. But if God says of a man, "Ephraim is joined to idols: *let him alone*," then you may call, but he will not answer; you may show him his danger, but he will not see it; and you may reason with him, but he will not understand. His conscience, which once troubled him, is quiet now, the eternal future awakens no concern, his fears have fled, all is still; but it is the stillness of death, an oppressive calm, the sure precursor of a coming storm! Lest it should be so with you, unsaved reader, hasten to receive Jesus. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart."

"Poor, lost, benighted soul! art thou
 Willing to find salvation now?
 There yet is hope; hear mercy's call—
 Truth, life, light, way! in Christ is all!
 Haste to Him, haste!"

CHRIST AND HIS INTERESTS.

Do not many people make the mistake of attempting to take up the *interests* of the Lord before having the heart taken up with the Lord Himself? If I have a dearly-loved friend, my *friend* is my chief object and delight, and in the course of friendship I discover that my friend has interests which, for love of my friend, become mine too; but the love and companionship are independent of the interests, although perhaps much enhanced by them.

A. B.

THE MORNING STAR, AND THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE apostle Paul, in 1 Thess. v. 4, 5, 6, says to God's people, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day [the day of the Lord] should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

Night and darkness! God's people are not of either, the world is of both. The darkness of night enshrouds it; and Satan is saying, "Peace and safety. Sleep on; there is no danger." As well might one say there would be no danger were a ship in the darkness of the night steering for the terrible rocks.

But what makes it night for this world? The answer is—Sin, death, and Satan's reign. Jesus, the Son of God, has been cast out and crucified, and night has settled down on the world that has been guilty of this awful deed.

Still God is acting in patient grace towards the world; and all the while God thus acts it is called "the accepted time . . . the day of salvation."

The believer is not of the world, even as Jesus was not of it. (John xvii. 16.) "We know that

we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." (1 John v. 19.) We, dear fellow-Christian, belong to a company who, in the mind of God, are distinct and separate from it—"children of light and of the day . . . not of the night nor of darkness." The world remains the same, or, if there be any change, it is growing darker and more hardened, because of light offered and refused—rocked to sleep in its sins, in the arms of the wicked one.

As the night wears away, what cheers the Christian's heart? And as he watches, what does he expect to break upon his gaze? It is the *Morning Star*. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star." (Rev. xxii. 16.) He knows that "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. xiii. 11, 12), and he awaits in ardent hope the coming of the Lord to take His people, dead and living, away from "night and darkness," to the light and joy of the Father's house above.

It is instructive to notice that the New Testament closes with the hope of the Church—"Jesus . . . the bright and Morning Star." As soon as He thus presents Himself, "the Spirit and the Bride say, Come." Jesus says, "Surely I come quickly." And the saints responding, cry, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The Old Testament closes with the hope of Israel, connected with which there is unsparing judgment for the world, deliverance for God's ancient people, and the ushering in of the millennial day of glory.

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. *But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings ;* and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked ; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Malachi iv. 1-4. Read also Isaiah xi. 1-10.)

The Church through the long dark night watches for the Morning Star. In that time of tribulation, “the time of Jacob's trouble” (Jer. xxx. 7), which will come in after the Church is caught away, and before the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, Israel will look for the rising of the Sun of righteousness, for the destruction of their enemies and their own deliverance. And when He thus appears they will say, “Lo, this is our God ; we have waited for Him, and He will save us : this is the Lord ; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” (Isaiah xxv. 9.)

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Happy time for that then happy people, when God will set His hand to deliver and to restore, and when shall be fulfilled all those glowing prophecies which illumine the pages of the Old Testament Scriptures. For His own glory He will make good every word that He has uttered concerning them. Then "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isaiah xxxv. 10.)

A common occurrence supplies an illustration that may help in the understanding of the order of these two deeply-important events.

Early one morning, not long ago, the writer enjoyed a sight long to be remembered, and which made the truth of the Lord's coming and of His appearing very real to him.

In the distance, low down on the horizon, was to be seen a star, small and reddish in appearance. At first it did not particularly arrest his attention, until, as it rose higher and higher in the heavens, it grew brighter and larger, and shone with great brilliancy. It was a beautiful sight, that lone star shining in all its glory in that early morning sky; so beautiful, that he could not help calling others to witness it. And as he sat watching it, the words of the Lord in Rev. xxii. came into his mind: "I, Jesus, . . . am the bright and morning star."

But he had not beheld it long before another object attracted him. The horizon began to glow with the beams of the rising sun, and soon the sun himself appeared in all his majesty, and the morning star faded from his view—lost in the splendour of the opening day. And as he looked, he thought of Malachi iv. 2: “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.” So we sing—

“In hope we lift our wishful, longing eyes,
Waiting to see the *Morning Star* arise ;
How bright, how glad some will His advent be,
Before the Sun shines forth in majesty.”

Deep was the impression made upon his mind by the fact that in all he had witnessed there had been no pause. The night wore away. Those who were *awake* and watching saw and admired the brightness of the morning star, and then came forth the sun, and the day appeared.

And well we know that it will be so in the ways of evil. The night, the long dark night, is passing away, and soon will the weary watchers see Jesus—the bright and Morning Star—and be caught away to meet Him. (1 Thess. iv. 15–18.) But, like the daily revolutions of the earth, there will be no standing still. The Sun of righteousness will rise upon a sleeping, guilty world, and judgment and wrath to them will be the result; but to the remnant of Israel, He shall arise with healing in His wings, and thus will that day of

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millennial glory be introduced, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas.

Alas, for this guilty world! It sleeps on its terrible sleep, rocked in the cradle of false security; and in the midst of its dreams of "peace and safety," shall sudden destruction come, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. (1 Thess. v. 3.)

As for God's beloved people, who are not of the night but of the day, who are not of the darkness but of the light, who belong not to earth but to heaven, who are strangers here and citizens above, may JESUS, as the Morning Star, become brighter and brighter to their souls, until they find themselves "caught up," conformed to His image, and in His own blissful presence, to go no more out for ever.

The glory of earth fades as by faith we sing—

"What will the sunshine of His glory prove?
 What the unmingled fulness of His love?
 What hallelujahs will His presence raise?
 What but one loud eternal burst of praise?"

E. A.

"Search the Scriptures; for" (John v. 39.)
 "If thou seekest and searchest." (Prov. ii. 4, &c.)
 "According to their pasture, so were they filled." (Hos. xiii. 6.)
 "Thy words were found, and" (Jer. xv. 16.)
 "These searched therefore." (Acts xvii. 11, 12.)
 "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
 (Acts xx. 32.)

THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY.

MANY believers fail to apprehend the true nature of the present gospel of the glory. This may be accounted for in great measure by their not perceiving the vast change involved in Christ's rejection, death, resurrection, and ascension to glory. Some mix up the testimony which went out before the cross with that which follows after, and fall into the greatest confusion. We desire therefore to bring before our readers a few points which we trust may remove difficulties, and enable them more clearly and fully to discern the nature of the present blessing in the gracious ways of God.

To bring this out simply, let us first briefly trace a few of His ways in the past. God originally created the universe for *His own glory*. "The heavens declare *the glory of God*, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." (Psalm xix. 1.) Man too was created in the image of God for *the same end*; but he, placed on earth in responsibility, disobeyed God, sin entered, and communion with Him was broken. Henceforth he was afraid of the Lord God who had hitherto found His delight in him. Excluded from paradise, the posterity of Adam filled the world with violence and corruption, and the judgment of God in the

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flood ensued. Noah and his house, preserved in the ark, reappeared on the renewed earth ; but sin was still there, and men fell into idolatry. During this long period there were individuals who believed the promise of God concerning One to come—the seed of the woman who should bruise the head of the serpent. (Gen. iii. 15.)

Next we get *the God of glory* appearing unto and calling Abram. From him sprang the nation of Israel, God's beloved earthly people. Redeemed out of Egypt, *the shechinah glory* dwelt in their midst. The presence of the Lord was there in the tabernacle, and later on in the temple at Jerusalem. But Israel broke the law of God given at Sinai, and slew His prophets, and God gave them over to captivity ; *the glory* retreating from their midst, and the temple was destroyed. (Ezek. xi. 23 ; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 19.) A little later a remnant returned, and the temple was rebuilt, but there was *no glory*. (Ezra, Nehemiah.)

When the fulness of time was come God sent forth His Son, the subject of promise ever since the fall, and the true hope of Israel ; but individual saints, ere Israel as a nation had been formed, had long looked in faith for future blessing beyond this world. (Heb. xi. 13–16.)

Before Christ was presented to His own the kingdom of heaven was announced as at hand by His forerunner John the Baptist. A little later He Himself proclaims the same glad tidings. The

glory of God had come back to earth, but was veiled in the person of Christ. His moral glory shone out in every act, word, and deed; and His glory as man on earth culminates when transfigured on the mountain top in the presence of His disciples. This wondrous scene is a sample of the coming kingdom; but Moses and Elias, who appeared in the same glory with the Lord, spake of His decease (or His departure) which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. (Luke ix. 30, 31.)

This alters everything. A remnant whose hearts were touched by divine power had received Him as the Messiah, but the mass of the nation rejected Him. Deeper counsels and purposes of God were hidden in His heart, and, instead of taking up the kingdom in power and glory, Jesus yields Himself into the hands of the wicked, that He might accomplish the glory of God by dying on the cross. And thereby He opened the door for the display of the most wonderful grace ever known—grace that transcends all creature thought, grace which, hitherto pent up in the heart of the blessed God, now raises the sinner from the lowest depths of degradation, misery, and sin, to share the very highest destiny of any of God's creatures, even to have *part with Christ in the glories* bestowed on Him as man.

The Messiah, the King, was cut off. The hopes of His loved ones dashed to the ground, only to be replaced by higher hopes; centred not merely

in His person as Messiah, the King, but as the One whom they should henceforth know as *the Saviour in glory*, the Lord of all, Head of His body the Church. When Judas at His last passover went forth to betray Him, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." (John xiii. 31, 32.) Memorable words, taking in all that was about to be enacted. He goes to the cross, and covers Himself with glory as man; not by a display of power, but as the Lamb led to the slaughter, and crucified through weakness. (2 Cor. xiii. 4.) And God is glorified in His death infinitely more than if sin had never been. See His wondrous answer to the same, "God shall glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." Christ Jesus the Saviour is in glory. He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. (Rom. vi. 4.) "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." (John xvii. 4.) And God glorified the One who did it in the heavens. The King being rejected, the kingdom in manifest power awaits its display in the hand of the Son of man at a future day. Meanwhile the mysteries of the kingdom go on during the absence of the King in heaven (Matt. xiii. 11), and all believers born again enter the kingdom to be

manifested with Christ in the heavenly sphere, when He shall take the reins of government into His own hands.

But there is more, much more, than this. The gospel of the grace of God is now to be preached. Grace reigns through righteousness. (Rom. v. 21.) "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii. 23.) But, adds the apostle, "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. iii. 24.) This grace abounds where sin once abounded. (Rom. v. 20.) Man has broken God's law, slain His prophets, murdered His Son, resisted His Spirit. Judgment rests upon the whole world. Wrath of God is revealed against man from heaven; but the long-suffering of God stays the execution of the sentence, and grace reigns. (Rom. i. 18.) This grace meets the sinner where he is, ruined, guilty, lost, and gives him to share all that God has given to His Son, the Man Christ Jesus, who glorified Him. "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them," &c. (John xvii. 22.)

Paul speaks of the testimony that he was privileged to bear as "my gospel," and as "the glorious gospel [or gospel of the glory] of Christ." (2 Tim. ii. 8; 2 Cor. iv. 4.) The grace of God flows from the glory, where Christ is seated, and the recipient of grace is identified in life with, and united to, the glorified One. His sins are put away by the precious blood of Christ; he is justi-

fied from all things, made the righteousness of God in Christ, has life eternal in Him, is united to Him by the Spirit, and is a member of His body, the Church.

Old Testament saints, as we have seen, looked in faith for future blessing beyond this world (Heb. xi. 13); but these wondrous present blessings of the gospel of the glory of Christ, now to be known and enjoyed in the power of the indwelling Spirit, were not yet revealed. Many of God's dear children even now fail to apprehend the riches of God's grace, and the fulness and blessedness of their portion in Christ. Self-occupied or legal, they think it would be the greatest presumption to say confidently that such blessings were theirs. But God would have His loved ones know His thoughts of His Well-beloved, and His estimate of His finished work. And it is according to the value of His work, and in the favour of His person, the Beloved, that the believer is now seen.

Beloved reader, have you apprehended it? Are you a believer in Christ? Not *about* Him, but *in* Him. If so, look back for a moment to the cross, and there learn, if you have never done so before, that there is the end of your sins, and you too before God. (1 Peter ii. 24; Rom. vi. 7, 8.)

And now look up into the opened heaven, and behold in glory the Man who died on the cross for your sins, and with whom in the eye and

thought of God *you died*, and learn that in all the favour in which yon blessed Man is seated before God you are taken into favour too. (Eph. i. 6.) Yes, thanks be to the God of all grace, the believer's sins are cancelled, blotted out, gone for ever. He will remember them no more. (Heb. x. 17.) Then as to yourself, you who committed them are gone along with them. Not as to fact, of course; for you are the same person still; but God says *you have died with Christ*. That is how He looks upon you, as having died when Christ died, as we read in Rom. vi.—“For he that is dead [or has died] is freed [justified] from sin. Now if we be dead [or have died] with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.”

And in verse 11 we are exhorted to reckon ourselves dead to sin on this very ground. If we were actually dead, we could not do so. But having died with Christ in the sight of God, the apostle says, “*Likewise reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin [as that which characterized us as long as we lived in Adam], and alive unto God, through Jesus Christ [or in Christ Jesus] our Lord.”

Furthermore, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. viii. 1.) Christ is risen, and the believer is alive from the dead in Him. There is no condemnation to Christ. He bore it on the cross for us, and rose again entirely beyond its reach. And we

being in Him, there is no condemnation for us. And not only so, but in Colossians we are viewed as risen with Christ (iii. 1), and in Ephesians as seated in heavenly places in Him. (ii. 6.) These and other precious truths are all embraced in the testimony of the apostle Paul; all form part of the glad tidings which he preached—*the gospel of the glory of the blessed God*. (1 Tim. i. 11.)

It is all-important too that Christians should apprehend the truth of their union with Christ in glory, and with each other, by the Holy Ghost. God hath “raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand . . . and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” (Eph. i. 20–23.) The wonderful union of the Head and the body—Christ and the Church—is called “*a [or the] great mystery*.” (Eph. v. 32.) It was hidden in God, and not made known in the ages and generations which are past; but is now made manifest to His saints. (Col. i. 26; Eph. iii. 3–11.) This union was first effected by the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, “for by one Spirit are we all baptized 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. 13.) Every believer now who has the Holy Spirit in him is in this unity. Referring to this blessed truth, the apostle says, “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*," &c. (Rom. xvi. 25.)

When the last elect saint of God of this wondrous day of grace is sealed with the Holy Ghost, Christ will claim His saints for the glory to which they are called. Man in crucifying Christ fulfilled the Scriptures unwittingly, and the result has been the revelation of God's secret counsels concerning a heavenly people (1 Cor. xv. 48), called on earth, and made meet to share *heavenly glory with Christ*. Here is found the wisdom of God in a mystery. "Howbeit," we read, "we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, *the things which God hath prepared* for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 6-10.)

How marvellous are the ways of God! Man's greatest act of wickedness on earth overruled to bring out eternal and heavenly blessings in the

glory as the portion of all who, self-judged, believe on His Son.

Glory with Christ above, and to share that which the Father hath given to Him as the Man who glorified Him, is the sure and eternal prospect of His own in this day of His grace. At any moment the Lord Himself may come to claim them for it. He has gone to the Father's house to prepare a place with His own hand of love, and will come Himself to take His loved ones to that blest abode. A place in the home circle in that glorious realm of unsullied light and everlasting love, and a place in association with Christ in the heavenly sphere of the coming kingdom and glory, both form part of the portion of the children of God. Israel and the nations will be the subjects of the King at that day; but *we shall reign with Him*. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. xiii. 43.) And in Rev. xxi. 10 the Church, which is the Bride, the Lamb's wife, is seen by the prophet as the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, and having the glory of God, &c. And nations and kings walk on the earth in her light, &c. (Rev. xxi. 24-26.) Neither are the Father's house and the coming kingdom the only promises of future glory that are set forth in Scripture as the destined portion of the Christian; for we have the further revelation that in the eternal state, when God is

all in all, the Church will have *her own special glory*. In Rev. xxi. 2, 3, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men," &c.

Beloved reader, what think ye of the gospel of the glory? Are you an unconverted sinner? It behoves you surely, ere it be too late, to embrace the glad tidings, and make the blessing all your own, by faith in His beloved Son, who died for all. Are you a believer? This marvellous revelation demands from your soul, for Him who is the Source and Author of it all, worship, adoration, thanksgiving, everlasting praise. E. H. C.

SECURITY.

WITH life eternal I am blest,
And nothing me from Christ can wrest,
Nor sever from His love.
By God, without a stain or sin,
In Christ I'm viewed, and seated in
The heavenlies above.

With Christ in God my life is hid,
So I'm secure; and God forbid
That I should ever doubt.
The work is done, the blood is shed;
Came wrath upon a Victim's head:
Shout "Hallelujah!" Shout!

H. S. T. B.

FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.

“SUCH preachers are not likely to reach the conscience who hop from one truth to another, but dwell on none. He is the better workman who drives one nail home with repeated blows; not he who covets to enter many, but fastens none. Were I to buy a garment in a shop, I should like him better that lays one good piece or two before me that suit my turn, which I may fully examine, than him who takes down all his shop merely to show his store, till at last, for variety, I can look attentively at none.”

“You may as well quarrel with God because He hath made but one heaven, and one way to it, as be offended with the preacher for preaching the same things over and over again. If thy heart be humble, and thy palate spiritual, old truths will be new to thee every time thou hearest them. In heaven the saints draw all their wine of joy at one tap, and yet it never tastes flat.”

“Beware thou retest not in thine own righteousness; thou standest under a tottering wall; the very cracks thou seest in thy duties bid thee stand off, except thou wouldst have them fall on thy head. The greatest step to heaven is out of thy own doors.”

“The more entirely thou canst rely on God’s *naked* word and promise, the stronger is thy faith; for then thou trustest Him on His own credit, without any bond from another; and this is faith indeed. He that walks without staff or crutch, is stronger than he that needs these to lean on.”

“CALL HIS NAME JESUS.”

THAT precious name of Jesus,
It tells of love abounding,
Which from above, came here in love,
The heart of God expounding ;
All grace and truth outshining
From Him so meek and lowly,
'Mid darkest night, He shone as light,
The Son of God all holy.

That precious name of Jesus,
What thoughts it doth awaken
Within each heart, which has a part
With Him who was forsaken.
When, all our sins He bearing,
The wrath of God endurèd,
From death and sin our souls to win,
He thus our peace securèd.

That precious name of Jesus,
He bears it still in heaven,
Though on the throne, He loves His own,
Who have to Him been given.
His strength is theirs in weakness,
His sympathy in sorrow,
His glory there, we too shall share,
When comes our bright to-morrow.

That precious name of Jesus,
Through ages without ending,
Shall be the boast of heaven's bright host,
Their knees to Him all bending,
Who was the Man of sorrows ;
But now the Man of glory,
Who soon shall come, and take us home,
And perfect love's bright story.

G. W. F.

THE MIDNIGHT CRY;

OR,

THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

IN the following pages it is our desire to bring before the reader a subject of daily increasing interest to every child of God, and in doing so we most earnestly ask the prayerful and serious consideration thereof which its importance demands.

The return or the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is the subject to which we allude, and in approaching it in company with our readers, we would urge upon them the importance of doing so Bible in hand, and of examining for themselves every passage which may be referred to, in dependence upon the teaching and guidance of the Holy Ghost—that Spirit of truth sent down from heaven at the day of Pentecost by the ascended and glorified Christ, and whose blessed office it is, amongst many other things, to guide us into all truth, and to shew us things to come. (John xvi. 13.)

It may be, however, that some into whose hands this paper may fall have not yet found “peace in believing.” The great question of their souls’ salvation has not yet been settled, and

consequently they have no inclination to look into this subject, for something seems to tell them that they are not ready to meet the Lord if He should come at this very moment.

We would remind all such of the blessed fact that Christ has already been here. His sinless feet have trod this sin-stained earth, and on Calvary's cross He who knew no sin "once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) Yes, dear anxious soul, this spotless One has died in your stead, has suffered for your sins, has borne them "in His own body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 24.) He has endured the judgment which you deserved, met every claim of divine justice on your behalf, and eternally glorified God in reference to the question of sin itself. Yes, He has done all this, and infinitely more than tongue could tell or thought conceive. Listen to those peace-giving words to which He gave utterance upon the cross—"It is finished"—words which have been the solid and eternal resting-place of multitudes of sin-burdened hearts.

"Hear the Lord Himself declaring
All performed He came to do ;
Sinners, in yourselves despairing,
This is joyful news for you.
Jesus speaks it :
His are faithful words and true."

Say, beloved reader, can you not rest there ?
If the *justice of God* has been **satisfied** in refer-

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ence to your sins, what more do you need in order to enjoy peace with God?

On the other hand, some who read these lines may be truly converted, may have the forgiveness of their sins, may possess peace with God and the certainty of being in heaven any moment that God may see fit to call them, and yet perhaps feel no interest in this subject. They are not filled to overflowing with the "blessed hope" of meeting face to face that precious Saviour who suffered on the cross, and bled and died to save their guilty souls from hell, and to secure for them an eternal title to be in that same glory with and like Himself.

Some time ago we met, while taking a railway journey, with one whose condition was pretty much what we have described above. He was unquestionably a child of God, and seeking to serve His Saviour. But on being asked if he was waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Ah, well," said he, "I do not dive into these matters so deeply as you. This question does not trouble me much. I know that I am ready to go any moment God may see fit to call me. If I were to die on the spot, I have no fear; and therefore it seems to me of very little consequence whether He comes to-morrow or not for a hundred years, for I am ready whenever He comes."

"Let me imagine," was our reply, "that you had gone to India to transact some business, and that you had left behind you your wife and family.

Though left behind, you do not forget them ; they are still the objects of your deep affection. Not a day passes but what your thoughts travel back to those dearly-loved ones, and you long for the time when you will once more enjoy their company. Your business nearly completed, with intense satisfaction you write home to tell them that they may expect you to arrive at any time now. You cannot tell them the exact day, but they may be on the look-out for you. Confident of their love, you imagine that it will cause them as much joy to receive this announcement as it has given you to make it.

“Soon after the receipt of this letter I pay them all a visit, and on enquiring whether they had lately heard from you, I am told, ‘Oh, yes, he has just sent us word that he is soon coming home ; indeed, that we may expect him back at any time. But after all it does not much trouble us whether he returns to-morrow or not for another year, for we are quite ready to receive him whenever he thinks fit to come!’ Would not this,” we enquired, “manifest a lamentable state of things ? Where would be the affections of their hearts ? *Trouble them !* I should think not, indeed ! If they had any love for you at all it would make their very hearts leap with joy to think of so soon seeing you again.”

And has not the blessed Saviour left us here ? And though in heaven, does He not constantly

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think of us? And is not His love for us now as deep and fervent as it was for His beloved disciples when He walked with them through this world? "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (John xiii. 1.) And has He not sent us word to say that He may return at any moment? Yes, dear Christian reader, **He has**. Three times over in the last chapter of Revelation, which furnishes us with His closing communications to His people in this scene, He has made use of those thrilling words, "**I come quickly.**"

And shall our affections be unmoved by them? Shall our hearts be untouched? We trust not; but rather let our willing voices take up the joyful response, "**Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**" (Rev. xxii. 20.)

We would now ask the reader to open his Bible at Matt. xxv., and to read carefully the first thirteen verses, and let him keep his Bible open at the very page, whilst together we cast our eyes over its contents.

A very little attention will suffice to show that this parable of the Ten Virgins is divided into three parts, which very remarkably coincide with three distinct periods of the Church's history here on earth.

We would observe in passing, that the history of the Church commenced at the day of Pentecost. Though in the counsels of God, no doubt from all

eternity, it was nevertheless “a mystery kept secret” (see carefully Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. iii. 3–7; Col. i. 24–28), and had no actual existence as such in this world until, at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost came down from heaven (Acts ii. 1–4), and baptized all believers into **one body**. (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.) It was there, then, and thus that the Church began. We cannot now go into this deeply important subject, but merely make the foregoing remarks, in order that it may be clear to the reader to what especial period we refer; namely, to that which began at the day of Pentecost in Acts ii., which has continued up to this present moment, and will continue until the Lord descends into the air, and we are caught up to meet Him there. (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) *Then* the Church’s history on earth will be closed.

PART I.

“THEY WENT FORTH TO MEET THE BRIDEGROOM.”

This characterized the Christians at the very commencement. “*They went forth to meet the Bridegroom.*” He who had just died for them had gone away from them into the glory of God. He, as a Man, was sitting there at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; but ere going away had left them a promise, that He would

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return to take them to the same place of glory where He was going Himself. Cheered by this promise, and filled with this hope, they went forth to meet Him. The world, which had just cast out and rejected Him whom their hearts loved, presented no attractions to them. Though in it, they were not of it. (John xvii. 14.) They coveted not its glories, they courted not its honours, and they sought not its pleasures. Thoughts of their absent Lord filled their hearts, and they longed for the moment when they should see Him and be with Him.

We lately met a young and ardent Christian. He was seeking to serve the Lord by preaching the gospel, and hoped ere long to leave his native shores, and go as a missionary to the heathen.

“Have you ever thought of the coming of the Lord?”

“No,” said he; “I cannot say that I have.”

“Have you never noticed,” we replied with surprise, “how repeatedly the New Testament speaks of it?”

Again he answered in the negative, hinting at the same time that it spoke more of death than of the coming of Christ.

Reader, will you be as surprised as he to learn that death—*for the Christian*—is not mentioned more than four or five times; whereas the coming of the Lord is treated of in all the gospels, in the

Acts, in almost every epistle*—in two of these epistles (1 and 2 Thess.) in every chapter—and lastly in the book of Revelation over and over again?

He was quite astonished at this, and promised to search the Scriptures, to see if these things were so.

And now, beloved reader, is it not strange that Christians in the present day should be occupied so much with death, which is but seldom mentioned in the Word in reference to them; while the bright and blessed hope of the Lord's personal return, which is its constant theme, and shines on almost every page, is ignored, forgotten, or looked upon as one of the eccentric views of a small portion of peculiar Christians? No, dear Christian friend, be assured it is a vital truth of God, given to us as our true and proper hope, and interwoven with our every right affection and duty.

But let us briefly look at a few of the passages which speak of it; we cannot attempt to do

* It is most instructive to notice the reason why the Lord's coming is omitted in Galatians and Ephesians. In Galatians the fundamental truths of the gospel were being given up, as to justification by faith, &c.; consequently the apostle has, so to speak, to lay the *foundation* again, and cannot occupy them with the blessed *hope* of the gospel. He has to travail in birth again for them. (Chap. iv. 19.) In Ephesians the believer is looked at as *already* seated in heavenly places in Christ, and accordingly, in *this* aspect of our position, His coming is not needed to bring us there.

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more, or this paper would expand itself into a volume. First of all we would turn to John xiv. 1-5. Here the blessed Lord is about to leave the world. Rejected by men, and knowing that "His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father" (John xiii. 1), He gathers around Him "His own," whom He was about to leave behind "in the world." He draws them to His side; for He finds Himself at home with this little company, and He knows that to them He can speak in all the unrestrained freedom of His deep affection for them. Judas too, the betrayer, is gone out, "and it was night." (v. 30.) How strikingly suggestive of the appalling moral darkness which enveloped the world at that very moment! Jesus, we read, "was troubled in spirit." (v. 21.)

It was not only the hatred of man, deep and long-felt as it had been, nor was it the treachery of Judas, nor the unfaithfulness of His disciples, bitter as must have been the sorrow caused by all this; it was not *only* this, we repeat, which oppressed His spirit at that terrible moment. Deeper shadows still were casting themselves across His lonely path. The cross, in all its intense reality, was rising before His soul. The storm of divine judgment against sin was about to break upon His devoted head, and its heavy clouds were now passing before Him. But amidst it all He looks beyond, to the glory which He

is straightway about to enter (xiii. 31, 32), and now distinctly communicates to them the sad intelligence that He is going away. He knew what trouble would fill them, and, forgetting for the moment His own deep sorrow, He seeks to lift their poor hearts above this world, by telling them of the Father's house, where He was going Himself, and where He would prepare a place for them—a place better far than all this world could give.

But how should they reach it? Ah, that is the point! Read, and as you read imagine that you are listening to the blessed Saviour Himself: "If I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again**, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (xiv. 3.) What cheering words for them! What comfort for their broken hearts! "**I will come again!**"

"But did He not, by these words, refer to their death?" some may enquire. Surely not. When they died, *they departed* to be with Him. (Phil. i. 23.) He did not leave the Father's house and come to fetch them. We believe it would have been simply impossible for them to have understood His words in any other sense than that of His own **personal return**; and, further, we are convinced that it is because His *absence* is so little felt by us in these days, that the thought of His *return* fills us with so little joy. The blank which the *absence* of a dearly-loved one

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makes can be filled up by nothing but the *presence* of that very one. And what friend have we like Jesus? Can we not, in some little measure, say, "Whom having not seen, we love"? (1 Peter i. 8.)

"True," we hear some saying; "but did He not return to them after His resurrection? And is it not to this that He refers?" Undoubtedly He did come back after His resurrection, but only for a brief moment. Forgetful of His own words, which assured them that He would rise again the third day, and refusing to accept the combined testimony of Mary Magdalene, and of the two disciples returning from Emmaus, who had actually seen Him alive and spoken with Him, they are filled with fear and alarm when "**Jesus Himself** stood in the midst of them." (Luke xxiv. 36.) So unbelieving are they, that they cannot realize that it is in very truth their own beloved Lord and Master once more in their midst. They think it is an apparition, and suppose it to be a spirit. He upbraids them with their unbelief, bids their fears begone, and reassures their trembling hearts by those touching words, "It is **I myself**: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

Ah, no! His resurrection was no mere spiritual manifestation, but an actual fact. There He stood before their very eyes—a **real Man**. As truly *a*

Man after His resurrection as He had been before His death, He even asked for food, "and did eat before them." (Luke xxiv. 43.)

Being seen of them forty days (Acts i. 3), He now leads them out "as far as to Bethany" (Luke xxiv. 50), and, as He blesses them, is "parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

Let us turn aside and look at that wondrous scene described in Acts i. See that little company gathered around the risen Saviour. See their eager faces as they listen to His parting words, bidding them return to Jerusalem, and there await the coming of the Holy Ghost, who in a few days would descend from heaven, and take up His abode *with* them, and *in* them (John xiv. 17), and who would thus be their power for service and testimony whilst the Lord was away. "When He had spoken these things, while they beheld, **He was taken up**; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." How steadfastly they look toward heaven as He goes up! How eagerly is their gaze fixed upon that cloud that has just hidden Him from their eyes! They scarcely seem to notice the presence of those two angelic messengers. But listen! "**This same Jesus**, which is taken up from you into heaven, **shall so come** in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

To what did they refer? To death? Most certainly not. By no possible means could these

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words be so interpreted. No, no, they do but repeat the same blessed truth that Christ Himself had expressed in John xiv.; namely, the fact of His own **personal return**.

We would now briefly consider 1 Thess. iv. 13-18. By reference to the first chapter, and comparing it with Acts xvii., which gives the historical account of the visit of the apostle Paul to Thessalonica, and of the first preaching of the gospel to that people, we shall see that many of them were nothing but heathen idolaters, but that to them and also to the Jews were announced the wondrous glad tidings of the death and resurrection of Christ. He had died for their sins, been delivered for their offences, and raised again for their justification. (Rom. iv. 25.) At the cross He had stood as the holy spotless Victim, charged with all their sins; and now God had raised Him from the dead, and put Him at His own right hand in heaven. *How better could He have proved His entire satisfaction in that sacrifice?*

“All His billows rolled o’er Jesus,
There exhausted all their power.”

“**Some** of them believed” (Acts xvii. 4), we are told, and no doubt their faith rested on the word of God; but we cannot pass on without noticing a beautiful contrast in the case of the Bereans, their neighbours. Of these last we read, “**Therefore many** of them believed.” (v. 12.) Why this

difference? “*They searched the Scriptures daily.*” (v. 11.) Ah, there was the secret! And may this earnest spirit be increased a thousandfold in the present day amongst all who desire to grow in the knowledge of God and His truth!

But what a marvellous effect was produced amongst those who did believe at Thessalonica, few in number as they may have been! They “became followers of the Lord,” “examples to all that believe;” and by their changed manner of life, the word of the Lord was “sounded out,” and their faith to Godward “spread abroad.” And having turned to God from their idols, they were **waiting** “for His Son from heaven.” (1 Thess. i. 6–10.) Yes, beloved Christian reader, this formed an integral part of their conversion. Not only had they been “delivered from the wrath to come,” not only saved from eternal judgment by His death, but now, He having been raised from the dead and seated in heaven, they were eagerly waiting, *not for their own death*, but for **His personal return**.

They were expecting Him to come back even in their very lifetime. They had been taught that at *His return*, and not at *their death*, would every desire of their hearts be satisfied; but as the days and weeks rolled on, and still He for whom they were waiting and watching did not return; and as death too began to make its appearance in that little company, they were

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filled with dismay, imagining that those only who were alive would reap the full joy of His coming, and that those who had passed away would in some way or other be losers. Accordingly the apostle writes the first epistle to revive their drooping spirits and reassure their desponding hearts.

Does he reproach them with ignorance for expecting their Lord so soon to return? Does he comfort them by assuring them that they themselves must soon die, and thus follow those of their number who had fallen asleep? Not at all. "Let not sorrow fill your hearts," he says. "Be not like the poor world which has 'no hope' in death; 'for this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we* which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (or go before) them which are asleep.'" (1 Thess. iv. 15.) It was as though he said, "We shall in no wise outstrip them, for (1) the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven . . . and (2) the dead in Christ shall rise first: then (3) we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."

It is inconceivable how anyone, who gives the smallest thought to the subject, can imagine that

* Notice how careful the apostle is to place himself, along with those to whom he was writing, amongst the number who *might* be alive at the very moment when the Lord should return—"we which are alive," &c.—he does not say, "*they* which are alive."

all this refers to death ! Do, beloved reader, let your eye rest upon the words of verse 16—**“The Lord Himself”** (is that *death?*)—“shall descend from heaven with a shout.” When a saint of God dies does death come down from heaven with a shout ? And further, “the dead in Christ shall rise first ;” * this is **resurrection**, and *not death*. At death the body is put down into the grave and there sees corruption ; but at the glorious moment of which this passage speaks three events take place, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. xv. 52), (1) the Lord Himself descends from heaven **into the air**, (2) the dead in Christ rise, and, as 1 Cor. xv. 43 tells us, they are “raised in glory,” and (3) the living saints are “changed in a moment” (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52), and “caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,” and so to be for ever **with Him**. Blessed hope ! Comforting words !

The meeting-place, observe, between Christ and His glorified saints, both raised and changed, is *not* the earth, *nor* is it exactly heaven, but **in the air**.

There it is that we shall meet our blessed Saviour. And oh, what shouts of triumph, and what songs of praise, shall fill the vaults of heaven as He takes us back with Himself, and ushers us

* On this subject see a little book entitled *The Two Resurrections*.

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into the Father's house! (John xiv.) Alas! for this poor world which is left behind, and which will then, for a short while, go on increasing in iniquity with fearful rapidity, until the heavens open and Christ comes forth in majesty and power accompanied with all the glorified saints to execute judgment.*

The scriptures which we have thus briefly looked at are, we trust, sufficient to show the reader who desires to be taught of God, and to learn in subjection to the word of God, that the early Christians were expecting the speedy return of the Lord Jesus Christ. He Himself was the first to put the thought into their minds. (John xiv.) He had even said of one, "If I will that he tarry **till I come**" (John xxi. 22), thus showing that He *might*, though not positively stating that He *would*, come back before the death of the disciple to whom He was speaking. The angels, too, after His ascension, took up similar language (Acts i.); and lastly the apostles on many occasions were inspired of God to repeat the same comforting words. Is it any wonder, therefore, that this blessed hope filled the hearts of God's people then, and that "they all went forth to meet the Bridegroom"? But, alas!

* Those desiring further light from the word of God on the events that will transpire between the coming of the Lord into the air *for* His saints, and His return to the earth *with* them, may consult a work entitled, *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*, by W. Trotter, to be had at the office of this Magazine.

PART II.

“THEY ALL SLUMBERED AND SLEPT.”

At the beginning “they all went forth to meet the Bridegroom.” This, as we have seen, characterized the early Christians. They were not of this world, their “conversation [or citizenship] was in heaven, from whence also they looked for the Saviour.” (Phil. iii. 21.) They had taken up their cross to follow Him, and amidst the many trials and persecutions with which their path was strewn, their hearts were cheered by His parting promise—“**I will come again**, and receive you unto myself.” (John xiv. 3.)

But still the Bridegroom tarried. The weeks, months, and years rolled by, and still there was no sign of His return. Had He forgotten His promise? Had He led them to expect what He never intended to fulfil? By no means. Their faith, no doubt, was being tested; but “ye have need of patience,” says the inspired apostle, “for **yet a little while**, and He that shall come **will come**, and will not tarry.” (Heb. x. 37.) But, alas! their hearts grew weary of waiting, and their eyes grew heavy with sleep. The world too grew weary of persecuting them, and began to spread out before their eyes its bright and glittering attractions. How quickly the direful effect of all this was felt! The evil servant had no sooner said in his

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heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming," than he began "to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." (Matt. xxiv. 48, 49.) He did not say, mark, "My Lord will **never** return," but "My Lord **delayeth** His coming;" in other words, instead of treating it as his daily expectation, his immediate hope, he postponed it to an indefinite time in the far-distant future. Worldliness swept in like a flood, and the Church began to seek her home and portion in the scene from whence her Lord had been cast out.

"We are but strangers here, we would not crave
A home on earth which gave Him but a grave.
His cross has severed ties which bound us here,
Himself our portion in a brighter sphere."

Instead of breathing such a spirit, "They all slumbered and slept." Yes, **all**, without exception, wise and foolish alike—those who were real Christians as well as those who were mere professors. **All** were fast asleep; for the hope of the Lord's return was completely forgotten.

Centuries rolled by, and still the slumber of the professing Church continued. Search through the books that were written, and the sermons that were preached, not a mention will you find of that which fills the pages of the New Testament, not an allusion to that bright and purifying hope (1 John iii. 3) of the coming of Christ.

Let us not be misunderstood. Warnings of judgment there were no doubt; appeals to flee

from the wrath of God, which would eventually be poured out upon this earth when the Lord Jesus should be revealed from heaven in flaming fire; but of His coming into the air to gather His people home to glory, of His descent into the clouds to remove His own in the twinkling of an eye from the earth, which would *then*, and **not till then**, become the scene of all those terrible judgments—of this blessed hope not a line do we read, not a word do we hear. Alas! alas! “they **all** slumbered and slept.” But hark!

PART III.

“AT MIDNIGHT THERE WAS A CRY MADE.”

The midnight hour has arrived, the cry has gone forth. Some fifty years ago, we believe, its first notes began to fall upon the ears of the slumbering Church. The Lord who loved His Church, and still loves her, all-forgetful of Him as she has proved herself to be, at that time led some of His servants to search the Scriptures more attentively, and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, unfolded before their eyes and revived in their hearts the same blessed hope that had led the Christians at the beginning to go forth to meet the Bridegroom.

Reader, has that cry reached you? If not, may God use these few pages to make it

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ring in your very ears, and reach your very heart.

"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." (Matthew xxv. 6.)

Behold, the Bridegroom! Yes, beloved reader, He is at the door. No time for slumber now. "Awake, thou that sleepest!" The history of the Church is about to close, its sojourn on earth is about to cease. **"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh."** (James v. 8.) "Then *all* those virgins arose." (v. 7.) What a stir was made! The foolish as well as the wise begin to open their eyes; but, oh, what a discovery do they make! They had "no oil with them;" the lamp of an external profession they had, but its light was fast going out. (v. 8, margin—"Our lamps are going out.") Of what use is a lamp which has no oil? In like manner the outward profession of Christianity is useless without the inward reality which the possession of the Holy Ghost alone can give.

Reader, we would earnestly press upon you the importance of these things—consider them well, we beseech you. We are living in a day of great profession, but God looks for reality. He searches the heart, and how often, alas! does He see that, though He is approached with the lips, the heart is far from Him. (Matt. xv. 8.)

It may be that some, upon whose ear this warning note may fall, are resting on the sandy

foundation of a Christless and lifeless profession. Baptized, confirmed, and a regular communicant you may be ; and yet, reader, have no saving knowledge of Christ. You may be a Sunday-school teacher, a tract distributor, a district visitor, and even a humanly ordained preacher ; but if still unsaved, all this is but the oilless lamp which ere long will go out, and you will be plunged into the awful darkness of an eternal night.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. vii. 21.) Oh, Christendom, Christendom, heed these solemn words in time !—words spoken by the lips of Him who cannot lie. And again, “when once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath **shut to the door**, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us ; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are : then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.” And cannot multitudes say this in our day who yet have no real love for Christ in their hearts ? We have taken the sacrament, they can say ; we regularly attend our parish church ; we are subscribers to many benevolent institutions. All this, beloved reader, may be true of you ; but, remember, it is quite possible to be very religious, and yet **unsaved, unconverted** ; and if this is your case you most assuredly will hear those

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terrible words, "I know you not . . . depart from Me." (Luke xiii. 24-28.)

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! and long had His coming been foretold; many a time, no doubt, had these very words been read, but the blessed truth they contain was unheeded, unnoticed, and unseen. And why? Ah! the professing church was slumbering with the world, the warmth of first love towards Christ had grown cold—she was *sleeping instead of watching*. But the night is now far spent, yea, the midnight hour is past—

"Soon will the morning break,
In radiance through the sky."

The cry has gone forth, it is spreading to the remotest corners of Christendom, and multitudes of souls are being awakened to the fact that Christ is about to return. May every soul that reads these lines be stirred up! *Professor*, see to it that *you* do not lack the oil! *Christian*, see to it that *your* lamp is trimmed; for it is quite possible to possess the oil, and yet the light be very dim!

Let everything be removed that hinders the light of testimony for Christ shining forth; examine your walk, ways, and associations, and give up everything of which you would be ashamed if Christ were to return this very day. When we see Him as He is, we shall be like Him; let us seek to be as like Him now as we can. "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself

even as He is pure." (1 John iii. 3.) Purposely is the moment of His coming left uncertain, in order that we should always be like unto men who are waiting and watching for their lord. If we turn to Luke xii. 33-49, we shall see what the Lord Himself desired should be the attitude of the hearts, and the occupation of the lives of all His people, *and it is His desire still*. Our treasure is in heaven—a treasure inexhaustible, for it *faileth not*; no thief can approach it there, and no moth can corrupt it. How unlike everything in this world of fleeting joys and crushing disappointments! Then let our hearts be there also!

But if our *hearts* are in heaven, and through grace they may be, in ourselves and as to our bodies we are still on this earth, a scene of defilement and darkness. We need therefore to gird up the loins, lest our garments should pick up the defilement of the scene through which we pass; and we need to have our lights burning, in order that some little ray of light for Christ may cast itself across the darkness of this world.

And while He tarries we must wait, and wait too with the hand upon the latch of the door, ready to open immediately the first sound of His footstep is heard. Then, "when He cometh," He will make us sit down within those heavenly courts, in the eternal rest of His own presence. No defilement there. We shall not

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need to gird ourselves ; but, blessed be His name, it will be His delight to gird Himself, and serve us, and thus throughout eternity to minister to our joy.

Oh, what an effect would be produced upon our whole life and conduct if we more constantly remembered that there is absolutely *nothing between us and that glorious moment but the twinkling of an eye !*

The foolish, who represent the mere professors of Christendom, now begin to understand the gravity of their position. “**Give us of your oil,**” they say, as they behold with alarm the smouldering embers of their oilless wicks. But no, this cannot be ; for *salvation is an individual and personal matter*. They now begin to bestir themselves, and with redoubled energies seek to buy, by their own efforts, that which can alone be had as a free gift on the principle of faith.

While thus engaged the bridegroom came, “and **they that were ready** went in.” Mark these words, reader. Not “they that were *getting* ready,” or “they that *hoped* to be ready ;” but “they that **were** ready.” Reader, *are you ready ?* For in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the Bridegroom will come. Then the door will be **shut**. It will be too late then to knock at the door ; for when once that door is shut, it is *shut for ever*.

But perhaps you say, “I desire to be ready.

What must I do ?” Come as a poor, lost, guilty, hell-deserving sinner to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has died for sinners, and risen again. “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts xvi. 31.) His precious blood alone it is that “ cleanses from all sin.”

“ Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour.”

Ere closing, we would most earnestly warn the reader against supposing that this earth is the scene of the Christian’s blessedness. When the Lord Jesus comes into the air, He comes not to bless us upon the earth, but to take us to the Father’s house in glory. Our hope is laid up for us in heaven. (Col. i. 5.) It is “ an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, *reserved in heaven*” for us. (1 Peter i. 4.)

It is ever Satan’s effort to drown the truth of God in a sea of error, by which means some of the children of God are frightened away from the study of those particular truths ; while others, alas ! imbibe those fearful errors to the damage, not only of their own souls, but also of all whom they may influence by their teaching.

Hence, in the present day, the great importance of taking heed what we hear and read ; for many are now lecturing, preaching, and writing about such truths as the coming of the Lord, who are in reality saturated with every form of the nineteenth-century infidelity. Some denying the

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divinity of Christ, and others His humanity; some denying the atonement, others the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures; while multitudes are giving up the deeply solemn truths of the immortality of the soul, and the eternity of punishment.

In such a day, amidst such perils, and threatened by the withering storms of scepticism and infidelity, we most earnestly commend our readers to God, and to the word of His grace. May we search the Scriptures more diligently, prize them more highly, and hold them more tenaciously, "until He come!"

"The night is now far spent,
The day is drawing nigh :
Soon will the morning break
In radiance through the sky.
Oh, let the thought our spirits cheer,
The Lord Himself will soon appear !

"Though men our hope deride,
Nor will the truth believe ;
We in His word confide,
And it will ne'er deceive.
Soon all that grieves shall pass away,
And saints shall see a glorious day.

"For us the Lord intends
A bright abode on high ;
The place where sorrow ends,
And nought is known but joy.
With such a hope let us rejoice,
We soon shall hear the Saviour's voice."

A. H. B.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

HARVEY.—An abiding obligation rests on every Christian “to keep himself unspotted from the world.” To it he once belonged, and of it formed an integral part; but now he belongs to heaven, and is called to walk as a heavenly man upon earth. To his Saviour the world gave nothing but a cross; and it is in that very cross—the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ—the Christian rejoices; for by it the world is crucified to him, and he to the world. (Gal. vi. 14.) How then shall he go on with it?

If a Christian suffers himself to be enrolled as a member of a political association, he thereby denies in the most practical way his severance from the world, his heavenly calling and citizenship; and, in so far as that act is concerned, he is an enemy to *the cross* of Christ—not the cross as a means of salvation, but as the mighty instrument by which the world is crucified to him, and he to it. Such an act is not that of an Abraham, but of a Lot, who pitched first his tent toward Sodom, then dwelt there, and afterward sat in its gate, formed family ties with the men of that place, ruined his testimony so that he seemed to his sons-in-law as one that mocked, and finally escaped from its destruction only by the interposition of angels by the sovereign grace of God.

As to other societies, of which you speak, we would counsel you to act in the fear of God, and according to your faith in Him. “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” (Rom. xiv. 22.) A principle, too, that reaches far may be found in verse 14 of the same chapter: “To him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, *to him* it is unclean.” May you have grace to follow the Lord’s guidance with singleness of eye and purpose of heart. Let Him be first, and the doing of His will your meat and drink. “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree 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” (Jeremiah xvii. 7, 8.)

FILTHY RAGS, THE BEST ROBE, AND FINE LINEN.

GOD repeatedly instructs His people in His word by means of figures. Each has a definite meaning. We would seek to gather a few thoughts for the help of our readers from three kinds of clothing employed in Scripture to set forth some all-important truths; viz., filthy rags, the best robe, and fine linen.

Filthy rags represent our own righteousness.

The best robe, Christ, the righteousness of God.

Fine linen, the righteousness of saints.

In his natural state man has no covering in the sight of God. He belongs to a fallen race. Our first parents were clothed with the mantle of spotless innocence, not knowing good and evil; but their disobedience to God soon wrought a most solemn change. Sin entered, and they knew that they were naked; and the whole of their posterity in their natural state have been morally naked before God ever since. They sewed fig-leaves together for clothing, yet the moment the voice of the Lord God was heard they hid themselves behind the trees; thereby manifesting that their own efforts to meet their condition were utterly unavailing. But the Lord

III.

God clothed them with coats of skin. From that time to this men have followed their example. Thousands finding out their fallen condition as naked sinners in God's sight have sought a remedy in a garment of their own weaving, instead of perceiving that nothing but one provided by God Himself could possibly avail. Hence the vast amount of machinery set going to improve man. It is evident that there is something grievously wrong with him, however slow poor blinded sinners are to acknowledge it. Conscience accuses. The daily newspaper is a daily witness to the miseries of men. The oft-repeated record of wars, tumults, murders, robberies, and other grievous sins, tells its own tale. Man is a sinner departed from God, morally naked, guilty, ruined, hell-deserving, lost!

But instead of taking his place in true repentance before God, and receiving the robe of His providing, he vainly seeks to clothe himself. Fig-leaf apron manufactories abound; they increase and multiply on all hands. Multitudes are busily engaged weaving garments of the fig-leaves of morality, reformation, human religion, law-keeping, &c.; but, like Adam and Eve of old, only to shrink from the light of the presence of God the moment His word is brought to bear upon them. Beloved reader, all such garments are utterly worthless. How long will ye treat as a thing of nought the plain teaching of the

scriptures of truth? Have you never read the confession of Israel in Isaiah lxiv. 6, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are *as filthy rags*"?

A Christian was conversing upon the subject of salvation with a young man whom the world would call "good living." He was honest, upright, moral, respectable, religious, and apparently quite satisfied that he was doing everything that was necessary. He sought to show him that his own goodness was worth nothing.

"What," said he, "do you mean to say that doing all I can, and following my religious duties are all to no purpose?"

"What would you do if I were to bring a great heap of filthy rags into your shop?" was the reply.

"Kick them out," he said, very decidedly.

"And yet, though you would not have filthy rags in your shop, you think that you will be able to stand before God in your own righteousness, which His word declares to be as filthy rags."

His countenance fell; he had never thought of it like that before.

Dear reader, what are you seeking to stand in? Have you nothing better than filthy rags? Is yours but a fig-leaf garment? If so, cast it away this moment. Away with the last filthy rag. Take your place in self-judgment before God as a poor, naked sinner, guilty, ruined, lost, and He

will clothe you in a manner worthy of Himself, and suited to your need.

Fig-leaf aprons were of no avail, but the Lord God clothed them with the skins of beasts. A lesson of immense import comes out here. To be clothed with the skin of a beast indicates that death must first take place. Hence we find that before a sinner could be clothed in a manner suited to God, Christ, His Son, must die. To visit this world without dying would not have availed the sinner one whit as to his salvation, for he is away from God, and nothing but death could put away his sin. Hence the Son of the Blessed came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Heb. ix. 26.) "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) And having glorified God in His finished work, His precious blood being shed for the remission of sins, God raised Him up and gave Him glory. And now the righteousness of God is revealed. (Rom. i. 17.) Here is clothing which will fit the vilest for the eye and presence of God—His own righteousness. Not the righteousness of Christ as a mantle to cover the sinner's unrighteousness, but the sinner's sins for ever put away by the death and bloodshedding of that blessed Holy One, and the sinner justified by faith in Him whom God has raised from the dead, and made the righteousness of God in Him. (Rom. v. 1; 2 Cor. v. 21.) "But now," we read, "the right-

eousness of God *without the law* is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." (Rom. iii. 21, 22.) And again, "To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 26.) And again, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) Here we have God's best robe. Are you clad therewith? Is it *on you*, beloved reader? Tens of thousands, "ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of (the) law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. x. 3, 4.) Human righteousness will not avail; it is too late to stand before God on the ground of the righteousness of the law, even if you could. Nothing but divine righteousness will do—the righteousness of God, the best robe, Christ.

When the prodigal came back from the far off country, he took his right place, and the father lavished upon him all that love could bestow. The kisses of reconciliation, the best robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf, music, dancing, and merriment, were the accompaniments of his

reception. Righteousness he had none, but his return was enough, even before he had confessed his sins, to bring the father's loving arms around his neck. And all unworthy as he was, and richly meriting the due reward of his evil deeds, grace clothed him in the best robe, in a manner suited to a father's eye and heart. The prodigal said, "I have sinned." But the father said to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and *put it on him.*"

This is a striking illustration of Rom. iii. "All have sinned," is the Spirit's testimony concerning men; but "the righteousness of God" is "unto all and *upon all* them that believe." When man had done his worst against God, God did His best towards man. Grace is God's best for man. The moment the sinner confesses the truth of His word, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," God's best meets him, "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." The moment he confesses his sin, and lays no claim to righteousness, but believes in Jesus, the righteousness of God is upon him. The poor, naked, Christless sinner is clad with heaven's best robe. He is made the righteousness of God in Christ. The best robe had not to be made; it was already prepared, and the occasion brought it out. The father had it ready, and the moment his prodigal son was a fit subject for it, clothed him in it. So

now, the best robe is ready for any and every poor sinner who takes his true place. Redemption's work was accomplished nearly nineteen centuries ago, and Christ is in glory, the righteousness of God.

Dear reader, if you still lack a robe of righteousness suited to His glorious presence, cease from your own vain efforts to clothe yourself in filthy rags, confess your sin, and you too shall be clothed with Christ.

To bring a single act of yours as part of the ground of your righteousness before God, whether before or after you believe in Jesus, is to put a patch upon that best robe. God will have none of it.

“Cast your deadly doings down—
Down at Jesu's feet ;
Stand in Him, in Him alone,
Gloriously complete.”

Someone, however, may say, “But must I not do good works, even though I am clothed with the best robe?” “Most assuredly,” we reply. But not as part of the ground of your justification before God, or to secure its maintenance afterwards. The prodigal had shoes to walk in as well as the best robe. To mix the two is to mar both. This is what so many are doing. If they fail in their walk, they question whether they are still clad with the best robe. What is this but practically going back to self-righteousness after

all? No; once in Christ, IN CHRIST FOR EVER. The walk should correspond. If we fail, there is provision in the advocacy of Christ and the confession of sins, as has been often shown in these pages. There is no license to sin in the grace of God. But the fact that we are *in Christ*, clad with the best robe, is not altered. Thank God, if once in Him, we are in Him for ever. "Ye are complete in Him," says the apostle (Col. ii. 10); and later on we hear of Epaphras praying that we may stand "perfect and complete in all the will of God." (Col. iv. 12.)

This is what is called in Scripture "*fine linen*," practical righteousness flowing out in the believer's walk and ways. At the marriage of the Lamb, it is granted to the Bride, the Lamb's wife, the church of God, to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; and it adds, "for the fine linen is the righteousness" (or righteousnesses) "of saints." Not the righteousness of God, but *of the saints*. Practical righteousness flowing from the knowledge of the former. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous." (1 John iii. 7.) Christians, so to speak, are now weaving the bridal robe. All practical righteousness, the fruit of the power of the Holy Spirit, in the walk of God's saints on earth, are, as it were, the threads. How watchful and careful this should make us.

People are afraid of grace; they think it leads to sin. Far be the thought. "Shall we continue

in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid," says the apostle, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. vi. 1, 2.) Grace known and enjoyed in the soul has the very opposite effect. It teaches godliness. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (or to all men hath appeared), "*teaching us* that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Titus ii. 11, 12.) The deeper our sense of grace, the deeper will be our love of righteousness, and our hatred of unrighteousness. We are saved unto holiness; saved to walk as Christ walked. (1 John ii. 6.) We have not to do good works to be saved, or to keep saved, but because we are saved. We have not to be righteous to get righteousness, or to keep righteousness, but because we are already accounted righteous before God. In truth the Scriptures call upon us to cease from seeking to establish our own righteousness, and owning our sinfulness, to submit to God's righteousness, and then walk in practical righteousness. Cast away therefore your *filthy rags*, confess your nakedness, accept *the best robe* to clothe you before God, and walk in *fine linen* before men.

"Clad in this robe how bright I shine,
 Angels possess not such a dress;
 Angels have not a robe like mine,
 Jesus the Lord's my righteousness."

E. H. C.

HATH.

“IF you had come all the way from England to Tasmania for no other purpose than to give me to see the beauty of *the little words of Scripture*, your visit, so far as I am concerned, would not have been in vain. How often had I read it! but never before had I noticed the magnificence of that little word HATH.”

So said one who for years had been a believer, but had never taken to himself the rich stores that fill to overflowing the treasury of grace; and yet all those years those stores were his, though unappropriated, and, therefore, not enjoyed.

And are not thousands in the same condition? *Doubting believers*. “Yes, that just describes me,” the reader may say. “I am not a careless unbeliever, but a careworn believer. I have no assurance, and hence no enjoyment, of salvation.”

For such, then, these few pages are written; and to all such we would say, Open your Bible, and see what God HATH done for you. We cannot do more than briefly refer to a few of those verses where that word occurs; and having set our readers on the track, we would earnestly hope that they will pursue it for themselves.

1. And first, then, “God HATH given to us eternal life.” (1 John v. 11.) What a gift! Be

it distinctly understood that it is of *believers* that the Spirit of God speaks these words, and that to them, and them alone, these things are written in order that they might *know* that they have eternal life. (v. 13.) In our natural state we are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. ii. 1-5); no life in us at all. "He that hath the Son HATH life; and he that hath not the Son of God HATH NOT life." Henceforth, then, let there be no uncertainty on this most vital point. An unbeliever is dead in his sins, and all his works and prayers, the very best of them, are *dead works* (Heb. ix. 14), possessing no value, merit, or efficacy whatever. But every believer is privileged to know that "God HATH given to us eternal life." However feebly you may have touched the hem of the Saviour's garment, however weak your faith may be, if you have only touched *Him*, and if it is in *Him* you believe, eternal life is yours, for it is impossible for God to lie.

2. But, further, we may give "thanks unto the Father, which HATH made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) Doubting believer, read the first chapter of Colossians carefully through, and particularly note each time the word HATH occurs. On your death-bed, perhaps, you hope to be fit for those bright eternal courts of light. Listen, He "HATH made us meet" (or fit). Then your fettered spirit may be free; your heart,

hitherto overwhelmed with doubt and fear, may overflow with thanksgiving and praise—"Giving thanks unto the Father." Do not question and mistrust, but confide in the Father's—yes, *your* Father's—changeless love.

3. You are no longer a child of wrath, and a captive of Satan. The power of darkness for you has been broken for ever; you are free. Then "*give thanks*;" for He "HATH delivered us." But are you only out of prison to walk the world in prison dress, and always to be groaning out, "Have mercy upon me, miserable sinner?" No, no; "GIVE THANKS, *give thanks*;" for

4. He "HATH translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (the Son of His love), and—

5. "He HATH made us accepted in the Beloved." (Eph. i. 6.) You are brought into a position of divine and eternal favour, and, wonder of wonders, you are there *now*! Then again we say, nay, God says, "GIVE THANKS" Who can give thanks?

6. "You, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now HATH He reconciled." (Col. i. 21.) God never having been at enmity against man, never needed to be reconciled to him; and hence we never read in Scripture of God being "our reconciled Father." To think of God needing to be reconciled to us is to have a wrong idea of God altogether. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten

Son ;” and Jesus came not to procure the love of God for us, but to prove it. We were at enmity against God ; we despised His love, and hated His Son ; but now we, who once were enemies, are reconciled by the death of His Son. (Rom. v. 10.) Amazing fact ! The act that proved man’s bitterest hatred against God is made the means of overcoming his enmity, and bringing him repentant and reconciled to the very God he hated.

7. “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ HATH made us free.” (Gal. v. 1.) *Free* from the guilt of our sins ; *free* from the dominion of sin ; *free* from the power of Satan ; *free* from the bondage of the law ; *free* from the fear of death and judgment. Yes, “Christ HATH made us free.”

These are but a very few of God’s HATHS. Pursue the subject for yourself, dear reader, and may your heart overflow with thanksgiving as you see how you have already, even now, passed from death to life ; from darkness to light ; from distance to nearness ; from enmity to favour ; from bondage to liberty.

Truly we may say that “God HATH blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” (Eph. i. 3.)

“All that we are as saints on earth,
All that we hope to be,
When Jesus comes and glory dawns,
We owe it all to Thee.”

A. H. B.

SALVATION.

SALVATION is brought before us in various ways in Scripture. We will look for a little at two of these.

1. Salvation as a present thing, to be known and enjoyed now.

2. Salvation as a future thing, including the resurrection of the body.

First, salvation supposes that the person to whom it comes is *lost*. For instance, a man clinging to the rigging of a ship driven upon a quicksand in a storm, and fast breaking up amidst the waves, would appreciate salvation when he had been landed safe on shore from a lifeboat. He would say, "Well, I should have been lost but for that lifeboat. I could not possibly have done anything for myself; and had not a means of safety been brought from shore, I should surely have perished in the surf."

Now Scripture is very plain in its testimony that man is *lost*. If he is not lost, if there is something good in him to work upon, he would require *improvement*, so as to make him better, and not salvation. "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." (Matt. xviii. 11.) "When we were yet without strength, in due

time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. v. 6.) We do not mean that a person is lost beyond all recovery while here; but away from God he is lost, and dead in sins.

Now, it is just when we are led to realize this, to take our *true* place in the presence of God, as Job did when he exclaimed, "I am vile;" or the jailor at Philippi, when he cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" that God can, in His grace, reveal the Saviour.

If, then, you have been brought to own your true condition as God sees it, aroused from the indifference in which so many are sunk, and bowed in his presence in a sense of your guilt, the question may be asked, Is there salvation for such as you? and whence and how are you to obtain it?

Let us look for a moment at the condition of the Israelites when they were escaping from the place of judgment—Egypt. Hemmed in, the sea in front and their enemies behind, what was to be done? For themselves they could do nothing; they were in despair. Moses says, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you to-day." (Exod. xiv. 13.) As it has often been said, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." They had to stand still and see the salvation which the Lord was about to show them. It must be all His work from beginning to end. We find the same principle

coming out in the prophets. "And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him." (Isa. lix. 16.) And again, "I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me." (Isa. lxiii. 5.) As God's eye surveyed this world of sinners for four thousand years, there was not one amongst its millions who could take up this great question of sin. *All* were lying under the common guilt; and if help was to come, it must be from outside.

And now, when all had been fully proved to be lost and ruined—man had sinned against God when he had no law, and broken the law when he got it—God entered the scene in the person of His own Son, Jesus, Jehovah the Saviour. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.) Think of Him coming from the glory in which He dwelt—coming as the sent One of the Father (1 John iv. 14), to suffer here, the just One for us the unjust, that He might bring us to God. As the Good Shepherd, He had come to lay down His life for the sheep, to give Himself a ransom for many. To be the Saviour of others He Himself must die; for man is a sinner, and death is the wages of sin. Without it the terrible distance between the sinner and God could not be bridged over, and the great

question settled according to the requirements of God's holiness and man's need.

Now, having passed through death, and being risen again from the dead, He is the sole and only way of salvation. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.) As in the days of Noah, when God brought an overwhelming judgment on the earth, there was but one place of safety—those who were in the ark were carried over those very waters in which all others perished. So God has been pleased to treasure up salvation, life, peace, every blessing, in a risen Christ alone.

This salvation is world-wide in its character. "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and *whosoever* among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent." (Acts xiii. 26.) And again, "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it." (Acts xxviii. 28.) There is now no limit to God's free salvation; it is proclaimed to every creature throughout the world.

It is a present salvation. "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, *hath* quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye *are* saved," &c.) (Eph. ii. 5.) We are saved *now* by grace (that is, God's free undeserved favour) through faith; not of works, lest any man should boast.

But there is also a sense in which salvation is spoken of as still future, to which we will briefly refer.

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.” (Heb. ix. 28.) This is not the salvation of the soul, which is always a present thing; but refers to the time when the Lord Jesus shall come again. When He came the first time He had to take up the question of sin, which lay between man and God; but having gone into and settled this question once and for ever at the cross, when He appears it will be apart from sin altogether—“unto salvation.” Salvation here looks on to the full, final result, when the body will be raised from the dead, or changed by His power, and made like unto His own body of glory. “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” (Rom. xiii. 11.) The believer can look on to this day of glory, when he shall enjoy the blessings of this full and complete salvation in his body of glory.

There is a passage which often perplexes people, at which we will look. “Wherefore . . . not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” (Phil. ii. 12, 13.)

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This is not working *for* salvation, it is working *out* a salvation.

The apostle is writing to the "saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi." He had been with them, had guarded and preserved them by his care and presence, and now, *being absent*, they are to work out their own salvation, or deliverance from the evils around, with fear and trembling; that is, without self-confidence, trusting God for strength every step of the way.

Have you got salvation? It is a salvation purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ at an immeasurable cost, but free to you; to be had by simply believing on Him with the heart, and confessing Him with the mouth.

It is a present and an eternal salvation, a salvation declared by a risen Saviour, and borne witness to by the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven by a glorified Saviour; a salvation worthy of the One who accomplished it, and of God who gave Him.

Who could estimate all the believer is saved *from*, and all he is saved *to*?

Will you be one of those who will have to join in the lamentation, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"? (Jer. viii. 20.) The harvest is the time of ingathering. At the harvest time the prudent husbandman puts forth all his energy, and employs every moment. He is *in earnest*; he knows if his grain is not

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gathered in before the frosts and rains of winter, it will perish. The winter of judgment is coming, how many will have to lament, through the gloom of a lost eternity, that they are "not saved"!

If you turn now to the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe on Him, you will be able to rejoice in this glorious salvation which He has accomplished, and go forth through this world seeking to express, according to your measure, your deep and heartfelt gratitude to the One who did it all.

"Oh, what a Saviour is Jesus the Lord!
Well might His name by His saints be adored!
He has redeemed them from hell by His blood,
Saved them for ever, and brought them to God."

F. G. B.

BOLDNESS, PATIENCE, AND REPROACH.

THERE are three words in the epistle to the Hebrews to which I wish to draw your attention—**boldness**, in chapter x. 19; **patience**, in chapter xii. 1; and **reproach**, in chapter xiii. 13.

It is a blessed thing to have our sins forgiven, and many through grace know that blessedness; but how few have boldness in the presence of God. Look at Hebrews x. 19: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Only purged worshippers can enter there. How little is known of this, and sinners in their sins, alas! are called worshippers.

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Have you ever felt yourself to be a sinner before God? Then what a comfort it is to read, in chapter i. 3: *When* He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Have you ever considered that work on the cross—Christ punished instead of you? Do you know that God laid all your sins on Him there, and that He has put them away for ever?

In chapter ix. 13, 14 we read of a purged conscience. Do you know what that is? It is more than sins purged. God owed a debt to the Man who had died to glorify Him about sin; and how did He discharge it? By putting Him in the glory. It gives me a purged conscience when I know that Christ has His present place in heaven as man, because of the way He has done the work which has put away my sins.

In chapter ix. 23 we read that the heavenly things must be purified with better sacrifices than the blood of bulls and goats, and in Colossians i. 20 we find all things will be reconciled to Himself; that is, things in earth and things in heaven. There is nothing about things under the earth. Infernal things will bow at the name of Jesus (Phil. ii. 10), but will never be reconciled; their damnation is eternal. Believers are reconciled now; but “things” are not yet; when they are, there will be no gaols or workhouses—sin will be completely put away.

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The opening of chapter x. tells us that worshippers under the law were *never* purged. In those days there was no such thing as a worshipper "*once* purged;" but those washed in the blood of Christ are perfected or purged for ever. It is done *once*, never to be repeated; consequently in Hebrews x. our Priest is sitting, not standing, and thus we have *boldness* to enter *through the veil*; that is to say, His flesh. The moment the Lord Jesus Christ died God rent the veil; but He left it there. Though it was rent it was not taken away, thus showing that the only possible way of access to God is through His death. The question is sometimes asked, "Though my sins are put away now, what am I to do if I sin again?" But it is a different thing to have to do with a father from having to do with a judge; and if I am once forgiven, God does not deal with me as a judge, but as a Father. He will not bring me into judgment for my sins, though He will deal with me about them as an erring child.

How seldom we hear God addressed as "Abba, Father." How often He is addressed as "Almighty God." This was quite right in Abraham's time (Exodus vi. 2, 3); but it is not right now. Believers should say, "Abba, Father." We never read of the Lord Jesus addressing Him as Almighty God. He always said "Father" or "Abba, Father," save when forsaken on the cross.

Now I wish to speak to you of patience. We

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have need of patience, that, after we have done the will of God, we may receive the promise. What promise? To be made perfect, to bear His image. Meantime we have to run the race, and we have need of patience (or endurance), for everything is against us here.

This cloud of witnesses in chapter xi. serves to show us what patience is. Turning back to Genesis v. we find that Enoch lived three hundred and sixty-five years, and begat sons and daughters. He walked with God, he endured the contradiction of sinners in a very evil day. In Job xxii. 15-17 you will find an account of the wickedness amongst which Enoch's life was passed, and that independence of God marked his neighbours. Perhaps you say he held his tongue, and took things quietly. Not at all, for we find in Jude 14 that Enoch prophesied, saying, "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment." We talk of being weary, but think of endurance like this. Next look at Noah. What a fool he must have seemed, preaching righteousness and building the ark. Then Moses. His faith and patience made him refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Again, in chapter xii., we are exhorted to consider our Lord Himself, who not only endured the contradiction of sinners, but who also walked in a path of perfect obedience and dependence. Look at Psalm xl.: "I waited

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patiently for the Lord ; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry." What a lesson for us ! Think of Him waiting patiently on Jehovah, and being answered in resurrection. Let us consider Him. We have much to try our faith and patience, but let us consider Him. "The just shall live by faith." These are a distinct class, the very opposite of those who draw back to perdition. Bear in mind those two words—patience and endurance—and keep waiting on God.

In chapter xiii. 10 we read, "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." This is a most important verse. It is no longer the Jews who have an altar, but it is we Christians. Our altar is where Christ was crucified—outside the camp* (the religious world). Then the apostle adds, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." If we go forth to the rejected Christ, we shall have to bear reproach from the world ; and, worst of all, from the religious world. It is hard to be separated from it, for we often see God working there. I am sure there are many true believers in it ; but the system is the camp, and Christ and our altar are outside of it. Notice that we first have an altar, then in verse 15 we have worship, and in verse 16 service. I am to do all the good I can, but first of all I am to go forth to Him.

Are you bearing His reproach ?

M.

* The Jewish altar was in the centre of the camp.

LETTER TO A DYING FRIEND.

DEAR ——

It is many years ago since you and I met. Perhaps you have forgotten all about it; but I remember it as if it were but yesterday.

And now I hear, to my great sorrow, that we may never meet on earth again, for they tell me you are very ill; and this impels me to write you a few simple lines, which either A—— or J—— will read to you, if too weak to read them for yourself.

In your present state—life passing away, and eternity so near—you must feel a great want. It may not be easy for you to describe what that want is, but it can be told in one word—JESUS.

Yes, you need Him. He can give you rest—perfect rest—and fill your heart with joy and peace.

Do you ask how? Let me answer in the very words of Scripture—"The God of hope fill you with all *joy and peace in believing.*" (Rom. xv. 3.)

I would earnestly beg you to let your mind dwell for a moment on those last five words—"JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING." Not joy and peace in working, for what could you do? Not in repenting, for how should you know when you had repented enough? Not in feeling, for what so changeful and uncertain? No, nor even in praying, but *in believing.*

Jesus has made peace by the blood of His cross. He has died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. All that was needed for God to freely and justly forgive us, the cross of Jesus supplies.

There is nothing for the poor sinner to do, all was done long, long ago. And the love of God is seen in providing such a Saviour, and such a ransom even for those who in themselves are wicked and lost.

Such is the message God sends to you. How sweetly His love shines in sending such glad tidings to sinners! Now it is *in believing* them that the heart is filled with joy and peace. Can you, will you, believe?

This way of joy and peace is very simple. Were it less so, it would not meet our case. If it is true that we are "*without strength*," then everything needful must be done by another. Jesus has done it all, and God has exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour, and has sent the gospel to us, that we might hear and believe.

See then in Jesus a Saviour for you. No goodness at your hands does He require. The fact of your being a sinner is your warrant for coming to Him. Remember the blood is ever before God, and it is that, and that alone, which makes an atonement.

May joy and peace in believing be yours. As you listen to these words, let your heart receive them. Jesus, the helpless sinner's Friend, asks you to confide in Him. Believe in His love. Believe that He is a Saviour for you. Believe in the preciousness of His blood, which cleanseth from all sin, and in believing you shall have joy and peace.

Farewell, dear ——. When we meet again, may it be in the Father's house on high, where we shall rest in His love, and for ever joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ever affectionately yours,

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. L. C. Luke vi. 40.—The perfected disciple in this passage is one who has been thoroughly instructed by his Master or Teacher. The word “perfect” carries that sense. Would he then follow the teaching he had received, and by which he had been formed? In doing so he would find that the disciple was not above his Master, but that the Master’s portion would be likewise his. If they called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of His household? In comparing Matthew x. 25 with John xv. 21, it will be seen that the Lord warns His disciples that His path of rejection and suffering would be theirs also. This should be the lot of those who learnt in the Master’s school, if such were the will of God. (See 1 Peter iv. 13.)

“Perfected,” as applied to the Lord in Luke xiii. 32, evidently refers to the accomplishment of His work on earth, and the doing of the will of God entirely. In Hebrews ii. 10 the force of “perfect” is that of one who went through everything needed for instalment in the office he was to fill. So the Captain of our salvation was made perfect. Personally He was always so, but as man about to take a certain position, He, by the grace of God to us, underwent all that that position required, at how great a cost to Himself! He was made perfect *through sufferings*.

A. W. The *working* of the Holy Spirit and our being *sealed* with Him are not the same. God wrought in us by His Spirit when we were far from Him, sunk in guilt and misery. Conviction of sin, the renouncing

of all confidence in our own righteousness, the coming to Christ as a poor sinner for whom His precious blood had been shed, the believing in Him who justifies the ungodly—all this was the fruit of God's Spirit working in our conscience and heart; and when we believed *the gospel of our salvation*, we were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise according to Ephesians i. 13. He wrought in us when unbelievers, we are sealed as believers. The former has been likened to a man building a house, the latter to his taking up his abode there, and this illustrates the difference pretty clearly. But when the believer is sealed the Holy Spirit does not cease to work in him, as the Scriptures abundantly testify. Paul's second prayer for the Ephesian saints, in chap. iii. 14–21, is an example in point.

As to John xx. 21, 22, we take it that the risen Lord formally sends out His disciples as His ambassadors, even as He Himself had been sent. His breathing on them reminds us of Genesis ii. 7, and may signify the communication to them of that abundance of life of which we read in John x. 10. For the mission with which they were entrusted the disciples needed the power of the Holy Ghost, even as it is written of the Lord in connexion with His service, that He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power. Therefore He says, "Receive *ye* the Holy Ghost." But the words of the Lord are not intended to imply that then and there they received the Holy Ghost, for in Acts i. 4, 8 He commands them to remain in Jerusalem till the Holy Ghost should come. This they did, and in Acts ii. we find the historical account of His coming, and of their receiving power to be witnesses unto Him both in Jerusalem and elsewhere.

LESSONS FROM BETHANY.

LUKE x. ; JOHN xi. xii.

It is important for us to study the Lord's ways with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. With each His mode of dealing differed according to their special need. In Luke we for the first time see Him in company with Martha and Mary; then, passing on to John xi., we find sickness in their house. Lazarus, the only brother they had, was sick, and they sent to tell Jesus. He loved them all, and yet He did not hurry to their help, but abode two days where He was.

God does not always answer our prayers forthwith. He has often more to give us when He keeps us waiting, than if He granted them at the time of asking; and we may be sure Martha and Mary were glad afterwards that Jesus did not come at once, for they thereby learnt Him in a way they could never have done otherwise. And how glad we may be too that He did not go until after Lazarus died; for had it not been so, we should never have had that wonderful scene at Bethany, which has been the stay and comfort of many a bereaved heart ever since.

But now look at these three people, and let us concern ourselves first with Lazarus. When

III.

Jesus came He found him a dead man ; and we may see in him an apt illustration of the way in which the voice of the Son of God quickens dead souls.

We read of three persons whom the Lord Jesus raised from the dead when He was in this world. One was the little daughter of Jairus—she was only just dead ; another was the widow's son, who was being taken to the grave as Jesus was entering the city of Nain ; and the third was Lazarus, who had been dead four days. He had been buried, and corruption had had its way with him ; but the raising of all three was equally the work of divine power. It was not more wonderful to raise Lazarus than to raise the little girl from whose body the warmth of life had not yet fled. There is a deep lesson for us in this. If you look around, you behold some walking in gross and open sin ; and it is easy to see where they are before God—"dead in trespasses and sins." Then others are not quite so bad ; and some, you say, are almost like Christians. Yes, people may look outwardly very like Christians, and yet have no life towards God. They resemble Jairus' daughter, yet she was as really dead as Lazarus, and all need the work of divine power in their souls equally.

But let us go on to see God's way of dealing with dead souls. In John v. 25 we read, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall

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hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Who are meant by the dead in this verse? Why, dead sinners. In verse 28 we have the resurrection of the body; but here, in verse 25, it is the spiritually dead. Look at the verse before (v. 24), and you will see this. Now, how are any brought to life? By hearing the voice of the Son of God. Apart from it there is no possibility of getting life. Have you heard His voice? Have you never heard Him speak to you at a meeting? or perhaps in the night? or in a dream? or in the death of a friend? or in reading your Bible?

Over and over again He has spoken to you, but have you ever taken your place as a repentant, guilty sinner? Mark, it is those that *hear* who live, not those who put it off. We get an illustration of this in Lazarus. Of course he was really a dead man, so it is only an illustration. And the first thing, let me observe, that Jesus tells them to do is to take away the stone. Martha does not want to disclose all that the stone conceals, and this is just the difficulty—people don't like to have the worst seen; they know it is a horrible sight, and they cover it up, and try to show only the best side. It is better to be honest; and to take away the stone, and let it all be open before Him; it is the sure way to blessing. Well, Jesus told them to take the stone away; so at last they did, and there was

death in all its hideous reality. Whose voice could break that silence, or reach the ears of the dead Lazarus? Not yours or mine. He would not have heard any cry we could have given; but Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." The voice of the Son of God reached the ears of the dead man. Oh, the wonderful quickening effect of that voice! To those who hear it *now* it is life; but by-and-by it will be heard, not in grace, but in judgment. One may ask, What does a man hear Him say? Well, some hear Him speak to their souls in one verse, some in another. Many have got peace and blessing through those lovely verses in Acts xiii., the 38th and 39th; many from John iii. 16, and from hundreds of other verses, often the most unlikely; for God can use any part of His word to speak life to the soul.

It is a wonderful thing when the word of God comes home to the heart with power. The darkness flies away, and light springs up. Darkness is ignorance of God; there is no light apart from the knowledge of Him.

There are many souls in the condition in which we find Lazarus when he came out of the grave; they have life, but not liberty. It is a test to such to ask what they think of Christ. They will perhaps say, "I know He died for me, and bore my sins; still, I could not say that I am free before God." Just like what we read in verse 44—

Lazarus came forth ; but he was bound with the grave-clothes. He had got life, but he needed liberty. So Jesus did not say to those who stood by, "Give him life." He had it, and only needed to be set free.

Lazarus did not come gradually back to life ; he did not come out of the grave inch by inch—an inch to-day, and another the next. No ; he had got life, and he came clear out. That takes place when a man is converted. You can never be made more fit for heaven ; for it is written, "Giving thanks unto the Father, who *hath made us meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) It is another thing to be made more what our Lord would have us be here on earth. This is what every Christian needs ; and for these Colossians Paul prayed that they might "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom," etc. That is to say, to have their eyes opened ; then "that they might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing ;" that is, their feet loosed ; and that they might be "fruitful in every good work ;" that is, free to use their hands in God's service. You see, the first thing the soul needs is to hear the voice of the Son of God, and get life. Then he needs light to see ; his feet free to walk, and his hands to work.

This is how God deals with dead sinners. If any ask, How do I know that my sins can never

come against me again? the answer is, Because Christ is in glory, and God is perfectly satisfied with all He has done.

Let us consider the Lord's dealings with Martha and Mary. The first place we hear of them is at the end of Luke x. Observe the difference between the two. When the Lord came in, Mary's thought was what she could get from Him; Martha's, what she could do for Him. He had not come to be served, but to serve—to give. Mary took her place as a receiver, and gave Him the more blessed place of a giver. Martha did not like it, and asked Him to reprove her sister. Then He takes Mary's part, and tells Martha of the one thing needful. Needful for what? Why, for true and acceptable service to Him.

Mary saw in Him a divine Teacher, Martha only saw a tired man, always serving others, and needing to be served Himself, and Jesus gently rebuked her; yet the next time we hear of her, in chap. xi., her name is put first, and we read that He loved her: "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." But trial was coming to the two sisters. Lazarus was taken ill, and the days rolled by till he died, and was buried. Then Jesus came, and Martha met Him with the words, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know," she adds, "that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." The Lord answered her with a revelation

of His divine glory: "*I am* the Resurrection and the Life."

What an unfolding for Martha, and how much more she got than even Moses at the burning bush, where the Lord only revealed Himself as, "*I am* that I am." Here He reveals Himself as, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." It is most beautiful to trace the "I ams" in John's gospel.

Martha seems to have felt that she couldn't get on well with Him, and went for Mary, as if feeling that she could understand Him better. Mary hastened to Him, and her friends thought she had gone to the grave to weep there; but she had a better place to go to. Don't weep over the grave; it is no good, you will get nothing back. But go to Him as Mary did, and, like her, you will get His sympathy. We read that "Jesus wept." Wasn't it worth all the sorrow and trial to have His tears? Then He went on with her to the grave, put forth His resurrection power, and gave her back what she had lost.

Look for a moment at chapter xii., where we have Jesus the third time in this household—"They made Him a supper."

Death and mourning had been in the house, but had all been put to flight; and what had the members of the family gained? Mary had gained this, that she knew His sympathy and His heart; Martha had learned His divine glory,

and she knew Him now as “the Resurrection and the Life.”

Lazarus sat at the table with Him a risen man at the other side of death, sitting there in happy communion. Martha was serving, but there was no jar now that she had learnt Christ, and Mary was once more at His feet. She had been there in her leisure, there in her sorrow, and now there in her joy; but more than this, she seems to have found out that He was going to die, and she produced the most valuable thing in her possession, most likely what represented her savings. This ointment was so costly. But it was as though she said, “He is going away, and all I have of value goes with Him into His grave.” And she poured out the best she had on Him.

Do we know anything of this character of devotion of heart which only values anything to spend it on Christ?

This scene in John xii. gives communion and worship thus—a once dead but now risen man sitting at the table with Christ, service done under the Lord’s eye, and the outpouring on Christ of the best we have; and remember, we can never pour out our ointment on Him without the house being filled with the odour of it.

“Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth.” (Cant. i. 3.)

M.

“THE WORD OF MY PATIENCE.”

THERE is nothing more frequently pressed upon God's children in the exhortations of His word than patience. But the patience looked for in a Christian, like all his other traits, is of an order entirely different from that found in the world. An unconverted man may have a good deal of patience, natural or acquired, but its character and source are entirely different from those of a Christian's patience; and for a simple reason—Christ is the Source, Power, Object, and Pattern of the latter, whereas the former is entirely independent of Him. In other words, Christian patience is the patience *of Christ*. And whether we view the pathway of Jesus through this world to the cross, or think of His present attitude in heaven, is not *patience*—the absolute renunciation of His rights and titles with regard to the world, the unresisting submission to rejection and suffering, and the passive waiting for the day of His kingdom-glory, when His foes shall have been made His footstool—is not this patience what characterizes His path below, and His attitude on high? “The world knew Him not: He came unto His own [Israel], and His own received Him not.” He was led “as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.” He

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"waited patiently for the Lord," giving His back to the smiters. And now that He is beyond the horrible pit and miry clay, now that He "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame," is set down at God's right hand, what is His attitude? *Patience still.* "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." No vengeance yet on the world that cast Him out. His royal titles still disowned, He waits patiently the coming day of glory. The eye of faith indeed sees Him now in the glory of His *Father's* throne; but for *His own* throne, His kingdom-glory, the establishment of His rights, and the display of His glory, *He waits*, still rejected by the world. Such is "the patience of Jesus Christ." (Rev. i. 9.) And it is His patience into which our hearts are directed. (2 Thess. iii. 5, margin.) We are not of the world, even as He is not of it. His heavenly portion and His prospects He shares with us; and if He is not establishing His earthly rights yet, are we to anticipate Him in seeking to do so? In various ways Christians do so. Some are seeking to set the world right, to bring it into a millennial state of blessing, forgetting that their own calling is heavenly, and that the question of Christ's rejection has yet to be met by the world in judgment, before His kingdom is established in power and glory. (See Psalm xxi., and the universal teaching of Scripture.) Others again, in selfish indifference to Christ, are seeking a portion

of their own in the world—politically, socially, religiously, &c. Their hearts, their home, their hopes are in the scene of their Lord's rejection, instead of being above it with Him in spirit, and beyond it in the power of the hope of His coming. Such was the state of the worldly Corinthians. “Ye have reigned as kings without us,” is the reproof they received from the one who was serving and following his rejected Master. He adds, “And I would to God ye did reign, that we might reign with you;” in other words, would that kingdom-days were come. But what disloyalty to Christ to anticipate them; to seek glory in the scene of His shame, wealth in the scene of His poverty, joy in the scene of His sorrow; to seek any portion whatever where He had none, and has none! And how often there is real love to the Saviour, without that loyalty to Him as Lord, without that response to His claims, which would lead one into real separation to Him from the world! The history of David affords a blessed type of the patience of Christ. The anointed one of God, his throne is in abeyance while Saul reigns. He is rejected, hated without a cause, hunted like a partridge on the mountains. Yet he neither seeks to enforce his claims before the time, nor to resist the violence of his foes. Patience in rejection characterizes him. Now there was one that loved David, one whose heart had been captivated by the victor over Goliath and saviour of Israel. It was Jonathan. He

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"loved him as his own soul." Yet when loyalty to David would have led him to share his path of suffering, Jonathan remains in Saul's court. As it is touchingly expressed in 1 Samuel xx., "David's place was empty." The king's javelin had driven him away. But Jonathan, where was he? Was his place empty? No. He continued to share Saul's royalty, and at last shared Saul's fate too at the hand of the Philistines.

Fellow-Christian, *Christ's place is empty* here; and shall yours be filled? "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

In 2 Samuel xv. and xvi. we find David again in rejection, and a usurper occupies the throne. Cursed and stoned by Shimei, David's patience endures every test, like His, "who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." There is one following David—Ittai, the Gittite. David would put Ittai's loyalty to the test, and says (v. 19), "Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king. . . . Seeing I go whither I may, return thou and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee. And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be." He refuses to fill any place

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where his lord had none. So in John xii. we read, “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be.” And it adds, “If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.” Jonathan’s “I shall be next unto thee” (1 Samuel xxiii. 17) was exchanged for the mount of Gilboa, and the wall of Bethshan; while Ittai (2 Samuel xviii.) leads in the day of victory the armies of his lord, whom he had followed in the day of rejection. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” It may not now be a question of suffering outward persecution; but there are other circumstances that test perhaps more severely how far our souls enter into the patience of Christ, and our spirits are imbued with it. How often there is the pressure of injustice, malice, misrepresentation, and the like! Well, are we to vindicate ourselves, claim our rights, or take revenge? How would such a course consist with His attitude? Is He vindicating His rights? or is He passively submitting to their being set aside, and held in abeyance till the day of glory? May His attitude form ours; and may our hearts be so directed into the love of God and the patience of Christ, that we may thus be found keeping “the word of His patience.” “Let your yieldingness be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand.”

“Oh, patient, spotless One,
Our hearts in meekness train,
To bear thy yoke, and learn of Thee,
That we may rest obtain.”

W. H. K.

EFFECTS AND RESULTS OF THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST.

OUR thoughts are often very contracted in relation to the cross of Christ, and the effects and results of His finished work. The word of God alone can communicate to us under the teaching of the Spirit of Truth His thoughts about it all. Let us endeavour to gather from its precious pages a little of what He has revealed.

First of all, we learn that there pre-eminently the glory of God shines out. We see the display of His glory in creation all around us, both in the heavens and on the earth. But the foul blot of sin is here, and that through the failure and disobedience of man, originally created for His own glory after His image and likeness. But though throughout the Old Testament Scriptures we have the records of man's ruin and wickedness, yet in the New we find a Man, Jesus, the Son of God, His perfect delight, who *could* go, and *did*, to the cross of Calvary, and glorify God in a way never known before, and infinitely more than if sin had never entered the world. Yes, the glory of God was maintained, vindicated, and secured in the death of His Son, and God has shown His estimate of the work of Christ in that He has raised Him from the dead and glorified Him. As the believer

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looks back upon his own and man's history, and trembles as he thinks how God has been dishonoured, when the eye of his faith rests upon the Man Christ Jesus, now at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, but once the spotless victim of Calvary's cross, his heart rejoices that *God is glorified in Him*. This was the first and highest object of the heart of the Son of the Blessed, whose delight was to do *His will*. And now, based upon this, for His own glory, and consistently with Himself, God is displaying His grace and righteousness, and is about to fulfil all His counsels in Christ before the world was, and to establish His promised kingdom, and eventually eternal blessing in heaven and in earth.

Now, the same death of Christ that brought glory to God destroyed (or annulled) *the whole power of His arch-enemy, Satan*. So complete was the victory, that Jesus, in anticipation, said, "Now is the judgment of this world: *now shall the prince of this world be cast out*." (John xii. 31.) Satan's greatest apparent victory was his greatest defeat. The seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head. (Gen. iii. 15.) It is true that the trail of the serpent is still visible on all hands. The whole world lieth in the wicked one. (1 John v. 19.) But the blow was given at the cross to him and his power by Jesus, the Son of God, which is about to lead to his utter discomfiture and overthrow, his imprisonment in the abyss,

and eternal judgment in the lake of fire. (Rev. xx. 3, 10.) Already the believer is delivered from his thralldom. Enslaved and led captive by him in the natural state, the death of Christ is the ground upon which God works by the Spirit in man, delivers him from that fearful bondage and deceit, and sets him free for His own glory and service.

Moreover, when Christ offered Himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God, *He suffered for sins*. Man, a sinner in the sight of God, needs the pardon of his sins. All his endeavours to secure this by his own laborious efforts and righteousness are utterly unavailing. Nothing could put them away but the death and bloodshedding of Christ, Who has done this once and for ever for everyone that believes on Him. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 3.) "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 24.) "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17.) The criminal question can never be raised again. Of all believers now it is said, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 7, 8.) Christ has suffered for them; the judgment of God fell upon Him. He sustained it, and put them away for ever. Hence God Himself, for His own glory, clears us of every imputation, and we are whiter

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than snow in His presence, cleansed by Christ's precious blood. (1 John i. 7.)

But there is also the question of *sin* itself, the corrupt root that produces the evil fruit, *sins*. John, the forerunner of Christ, points Him out, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the *sin* [not sins] of the world." (John i. 29.) Again, "Once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away *sin* by the sacrifice of Himself." (Heb. ix. 26.) And again, "God hath made Him to be *sin* for us who knew no sin," &c. (2 Cor. v. 21.) As to fact, sin is still all around us, and it is not until the end of all things that it will be got rid of as the result of Christ's work. It remains also in the believer until he leaves this world. But before God and to faith it is gone already. Its judgment fell upon Christ on the cross. God condemned *sin* in the flesh. (Rom. viii. 3.) Christ bore the judgment, died unto sin, and lives again. The Christian has *died with Him* in the sight and thoughts of God. So faith reckons that we are dead to sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. We are delivered from its dominion through death. We died with Christ, and are now alive again in Him, where sin has no claim. But *sin is still in us*. Hence the exhortation to reckon ourselves dead; for which there would be no need, if it were actually gone altogether. But it is all-important for the believer to lay hold of the blessed truth that the death of

Christ completely and for ever delivers him from sin's dominion now, and from its presence when we leave this world.

Closely connected with *sin* is *the law*—the *holy law* of God. The Jew only was put under it, and it proved him a transgressor. The Gentiles, however, are a law unto themselves. (Rom. ii. 14.) But the death of Christ delivers completely from the whole principle of law altogether. The apostle tells us that “the law is not made for a righteous man.” (1 Tim. i. 9.) It has dominion over a man as long as he liveth. (Rom. vii. 1.) It has to say to man in the flesh. It forbids him to do this, and commands him to do that; and he has neither the ability to abstain from the one, nor to perform the other. Hence he discovers its true character, that it is a ministration of death and condemnation. (2 Cor. iii. 7–9.) The curse attached to its non-fulfilment must fall upon him if he dares to stand before God on that ground. In the flesh dwelleth no good thing. How, then, can he keep the law? Impossible! The only way of deliverance is *through death*. Christ, made sin on the cross, bore the curse of the broken but holy law of God. “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” (Gal. iii. 13.) He bore it, and gave up His spirit. Raised from the dead, the believer having died with Him, as we have seen, is alive unto God in Him. He is in Christ now, where there is no condemnation. The law has nothing to say to him. He is beyond

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its reach. Its claim is for ever gone in the death of Christ.

Thousands of converted souls, occupied with themselves, and not apprehending in simple faith the completeness of the work of Christ, remain for weeks, months, or even years, in bondage, crying, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Faith looks to the risen and triumphant Christ, and away from self, and says, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Another effect of the work of Christ is deliverance from this *present evil world*. We read, in Gal. i. 4: "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." The world is set in man's heart, and in some form or other all in the flesh follow it. Satan presents it in many different phases, and it is an all-powerful attraction until the heart has found a superior object in the person of God's beloved Son. He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from it in every phase—whether wicked, worldly, social, religious, or whatever it may be. The death of Christ is the death-blow of all the world's glory, and the death-knell of all who follow it. "Now is the judgment of this world" (John xii. 31); but the Christian died out of it in the death of Christ. Faith says, "I have died out of it, and done with it—all its folly, vanity, and sin; and now I live

to God, as one who is not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world." We must pass through it, and have to serve God in it; and the Holy Ghost in us is the power to glorify Him. But the judgment of God rests upon the whole system, principle, and practice that man has set up, whether without Him, or under the profession of His name.

The Christian, then, is completely dissevered from the world. If we do not *have to do with it*, we must needs go out of it, says the apostle. (1 Cor. v. 10.) But it is one thing to have to do with it as long as we are in the body, and quite another thing to *go with it*. We are not of it, but we are of God, and are called to pass through it *with Him*, as strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. And in having to do with it in the paths of every-day life, it must be in dependence upon Him, sustained by His grace, and walking in His power, whereby alone we shall be preserved from its corroding and defiling influences. And this according to the will of God and our Father.

And how blessed, too, as partakers of the grace of God, to know that, sin having been judged, the sting of *death* is gone. That of which Satan had the power, and which kept us, through fear of it, all our lifetime subject to bondage, is now but the portal to the presence of Him who took the sting away, and robbed the grave of its victory. What is

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death to the Christian but a happy release from all the sorrows and groans of this poor world, and the door of entrance to that which is *far better*? The king of terrors to the poor Christless soul, but the peaceful rest of the wearied saint of God. We sleep in (or through) Jesus; and, marvellous grace, so complete is His victory, that we rest in the promise of His speedy return; and looking with the eye of faith upon the glorified Man in heaven, await His triumphant assembling shout, which may be raised at any moment, so that we may never pass through death at all, but be caught up together with the sleeping saints who have gone from this world before, and who, in the unclothed state, await the same bright resurrection morn without clouds. Blessed, glorious consummation of our hope in Him, and all the result of His own humiliation and death, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God.

And where is death's yoke-fellow, *judgment*? Completely gone. The believer shall not come into condemnation (or judgment), is the blessed testimony of the Son of God Himself, in view of His accomplished work. He Himself has borne it for us. *All the world* has become subject to the judgment of God; but the Christian is delivered from it by the work of Christ, and stands *in Him* before God, where there is now no condemnation. So perfect is this, that the Spirit of God leads the apostle, in Rom. viii., to say, *Who*

can be against us? *Who* shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? *Who* is he that condemneth? *Who* shall separate us from the love of Christ? And the challenge is unanswered—there is no one. Every foe is effectually silenced. No charge can be possibly brought, no tongue condemn, no enemy separate us from His love. But, on the other hand, as the Scripture from which we quote plainly shows, God is for us, and has proved it in the gift of His Son. God justifies us, God hears Christ's intercession for us, and God's love in Him abounds towards us. So wondrously perfect is it all, that in 1 John iv. 17 we read, "Herein is our love" (or love with us) "made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world." That awful day, that strikes terror into the hearts of thousands, we now no longer fear. Our judgment is passed. We look back to the cross, and there behold the Christ of God enduring it on our behalf once for all.

But some may say, Shall we not be judged at all? Well, we shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, it is true; but space will not permit us to dwell upon this here (and it has already been gone into and explained in other papers) beyond remarking that we shall stand there perfected in the image of Christ, as justified persons, delivered from judgment, to be manifested as to our path, ways, and works here, and to be

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rewarded by our gracious Saviour, according to our faithfulness. (1 Cor. iii. 11–15; 2 Cor. v. 10.) But *our judgment* is passed. That we shall not come into it, is, as we have seen, the express declaration of the Lord Himself. (John v. 24.)

And now, lastly, having looked more particularly at the perfection of our deliverance, let us contemplate for a brief moment what we are brought into. In short, it is all that love could give. Saved from all the consequences of the fall, we stand complete before God in Christ, sanctified, saved, and sealed with the Holy Ghost for the day of redemption. Brought to God, and in relationship with Him as His children, we rejoice in the hope of glory. Risen with Christ, and our life hid with Him in God, when He shall appear we shall appear with Him in glory. (Col. iii. 1–4.) And not only so, but God *hath* blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. We are “holy and without blame before Him in love” for ever. (Eph. i. 4.) He hath “made us accepted in the Beloved.” (Eph. i. 6.) He hath quickened us together with Christ, raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) All these and more form part of the exceeding riches of God’s grace towards us. All is ours now *in Christ*; made ours as the result, and on the ground of His finished work. The moment He fulfils His parting promise, and returns for His people,

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we shall be caught up to meet Him, and to share and enjoy it all with Him in glory. When He reigns in righteousness we shall reign with Him in glory; and when time is no more, God will fashion a new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness shall dwell. And throughout one eternal day the Church shall be the tabernacle or dwelling-place of the only wise God. (Rev. xxi. 2, 3.) All is the result of the same blessed work.

How wondrous are the ways of God! How perfect the work of the cross! How wide the glory of God that therein shines! How complete the deliverance wrought for everyone that believeth! How full the blessing that flows therefrom! How grateful should every believer be to reap such a portion! Eternal praise be unto Him who accomplished it by the shedding of His own life's blood! God is glorified, Satan's power annulled, our sins borne, our sin put away, law ended, the world beneath our feet, death vanquished, judgment gone, and we poor sinners, once guilty and lost, now saved and blessed eternally to the praise of the glory of His grace. May we enter more and more into these glorious realities, and be found characterized by true devotedness of heart to Him who accomplished all by dying on the tree, and who lives in glory in patience awaiting the moment when He shall claim the trophies of His victory.

E. H. C.

THE COMPASSION OF JESUS.

THERE is a beautiful expression in the Lord's answer to the question of the lawyer in Luke x., "Who is my neighbour?" With perfect skill and wisdom the Lord, by means of a parable, depicts the condition of a poor sinner ruined by sin, and helpless to save himself; and on the dark background paints the bright picture of **H**is own tender compassion and grace to such a ruined one.

The expression to which we refer occurs in the latter part of verse 33, and brings us to the source from whence flows the bright river of mercy, even the heart of the blessed God **H**imself as seen in Jesus—the Son of **H**is love—as a man here on earth.

"When he saw him, he had compassion on him." This tells the secret of his acting in such a way toward one who had no claim on him. He was moved by the misery which he witnessed. True, at any other time, or under other circumstances, he would have been repulsed and scorned, "for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (and the sinner will have no dealings with Jesus until he is brought to know and feel his misery); but now he is free to act according to the promptings of his own love.

"He had compassion on him." Here is the

hidden spring, the motive power, of all his actings. And surely as we behold this compassion in exercise, we discern who this Samaritan is. No mere child of Adam is here portrayed, though it be one found in fashion as a man.

If we turn to Matt. ix. we shall see without a question who it was that was thus in Luke x. moved with compassion at the sight of suffering and ruined humanity. Here we find ourselves in the presence of Jesus, and behold the divine compassion of His heart (v. 36), and the rich resources of His hand. (v. 35.) We read, "He was moved with compassion on them." Surely we are in the company of "the good Samaritan" of Luke x., and behold in him the Father's beloved Son, making known to us the love and compassion of the heart of God in respect of all the deep need of poor perishing sinners, destitute and "without strength."

As we follow the footsteps of Jesus in the gospels, we find this same compassion in constant exercise, and we learn what a Saviour He is—a real man in all the weakness and in all the nearness of a man amongst men, but one whose love is beyond all human love, and whose compassions *fail not*.

The shepherd brings the sheep *home* on his shoulders *rejoicing*. The Samaritan brings the object of his compassion safe to the inn, and there provides for his every want. And so with

our Jesus, our Shepherd. We know that He has found us, has removed the burden of our sins, healed our wounded consciences, comforted our troubled hearts; and, though now in the glory, He has said, "I will come again."

But more, He has revealed the Father. What we see of the compassion of Jesus in Matt. ix. and Luke x. is just the expression of the Father's heart in Luke xv.—"But when he" (the prodigal) "was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and *had compassion*, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." And this compassion was the spring of all the blessings poured upon, and all the rejoicing over the ruined but repentant prodigal. "I and my Father are one," said the Lord, and "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Therefore knowing Jesus we know the Father, and we have learnt Him through our need. It was our misery and need and His compassion that brought Him to us and us to Him; and it is because His love never changes, and His compassions fail not, that we are kept while here below, where we are placed to be "followers" (or imitators) "of God as dear children," and to "let this mind" be in us, "which was also in Christ Jesus."

I do not dwell now on that wondrous work of our blessed Lord on the cross, which is after all by far the brightest and richest display of His compassion and love. But if any enquire what

brought the Holy One of God there, suffering the judgment against sin, the answer may be found in the humbling and yet blessed truth, that we were poor, guilty, needy sinners, deserving that wrath; and that His compassion brought Him there for us. As we there learn His love, and what that love has accomplished for us, our language may well be, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

S. M. A.

Answers to Prayer.—"How many prayers do we see manifestly answered even long after the saint who breathed them into the ear of Jesus has gone to lay his weary head on that Saviour's breast! A dying mother commits her beloved boy to the care of a faithful God. She has often borne that child on the arms of faith to the mercy-seat. He has been the child of many prayers; and in the feeble utterances of her passing spirit, another and a last petition is breathed forth that Christ would have mercy on his soul. Years roll away. The sod has grown green, and the rank grass has long waved over that mother's tomb. In some distant land, mayhap many hundred miles from that spot, a full-grown man, who has long been ripening in sin, is seen bowed in prayer. He is crying out of the depths of an agonized spirit, '*God be merciful to me, a sinner!*' 'Behold he prayeth!' and *his* prayer is the answer of that fervent petition which his dying mother uttered many long years before."

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“The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures : He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul : He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies : thou anointest my head with oil ; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life : and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”—PSALM xxiii.

PRECIOUS to the saints of God in all ages has this psalm of David been. It is full of celestial music, stirring the soul to its deepest depths, and filling it with holy, calm, and yet triumphant joy. Many a timid saint has found his faith strengthened by it, and many a chamber, darkened by heavy clouds of sickness and approaching death, has been gilded by it with floods of heavenly light.

Its imagery is drawn from the simplest sources. A shepherd caring for his sheep, pastures of tender grass, waters of quietness, a rod and a staff, an overflowing cup, a head anointed with oil—these are the chief and homely figures under whose guise are presented truths that speak to the heart in tones of melting tenderness and un-earthly power.

And the man whose pen the Spirit of God used to write this psalm of faith and hope, of

joy and peace, had not been cradled in king's courts. Nor had his outward life been like the smooth surface of a summer's sea, disturbed by no angry storm. As a shepherd-boy keeping his father's flocks on the plains of Bethlehem, he had fought with the lion and the bear; and when drawn in early manhood to stand before Saul, he soon became the object of the king's unjust jealousy—jealousy as cruel as the grave. Forced to flee from Saul's face, hunted like a partridge on the mountains, his life in constant danger, such was David in his earlier years. And it was under the pressure of perils and privations, great enough to make the stoutest heart quail, that the sweet psalmist of Israel proved the tender and unceasing care of Jehovah his Shepherd. Rich were his experiences in that cloudy and dark day. His extremities were God's opportunities; and in the school of adversity he learned those great grand lessons that fitted him to sing this immortal psalm.

Are the saints of God to-day less privileged than David was? Are they as sheep having no shepherd? Are their experiences to be of a lower order than his, and have they no song to sing? Nay, the contrary is true; for Jehovah of the Old Testament is Jesus, Jehovah the Saviour, of the New; and His love has been manifested to them in an infinitely richer way than to saints of old. And surely there is not a child of God beneath the blue sky whose heart has not been

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made glad as he heard his Saviour say, "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." Gone from earth and ascended to the right hand of God, He is now not only the good Shepherd, but the great. It is He, and none other, that is before the mind of the believer when he sings with holy confidence, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

Let us first of all think of Him who is our Shepherd. Let us dwell on the love that shines in His incarnation, and in the endurance of those sorrows that beset His lowly path on earth—a love that never faltered, and which death's dark waters could not quench, nor floods of judgment drown. Was ever love like His? Whereunto shall we liken it, or with what comparison shall it be compared? We know not; but this at least we know, that if every heart that ever loved from Eden's day till now could pour the strength and wealth of its affection into one single human breast, mighty as that love might be, we should call it poor and mean in comparison with the love of Christ. Challenged, like the Bride in the Canticles, to say, in what was our Beloved more than another beloved, what a story we should have to tell! The tongue of men and angels could never tell it. He who knew that love best would be the last to attempt the task, though he might say, with quivering lip, and eyes bedewed with tears, "He loved me, and gave *Himself* for me."

The suffering saints of God may well remember that He who loves them thus is still alive. Their Shepherd is not dead. Go, search the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea; the body of the Lord Jesus shall not there be found. He is risen and glorified. Thinkest thou that He forgets, amid the glories of His Father's throne, the sheep of His pasture that sojourn still on earth? Nay, He knows His sheep, and they are ever under His eye. Each one remembered as if but that one sheep were all His care. The roughness of the road He knows, the sharp thorns that pierce the foot, the sorrows that flood the eyes with tears, the stroke that lays the dear objects of our love in the silent grave, the dark forebodings that sometimes steal across the soul, the sick husband, the prostrate wife, the motherless children, the family shorn of a father's care, the lack of employment, the slender means of existence growing less as years pass by—these and all other possible sources of anxiety the Shepherd knows. But it is in these very circumstances that faith achieves her greatest triumphs. They err who think faith only plays her noblest part in doing mighty deeds that every eye can see. The Christian who meekly meets the storm with an "Even so, Father," or in view of threatening clouds can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, *I shall not want*," is as true a witness to the power of faith as David when he slew Goliath, or Gideon and his three hundred men when they overthrew the host of Midian.

And this confidence in the Shepherd's love is but the door to further blessing. There are green pastures in which He maketh His flock to lie down, and still waters beside which He leadeth them. Be it that this world is but a wilderness of stones, a parched place where nothing grows. It is so; but the green pastures and waters of quietness are found elsewhere, and are only known by those who walk by the Shepherd's side in the paths of faith and obedience. John found them when he leaned upon the Saviour's bosom; the two disciples of the Baptist found them when, in answer to their question, "Master, where dwellest thou?" He said, "Come and see;" Mary found them when she sat at His feet and heard His word; Stephen found them when he "looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God;" and Paul had found them when, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, he counted all earthly gain but loss. We shall find them too—yea, we have found them, if our hearts have learned to rest in the present love of Christ, and if occupation with Him in glory is our constant employ.

But, alas! how evident it is that many a true saint of God knows but little, if anything, of the green pastures and still waters. If the eye is not on the Shepherd, how shall the sheep follow Him? and if the ear be filled with the Babel-voices of

men, how shall His voice be heard? Into what snares and pitfalls have the sheep of Christ been beguiled, to their loss and His dishonour! The world and the fashion thereof passeth away; its pomp and pride and glory shall descend into the dust. Why then, believer, shouldst thou follow it? why seek its fading garlands, and pursue its fleeting phantoms? There is wormwood and gall at the bottom of all its cups. What a portion thou art missing for time, to say naught of eternity! Thou dost love Christ? Then let thy heart seek in Him its rest and pleasure. Thou art one of His sheep? Then follow Him; and if thou hast wandered from Him, hasten to return. He will restore thy soul, and lead thee in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake.

Across the fair face of nature death has flung his dark shadow; for sin is here, and death came in by sin. Could you stand upon a point where the whole earth lay at your feet, and where all its beauties of mountain and moor, hill and valley, river and flood, passed before your eye in gorgeous panorama, athwart the whole of it you would see that the finger of God had written its name, "THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH."

Through that valley, full of innumerable evils, the blood-bought flock must go. But there is no cause for the feeblest lamb to be afraid. Every inch of the road the Shepherd knows, for He has passed that way before. Strong, too, is His hand;

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and, sheltered by His rod and staff, we need fear no evil. And He is full of tender and gracious thought for those that have but little strength. It is written, "He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." His arm and His bosom alike are ours. Let us trust Him more fully; let us lean upon Him. Whatever the circumstances of the day, however dark and distressing, let us charge our timid hearts to remember that He is with us. What room then is there for fear?

And if the earthly tent decay, if the tide of life ebb far away from shore, and carry us out into the wide ocean of eternity, let us fear not. He who has said, "I will never leave thee," will not forsake us then. Underneath shall be the everlasting arms. Grace for dying moments shall not be wanting when dying moments come. Moreover, we may never see them; for the parting promise of the Saviour yet remains to be fulfilled: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." The Christian does not look for death, but the personal return of the Lord to call His own away. But if this tabernacle must be put off, if Infinite Love has chosen that way for us, let us not shrink.

"Jesus can make a dying bed
 Feel soft as downy pillows are,
 Whilst on His breast I lean my head,
 And breathe my life out sweetly there."

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
 all the days of my life." If David could say so,

how much more may the Christian! "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Our gracious God would have us without carefulness; and what we know of His love emboldens us to speak of days to come. "All the days of my life"—yes, *all of them*—"goodness and mercy shall follow me"; and when wilderness days are done, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Oh, blessed prospect, so sweet and sure! Well may our hearts rejoice! Well may we sing—

 "My Shepherd is the Lamb,
 The living Lord who died:
 With all things good I ever am
 By Him supplied.
 He richly feeds my soul
 With blessings from above;
 And leads me where the rivers roll
 Of endless love.

 "My soul He doth restore,
 Whene'er I go astray;
 He makes my cup of joy run o'er,
 From day to day;
 His love so full, so free,
 Anoints my head with oil;
 Goodness and mercy follow me,
 Fruit of His toil.

 "When faith and hope shall cease,
 And love abide alone,
 Then shall I see Him face to face,
 And know as known:
 Still shall I lift my voice,
 His praise my song shall be;
 And I will in His love rejoice
 Who died for me."

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

THERE is nothing more important, in its place, than to remember that in the gospel we have to do with a Person. This at once distinguishes the gospel from the law. In the law we have a *rule* for man, but in the gospel a *Saviour* is revealed.

Under the law man was on probation to see if he could stand before God in his own righteousness, as Paul says, "Mine own righteousness, which is of the law." (Phil. iii. 9.) This at once explains that scripture in Ezekiel xviii. 24–26, which has been such a stumbling-block to many. Being on *probation*, his righteousness consisted in his perfect obedience to the law, and consequently the moment he broke it he was no longer righteous. You see it was "his righteousness," and one failure spoiled all. (Read Gal. iii. 10–12.) God putting man under the law manifested the fact that he was a ruined creature—"By the law is the knowledge of sin." "Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound." "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions." Sin was in the world from Adam to Moses; but where there is no law there is no transgression. The children in a school have been marking on the walls, and the master says there must be no more marking on the walls on pain of a flogging. What is the result? The moment his

back is turned there is more marking than ever. The master's prohibition has demonstrated the fact that there is a perverse will in the children, which was the more provoked by the prohibition. It was wrong to mark on the walls at the first; but now it is positive transgression.

But mark, if the law gave the knowledge of sin the gospel gives the knowledge of sin put away. A blessed contrast that, my reader, is it not?

If I turn to Romans i. 1-3 I find this: Paul "separated unto the gospel of God . . . concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Now note this well, that it is no longer a *rule*, but a *Person* that God speaks to us about. Under the law man was the subject—"thou shalt" and "thou shalt not;" but now Christ is the subject. Man's day of probation is closed, his trial over, and the judgment of God is passed upon him—all guilty. (Rom. iii. 19; John xii. 31.) But now there falls on our ears the blessed sound of the gospel—"Once in the end of the world" (after all the ages of man's probation are passed) "hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Heb. ix. 26.)

The law only shut man up to death and judgment; but "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." (Heb. ix. 27, 28.) What a blessed fact is this, that One has come to take up our cause, and that the gospel is the good news about that One—God's Son—and what He has done!

Let us go back to Romans, and see what is there told us about Him. Ere He unfolds the good news "concerning His Son," He shows what man is in himself. What a history we have in Romans i. 18-iii. 19, finishing up with that most solemn verdict, "Every mouth stopped, and all the world guilty before God!" Oh, my reader, have you stood thus at the bar of God—your mouth stopped, not an excuse to offer, not a plea to urge, and God's own verdict, like a death knell ringing in your ears—Guilty, all the world guilty?

Two things are needed if you and I are to stand in the presence of God in peace; viz., *forgiveness* and *righteousness*; and, blessed be God, these two very things the gospel brings. In the twenty-second and twenty-third verses of Rom. iii. we have the common ground on which we all are—"There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And there it is the gospel meets us—"Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood." (vv. 24, 25.) God has come out as the Justifier. The spring of all is His grace, and the ground of all is the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. God's eye is on Christ, and according to what He has found in Him and His finished work on the cross, He acts towards us. So we read, in Acts xiii. 38, 39, "Be it known unto you

therefore, men and brethren, that through *this Man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and *by Him* all that believe are justified from all things." See how the eye is turned to Christ—"through this Man," "by Him." You and I are out of sight here ; Christ is all.

But in Romans iii. 25 there is another most beautiful contrast to the law. We read, "Whom *God* hath set forth." Oh, the beauty and preciousness of that ! From Genesis to Malachi it was always *man* setting forth his offerings and sacrifices, which could never make the worshippers perfect, could never give a purged conscience ; but in the gospel my eye sees, and my heart and conscience rest on, a sacrifice set forth by God Himself. God has provided Himself a Lamb, whose precious blood has so thoroughly met the claims of the throne of God that He is just, and the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus. And not only have the holy, righteous claims of God been met, but the conscience of the believer is purged, so that there is not a note of discord between it and the throne. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. i. 3 ; x. 14.) Is this claiming too much for Christ ? Is this putting too much value on His sacrifice ? Ah ! no. Eternity alone will declare the full value of that sacrifice on which we can now peacefully rest.

Remember God's eye is on Christ, and according to what He finds in Him, and His own sacrifice of infinite value and eternal efficacy, He speaks and acts toward you and me.

But what about righteousness? Well, turn again to Rom. iii. 21: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." In verse 19 it is seen that we have no righteousness for God; in verse 20 we are told that by the law we never could have any. But now righteousness of God apart from law altogether is manifested. The law bore witness to it in the countless sacrifices appointed by God Himself; and in Abel's sacrifice we have a striking testimony to this truth—God testifying, not to his personal goodness, but "of his gifts." (Gen. iv. 4; Heb. xi. 4.) In Isa. xlv. 21, 22, 24, 25, and Jer. xxiii. 6, we have the testimony of the prophets (see Rom. i. 2); but now it is manifested. In 2 Cor. v. 21 we read, "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." On the cross He was made sin, and the judgment of God fell on Him; He died to sin. Now in resurrection glory we are made the righteousness of God in Him. On the cross He was in our place; in resurrection we who believe are in Him, even as we read in 1 Cor. i. 30: "But of Him are ye *in Christ Jesus*, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness," &c. What a contrast between the gospel and the law!

The law put sins to my account. The gospel says, "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree;" and "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 Peter ii. 24; 1 John i. 7.) The law demanded righteousness; the gospel provides it. But, you ask, how am I to get this righteousness? The answer you will find in Rom. iii. 22: "By faith of Jesus Christ." Again, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 5.) "What saith the scripture? Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." Have you believed God? "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. x. 4.) Do you ask now, "How am I to know when I stand clothed with this divine righteousness?" Rom. iii. 22 answers that question too. It is *unto* all—that is its aspect; and *upon* all that believe—that is its application. Have you believed in Christ? Then it is *upon* you. Is it any wonder that Paul says, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light"? (Col. i. 12.) Was he claiming too much for God when he wrote, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved"? (Eph. i. 6.) "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John i. 17.) G. R.

NOT SEEN.

IN the course of our Lord's ministry on earth "He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things *that ye see*: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things *which ye see*, and have *not seen* them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." (Luke x. 23, 24.) But later on, being rejected, both in His words and His works, He goes to the cross. For the moment the hopes of His loved ones are dashed to the ground. But death and corruption have no claim upon the Son of the Blessed; so that, having given His life for His own, He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Appearing in the midst of His disciples, He showed them His wounds, and they were glad when they saw the Lord. But Thomas, called Didymus, was absent, and refused to believe their testimony until he had himself seen the same tokens. Eight days after Jesus again manifested Himself, and Thomas, being present and convinced, He said unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have *not seen*, and yet have *believed*." (John xx. 29.)

These memorable words carry us on to the present day of grace, whilst Jesus is hidden at

the right hand of God. He has ceased to be manifest to the natural sight of His people, but now presents Himself as *the object of faith*. "Ye believe in God, *believe also in Me*." All the blessing of God is to *faith* now, not sight. God presents *an unseen Christ* as the object of faith to the world, and whosoever believeth in Him receives the remission of sins and everlasting life. (Acts x. 43 ; John iii. 16.) Faith first rejoices in an *unseen*, but living Saviour in the glory of God, and joins in the words of the apostle, "*We see Jesus*, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour ; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb. ii. 9.) And then the heart, being ravished with His love, responds to the words of Peter, "Whom having *not seen*, ye love ; in whom, though now ye *see Him not*, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (or filled with glory), looking with joy too for the moment when we *shall see Him face to face*, as He is. (1 Peter i. 8 ; 1 John iii. 2.) These are they whom Jesus pronounced "*blessed*."

And how marvellously rich and full the blessing connected with a glorified Saviour is ! How feebly our poor hearts enter into these glorious and eternal realities ? How is it ? God hath given us the Spirit. He is the Spirit of truth, and is here to guide us into them. Paul says to the Corinthians, "It is written, Eye hath *not seen*,

nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.) Surely He would have us exercised, that our souls may increasingly apprehend these wondrous depths. In the glory we shall share them with the Son of His love evermore; but now *faith*, taught of the Spirit, grasps the things hoped for, though *not seen*, and rejoices in them.

Many are hampered on account of the trials and afflictions of the world that we are passing through. The word of God is full of encouragement to cheer our hearts. Take for instance 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are *not seen*: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are *not seen are eternal*." What a blessed contrast! Poor foolish and infatuated creatures that we are, we constantly allow ourselves to be distracted, our eyes turned to things seen, and our hearts engrossed with things temporal. Oh that we may know more what it is, dear Christian readers, to keep our eyes fixed upon Christ in glory, and on things *unseen and eternal*! All is

vain and fleeting here. We grasp at shadows when we turn to the visible. The substance is only known to faith.

All this must be a mere enigma to anyone without Christ. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) The path that the Christian is called to tread, with the eye of faith fixed upon that which is unseen, heavenly and eternal, is one that nature knows nothing whatever about. It is a path, "the way of holiness," which the vulture's eye hath *not seen*, nor the lion's whelp trodden, &c. (Job xxviii. 7, 8.) From this we may learn that the keenest gaze of the natural man will not enable him to discern it, nor the greatest power that he can exercise enable him to tread it. No; nothing but the keen gaze of the eye of faith can trace the footprints of Christ in the narrow way to life eternal in glory, and nothing but the power of God enable us to follow Him.

Moreover, the natural mind treats the unseen things as visionary and unreal, and men regulate their course accordingly, little knowing that Satan has blinded their minds both to their own condition and that of the world. With the word of God neglected or questioned, they pursue their course, occupied with things seen, little dreaming of the awful doom that awaits this poor world. Unlike Noah, who, by faith "being warned of

God of things *not seen* as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Heb. xi. 7); they follow the course of this world, ere long to reap the folly of their neglect by coming into the judgment of God. Whereas the believer, like Noah, bowing to what God has said concerning things *not seen*, and the solemn warning of judgment about to be executed, has found a safe refuge in the true ark of God's providing—in *Christ*.

Now whilst Christians remain upon the earth awaiting the glory of Christ, they are surrounded with dangers. One we are especially warned against in Colossians ii., is that of letting something come in between us and Christ. "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath *not seen*, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head," &c. Nothing is easier than to let our minds get occupied with something *not seen*, and Christ be more or less displaced by it. Thousands around us have fallen into this snare, and are following the very things here warned against, doing their own will in humility, worshipping angels, saints, the Virgin Mary, relics, and other objects, until one is led to ask in bewilderment, as one sees Christ so completely put in the background, or lost sight of altogether, "Can such

persons ever read their Bibles? or do they really believe that God means what He says?"

Furthermore, in the epistle of John we get strikingly contrasted those who are and those who are not of God. We read that, "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath *not seen* Him, neither known Him." (1 John iii. 6.) The apostle himself and others had seen and known that which was from the beginning — the Word of life—and they followed Him, forsaking sin. Abiding in Him they sinned not. But if any were or are characterized by sinning, they have no part with Him. Seeing and knowing Him lead to self-judgment and practical righteousness. The knowledge of God ever produces the same effect. To go on in sin is entirely contrary to Christianity and to Christ. To pursue such a course is to forfeit all claim to be a Christian. To refuse sin, and to walk as He walked, is to manifest to all who we are, and that we know God.

Moreover, in chapter iv. 20 we have a verse amongst others which brings out in a most distinct manner the value of a man's professed Christianity: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath *not seen*?" (1 John iv. 20.) "No man hath seen God at any time." (John i. 18.) He is *the invisible God*. (Col. i. 15.) It is only as manifest in flesh that any have beheld Him. But we love Him whom we have *not seen*, because He

first loved us. (1 John iv. 19.) And this knowledge of His love produces love to our brethren. "Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him." (1 John v. 1.) But "if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." (1 John iv. 20.) The two things are bound up together; it is impossible to separate them. If love to our brother whom we have seen is lacking, clearly love to God is lacking also. So natural is the outflow of the one from the other, that the apostle Paul says, "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." (1 Thess. iv. 9.) But it is all important that we should get God's thought of what love is, for much that is spurious is abroad. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." (1 John v. 3.) And, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments." (1 John v. 2.)

May all who read these lines become increasingly occupied with *unseen, but everlasting realities*; with God, His Son, and the things above, so as to be morally formed by them, according to the desire of His heart. Ere long we shall see Christ face to face, be conformed to His blessed image, and share the things prepared with Him for ever.

"The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are *not seen are eternal*." (2 Cor. iv. 18.)

E. H. C.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. J. 1 Tim. v. 9.—It would seem that the apostle distinguished between widows and those that were “widows indeed.” The latter were more particularly friendless and desolate, and therefore needed the special care and sympathy of the Lord’s people. The peculiar reasons that led to Timothy being directed not to take into the number those under sixty we know not. That there were such reasons we may not doubt. But it would be a grievous misuse of the passage were any assembly of God’s people to take it as a warrant for excluding from their ministrations any truly necessitous widow who had not reached that age.

With regard to your second question on 2 Tim. i. 13, Timothy (and we no less than he) was to hold fast not only the truth he had heard of Paul, but to hold it in the very form in which it had been presented to him. It reaches us, of course, in holy writings, commonly called the Scriptures; and it is important to remember that we are only sure of *the truth* when we retain the very language of God which contains it. Moreover the form or outline of sound words, which words Timothy had heard of Paul, were not to be separated from *faith and love* which are in Christ Jesus. This is of the greatest moment; for if faith and love do not accompany the apprehension and retention of the truth, it results in mere dry unctionless orthodoxy, than which nothing is more withering.

Finally, 1 Cor. ii. 13 teaches that the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him were spoken of by Paul in words which the Holy Ghost taught. Under the law and the prophets these things were hid. Eye had not seen nor ear heard them, nor had they entered into the heart of man. But in the glorious revelations of Christianity these things were made known. "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit," Paul said. Were they then locked up as secrets in the apostle's bosom? Nay; for he adds, "Which things also we speak." They were revealed to Paul that he might be the vehicle of communicating them to others. In what words did he declare them? Not those which man's wisdom would have taught, but those which the Spirit of God gave; and that same Spirit God gives to us that we might know the things He has so freely bestowed. We have then in this pregnant passage, 1st, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him revealed to Paul and other inspired vessels; 2nd, that these things are now made known to us; 3rd, that they are made known in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth; and 4th, that the Spirit is given that we may know them, for they can be only spiritually discerned.

T. A. H.—Your question involves the foreknowledge of God. But do not confound this with predestination. If anything were hid from God's eye He would not be omniscient. Scripture, too, abundantly shows that it is the last Adam, not the first, that is the centre of God's eternal counsels. The evil and the good are alike known to God, but He predestines only to good. (See Rom. viii. 29; Eph. i. 5.)

“HE IS WORTHY.”

He is worthy ! Take it with thee,
Just this thought to ponder o'er,
Till His loveliness and beauty
Fill thy soul yet more and more ;
Till thy heart o'erflow with longing,
Till thy mouth be filled with praise,
Till Himself become the object
Of thy thoughts and words and ways.

He is worthy ! Take it with thee
To the throne of grace on high ;
What thou in His name requirest
God can never more deny.
Art thou asking for the interests
Of His kingdom here on earth ?
Ask more largely, He is worthy—
Ask according to His worth.

Shine this word upon thy labour,
Lighting up thy pathway dim.
Does the daily task seem trivial ?
Think, “I’m doing it for Him.”
Do it heartily and gladly,
He is worthy of thy best ;
Those who will in much be serving
Must be faithful in the least.

He is worthy ! Let it brace thee
For the tempest or the fight ;
Difficulties, dangers, conflicts,
Borne for His sake, seem but light.
He is worthy ! Let it teach thee
How for Him to speak a word,
Though the world may scorn and slight thee,
Standing for thine absent Lord.

He is worthy ! He who loved thee
Ere this world began to be ;
He who suffered to redeem thee—
Yea, who gave Himself for thee.
Then of Him, the Lamb, the slain One,
Be e’en here on earth thy song,
Till thou on the throne behold Him,
Praise Him with the ransomed throng.

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A. E. A. GOODWIN.

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