

Things New & Old,

A

GOSPEL MAGAZINE,

WITH PAPERS FOR THE FLOCK OF GOD.



“Christ is all.”—Col. iii. 11.



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Things New and Old.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST:

OR, DESIRE.

MANY Christians spend much of their lives *desiring* the love of Christ, and still more in *desiring* to love Christ. "Draw me, we will run after thee." There is love to Christ, but a sense of distance. "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon? for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" Such expressions as these in the Song of Solomon express the state of many a soul now, as well do they describe the condition of the remnant of Israel in days to come. How many of us have felt a well-known line in a hymn suit the real state of our souls—"Oh, draw me, Saviour, after Thee"—and may have wondered why a dear servant of the Lord, more deeply experienced in the love of Christ than ourselves, should have altered it to, "Lord, Thou hast drawn me after Thee." Is not the difference immense?

The difference would not be greater than if you saw a child looking eagerly through a shop window

at various kinds of delicious fruit within. Yes, that child loves grapes, and pears, and plums, and greatly desires them, but not one does it enjoy ; it is outside, and they are all inside. A kind hand opens the door, and a loving voice says, Come in, my child. Freely I give you all. Eat, and enjoy, whatever is for your good. How real the difference between the desire of that child, and the enjoyment of the fruit ! And has not that One with the wounded hand opened the door ? Or does He leave us outside still, only to desire ? It is, or was, the true place of a Jew outside the holiest ; he could only earnestly desire. That is not the true place of a Christian. "The king hath brought me into his chambers." "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." Is not this the King with the wounded hands ? "He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love." What holy, deep, real enjoyment do these words describe ! Is this desire at a distance, looking through the window ? No ; "I sat"—perfect repose of heart—in the presence of Christ. No fear ; no, such perfect love casteth out fear. God is love, and that new nature born of Him delighteth in Him "with great delight." And it is not longing to love Him, but delighting in Him. "And his fruit was sweet to my taste."

Now a very common mistake is often made. It is this: that we must love Him more, and more, and more, until at last we may hope to arrive at this banquet of love. It is not so; it is not an act of our own. "He brought me to the banqueting-house." Oh, how tenderly He led me, with those wounded hands, to the banquet of love! But must it not be our love to Him that makes the banquet of love? No, "His banner over me was love."

Is it not evident, then, that if we truly "have known and believed the love that God hath to us," we must go beyond "Oh draw me, Saviour, after Thee"? It is quite true, in another sense, that we need constantly His power to keep us, and guide us through this wilderness. But "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Yes, He has not only brought us into the banquet of love, and spread His banner over us, but this is our dwelling, abiding place. Is it not written, "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end"? The banner of love ever floats over us. The fruit is ever sweet. The perfect rest is ever secure. Not a sin did He fail to bear. Never can He cease to love or intercede for those whose sins He bore.

No, the believer has not to desire peace with God, and rest to his soul. "I sat down." He has not to long for repose of soul in the presence of Christ. No, he rests under His shadow

in sweet repose. He has not to desire the love of Christ: that love is sweet to his taste. He has not to say, "Oh draw me," he is brought into the banqueting-house. He can say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies."

There is no effort to love; all is deep, perfect, full enjoyment. A miner in a deep pit, on fire, and about to perish in the suffocating fumes, may well cry out, "Oh, draw me out; oh, draw me out into the bright day and pure air." But if a nobleman sent his own son as volunteer to fetch him out of that pit of death, and then made him joint-heir with that son of a large estate, he would not then desire to be out. Neither could he desire to be brought into the sunshine and light of day, nor to breathe the pure, fresh air. No; see him walking with and talking to that son who had saved him, and who delighted to share with him all the estate.

Is this an over-drawn picture? Far from it. Every illustration fails to set forth the eternal love of God in Christ. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love." Surely, then, He could not love us more. "So have I loved you." Mark, we have not to keep His commandments to cause Him to love us, or to attain to His love, but to abide in His love. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall *abide* in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." And why does the

Lord thus speak to us? He says further, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." He would not have us remain outside in the continual disappointment of mere desire, but come into the banquet of full joy in the everlasting possession of His love, with the conscience purged, and in perfect repose, through His precious blood; the heart for ever satisfied, dwelling in His unchanging love; the affections now free to act and flow forth from Himself to all the objects of His love. For this is the desire of His heart. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Have we to desire Him to do this? Surely not. Who could have conceived such a thing? No, God so loved. Jesus so loved. It is done. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

It will thus be seen by the christian reader, that we cannot desire Christ to love us. His love to us has been displayed to the utmost. We cannot desire God to love us more than He has loved, or more than He does love. For nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

We may have a desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better. Paul had this desire.

(Phil. i. 23.) But this was because he knew the love of Christ to him. We may long and hope for that moment when we shall be like Him in the glorified body, but this is because of the certainty that when He appears we shall be like Him. Yes, we shall see Him as He is, and be like Him. But all this is far different from desiring now that Christ would love us. No, He wishes our present joy to be full, dwelling in His love. He says to the Father, "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. 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. 22, 23.)

Just think of the glory given to Christ, already given to us. And shortly the world shall know that the Father hath loved us, even as He has loved Christ!! Oh, yes, the blessed One, with those wounds in His hands, says, Come into the banquet; my banner over you is eternal love.

But the reader may say, Ought I not to desire to love God? How plain the answer! If you know and believe this wondrous love of God to you, you will (not desire, but) love Him, *because He first loved you*. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "We love him, because he first loved us." As the children

of God, we have the nature of our Father, and He is love. Would not that be a strange child that *desired* to love its parent? And the love of God leads us to delight to keep His commandments. It is the very outflow of the new nature, by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. True love is never occupied with self. Desire to love is always so. We may read page after page of those seeking and desiring to love God, and find nothing but self-occupancy, from beginning to end. If you ask them the meaning of those words, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. v. 5), their thought will be, the more we love God, the more He will love us. This shews sad ignorance of the great FACT declared here. Believing God, who hath raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," we are justified, accounted righteous, before the very eye of God. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." To desire to make peace with God would spoil all. It would be to set aside the peace now made by the blood of Jesus, and thus desire to make peace with God ourselves in some other way. No, it is as certain a fact that *we have* peace with God, as that He who has made our peace is raised from among the dead. We do not desire peace, we have it WITH GOD. We do not desire

access to the banquet of love, we have access by faith into this grace, this wondrous free favour wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

In like manner, though we pass through tribulation, yet we "glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us."

Do not mistake: if the love of God is not shed abroad in your heart, if the Holy Ghost is not given to you, then you are not a Christian, and that is another matter. But if you know and believe the love of God to you in sending His Son, then every barrier to the love of God has been removed. You have not to desire, but the love of God is shed abroad in your heart, the Holy Ghost is given to you. That love is revealed in Christ, cease your vain, unbelieving desires. No longer stand with the doubting crowd without, but take your happy seat beneath His shade in everlasting repose. The Lord bless these few thoughts on the difference between love and desire to every christian reader, and may we evermore rejoice in the Lord.

C. S.



THE RIBAND OF BLUE AND THE LACE OF BLUE.

NUMBERS XV.; EXODUS XXVIII.

IN these two scriptures we have a remarkable contrast. The one, the riband of blue, is a symbol or sign of man fully tested under the most favourable circumstances : what man is to God. In the other, the lace of blue : what Christ is to man.

Let us remember both were of God. Man has been tested. Christ is our great High Priest.

In turning, then, first, to the riband of blue, let us remark that the institution of the riband of blue was of God. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders A RIBAND OF BLUE : and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them. . . . That ye may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. I am the Lord your God."

Thus the institution of the riband of blue was of God, and is very beautiful. It was not worn in Egypt whilst they were slaves to Pharaoh, but

after God had brought them out by redemption. A riband of blue, worn by a slave of Pharaoh, or a slave of Satan, would be a contradiction, as blue is the heavenly colour, that which is of God.

Who, then, were to wear the riband of blue? The nation of Israel, and the stranger that came to dwell with them, to sojourn in the land. It was the outward visible sign of that one nation whom God had brought from Egypt, and to whom He had made known His laws and commandments. As circumcision was a mark before the eye of God, so the riband of blue was to be a constant sign of remembrance before their own eyes. "That ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them." "And be holy unto your God." It certainly was very striking: the blue on the fringe of their garments, almost touching the earth as they walked, with its heavenly colour, ever proclaiming the holy claims of God, He requiring men to walk in heavenly purity and holiness before Him.

The context of the institution of the riband of blue will shew that it was not a sign that Israel did thus walk in heavenly purity, but rather what a holy God must require. He must have a perfect obedience to all His commandments, if man is to stand on that ground before Him.

The context is indeed remarkable. In chapter xiv. we find Israel murmuring, in rebellion so fearfully, that had God dealt with them in judg-

ment, they would have been destroyed. Then we have the intercession of Moses. The Lord hears and pardons. Still there is continued rebellion and sin. Then grace shines out in chapter xv., and also government. They had pledged themselves to do all the commandments of the Lord, in Exodus xix. Thus the riband of blue was a badge of the pledge they had taken to do ALL the commandments of Jehovah.

The immediate context of this deeply interesting institution is still more remarkable. A man was found gathering sticks on the sabbath-day. If he had kept the law in every other point, yet he was guilty. "And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death." The sabbath-day being a type of the rest of soul God gives through redemption, nothing could possibly be allowed on man's part to pollute that rest. God said to Israel, "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: THEREFORE the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day." (Deut. v. 15.)

Does not God still speak in this shadow? Peace with God and rest of soul is only to be found through the redemption we have in Christ Jesus. Hence, nothing can be allowed of our works to touch or pollute the perfect sabbath of rest we have in Christ.

This will be seen in another scripture. Never was the observance of the sabbath more strictly enforced than when Moses was just about to receive the people's contributions for the tabernacle. "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein, shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the sabbath-day." (Ex. xxxv. 2, 3.)

Does not God say to us in this, The first thing I desire is, that you may have perfect repose in my presence: then I am ready to receive your smallest works and offerings? And does not this explain why God could have no pleasure in those sacrifices which did not purge the conscience, or bring man into the holy presence of God? (See Heb. x. 1-10.) Nay, was not this God's eternal purpose to bring the sinner, perfectly purged from sins, into His holy presence in the perfect and eternal sabbath of rest? We can well see, then, why no work of man could be allowed to mar this rest.

The man had not kindled the fire, but he had presumptuously gathered the sticks. And mark, that if a man is on the principle of law, of which the riband of blue was the outward sign, he is under the curse; for the least infraction of that law brings a curse. The gatherer of sticks, though he had not kindled the fire, must die.

We shall find this fully confirmed in the New Testament.

We will now inquire what was the first thing that took place after the touching and beautiful institution of the riband of blue. The very first thing we find in the host of the riband of blue, is the sin and rebellion of Korah and his company.

How sad this is : instead of looking at the riband of blue, and keeping all the commandments of the Lord, to do them, to be holy unto the Lord, the very leaders, the ministers of the sanctuary, are chief in this fearful rebellion. This was the first act of the army of the riband of blue. Surely it demands our attention, and especially as we know this is one of the great sins of Christendom—the way of Core, or Korah. (Jude 11.)

The sin was this : it was the ministers of God seeking also to usurp the priesthood. There was only one high priest in Israel, type of our only one great High Priest, passed into the heavens. Rebellion against Aaron was sin against the Lord. And what was the righteous judgment of the Lord on these wicked men? The earth was made to open its mouth, and swallow them up. They went down alive into the pit. Fire also came out from the Lord, and destroyed the two hundred and fifty princes, famous in the congregation, men of renown. And if it was so fearful to sin against Aaron, is it a light matter, O ye so-called priests, famous in the congregation, to sin now against

Christ, by usurping the functions of priesthood? We earnestly entreat *you* to repent before the terrible judgment, now so near at hand, overtakes you.

There is but one great High Priest, who has passed into the heavens; what, then, will be the judgment on those who usurp His place as priests on earth?

Thus, at the institution of the riband of blue, man was placed on the principle he had accepted, to remember and do all the commandments of the Lord; but the gathering of sticks on the sabbath, and the sin of Korah and his company, prove that the least presumptuous breach of that law must be punished with death.

Then, further, what was the history of those marked out from the rest of the world by this badge of blue? Can we find one person, from Moses to Christ, that kept his pledge—that kept the holy principles of the riband of blue? No, not one; for “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” What a happy people would Israel have been, had they kept the holy walk of the riband of blue! But, alas! judges, priests, kings, people, all are proved, in God’s word, guilty before Him! Not one kept the pledge of the riband of blue!

It was to this **very** nation, who wore the riband of blue on the fringe of their garments, that God sent His Son. Did He find the riband of blue a

true sign, that they remembered and did all the commandments of the Lord? Did He find them a holy people to Jehovah?

Hear what Jesus says: "All their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments." Yes, the eye of the Son of God saw that riband of blue on the fringe of their garments, as a mark of hypocrisy and self-righteousness.

The two great commandments are—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Now the Eternal God was made flesh, and dwelt among the company of the riband of blue. Did they love Him? He who created the universe was revealed; in love, He had become their neighbour. Did the wearers of that heavenly-coloured riband love Him? They hated Him without a cause. They spat in His face. They demand that He should be crucified. And as He was offered up in divine love a sacrifice for sins, as He breathed those most tender words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," they gnashed their teeth with rage and hatred of Him, though every one of them may have worn the riband of blue. They were pledged by that riband to remember all the commands of that very Jehovah-Jesus, whom, with wicked hands, they crucified, and hanged on a tree.

We do solemnly ask the reader, Has not man been fully tested on the principle of law, of which the riband of blue was the outward sign? Man thus pledged himself to keep the law, but only to break it. Could the wearers of the blue have possibly been more guilty than they were in murdering the holy One of God?

No doubt, as we shall see, God's purpose of infinite grace shone out in all this. The effect of the blue riband principle and institution was simply this: sin abounded. Sin, man's nature, abounded in open transgression. "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. v. 20.) There can be no doubt, then, of the utter break-down of the principle of the riband of blue. Man was pledged to keep the law, but all were guilty.

The question, then, now is this—Would there be good or harm in combining the principle of the riband of blue with Christ? Would it be pleasing to God for a Christian to wear the riband of blue, and pledge himself to keep all the commandments of the Lord? As a principle, is it still in force, or is it abolished? What does the Spirit say as to all this in the inspired word?

We will look for a moment at the fairest specimen of man under law that ever wore the riband of blue. Saul of Tarsus, surely, was that man. He says, speaking of the righteousness of the law,

of which the blue riband was the sign, "touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless." He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a chief wearer of the riband of blue. If any man could have been justified on that principle, certainly Saul was the man. Now hear him speak, after Christ in glory had appeared to him. He says, "But what things"—yes, blue riband, and all it represented—"were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law." He had sought to stand before God wearing the blue riband, so to speak; that is, in the righteousness of law, of which it was the outward sign; but now he counted all this as dung, compared with being found in Christ. Yes, Christ was everything to him now, and the blue riband nothing.

If you had seen him once, how different!—not wearing a little bit of riband, but with his broad fringe, and on it the riband of blue. Thus he went along the road to Damascus, with all good conscience, a blameless man, doing the will of God, as he thought. But what did that light from heaven reveal to him? A few words from Jesus, the Son of God, and the proud Pharisee was the convicted enemy of Christ. Yes, the wearer of the riband

of blue was the greatest enemy of Christ on earth. The very first commandment of the Lord that riband reminded him he should keep, was to love the Lord with all his heart. But he found, to his horror, that he was a hater and persecutor of that very Lord. Ah, well might he from that day count all that the riband represented loss and dung, for the excellency of Christ.

Beloved reader, have you ever, like Saul, discovered the deep hatred of the heart against Christ? And yet in that MAN IN THE GLORY what grace and love! The blue riband persecutor was chosen to be the messenger of Christ, the apostle of the Gentiles. Ever after, to Paul the apostle, the difference between the gospel and that of which the blue riband was the outward sign, was as wide as the poles are apart. Do we hear some reader saying, How can this be? Was not the blue riband instituted by God? Was it not to remind the people under law that they were to do all the commandments of the Lord? And is not the law just, and holy, and good? Would it not be a great blessing to keep all the commandments of the Lord, to be sober, righteous, and holy? Most assuredly this would be the case, if such a person could be found. But not only did this, the most blameless wearer of the riband of blue, find himself to be the chief of sinners, the greatest enemy of Christ, but let us now hear what the Spirit of God says, by him, as to the whole human race.

First, he shews that those nations, the Gentiles, who, of course, were not under the law, as he shews, and therefore did not wear its sign, the riband of blue—all these were utterly sunk in the deepest lawlessness and depravity. (Rom. i.) Then he speaks of the one nation of the blue riband—Israel—who had received the law, but had not kept it, and proves from their own scriptures that they were as guilty as the Gentiles. Read his words, nay, the words of God. (Rom. iii.) Thus, after fifteen hundred years' trial of the riband of blue, all are proved guilty. This closed the trial of man in the flesh, and proved that, on that principle, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Apply all this to your own case. Suppose you say, I am a Jew, and I will wear the blue riband, the sign of it, that I may remember all the commandments of the Lord, to do them. Now, if you are a guilty sinner—and can you say you are not?—what good in this case would there be in wearing the riband of blue?

No, must we not look for righteousness and justification on a totally new and different principle, "even the righteousness of God, which is by Jesus Christ"? It is thus Christ, *or* the blue riband. The accomplished righteousness of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, *or* man working out a righteousness of his own by re-

remembering all the commandments of the Lord, to do them.

It may now be asked, But what harm would there be in adopting both Christ and the principles signified in the institution of the riband of blue? believe in Christ, and then wear the riband, as a pledge to keep all the commandments of the Lord—of course, praying to Him to help us to keep that pledge? Well, to the natural man, this looks very fair. But have we not an inspired epistle on this very subject? Did the Spirit of God not know that this would be the greatest danger that ever could assail the church of God? And on no subject is the apostle Paul so earnest and vehement.

If the reader would understand the danger of the Christian going back, or combining the principle of the riband of blue, though once instituted by God, with the gospel, let him most carefully study the Epistle to the Galatians. He will find that the very thing symbolised by the riband of blue, that is, righteousness by works of law, is the very leaven, that the Judaising teachers wished to introduce, in order to neutralise the grace of Christ.

Now mark, deliverance from sins, according to the will of God, is through our Lord Jesus Christ, “who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father.” (Gal. i. 4.) This is all of grace, free favour. Well might the apostle marvel that they were so soon, and so

easily, turned from the grace of Christ unto another gospel, "which was not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." If any man or angel did this, he was to be accursed.

He had not received his gospel from man, or by man, but from the Lord. False brethren had come in, seeking to bring them again into bondage. Nay, in this very matter he had had to withstand Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed. The gospel was endangered. Then the argument of the apostle is very striking; he says, "We who are Jews by nature"—the very people who wore the blue riband—"and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Thus the very wearers of the riband of blue had given up works of law for justification, that they might be justified by faith of Christ. Surely this exposed the folly of those who would persuade those justified by Christ to mix with Christ the principles of the riband of blue. Nay, the apostle says, If I do so, I make myself a transgressor. He says, "I am crucified with Christ." Now a crucified person needs no blue riband as a sign that he is keeping the law. The old man who wore the blue riband

no longer lives. It is now Christ: "but Christ liveth in me." The life he now lives is not on the old principle at all, but entirely new. "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." This is not on the principle of the old man, the old *I* keeping the law. How can it be, if "*I am crucified*"? A dead man needs no riband of blue. To wear it again would be to frustrate the grace of God. I do not do that, Paul says.

But if I am saved by Christ, may I not adopt the blue, and so seek righteousness before God by keeping the commandments? "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." The foolish Galatians were forgetting that the law (or riband of blue) had not been set before them, but "Jesus Christ evidently set forth crucified among you." Yes, it was by what He had done that they had received the Spirit of God. Think of their bodies being the temples of the Holy Ghost, and then so foolish as to seek perfection by works of law for that old man of the riband which had been crucified with Christ. We can only point out a few facts now, but hope to take up the epistle in a future article.

Abraham lived long before the law, and the institution of the riband of blue. He believed God, and it was counted to him for justification, or righteousness.

As many as are of the works of the law, the

sign of which was the riband of blue, are under the curse (see Gal. iii. 10), "for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Christ redeemed those who had been under the law. (Ver. 13.)

The promise to Abraham was confirmed in the Seed, which is Christ, four hundred and thirty years before the law, or the blue riband. The scripture hath concluded all under sin. (Ver. 22.) We are now saved, not by the law, but by redemption. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Chap. iv. 5, 6.)

To return back to the beggarly elements was enough to make the apostle doubt whether they had ever been truly converted. (Chap. iv. 9-11.)

Circumcision was one of the commandments under the institution of the riband of blue. "Behold I, Paul, say unto you, That if ye [the Galatians] be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. . . . Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Thus man has been tried, and found guilty, and, according to the institution of the riband of blue, he cannot be saved. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (James ii. 10.) The whole Epistle to the Galatians is on this subject, as it was there especially that the false

teachers sought to introduce the institution of the riband of blue, that is, righteousness by the law, and man in legal bondage to keep it.

In our next, we hope to examine the blessed contrast of the priesthood of Christ and the lace of blue. "Walk in the Spirit, and fulfil not the lust of the flesh."

C. S.



BE YE READY.

"They that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." *Matt. xxv. 10.*

MASTER! Thou'rt coming soon,
And time rolls quickly on;
Help me always to be
Ready for Thee!

Give me that fervent heart
That will not take a part
In aught that would not be
Ready for Thee!

Self-emptied at Thy feet,
Thy words I'd find and eat,
And thus unceasing be
Ready for Thee!

May *all* Thy saints, dear Lord,
According to thy word,
Be loved, and served, by me—
Ready for Thee!

In thee, Lord, may I hide;
For lusts within and pride
Oft press me, when I'd be
Ready for Thee!

May I confess Thy name
'Midst suffering, loss, or shame;
My garments spotless be
Ready for Thee!

Lord, 'tis THYSELF—not heav'n,
Not e'en the glory giv'n—
But Thy dear face I'd see,
Ready for Thee!

H. H. S.

CORRESPONDENCE.

1. "A. B.," Bristol. "Absent from the body." It is far more blessed to receive the word of God—as it indeed is the word of God—than to reason about it. In this our present state we cannot fully understand what it is to be "absent from the body, present with the Lord." There is perfect consciousness. When Paul was caught up into paradise, he says, "whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth." He must have been as conscious in one case as in the other, or he would have known. What he heard was beyond our present state to understand; it was impossible to utter the words. But surely this is enough for faith. Those absent from the body are as conscious as we who are still in the body. On these matters there is a common and vulgar mistake. It is often said, "What do we know of the other world, or state of the departed; no one has ever returned to this world?" We will take the two persons you name—Moses and Elias. Moses died, and the Lord buried him in the land of Moab, nearly fifteen hundred years before he came and appeared with Christ on the mount of transfiguration. (Deut. xxxiv.) Elias had been taken up to heaven eight hundred years before. (2 Kings ii.) Both appear in glory; they talk with Jesus. They are perfectly conscious of what was about to take place: they "appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." Thus the fact of perfect consciousness is revealed in those (whether in the body, or absent from the body) who have departed. We might also point to the case of the

rich man who died, and was buried, and lifted up his eyes in hell. Is he not perfectly conscious of the state and danger of his brethren on earth? It is a solemn thought that those who have departed whom we knew and loved, may often think of us on earth. The spiritual intelligence of Moses and Elias was far beyond what it ever had been before they departed.

2. Brixton. We scarcely see what there is to answer in your letter. In the quotation you give from Cæsar Malan—"Faith does not consist in persuading me that Jesus has saved me, but in believing that He is the Son of God, the Saviour." This was, no doubt, to meet the thought so common amongst the Reformers, of making faith subjective, that is, believing they were saved was salvation, instead of faith resting in the Son of God, the Saviour. And so of your quotation from J. N. D., "Voice to the Faithful."

But how has God revealed to you His Son? Has not the Holy Spirit revealed to your conscience your lost, loathsome condition as a sinner? Has He not opened your eyes to see Jesus, the Son of God, meeting that lost condition by the death of the cross? Is He who died on the cross known to your soul as the Son of God? Then hearken to His words, read them slowly: "Verily, verily. I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life," &c. Do you believe the word of the Son of God? What need, then, have you of further evidence?

3. "F. J.," near Bristol. The scripture is quite clear on the point you ask. "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord.

Whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath-day." (Ex. xxxv. 2, 3.) To gather sticks even on the sabbath-day was a presumptuous sin, that was punished by the man being stoned to death. (Num. xv. 32.) Thus those who were under law were bound to keep it in every point. The Christian is not under law, but under grace. To the Jew the law was a ministration of bondage and death. To the Christian the ministration of the Spirit is liberty, joy, and peace. He is dead to the law, and alive to God. The sabbath was bondage to the Jew, yet, on the part of God, a beautiful type of rest in Christ. The Lord's day is a day of joy and liberty to the Christian. He delights in freedom from earthly care and toil, to serve and worship Him he loves. It is not a legal command, there is no such command to keep the Lord's day. If any one goes back to the law, with its command, he puts himself on the ground of death and the curse. (See Gal. iii. 10.) The Lord's day speaks to our hearts of eternal redemption, for Jesus is risen from the dead.

4. "A. C.," Oxford. In John i. 1 we are taken back to the past eternity: "In the beginning was the word." In eternity *was* the self-existent, the blessed, and glorious Person of Him who became flesh, and dwelt among us. "That which was from the beginning" (1 John i.) means the beginning of Christianity in the Person of Christ. The old commandment, which they had from the beginning, was the obedience of Christ. There could be nothing new, or further, or superior to that. It was the delight of His heart to do the Father's will. It was not obedience contrary to His own

will. It is new to us, in a sense, as the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth—true in Him and in us. He is now in glory, and we now take His place, the same principle of obedience true in us. Partakers of the divine life, we delight to do His will; it is our new nature. (1 John ii. 7, 8.) It was when He was about to depart, for the present, He says, “Whither I go ye cannot come. . . . A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” (John xiii. 33, 34.) It is old, as seen in Him on earth; it is new, as seen in us now He is in heaven. The Epistle of John was written to those whose sins are forgiven. (Chap. ii. 12.) It is important to remember this, in love one to another.

5. “H. A. L.,” Plymouth. There is nothing in the scripture your friend referred to about insuring your life. If you have eternal life in Christ, that is sure enough. “He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.” It is most blessed when this is also true of a household. The future of such a household is to be caught up to meet the Lord.

As to the text, “But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” (1 Tim. v. 8.) The context shews this is in reference to the daily or present need of the household, and has nothing to say to insuring for the future. We believe idleness, and want of industry and providing for the family, a source of great misery in the present day. May the Lord lead each one to do that which is acceptable in His sight.



WAITING TO BE HEALED.

JOHN V.

It is deeply interesting to trace the journeys of Jesus. Repelled by the cold Pharisees of Jerusalem, He had found His deepest joy in revealing the grace of the Father to the sinner at Sychar's well. The new wine of divine grace had broken the old bottle of Jewish prejudices and law, and had found its true object in the case of a guilty and lost woman. Did He not come to seek and to save that which was lost? We see Him taking that same new stream of grace to Galilee; and the Galileans received Him.

“And after this”—after His spirit had thus been refreshed—“there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” Now let us watch His steps, and hearken to His precious words. Whither turns He His steps? Does He hasten first to mingle with the careless crowd of self-righteous, pretending worshippers? No doubt there was great religious excitement, and great professions of devotedness and piety. Well did He know its hollowness. No, we do not find Him first with the crowd of Pharisees. There was a place of felt need, there was a multitude of poor, miserable objects even at Jerusalem. All this was the proof and result of sin. In those five

porches at the pool of Bethesda "lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water."

What a scene of helpless misery! That misery attracts the heart of Jesus. Thither He directs His steps. Not a place in Jerusalem so suited to Jesus as this scene of misery. Look at them, and look at Him. Do you not see here a true picture of the moral condition of Christendom? There is that great crowd of those who say they are Jews, and are not, who answer in every respect to the Pharisees of Jerusalem—self-righteous, but utterly careless or indifferent about Christ. And, like them, about to be destroyed by overwhelming judgments!

But there are those who morally answer to the great multitude *waiting* for the moving of the water. Take each word used to describe their misery. "Impotent." How many who feel something of the wretchedness of sin, yet remain, year after year, utterly *helpless*—yea, as to all good, "dead in trespasses and sins." The pool was excellent, and had its healing to the one who could *first* step in. So of all the millions of Adam's race, if you could be *the first* to keep the law, so as to be perfectly healed of your sin, would it not be truly blessed? Only you would be the first of all the fallen race that did it. But though you have waited and hoped so long, yet still you find yourself utterly impotent—"without strength," it may

be waiting, and longing to keep the law, and be healed ; but you have no power ; you find the law of sin in your members too strong for you. How impotent ! How helpless !

But there is another plain word that is used to describe the waiting multitude—"blind." Yes, this is man's helpless condition also—groping about in the dark, not knowing whither he goeth. He has waited long, and tried long, to be saved. Must he not reform, must he not give up his sins, must he not follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord ? But how is this to be accomplished ? He cannot say, for he is blind, he cannot see how it is to be done.

And there is another class of waiters to be healed. A sorrowful, miserable class this is—"the halt." You once professed, it may be, that you were saved ; and you thought you walked with God, and kept His commandments ; but you stumbled, you fell, and you have been lame ever since. You did not, perhaps, quite learn that there was no good in you. You are laid aside, lame, but waiting. Oh, how you long to be healed ! Is it not so ? Ah, that tear in your eye ; there is One that sees it. If you could be healed in your way, you would have been the first that had stepped in, and that was made whole. But with all your efforts you are no better ; no, it is just so.

There is still another, and even more wretched

class of waiters for the moving of the water—"the withered." These are on the verge of despair. Oh, how different these from the giddy, careless, worldly religious crowd over there in the temple! Every hope of healing almost gone. You have seen a drooping flower on a hot summer's day; ah, more than that, *withered*. Has not Satan whispered, "It is better to be withered than make a profession of being a holy Christian, when you find you have no power to be what you once tried to be, and found you did nothing but fail?" And perhaps you have listened to the serpent, and given up all profession. Those bright hopes of your early days are all *withered*, and eternity is before you. Have you mingled with the hollow, professing crowd, or are you waiting to be healed? If you could but work out a righteousness fit for God, by keeping His commandments—if you could but step into the pool of healing!—but you cannot; and if you could, you would be the first. We are persuaded there is a great multitude of such impotent, helpless folk, seeking to be healed by works of law.

Let us not forget that this place of misery and helplessness, above all others and before all others, attracted the heart of Jesus. We must also notice the sovereign grace that singles out a sad, sad case: "And a certain man was there which had an infirmity thirty and eight years." We are not told how many years he had been waiting, but it

had been a long time ; for we read, “When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he said unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?” Very sorrowful may have been your individual case—now a long time. Every effort may have failed, but the eye of this same ever-loving Jesus is upon you. He saw him, and He sees you. He said to him, and He says to you, “Wilt thou be made whole?” Jesus does not give him a prescription, or advise how he is to act, or what he is to do, to heal himself. No, all must be done for him: “Wilt thou be made whole?” The man does not see this at first. Conscious of his own helplessness, he only wants some one to help him ; he says, “Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool.”

Does it not seem very strange that, though surrounded by preachers, and every possible religious form and ritual, yet you have no one to really help you to be made whole? If you seem to get help for a moment, it is but for a moment. There is no perfect, permanent, abiding healing—no real known peace with God. Have you ever been alone before the tender, loving eye and heart of Jesus, like this impotent, helpless man? Do you hear His words, “Wilt THOU be made whole?” Needest thou now to wait any longer? It is not a little amendment or restoration, but a wholly new, yea, eternal life, He gives. Jesus says, “Rise,

take up thy bed, and walk." The words of Jesus give life and power—a life and power that bears its own witness that it is of God. The change is immediate: "And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath." How immediate and complete the salvation of that helpless sinner, who hears the words of Jesus, believing Him who sent Him! A little lower down in the chapter Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." Thus is he made perfectly, everlastingly whole. No condemnation, for Jesus has borne his sins, has also been made sin for him. He hears the words of Jesus, and passes from the old creation to the new, "is passed from death unto life." He passes into a state of "no condemnation," and is made a partaker of eternal life; and to him that day is a true sabbath-day. He has perfect and everlasting repose, having redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins. Having redemption, he also receives power; his body becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes him free from the law of sin and death. He takes up his bed, and walks, that bed which was the proof of his impotence, the bed of helplessness. The utter inability to walk as a man in the flesh,

seeking to keep the commandments, is now all reversed. He walks in the Spirit, and thus ceases to fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Lusts only provoked so long as he was in the flesh, under law, or seeking to be healed by it. Have you known this immediate, this blessed, mighty change? It is sad to think how modern—alas! even ancient—preaching has so dimmed and clouded the gospel, so hidden Jesus, and shut out His words, that the bulk of even the children of God are waiting to be healed—doubting and hoping, but never knowing that they are perfectly healed.

This greatly offended the Jews. It as greatly offends those who say they are Jews, and are not, in our day. They cannot endure so much as that a sinner should be brought face to face with Jesus—hear His own precious words, and be immediately healed—and know it, and prove it, by a holy walk in the power of the Spirit of God; to enter into one eternal sabbath of rest to the soul, of perfect peace with God; for ever perfected, immutably perfected, by the one offering of Christ. No, no, this cannot be endured by all who would be Jews in our day.

The early church were healed, *had peace* with God, and were waiting for His Son from heaven. That which calls itself the church now is like the multitude of helpless folk waiting for the moving of the water to heal them. It must be self-evident that no one waiting to be healed can be wait-

ing for Jesus from heaven. To them He would not be coming as the Bridegroom, but coming—as He will to the unbelieving—as the Judge of quick and dead. Are you waiting to be healed, or waiting for Him who *hath* healed you?

The Jews were occupied with the sabbath ; they knew not the Lord of the sabbath. He was the Holy, Holy, Holy Jehovah who had given them the sabbath. And He was Lord of it. He did not *make Himself* equal to God, He was God. “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them ; even so the Son quickeneth whom HE WILL.” How truly sublime to see Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, thus seeking and healing the impotent, helpless man !

Just one word more before we close. Have you ceased to wait in lingering doubt and hope ? Have you heard the words of Jesus ? Do you know that He hath made you whole ? Then you may possibly be asking this question : What shall I do now I am saved, made perfectly whole, in the risen Jesus ?

What did the impotent man do ? “The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.” It was not temperance, morality, works of law, or ritualism. “IT WAS JESUS.” Oh, let us tell to the would-be Jews around us, “*It is Jesus.*” Yes, He has made us whole. He has not half washed us in His precious blood. No, He has made us whiter

than snow. Our sins are all forgiven, and we are justified from all things. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) But it is through Jesus. "It was Jesus" who died for our sins. "It was Jesus" who was raised from the dead for our justification, who said, "It is finished." "It was Jesus" who shewed them His hands and His side, and said, "Peace be unto you." "It was Jesus." Yes, yes, Jesus hath done all things well. C. S.



THE RIBAND OF BLUE AND THE LACE OF BLUE.

NUMBERS xv.; EXODUS xxviii.

PART II.

WE have seen man fully tested under law, as symbolised by the riband of blue, and found him only guilty. We have also seen that to go back to the institution of the riband of blue is to give up grace, and to make the death of Christ of none effect.

We now desire to consider the priesthood of Christ and the lace of blue. "And they shall bind the breastplate by rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with A LACE OF BLUE, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his

heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart continually. And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue."

Here, in this chapter, all points to Christ, the great High Priest passed into the heavens. The riband of blue shewed what we ought to have been to God, and were not; the lace of blue, what Christ is to us, having first glorified God on the cross.

Whatever excellencies and glories of Christ we see shadowed in the dress of the high priest, let us not forget that gold, the emblem of divine righteousness, has the first place. "Gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine-twined linen." He is all this for us. What Jesus was in the flesh was typified in the materials of the veil—as the royal Sufferer, as the Messiah, as the One in whom the Father delighted; all was perfect. But He was not a priest on earth; He must first suffer; the fine gold must pass through the fire. As our Substitute, He must bear *the judgment* due to us once, and then pass into heaven, our great High Priest. "Who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, WHEN HE

HAD BY HIMSELF purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

There is another fact of all-importance to Christians expressed in two words—"WE HAVE." "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." We have not to come and pray that He would be our Priest. Whatever tender sympathy, whatever security—all, all we see in our great High Priest—is ours, whether we know it, or not. (Heb. iii. 1; iv. 14-16; viii. 1; x. 21.)

It is, however, important not only to look at and learn the precious lessons set before us in the dress of the high priest, but also to seek to understand the contrasts between Aaron and Christ.

There were two places on which the names of the children of Israel were set in gold—on the shoulder, and on the heart. (Ex. xxviii. 12, 29.) "Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial." Thus we see all Israel represented before the Lord on the two shoulders of the high priest. Is not this a striking picture of every child of God placed in security and strength, like the sheep that He laid on His shoulder?

The Priesthood of Christ is not to meet us when we sin, but rather to preserve us from sinning, our names being ever on His shoulders, and He having an abiding, unchangeable Priesthood. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost

[evermore] that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." What a contrast this is to putting ourselves under law, or taking the pledge, to save ourselves from sin!

But not only were all Israel written, nay, engraved, on the shoulders of Aaron, we must pass on to the *lace of blue* and the breastplate of judgment. The names of all Israel must also be engraved like the engraving of a signet, and placed on precious stones in that breastplate of judgment on the heart of Aaron. Why did the Lord give such minute instructions as to the materials and the security of the breastplate? What a place gold has in all this! It is like the glad tidings of the revelation of the righteousness of God. What chains of gold and rings of gold! "And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the ephod with a *lace of blue*." Blessed security! fastened on the heart of the high priest with a heavenly tie—the heavenly colour, blue. Thus, whilst the riband of blue reminded Israel of the heavenly, holy claims of God on them*—claims which they never met—the lace of blue points to

* It may interest some of our readers to know that "riband of blue" and "lace of blue" are the same in the original. How useless, then, for man to be doing his best! If God declares what He requires from man, it cannot be less than what would suit heaven itself, where all is holy, just, and true—as truly "blue," heavenly—as the lace on the forehead of our great High Priest.

those who are given by the Father, and ever accepted in the Son. And how secure the fastenings : “ that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod.”

What a sight ! Look at our great High Priest. Who are they engraved on His tender heart ? Let us hear Him tell. He says, “ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out . . . And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”

Do you not see the lace of blue in all this ? All is of the Father’s will. Perhaps you say, How am I to know that the Father hath given me to Christ ? Have you come to Him, or are you trusting in your own resolutions ? He says further, “ And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life,” &c. Have you by faith seen the Son of God, and believed on Him ? Then rest assured you are bound on His heart with the lace of blue. It is the Father’s heavenly hand. Again, He says, “ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me ; and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” (John vi.,

x.) Thus have we the answer—ALL that the Father has given to Christ are placed in abiding security on His heart. Rings and chains of gold, and lace of blue—all, all are of God. Now read Romans viii. 29-39. What a chain of pure gold! What rings of everlasting love! Predestinated, called, justified, glorified. Who shall condemn? "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Yes, all is the lace of blue; all is of God—from eternity to eternal glory. Engraved like the engraving of a signet—bound with a lace of blue in everlasting security, that they be not loosed.

It may, indeed, be asked, How can such lost sinners as we be placed on the heart of Christ, never to be separated from His love? On what ground can this be in righteousness? For an answer to this question, we ask your careful attention to these words: "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of JUDGMENT upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually." (Ex. xxviii. 29.) Still more: "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of JUDGMENT the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the JUDGMENT of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually."

Here, then, is the ground of our security on the heart of Christ. He who bears our names on His

heart has first borne the judgment due to us ; yea, bore that judgment according to Urim and Thummim. He has met the claims of the light and perfection of God. Other foundation for my soul than this would I have none. Before He sat down in the radiance of the glory of God, He purged our sins. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He was delivered for our iniquities. He made atonement for sins. Christ died for the sins of many. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Yea, if we turn to the epistle, on this subject, we shall find this pressed more than anything else. The infinite value of that one sacrifice, when He offered Himself as the ground of the immutable security and perfection, as to the conscience, of those sanctified unto God by that one offering. We hope to refer to this especially in our next.

To return, then, to our chapter, and type of our great High Priest, two things are evidently set forth in that breastplate, bound by the lace of blue. Christ, the Substitute, bearing our judgment, and Christ, our Representative, in whom we are immutably accepted.

In the principle of the riband of blue we see man tested, and proved utterly guilty, under judgment. In the principle of divine righteousness and grace, set forth in the lace of blue, we see the Substitute taking our place, bearing our judgment, both as to sins and sin, so that we can say, "Who

shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" Now mark the order: "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. viii. 34.) We say, how beautiful the order: first, He died on the cross; He bare our judgment; God has raised Him from among the dead for our justification. So that God is our Justifier! Then, next, He is even at the right hand of God. There we see Him our High Priest: He maketh intercession for us. So that all is removed that unfitted us, and we are accepted in the Beloved. We now see Him who was our Substitute, bearing the full judgment of God due to us, now our Representative, bearing our names upon His heart in the full light and perfection of God. Bound by a lace of blue, to be unloosed no more—engraved there, to be never effaced. The robe of the ephod ALL of blue. Yes, all this of God. If the riband of blue shews what we ought to have been, and failed; the lace of blue, and the robe ALL of blue, reveals what God has made Christ to be to us. And He never fails.

We can only, in this short paper, dwell on one thing more. "And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre, upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be.

And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord."

Who is worthy, we ask—who in His own Person is worthy to wear the blue lace before the eye of God? It is that glorious, peerless Man who sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He whom God has made to be righteousness unto us—He who has established the throne of God in righteousness, yet perfect grace to us. Oh, Holy, Holy, Holy One, Thou alone art HOLINESS TO THE LORD, Thou alone art worthy to wear the lace of blue. We bow and adore Thee, and cast the riband of blue at Thy feet. Thou hast borne the iniquity of the things of Thy people, and now they are accepted in Thee before the Lord.

What a wondrous picture! all the redeemed people of God accepted, and presented in the holiest, immutably on the heart of Christ, bound there by the lace of blue.

In our next we hope to further consider "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession—Christ Jesus"—as revealed to us in the Epistle to the Hebrews.



THE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE CHRIST.

No. I.

GALATIANS.

WE would now ask the reader's attention to the defence of the gospel of Christ in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians. It would be difficult to name a subject of greater importance at the present time. It is well for us that God permitted the perverters of that gospel to seek to overthrow the doctrine of the grace of Christ at the very beginning, so that we might have the answer of the Spirit of God in the inspired letters of the apostles.

With the apostle that gospel, as revealed to him, was perfect, complete; whatever was added to it disfigured and spoiled it. Christ filled his soul, and all else that man sought to add to it was of Satan. This explains his indignation. What would be the feelings of some master sculptor, who, having finished an exquisite bust or figure, finds others adding to his work an additional eye or hand, and thus for ever spoiling his figure? Picture his indignation. Or a watch manufacturer has finished a most perfect chronometer, made on such principles that it will keep correct time to the decimal of a second in a year. He finds some man, who does not understand the delicacy of the movements, actually adding, say even only one

additional wheel; and, behold, the chronometer is spoiled. What would be the feelings of the manufacturer? Far deeper the indignation of Paul, and for a very grave reason. Another beautiful marble bust might be executed; another chronometer might be made; but if the glad tidings of the Christ be perverted, there is no other way of salvation. A marble bust is for this world; a chronometer is for time: but salvation is for a never-ending eternity.

Now the absolute perfection of the gospel of Christ consists in this—that it is wholly of God, and that which is of God must be complete. This is the first point he proves. And in order to do so, he shews that he has not received his apostleship as God's messenger, either from man, or through or by man. Neither had he received the message of the gospel from man. In this he stands in peculiar, but important contrast to many preachers. Many professedly take the place of being of men, and will tell you they have received their message and authority by apostolic succession from Peter, who they say was bishop of Rome. With Paul it was the reverse of all this. "Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren which are with me."

He had never been ordained by the apostles, nor had he derived anything from them. He was

what men now call a layman, yet an apostle by Jesus Christ and God the Father. To him this was enough. We shall see the importance of these facts shortly. His salutation is very beautiful, and contains the foundation of his glad tidings. "Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ." All flows *to them*, from God as Father, and Jesus as Lord. The free, unmerited favour of the Father, perfect, immutable peace must that be which was made by the blood of the cross, and thus flows to us—the very peace of God. It was from our Lord Jesus Christ also, "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: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

It is most important to see these two parts in the atonement of Jesus our Lord, as the Substitute for our sins. Not only did He thus offer Himself, but this was according to the will of God the Father: as it is written in the volume of the book, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Expiation for our sins must be made; but God so loved as to give His beloved Son to be the holy victim. "He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Yes, He gave Himself for our sins. "And the Lord [Jehovah] hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," according

to the will of God our Father. "Neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when THOU shalt make his soul an offering for sin"—Then did He cry as in the psalm, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" To deny the true atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the will of God, is to deny Christianity; and the crowds that are denying it sadly prove that they are not Christians. No doubt the false gospel, introduced by false brethren in the assemblies of Galatia, has led to this.

Let us, then, hold faster than ever this foundation-truth, that the Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself FOR OUR SINS, according to the will of God and our Father. Is not this the eternal rock on which our souls rest?

The Jews, with all their boasting of the law, were still of the evil world, or age. But through the death of Jesus believers were delivered from it, just as Israel were a figure of this, when, after the killing of the paschal lamb, they were delivered from Egypt. What grace in Christ to become the Lamb! Well might the apostle say, with holy indignation: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." To alter it was evidently to pervert it; and the least addition to it, or taking

from it, was to alter it. Would not a son feel indignant if, after his parent's death, he found some solicitor had been tampering with his father's will? Could there be any addition made to it after the death of the testator? An estate in this world might be, and often would be, lost, if such tampering with wills were allowed after death. But what is this to the momentous issues of perverting the gospel of Christ—the righteousness of God established by the death of Jesus for our sins—the glory of God—the eternal happiness of man, his justification in the sight of God? The apostle, grasping the infinite consequences of such a perversion, says, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed." So deeply does he feel this that he again repeats it.

Mark, there could be no addition to that gospel which he had preached; it is complete. So much was involved, and such his love to men, that he, with holy indignation, says, Let the perverter who preaches another, which is not another, be accursed. There cannot be any other glad tidings. No doubt, if Paul preached any other, he would please men, as we see at this day; but he would not be the servant of Christ. In faithfulness, then, we must conclude that the vast numbers now who are preaching another gospel than that which Paul preached, are not the servants of Christ.

What gave the apostle this divine certainty?

Let him tell us. He says, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." How men do delight to go to the Fathers for teaching and authority; and they say, the more ancient, the nearer the truth. But here is a man in direct contact with the Lord Himself after His ascension to glory. He received his gospel by direct revelation from the Lord, without the intervention of a single person. How is it that men do not desire to come, and hear, and believe his words? No doubt the answer is found in John iii.: "And men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

What an immense privilege to have the very words of one taught by the revelation of Jesus Christ! The apostle enlarges on this. He appeals to his own history as a Jew. Beyond measure he had persecuted the church of God, and wasted it. He had been exceeding zealous of the traditions of his fathers. Never was there a more zealous ritualist. But it was the good pleasure of God, who separated him from his mother's womb, and called him by His grace, he says, "To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen." Did he need to go up to Jerusalem to receive apostolic ordination, or even apostolic instruction? Not for a moment did he dream of such a thing. He says, "*Immediately* I conferred

not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me." Thus he carefully proves that he had nothing to do with apostolic authority, teaching, or succession. Well did the Spirit know all that would come in afterwards through the pretensions of men. Thus went forth this servant and messenger of Christ into Arabia. Then it was three years before he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. He says, "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother." So important does he feel the establishing of this matter, that he solemnly asserts, "Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." Afterwards he departed into Syria and Cilicia. In the next chapter we shall find it was fourteen years after this that he went up to Jerusalem again. Thus, for twenty-one years did he preach the gospel of the grace of Christ, just as he had received it by direct revelation from the Lord. What mighty signs and wonders God had wrought by him during those years! What numbers of souls had been "turned to God from dumb idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." Had he not witnessed the power of God through the foolishness of preaching the cross of Christ? And now had false brethren introduced something

in addition to the gospel of Christ, the perfect, complete glad tidings he had preached? Yes, and they thus trouble these dear souls he so tenderly loved, and evidently they perverted the gospel of Christ.

Let us inquire, then, most diligently what this was they sought to add to the glad tidings revealed to Paul by the Lord. One word before we proceed. Is the grace of Christ, in giving Himself for our sins, a matter of as deep interest to you as it was to Paul? Or are you neither cold nor hot about it, or Him who died, the Just for the unjust? We are deeply impressed with the solemn fact, that, with the crowd of professors, the atoning death of Christ is of so little or no moment. This is the most solemn and striking sign of the times. May the Lord use our meditations on this epistle for the stirring up of our souls to the importance of this great foundation-truth.

C. S.

“UNTIL the power of evil is set aside, the effect of the energy of the Spirit is to make us groan and suffer in proportion to it. Our groaning as saints should ever be that of the Spirit, because of holiness of mind as amidst the evil, and not on account of our own evil. So was it with Jesus: He groaned because of holy affections, and not because of unholy.”

CORRESPONDENCE.

6. "J. H.," Ferniehirst. Jesus, having accomplished eternal redemption (John xx. 21), and being raised from the dead, first spoke peace (having made it) to His disciples. Then "he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This seems to us to be as the spirit of life. (See Rom. viii. 2.) How expressive of the new creation! As God breathed into Adam before Eve was formed, so the disciples received the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of life. By the Holy Ghost the Lord imparted to them the risen life. As individuals they were made partakers of the risen life of Jesus by the Holy Ghost. They could not then be baptised by the Holy Ghost, that is, joined, as the one body of Christ, to Him, the Head in heaven, until He, the Head, was there. If they had been baptised to Christ by the Holy Ghost whilst Christ was on earth, then the church would have been an earthly institution. It is of the first importance to see that the public descent of the Holy Ghost from heaven, and the forming of the body of Christ by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, was consequent on Jesus having ascended above all heavens. Thus these two passages not only do not contradict each other, but each contains an equally important truth. He first breathes into them the new-creation spirit of life; He must then ascend to heaven. The Holy Ghost is then personally sent to form and unite the body to the Head in heaven. The Lord be praised for the blessing He has been pleased to make this little magazine to your soul, and to others you name.

7. "J. C.," Lincoln. We believe it to be a most blessed thing in these last terrible days, wherever the Lord, in His sovereign grace, is pleased to gather a few of His redeemed ones to Himself. There is nothing on earth so blessed to us, or so pleasing to Him. But let us beware of all self-importance. The Lord added such as should be saved on the first day of the church. (Acts ii. 47.) Has He "added" the few you speak of? Then surely it becomes us to rejoice, and own His work. How soon we may become a sect, making a company, instead of discerning the work of the Lord, by whatever instruments! Some gatherings may be in such a condition that the Lord may not be able to use them as centres of blessing.

8. "J. C.," near Stonehouse. We know similar cases, where the poor sheep of Christ are hindered from going to hear the gospel. But surely our path is to meet in prayer, and do as you did. The case is so solemn, we will quote your words: "The poor ritualist priest I wrote to you respecting has gone to his account. The poor were so interfered with, as to liberty of conscience, and the name of the squire used to coerce them, that I consulted with a christian friend as to whether it would not be right to inform him of the use made of his name; however, we decided it was better to lay it before the Lord. Two days after, the poor ritualist was numbered with the dead!"

9. "A Salisbury Reader." The quotation you give from a ritualist paper reminds us of 2 Timothy iii. 9. We give an extract: "DIOTREPHES, who, it is clear, was not a mere presbyter, or layman, who took the lead . . . amongst his equals, for he is represented as wielding the power of excommunication. It would seem to follow that by his

time diocesan episcopacy had been established, that Diotrophes was a bishop, and that he asserted his authority against the apostle himself." It is quite true, that if we search through the New Testament, this is the only person that answers to the modern bishop. Gaius was baptised at Corinth, and also lived there. (1 Cor. i. 14; Rom. xvi. 23.) Such a person also was at Corinth as Diotrophes, and withstood Paul. (See margin, 2 Cor. x. 10, 11.) And there was more than one. (Chap. xi. 13.) Even as early as 2 Thessalonians ii. 7 the mystery of iniquity began to work. No one can doubt that the papacy has been the working out of that mystery of iniquity. God has, in His infinite wisdom, allowed every form of evil to appear before the close of inspiration. He allowed this evil to be developed in this self-willed, self-exalted man, Diotrophes. Call it what we may—episcopacy, or any other name—he exalted himself, he set aside the authority of Christ over the assembly, and practically denied the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost. Compare his conduct with Matthew xviii. 20, 1 Corinthians xii. 4–11. We thus have an inspired epistle to give us the Lord's own thoughts on what the ritualist paper calls a BISHOP. If diocesan episcopacy had been established by the Holy Ghost, how is it that John did not write to the bishop? He recognised no such person, but, owning all the gifts of Christ, he wrote to the church. It is a fearful evil to set aside Christ's authority, and the Holy Ghost; and hence the strong condemnation of the inspired John. His words need no comment of ours. May we take heed to his exhortation, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil."



WORDS OF JESUS.

“And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.”—JOHN v. 40.

JESUS had spoken of two periods—one of wondrous grace, the other of judgment. He had also spoken of two resurrections—one of life, the other of judgment. He had also spoken so plainly, that no one need doubt to which of these periods, or of these two resurrections, he belonged. Of the period of grace he had thus spoken: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” That hour, or period, has lasted nearly nineteen hundred years, and we are in it. In the beginning of the chapter we see divine grace seeking the blind, halt, withered—the helpless. But here grace is seeking its objects amongst the morally dead—the dead in trespasses and sins. Even there the voice of Jesus, Son of God, in freest grace reaches them; and they that hear shall live.

After this hour of richest grace shall come another. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life;

and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." Jesus said it, and the day of grace is *now* ; Jesus said it, and the period of judgment shall surely come. The words of Jesus must be heard in grace, or in judgment. There can be no escape. One of these must be the portion of the reader. We beg, then, your attention as a deeply interested person. Eighteen centuries have run their course, and not one who has heard and received the words of Jesus has been lost ; not one who has come to Him has been refused, or cast out. Mark, it is the most absolute grace : " The DEAD shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; and they that hear shall live." There is neither merit nor motion in the dead. And does not the death of Jesus prove the state we were in ? " We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."

The reader may say, How am I to know whether I am dead, or have life ? I have made many efforts, but am not sure yet. Do you make efforts to be dead ? Nay ; those efforts rather prove that you do not believe in the grace that reaches the dead ; nay, the grace that has reached us by dying for us. " How, then, am I to know ?" do you say ? Harken to the words of Jesus. He says, " Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." (Ver. 24.)

Is it not thus clear, whether you are still in a state of spiritual death in sin, or have passed from that state to life? If you have heard the words of Jesus, or lest you should say, "I may have been mistaken in the past," then mark, it is, "He that *heareth* my word, and *believeth* on him that sent me, *hath*." Hath what? Eternal life. Not merely life for a day, or a year, but, hath eternal life. Jesus says, "*hath eternal life*." Jesus says, "shall not come into judgment." Jesus says, "is passed from death unto life."

Could Jesus speak more plainly, or make it more clear and certain? To hear Him is to hear God; to believe Him, is to believe God. If you hear His word, and believe God that sent Him, then He just represents these three things exactly as they are: you *have* eternal life; you *shall not* come into judgment; you *are passed* from death unto life. You have now to walk as a new creature in a new creation; yes, passed from death unto life. Now walk as such, alive from the dead, to live unto God.

If, then, you have life, you belong to the resurrection of life. Should you die, or fall asleep, as surely as you have heard the voice of the Son of God, raising you from the death of sin, so surely "all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life." In 1 Corinthians xv. this resurrection is fully described. This re-

resurrection of life will take place at the coming of the Lord. "But every man in his own order; Christ, the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." This resurrection of life is very glorious. Believers, we have seen, as to the soul, have *now* eternal life. But *then* the body of corruption will be raised in incorruption and glory. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." What tongue can tell, or pen describe, the glory of the resurrection unto life? But, reader, will it be yours? Or, if you are alive and remain, will you be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and be caught up to meet the Lord, with all those who have heard His voice, and come forth from the grave to rise to meet Him in the air?

It is quite certain, as we write these lines, that we are still in that period, or time of grace, which began when Jesus took the book, and proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord. But can you tell when that period will close? May it not be this very year—nay, this very day? And then, if you die, and are not raised at the resurrection of life, you must be raised, or come out of the grave, a thousand years after, at the resurrection of judgment.

Is not this plainly declared in Revelation xx.? Remember, *all* that are in their graves must come forth "and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." "And I saw the

dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. . . . They were judged EVERY MAN according to their works. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." At the beginning Jesus said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is blessedly true, after eighteen hundred years. It is also as true that the dead who have rejected this love, have not eternal life. "And WHOSOEVER was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Yes, at the resurrection of judgment, every man will be judged according to his works. Well might the heart of Jesus be grieved when He said, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." He knew what would be the eternal consequences of rejecting Him, in the lake of fire.

And now, He gives four distinct witnesses of His Person and work. Jesus says, "Ye sent unto John, and he bore witness unto the truth." Jesus thus pleads with them that they might be saved. They could not deny that they had regarded John as a prophet of God. They had gone out to be baptised, confessing their sins. And John was a burning

and a shining light, and they were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But had not John pointed to Him, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God"? And now Jesus had to say, "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

The reader may have rejoiced for a season to sit under some ministry, it may have been a burning and a shining light; but does Jesus say to you, "And *ye* will not come unto me that ye might have life." Are you still without life?

But Jesus had greater witness than that of John: "For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." Was there ever another man on this earth that did the works that Jesus did? Where did he live, and what was his name? The men who saw Him do these works bare record, even at the cost of all things, and often unto death. He calmed the raging sea, He gave sight to the blind, unstopped the deaf ear, cleansed the lepers, healed the sick, raised the dead, proclaimed the glad tidings to the poor. But, ah, far more, He offered Himself the sacrifice for our sins, according to the will of the Father. Yes, yes, His own works bear unmistakable evidence that the Father had sent Him. "And ye will not," He says, "come unto me, that ye might have life."

Still further witness: "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me."

At His baptism the heavens were opened, "And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Again, on the mount of transfiguration: "Behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." And again, in answer to that solemn cry of Jesus, "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." But, oh, that still more glorious witness: when Jesus had borne our sins in His own body on the cross, the Substitute for us, God the Father raised Him from the dead, thereby bearing witness that He had accepted the atonement by His precious blood. And still Jesus says, "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

Lastly, Jesus appeals unto a fact. He does not say, "search," as a command, but, "Ye search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." Is not this equally so at this day? Men possess and read the scriptures; they think the scriptures have the truth of eternal life in them; they send them abroad, they preach from them. Is there any other Saviour in them but Jesus? The scriptures are full of Him. Do not all the sacrifices of the law, the tabernacle, and all its furniture; the high priest, and his dress, his breastplate, with Urim and Thummim; the psalms and the prophets, the gospels and the epistles—all proclaim Jesus Jeho-

vah, the Saviour of sinners? Every book, every chapter, bears witness to Jesus. "And ye will not come to me that ye might have life."

Oh, by the resurrection unto life, by the resurrection unto judgment, by the witness of John, by the witness of the works the Father gave to Jesus to do, by the witness of the Father in raising Him from the dead, by the whole overwhelming witness of the inspired word of God, scriptures which you profess to believe—we beg of you answer the question, Is it true that you will not come unto Jesus that you might have life? Are you vainly seeking to attain to life by works of law? How can this be, since we have seen that the grace of Jesus comes in the voice now that speaks to, and is heard by, the dead in sins? Do you say, Lord Jesus, I come to Thee now; but I am so bad, I am not fit to come? Do you come? Yes, just as you are! Then hear His words—words of Jesus: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." Do you hear the voice of Jesus? Do you believe God that sent Him? Then remember—"Will in nowise cast out," "hath eternal life," "shall not come into judgment," "is passed from death unto life." All precious words of Jesus. C. S.



THE RIBAND OF BLUE AND THE LACE OF BLUE.

NUMBERS XV. ; EXODUS XXVIII.

PART III.

IN considering the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, as set before us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, let us bear in mind the remarkable place that gold had in the dress of the high priest. The names of Israel were set in gold on the shoulder, and fastened by rings of gold and the lace of blue to the heart of Aaron. That lace of blue, as we have seen, by its heavenly colour, speaks to us, and says, all is of God. We are given and fastened to the heart of our great High Priest by the loving hand of God.

This epistle is in perfect harmony with these typical thoughts. It is God speaking to His people, not now by His prophets, as in the past, but God speaking in the Son. The glory of His Person introduces and crowns His finished work. The appointed Heir of all things, He, the eternal, self-existent Son, by whom the universe was made. He did not *become*, but, “who *being* the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, WHEN he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Could any mere man, or creature, be the self-existent brightness of the glory of God? Could any mere creature be the upholder of all things? He is truly God! "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." And yet as truly perfect man. "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Thus is the Person of our great High Priest set before us. But mark, before He became our High Priest how completely His atoning work was finished; and, as we learn elsewhere, divine righteousness was accomplished! It was "when he had purged our sins" He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." This was in direct contrast with Aaron, or the high priest in Israel. He never had finished his work. He never could offer a sacrifice that purged our sins. He never, therefore, sat down. Scarcely need we say that the law, as symbolised by the riband of blue, knew nothing of this. Man did not keep all the commandments of the Lord, and the law could never purge our sins, but only curse the transgressor. But the lace of blue points to a Priest who has first of all purged our sins by His own blood. "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Having, then, by that one sacrifice opened the way for us into the holiest, even into heaven itself, and having obtained eternal

redemption for us, it is evident we need no other sacrifice. Can anything be superior to eternal redemption? Can anything be additional to that which for ever perfects? Oh, the blasphemy of the man that can pretend to be superior to Christ! —to pretend to offer sacrifices for the living and the dead. We ask you, reader, Have you eternal redemption through the blood of Christ? Then what other sacrifice can you need?

It is most important to be quite clear about this, that the one sacrifice of Christ is the ground of His Priesthood. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." God had no pleasure in those sacrifices which could never take away sins. (Heb. x. 1-9.) It was the blessed will of God that our sins should be so perfectly put away, purged, that He in righteousness should remember them as against us no more.

The Lord Jesus came to do that will. He has done it, and the Holy Ghost now bears witness that God will remember our sins no more. This brings us back to the all-important fact that all this was accomplished before He sat down. "But this man, AFTER he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Mark, He settled the whole question of the believer's sins before He sat down; in this sense, that they never could, or would, be imputed to believers. The Priesthood of Christ begins there.

But then, is not this the very opposite of all

human ideas of priesthood? Of course it is. You see that poor woman, or rich one either. She is going to her priest. What is she going to him for? About her sins. She wants him to intercede for her with God—maybe to offer a sacrifice for her sins. She will pay him to do this. She knows nothing of eternal redemption, nothing of a purged conscience. Her sins, her sins, these drive her to the priest. Or she may have seen the dreadful wickedness of a man pretending to be a priest, and to have power, either to offer sacrifices for sins, or to forgive them. And she may try to come to Christ, that He may do something, as the only Priest, to relieve her. Centuries of false teaching as to priesthood have almost obliterated the truth, that the believer is for ever perfected. (Heb. x. 14.) In ignorance of that fact, a person then looks to Christ to be his Priest when he has sinned, and to intercede with God for him; or to let him have a fresh application or sprinkling of blood; or do something to relieve the conscience as to sins. All this is entirely erroneous, and utterly contrary to the fact that all is done, and the worshipper once purged needs nothing more to perfect that one sacrifice by which he is immutably perfected as to the conscience.

Search through this epistle on the Priesthood of Christ, and you will be struck with this—it is not priesthood before God *if we sin*. Should that be the case, He meets us as Advocate with the Father,

not as Priest with God. (See 1 John ii.) But even then it is on the ground that He is our righteousness, having made propitiation for our sins. And mark as to that also, it is not if we repent and come to Him, that then, perhaps, He may be our Advocate, if we repent enough, and so merit His intercession. No, He is our Advocate. We have such an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. It is wholly of the Father—the lace of blue. We repent, utterly judge ourselves, because we have such an Advocate.

Peter sinned deeply, did he not? Had he to repent before Jesus prayed for him? Before Peter repented, yes, before he sinned, Jesus said, I HAVE prayed for thee. Yes, whether it be as Advocate with the Father, or as our great High Priest before the face of God, all is of God; it is the heavenly blue, the lace of blue. The Priesthood of Christ, then, is to “succour them that are tempted,” “to help in time of need.”

Let us now by faith look up, and see Jesus, our great High Priest, before the face of God for us. Let us dwell on the tenderness and glory set forth in the dress of the high priest. The gold is there. The righteousness of God is now accomplished. He is our subsisting righteousness. The purple is there. As the altar was to be covered with purple, so was He, the royal Sufferer. Yes, the body prepared was once covered with purple. Scarlet was there: David’s royal Son, now in heavenly

glory. Fine-twined linen was there: the ever-righteous One.

Now look a little closer, if only a little child whose sins are forgiven; see your name engraved, and placed on His shoulder, set fast there in righteousness complete. Nay, look again, and never cease to look. Your name engraved, set upon His heart, in the light and perfection of the glory of God. Oh, that lace of blue! It is God the Father that has tied you fast with the heavenly lace of blue—no more to be separated, no more to be loosed. It is the heart of Him who has borne the judgment due to you; it is the heart of infinite, unchanging love. Oh, look at the Person of your great High Priest, blessed, only holy One, the plate of pure-gold righteousness before the face of God—holiness to Jehovah. Yes, and—blessed words!—*we have* such a High Priest. Consider the High Priest.

If it be the riband of blue, in our efforts and pledges to keep all the commandments, we have failed, and shall fail to keep them. But it is the lace of blue: Christ, our great High Priest, will never fail to keep us safe to the end. Did He not pass by the angels, and take hold on our nature, that He might be a faithful and merciful High Priest? that He might first make reconciliation for our sins, and also, having suffered being tempted, He might succour us when tempted? We have not to do one thing that He may become our Priest;

no, "*we have* a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God." Sometimes we are so tempted, so tried, by the world, and still more by false brethren, that we wonder what will come next. He who watches over and cares for us never so wonders. "All things are naked and open unto his eyes." All is known to Him. He has trod every step of the way. As man He learnt His lesson perfectly. So that, being in that sense made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him. Nothing, present or future, can ever loose us from that breastplate of light and perfection. Nothing can ever unloose those rings of gold and chains of love. Nothing can untie what God has tied, that lace of blue. God gave Him this blessed Priesthood, and God gave us to Him.

Not a temptation can come, not a single need or trial, but He sees it all beforehand ; and He is well able to help in time of need. Yes, He is all we need before the face of God, having borne our judgment once. Having once purged our sins, He is all we need in passing through this wilderness to succour and sustain. And *we have* such an High Priest whose priesthood is unchangeable. "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Thus the riband of blue is a symbol of that which saves

never. The lace of blue shews us fastened to Him who saves to the uttermost, even for ever.

Have you seen the dignity of our great High Priest, the Son of God? Then, also, have you seen the wondrous dignity of those placed, through the riches of His grace, on the very heart of this great High Priest? Think of these words: "For such an high priest BECAME US, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." How we have forgotten our heavenly calling! What has God purposed us to be? Or what the height of His eternal purpose, for such an High Priest to become us? Yes, through infinite grace, we too are to be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and finally with Him, for whom we wait, made higher than the heavens. (Eph. i.) Who but our great High Priest could thus save us to the end?

How much still remains to be unfolded of the Priesthood of Christ in this epistle! However, this is the sum: "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;" and therefore we need no other. Such a High Priest excludes all others. If we believe His one sacrifice has put away all our sins from the sight of God, then such a sacrifice excludes all others. In like manner such a High Priest excludes all need of another.

The priesthood of Israel made nothing perfect with its oft-repeated sacrifices and its annual day

of atonement. Those sacrifices could never take away sins. Man was still shut out of the holiest. The institution of the riband of blue made nothing perfect, for no one kept all the commandments of the Lord, to do them. All were guilty. What a contrast in Christ, our great High Priest! By His own blood He has entered in, having obtained eternal redemption for us. The veil is now rent from top to bottom. He ever bears our names upon His heart. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. He ever appears in the presence of God for us. He is ever set down in perfect repose. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Now, if we believe this testimony of the Holy Ghost, we repeat, what need have we of the hosts of pretending usurping priests?

If God thus spake by Moses, when men sought to usurp the priesthood of Aaron: "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men," what is the wickedness of those now in His sight who dare to usurp the priesthood of Christ, and deny the eternal efficacy of His one sacrifice, by offering false sacrifices of their own? May God, by the Holy Spirit, keep our hearts true to Christ, and deliver His people from every form of deception of these last days. C. S.



ACCEPTANCE.

GENESIS IV. 2-7.

It has often been said, "Man is naturally religious." Cain felt and owned that it was right to bring something to God; and so it is. This is the main point of the law; but it must be something that He can accept, and there must be submission to His judgment. Cain, doubtless, presented a beautiful and costly present to God, the result of his own labours, the fruit of the ground. He came (and thousands have followed in the same path) as though nothing had happened, denying by his offering the fall, and the presence of sin; void of all sense of sin and ruin, he adds, as it were, insult to injury. His offering, beautiful as it might be, was the fruit of a ground cursed because of man's sin. And could God accept this, a denial of his true condition in the sight of God? The offering was rejected, and the offerer too, for this is the point here. It is not the expiation of sin, but the question of the sinner's *acceptance*, and this is seen all through Genesis. It is always the burnt-offering, never the presentation of blood, and that seven times. Abel, as here; Noah offering of every clean beast and fowl; Abraham (chap. xv.) offering the heifer, the she-goat, the ram, the turtle-dove, and pigeon. Isaac on the altar, and the ram offered up in his stead. Jacob offered sacrifices on the mount at

the close of his meeting with Laban. (Chap. xxxi.) Israel, in his journey to Egypt, when he came to Beer-sheba, offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. (Chap. xlv.) And in every case it is immediately followed by divine favour and blessing.

Abel felt and acknowledged his condition as a lost sinner, and his need of a substitute before God, and also God's holy demands. In Hebrews we read, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts," &c. It is not that Abel was personally any better than Cain, they were both sons of the same father and mother, fallen, and outcasts; the value and measure of the acceptance was all in the offering. Abel had that divine principle—faith, without which we cannot please God; his sacrifice was "more excellent," by which—not by his faith or personal worth, but by his *sacrifice*—he obtained witness that he was *righteous*, God testifying, not of his faith or himself, but of his *gifts*. And what were those gifts? The firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.

Abel has faith in the love of God, and brings the fat, that which God in all the offerings claimed for Himself, that which gave forth a rich, sweet-smelling savour, speaking to God's heart of a richer, greater sacrifice in the future, when that blessed One, in His deep love for His own, in full

and perfect surrender, meeting every holy claim, gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. (Eph. v. 2.) The believer is brought nigh in all this, he stands before God, clad in "the best robe," justified, "accepted in the Beloved"—"as he is, so are we in this world." "Christ is the believer's righteousness, and we are the righteousness of God in him." Not only are sins gone, but Christ is there, and the Christian is in Him, his true, unalterable standing before God, where there is no condemnation. "For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," and nearer the Christian could not be; Christ's own place and relationship is his, and loved with the same love too, His God and Father ours.

L. S.



CLAIMS AND PRETENSIONS OF THE CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

BELOVED BROTHER,—We have read, and read again, most of the books you sent us. The modern apostles and their church profess to be the only ark of safety from the coming floods of judgment.

It is strange that any truly converted Christian should be misled by these pretensions.

Where is there a single promise or *indication* that the Lord would restore, or raise up, new

apostles at the end of this dispensation, or rather the end of the church's history on earth? Not a single text can they quote that refers to the church, or to Christendom. The only ones they attempt to give are such as plainly do not in the least refer to the church, but to the future restoration of Israel. "I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy councillors as at the beginning." (Is. i. 26.) All the intellectual reasoning on this is evidently a false application of scripture.

It is absolutely certain there is no scriptural warrant to expect the restoration of apostles. If there is, let it be given. We read of the building "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. ii. 20.) But we might as well look for another chief corner stone, as for other restored foundation-apostles.

What have these apostles done? Have they given us a single new truth, or inspired revelation? We cannot find in their books a single truth which is not held by thousands of Christians. We will examine briefly whether we do not find the worst errors of Christendom confirmed by this professedly apostolic teaching.

"REDEMPTION."—In one tract we have some statements as to redemption; but the idea there attached to the word redemption is *restoration*; so that the use of the very word is quite different from the scripture use. Where is there a thought

of *restoration* in scripture where the truth of redemption is set forth?

Again, in scripture it is the redemption of *persons*. "In whom *we* have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Eph. i. 7.) With them it is the redemption of human nature: "For man, for Adam's race, Jesus took part in our nature, and redeemed *IT*." And, as I have said, with them to redeem means to restore. The uniform teaching of scripture is that believers are redeemed by the blood of Jesus—the one sacrifice of Christ—"the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." "By his own blood he entered in once . . . having obtained eternal redemption for us." And mark, this redemption is never applied in scripture to any but believers; "purchase" is, and "propitiation" is. But it is plain that, since redemption is eternal in scripture, it can only apply to those who are saved.

These new apostles tell us "He offered up Himself to God, without spot—a full, perfect, and all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world." "But," they say, "*something more was necessary for man's redemption (!) . . . and this also* Jesus effected in His own Person as the Redeemer of man. He cleansed the human heart from defilement, and fixed it upon God. He sanctified the thoughts and affections at their source. He

regulated the will, and subjected it to holy obedience," &c. "Jesus took part in our nature, and redeemed it." This is strange teaching, that the sacrifice of Christ is not sufficient, though all-sufficient for man's redemption. This doctrine was most distinctly taught by them at the first, though more hidden by words now.

The insufficiency of the atoning death of Christ is thus spoken of: "The atonement, upon the popular scheme, is made to consist in suffering, and the amount of the suffering is cried up to infinity. Well, let these preachers . . . broker-like, cry up their article—it will not do; it is but the sufferings of a perfectly holy man, treated by man, treated by God and by men as if He were a transgressor." Thus is the great atoning work of the Son of God despised with scorn, and reconciliation of individual *sinner*s by His precious blood denied. "There is no reconciliation of individuals, but a reconciliation of human nature. It is not thine, it is not mine, it is not Christ's; but it is the common unity of our being."

If, then, these teachers tell us the sacrifice of Christ was not enough for our redemption, what do they tell us Christ did to reconcile human nature? It is dreadful to tell what they do say. "Manhood, after the fall, broke out into sins of every name and aggravation, corrupt to the very heart's core, and from the centre of its inmost will sending forth streams black as hell. This is

the human nature which every man is clothed upon withal, which the Son of man was clothed upon withal, bristling thick and strong with sin, like the hairs upon the porcupine." "I stand forth, and say, that the teeming fountain of the heart's vileness was opened on Him; and the Augean stable of human wickedness was given Him to cleanse; and the furious wild beasts of human passions were appointed Him to tame. This is the horrible pit and the miry clay out of which He was brought."

Christ, by this horrible doctrine, is made to say, "Not I, but sin that tempteth me in my flesh." This is the root-error of the whole system. Reconciliation of human will, sinful nature, to God by the incarnation, Christ taking that sinful nature in His incarnation, and making it acceptable to God! We could not descend so low as to discuss this abominable doctrine.

We look back to that cross on which redemption's price was fully paid—that one sacrifice, by which He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. We do not behold there a man with a sinful nature like our own, and therefore unfit to be the holy, atoning victim—nay, needing a Saviour for Himself; but we see there the Holy, Holy, Holy Lamb of God made sin on that cross for us; delivered for our iniquities; bearing our sins in His body on the tree. There God did not reconcile sinful human nature to Himself, but

utterly condemned it. "God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh [*'reconciled it?'* No!] and for sin [or, by a sacrifice for sin] CONDEMNED SIN IN THE FLESH." (Rom. viii. 3.) He was ever well pleasing to the Father. It was only when bearing our sins on the cross, in darkness, that He for the first time addressed Him as God. Then did He cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was then, when made sin for us, when forsaken of God—THEN atonement was made: sin, not reconciled, but for ever judged. Jesus says, "It is finished." Surely God has proved it is enough. He is glorified. Sin is judged. And believing God, who shewed His acceptance of the sacrifice by raising Him from the dead, we have peace with God.

Now, who sent these apostles, who, whilst quoting these very scriptures, yet deny and neutralise the value of the blood of Christ, by declaring "something more was necessary for man's redemption:" and that something more, Christ having a vile, sinful nature like our own, which would quite unfit Him to be the Saviour! We ask, Are not these soul-destroying, Christ-dishonouring doctrines? May the Lord make Himself, the truth, more increasingly precious to our souls. In our next we hope to examine their doctrine of regeneration.



CORRESPONDENCE.

10. "W. J.," Harlech. The words of Ananias to Saul are very remarkable. (Acts xxii. 16.) They seem to us to refer more to sins before and against the disciples, or the assembly. He had believed, and therefore was forgiven before God. In repentance, utter self-judgment of all the past, and buried with Christ in baptism, as the public identification with Christ. In that figure he left himself and his sins behind in death, washed wholly away in the death of Jesus. Baptism was a most striking sign, and to the disciples Saul had thus publicly judged and renounced himself, and thus taken the profession of what he before persecuted. He thus washed his sins away before the assembly. He was now Paul, the chosen disciple of Christ.

In Matthew xviii. 18 the Lord establishes the all-important principle, that whatsoever the assembly binds in discipline is bound in heaven; and, foreseeing the sad, divided condition of the church of God as a whole, He also declares the further truth of verse 20. Thus, wherever souls are truly gathered to Him, and recognise His presence in any place, their decision will be felt to be binding by every one obedient to the Lord. Should *they* make a mistake, no doubt the Lord will make it manifest to them, and to all. We judge this has special reference to discipline. John xx. 23 will confirm the same administrative action of the assembly in cases of discipline. But we believe the Lord, having accomplished redemption, and having in grace spoken peace to them, makes the assembly on earth the administrators of the glad tidings of forgiveness of sins to the whole world.

All believers, since the descent of the Holy Ghost, are one with Christ, being baptised into the one body by the one Spirit. There is no contradiction between Peter preaching Jesus as Lord and Christ (Acts ii. 36), and Paul, who was used in unfolding the further glories of Jesus as Son of God.

The disciples were clean every whit, in the sense of being born again, begotten by the word—clean as to the new nature. As to our actual sins, we are washed in His blood. “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

To be born again implies a wholly new nature, or life, to us; but it is eternal life, because the life of the eternal Son. (1 John v. 1, 10–13.) The Son of man, Son of God, had the title to forgive sins in righteousness, through that work which He must accomplish, and has accomplished, on the cross. The assembly also has the privilege of forgiving sins in discipline. (2 Cor. ii. 7.) The Father also, in His discipline of us, forgives sins on confession, through the unchanging advocacy of Christ. (1 John i. 9; ii. 1, 2.) This must not be, however, confounded with the blessed non-imputation of guilt, through the eternal efficacy of the one offering of Christ. (Heb. x. 17.) In Peter’s preaching (Acts ii. 36–38), he announces to the guilty Jews the necessity of repentance, an entire change of mind, and self-judgment of their conduct, manifested by becoming the disciples of the Jesus they had put to death, openly confessing Him in baptism, “in the name of Jesus Christ, for forgiveness of sins.” Paul, on the other hand, explains the typical meaning of baptism. (Rom. vi. 4.) It is thus death written on the old man. Baptised unto the death of

Christ, Peter proclaims it ; and Paul explains what it signifies. It is most profitable to read the two together.

The difference between the kingdom or reign and the body, is too great a subject for a short answer. The whole of professing Christendom forms professedly the kingdom in mystery whilst the King is away, and all true believers form the one body of Christ.

The difference between redemption, bought, and salvation, may be illustrated thus : you may buy a slave to be still your slave. You may pay the price of his redemption, in order to set him free. When he receives his full liberty, the effect of the redemption, the writings of his freedom, then he is saved, delivered from slavery. We are bought, we are redeemed, we are saved, we have the writings, the very word of God.

11. "F. W. C.," Demerara. The Holy Ghost did not come to dwell, or abide, until redemption was accomplished. This corresponds with Jehovah dwelling in Israel after redemption from Egypt. Baptism brings a person into the house or profession of Christianity, and that house is professedly under the reign during the absence of the King. All the unbaptised are outside the kingdom. Many that are baptised, and thus in the house, are indeed of the world, as you say, being mere professors ; yet, in general, it would be correct to say the house includes all the baptised, and responsible as such, whilst the world is the unbaptised. The Lord be praised for any help you may have received in the pages of this little periodical.



THE LORD WITH JEHOSEHAPHAT.

OF all the Old Testament types written for our admonition, there is perhaps not one more deeply interesting to us at this moment, than the history of Jehoshaphat. (2 Chron. xvii.-xx.)

These are remarkable words, "And the Lord WAS WITH Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim. But sought the LORD God of his father David, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel." (Chap. xvii. 3, 4.) He who was WITH Jehoshaphat has thus promised, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Are we so gathered to Him that it can be said of us, The Lord is with you? Do we know this to be really so? Are we assured that we are walking in the first ways of the church of God? Have we really sought to the LORD, as seen in all His blessed authority in the church, the assembly, at the beginning? Are we walking in His commandments, and not after the doings of Christendom? Has He authority over us by His word, applied by the Holy Ghost? If not, we are not treading in the steps of Jehoshaphat.

We do beg the reader to lay these solemn questions to heart. If Jehoshaphat had this privilege, the Lord was with him. Have we a less privilege

now redemption is accomplished, and the Holy Ghost sent down to abide with us to the end? Are we walking in the ways of an unconverted, yet professing Christendom? or are we walking in His commandments? Have we His command for all we do? Do you say, I am walking with such a party? Have you His command to walk with that party, and to do as they do? We do trust this solemn word will be applied with searching power to all our souls.

“Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand.” If we are walking with men, we shall be blown about by every changing wind. If we are walking with the Lord, keeping His commands, our feet are placed on a solid, immovable rock—yea, on Himself, the Rock on which His church is built. If we are walking with men, our heads may hang down in utter discouragement. If we walk with the Lord, it will be with us, as with Jehoshaphat, “And his heart was lifted up [that is, was encouraged] in the ways of the Lord.” Is there anything so blessed, so cheering to the heart, as to be walking in the ways of the Lord? For there are the right ways of the Lord, and all others are wrong and evil ways. There is surely only one path that is the right path; and all others are wrong.

The next thing he did, in the third year, was to send princes to teach in the cities of Judah. “And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law

of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people." It was thus the word sounded out at Thessalonica. They had received the glad tidings of salvation with full assurance, and by the power of the Holy Ghost; and they sounded it forth all around. Are we walking in these first ways of the church? If we know that the Lord is with us, and our hearts are encouraged in His ways, then may we not away to the cities and villages, and have the book of the law of the Lord with us? We need greatly stirring up to these first ways of the church. The fear of the Lord fell upon the nations around. We can testify, after many years, that just in proportion as we walk in the ways of the Lord, and go forth in faith, encouraged in the ways of the Lord, it is then and in that proportion of faith, that the fear of the Lord falls on those who hear the word.

After all these blessed encouragements come most solemn warnings. "Jehoshaphat had riches, and honours in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab." Now the ten tribes, over which Ahab was king, did not walk in the ways of Jehovah. They were the ten tribes of Israel; but they hated the rule of the Lord, and would not have it.

Are there not many tribes in Christendom who exactly answer to the condition of those tribes of Israel? They are of professing Christendom. But there is scarcely one thing they do after the first works of the church. They do not own the Holy

Ghost on earth, or bow to the Lordship of Jesus. Do they not hate it? This is a very humbling lesson. This was a great mistake on the part of Jehoshaphat. He goes to Samaria and eats at the feast of Ahab. Beware of this! He is then easily persuaded to go up to fight with Israel, at Ramoth-gilead. "And he answered him, I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war." Very soon did he find this to be all a mistake. And so will any man find now. If we are walking in the ways of the Lord, and we join affinity with those that are not, we shall find on the very first essential, we are as wide apart as the poles. Mark the very first thing Jehoshaphat proposes. The very first thing those walking in the ways of the Lord always desire. "And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, INQUIRE, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord." This is just the last thing those would think of doing who are walking in the ways of Christendom. There is human arrangement, human effort, and yet a great show of having the mind of the Lord; yea, in some cases, with professed infallibility. This desire, however, of Jehoshaphat, and the antagonism always thus found to the authority of the Lord, brings out a marvellous revelation of the invisible world.

The king of Israel has a grand display of prophets at once; but mark, it does not say prophets of the Lord. They reply immediately so as to please the king. "Go up; for God will deliver

it into the king's hand." Jehoshaphat cannot accept the word of the four hundred prophets. He said, "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him? And the king said, There is yet one man, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesieth good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah, the son of Imla." Thus there are four hundred false prophets to one true man of God. The messenger who was sent to fetch him besought Micaiah to prophesy like the established prophets of the king. Mark his reply: "And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak." Beautiful words of the son of Imla. Thus we have four hundred ready to speak what will please man; and one man of God who desires, yea, will only speak what God shall give him to speak. Ahab is both afraid of this one man and also hates him. Jehoshaphat prefers to hear the word of the Lord from this one, to the unanimous words of the four hundred. So far we have the outward facts of the case. Now for the inward, the invisible.

Heaven is opened to the son of Imla. "I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left." A spirit offers to come, and is sent to entice Ahab. "And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou

shalt also prevail: go out and do even so." Thus we see the words of Samuel to Saul are fulfilled, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." The whole of the false prophets were in rebellion against the Lord, and under the power and guidance of an evil spirit, which is witchcraft.

Men laugh at the idea of witchcraft in this day, perhaps there never was more of it. Do we not read in one of the last inspired epistles, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Let us remember how many professing Christians there are that answer exactly to the ten tribes of Israel in the days of Ahab. They are in rebellion against, and have set aside, the Lordship of Christ, as seen acting by the Holy Ghost in the beginning. For centuries they have hated the few, who, like the son of Imla, would only teach the word of the Lord. Is not Christendom full of false teachers preaching smooth things? Can any man say there are not four hundred false prophets to one true prophet sent of the Lord? The Lord Jesus, speaking to the angel of the church which answers to the protestant epoch of this day, says, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." And think of the long condition of the Greek and Roman churches.

Only one *with* and *for* the Lord. Four hundred not with Him, and therefore they were against

Him. It was rebellion as the sin of witchcraft. They, and all they deceived, were under the power of, and led up to Ramoth-gilead by, an evil spirit. What a revelation ! We call the most solemn attention to this fact. All who are not now with the Lord, are against Him. Tribes of Christendom have rebelled against the Holy Ghost now here on earth. They have rebelled against the presence of the Lord, in the midst of those gathered to His name. Is it not a fact that Christendom has departed as far from the New Testament, as Israel had departed from Moses ?

But to be in rebellion against the Lord is as the sin of witchcraft ; so that every false prophet now is under the power of, and led by, an evil spirit. Does not this explain many a movement in the professing church, as it did then in Israel ?

There is scarcely a truth in the word of God that is not denied and undermined by false teachers under the power of witchcraft ; that is, an evil spirit. How men would stand aghast if they knew how many parties, guilds, and associations, are associations of witchcraft ; as truly under the power of an evil spirit and idolatry as the four hundred prophets of Ahab. Nothing can happen but that which the Lord permits ; but we would press on the reader the question, Are you with the Lord, or against Him ?

The true servant of the Lord may also be ensnared in this. Prosperity may make him care-

less, and then is the time of special danger, as it was with Jehoshaphat. He is brought into great trouble and danger, and so it is with us if we ever get into affinity with the enemies of the Lord. The one who had the true message of the Lord must suffer and be despised. But it was better to be put in prison, and fed on the bread of affliction, than to be clothed in royal robes with Ahab.

The Lord, however, was not unmindful of His erring servant. In his great strait, when compassed about by the enemy, "Jehoshaphat cried out, and the Lord helped him ; and God moved them to depart from him." How gracious of the Lord ! Is He not our Advocate with the Father ! If my reader has been enticed into affinity with the enemies of the Lord—for many who profess to be prophets are such—and if you should be sore pressed and in great perplexity, oh, cry to the Lord ; He will hear and He will deliver.

The Lord delivered Jehoshaphat, whilst Ahab was slain in his chariot of war.

"And Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem." Yes, "He restoreth my soul." Jerusalem was the place where the name of Jehovah was recorded. There was not another such centre on earth. The Lord Himself is the Centre of gathering now ; and there is no other. Who can tell the blessedness of being restored to that Centre—even Himself—after a time of wandering ! Yes, "in peace to Jerusalem."

In His presence there is always peace. There is, however, chastening and rebuke. Mark the words of Jehu the seer, "Shouldst thou help the ungodly? and love them that hate the Lord?" Now weigh these questions well. There is no enmity against the Lord greater than that of false profession under the power of an evil spirit. Is it not true now also that he that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him?

May the Lord write these deeply solemn lessons on our hearts, and whatever more there is to follow in our meditations of this interesting portion of scripture.



THE GLAD TIDINGS OF CHRIST.

No. II.

GALATIANS II.

WE will now pursue our inquiries as to what it was that the false brethren sought to introduce, so as to mar the glad tidings of Christ. A comparison of this chapter with Acts xv. will greatly help us to understand this deeply important question. Here we see the inward exercise of the apostle's heart, guided, too, by the Holy Ghost, for the safety of the gospel. He says, "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem . . . and I went up by revelation." There was no uncertainty in his own mind, he well understood the object of these false brethren—"to spy out our

liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage." Paul was so clear, and had the Lord's mind so distinctly, that he declares those at Jerusalem added nothing to him in conference. Yea, so clear was he about it, that he took Titus, uncircumcised as he was, with him; that is, with him the question was decided beforehand, the taking of Titus proved it to be so.

In Acts xv. we have the outward facts of the conference. And the conference decides exactly as Paul had decided beforehand, which must be so when guided by the Holy Ghost. The Gentile believers were not to be placed under the bondage of the law—the very bondage the false brethren sought to introduce. Titus was not compelled to be circumcised, and the work of the apostle Paul was fully owned to be of God. Thus did God, by the decision of the assembly, settle the matter in peace, and with one accord.

It did not follow, however, that Satan ceased to seek to destroy the gospel of the grace of God. Nay, in his next attempt (would you have thought it?) he uses the very apostle of the circumcision to compromise the gospel. Paul has to say, "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." What need we have, as he himself says afterwards, to be kept by the power of God! At first Peter acted according to the liberty and grace of God. He did not regard anything as unclean which the Lord

had cleansed ; he ate with the Gentiles. But when certain came from James—that is, from Jerusalem, where evidently the superiority of Judaism still sadly asserted itself—he withdrew, and separated himself. This led others to dissemble—the gospel was in jeopardy. The Gentile Christians had Christ, but Peter was acting as if that were not enough ; there must be something besides Christ, or he could not eat with them. This was terrible. Now mark, Paul did not bow to him as the pope, or chief bishop of the church, but withstands him to the face.

Thus the gospel is not of man ; it is not of Peter ; it is not of Paul : it is of God. And God greatly overruled this fault of Peter, in bringing out for us this blessed defence of His truth. The place of the Jew who had been under law is thus fully examined : “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law : for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

The Jews had been seeking righteousness by works for many centuries. They could not find it ; they could not acquire it. They were still guilty, under death and condemnation. They had had to give up that by which they could not be justified. They had believed in Jesus Christ that they might be justified—accounted righteous in Him. How

simple this is; but is it also true of the reader? Very likely you have been brought up as a Jew, that is, seeking to acquire righteousness by works of law. Have you not? Have you not hoped to do this or that, and at last hoped you might be justified? Have you found this cannot be, that you are still guilty, nothing but sin, and according to the holy law of God, He must condemn you? Is there no escape for your soul on the ground of the law—guilty and condemned? Now this is just what the believing Jews had found to be their case. And they had given up all hope of ever being saved or justified by the law; they believed in Christ, they had found righteousness in Him. Have you? Can you say, “Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ”? Now they had thus been led to give up the law, even the Jews, who had been under it as a means of attaining unto righteousness. They were accounted righteous by faith in Jesus Christ. But if they were still accounted, found sinners—as Peter’s conduct implied—not fit to eat with, it was really making Christ a minister of sin; for it was through Christ they had given up the law as a means of seeking to be righteous. For if we preach again the law, or build it again, we make it appear that we have been sad transgressors in destroying it as a means of righteousness, even by preaching Christ. Was it not, then, a serious

thing to thus mar and corrupt the glad tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ, by seeking to introduce the law again, as something additional or superior to Christ?

But now the apostle calls attention to one thing, as to the law, which is greatly overlooked. He says, "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." The claims—the most *holy* claims—of God had come upon him with such force and power, that they overwhelmed him with death. As a responsible man there was nothing but death for him, and to him. God so holy, and I so bad—not an atom of good in me as a responsible man. Oh, what needed distress and death this brings! Paul accepted this fully, death to himself, that he might live to God. Now, apart from Christ this could not be, he could not live; there could only be death, no life. Hence he says, "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."

Can you say, "I am crucified with Christ"? Every claim on me as a responsible man has been met in that death. I am dead with Him. There is an end of 'I.' Yes, the claims of a holy God have been fully met; yet I live; yet not I, Christ liveth in me. Oh, have we learnt this end of the abominable old 'I' in the cross of Christ? It is also blessedly true that He bare our sins in

His own body on the tree. But here the great point is the end of old self, the vile old man; and the new 'I,' the new life in Christ. Death has had its full power according to the claims of God, and yet I live in Christ. Have you thus come to the end of yourself? Is it now, "NOT I, BUT CHRIST"?

This is not only so as to judgment due to us, but the same precious Son of God is the blessed object of sustaining faith. "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Oh, how unspeakably blessed! We have passed through death with Him into a life where all of the vile old self is reckoned behind, and where Christ is now our life, our all. And now He is the one object of our hearts—the living, loving Jesus, "who loved me, and gave himself for me." May we thus individually know Him, and feed on His matchless, infinite love!

All this is the true grace of God. We do not set it aside, surely. Is it not all the free favour, the grace of God? Do you say, But now, having Christ, must I not seek righteousness by the law, as a rule of that life which I now have? The answer is very plain. "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Is it not clear that if we are seeking righteousness by law, or by any means, we evidently have not found it? Did you ever see a person seeking a thing he had found? If I have found both the righteous

judgment due to me, and complete justification, acceptance in perfect righteousness in Christ, how can I seek it in the law, where we have seen it never could be found? The soul, then, that seeks righteousness by works of law has given up Christ; for if he has Christ, he is justified from all things, is accounted righteous before God, through the redemption in Christ Jesus. Hence there are thousands who, whilst they profess to believe in Christ, yet have no peace, no rest of soul and heart, by faith in God. If they are seeking righteousness by works of law, it must be thus. If a man supposes he can attain to righteousness by the law, he has neither learnt his own vileness, nor yet the overwhelming claims of the holy law of God. It has never come with death to his conscience; neither has he, as even the believing Jews who had been under it did, given it up entirely as a means of ever attaining to righteousness. And if he has not given it up, but is still under it—still seeking righteousness by works of law—then to him Christ has died in vain. If such should be the state of the reader, may the Lord use this paper in awakening him to these solemn, eternal realities.

Well, another says, I have known what it was for the holy claims of God to overwhelm me as a sinner. I long sought righteousness by trying to keep the law. I found it all in vain. At last the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to see Jesus, and to

believe on Jesus Christ. I am justified by faith, and have peace with God. I would just ask you this question: Must there not be a holy walk now? Ah, that is another matter, and just the point we shall find brought out in this epistle. Indeed, let us remember the opening statement as to our Lord Jesus Christ. It is, that He not only gave Himself for our sins, but also that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God our Father. Whilst there is the gracious provision, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;"—yes, He is still our righteousness—"and he is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John ii. 1, 2.) Yet the very mark of a true child of God is, that he doth not practise sin, for he that is born of God cannot sin; that is his very nature as born of God. (1 John iii. 1–9.) Let it, however, be well understood that this cannot be accomplished by being under law, for the law finds nothing in the flesh but sin.

Now, as this is such a practical and deeply important question, and as both sides of it are fully opened out in this Epistle of the Galatians, we propose to examine how there cannot be, and how there can be, a walk of holiness. We shall consider in our next, if the Lord will, why the Galatians were so foolish, so senseless, in listening to those who would teach them to seek righteousness by works of law.

CLAIMS AND PRETENSIONS OF THE CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

No. II.

REGENERATION.

BELOVED BROTHER,

WE notice in the tract on regeneration, that regeneration and the new birth are supposed to be the same thing—"regeneration is nothing less than the new birth." Now these two things are quite distinct in scripture. The word translated "regeneration" only occurs twice. In Matthew xix. 28, it can only mean *the entire new order of things* in the millennium; and it could not there mean the new birth of a soul. Is it not the same in the other place, Titus iii. 5? It is not the thought of the communication of a new life merely, but the entire new order of things into which we have passed. The washing of that new order of things is expressed in such scriptures as these: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy WORD is truth;" "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word;" "And forthwith came there out blood and water," both expiation for sin and cleansing. Now read Titus iii. 5-7. To limit this to the new birth, or the implantation of a new life, would be a great violence to the passage. The washing of regeneration is the entirely new order of things in Christianity. The

renewing of the Holy Ghost takes in the whole range of His work in that new order of things.

The catholic apostolic tract then goes on to teach that "*By regeneration* we are brought into oneness with Christ, and become joint-heirs of His everlasting inheritance." This is a subtle error, and the very opposite of the teaching of Christ in John iii. The doctrine is indeed announced, that man must be born again, not the old man instructed, or even reconciled to God, but a new, wholly new, birth; or man could not even see the kingdom of God.

But not only *must* man be born again, the Son of man *must* be lifted up, expiation for sin *must* be made: "that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have eternal life." It is remarkable how expiation for sin by the sacrifice of Christ is admitted in these tracts, yet it is uniformly set aside (as in this case) or neutralised.

Let us now go to the root-question that affects millions of professing Christians. By what means is the new birth effected, or, as they call it, regeneration?

They answer, "Regeneration, or the new birth, is effected by means of water and the Spirit . . . the sacrament of baptism the means by which the Spirit acts." "We need not hesitate to say that the new birth is communicated by water and the Spirit, and that at baptism." "He who is baptised is said to be born of God."

As all error exalts man in some way, so here man, the minister doing his part in the ordinance of baptism, causes God to do His part, and so the baptised must be born again. "Can we doubt that God performs His part? The ordinary means of regeneration, then, is the sacrament of baptism; and, except God fails Himself, the act is thereby accomplished, and the new birth takes place." All this is applied alike to infants or to men. "The newly-baptised babe, and the newly-baptised man, should alike come forth from the waters of baptism pure and undefiled."

FAITH in the atoning death of Christ for our sins, or in God who raised Him from the dead, seems to have no place in this professed apostolic doctrine of regeneration, whilst allowing that it is the blood of Christ that makes atonement. "Yet the means of entering upon the state in which man receives the full benefit of forgiveness is the ordinance of baptism." "*In baptism is imparted*, not merely pardon of guilt, and escape from its penalty, but a putting to death of the flesh," &c.

Thus is this wide-spread, deadly error of baptismal regeneration confirmed by these latter-day apostles. It is remarkable that Satan teaches just the same soul-destroying error by the Mormon apostles. One set of apostles is adapted to the highly educated, and the other to the illiterate.

Is not this the rotten foundation on which Rome

and ritualism is built? Can a single truth be fully held in unison with this error? Take the church, the body of Christ. These apostles recognised all the baptised as composing the church, and quote 1 Corinthians xii. 13 as meaning water baptism! Thus they have no idea of the church, His body. Was the place filled with water on the day of Pentecost? Is there even proof that the hundred and twenty were baptised with water?

But it may be asked, Did not the Lord teach Nicodemus that a man must be born again in christian baptism? Well, did He? Read it again, and see. Is there a word about baptism? Was christian baptism instituted then? Certainly not. Then how could Nicodemus have understood it? Yet "Jesus said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" Now read Ezekiel xxxvi. 23-31. Ought he not, from this scripture, to have known that before Israel can see the kingdom set up, there must be this purification—a new birth, and that by the Spirit of God? Was not water the well-known emblem of purification to the Jews? and more, that purification is chiefly connected with death? (Lev. xiv.; Num. xix.) And water came out of the dead side of Christ. Now, is it not all a mistake to say Christ spoke of baptism to Nicodemus?

He shews it is an act of divine sovereignty in every man born of the Spirit. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," &c. But if it meant water bap-

tism, there would be no sovereign grace in it. Let the ministers do their part, and baptise the whole population, and then tell them that God must have done His part. Their sins and guilt are gone. They have no need either to repent or believe the gospel. They are members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of heaven. Thus a whole ungodly population are deceived.

We fully own baptism as the entrance into the outward discipleship, or profession of Christianity. We also fully hold it as a most striking figure (Rom. vi.) of death to the old man; *but never once is it used as imparting life*—the very opposite, it is a figure of death. It is not the restoration, or reconciliation, of the old man, but death to him. Just as the waters covered the earth which had been created in the beginning, all was death beneath those waters, so to speak. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep. So again, in the days of Noah, the waters of death covered the old world when God brought out of death the new world. So baptism is a figure how old things have passed away, and all things become new. Read the Spirit's explanation of this in Romans vi.

The question, then, is this—How am I to know that I have passed from death unto life?

These apostles tell me, if I have been baptised by a minister, it must be so. I am regenerate.

Reader, can you rest your soul's eternal salvation on the words of these men? We know you

dare not. Let us beg of you to contrast their words with these words of Jesus—ponder them well: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, BUT IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.”

Is not the new birth declared to be by the word also as follows? “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever.” (1 Pet. i. 23.) “Of his own will begat he us with the WORD OF TRUTH.” (James i. 18.) Millions in this day have been baptised who have never passed from death unto life. Have you, reader, heard the words of Jesus? Have you believed God? Can you not, then, rest in His word that you have passed from death unto life? In our next we hope to examine their doctrine of the holy Eucharist.



“THE DAY OF THE LORD.”

WHERE shall the sinner stand
On that approaching day,
Or how escape God's mighty hand,
When judgment has its way?

God's wrath has gather'd long,
Increasing in its force:
But see, it bursts, and oh! how strong—
O'erwhelming is its course.

The wave of judgment rolls
Across a guilty world,
And as each “ seal” and “ woe” unfolds,
God’s thunderbolts are hurl’d.

The “ strong delusion ” there
Its power doth exercise ;
Who would not love the truth to have,
Must now believe in lies.

Who would not have the grace,
Must now the wrath endure ;
’Neath rocks and mountains seek a place
Where they may hide secure.

But that all-seeing Eye,
Still follows where they go ;
No place is found for them to fly
From their unceasing woe.

“ In flaming fire ” now see,
The Lord His “ vengeance ” take ;
His enemies shall broken be—
Their final doom, “ the lake.”

To those who know Him not—
Who did not grace obey—
Is seal’d their doom—is fix’d their lot,
Where hope ne’er sheds its ray.

But oh ! grace lingers still,
The door wide open see,
And love still calls—“ whoever will”
May to the fountain flee.

There prove the power and grace,
Of Him whose blood was shed—
Who died ; who rose ; who fills the place
Of Quick’ner of the dead.

Before this “ hour ” shall close,
And come the judgment “ day,”
Accept the grace which freely flows.
For soon ’twill pass away.

CORRESPONDENCE.

12. "W. P.," Birkenhead. The meaning of the phrase, "kingdom of heaven," is the kingdom of the Messiah here on earth, whilst He, the King of Israel, the Messiah, is in heaven. This was a mystery not revealed in the prophets. This phrase is used by Matthew only, who presents the Lord Jesus as the righteous Jew, the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.

"Leaven" is that which spreads and permeates the whole where it is found. If we compare the parable of the leaven with that of the tares and the mustard-tree, it is evident that the spread of evil is the leavening of the whole lump of the kingdom during the absence of the king. Leaven was forbidden in all the offerings that typified Christ. (Lev. ii. 4, 5, 11.) Compare Leviticus vii. 12 with ver. 13 ; xxiii. 16, 17. Thus, when the type pointed to Pentecost, the forming of the assembly on earth, leaven was to be used, as evil was soon introduced into the assembly as seen on earth. If you look out all the passages where the word leaven is used in the New Testament, it will be found invariably to mean evil ; 1 Corinthians v. 6-8, and many other passages.

We do not know of a tract specially on the parables.

13. "A.," Walton. The word of God meets every case. We cannot tell whether you have ever been born of God, or not. Whilst persons are living in sin, they surely cannot conclude that they are the children of God—whosoever is born of God doth not practise sin. We must not forget that we are close upon the end of this dispensa-

tion, consequently the great mass of professors are not saved, but about to be judged. (Rev. iii. 6.)

But does not your intense distress and self-judgment because of sin rather remind you of the wretched prodigal in Luke xv.? Now turn your eyes from yourself to the Father ready to receive *you* with open arms. Yes, you are welcome to Him just as you are. You never can lead a holy life until you have despaired of all good in yourself, and all strength to be better, and believed the wondrous grace that receives you for ever just as you are. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. The prodigal did not remain in the far country. Do you wish to be saved, and still remain with the world?

Perhaps you say, I am a Christian, and I have sinned, and there is no hope. We are not ignorant of Satan's wiles. Oh, wondrous grace! if this is the case, there is still a precious word for you. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins." Come at once, then, to that Father. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And now for the future: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Cast yourself on Him, mighty to save.

14. "E. C.," Acton. You will find an answer to your question, as to the complete consciousness of the departed saints, in the correspondence of January this year, No. 1.

15. Extracts from Rangoon.—"With regard to discipline, I would suggest for your consideration what strikes me as the correct application of

Matthew xviii. 20. That the Lord had discipline in view when He uttered those words, there can, I believe, be no doubt, if due weight be given to the word 'for,' which connects what follows with that which precedes it. Now if this view be correct, what an awful thing it is—how solemnly so—when any one sets himself up as a court of appeal, to revise, amend, or reverse the judgment passed by the small number of even two or three assembled in His name; for the act is His really, and not theirs, though done through them as instruments of His. Their act is binding on all who love Him, and keep His word.

"This verse 20 is made by many of general application to what are now called 'meetings,' like verse 19 to 'prayer' generally. But, to my mind, the Lord intended both for discipline, as the word 'for' implies.

"To my mind, His word is inseparable from His *Person*; and we must hold to both or have neither.

"Matthew xviii. 19, 20 may be applied to the assembly generally, but its particular, special, primary, and almost exclusive application is to the assembly when exercising discipline." M. A. G.

16. "G. E.," Uxbridge. It is very sad when a brother links himself with evil, even ignorantly, so that we are directed to have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. But mark the words which follow: "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." Where there is wilfulness, it must end in either chastening and restoration, or deeper sorrow. Let us, however, beware of acting in the flesh, apart from the Lord, in discipline. Nothing can be more disastrous. May we be kept walking in the fear of the Lord. It would not be suited to this little

magazine to take up the details of the case, which can only be judged in the presence of the Lord, as so directed in Matthew xviii. 18-20.

17. "C. F.," Sandhurst, Victoria. There is no intimation in the New Testament as to whether we should use fermented bread or unfermented, or whether we should take fermented or unfermented wine, at the Lord's table. You say both cannot be right. Suppose you were to ask, Is it according to scripture to break bread at ten, or twelve o'clock? or morning or evening? You might say, Both cannot be right. Silence of scripture shews that these are matters of convenience, and do not affect the object the Spirit has in view. It is not the bread, the wine, the hour; for in no two places or nations on earth might these things be exactly alike.

But in the breaking of bread, in every place the object and purpose is the same. It is to shew forth His death until He come—to remember Him. Let all things be done decently and in order, without distraction. The natural man would be occupied with natural things—the bread, the wine—like the depth of the well to the woman at Sychar, as yet unconscious of the presence of Him who spoke to her. But when she knew Him she forgot her water-pot. May we so know Him present, be so filled with the joy of His presence, as to forget mere natural things, and all contention about them. Jesus Himself stood in their midst.

18. "S. B.," Plumstead. Our being manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10) is connected by the word "for" with what goes before. "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him;" or, be acceptable, agreeable unto Him. This would

clearly connect the manifestation with the path and *service* of the believer since his conversion. If this greatly misunderstood passage be compared with Romans xiv. 10-19 and 1 Corinthians iii. 10-15; iv. 3-5, it will be seen that in all these cases it is chiefly the thought of serving Christ *acceptably*. It is not, as you say, nor can be, judgment for sins, or we must all perish. We trust we are manifested to the saints, as to God, that our only object is to serve and be acceptable to Christ. How sadly this is forgotten! It is certain, in proportion as we do this, we shall be despised by men, and probably misjudged by our brethren. The judgment-seat of Christ, then, is as great a comfort to the believer as terror to men. Our course, from first to last, will be manifested to the glory of His grace; and surely His approval will make up infinitely for all the slander and misjudgment of men here. In all things may we seek to be acceptable to Him, now and then.

When believers have purged themselves—that is, separated themselves from vessels to dishonour—they have also to follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, *with them* that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Such, however few, may count on the presence of *the Lord with them*, when gathered to His name. They will thus have power, and His authority, to deal with evil. Also, they must not forget the instruction as to gentleness, meekness, and patience. (2 Tim. ii. 19-26.) Still, it is clear there may be vessels of dishonour from whom we must separate.



THE GLAD TIDINGS OF CHRIST.

No. III.

GALATIANS III.

“O FOOLISH Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified, among you?” Every word of scripture is important. “Who hath bewitched you?” How little they had been aware that those false brethren who had turned their eyes from Jesus Christ crucified, to something else, were under the power of witchcraft. That is, that they were the ministers of Satan, under the power and guidance of a false, evil spirit. To Paul it was either this witchcraft or the Spirit of God.

Is it not the same thing at this day? If we test every religious movement around, it will be found to be either witchcraft, that is, the power and leading of an evil spirit—a demon; or the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Is not everything around of Satan, or of God? Whatever takes the eye from Jesus crucified for us, however highly esteemed among men, is the work of a demon. How much then is there that is the direct work of Satan in Christendom! What infidelity and what superstition!

If then the believing Jews had given up the law as a means of justification, or righteousness, and

found all in a dead and risen Christ, was it not utterly senseless for the Galatian Christians, who never had been under the law, to allow demons to use men, to take away Christ crucified from them?

In applying this, however, to the present day, we must remember, that the great mass of professing Christians are under much of the direct influence of these evil spirits, through false teaching. If men knew it, they would shrink in alarm from many who profess to be ministers of Christ. Is not the law put in the place of Christ for righteousness, instead of souls rejoicing in eternal redemption? Is not the law portrayed before their eyes, and they kept in continued bondage, crying for mercy? "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?"

"This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Thus could Paul speak to them. But can he thus speak to you? Professing Christians, have ye received the Spirit? If so, why those continued repetitions that ye may receive the Holy Ghost? Now as the ministration of the Spirit, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, is the power for a holy walk—that by which a holy walk can be, in contrast with the ministration of the law by which a holy life and walk cannot be—it will be seen that this point is of the very greatest importance. Christ crucified had been set before the Galatians. They had by faith in that sacrifice

received the Holy Ghost; whilst all persons now who have the law set before them, are invariably uncertain as to having received the Spirit at all. The vast numbers who even say they have received the Spirit when baptised, yet declare their uncertainty as to this by continuing to utter prayers that they may do so. We therefore solemnly ask, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? If you have, assuredly you cannot say it was by ordinances, or works of law; but as the apostle says, "by the hearing of faith."

We now go a step farther to such as have received the Spirit by the hearing of faith: "Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Have ye found complete ruin in sin, and nothing but condemnation in law, and now complete righteousness in the accomplished crucifixion of Jesus Christ? And by faith in Him have ye received the Spirit, and thus infinite power for a holy walk? What! will ye be so foolish as to turn back from Christ, and the Spirit, and be made perfect by the law—that by which those under it could never attain to righteousness? But is not this the folly of the mass around? If it is not your case, reader, it is a marvel of mercy. It was this eternal redemption through the cross of Christ that was then and is now the offence. Give that up, and go back to ordinances or the law, to perfect that which is begun, and immediately the effect of the cross

ceases. For this they had suffered much. The witness of the Spirit, too, both in ministry and miracles, was not by works of law, but by the hearing of faith.

Now be it observed that it is God who is thus speaking to us, by the apostle. We are assured the Galatians had not received the Spirit by sacramental ordinances, or by works of law, but by the hearing of faith. He appeals to this as a fact.

He now goes back long before the law or any ordinances were given, and appeals to the way God justified Abraham. "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." And this was the very principle in which God promised, and purposed to justify the heathen. "And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

Most assuredly Abraham was not justified by the ordinance of circumcision, for it was given afterwards as a seal of the righteousness he had, being uncircumcised. (Rom. iv. 11.) Neither could it be by works of law, for the law was not then given. No, he believed God, and righteousness was reckoned unto him. If we believe God, that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for

our justification—righteousness is reckoned unto us. We are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. “So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

Does it not follow then that the great numbers in this day who are not of faith, but seeking righteousness by ordinances, and works of law, are not blessed? are not saved? Think of the great preachers who are rejecting justification by faith in God, and putting ordinances, sacraments, ritual, works of law, in the place of Christ, for righteousness. What is the answer of the word of God as to such, and all they deceive? Is the blessing of justification limited to those who believe God as Abraham did? Yes. “For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse;” and the proof is self-evident: “for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them.” To be on that principle, “of the works of the law,” is of necessity to be under the curse; for we are guilty. Now God has intervened in the gift of His Son, and presented Him as the object of faith; to go back to ordinances, and law, is thoroughly to disbelieve God, and seek to stand on a ground before Him, on which it is impossible to be justified, and have peace with God.

Now all this must be important even for a holy walk, or it would not be so fully opened up and

explained to us. Yes, God by the Spirit explains to us, "That no man is justified by the law *in the sight of God*, it is evident: for The just shall live by faith." Now we have seen that Christ crucified is the object of faith. Men would put the law as the object of faith; would hang it up before your eyes as such, "And *the law is not of faith*: but the man that DOETH them shall live in them." The law knows nothing of believing, but doing. Its demands are most just, but man is a guilty sinner, and therefore it can only curse him. Could there be a greater proof than this? "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Would you pay a thousand pounds for a poor Turkish slave in order immediately after to put him into that bondage again? Think then of the price of the redemption of the Jews, who had been under the curse of the law. Could that redemption possibly be in order to put either them back again under law, or to put us Gentiles there who had never been under its curse, though under sin and condemnation? No. That blessed eternal redemption was that we might be made partakers of the blessing of Abraham, "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Nothing can be more clear than that the Spirit, who is the power of a holy walk, was not received by the works of law, but by the hearing of faith.

This leads us to the all-important distinction between promise and law. "Now to Abraham and to his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many ; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." It was God Himself that first promised unconditionally to Abraham, "I will bless thee and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." It was God Himself who confirmed this absolute promise when Isaac had been received in figure from the dead. "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, . . . that in blessing I will bless thee. . . . And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii., xxii.) Not only did the receiving of Isaac from the dead point to Christ raised from the dead, but we have the inspired words, "And to thy seed, which is Christ." Since then it is the promise and oath of God, nothing can possibly disannul it or set it aside. Has God spoken and shall He not make it good? Nay, we shall soon see that God has made the promise good and steadfast to all who believe.

It is clear then that the law which was given 430 years after the promise, "cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." The inheritance cannot be of both ; if it be of law, then it is no more of promise : "but God gave it to Abraham by promise." Mark, beloved reader, your salvation cannot be partly by the promise of God, confirmed in Christ, and partly by your own

works of law. It must be by faith, or works ; it cannot be by both. You might ask then why was it given, "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added, because of [or, for the sake of] transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." The whole question of sin and righteousness must be fully brought out. There was sin and death before ; but the true character of God's righteous claims and man's sin, manifested in all its rebellion against God, must be manifested as transgression. This was the actual effect of the law. Righteousness was required, but never found in man until the Seed came. So that your salvation must be absolutely of grace, free unmerited favour, "that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." What a gospel this is, so suited to lost and ruined man. Now think of that promise of God ; think how it has been confirmed in Christ Jesus ; and if you are a believer it is given to you : yes, to all who believe. Oh, beware of evil spirits and ministers of Satan, that would rob you of this precious gospel of Christ. The law had brought out sin in open transgression ; all are now concluded under sin, that they should be condemned for ever ? No, that the very steadfast promise of God, by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe.



THE LORD WITH JEHOSEPHAT.

No. II.

2 CHRONICLES XIX., XX.

NOT only was Jehoshaphat restored from his wanderings and sad affinity, "he returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem." But we read further, "Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem." What grace and mercy, not only to be restored to the true place, gathered to the blessed Person of Christ, the only Centre—as Jerusalem was the only place where the Lord's name was then recorded. But to *dwell* there. Beloved reader, do you dwell there? Do you sit beneath His shadow with great delight? Is His fruit sweet to your taste? Has He brought you to His banqueting house, and is His banner over you Love? Have you heard His words, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"? Do you dwell there? This is the only dwelling-place the Lord can really own. Yes, "And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem." Happy place of rest from all the war, and toil, and danger, of following the lying words of the king's prophets.

Having found peace and rest, did he now sink in indolence? Far from it, "he went out again through the people . . . and brought them back unto the Lord God of their fathers." Now would

it not be most blessed to arise and do likewise. Can anything be more pleasing to the great Shepherd than to go out and seek to bring back the whole flock to Himself the Lord? It is not bringing them to this party or to that, but to the Lord. Perhaps nothing has discouraged those thus gathered back to the Lord more than the trouble which often arises in cases of discipline. Let us then attend most carefully to Jehoshaphat's instructions in this very matter. "He set judges in the land, throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city." Surely this points us to what the Lord has done in this matter. Offences do come. But has He not appointed the few or many gathered to Himself to judge? Has He not by His presence *with them*, in whatever city or place, made their judgment binding? (Matt. xviii. 18-20.) He is *with them*, and thus what they bind on earth is bound in heaven.

This seems foreshadowed in the striking words of Jehoshaphat. "And he said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, WHO IS WITH YOU in the judgment." Oh, how often this is forgotten in the discipline of the assembly! If we saw the Lord present, should we act as we do? Or should we sow discord by calling in question the solemn judgment of the assembly, or the few truly gathered to the Lord, who is *with them* in the judgment?

Next to truly owning the Lord present in the

judgment, is the state of our own souls. "Wherefore now let the FEAR OF THE LORD be upon you; take heed and do it. . . . And he charged them saying, Thus shall ye do in the FEAR OF THE LORD, faithfully and with a perfect heart." We remember a case where an assembly was nearly broken to pieces by man's self-will in a case of discipline. At the very climax of their trouble and forgetfulness of the Lord's presence, an aged brother said, "Shall we read Isaiah xi. 3? 'And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord,'" &c. Immediately the Person of the blessed Lord when down here was brought before them. If He was of quick understanding in the fear of Jehovah, what state of soul ought they to be in? The wiles of Satan were broken: that assembly was delivered by that verse of scripture. They bowed together in the fear of the Lord, and were forthwith all of one mind. These are much needed lessons at the present time.

How striking the order of this chapter. As Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem so we must personally return to the only true Centre, the Lord Himself, and that in peace. How perfect that peace which He gives us! And we must abide there; dwell in His presence, in perfect rest and peace. We must in faith go out among the Lord's people, and bring them back to the Lord. We must own His very presence, with the two or three gathered to His name. We must remember in all

cases of discipline He is with us in the judgment. All must be judged in the fear of the Lord faithfully, and with a perfect heart. There must be no partiality. And now "Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good." He will make manifest what He approves.

The reader may say, That is most instructive in cases of internal difficulties and discipline ; but what is so perplexing is this : If you are truly brought back to the Lord, the only true Centre, and in His fear seek only to do those things that are pleasing to Him and in His name, you find there are great numbers arrayed against you, and against the blessed place of rest and peace God has given you. These also profess to be the children of God as well as you ; yet their opposition is most determined. Is not this very perplexing ?

This question will very properly bring us for an answer to chapter xx. Here we have the very picture of what you find. We have seen Jehoshaphat restored in rest to the only centre God owned on earth—Jerusalem. "It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle." There was a very great multitude. And they were the natural relations of Israel. As we see, they were the children of Ammon and Moab, and mount Seir, or of Esau—children of the flesh ; but bitter, most bitter enemies of Israel. If you

are truly gathered to Christ, and own Him as the only Centre, as in the first ways of the Church, just as Jehoshaphat was restored to Jerusalem, God's centre, then assuredly a great multitude will come against you. This is so in every part of the world at this moment, but those that come against you are the very persons who ought to be with you—yea, the opposition extends to those who have a name to live, and are dead; all will be against the truth of the Lord's presence with those gathered to His name. It is a fact that cannot be denied, that every sect or party on earth is opposed to this inestimable privilege—the saints of the Lord gathered to Himself. Sometimes the heart is ready to faint at the sight of so many Ammonites, children of Moab, and of Mount Seir, *all, all* against you. What are we to do? What did Jehoshaphat? “And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.” He did not rush into battle. The flesh is always ready for contention; pamphlet for pamphlet, railing for railing. Not so the Spirit. Does the fear of the Lord rule our hearts? Have we set ourselves to seek the Lord? Oh, that was beautiful! May we thus set ourselves, more and more, to seek the Lord. We are deeply convinced this is the real question at issue—Do we, or do we not, own the Lord?

Yes, let us proclaim a fast; let us refuse the

natural resources of war. What so mighty as real faith in God? And Jehoshaphat was not alone: "And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord; even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord." Oh, ye children of God in every part of the world, is not this a word to us? Let us neither fight, nor be discouraged. More than ever let us gather together unto the Lord, to seek help of the Lord.

Now look at Jehoshaphat as he stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord. All the twelve tribes were not with him. Their brethren after the flesh were coming against them, if possible to destroy Jerusalem. The whole professing church of Christ is not with those gathered to Christ; and a multitude are determined to destroy the true centre of gathering unto, and really owning, the Lord present. Many we little expected are seeking to destroy what they once professed. Now, can you say that you are standing in the congregation of, however few, the only true Jerusalem now on earth? For is there anything on earth the Lord fully owns but those truly gathered to Him, and thus standing? If you are quite sure this is your standing-place, then listen to the prayer of faith: "O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to with-

stand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham, thy friend, for ever? And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us we stand before this house, AND IN THY PRESENCE (for thy name is in this house), and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. And now, behold, the children of Ammon, and Moab, and Mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession which thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt not thou judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee."

Have we thus been brought before God? Do we know Him thus as our God and Father? Can we thus speak to Him? Can we, in intelligent faith, say, Thou hast driven out our enemies, and given us, in Thy pure grace, Thy free favour, a blessed sanctuary in Thy presence, in these last days? Are we conscious of the unspeakable security of those words, whatever evil may assail us, the blessed safety, "IN THY PRESENCE"? In that presence can we not, like Jehoshaphat, tell the

Lord our God of all that are gathering, like a cloud, against us? Is it not against Him? They come also to cast us out of our place of privilege—"Thy possession." This is what evil spirits are banding men and leading them to do. It was very fine for a man who had an army of eleven hundred and sixty thousand men ready prepared for war (chap. xvii.), to hear him say, "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." Instead of relying on the army, "All Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children."

Oh, ye children of God throughout the whole world, is not this your only true place, to stand before the Lord? Faith alone can take such a place of dependence. What a contrast: on the one hand there was the great multitude of Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir, ready to destroy them; on the other, all Judah stood before the Lord. It was not the Philistines or the Syrians; that is, it is not the enmity of the world that threatens, but those much nearer to us. An activity and opposition to the all-important fact of the presence of the Lord with those gathered in grace to Him is as distinctly manifest at this moment, as was then shewn in the determination to destroy God's centre at that time. Is not that place of blessing—His presence—of God? Has He not, in His

grace, given that place and centre to all who hear His voice? Will He not defend it? Is it of God, or is it not? Is it His will that we should be mixed with the confusion and human will around, or truly separated unto Him? Did He make Jerusalem His only centre, and would He not defend it? Has He now made the being separated from all around unto Himself the only centre? and will He not preserve and defend His own?

In our next we hope to hear what God said, and see how He delivered all Judah who stood before the Lord, and in this learn how He will surely deliver all those truly gathered to Him in this day.



CLAIMS AND PRETENSIONS OF THE CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

No. III.

THE LORD'S SUPPER, CALLED THE HOLY EUCCHARIST.

BELOVED BROTHER,—Having briefly examined the doctrines held on redemption and regeneration, we will now examine the doctrine held by the Catholic Apostolic Church on the Holy Eucharist. What we find, then, in the tracts you sent us is the doctrine and ritual of the Mass, but, as they profess, a little improved. But all the main features of the Mass are there. It is surprising that

they publish the approval of a Romish bishop. The bishop says, "Nothing more resembles Rome." "What a combination! The most precious jewels of Rome—authority and HER CHURCH WORSHIP—stolen from her and, *in spite of this, the scriptures held pre-eminent.* . . . Would you believe it? I am surprised at myself in wishing that you should triumph rather than Protestantism;" and much more of the same kind.

Is not the publishing of this letter approval of the flattery? The bishop is also delighted with the circumspection that keeps back what would alarm Protestants. What significant blanks! We were surprised to find these tracts seeking covertly to spread the deadly error of the Romish Mass, though it is covered with most subtle and flowery language.

We find the teaching on the Lord's supper, or Eucharist, the exact contrary of scripture.

I. They hold that it is "THE BOND OF UNIVERSAL LIFE, and the MEANS WHEREBY MEN ARE PARTAKERS OF IT." "*Partaking* of it, that life is transmitted to us." Not prayer, or hearing the word, but "A MODE OF RECEIVING CHRIST *by eating and drinking.* Something peculiar that is not in *prayer*, that is not in hearing of the word." As with many of the Romanists, they refer to John vi. Some of the learned Romanists admit—as is most clearly the fact—that the Lord does not speak in this chapter of His supper, but of Him-

self, and that as the true bread which came down from heaven. He says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." Now the question is this: Could the Lord Jesus possibly mean these words to be understood literally? He could not, He did not mean that He was at that moment not truly a man, but a loaf of bread. If, then, He was speaking figuratively of Himself, did He not continue to do so? Three things were necessary for our salvation: that He should come down from heaven—that alone was not enough; He must die, His blood must be shed for our sins; and then He must return into heaven. These are just the three things He sets forth in these figures. His incarnation, His death, and His return to heaven. Could He for one moment mean to teach that either He was literally bread to be eaten, or that it was literally His flesh that must be eaten, or His blood literally drunk? Impossible! for He assures us, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: THE WORDS that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." We have shewn, in a tract (lately published) on the Mass,* that the literal gross interpretation of these words was not the doctrine held by the early church. Now read these words of Jesus: "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the

* Morrish: London.

last day." Now if these mean receiving Christ by eating and drinking, as these tracts teach, with Rome, then mark, it would follow that all the ungodly ("Whoso") who eat the bread, and drink the wine, both *have* eternal life, and are absolutely safe for eternity! Is there a man on earth that believes this? Reader, do you believe these tracts, or scripture? For where is there a single text to confirm this literal sense of this chapter? That it is in believing the words of Christ life eternal is imparted to us, this is confirmed everywhere. Does not Jesus teach the very opposite of these tracts? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, *HATH ETERNAL LIFE.*"

Yea, is not this the very subject in hand in this chapter vi.? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me *hath everlasting life.*" What is it to believe the record that God gave of His Son? "This is the record, that God *hath* given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. These things have I written unto you *THAT BELIEVE* on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." Have you heard the words of Jesus? Do you believe God that sent Him to die for your sins, and that raised Him from the dead for your justification? Then you have eternal life. If you have eternal life, is it not, then, most

certain that you have not to *obtain* it by eating and drinking?

If we examine the institution of the supper by the Lord, there is not one thought of imparting, or obtaining, life. It is emphatically the Lord's *death* that we announce, and that is before us. So, in 1 Corinthians xi., Christians are told: "This do in remembrance of me. . . . For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." Mark, it is still literal bread and wine, shewing in figure how He has taken the place of the paschal lamb. As we have said elsewhere, a figure in scripture may at least be known by this—that it cannot be literal, as it would not be true. The Lord could not mean that He was a loaf of bread. He was not. He could not mean His own literal flesh and blood when He said, "This is my body." That loaf was no more literally His body, than that He was a loaf from heaven. And when He said, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins," He could not mean this literally, as it would not have been true; His blood was not then shed. If we simply take the scriptures as they are on the subject, then nothing can be more blessed than for those who have eternal redemption through His death, to shew forth that death, in the Lord's supper, until He come.

II. With these tracts, as with Rome, the Lord's supper is "The grèat memorial sacrifice,

offered continually." It is known to many that the Holy Ghost has, during these late years, opened up the scriptures in a wondrous manner, and shewn how the sacrifices of the law all pointed to the one sacrifice once offered on the cross. In reading these tracts, the first and second time, we understood them to apply to the one true sacrifice of Christ. On going over them again, we see that the whole value of those types is transferred to the Eucharist, or Mass!! The eye is fixed on the Holy Eucharist. It is the great sacrifice of all sacrifices. "All other services are derived from, or based on, this service." The sin offering, the burnt-offering, the peace-offering, &c., these are different aspects of His sacrifice; but the sacrifice is the Eucharist, or Mass! "THE HOLY EUCHARIST, therefore, is a summary of all types which exhibit the atonement and sacrifice of Christ."

Further, these tracts teach that all the detail of the Jewish worship is "developed into perfect order and beauty in the christian church." This deadly error perverts the entire meaning of all scripture on this subject, in the pretended answer of the antitype, the Eucharist, to all the sacrifices of the law? Is not this a deception of Satan? Thus we have an angel who alone goes into the holy place—"the representative of the angel of the covenant." This angel is the celebrant, who offers the great sacrifice of the Eucharist. The people

are outside the sanctuary! At last the consecrated elements are received by the faithful. "In this act we trace again the analogy to the types of the law. It is essential to the idea of a sacrifice that the sacrifice should be consumed; all the Jewish sacrifices were consumed, though in various ways; and so this 'holy and unbloody sacrifice,' &c. Thus their great sacrifice, offered continually, and consumed, is a more elaborate continuance of Judaism in the Mass, and all supposed worship connected with it. They assure us "the whole object of St. Paul's teaching on these matters is to shew the close connection that exists between the Jewish and Christian worship. He points to the law as 'the shadow of good things to come.'"

Now read the inspired words of the apostle Paul, in Hebrews ix., x.—nay, the whole epistle. Is not his object to shew chiefly the immense contrast there is between the Jewish and Christian worship? The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope, "by which we draw nigh unto God." (Chap. vii. 19.) The evident object the Spirit of God had in giving this epistle was to shew the danger of the Hebrews giving up Christianity, and going back to Judaism. And to do this was so to fall away, that the whole system of the law could not renew them to repentance. (Heb. vi. 1-7.)

Whilst the high priest went into the holiest once a year alone, the Holy Ghost by that signified that

the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest. But now the Lord Jesus, by His one sacrifice, has obtained eternal redemption for us; and now we—that is, all true believers—have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus. What the law could not do, with all its sacrifices, Jesus has done by His one sacrifice. He hath perfected us for ever, in perpetuity, so that God remembers our sins no more. God in His word says, “There is no more offering for sin;” “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” Shall we doubt that God speaks the truth in these scriptures—that believers are not perfected by that one sacrifice—that they must continually offer this great sacrifice? God says without shedding of blood there is no remission. They deny it, who offer the oblation of the “holy and unbloody sacrifice.” It is remarkable how this sets aside the eternal efficacy of the one sacrifice for sins, and puts in its place the continued sacrifices often repeated, which can never take away sins. We must see that, if we believe God, there neither can be any more sacrifices for sins, neither can the believer need them.

If you are for ever perfected by the one sacrifice, how can you need another? It is surely in vain to tell a Christian that their Eucharistic service is superior to any other. A table of comparison is given to shew how far even they are superior in ritual to the Mass of Rome! One infinite, atoning sacrifice of the Son of God

excludes all others. God has received Him to glory. Death has no more dominion over Him. He dieth no more. All that believe Him are justified from all things. No, no, we must not give up the word of God, and embrace the soul-destroying delusions of Rome.

We trust enough has been said to warn any Christian from being deceived. They can have no idea what the atoning sacrifice was—the Lord of glory made sin for us, forsaken of God on the cross—who can talk of “The great memorial sacrifice, offered continually.” Is Christ often put to death? Is His blood often shed? Is He still forsaken of God? Mark, without this there would be no atonement. The fact is this, the Romish Mass is the very opposite of the disciples coming together to break bread. It is a denial that God has accepted the sacrifice once offered for our sins. Hence, in the Eucharist they constantly bring sin to remembrance, and continually use vain repetitions for mercy, never knowing what it is to be worshippers with a purged conscience.

[Our Extracts have been taken from tracts sent to us, purporting to have been issued by the Catholic Apostolic Church; and as it is generally held that the above Church arose from, and holds the same doctrines as the late Mr. Irving, the extracts in the March No., pp. 79, 80, were taken from the “Christian Witness” (vol. ii. pp. 122–129.) We have since been informed by a defender of these C. A. Church Tracts that the extracts from Mr. Irving’s writings do not apply to the above church.—ED.]

CORRESPONDENCE.

19. "W. C.," Leamside. Your question as to the Lord's teaching in Luke xvi. 19-31, is a most solemn one. Jesus said, "There was a certain rich man." And again, "And there was a certain beggar," &c. No doubt these were given as representative persons, as the Pharisees trusted in their circumstances as evidence of the favour of God. But we see no reason to doubt that there were two such persons, and that they, with the thousands and myriads of others, have been ever since in hades, in unspeakable happiness, or unutterable woe. The Lord described the state of departed spirits in such language as we can understand. We cannot have too strong or too simple faith in every word He uttered. No other person could thus describe the fearful reality of what it is to lift up the eyes in hell. How true His words: One has been raised up from the dead, but men did not believe Him. One after another departs—about one every second of time—either to lift up the eyes in hell, being in torment, or to be absent from the body, present with the Lord. Believing the words of Jesus, what manner of men ought we to be?

20. "S. M. A.," Kent. The teaching of the Lord Jesus to His Jewish disciples, and to us as disciples, in the prayer, Matthew vi. 11, is, we judge, in reference chiefly to the *government of God*, yet known to us as *Father*. "Give us this day our daily bread" had special reference to the need of the body, and the Father's care for our temporal needs. So of forgiveness of sins, this

could not now refer to sins forgiven as to guilt, to be remembered no more (Heb. x.), but to forgiveness of debts, or trespasses, as under His discipline and government. (James v. 15, 16; 1 John v. 16.) The whole prayer breathes a spirit of entire dependence in those who can truthfully say, *Our Father*. It is most important to remember this, whilst avoiding the making it a form of prayer unsuited to the Christian, because it is not in the name of Jesus, and therefore never could have been intended for a form of prayer.

21. "J. J.," Walker-on-Tyne. All that we know about the book of Jasher is this, that there was such a book in Hebrew literature. Whether Jasher was the name of the author or title of the book is not certain. In various ancient languages the word used means upright, or just. In some ancient copies the sentence is omitted in Joshua x. 13. The other books you refer to, such as the book of Nathan the prophet, &c., in the various scriptures, were uninspired books; or, if inspired, were only for the then present use, and almost every vestige of these is now lost. The Holy Ghost did not inspire them for the people of God through all ages. There has been *much* discussion, and *little* profit, in these matters. Suppose an absolutely perfect watch were given to a person, one that should go correctly through all time. The different parts have been made to order by many different persons, in different places, and wonderful and diverse machinery used in producing this perfect time-keeper. The owner of that watch would not need to be acquainted with the name, residence, &c., of each person employed by the designer and maker of that watch. Here, in this precious book, the inspired word of God, is the

most wonderful production ever placed before the eyes of man. It not only unlocks and explains every secret thought of the heart of man—meeting his every spiritual need for time and for eternity—but it is the *true* and *only* full revelation of God to man. A great number of persons, in different places and conditions, have been used in producing this marvellous book of books, every part being as important in its place as the wheels of a watch. God the Holy Ghost alone could have designed and executed this greatest treasure on earth. But this revelation is so wholly of God, that if we knew the minute history of every person employed, and the very day on which he wrote his part, it would not afford the smallest help; it is only (as we are assured you will agree with us) the divine Author that can, and does, enable us to understand and ever enjoy this inestimable treasure, for which we would ever praise God.

In Psalm cvi. 31 there was in Phinehas the full owning of the righteous judgment of God on sin; just as we see it in another way in Abel—death as the judgment of sin. He believed the claims of God; this was seen in his act.

In Romans iv. Abraham believed God, and in each case faith was reckoned as righteousness. It was just so, as we now believe, the righteous judgment of God has been executed on our Substitute for our sins, and being raised again for our justification, righteousness is reckoned unto us. This was not revealed to Abraham, that is explained, as it is to us.



HORMAH.

NUMBERS XIV., XV.

SAD indeed is the history of unbelief in Numbers xiv. The Lord had spoken to Moses saying, "Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I GIVE unto the children of Israel." "Which I give" surely should have been enough for faith. In chapter xiii. we have the searching of the land. "And they returned from searching the land after forty days." The report they gave was that the land was good. "Surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it:" for they had brought a first ripe cluster of grapes, and of the pomegranates, and of the figs. But to unbelief there was the dreadful uncertainty of being able to take possession. There are immediately to unbelief insurmountable difficulties: walled cities, and children of giants. And this only leads to bringing an evil report of the land.

Very striking is the contrast of the faith of the two, and the unbelief of the ten. Unbelief reasons on what *we* can do, and therefore says, "We be not able to go up against this people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land," &c. Faith, on the other hand, looked beyond all difficulties. Joshua and Caleb were delighted with the *place*, into which God had

promised to bring them. They said, "Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." How sad! the unbelief of the ten took hold of the whole congregation. This uncertainty brings sore misery. If once it takes possession of the soul, you cannot stand still; at once in heart the effect is to go back to the world. Thus Israel reasoned in their sin, and misery, and wept all night. Rebellion then rises up in the heart against Moses and against Aaron: really it is against Jehovah. This is always the case, and hence Satan is ever seeking to rob the soul of the certainty of taking possession of the heavenlies. He whispers, You must not be too sure, there are many difficulties; you may never get there after all; you are not able to overcome and get possession. They are ready to give all up—redemption, everything. They reason that it is better to go back to Egypt, yea, to die there; or die in the wilderness. Thus Satan says, You had far better give up all profession of faith than be in this state. 'Yes,' they say, 'it is better to return into Egypt. Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.'

How different the language of faith that rests in God! "The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. *If the Lord delight in us*, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD,

neither fear ye the people of the land ; for their defence is departed from them ; AND THE LORD IS WITH US : fear them not." Every one is a precious word of faith. The natural heart of man hates this divine certainty of faith. " But all the congregation bade stone them with stones." All this is full of instruction to us, not merely as to our final departure to be with the Lord. But it is full of deep instruction to those who have not yet understood what it is to be in that new place across the Jordan, in possession, with our heavenly Joshua, though also in conflict there with those whom we find there before us.

To keep however to the simple lesson, unbelief says, ' We are not able to do it.' Faith looks solely to the Lord. " If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us." And again, " The Lord is with us ; fear them not." He had been *for* them in deliverance from Egypt. He is now *with* them to bring them into the land. He delighteth in us : it is enough.

Deeply instructive would every verse be in this chapter. But we wish to call special attention to the end. Through unbelief and rebellion they had to wander forty years in the wilderness. How often this is the case ; many a Christian has to wander for years in the wilderness, learning its painful lessons, instead of entering and enjoying the fruit of the land. It may be on his death-bed he practically crosses the Jordan and learns what it is to be in

the *new*, and the *old* for ever passed away. (2 Cor. v. 17, 18.)

It is just the lesson of the words of God to Noah over again : “ The end of all flesh is come before me.” Yes, let us not forget death must be written upon all flesh. “ Even those men, that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord.” But quite another kind of fruit of the flesh of man appears now. It is not at all now unbelief that says, ‘ All is lost, we will give up and go back into Egypt.’ Oh no ! It is rather the religious determined activity of the flesh. It is like man in this day, whilst refusing the goodness of God ; refusing possession of eternal life in the wholly new creation in Christ, on the principle of pure unmerited grace or favour of God, because He delighteth in us ; yet a determination to go up and take possession by early sacraments and ordinances.

“ And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised : for we have sinned.” There is a strange combination of self-will and confession. It is the principle of seeking holiness in the flesh in whatever way. It is seeking to get possession by renewed effort at improvement of the flesh, though confessing failure hitherto. It is lip confession, for if it were heart confession, we should be afraid to take a step in

self-will. Yes, man will rise early to climb this mountain. He tries hard to *attain* to death and resurrection by human effort, though he has refused it as the gift of grace. Is not this the state of Christendom, fast giving up the goodness of God? But more than this, is there a soul that has not to learn the lesson of Hormah? They had refused to go up and take possession because the Lord delighted in them; and now they are determined they will go up and take it. They are solemnly warned by Moses that it is transgression: they shall not prosper: "the Lord is not among you." They were about not only to meet the temptations of the wilderness, but also the power of the Canaanites who were in the land. And the Lord was not with them, because they were turned away from the Lord. Thus they placed themselves in the greatest danger.

Is it not so with us in this day? If we refuse the gift of God in grace, and seek to get possession by the improvement of the old man, the flesh, whether by the sacramental system of men, or even by what are called evangelical doctrines, we have turned away from the Lord and He cannot be with us. In such case how can we meet the hour of sudden temptation? How can we meet the power or wiles of the enemy, the wicked spirits that inhabit as yet the heavenlies? (Eph. vi.)

The fact is, in such a conflict we are sure to be discomfited. "But they presumed to go up unto

the hill top : nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp." How little do men think that their pious efforts to improve the flesh are but presumption ! And what was the result ? " Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in the hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah." If we compare chapter xxi. 3 and Judges i. 17, we see the meaning of the word Hormah is " utter destruction." Thus Israel were smitten, and discomfited even unto utter destruction. How complete then is the lesson of utter destruction to the flesh ! Not only the sin, and unbelief and rebellion in refusing the land as the gift in grace ; but when they rise early in the morning and presume to go up and take possession, they find they have no good in them, no power to overcome, nay, they are overcome, and that utterly ; from the top of the mountain of presumption, they sink to the lowest possible state of discomfiture.

Have we learnt this lesson, that every effort in the flesh to attain to that which the land typified—the new place of complete deliverance—ends only in deepest failure ? Oh, the lesson of Hormah ! utter destruction to all religious pretension ! Can we not only confess our sins ? for they did that ; but have we learnt the utter ruin and helplessness of the flesh ? " For I know that in me [that is in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing." We may presume, we may determine ; but in the moment

of sudden attack, to be smitten, discomfited to utter destruction of all hope of amendment in the flesh. This is surely a most important lesson, as almost every one hopes for some improvement of the flesh, in one way or other.

Well, does God propose to improve the flesh? No, the scene closes upon it just here, as utter destruction, without a ray of hope in itself. And a new scene opens up, a new Person in whom is centred all the purposes of God. Just as in Romans vii., when we have reached the bottom, "O wretched man that I am!" the scene there closes, and the new scene is Christ. So here in Numbers xv. What a change! What a contrast! how precious are God's thoughts of Christ. It would lengthen out our little paper too long to enter on this bright display of grace. That we will reserve, if the Lord will, for our next. We will therefore close with a few remarks in review.

"So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." They did not believe the report of faith. They looked at themselves; and measured the walls and giants by themselves. They did not see the whole thing was, and must be, of God. Entering in was not the same as deliverance from Egypt. They did not take hold by faith, that it was God's delight to bring them in. It is not then simply the question of our redemption from sin, and all the claims of justice, but entering in and taking possession of the new creation as risen with

Christ ; oneness with Him in resurrection ; dead with Him ; risen with Him. (See Col. ii., iii.)

Well, they had not faith, nay, they utterly refused this new place (the land) as the gift of God. Then their first impulse was to return back to Egypt, in open rebellion. One of those two places must attract us, either the new creation or the old. We cannot remain stationary. Then in the same fleshly unbelief they presume in self-will to go up and take possession, which ends in terrible breakdown. But mark, breakdown of the flesh there must be, and forty years' lessons of the wilderness after this. Various are the ways in which we have sought to improve, or take possession by the flesh. Have we really accepted the truth, "The end of all flesh is come before me"? Have we sought to climb that mountain only to reach Hormah? Have we reached Hormah? Have we arrived at the end of all hope for the old man ; all hope of amendment or restoration of the first man? There could not be a more hopeless picture of Israel than Hormah. The redeemed people of the Lord smitten to destruction before their enemies! What a sight! Let us beware, unbelief and presumption must lead in every case to similar results. Oh, wondrous grace to shine out just at this lowest possible point in Israel's history, and in ours!



THE LORD WITH JEHOSEPHAT.

No. III.

2 CHRONICLES XX.

GOD has had one special testimony at each epoch of His dealings with men. It is also a marked principle, that those nearest allied with that testimony, but not really of it, have been the most bitter opponents of that testimony. Examples of this will occur to the reader's mind everywhere, from Cain downwards. Lot was nearly related to the testimony of Abraham, but did not walk in the blessed steps of faith. So, again, of Esau. Their posterity, as we have seen, formed parties of ungrateful, bitter opposition. In our chapter we find them united—a vast multitude—against the testimony in the days of Jehoshaphat. If we have spiritual discernment, it will be seen to be the same in this day as in every other. Those who have been outwardly in closest alliance with the testimony of the Lord will be found to form parties of determined resistance. The Lord's people, who desire to worship in His presence in peace, may be greatly distressed, especially if those parties of resistance should unite.

We cannot dwell too long on the most instructive attitude of Jehoshaphat, and all with him, gathered before the Lord: that beautiful prayer of faith; that calm trust in Jehovah; that laying

aside of all mere natural resources, even his vast army, as an object of trust. Is this our position? the calm trust of faith in the Lord, with those gathered really to Himself? Let us now hear the Lord's answer to this faith. "Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid, nor dismayed, by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's." Then what are they to do? "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord *with you*, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed. To-morrow go out against them, for the Lord *will be with you*." Each of these sentences is full of golden instruction to the children of God now. It is not attack, but set yourselves; take heed to yourselves; see that your condition is acceptable to the Lord.

And now mark, it is not only, "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord," as in the day of deliverance from Egypt, but here it is "the salvation of the Lord *WITH YOU*." Christian readers, can you see the salvation of the Lord *with you*? This is the one thing to see, and to hold fast, until He come. "For the Lord *will be with you*." We can trust Him, however men may become united against us. He has not only gathered a few to Himself, as at the beginning, but be assured of this, "the Lord *will be with you*." Oh, wondrous grace! Here our souls can rest.

Now we have a striking contrast. The multi-

tude were prepared for war in the wilderness of Peniel, all ready to fight. On the other side of the cliff, or hill of Ziz, Jehoshaphat, and all with him who have just learnt the salvation of *the Lord with them*. And what was the effect of this great truth on those who heard and believed it? "And Jehoshaphat bowed his head, with his face to the ground: and all Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD." Oh, that the Holy Spirit may lead the people of God to do so likewise. Is He not present with us wherever two or three are gathered to His name? And shall we not fall before Him—worship and adore Him?

We feel sure many fail thus to recognise Him present when gathered to worship, and do those professedly gathered to Him thus worship in spirit and in truth? Here is our salvation from every gathering storm of war—the salvation of the Lord *with you*. Oh, priceless lesson! May our hearts learn it, and thus worship before Him.

And what more did they do? The very children of those who were spared from going down into the pit—yes, "the children of the Korhites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high." Oh, for that deep sense of grace! for is it not of His grace that we have not gone down into the pit? It is well to remember this, until, instead of fighting and wordy contention, one vast note of praise burst from our hearts

and lips. There is no power in that soul that loses the sense of grace, the free, full, and eternal favour of our God and Father.

Now they rise early in the morning to see the wondrous deliverance of the Lord. "And as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood, and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." What a contrast to unbelief! He did not say, "It is all over now. You had better return each man to his tent. There is nothing left now but the individual tent." No; to those who are gathered to Christ it is, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established." And can we not still rest in the word of God, be assured of spiritual prosperity? Never was there such a battle as this. When he had consulted with the people, what did he appoint to meet the vast army? "He appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever." Thus were they to be occupied with the holy and the true, the beauty of holiness, singing to *Him*, instead of fighting with *them*. There is a great secret of strength in this: "Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever." Can we not say so?

But what has this to do with the multitudes

gathered against them? And what effect can it now have, if we sing instead of fight? "And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir. . . . And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another." Thus they who were gathered to the centre God owned could bow their heads in worship: believing God, they were established; their hearts could go up in adoring praise to the beauty of holiness: and though they had not to fight, yet, when they began to sing, the Lord set party against party, of those who were gathered against Judah; so that they destroyed one another. Judah had nothing to do but to gather the spoil, "more than they could carry away; and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much." Now, is not this very blessed? Instead of fighting and contending with those who oppose themselves, let us praise the Lord, and afterwards gather the spoil. Yes, let us seek not theirs, but them, even precious souls, from Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir.

If these precious lessons of faith be learnt, we shall see this result. Nothing can be more blessed than to keep the unity of the Spirit; but the

divisions of that which is of the flesh is a mercy. If all the different parties of the flesh were united, fierce persecution would soon break out. Let us, however, remember God's centre is not maintained by contention and fighting, but by worship and singing; and thus shall we see the salvation of the Lord with us.

We would further notice, after this wonderful victory, they did not assemble themselves on the top of the hill, but, "on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the *valley* of Berachah [that is, blessing], for there they blessed the Lord: therefore the name of the same place was called the valley of Berachah unto this day." Yes, the valley is the true place of blessing to this day. Let us beware of the hill of spiritual pride. In the valley there they blessed the Lord. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies. And they came to Jerusalem, with psalteries, and harps, and trumpets, unto the house of the Lord." Now we have seen that as that place, that house, was the only centre of God here on earth, so now Christ, as the Centre of gathering, is the only Centre now owned of God. Let every man, then, who has been gathered to Him return with joy, in

the full confidence of faith. How blessed to walk in the true ways of the Lord ! “ And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries,” &c. Does He not also say now, “ Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie ; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” Shall we faint, or be discouraged, when the Lord says, “ Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown ” ?

Would it not be most sad to cease to see the salvation of *the Lord with you*, at the very moment when He says, “ Behold I come quickly ” ? There is a calm peace not known to the divisions of Christendom, but surely should be ever enjoyed by those gathered to the Lord. “ So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest round about.”

There was failure in Jehoshaphat, as we have seen in the sad matter of joining Ahab, but the Lord graciously restored him. Can we not say also, “ He restoreth my soul ” ? And what need of constant watchful dependence ! “ And after this did Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, join himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, who did very wickedly. And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish.” Then did the prophet say, “ Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works.

And the ships were broken that they were not able to go to Tarshish." This is, no doubt, a most solemn warning ; but also there is this lesson—the failures of men, even of the most honoured servants of the Lord, do not for one moment alter the principles of eternal truth. How sadly they may fail ! They may join themselves to them that do wickedly ; all their works may be destroyed. Peter may fail sadly, but that should not hinder Paul from standing for the truth of the gospel. All Asia may turn from Paul, but that does not alter the truth of the church, the body of Christ, as revealed to and by Paul. Servants of Christ may fail, and by their works deny the precious truth they have taught. Shall we follow them, or the blessed truth they have taught us ? Parties of resistance may join, like Ammon, Moab, and the children of Seir. This is nothing if we are truly seeing "the salvation of the Lord with you." That was the one question then—it is the one question now. To depart from this may lead to getting under the power of a lying spirit for the time, as Jehoshaphat, listening to the prophets of Ahab. This may seem dreadful. It is so ; for if we are not led by the Spirit of God, shall we not be deceived by Satan ? May our God and Father lead our hearts in the prayerful study of this deeply instructive history, that so the prayer of Christ may be answered in each of us—"Sanctify them through thy truth."

C. S.

JOSEPH WEPT.

“And when Joseph’s brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went, and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not; for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.”—GENESIS L. 15-21.

AFTER the death of Jacob we thus find the brethren of Joseph in great distress. The remembrance of their past conduct might well, indeed, be overwhelming, for they understood not the grace in Joseph. They thought of their sin, but entirely lost sight of the forgiveness and grace of Joseph; and they said that Joseph would certainly requite them “all the evil which we did unto him.” Surely they deserved all this. There was no excuse for their sin. It had been terrible. They had as good as killed their brother by casting him into that pit. There was no pity in their hearts when they took him out of that pit, and

sold him into slavery, though they saw the anguish of his soul : he besought them, and they would not hear. (Gen. xl. 11-21.)

But had not their sin been brought to their consciences? Yes, in the very presence of Joseph, though they knew him not. He was dealing with them; he understood their thoughts and their words. Judah had said, "What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." It is an awful moment, thus to be brought into the presence of God, and all laid bare!

"Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood before him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren." Oh, what grace! "And he wept aloud." He said, "I am Joseph: doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence." It was not now that they prayed to be forgiven, but "Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." Then did he make known unto their astonished ears the purpose of God, in their salvation from famine. "Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him."

What a life picture of the wondrous ways of God in grace! God the Spirit uses various means to bring sin so home to the conscience that there is no escape. But when sin is not only felt, but confessed to God, what a revelation in Christ, the true Joseph! Our sins are felt to be loathsome, and we abhor ourselves in His holy presence. It is He who is dealing with our souls. We own all to Him; and He says, Yes, it was for those very sins I sent my beloved Son to be the propitiation. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Thus the Antitype goes infinitely beyond the touching type of Joseph.

There was not, however, one thing lacking to shew and prove the forgiveness of Joseph; yet, after years of kindness on his part, they feared the reality of his forgiveness. How was this? No doubt the better they knew their relationship to Joseph, and all his righteous conduct, the baser would their own appear, but, as we have said, they could not fathom the grace in Joseph's heart. And is it not so with those who are brought to know their relationship with the risen Jesus? The more we *know* Him, while we abhor the flesh and all its sad fruits, the more we rest in His grace.

If they looked at their own past conduct, they might give way to gloomy unbelief, until they sank in despair. If they looked at *his* past conduct and love to them, how could they have a

doubt? Past failure often gives Satan a great handle, and he will ever use it, if possible, to drive the child of God to despair. By this mark we may always know it is his work. The Holy Spirit may have to humble us, and deepen in us a sense of what sin is, and the need of greater watchfulness and dependence; but then He will also deepen in our souls a blessed sense of that mercy which endureth for ever. "Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD; even thy salvation, according to thy word. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me; for I trust in thy word." At such a time it is of all importance to be able to say, "The LORD is on my side, I will not fear."

With these thoughts, let us look at our deeply interesting scripture. No doubt the brethren of Joseph deserved punishment. And if God dealt with us in judgment, what do we deserve? They had thought of this, and reasoned from it, until doubt and unbelief had got a strong hold upon them; but they did not despair. There was the lingering sense of his grace: they went to Joseph, whereas despair would have led them to depart from him. It is so with God: the lingering sense of His grace draws us near to Him. Despair would drive the soul to utter darkness.

They "said unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee, now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin." It was terrible to have sinned as the brethren

of Joseph. It is this that gives sin its deep aggravation, to have sinned as the brethren of the risen Jesus. And mark, it is much easier to pray for the forgiveness of sins, than to believe in the forgiveness of sins. Many there are who continue for years to pray for forgiveness of sins, just like the brethren of Joseph, who never believe their sins are eternally forgiven.

This, then, was their position: long ago their sin had been brought home to them; they had stood self-condemned before Joseph. He had fully revealed his grace to them, and given to each the kiss of forgiveness. But little understanding the grace in Joseph's heart, they now pray for forgiveness. Now look at Joseph; does this please him? "Joseph wept when they spake unto him." What a picture of Jesus! What a touching scene! How deeply his heart felt their unbelief! How could they doubt his love? No doubt God greatly overrules—yea, uses this humiliation for blessing to His children. "And his brethren also went, and fell down before his face." They also did what the prodigal thought of doing. "And they said, Behold, we be thy servants." Thus the poor unbelieving heart is ever ready to take the place of serving, in order to be deserving.

Surely it is far better to be thus humbled and broken in the presence of our Joseph, than to be indifferent about sins. But, oh, how sweet to a crushed, broken spirit are those words, "Fear

not." And again, "Now, therefore, fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them:" or, as in the margin, "*spake to their hearts.*" Is not this what our Jesus does? Full well does He know that even His own words would fail at such a time to comfort, unless applied by the Spirit to our hearts. Let us not, however, forget the grief it gave to Joseph for his brethren to doubt his forgiving love.

With our eyes we do not see our Jesus weep; we do not thus, as they, see the pain—if we may use such a word—it gives to doubt His love; but do we not hear Him say, "Why are ye troubled; and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 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." They had just heard, for the first time in resurrection, those blessed words, "Peace unto you." Yes, words spoken on the first day of the new creation. Now why were they troubled? What thoughts would arise, if they looked back only for one short week? Oh, what a week!—never such events had taken place, or can take place in one short week.

They were now the brethren of the risen Jesus. He had sent them the message to assure them of this. They never had been, and never could be, in that relationship until He had died, and risen again. (John xii. 24.) They had not yet grasped,

or understood, this marvellous grace. And as Joseph wept, so the risen Jesus could not bear to see them doubt His love.

If they thought what they had done, even in those few past days, what cause for trouble in His presence! If they thought what He had done, what cause for eternal joy! Yes, how much depends on whether we are occupied with ourselves, or with Him! What had they done? All had forsaken Him; one had denied Him in the presence of His enemies. All had loved Him, and did love Him; but, oh, how weak is the flesh in the hour of temptation! And more, they had known His love, and yet they had so sadly failed to stand by Him. Had He not deeply felt all this? Yes, He says, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." (Ps. cxlii. 4.) Yes, if they looked at their own conduct, they could only feel troubled in His presence. But if they looked at what He had done, had He not spoken to their hearts? Yes, after warning the boldest of his fall, before it came, in infinite grace, He turned to His disciples, and said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." He was going away, no more to be seen with them in the flesh, but He speaks to their hearts, to trust Him even as God, whom they did not see. Yes, He spake to the heart. He said again, "Peace I leave with you,

my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Did He not then go up to the cross, and accomplish their and our eternal redemption? Did He not bear their and our sins in His own body on that cross? Had not those words been heard, "It is finished"? Had He not risen from the dead, Head of the new creation, the first-born from among the dead? Had He not sent the joyful message, that they were now His brethren—that they stood in the same relationship to God the Father in which He stood, alive from the dead? Yes, He had said to Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Old things had passed away, all things had become new, and all of God. As yet they understood it not, and were therefore troubled when He stood in their midst, and said, "Peace unto you." If Joseph wept, Jesus said, Why are ye troubled? Did He not speak unto their hearts? Yes, He says, "and why do thoughts arise in your hearts"? Had He not borne their sins, to be remembered against them no more? He shewed them His hands and His feet.

It might be asked, But how could they know, and how can we know, that all that would otherwise give trouble is gone for ever? Surely His

own word, spoken to the heart, is enough : Peace be unto you. Satan and memory would bring up the past. Jesus says, "PEACE," and He had made it by the blood of the cross. Joseph had not done this for his brethren. Jesus has for His. Peace and forgiveness is now proclaimed through Him ; and as it was with Joseph's brethren, it is much easier to pray for forgiveness of sins, than to believe the forgiveness proclaimed. "To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." "Through this man is preached the forgiveness of sins : and by him all that believe are justified from all things." It does not say, 'Whosoever continues praying for forgiveness of sins shall at some future time be forgiven, but, all that believe *are* justified. And if praying for forgiveness, long after they were forgiven, made Joseph weep, may we never grieve the heart of Jesus by a single doubt ! God grant that we may hear Jesus speak to our hearts in these scriptures. It was wondrous grace in Joseph, but have we less in Jesus ? Far be the thought. All the types of the Old Testament were but figures, or pictures, but in Jesus we have the infiniteness—God manifest. Ever, then, may these words abide in our hearts—"Peace be unto you."

C. S.

CORRESPONDENCE.

22. "H.," Taunton. The scripture (1 Cor. vii. 39), "She is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord," in itself only goes so far as to restrict marriage with a Christian. No doubt there are also other considerations connected with the walk of a Christian. If walking in the flesh, or allowing evil of any kind, to marry such an one, or be married to such an one, would surely be to become partaker of the evil. In certain cases a person, though professing to be a Christian, is not to be received into the assembly. (See 1 Cor. v. 11; John ii. 10.)

23. "S. H. N." For a poor aged Christian to have to receive assistance from the parish is a very humbling proof of the present ruin of the church. It was not so in the beginning. We have just heard of a dear aged Christian receiving two shillings and sixpence per week, at the age of 103. He also sells a few matches. Two things, however, are greatly needed—the hearty sympathy of those who can give; and industry and management in many who should not need help, who might thus become able to assist the really distressed. These are matters in which the Lord's glory is greatly concerned. We could not say a Christian may not have thankfully to receive from the parish. (1 Pet. ii. 13.)

24. "W. J.," Penygraig. In Galatians ii. 7, 8 it does not seem to be so much that which characterises the gospel of the uncircumcision and the circumcision, as that the fact was apparent, after fourteen years' labours, that God had really owned and used Paul as His honoured minister of

the Gentiles. This was as distinctly proved as that He had used Peter as the apostle of the Jews, or circumcision. We see the wisdom of God in allowing so long a time to pass before the conference at Jerusalem (Acts xv.), so that the mighty work of God, through Paul, to the Gentiles, might be accomplished. For though the truth of the church does not seem to have been fully revealed to Paul as yet, still, there was a great advance during the fourteen years. The preaching of Peter was salvation through Jesus Christ, rejected, crucified, and risen, and made Lord; but no setting aside the Temple service of the law. Even at Cæsarea (Acts x.) they were rather brought into the new privileges of Israel. (See ver. 36.) The temple worship, &c., continued.

Now Paul distinctly preached a justification that could not be reached or acquired by the law of Moses, and said so. (Acts xiii. 39.) This prepared the way for all that was to follow, when the transitionary state had passed away. God spared the Jews the sudden revulsion of giving up the whole administration of the law at once, but gradually unfolded this through Paul's preaching, and mightily owned it. As to the Gentiles, the question was for ever settled. (Acts xv.) Then, later on, the Epistle to the Hebrews; and about the same time the complete revelation of the church as the body of Christ, in Ephesians and Colossians. How perfect the whole and every part of the word, and of the ways of God!

25. "M. M.," Devizes. We thank you for calling attention to the sentence, in the December number of this periodical, page 319—"He is the Man justified," as applied to the Lord Jesus. The writer did not, and could not, use it as when ap-

plied to us. We are justified from all things, accounted righteous. He was ever the Holy One, ever the Righteous One. He could ever say, "He is near that justifieth me," &c. (Isa. l.—read vers. 6–9.) "All the people that heard him justified God." "Wisdom is justified of all her children." (Luke vii.) In His whole being as man, from birth to being received up to glory, we read of Him, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit . . . received up into glory." (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

When man had condemned Him to death, and crucified Him, He was then justified of God in the sense of being declared the Holy, Righteous One. "And declared the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i. 4.) "He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." Now, as our Representative, this is most blessed. The glory of God shining in the face of Jesus as man, as our Saviour and Representative, *declares* Him righteous; and thus we are accounted righteous. This is justification in this sense—"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" We thus understand what we are accounted to be, by seeing what He is declared to be.

In that sense is He justified, the Holy One and the Just. What He really is, not like us, what we are accounted to be. Believing God who raised Him from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, we are thus accounted righteous, accounted to be what He is declared to be.

THE GLAD TIDINGS OF CHRIST.

No. IV.

GALATIANS III. 4.

“BUT the scripture has concluded all under sin.”

Yes, *all*, both those who were not under the law, and those who were under it, but who never kept it. All are *concluded* under sin, and there is no further need to test man. God hath announced in the scriptures His conclusion about all men. All are guilty, all are under sin. Is this, then, that all may be justly condemned? Oh, wondrous grace! the very opposite. “That the promise, by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe.” Man had failed, whether under law, or not, but the promise can never fail, as we have seen; that depends, not on man, but on God—yea, God hath confirmed the promise in Christ.

We must just here notice a very common mistake. Frequently this scripture is misquoted, as though it said that the law is our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ. (Gal. iii. 23–25.) Bear in mind that the word “we” refers to the Jews; and “ye” is as distinctly applied to the Gentiles, who had never been under the law. Thus, as to the Jews, “before faith came we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law *was* [not.

is] our schoolmaster unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." Now, to alter all this, and apply it now to us, the Gentiles, is to deny that faith is come—yea, in effect to deny that Christ is come, and to go back to the schoolmaster, as if Christ had still to come, and deliver us from him. It is to set aside the true gospel altogether; and yet how many do it! It was the state of the Jews before Christ came, and until He came; and after He came they could be no longer on that ground. There was no further need to be there, for the law had only proved them guilty, and now they were shewn the need they had of redemption. Can we, then, as believers be in that condition of bondage and guilt? No! for, turning now to the believers in Galatia, and surely to us, he says, "For YE are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus." Children are not slaves in bondage.

Let us dwell a little on this part of the glad tidings: the relationship of children. We will take the scripture just as we find it. Mark, we are not children of God by baptism, but by faith in Christ Jesus. This is important, as men do so love to teach whatever is contrary to scripture. Never does the scripture teach that we are children of God by baptism, but by faith in Christ Jesus.

"For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ." This is a remark-

able confirmation of his doctrine. "As many of you"—that is, you Gentiles who are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus—"as have been baptised into [or unto] Christ." In baptism, Judaism or heathenism had been given up, and the eye of faith directed solely to the privileges in Christ, to Christ Himself. Did not this shew the folly of going back to that which had been so solemnly given up? Take a case: a Jew, or say a Mohammedan, believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is baptised unto Christ. Would he not thus give up Mohammedanism? Could he be a Christian and a Mohammedan at the same time? No, as many believers as have been baptised, whether they were Jews, heathens, or Mohammedans, have left all behind, and "have put on Christ." All this shews the folly of going back to any of these; for "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

This is the most wondrous conclusion possible. All believers are one in Him to whom the promise is confirmed, on the ground of His resurrection from the dead, as seen in the figure of Isaac received from the dead. Oh, then, let us for ever renounce the great delusion that we are children of God by baptism, and hold fast the truth, that if we are believers, we *are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*; and that all believers have given up for ever the religions of the flesh,

whether as Jews or Gentiles, and are baptised unto Christ; that all believers are one in Christ Jesus. And further, as the promise was confirmed to Christ, "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

We must remember that nothing can change or set aside heirship according to promise, because the promise is entirely of God. This is wholly of grace, the free favour of God. But then there must be righteousness as well as grace, and the law had proved man a sinner, even those who were under it. Then could man, whilst under the law, and proved guilty, be brought into the relationship of heir of God? No, as is plainly said, "Even so we [Jews], when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world." They could not be brought to enjoy communion with the Father. REDEMPTION was needed to bring them, as to bring us, into the enjoyment of sonship, as is now explained. "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." Here we get the very opposite of the law. The law demanded obedience from man; but here all is of, and from, God. Man under law required redemption, and God sent His Son to redeem them that were under the law. Then this proves that if

man could be placed under law again, he would again require a Redeemer, or something to take that Redeemer's place: a human priesthood, with its oft-repeated sacrifices, that really cannot help man, if under law, for righteousness. Oh, that our hearts may be bowed to this stupendous fact, that "God sent his Son." How different this is from the law! Not in judgment enforcing the curse of the law, but to bear it in infinite love. It is altogether a new revelation of God. It is God's reply to Satan's lie in paradise. When man had listened to the woman's voice, when he had eaten of the forbidden tree—yea, when the whole world was sunk in sin, Jew and Gentile, through Adam's sin and their own—then what was the end of it all? "God sent forth His Son."

Had sin come in by the woman? He was made of a woman. Had man utterly failed to keep the law? He was made under the law. The Holy One of God thus took the sinner's place, and as the sinless One, there He glorified God. For what did God send Him forth? "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Thus the Jews, who had the law, and were under it, and were the natural seed of Abraham, needed the expiatory death of the Son of God as much as we Gentiles; and God sent forth His Son for that very purpose—to redeem them. They could by no other

means receive the adoption of sons. Was not this wholly of God? And has not the Son accomplished the blessed, eternal will of the Father? Thus believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, are by redemption brought into this new but eternal relationship of sons of God.

“And because YE [believing Gentiles] are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Still all of God. God sent forth His Son to redeem. “God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Thus the new relationship is entirely of God. The poor blind heart of man will not believe this. No, it takes away all credit from man. He hopes to be able to do something, or that God will do something, to take away his sins, and make him His child, and he will pray for God to give him His Holy Spirit; but what is already *done* never enters his mind. The unbelief of Christendom is in direct contradiction of these two truths : God sent forth His Son ; God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son. Yes, God hath sent forth His Son. That blessed One, as made of a woman, made under the law, has accomplished redemption. He has done the will of God in our eternal redemption. And God, having received Him up to glory, He hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts as believers, and hence the blessed cry, Abba, Father. Yes, “because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of

his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” And how did we become children? “By faith in Christ Jesus.”

All is thus of God, and all so real. The Holy Ghost is sent forth into our hearts, the proof that God has accepted the redemption-price, and also the proof that we are the children of God: “because ye are sons.” Yes, this is at once the relationship in which the believer stands—a relationship that never can end, because so entirely of God. “Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” Wherefore “*thou art*,” that is, it is now a personal relationship in which the individual believer stands. Oh, reader, is it true that *thou art* no more a servant—no more on the ground of probation under law—but a son, an heir of God through Christ? Hath God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into thy heart? Canst thou say, Abba, Father? Do dwell on these two facts: God sent forth His Son; God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son. We surely had nothing to do with either of these acts. But what a revelation of God! Just when man was utterly lost, shut up under sin, no power to deliver himself, then God sent forth His Son to redeem the lost, and to bring us from bondage to the happy position of sons. And then, because sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

And are we to deny all this, and put ourselves under law or bondage? Are we to return back to the beggarly elements of the world, to do even as the heathen do, observe days, and months, and years? When the Galatians did this, it made the apostle stand in doubt whether they were Christians. And what shall we say in this day, when these very beggarly elements, these very heathen festive days, under new names, mingled with unbelief and doubts, and striving to get saved by works of law—when these things have taken the place of pure Christianity? Do not all these things leave the soul wretched and uncertain? It is then no longer the love of God in sending His Son to redeem us; no longer the sweet certainty that we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Instead of the Spirit of His Son sent down, and dwelling in our hearts, and the holy enjoyment of our known relation as sons, a long life is spent in unbelieving prayer for the Spirit, just as though He had not been sent; and instead of liberty, bondage and unbelief. Is not this the state of thousands? Reader, is it yours?

This must be the case where law and grace are mingled together. Nay, it is not to mingle merely, it is to deny, to lose, the standing of one justified by Christ. As is shewn in our chapter, the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir WITH the son of the freewoman. It cannot be both—of the flesh and of the Spirit. It must be either

what we are to God (but then, all is lost, for man has been tested, and found guilty); or it must be entirely what God is to us in grace—grace that sent forth His Son to accomplish our eternal redemption. That redemption is accomplished; God hath sent forth the witness of it even into our hearts, the Spirit of His Son, crying, Abba, Father.

Oh, let us, then, hold fast the glad tidings of the gospel of Christ. There will be hatred and persecution, “as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born after the Spirit*, even so is it now.”

In our next we hope to notice the importance of standing fast in this liberty, and its effect on our walk.



GOD SO LOVED.

JOHN III. 16.

WE desire to call attention to the place this wondrous revelation of God has. It has been thought by some that God once so loved the world, but that when the Lord Jesus had been rejected, this ceased to be the case. Now, if we remember that the Gospel by John was the last written, long after the Jews had rejected both the Lord Jesus and also the testimony of the Holy Ghost, we shall then see that this wondrous statement of the love

of God to the world was not only recorded after He had been rejected, but, consequent on that rejection, this fuller revelation of God was made. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

His own nation rejected Him as Messiah, but as many as received Him were introduced into a far higher place of blessing than the Jew ever had as a servant, even into all the privileges of sonship. And this sonship not of man, either by natural descent, or by any action of man—a new birth, entirely of God. This truth is more fully unfolded by the Lord to Nicodemus. Only we must remember the Lord did not speak to him about the heavenly church, but of the kingdom of God, and this is yet to be set up in power on this earth, according as God had spoken, and promised by all the prophets. No one could see or enter into the kingdom, except he were born again, or wholly anew, as had been fully shewn in Ezekiel xxxvi. They must, and will, have a new heart given to them, and be sprinkled with water that is cleansed from all pollution, as is there explained.

It is a dreadful falsehood to pervert this scripture, as though it meant christian baptism, and that a priest could regenerate a child or a man

with water. All who rest on such a new birth are not born of God at all, but simply deceived. But then the question is this: if, through the rejection of the Messiah, the earthly kingdom of God has been so long postponed—for God will yet fulfil every promise—what as to this present time, this long interval? It is just here the character and love of God shine out in all their fulness.

The first thing, then, announced as meeting man's condition is this: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." The serpent was placed on the pole, that every bitten Israelite who looked at it might live. But the thought God had in giving His Son to be nailed to the cross, the sacrifice for sins, went far beyond the type. It was not for that nation only, but, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

What an object set before a guilty world!—before every serpent-bitten sinner on the face of the earth. None can say, My case is too bad, I am too vile. "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Does not this mean the writer and the readers of these lines? Who is the source of this wondrous grace? God! "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Well did He know the nation of Israel would, and did, reject

Christ, but this did not hinder His love flowing out to the whole world.

Let us, then, dwell on this wondrous fact, the infinite love of God, revealed by the cross, toward the whole world. What a contrast this is to the law! It demanded most justly the love of man to God, but He had come, and only found hatred, a cross, and a grave. Man so hated God, God so loved. Man's utmost hatred brought out God's utmost love. The law said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;" Jesus says, "God so loved the world." All this is entirely new, and entirely of God. It is the revelation of God to men. We may also say, not only was this in direct contrast to the law, but it is in direct contrast to every human thought.

The human mind is ever occupied with its love to God, or, at the most, What shall we do that God may love us? But "God so loved" is the exact opposite of all this. The gift of His Son to redeem us by His death, lifted up on the cross, was the gift of pure, unmerited love. "God so loved." God is that fountain of love from which the Son came. The guilt of the world, the loathsomeness of sin, the gift of the Sacrifice to put it away—all this reveals the love of God so as it could not otherwise have been known.

To a careless, deceived soul these words may have little meaning, nay, be utterly disregarded; but to an awakened conscience, oppressed with the

shame and guilt of sin, after long struggles on the borders of dark, endless despair, what a burst of light, what a revelation of God! Jesus speaks: let us hear. He says, "For;" yes, well did He know that nothing short of His death on the cross could meet, bear, and put away our sins. He must be lifted up, "For God so loved." "God." Yes, the source of our salvation is in God, not in ourselves, or our love to God. "So loved." It is astonishing how few believe what Jesus says. Let us give an illustration. A fallen and rebellious child has sinned against his parents, and wandered far from home—say from London to New York—and, further still, is sunk in great misery in California. Now many might believe that that parent had so loved the lost child as to send one for him to California, with money to pay his fare back to New York; but he must cross the Atlantic as best he can. But they would utterly deny that the father sent money to pay the through fare, not only to New York, to Liverpool, but even unto *home*. Yes, many would say, God so loved the world, that He gave His Son, that the sinner might get present deliverance from the wretchedness of sin; but they have no idea that God so loved, that the gift of His beloved Son was that He might pay the through fare from forgiveness of sins to glory. There is forgiveness surely, but, alas! final salvation is made out to be—the believer doing the best he can.

But let us hear His own gracious words. How far do they reach? "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Yes, God so loved the world. And for this He gave His Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life. To deny this, is to deny the true character and extent of the love of God, and also the eternal efficacy of the work of Christ. How many think it most dangerous to believe the full extent of the love of God! Do we receive this revelation of God? Do we believe He has purposed and given His beloved Son, and that He has thus accomplished the eternal salvation of all believers? Is this your happy position? Do you believe in Him, and thus know that you can never perish, that you have eternal life? This must be so if you believe the words of Jesus. Let us neither limit the circumference nor the diameter of this love to the world. It is the love of God—its circumference is as boundless as the world, its duration and effect to whosoever believeth, unlimited; it is eternal life; love that knows neither end nor change—all of God; old things passed away, all become new—a new creation. God hath sent His Son as the revelation of His love. It was not then to judge the world, "but that the world through him might be saved." You cannot be outside the reach of this love, except by rejecting it in unbelief. "He that believeth not is condemned already,

because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Thus, not only is man utterly guilty as a sinner, but he spurns the love of God, and refuses the gift of eternal life. On God's part there is infinite love proved in the gift of His Son. On man's part, Jesus says, "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." Yet He also says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." Well did He know the long-continued rejection of the human heart, yet He could say, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

Thus, whilst the love of God is fully revealed to the world, it is equally clear that the final result of the death of the Lord Jesus was not left to man's acceptance or rejection—to the will of man; or, as all have rejected Him, evidently none would have been saved. Precious words of

Jesus, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

Man, through the perversity of unbelief, and the darkness of his natural mind, sees nothing but confusion, where all is perfect harmony. One great cause of that confusion and doubt, is, constantly thinking of our love to God, instead of seeing how "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Thus, to make our love the motive for God to love us, is to deny the grace of God.

Now, as to believers, they can say, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." His love is perfect, and thus all fear is gone. Yes, His love has been shewn to the utmost, in sending His beloved Son to bear the judgment due to our sins. This alone can give holy boldness in the day of judgment. The Judge has borne our judgment! Oh, wondrous, infinite love! Beloved reader, do you believe this love? Can you look forward to that day without fear? In this matter, it is not that we loved God, but that He loved us. But then you say, Our dreadful sins! But we never could have known the depth of His love but for them. He sent His Son to be the propitiation

for those very sins. Jesus endured in love the full wrath of God against your sins, and all this because God so loved you. Will God change, and hate and judge you after this? Oh, begone, dark unbelief! God is love.

If you really know and believe the love of God, there is one thing you can then say, and say it truly: "We love him, because he first loved us." This is the very nature of love. A little child knows, sees, and sweetly confides in the love of a mother. Did that child first love that mother? Did it ever try to do so? No; it loved the mother, because the mother first loved it. It constantly sees the manner of its mother's love. Then let us "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Not only are we brought into this present relationship, but the future is surely as bright and certain as the present. "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." And mark, it is this very certainty that gives power for a holy walk. "And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." How much, then, is there in those blessed words of Jesus: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal

life." "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

"God is love."

C. S.

HORMAH.

No. II.

NUMBERS XV.

WE have seen Israel smitten and discomfited even unto utter destruction—the end of all hope of taking possession in the energy of the flesh. Is all over? Has God failed to keep His promise? *They* have failed utterly. But now God speaks unto Moses, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations which I give unto you." What a glorious contrast is the word of God to all man's failure. Yes, after all this failure, He will bring His people into the land, as He says, "which I give unto you." They are not only thus carried by faith beyond all the failure and the travail of the wilderness to the land; but mark the blessed object now presented to the eye of faith in these figures of things to come.

That object is Christ, under these various types

of His Person and work. On Him the eye can rest with supreme delight, for there all is divinely perfect. It will be noticed that the burnt-offering is the chief thought in these verses; but that offering was accompanied in each case by a meat-offering and a drink-offering. We shall also see these increase as we grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The first and great thought, then, is the burnt-offering. This also is the first in God's order in the book of Leviticus. The other extreme is where God reached us, even the sin-offering. There, on the cross, the Holy One became identified with us, was made sin for us. The hands of Aaron were laid on the sin-offering, and it became identified with, yea, the substitute for, the people's sins.

But now look at that burnt-offering. The offerer "shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him." (Lev. i. 4.) Thus are we seen to be identified with Christ in all the sweet-savour offerings of His Person and work.

Thus, in our chapter, when the flesh has failed, when we have learnt Hormah to be utter destruction, God now throws aside the veil, and reveals His purpose, that we shall be identified with Christ, accepted in Him, in all the perfections and sweet savour of His blessed work. What a vision of grace is this to our souls! Now, accompany-

ing this revelation of the purpose of God, we have the meat-offering — Christ, the Incarnate Son. Here, not only has God His portion, but all the sons of Aaron had their portion, one as much as another. The beloved Son was ever well-pleasing in His sight—full of grace and truth.

There is an increase in quantity progressively in each of the three cases before us: the one lamb; the one ram; and the one bullock. But it is the same—the meat-offering, the oil, and the wine. This is most important, thus, if we begin with the feeblest apprehension of Christ in His incarnation—for the manhood of Christ, during His life, is the sweet savour of the meat-offering—however feeble the apprehension, it must be the true Christ. There was the repeated command that there must be no leaven in or with the meat-offering. (Lev. ii. 4, 5, 11.) All was a sweet savour unto the Lord. Leaven, as a type of fallen humanity, would have utterly unfitted it to be offered to Jehovah.

Thus we learn that those who teach that Christ took our fallen nature in incarnation, have no true Christ at all, and no true atonement. Fallen human nature is sinful human nature; and if sinful, or with the leaven of sin in it, He could have been no Saviour, but would have needed to save Himself. To say Jesus took fallen human nature is thus the most soul-destroying doctrine

ever propounded. Every type that points to the Holy One carefully excludes leaven, the type of evil, and fallen human nature is evil to the core. No, the more the fire tried the meat-offering, the sweeter the savour.

In the New Testament He is ever "THE HOLY ONE AND THE JUST." The voice from heaven had been heard, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In Him was no leaven, no fallen humanity, NO SIN. Had not the angel announced to Mary, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Let us worship Him, the Holy, Incarnate Son of God. Let it be remembered, the hand of identification was never laid on the meat-offering. Until He died He must remain alone. But Jesus must be that pure, unleavened meat-offering—pure and holy in His human nature, or He could not have been the spotless burnt-offering; for in the burnt-offering the whole victim must be wholly burnt, and go up a sweet-savour offering. Thus, as there is death in it, there is also perfect identification—the hand was laid on the head. We are as fully identified with Christ in all the sweet savour of His Person and work, as He became identified with us in sin and judgment on the cross.

Oh, wondrous purpose of the God of all grace, thus to reveal Christ to us, and our place of ever-

lasting acceptance in Him, when we have learnt the discomfiture of the flesh, even to utter destruction. With the *one lamb*, then, before us, the meat-offering was to be "a tenth deal of flour, mingled with the fourth part of an hin of oil." That is three pints. "And the fourth part of an hin [or three pints] of wine for a drink-offering." Or for a ram, the increase in the meat-offering is two tenth deals of flour, and four pints of oil, and four pints of wine. How beautiful the increase. Then, if the burnt-offering is a bullock, it is "a meat-offering of three tenth deals of flour, mingled with half an hin [or six pints] of oil. And thou shalt bring for a drink-offering half an hin of wine [or six pints], for an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord."

What is the measure? What think ye of Christ? Have we entered into the sweet savour that He is to God, and the sweet savour we are to God in Him? That, beyond all our failure, the purpose of God, who chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, was to bring us into oneness with His Son, "that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love." Oh, the glory of His grace after Hormah!

The burnt-offering teaches us that this is through His death: as it is said, "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprouvable, in his sight." Now, just in proportion as we apprehend, by the teaching of

the Holy Ghost, Christ as the Holy One who has glorified God, and, if we may so speak, has satisfied the heart of God, who gave His beloved Son for this purpose, in that measure will be our joy in God, for the wine is the emblem of our joy.

Just as the burnt-offering increases in value, the one lamb, the one ram, the one bullock, so, as we grow in grace, the sweet-savour offering of Christ, in which we are presented to God, accepted in Him, is increased in value to our souls. Thus we enjoy more and more of the Spirit's teaching, and as we feed on Christ, the bread of life, we see more and more how He was in His manhood the Holy, Holy One without leaven, and in His own holy Person, anointed with the Holy Ghost, the fine flour mingled with oil. Thus, also, our joy in Him is increased.

How is it with you, beloved reader? Is it what answers to the three, four, or six pints of wine? Can you say you have one of these measures of joy in Christ, having learnt the lesson of Hormah, the utter destruction of all—yea, even religious—flesh? One of old could say, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii.) Yes, the context shews it was religious flesh the apostle referred to. But when all that was of the religion of the flesh, all that was of self, was but as dung in his sight, the glory of the Person set forth in these types was

ever before his eyes. He says, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Yes, Hormah was written on Saul of Tarsus, the devoted Hebrew, and Christ was revealed to Paul, the dependent apostle. All was lost in the old man, but far more was gained in the new man. "That I may know him." Yes, as we know Him, what answers to the wine ever increases—perhaps six pints here, and then twelve, the full hin, up there with Him for ever.

Perhaps you reply, I am a stranger to much you say. I believe in Jesus, and I scarcely know yet what I believe. I am only just awakened to come to Jesus. Welcome, stranger : in this very chapter the stranger is welcome to all these typified privileges : "And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord : as ye do, so shall he do." (Num. xx. 14-16.) Oh, stranger, have you learnt in any measure the utter destruction of all hopes and efforts in the flesh? Are you smitten? What, did you hope to go up, and take possession of holiness, in the flesh, and found only utter destruction of every such hope? Oh, how God delights to set before you the sweet savour of Christ, both in His holy humanity, and in His atoning death. Welcome, then, every stranger, to Christ. Oh, do you thirst? Then come unto Him, and drink.

Come unto Him, come in faith : He will give you what answers to the three pints, four pints, six pints of wine, according to your appreciation of Him down here in the wilderness ; and then soon to enter His presence with fulness of joy—yes, joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

It is a most striking lesson, then, this history of Hormah, whether we look at Israel, the church, or the individual. What is the present state of Israel ? Hormah, utter destruction, failure, and scattering. Soon, very soon, every promise shall be made good to them in Christ, their Messiah. If we look at the present state of the church, what utter failure, even unto Hormah : but how soon the true church shall be presented glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. And so, as to the individual believer : have we arrived at Hormah, the utter end of self ? then all is Christ. May it be so, and the wine shall increase with every increased knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

C. S.

“ Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

“WITH THE LORD.”

How blest the hope, that we shall be
 For ever, Lord, at home with Thee,
 The “Father’s house” within;
 Within that place of cloudless light,
 Where never comes one shade of night,
 Nor trace of grief or sin.

Blest Lord, to see Thee satisfied,
 In having us, Thy spotless bride,
 Upon the throne with Thee;
 To hear Thee lead the song of praise,
 Which wid’ning circles round Thee raise—
 The nearest circle we.

The seraphim there veil the face,
 And seek to understand the grace
 Which placed *us* on the throne;
 Then, breaking forth, ascribe to Thee,
 All honour, glory, majesty,
 Who wrought the work alone.

The “living creatures” Thee adore,
 The “elders” cast their crowns before
 The throne, where sits the Lamb;
 The heavenly hosts take up the song,
 Which all creation bears along,
 To Thee, the great I AM.

Above it all, this richest strain—
 “To him who wash’d us from each stain
 In his most precious blood”—
 Shall flow from hearts supremely blest,
 And brought by Thee to God’s own rest,
 Who once as rebels stood.

CORRESPONDENCE.

26. "W. W. G. C." We understand the word "mystery" to imply something which the mind of man never could have understood, except by revelation. "Great is the mystery of godliness [or piety] : God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) All the vain systems of philosophy and idolatry prove that man by searching could not find out God. All was mystery as to God. This verse contains an outline of this marvellous revelation to us. The mystery is revealed in God manifest in flesh, in our very form and likeness. God is not to us a mystery that needs revealing. He was manifest before us in the man, the Holy One of God ; justified ; sealed by the Holy Ghost as the sinless One in the midst of all the sin and darkness. God was then seen, or made visible, to angels, not merely as the Jehovah of Israel, but God revealed and preached to the world—the Gentiles. Thus revealed, God was believed on in the world, and, as man, received up into glory. The whole character, too, of God visibly seen in the Son. Let us, with holy reverence, remember that he that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father also.

27. "W. F.," Miles Platting. A christian printer will be at liberty, surely, to print sermons or tracts for any one, in his business, providing they are not unsound in doctrine. No Christian, for the sake of his trade, would spread what is false.

Surely a child of God, truly desiring to own

the Lord with His brethren around the Lord's table, should be welcomed there. Those around the table, or gathered to the Lord, are responsible to be satisfied that he is a child of God, and in sincerity desires to own the Lord. It may be some time before the brother fully understands the solemn step he takes. The thousands gathered to the Lord in Acts ii., and onwards, did not at once know its full separating character. We all need in these matters lowliness of mind, faithfulness, and largeness of heart.

28. "R. G.," Grangemouth. No doubt there is a distinction between the terms, "the first man" and "the old man," or evil nature. The first man, Adam, existed in a creation made for him before the fall, or before he had a fallen, evil nature, called the old man. At present it would not be strictly correct to say "all of the first man is set aside;" just as it would not be correct to say that the sin of the world is now put away by the sacrifice of Christ. We know this will be in the new heavens and the new earth, by that one sacrifice.

So, in the purpose of God, all of the first man is set aside, but in the reverse order of creation and the first man. In Genesis we have, first, creation; then the body of man; then the spirit. This order is reversed in the last Adam. He was raised up from the dead; we derive even life from Him. He breathed on them. Thus it is the spirit first; then, by-and-by, the redemption of the body (Rom. viii. 23); then, lastly, the creation—new heavens and earth. Thus, if we go on to that scene, there is nothing of the first man restored, but all new, even the very earth we now tread on.

THE GLAD TIDINGS OF CHRIST.

No. V.

GALATIANS V.

BELIEVERS, then, are to “stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” The believing Jew stood thus delivered from the curse of the law, accounted righteous before God, by the faith of Jesus Christ: no longer a bond slave, but now a son, an heir of God. The believing Gentiles are brought into the same blessed relationship of children of God. And because sons, God had sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Both were to stand in this happy liberty, where all was of God, on the principle of promise. Now, to go back to seek righteousness by the law, was to be entangled again in bondage. Paul assured them, “that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.” Does not this, then, shew the fearful danger of seeking to mingle Christ and law together? And yet what is more commonly done? We have seen man fully tested under law for fifteen centuries, and found only guilty, whilst the law demanded perfect obedience; man a debtor to do the whole

law, yet none righteous, no, not one. The scripture hath concluded all under sin.

Nothing, then, but pure grace, the free favour of God in Jesus Christ, could suit and meet man's condition. How fully the claims of law, of God, and the deepest needs of man, have been met by Christ. Is it not so, beloved reader, in your case? Have you not in vain sought righteousness by trying to meet the holy claims of God? Now if God takes you up on this ground, and asks, What about those sins, can you answer Him for one in a thousand? No; if you try to wash yourself in snow water; if you try to be clear by ordinances, let the light of God shine into your conscience, and you are like a man coming out of a dirty ditch. The more you compare yourself by the holy law of God, the more you bow down your head in shame.

Now look at Christ. Look back, and see that full, infinite atonement for your sins. Look in the sepulchre—it is empty. Look up above the highest heavens; He is there, raised from among the dead for your justification. God hath raised Him from the dead. It is quite true you could not acquire righteousness by the law, but Christ Jesus of God “is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Cor. i. 30.) Oh, weigh these words; they are God's words. It is of God that Christ Jesus is made unto us all we need, and all that God could

bestow upon us in Christ. Have you found that you cannot make your peace with God by works of law? He has made peace by the blood of the cross. And mark, what He has done is as eternal as it is perfect—eternal life, eternal salvation, eternal redemption. And, believer, all is yours.

But, mere professor, beware! Are you still seeking righteousness by works of law? Then hearken: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." The proclamation of grace is this: "Be it known unto you, 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, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Have you, as a lost sinner, believed this message from God? Then plainly your sins are forgiven, you are justified. And as clearly, if you are still seeking to be justified by the law of Moses, you do not believe God, and thus Christ shall profit you nothing.

And mark further, if you are justified, accounted righteous before God, by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, then, as to practical righteousness, it is not through the law you wait for the hope of righteousness, but "we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith"—the coming glory.

This brings us now to the two distinct prin-

ciples of righteousness of walk—the walk of the justified. The one principle, so strongly denounced here, would place the believer “under the law,” as is said, as the rule of life, or walk. The other, according to this scripture, declares, “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” Now this is a most serious question, as every true Christian earnestly desires a righteous, holy walk before God and man—not that he may become a child of God, justified from all things, but because he is one.

Now, what will avail, what will really serve us for a holy walk? Will the law help us? No; “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.” If, then, we take the law as the rule of life, it cannot help us, as, in that case, we take the responsibility of keeping it perfectly. We fail, and it must curse us. If, on the other hand, we say we are not under it, and therefore at liberty to sin, surely that will not help us; and the flesh may take even such license. What will avail, then, for a holy walk? “Faith which worketh by love.” But the law is not of faith, but on the principle of, “Do this.” Just here the apostle thinks of the Galatians, and in the depths of his heart’s love, he says, “Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?” How deeply he felt this! What would he feel now? This persuasion to put themselves under

law was not of God, who had called them in grace. And how those words are fulfilled now. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Is not this leaven the established religion of Christendom? Yea, the whole lump! He would they were even cut off which troubled the Galatians. He looks up to the Lord, and has confidence. And now he returns to the subject, and warns them against license. "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." To love one's neighbour is the very opposite of all lust or self-seeking.

Here, then, are the two antagonistic principles as to walk—the Spirit and the flesh. "This I say, then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." The flesh is still there, and nothing can be more contrary the one to the other. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot [or, should not] do the things that ye would." They had received the Spirit, not by the works of law, but by the hearing of faith. They were now to walk in the Spirit. It was thus faith would work by love. The Spirit would set Christ before them. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit. It is not the flesh under law,

but God the Spirit dwelling in us, bringing forth fruits that no law can condemn. The apostle does not fully develop this great truth here, as in Romans. He is chiefly occupied with their serious danger of getting under law, hence he says, "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

And mark, this is not now in reference to justification, but of *walk*. The whole question here is walk. That teaching, then, which would lead the believer under law as a rule of life, or for walk, is not of the Spirit of God, and therefore can only be of Satan. This is very solemn, and accounts for the vehemence of the apostle. It is to go back from Christ and from the Spirit to Judaism. The works of the flesh are manifest; a sad list of them is given. What a picture of the human heart, of yours, and of the writer's! And "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And how is all this to be overcome—by being under the law? No, by walking in the Spirit; and then the fruit of the Spirit is also given. Yes, these are not the fruits of improved flesh, the old "I;" but fruits of the Spirit—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." There is no law against these, surely, for they are of the Spirit.

They that are Christ's have not put the flesh under law to be tested again, but crucified it, accepted the judgment of the cross upon it, as

utterly and irremediably corrupt. They do no longer reckon the old "I" to live. They have the new life, and "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." This deep sense of grace will avoid all vain-glory, and provoking one another, and envying one another. We are then exhorted to seek the restoration of one, should he fall, considering ourselves, lest we fall also.

There is also another principle of great moment, and that forbids all carelessness. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." To the Christian, then, how great the privilege and the power—to walk in the Spirit, to sow to the Spirit. "As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Precious privileges! These Judaising teachers only wished to make a fair show in the flesh, in seeking to constrain believers to be circumcised. They did not keep the law themselves, but they delighted in persons being converted to their religion. To give up their ancient religion, and accept the cross of Christ, then, and always, brought persecution.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the

world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” The cross had fully revealed what man is. There needed no further test. It had proved what the whole world was. But it had also revealed what God is, and God is love. That cross was the end of all man’s religion. It was the end of the law. But such as cling to man’s religion must, and do, persecute those who have found accomplished righteousness and eternal redemption by that work on the cross. It is the greatest foolishness to the world, and especially man’s religious world, to have found all I need in that One crucified between two thieves. But so it is. Surely it is well to be baptised, it is well to break bread, it is well to do the will of the Lord: “but God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Let us behold the Lamb of God, and glory alone in Him. “For in Christ Jesus,” again he repeats, “neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision”—but now mark another and important statement—“BUT A NEW CREATURE.” This is what the Christian is. “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God,” &c. (2 Cor. v. 17.) “Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.” (Eph. ii. 10. The divine nature, as born of God, cannot practise sin. (1 John iii. 9.) The flesh is not now

under law, but set aside by the cross. There is no good in it under law, or not under law; neither availeth anything, "but a new creature." "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

Thus the question for walk is this: Are we walking by the rule of the law, the flesh still being tested; or by the rule of the new creation? If the latter, it is by the power of the Holy Ghost, and according to the gospel of Christ, the cross having utterly condemned all that is of the flesh. Thus we can truly say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

C. S.



A FEW THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM.

("R. T. K.," Hammersmith.) Your question as to "baptism bringing a person into the house or profession of Christianity," requires more than a page in "Correspondence." What we understand by "the great house" of 2 Timothy ii. 20, is baptised Christendom, in which are found vessels to honour, and some to dishonour. It will, no doubt, help us to trace the subject of baptism from the beginning.

Even the baptism of John should be examined, and it will be found helpful. "He came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism

of repentance for the remission of sins." (See Luke iii. 3; Matt. iii.) "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan. And were baptised of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Thus did God make straight the path, and prepare the way for the blessed Saviour. The leaders of the people do not seem to have understood it. But it was really bringing the people to the very place where they entered the land fifteen hundred years before, and the most complete repentance and self-judgment that all was failure, confessing their sins and need of forgiveness. If Jordan was the figure of death in the days of Joshua, they had to be buried in death for the forgiveness of sins. All had to begin again, and somehow forgiveness had to be reached through death, of which the Jordan was the figure. John seems quite conscious that he cannot fully explain what he is doing (see his answer to the priests, John i. 19). He was not the promised Christ, he only prepared the way. All the baptised disciples of John were simply prepared for another. They had repented, confessing their sins, and were buried in the river of death. But how were those sins to be forgiven? That other One appeared, He came to this sin-confessed multitude, and, to meet their need, went Himself into this river of death, striking figure of the death of the cross. Now hear the words of John to this prepared multitude :

“Behold the Lamb of God, which beareth away the sin of the world.” Thus the baptism, even of John, should have brought them eventually to the Lamb of God.

Then John must decrease. His work was done. A baptism unto the Lamb of God for forgiveness of sins. We do not read their sins were forgiven by baptism. If that had been the case, there would have been no need for the Lamb of God. The work of John was to prepare the way, to prove man’s need of Him. Thus John made disciples, and thus were disciples made unto Jesus as Messiah. (See John iv. 1, 2.)

Discipleship was evidently outward profession, the vine on earth. We must not confound this with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, of the members of the body to the Head now on high. (1 Cor. xii. 13.) As man, He was not then in heaven, but on earth, where many were made disciples by water baptism. (John iv. 1.)

How far will all this help us as to Pentecost? What a change! We are now at Jerusalem, where fifty days before redemption had been accomplished. The Lamb of God had died, the propitiation for sin. God had raised Him from the dead. He had not only spoken perfect, everlasting peace to His disciples, but He had also commissioned them to begin at this very place, and announce repentance and remission of sins in *His name*, also among all nations. (See Luke xxiv.

47.) Before doing this, however, they were to wait until they were endowed with power from on high. But now the promised Holy Ghost had descended from heaven. Every barrier being removed, now read the gospel announced by Peter. (Acts ii. 22-47.)

The order is reversed now. John had *first* preached the baptism of repentance. This prepared the way to direct those who repented to the Lamb of God—most important in its place. In this way they were led to the Lamb as the One through whom alone sins can be forgiven. Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, preaches, *first*, “Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ.” He begins where John ends—the purpose and counsel of God, fulfilled in the death and crucifixion of Jesus. They with wicked hands had put Him to death. God had raised Him up both Lord and Christ. This announcement, by the Holy Ghost working in the heart, produced that godly sorrow which leadeth to the needed repentance; and, believing the words they heard from Peter, they said, “What shall we do?” The answer now is in perfect harmony with what John had partially announced: “Then”—that is, after they had heard and believed the wonderful tidings of Jesus exalted on high—“then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

And mark, this declaration from God went far beyond merely themselves. “For the promise is unto *you*, and to *your children*, and to *all that are afar off*, as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Now did not that change of mind, produced by, or the result of, godly sorrow for what they had done as Jews, imply the full confession and judgment of themselves and their sins in what they had done? And, in like manner, though they might not as yet fully understand it, did not their baptism to the Lord Jesus imply the utter giving up of all on which they had formerly depended? They were thus, by repentance and baptism, directed to the name of Jesus Christ alone for the remission of sins.

We shall find, when we come to the explanation in the Epistles, it was separation, as by death, from all in which they had formerly stood. The effect of the exhortation which followed is summed up in these words, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” By this act, then, as a figure, they were separated, and formed the first beginning of the community of believers. “They that gladly received his word were baptised: and the same day there were added about three thousand souls.” Outward profession then, by baptism, and the true assembly of God were identical in that day, for “the Lord added daily such as should be saved.” Baptism, then, was plainly the giving up of Judaism, and looking only to Jesus Christ

for forgiveness of sins ; thus involving separation, as by death.

It is remarkable that this is just how the Jew understands baptism to this day. The Jew may make a lip profession of Christianity, but can you trust him if he refuses to be baptised? Not the least. Let him be baptised ; from that day he is a dead man to the Jews—yes, even to his father and mother. In a so-called christian country like England, we almost lose the original meaning of baptism.

Now, if we inquire further in the Acts, we shall not find the order of John introduced in one single instance. It is Jesus, or the words of this life, the apostles first preached everywhere. (Chap. v. 20-42.) We have to pass on from Pentecost to chapter viii. before we find much more as to baptism. Here, again, we find the “preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ;” and it was when they believed Philip that they were baptised, both men and women.

There is much for reflection in this chapter, and we desire to forget all theories in looking at it. It is evident there was no sacramental grace, or new birth, in it, for we find Simon, the sorcerer, was baptised, though still in the bond of iniquity. But the most striking thing is this—that baptism in water is totally distinct from the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Samaria had received the word of

God, and that in the full separative profession of baptism. But it was not until after the apostles had sent Peter and John that they received the Holy Ghost. Thus, by baptism they had been brought into the house, or profession of Christianity, being baptised unto the name of Jesus Christ; some time before they were baptised by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ. (See 1 Cor. xii. 13.) No two things could therefore be more distinct.

In the case of Philip and the eunuch, the same order is observed. He does not preach baptism to the eunuch, but, “Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus,” that is, the Saviour, as the One who bare our sins, &c., as foretold in Isaiah liii. Acts viii. 37 is no doubt an interpolation, still, the truth is clear: he heard the word, believed, and then took his place as a professed Christian in baptism. “They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptised him.”

(To be continued.)



“WORTHY OF THE LORD.”

THERE are many who own the name of Jesus, the Saviour, and preach forgiveness of sins in that blessed name. Some of such would also speak of meeting in the name of Jesus. Some may, on the other hand, speak of “Jesus only.” Now,

whilst the name of Jesus is unspeakably precious, and "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin;" but for those who had heard and believed the grace of God, the apostle thus prayed: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might 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." (Col. i. 9.)

The Lordship of Jesus is not only equally set aside by the two great streams of human wickedness—infidelity and superstition—two streams fast becoming one, in roaring rapids of violence, but, what is still more distressing, the preachers of forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus, and those who own that name most precious, they also too much set aside the authority of Him as Lord.

We may speak of Him as Lord of heaven and earth, but do we truly own Him as *our* Lord? Providing sinners be saved, they are left to join and own any government that men may choose to set up in Christendom, never asking or reflecting, Is this suited to the Lord? is this walking worthy of the Lord? Is He not entirely ignored as Lord, and each found doing that which is right in his own eyes?

No doubt, in the crowds that walk along the broad road of profession, there are learned and far-seeing men; but there is a narrow path, and the vulture's eye hath not seen it. It can only be discerned by the Spirit. The worst thing is this—men, saved sinners, are content to go on in what their heart condemns; so different from this earnest prayer of Paul, or even the words of Moses in another day. He says, “Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, SHEW ME NOW THY WAY.” Have you found grace in His sight? Thank God if you have. But now, if so, have you ever truly prayed to God, “Shew me thy way”? You may think you know it, or you may trust in men, or churches, and think you have no need to cry to God, “Shew me thy way.” You could not make a greater mistake. Let us read a few more words of Moses: “That I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight; and consider that this nation is thy people.” Is this the childlike desire of our hearts, having found grace in His sight, that we also may know Him, be more and more acquainted with Himself, and thus ever find His full, free favour? Do we know, and do we thus speak to Him about, His whole redeemed church? What was the answer of the Lord? “And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” Is not this enough? The path may be very narrow, and despised by men, but in that narrow path, what-

ever may be against us, He says, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." The vulture's eye, far-seeing men, have not known this narrow path of perfect rest, in a world full of opposition and bitter hatred.

Yes, it is enough: "And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us?" Yes, it is this, the presence of the Lord with the few gathered to Himself that marks the narrow path. But then, must not this separate from whatever disowns the Lordship of Jesus? "So shall we be separate, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

And was Israel as a nation more separate from the people that were upon the earth, than is the church of God? But mark, if it is not separation to THE LORD Himself, it is only sectarianism, or the disowning of Jesus as Lord. Can we truly say, "Is it not in that thou goest with us; so shall we be separated?" We must walk with the Lord, or we cannot walk worthy of the Lord. The world ever rejects and disowns Him. And does He not say of His own that are in the world, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"?

The first thing, then, the apostle prays for, for the beloved saints in Christ, is, that they "might

be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Is this our prayer, our desire? For how much more do we need, in these last days of deceivableness, of unrighteousness, to look to Him! Now, have we the knowledge of His (our Lord’s) will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding? Or are we merely led by men for party purposes in the church of God? Do not admit for a moment that this is not your privilege, however dark the night, however great the confusion. The path will be narrow, but the privilege how great! Is there any wisdom like being filled with the knowledge of His will? But do not forget the vulture’s eye sees it not; it must be known by spiritual understanding. If, however, a servant knoweth his lord’s will, and doeth it not, does his knowledge profit him? Nay, is he not the more to blame? Thus the prayer continues: “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing.”

There are lords many, or divers human church governments, owned in Christendom, but each, when compared with the church in the beginning, displaces Jesus AS LORD. In the beginning the world hated and persecuted the church of God. And what they did to the church, they did to the Lord. He said, “Why persecutest thou me?” Now, with great numbers, that very world governs the church. In the beginning the Lord held the stars in His right hand; guided and governed the

assembly by the Holy Ghost : now that assembly is divided into various conflicting governments. All this we must confess and deplore. What need, then, for earnest prayer, at such a time, that we may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing ! Yes, will it not be all pleasing unto Him in these days of human will, to find a few loyal hearts ?

We earnestly ask all our readers to cry to God about this matter. Do all own Jesus as LORD ? No doubt this can only be done by the Spirit of God. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. xii. 3.) We may own other lords, but if we truly own Jesus "the Lord," we may rest assured this is by the Spirit of God. What divine comfort, then, there is in those words of His, "Where two or three are gathered to my name, there am I in the midst of them." Yes, if we have found grace in His sight, we may count on His presence with us. It is enough ; we need no more ; soon we shall see His face in glory, Lord of all. Oh, that we may walk worthy of Him, as Lord, now. May we do that only which is suitable to Him, until He come.

C. S.

Oh may Thy Spirit guide our souls,
And mould them to Thy will,
That from Thy paths we ne'er may stray,
But keep Thy precepts still!

That to the Saviour's stature full
We nearer still may rise,
And all we think, and all we do,
Be pleasing in Thine eyes.

THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD.

IN considering the subject of the parables of the New Testament, questions immediately arise as to what is a parable? and why did our Lord so often speak in parables?

The word "parable," in the New Testament, is a translation of the Greek word, *parabolee*, and is always translated "parable" in the Authorised Version, except in Mark iv. 30, where it is "comparison" (but "parable" would be correct); in Luke iv. 23, where it is "proverb;" and in Hebrews ix. 9; xi. 19, where it is "figure." The word is derived from *paraballo*, and signifies literally, "a placing one thing by the side of another," a "comparison;" and hence a "simile," "similitude," "parable."

A short narrative was related, with more or less of detail, but always complete in itself. Alongside of this ran, as it were, its interpretation; as we see beautifully brought out in the parable of the sower, and our Lord's own interpretation. The sower, the seed, and the various sorts of ground, have that which answers to each.

This, in short, shews us what is a parable. It has often been said there are no parables given us by John in his Gospel. It is true that the above Greek word is not used by this apostle, but he uses another word (*paroimia*), translated "pro-

verb," in John xvi. 25, 29, and 2 Peter ii. 22, and "parable," in John x. 6. Now, seeing that John omits all the parables given by the other Evangelists—in keeping with the character of his Gospel, for he once only uses the term, "kingdom of God" (chap. iii. 3)—the question arises, Is the passage in John x. 6 a "parable"? It is Christ as the Good Shepherd, and a little consideration will shew that it is not like any of the other parables, and partakes more of the character of an "illustration" than of a parable, and is rightly translated "allegory."*

Our Lord Himself introduces His parables by a quotation from the Old Testament. He spoke to the people in parables, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matt. xiii. 35.) This is generally marked as a quotation from Psalm lxxviii. 2. That reads (with ver. 3), "I will open my mouth in a

* The "Revisers," in both the above-named passages in the Hebrews, have translated the word "parable;" but it is difficult to see how the Old Testament tabernacle can be "a parable for the time (now) present." (Chap. ix. 9.) Many of the things named are *in contrast* to what we now have, in and by the finished work of Christ. And in chapter xi. 19 we cannot see any trace of a parable. In the purpose of Abraham, Isaac was put to death, and he received him back from death, not really, but in a "figure."

parable, I will utter dark sayings of old ; *which we have heard and known*, and our fathers have told us ;” whereas our Lord speaks of things “*kept secret from the foundation of the world.*” What were these secret things he was about to explain to them? Our Lord Himself tells us. The disciples asked Him why He spoke to the people in parables. He replied, “Because it is given unto *you* to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to *them* it is not given.” (Matt. xiii. 11.)

Why were only the disciples to know these mysteries? It was because of the judicial blindness of His once-favoured people. He spoke to them in parables, “because they, seeing, see not ; and hearing, hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand ; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed ; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.” (Matt. xiii. 13–15.)

Thus it is plain *why* our Lord spoke in parables. His followers were to understand the mysteries of His kingdom, but the Jews were not ; they had closed their eyes, and judicial blindness

now enshrouded them. Christ had come to His own, and His own had received Him not. The Pharisees had already been guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, by declaring that He cast out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons. (Chap. xii. 24.) Some of the parables were given to the disciples only, and what He had spoken in public He explained to them in private.

On considering the parables of our Lord, it will be seen that they may be classified under a few general headings, shewing—

I. The condition of the people of Israel, and their being set aside as a testimony for God; such as the parables of the Wicked Husbandmen, the Fig-tree, and the Two Sons.

II. The setting up of the kingdom, and Satan's opposition to it; such as the Sower, the Tares, and the Leaven.

III. The way of God in bringing into the kingdom; such as the Great Supper, the Lost Sheep, and the Prodigal Son.

IV. The responsibilities of those connected with the kingdom; such as the Unmerciful Servant, the Talents, and the Ten Virgins.

To us also—Christians in this day—it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom. Christ calls us friends, to whom He reveals what He is doing. (John xv. 15.) "We have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. ii. 16.) Happily, of several of the parables we have our Lord's own explanation.

May He give us, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the true interpretation of them all.

The parables have been used as the medium of much false teaching. Where our Lord Himself did not interpret, false teachers have been busy;* indeed, we all need to be on our guard, or we may go astray, especially in interpreting the detail of a parable. We must remember that a parable is a comparison," mostly of natural things (with which all are more or less familiar), with things of a deeper and spiritual meaning. The great thing is to gather the teaching of a parable as *a whole*, and then take up the details, as far as they are in agreement therewith, rather than to insist on every detail, which very few of the parables will allow. For instance, it will not do to conclude that, because in the parable of the Virgins there were five wise and five foolish virgins, there will be an equal number of professors lost and saved. This forms no part of the teaching of the parable. The fact is, that in the parables we need the teaching of the Holy Spirit, as we do in every other part of the word of God. Our Lord explained the parables to His disciples, in His own presence, privately ;

* For instance, it has been attempted to prove from the Prodigal Son, that there is no need of an atonement. The son was received at once into his father's house, upon his confession, without any allusion to another having to die for him ! entirely ignoring the many proofs of that doctrine elsewhere.

may we, in the same presence, seek to learn them also.

We have seen the solemn position of Israel in the days of our Lord on earth. They had not received Him, and were *not* to understand the mysteries of the kingdom. Let us not forget the great responsibilities devolving on Christendom in this our day. We see much error and evil around us on every hand. Surely the light that many had has become darkness, and, alas! how great is that darkness. Whereas God is faithful, and has promised that he that will do His will, shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. (John vii. 17.) But if any shut their ears, and turn away from the truth, a time is hastening on when that Wicked shall be revealed, and God will send strong delusion that they should believe *a lie*. (2 Thess. ii. 8, 11, 12.)

May God bless our study of the parables of our Lord, enable us to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, and see what His purposes are respecting Christendom and the poor world through which we are passing; and, while we enjoy our privileges, which are many, may we seek grace to answer to our responsibilities, which are great, remembering that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required."



SCRIPTURE: ITS INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY.

(EXTRACT.)

“How many, now wandering in the dreary wilderness of unbelief—who would at one time have shrunk back with horror, if asked to relinquish Christianity—have had their faith undermined by the insinuation of doubts concerning scripture, used by the enemy of souls, as the narrow end of the wedge, to loosen its foundation; for where the authority of scripture is once shaken, all that is supernatural speedily crumbles; and miracles, atonement, and resurrection—all, indeed, that distinguishes Christianity as a revelation of God, and from God—is surrendered by degrees, till, at last, there is not a plank left to float the soul over the dark ocean of eternity.”

We have much pleasure in commending the pamphlet from which the above extract is taken. We have read it with much profit, and feel assured the Lord will use it for the establishing of the faith of His own people.*

* “Scripture; its Inspiration and Authority:” being an Answer to Two Lectures by Mr. Wilson. By Alexander A. Ord. Messrs. Nisbet & Co., London. May also be had from George Morrish, London. Price 3*d*.



CORRESPONDENCE.

29. Walsall. It seems scarcely possible to think that any one could quote the words of Paul, "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. ix. 22), as a reason for joining the various games which rage at the present time. Where is the person that can honestly say he has joined such clubs for the sake of seeking the salvation of souls? "That I might by all means save some." There are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." This is a scriptural mark the apostle gives of the last days, the perilous times. Does he say, Join them, become like them? No, he says—nay, God says—"From such turn away." Games came from our heathen forefathers, and have always marked absence of spirituality in the professing church, if not a real power in Romanism. It is remarkable that every feature of Romanism is rapidly reviving in this country, and there seems to be a vast secret army, seeking to influence every outpost, with one single object—to banish true spirituality, which is separation from this evil world. Let us remember, "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." (1 John ii. 15, 16.) "The friendship of the world is enmity with God: whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God." (James iv. 4.)



NOTES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THE writer of this article would strongly recommend a close, prayerful study of this epistle, as the groundwork of all scriptural knowledge. Well does he remember the benefit he derived, for nearly two years, in laying aside all other reading, and studying this epistle, with a few others, when young, about forty years ago.

We cannot be surprised that it should contain such solid foundation-truth, when we bear in mind that it was written to the assembly in the then metropolis of the whole world.

It is important, and really helpful, in reading any of the precious epistles or books of holy scripture, to observe the character and design of that book, and also the order and divisions in the same. The object the Spirit had in this epistle, then, was evidently to reveal the relationship of God to man, and man to God—the way God could be righteous in justifying man. Thus it is the foundation of all truth.

The careful reader will at once see the three divisions of the epistle. Chapters i. to viii. reveal God, the Justifier; the gospel of God to Jews and Gentiles alike—the same grace to each. Chapters ix. to xi. shew that God has not forgotten His promises to Israel, but that, at the appointed time,

all shall be fulfilled to them as a nation. Chapters xii. to the end contain the preceptive part.

There is, however, a subdivision in the first eight chapters of great importance. Up to chapter v. 11 it is the question of justification from SINS; then, on to the end of chapter viii., it is more the question of justification and deliverance from SIN. We will now turn to chapter i.

“Paul, a bond servant of Jesus Christ.” He was not a bond servant of any society or party, but of Jesus Christ. How few can follow Paul in these seven words, and yet how important it should be so, if service is to be acceptable to Christ! Have you thought of this as to the whole course of your life and service? It will make all the difference in the day of reward. “Called *to be* an apostle” should be, “an apostle by calling.” When the Lord Jesus called him, it was not that he might go to the other apostles, and be educated, or prepared, or ordained to be an apostle; no, he was constituted an apostle at once, and without any human authority whatever; he was called to act and preach as an apostle because he was one, not that he might be one. (Compare Acts xxvi. 15–19; Gal. i. 10–16.) Thus Paul was “separated unto the gospel of God.” Well did the Holy Ghost know how all this would be entirely reversed in that very Rome. Yes, this very first verse is of the utmost moment to us, if we would do the will of God. Remember, Paul had been

an apostle for some time when the Holy Ghost separated him, and sent him to a special tour of service, with the approval of the elders, in Acts xiii. 1-4.

Here, then, we see Paul a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, an apostle by calling, separated unto the gospel of God. Now this word, "separated," goes a great way. Separated from the world, and from the law, from Judaism, unto the glorious good news of God. It is not the subject of the church in this epistle, but the gospel of God. The church was not the subject of promise, but the gospel was. ("Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.") Yes, the scriptures, from Genesis iii., contain abundant promises of the gospel of God, "concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Every promise thus looked on to the seed, which is Christ. It will be well to lay hold of this. The gospel is not concerning our feelings or doings, but "concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." May that blessed One be ever the beginning and the end of the gospel of God which we preach!

There are just two parts, then, in the true gospel: the work accomplished by Jesus in the flesh; and His resurrection from the dead. "Which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." In Him, as Son of David, all promise was fulfilled. What a manifestation of the love of God—the Holy One to be made flesh, to

become truly man—to come down from His own eternal glory into the midst of a fallen, guilty race, under sin and judgment, and in that state of sinless humanity to go on to the cross!—Himself all pure, and yet to be made sin, to bear its utmost judgment unto death; yea, to go down into death itself, and deliver us from its rightful power—to be delivered for our iniquities. This we shall find to be one great theme of our epistle—the atoning death of Jesus, in its double aspect of propitiation and substitution. But though made man in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet not Himself in fallen humanity or sinful humanity—not Himself defiled. He was ever the Holy One of God, and was thus determined, or “declared the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

Let us, then, behold the Son of God, pure and undefiled all along His path below; not only His blessed acts, but His nature, holy, according to the Spirit of holiness. Thus, though in the midst of evil, come there in love; for us entering in sympathy into all the sorrow sin has brought; and tempted from without in all points as we are, but in Himself, His holy nature was entirely apart from sin. All this was declared in that, having accomplished our redemption, God raised Him from among the dead. Personally death had no claim on Him—He could not be holden by it. Since He was according to the Spirit of holiness,

God in righteousness must raise Him from among the dead, and receive Him to glory. He had glorified God in human nature, and as man He is now raised *from* the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness; and there is now in heaven the Man who has glorified God. It is well to be clear as to what He is in Himself, and then we shall better understand what He has done for us, and what He is for us raised from the dead. These truths we hope to notice more fully further on.

From this Holy One raised from the dead Paul had "received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name." It is important to notice this; whatever he was as an apostle, it was all grace received. Did not the Lord shine across his path, in pure, free favour, at the very moment he was mad—yea, exceeding mad—against Christ? Did He not call him, and make him His chosen apostle to the Gentiles at once, in free, unmerited favour? Is it not the same in principle in every case? Whatever service we may have for Christ, is it not the same grace, the same free favour? Thus the apostle looked upon the saints at Rome. The same grace had been shewn to them. "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ." Thus grace shines out in all its fulness. He who met Saul on his way to Damascus, even Jesus Christ as Lord, had also called every believer in Rome. "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints:

Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The two little words introduced by the translators, "*called to be saints*," completely changes the meaning of this important scripture, and has been the cause of serious mistakes in the question of holiness. It is the same word as is used in the first verse, "*called an apostle ;*" or, "*an apostle by calling*." As the word, saint, means holy one, so the words mean, "*holy ones by calling*." Not called to seek to attain to holiness—the common mistake—but just as Paul was constituted an apostle by the Lord who called him, so all believers in Rome were constituted holy ones by calling. This was the ground on which they were exhorted to walk in accordance with what they were. Every believer is a saint by calling, holy by calling. He is born of God, partaker of the divine nature, which is holy. By new birth he is holy. He is dead with Christ, risen in Christ—yea, Christ who has passed through death, and is the resurrection and the life, is his life. "He that hath the Son, hath life." Now, if he has the life of the Holy One of God, that life of which he is now a partaker is as holy as it is eternal. All believers have eternal life, therefore all believers have a holy life. To seek by any means to attain to one or the other for acceptance, is to totally misunderstand our calling and high privileges.

All scripture bears out this truth. The exhorta-

tion to be holy is on this principle : " AS OBEDIENT CHILDREN as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation : because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." (1 Pet. i. 14.) Yes, it is because they are begotten again unto a lively hope : kept by the power of God, because they are born of God ; as children, having purified their souls in obeying the truth. In a word, as they were holy by calling and nature, and having the Holy Ghost, they were to give all diligence to be holy in life and conversation.

John brings out the holiness of the new nature as born of God. He that is born of God does not practise sin. In each epistle the holy calling will be found first, and holy walk, as the result, follows. (Compare 1 Thess. i. 1, with chap. v. 23.) It is important to notice the place the word has, applied by the Holy Ghost, both as to the new birth, and also in practical holiness. " Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." (James i. 18.) " Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth." How sad it is in this day to see all this set aside, and men by thousands seeking to be holy by sacraments and ceremonies ; and not only they, but many who write and teach on holiness entirely overlook what every Christian is constituted by calling and new birth, and the indwelling of the Spirit. There is no doubt this is the cause of great weakness and mistake and low walk.

Let us not lightly pass over those other precious words : “ Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” What a change from Judaism !—the free favour of God our FATHER, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and peace to all the beloved of God in Rome. Do our souls enter into this ? Instead of law justly requiring perfect obedience from man, now we have perfect peace with God, on the principle of free, unmerited favour. Israel, if faithful, could only have known God as Jehovah ; we know Him as Father. We shall see in this epistle how His grace and peace can flow out to us unhindered in perfect righteousness.

As this epistle reveals the ground of a sinner’s standing before God, we notice that the first thing for which the apostle gives thanks to God, through Jesus Christ, for them all, is this : “ Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.” Thus faith has the first place. Beloved reader, is your faith well known, or is it doubtful whether you really believe God ? This is the first point to be settled ; all will follow in order after that. We shall find that if you believe God, then you can say, “ Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Can you with confidence say so ? Then drink of that stream of grace and peace ever flowing from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.



THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD.

THE SETTING ASIDE OF ISRAEL.

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

MATTHEW XXI. 33-45; MARK XII. 1-12; LUKE XX. 9-19.

“Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.”—MATTHEW XXI. 33-45.

Our Lord's own words give us the interpretation of this parable: “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you [Jews], and given to a nation

bringing forth the fruits thereof." This was the result, after constant and repeated failure of yielding fruit to the householder, and at last of open rebellion and murder.

The figure is taken from the East, where men do not generally pay rent for the land in money, but in fruits—a certain percentage of the increase of the land, according to the nature of the soil, and other circumstances. In some cases it may have been paid in money, as we read in the Canticles (chap. viii. 11): "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon: he let out the vineyard unto keepers: every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver." And verse 12 would seem to point out the proportion that was to be the keeper's share, and what paid to the owner: "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred." This would, doubtless, be, as in our parable, when the owner provided vines, vinepress, tower, and everything but the labour; for when arable fields are let in the East, a percentage much less than this is paid as rent, the tenant having to find seed, implements, &c., as well as labour. It has been stated as about a tenth of the produce.

The owner providing *all things*, and calling for the chief part of the fruits, is the more applicable to what God did for Israel. He took them up as Syrians ready to perish (Deut. xxvi.

5), did everything for them, and then looked for fruit.

We read that "when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them." They could not well fail to see the application of this parable, because of what they had read in the prophet Isaiah: "Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." (Is. v. 1, 2.)

The appeal is then very pathetic: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" There was, alas! no remedy: the hedge was taken away, the wall broken down, and the vineyard laid waste. Neither could there be any mistake as to who this vineyard was: "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."

Now, in our Lord's day on earth, Israel had but to look back, and see that this prophecy had been

fulfilled. Israel was not at that time the flourishing vine, nor the fruitful vineyard, it had formerly been—at least in measure. Now they were to hear that the guilt was brought home to *them*. They had ill-treated God's prophets, stoned the messengers, and now the Son was there: how would they treat Him? He was the stone that was to become the head of the corner, but which the builders rejected, for it would indeed set them all aside. He was the stone on which they stumbled and fell when He was here in grace; but when He comes in judgment, He will grind His rejecters to powder.

But though the chief men of Israel knew that our Lord spoke of them, and though they had seen the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled in their very midst, yet it all had no effect on them: they wished to seize Him then and there, but feared the people. Thus they sought to verify the parable. The vineyard should be taken from them, and “given to a nation* bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

A useful lesson we may surely learn from this parable. God had asked what more could He

* The word, “nation,” need present no difficulty; it is quite in keeping with the rest of the parable, and in 1 Peter ii. 9 we read, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an *holy nation*, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

have done for Israel? May we not ask, What more could He have done for His church? And when we look at what it was at the first, and what it still is in the mind of God—"the pillar and ground of the truth;" "the body of Christ;" "one body;" "His house," &c.—and now see its broken and corrupt state, we can but sigh, and cry, by reason of its state, and lament that Christ will have to say to that which bears the name of His church, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Thank God, He also says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev. iii. 10, 11.)

THE TWO SONS.

"What think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."—MATTHEW XXI. 28-32.

We have our Lord's own explanation also of this parable. The chief priests and the elders of the people had come to Him, demanding by what authority He was acting. The day before He had entered into Jerusalem in triumph, fulfilling the prophecy that said, "Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass." Garments were strewn in the way, and branches of trees; and the multitude cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!" He then went into the temple, and cast out those that sold and bought, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers; but He healed the blind and the lame who came to Him. At all this the chief priests were "sore displeased," and in the morning they demanded of Him on what authority He did these things.

Our Lord then asked them a question respecting John; and because they could not, or would not, answer Him, neither would He tell them by whose authority He had done those things. "But"—He would tell them something—"what think ye? A certain man had two sons," &c. *They* were those who said, "I go, sir," and went not. The people were to observe what the scribes and the Pharisees *said*, for they sat in the seat of Moses (chap. xxiii. 2), but they were not to follow them—they "went not." They were blind leaders of the blind, and

were not to be followed. He Himself would answer the question He had asked them: "John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not:" neither were they following Christ. On the other hand, those who made no profession—the publicans and the harlots—had believed John, and were entering into the kingdom of God before them. This parable is evidently spoken emphatically against the chief men of Israel.

Alas! we see the same great profession in these days. Men in high position in the so-called church assume to be God's priests on earth, but, alas! are not many of them blind? By profession they say, "I go, sir;" but when we contrast Christianity with Christendom, we find that many of them "go not," and they really mislead those that would know the way of life.

This parable may, indeed, have a wider application. Those who have heard the good news of salvation may be compared to those who say, "I go, sir," and to those who say, "I will not." Alas! how many who say, "I go, sir," do not really go. They are satisfied with the lip service and the routine of observances, which, indeed, is but a solemn, but in many cases a fatal, way of saying, "I go, sir:" while God, in His mercy, is blessing His message of salvation to the careless and ignorant, and they believe the gospel of God (1 Pet. iv. 17), and are saved.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

“A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.”—LUKE XIII. 6-9.

There were some present at that time who told our Lord of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. By our Lord's reply, it appears evident that those who related this, judged the sufferers to have been great sinners, or God would not have allowed such a dreadful thing. This, alas! is a conclusion men are always too ready to draw when any calamity happens: they think what sinners such must have been, rather than take warning to themselves.

Our Lord asked if they supposed these Galileans were “sinners above all” others, because they had suffered such things? or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell? He said, “Nay; but except *ye* repent, *ye* shall all likewise perish.” They should look to themselves: *they* were equally guilty. He knew how they despised the Galileans (see John iii. 41, 52), and prided themselves on their fancied superiority: *they* should also perish, unless they repented. Yea, more, He would give them a true description of themselves, and in a parable tell them their end.

They were compared to a fig-tree, from which fruit had been sought—sought, not once only, but for three years, answering, doubtless, to their probation under the law, under the prophets, and then under grace. Under the law the Master found no fruit—they broke it entirely; under the prophets, they heeded them not—He found none; and under grace He found none—they went about to kill our Lord. The Master ordered the fig-tree to be cut down.

Still grace lingered: the “dresser” begged it might have one more trial—a *fourth* year, as we may say; and we know our Lord prayed for His murderers that their sin might not be laid to their charge; and in sending forth His apostles to preach “repentance and remission of sins,” they were to *begin at Jerusalem*.

Alas! it was all in vain. Our Lord had wept over Jerusalem. He would often have gathered them under His wing, but they would not. Still they had one more trial. Remission of sins was preached to them, and the Holy Ghost was sent down, convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. (John xvi. 8–11.) Still there was no fruit, and Stephen had to charge home their sin upon them, reminding them of the three former trials their nation had had: “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist *the Holy Ghost*: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of *the prophets* have

not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of *the Just One*, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received *the law* by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." (Acts vii. 51-53.)

The Master's sentence hung over the guilty people: "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Why occupy the ground, if useless? Why be there to hinder others? This was the very thing charged home upon their rulers—they would not enter the kingdom themselves, and hindered those desirous of doing so. Yea, more: the apostle declared that the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them. (Rom. ii. 24.) The judgment, though long delayed, fell at last upon that guilty city, and more guilty people, once the fig-tree in the vineyard of God.

The same principle applies to the professing church as a whole, and to each one in particular. Where much is given, much will be required. The servant which knows his Lord's will, and does not prepare himself, nor doeth His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. (Luke xii. 47, 48.) Can we not almost hear our Lord saying, "why cumbereth it the ground?" The time hastens on when "Judgment shall begin at the house of God." Let each that bears the name of Christ look around, and seek to get God's judgment as to the

whole professing church, and then ask himself, What fruit am I yielding to my Lord? He has done much for me. Oh, His love, His death, for me!—His long-suffering, His patience, His care over me! How do I requite it all? What fruit do I bear that is pleasing in His eyes? We are exhorted to “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Col. i. 10.) May it be so, and to Him be all the glory!



A FEW THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM.

No. II.

The preaching of Peter at Cæsarea to Cornelius and his company next comes before us. Again, it is not baptism, but “peace by Christ Jesus,” that is preached to them. Now, if baptism had been the channel, or medium, through or by which forgiveness of sins was obtained, or the medium by which the new birth was effected, then Peter must have at once preached it; or, if there was any sacramental grace connected with it, then also he could not possibly have omitted to preach it first of all. How differently from all this did he declare of Jesus: “To HIM give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” Does not this explain what was meant at Pentecost, “in the name of Jesus for remission of sins?” It does

not say, whosoever is baptised, but, "whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Baptism was the profession of faith in Him; but in this case, to shew that remission of sins is through faith in Jesus, "whilst Peter spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." This was before they were baptised. It would therefore be a great mistake to connect forgiveness of sins with baptism, instead of the name of the Lord Jesus. The believing Jews were greatly astonished at this, and especially as this was on the Gentiles, and it demands our closest attention. There were a company of believers baptised by the Holy Ghost, and thus members of the body of Christ (1 Cor. xii.), before they had been baptised with water. Does not this, then, shew again the distinction between the outward profession and the baptism by the Spirit into the body of Christ?

Surely, however, the way was clear for the former by the latter. "Can any man forbid water, that these should be baptised which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord." It follows, then, that it is a fatal mistake to attach forgiveness and sacramental efficacy to baptism, instead of faith in the Lord Jesus.

Repentance, no doubt, was wrought in the heart and conscience, but the expression of it in baptism did not take place in this case until they had re-

ceived the Holy Ghost. The great point established is this: baptism cannot be the channel whereby we get forgiveness of sins, for they had this and the Holy Ghost, and yet were commanded to be baptised. They could not be baptised to obtain what they already had.

We will now look at that remarkable passage in the conversion of Saul. Convicted and repentant, through the revelation of the risen and glorified Jesus, whom he had seen, and whose words he had heard; three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. Ananias is sent to him as a chosen vessel of Christ. Let us hear his words: "putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts ix. 17.) Mark, all this is before baptism is named. Then Ananias said, "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Chap. xxii. 16.) This is sometimes read as if it said, or meant, "wash away thy sins by baptism." But does it say so? Read each clause. It is not, wash away thy sins, being baptised, but, wash away thy sins, CALLING on the name of the Lord. It does not say, wash away thy sins, AND call on the name of the Lord. Is not wash away thy sins connected with calling on the name of the Lord? Let us inquire how Paul himself understood this.

The literal translation of those words of Ananias to Saul is given thus : “And now, why lingerest thou? Arise, and be baptised, and have thy sins washed away, calling on his name;” or, as in the common Greek text, “on the name of the Lord.” Are there not three thoughts : first, “Why lingerest thou?” second, “Arise, and be baptised;” third, “and have thy sins washed away, CALLING on his name.” Now the question is this —Is the washing away of sins by baptism? It does not say so. Or, then, is it connected with calling on the name of the Lord? If we compare Acts xxvi., it is clear Saul had received his call and commission three days before his baptism : “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, BY FAITH that is in me.” Here forgiveness of sins, &c., is not by baptism, but *by faith* in Christ. It was through faith in Christ he preached repentance, and doubtless baptism resulted as the expression of both faith and repentance, as we shall soon see : “That they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.”

Saul was, doubtless, a forgiven man, and therefore, whilst it could not be said, Wash away thy sins by baptism, or, thus washing away thy sins, yet, as has been said, being baptised, and now calling on the name of the Lord whom he had

persecuted, the assembly would now look upon him as a new and forgiven man: indeed, they could not have done so had he delayed or refused baptism. But this we must say boldly—never did Paul preach baptism as a means of obtaining forgiveness WITH GOD; but he did distinctly connect salvation with *calling* on the name of the Lord (Rom. x. 8–13); ending with these words: “For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” “For whosoever shall CALL upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” No doubt the Holy Ghost used the words of Ananias in bringing Saul into the full *enjoyment* of sins forgiven.

Now read through the Acts, and examine each instance of the preaching of Paul. Did he once preach baptism as a means either of the new birth, or a means by which sins are forgiven? Redemption being accomplished, he first invariably preached the cross, the death, and then the resurrection of Jesus Christ; and then, “Be it known, therefore that through this man (not through baptism) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all [that are baptised? No.] that believe are justified from all things.” (Acts xiii. 39.) Also at Thessalonica, his manner of preaching was this: “Three sabbath-days [he] reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom

I preach unto you, is Christ.” He fully explains the gospel he preached, and that by which the Corinthians were saved, if saved at all, in 1 Corinthians xv. 1–17. But in that gospel it was, “Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again,” &c. He also declares, “Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel.” (1 Cor. i. 17.) Now, if sins were washed away by baptism before God, or if the Spirit used baptism to effect the new birth, then baptism would be the very cream of the gospel, and Paul could not have written such a fact. He makes the gospel something absolutely distinct from baptism. Christ sent him not to baptise, as we have seen in the commission, but to preach the gospel.

Yet it is also clear that baptism was the result where Paul preached the word. Let us look at a few cases. We see Paul at Philippi. Lydia is listening to the word of life: “Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things that were spoken by Paul.” And what was the result? “And when she was baptised, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged ME to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there.” (Acts xvi. 14.) This believing woman—the first believer in Europe on record—took a most remarkable place of, shall we say, responsible authority? Her *household* was baptised; yet she says, If ye have judged *me*: she

does not say, If ye have judged my household faithful. This is worthy of reflection. She was a Jewess, or "proselyte."

The next is a poor heathen jailor. He says, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Did the apostle direct him to baptism as a means of grace or salvation? No: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." Had he said, Be baptised, and thy house, and thou shalt be forgiven, or saved, it would have been another thing; but it was, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He believed; and the result was, "He took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptised, he and all his, straightway," &c.

So, again, at Corinth (chap. xviii.), Paul first testifies that Jesus is the Christ: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptised."

Yes, in all these cases they heard, believed, and were baptised. All that heard, and believed, had eternal life, and were justified from all things before God. (John v. 24; Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. v. 1, 2.) Baptism had nothing to do with imparting any of these. The above scriptures make that certain. Baptism marked their separation from Judaism, heathenism, and all with which they had been connected.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

30. "J. L.," Old Cumnock. The words in our June number, page 166, "walking in the flesh," were used in the sense of walking disorderly. (2 Thess. iii. 11.) It is quite true we are reckoned dead, and, as to our standing before God, we are not in the flesh. (Rom. vi. 11; viii. 9.) It is blessed to know our acceptance in Christ wholly in the new creation. But it would be a great mistake to suppose the flesh is not in us. And we need being kept every moment by the power of God. The moment we allow it, or walk after it, we find, to our deep sorrow, it is sin. You will find the apostle uses the expression in 2 Corinthians x. 2, 3, though the charge was false as to him. If the flesh is allowed, if it acts, it is still the law of sin—yes, as bad as ever, though we have found deliverance in Christ. "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." (Rom. vii. 25.) May we ever remember the words of warning: "I say, then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. v. 16.)

31. "R. S.," Northumberland. We judge that carelessness in parents as to where their children go, is a sign of a bad state of soul. If the Israelites were to instruct their children so carefully, both as to their redemption from Egypt, and the passage of the Jordan into the land, how much more diligent ought we to be in instructing our children in the eternal realities of redemption, and our present entrance by faith into the heavenlies in Christ! What grace is needed for this! But to

allow our children, whilst they are at home and under our care, to go where the eternal character of redemption is set aside, and thus expose them to unbelief and confusion, is the very opposite of the teaching of the word of God. "And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." We must, however, be very careful that the obedience we inculcate should be in the Lord, truly according to His mind. The word to them is, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." Just as it would be wrong to obey, if a heathen parent commanded a child to go and worship idols.

In these matters, then, it is all-important that parents are assured that the obedience they require is in the Lord, especially in this day of increasing infidelity and superstition. We feel we have all much cause for humiliation in these matters.

Matthew xxvi. 36 may help us to understand verse 45. It is most touching. "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." Yes, full well did He know the contrast expressed in these few words. How His heart longed that we might rest—"Sit ye here." But, oh, to Him yonder! What He had to meet for us. And yet as man He felt the need of sympathy. "And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee." Then He went a little further, and fell on His face, &c. What a scene! But they were heavy with sleep. When He came the third time, it was as though He had said, Yes, I must meet it all, and bear it all, alone: "Sleep on now, and take your rest." It was not that He intended them to remain asleep. There was a gentle reproof, and the deep consciousness of what His soul was now

to pass through. The moment had come. "Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." All this shews what He truly felt as man.

Your third question, What is the meaning of the word, "water," in John iii. 5?—there would be no difficulty in this, were it not for the mistaken notion that the Lord was speaking of baptism. What would Nicodemus understand it to mean? From its constant use in the varied washings of the law, water signified that nothing unholy or defiled was suited to God. Now for man to be suited to God, he must not be merely washed, like the purifyings of the law, but he must be born of it—that is, have an entirely new, holy, undefiled nature. And indeed this had been promised in Ezekiel xxxvi. Nicodemus ought to have known this. To us it is the new creation, pure and holy. Thus the new birth answers to the holy requirements of God, as set forth in the washings of water. Now it is the washing of water by the word. But we are not children of God by water, or baptism, but "by faith in Christ Jesus." (See Gal. iii. 26.) All the purifyings of the law failed—the purity of the new creation can never fail, as it is wholly of God.

We must, therefore, understand the words, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit," *in contrast* with all the washings of the flesh in water, or baptisms of the law. That dispensation must be laid aside. Man must be born entirely anew. It is not, however, water that the Spirit uses to effect this new birth, but plainly the word. (See 1 Peter i. 22.) "Being born again, . . . by the word of God." (Also James i. 18.)



DELIVERANCE:

OR,

AM I WRETCHED, OR GIVING THANKS?

A FEW THOUGHTS ON ROMANS VII., VIII.

THE *doctrine* of the believer's being dead to the law, and his being married to another who has been raised up from among the dead, as the alone source of fruit-bearing, is set forth in the first six verses of chapter vii. ; afterwards, we have a case supposed of the *experience* of a quickened soul under law struggling for deliverance. This deliverance is stated by one who has been delivered. *Practice* follows deliverance.

The person supposed to be here speaking has *life*, for,

1. He knows that "the law is spiritual"—that is, not merely applicable to outward conduct, but to the inward feelings and desires; and that he is fleshly, sold under sin—the slave of sin.

2. He declares that the law is good, and resolves to be good, and to do good, but cannot.

3. He delights in the law after the inward man, and says the commandment is holy, just, and good. It is because his *understanding* is changed he consents to the law that it is good; because his *will* is changed, to will is present with him for good; and because he has a *heart* now according to God, he delights in the law of God according to the in-

ward man. This reveals his *state*, and that he is born of God; but the context shews also that he is occupied neither with Christ nor with the Holy Ghost, but with self.

But though he has *life*, he is really under law, and, through his struggling with the law, learns,

1. That in him (his flesh) *no good* dwells. (Ver. 18.)

2. That *sin dwells in him*. (Ver. 20.)

3. That he has *no power* to perform that which is good, so that he is brought into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members. He finds that he is powerless to overcome indwelling evil by *efforts* of law-keeping. Three profitable lessons, but often learnt through deep distress and humiliation of spirit. And having found out by experience, though painfully, that *sin dwells in him*, that his whole Adam nature is sinful, with *no good* in it, and that he has *no power* over it, he is truly "wretched," and cries out for a deliverer to bring him out of it: "Who shall deliver me?" Then he finds that God has already done this for him, through Jesus Christ our Lord; and, believing this, he thanks God. He now has soul-deliverance, and waits for the deliverance of his body, for God's purpose is that we shall "be conformed to the image of his Son." He may have received forgiveness of sins before, but now he finds he is delivered from sin and the law by the death of Christ, and from that time he has *a new experience*.

No doubt, among many other profitable lessons, such learn that *experience* never gives peace with God, but that faith in the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ always does.

In Romans iii.—vii. God is the *Justifier* of the ungodly, the *Reconciler* of His enemy—man, and the *Deliverer* from sin. The law, instead of justifying, condemned; instead of reconciling, gives the knowledge of sin; and instead of delivering, brings him in guilty, and under the curse. Yet the law is “holy,” because, instead of excusing sin, it exposes sin; the law is “just,” because it judges even the motions of sin, as well as sins committed; and the law is “good,” if a man use it lawfully. Our sins are forgiven on the ground of Christ having died for us, but we are delivered from that evil principle in us (sin) by death, for Christ having “died *unto* sin once,” we have died with Him, and are now alive unto God in Him who is alive again, and that for evermore.

As to his *experience* now—

1. *His eye is off self and the law*, he looks to God in Christ, and becomes occupied with all that divine grace has accomplished for him in that work. Before he knew deliverance, it was self-occupation, “I” and “me”—but now he is before God, thanking Him for what He has done through our Lord Jesus Christ. This produces an amazing change in the *state* of soul.

2. *He has God’s thoughts, instead of his own*

about himself. He now knows that he has two natures of very opposite qualities—"that which is born of the flesh," and "that which is born of the Spirit:" the former he sees as having been judged by God on the cross; the latter he knows is a new creation in Christ, in which God always views him. He is aware that both these natures are unchanging in their moral qualities, for "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh," and "that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." Both these natures are in the believer; the one acts out what is "only evil," the other what is for the glory of God. In looking at himself now, he takes sides with God, and, recognising these two natures, he concludes, "So then with the mind [or new nature] I myself serve the law of God," but "with the flesh [or old nature] the law of sin." (Ver. 25.)

3. *He has done with himself* as to having any standing in the flesh before God, and as to confidence in it; for God has given him a new state, and put him on entirely different ground before Him. Not only is he forgiven, but God has delivered him from his old fleshly state, and given him a new place before Him. He is no longer in Adam, but in Christ Jesus; not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwells in him. This is a real deliverance, and, *believing* God's testimony concerning it, we have, by the Spirit, the comfort and power of it; for "There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ

Jesus." (Chap. viii. 1.) What a wide contrast now as to state and standing, and what comfort and rest the soul has that simply receives God's testimony!

4. *He has power over sin.* If he thinks of sin in the flesh, he remembers that God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin *condemned sin in the flesh*. It is gone thus for ever to faith, under the judgment of God. If he considers that in his flesh no good dwells, he knows that his standing before God now is *not in the flesh*, but in Christ Jesus. And now, instead of being helpless as to sin and its captivity, he finds he has power to walk in the light, as God is in the light, to resist the devil, and to overcome the world. He knows that by the gift of the Holy Ghost he is connected with a triumphant Christ. He is conscious of being set free, and that SIN is no longer his master; and, looking up, he can say, that "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free from the law of sin and death." (Ver. 2.) Thus, having a new nature, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, the two great requirements of the law are fulfilled *in him*—love to God, and love to man; though he is not under law, and he walks "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 1-4.)

In the scriptures we have thus far looked at, it may be well to observe, that there are four laws brought before us:

1. "*The law of God*," the demands of which even a quickened soul finds himself powerless to answer. (Chap. vii. 22.)

2. "*The law of my mind*," the resolution of a quickened soul to obey God. (Ver. 23.)

3. "*The law of sin and death*," the principle of enmity and antagonism of the natural man to God, of insubjection to His will; as another has said, "that deadly principle which ruled in us before as alive in the flesh."

4. "*The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*"—the principle and power of that new life given us in Christ by the Holy Ghost, who now dwells in us.

The soul thus brought into liberty, or set free by divine grace, is delivered in three ways :

1. *By death.* Our old man is crucified with Christ, for God condemned "sin in the flesh" in the death of His own spotless and well-beloved Son. We have thus "died unto sin," "have died with Christ," and are clear from the law, having *died* to that in which we were held; and can a dead man have lusts or sin?

2. As "*not under law, but under grace*," sin shall not have dominion over us. We are now "in Christ Jesus," brought into the full and abiding favour of God. Faith knows no other position. And will this lead us to sin? Shall we not rather have our fruit unto holiness? (Rom. vi.)

3. *By the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, bringing

us into a new order of things—new life, new position and state. Will, then, this new life and power in the Holy Ghost lead us to sin ; or shall we thus be strengthened to resist the devil, and to abstain from all evil ?

We are set free, then,

1. As to *conscience*, by the death of Christ, in whom God condemned “ sin in the flesh.”

2. As to *state and position*, as not in the flesh, but in Christ; and the Spirit dwelling in us, and not under law, but under grace.

3. As to *experience*, sin no longer has dominion over us, but having love in our hearts to God and man, and power by the Spirit to overcome, we find the mind of the Spirit to be life and peace.

4. As to *practice*, “ who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

What a deliverance ! What praise and worship it calls forth ! What never-ending cause of thanksgiving to God ! Surely we may say to the disconsolate believer—

“ Look off unto Jesus, and sorrow no more.”

The *comfort* of this deliverance we have “ in believing.” Our *power* for the enjoyment of it, and for life and godliness, is the Holy Ghost, and we are told that if we are led of the Spirit, we are not under law ; and if we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Before deliverance it was all “ I,” “ me,” and “ my,” but

after deliverance, CHRIST becomes the object of faith, and the Holy Ghost the power for holiness. We can therefore do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us.

As to the Spirit, we may observe that—

1. He gives us “life in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. viii. 2.)

2. He dwells in us as a divine Person—the Spirit that raised up Jesus from among the dead, and shall “quicken your mortal bodies.” The Holy Ghost Himself dwells in our bodies. (Ver. 11.)

3. He is our power to “mortify the deeds of the body.” Observe, it does not say “the body,” but, “the deeds of the body.” (Ver. 13.)

4. He is “the Spirit of adoption,” to make us know we are God’s children. He forms affections and thoughts in us suited to such a relationship, leads us, and “whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” (Ver. 15.)

5. He is the “first-fruits of the Spirit,” because, by-and-by, the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh. (Ver. 23.)

6. He is the Helper of our infirmities in prayer, and makes intercession for us. (Ver. 26.)

7. He teaches us to wait for the redemption of our body. (Verse 23.)

Thus we have brought before us something of *the power* that works in a delivered soul. Ought we not, then, to “abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost”?

In the old-creation line of things, we have sin, flesh, death, sufferings, groanings, and infirmities, often struggling under law; but in the new creation we have deliverance from sin, life in the Spirit, thanksgiving, peace; we are in Christ, and the Spirit in us—all things working together for our good—are more than conquerors through every trouble, “are not under law, but under grace,” having no condemnation, and knowing no separation.

But be it remembered, that, though so blessedly delivered, and walking in the Spirit, we can never forget that *the flesh is in us*; but the flesh is not *us*, for *we* are in Christ, and are not in the flesh before God. Yet we never lose the sense that in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing; we know what the conflict between the two natures is, and find our communion with the Father interrupted the moment we trust the flesh, and walk in it. Besides this, the delivered soul groans—

1. *As having a mortal body*: for “we that are in this tabernacle do groan.” “In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven”—our glorified body. He knows that he has a “mortal body,” liable to disease and pain. (2 Cor. v.; Rom. viii. 11.)

2. *Groanings within*. “Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, *even we ourselves groan within ourselves*, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body.” (Rom. viii. 23.) This is more than suffering in our

bodies ; for, having the Spirit, the affections and thoughts are according to Christ, the suffering and rejected One, who is coming, not only for the redemption of our body, but to bring even this groaning creation into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

3. *Unutterable groanings in prayer*, for “the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

How many groans the Lord Jesus will hush when He comes again ! How blessed is the thought that when *Christ, who is our life*, shall be manifested, we also shall be manifested with Him in glory ! (Col. iii. 4.) Meanwhile may our hearts be taken up with Him, stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has made us free, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God !

H. H. S.

NOTES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

II.

WHAT real heart work it was with Paul ! He says, “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.” What deep love to those he had never seen ! This was no mere outward service, but “with my spirit.” All done to God in the gospel of His Son. Is it so with us, or mere cold imitation ? Was not this the secret of Paul’s

success? If lacking with us, must there not be failure? Paul greatly longed to see the saints at Rome, but hitherto he had been hindered. We see here proof of the wisdom and foreknowledge of God. Had Paul or Peter founded the assembly at Rome, what a plea this would have been for so-called apostolic succession! There is no evidence as to whom the Holy Ghost used in the forming of that important assembly. No evidence that any apostle had been there at this time, though the faith of this assembly, or rather of all the called saints, was thus spoken of and well known. It is also remarkable, they are not addressed as the church at Rome, as in other epistles.

Paul desired to have mutual fellowship with them, and to bear some fruit amongst them, whether this might be in the conversion of souls, or in the imparting of some spiritual gift to those already brought to Christ. Having so great a treasure committed to him as the gospel, he felt himself a debtor to impart it to all, both Jews and Gentiles. He could say, "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." What entire readiness, yet the most real dependence on God alone. Had he been the servant of men, he might have needed a call from them to preach at Rome, or have a human appointment of some sort: but there is no such thought. Why should it not be so now? If we had more divine energy it would be so. Paul

could say, "I am ready." Yes, yes, the world behind his back: "I am ready as soon as my God shall open the way." Oh, where are Paul's successors? May our God awaken us by the consideration of the path of this devoted bond-slave of God.

We now begin to approach the question as to what the gospel is. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The reason why he is not ashamed of the gospel is stated clearly. The law commanded, but had no power to deliver from sin; nay, it was given that, not sin, but the offence might abound. But, in direct contrast, the gospel is the power (not of man, but) of God unto salvation. There is a vast meaning in this. We will seek to make this plain to our young readers by a few illustrations.

You may have read and heard much that undermines this truth; for there is much preaching that tells the sinner that he must give up his sins, and forsake them before he can come to God and get forgiveness of sins and salvation. This looks very reasonable and plausible. Take this illustration. Let us take our stand a little above the Niagara falls. How calmly the mighty river flows on! smooth as glass to look at, and the nearer the falls the smoother it flows along. A boat is seen gliding down amid stream. There are two men in it. They hear the every-moment increasing roar

of the fearful falls. One is awake to his danger : a few minutes and the boat must be over. The other seems stupefied. Both are alike helpless ; both in the same boat rushing on so smoothly to utter destruction. Now hail them ; try the gospel of man. Tell them to forsake that boat ; to give up that mighty river ; to come to the bank or shore before they are over, and you will help them ! Man, you tell them to do the impossible. Is it not only to mock them ? Is it not cruel thus to mock them ? one, two minutes and they are over. What is needed is power to save them.

Is not the sinner on the stream of time, hasting to far worse destruction ? Yes, he says, The power of sin carries me along. He awakes to his danger, death and judgment close at hand. He hears the roar ; but can he save himself ? Can he leave the river ? If he can, he does not need a saviour. It would be glad tidings to that man, gliding on the fatal stream, to hail him and assure him there was One ready and able to save him to the uttermost. Yes, and thus God speaks to the helpless, guilty, perishing sinner, as we shall find further on : “ For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Take another illustration. You hear the sudden cry of Fire, fire ! You have not proceeded more than a few yards, and you see a house on fire. Flames issue from all the windows on the lower basement. There are some persons known to be in

the fourth story, and they are either asleep or stupefied with smoke. If they have power to escape, there is no need of the fire escape. The ladder is placed against the upper window. Now watch that bold and able fireman. What does he do? Does he merely tell the inmates that they must first leave the burning house, and then he will save them? He mounts the ladder, breaks in the window, and enters the scene of danger. He brings them out: they are saved. It is the same in a storm at sea. The helpless wreck is drifting fast to utter destruction, carrying its helpless crew. What would be the use of a life-boat, if the captain remained on shore, telling the perishing men that they must first leave and give up the wreck, and come to shore, and then the life-boat would save them? Such is the gospel of man. Man must save himself; and then Christ will save him. And strange to say, men love and accept such folly as this. Now the gospel of God is the very opposite of this: He sent His beloved Son to seek and to save that which was *lost*. Yes, *lost*, as those even in the boat, so near the roaring falls of the river. *Lost*, as the inmates in a burning house. *Lost*, as those sailors drifting on the wreck. Yes, if men only knew, and owned their lost and helpless condition, they must then own that gospel to be utter folly that bids them save themselves, and that then God will save them.

Take only one more illustration. A man has

been tried and found guilty. He is under judgment, locked up securely in the condemned cell. Would you tell him to come out of that cell ; to give up his sins and his chains, and the prison, and the sentence already passed on him ; and then, but not till then, would he be pardoned ? Would it not be cruel mockery to a man in his condition ? This is the sinner's real condition, and therefore "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the *power* of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." The question to one who discovers he is gliding helplessly on to the falls, or the rocks, or is a guilty sinner under judgment, without strength, to such, the question is this, How can I be saved ? How can I, a condemned sinner, be justified ?

This then is the very question taken up and explained in this first section of the Epistle. Yea, the very reason why Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. "For **THEREIN** is the righteousness of God revealed from faith [or, on the principle of faith] to faith : as it is written, The just shall live by faith." It is not righteousness of man, for he has none. How can he have any if he is guilty—under judgment ? And if he had, it would be righteousness of man, not of God.

We shall find the righteousness of God to be in direct contrast to righteousness of man. Neither can it be by law, for God cannot be under the law. He was the law-giver. Had it said "the righteousness of Christ," that would have been another

truth. But it is righteousness of God revealed, in the gospel, on the principle of faith, to faith. It was announced repeatedly in the Old Testament, but now explained, or revealed. "And there is no God else beside me ; a just God and a Saviour ; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." (Isa. xlv. 21-24.) "In thy name shall they rejoice all the day : and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." (Ps. lxxxix. 16.)

Let it be noticed that the righteousness of God is the first and great question in our epistle. It is the first subject, and then the love of God. For the love of God will not meet the wrath of God. The question of righteousness is at once raised. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. That wrath is not yet executed, but there can be no doubt of the wrath of God against all the wickedness of men—against sin. It was seen at the flood ; in the destruction of Sodom ; and on the Holy One made sin for us. It is also revealed that He is coming in judgment, taking vengeance. The wicked will surely be cast into the lake of fire. And am I a guilty sinner ? Then what would the love of God alone avail me in the day of righteous wrath against all ungodliness ? It must then be evident that the first great question is the righteousness of

God in justifying him that believeth. How can God be righteous in accounting such a sinner as I righteous before Him? What a question!

This question, the righteousness of God, is taken up again in chapter iii. 21. What then is the object of the Spirit in this large portion of scripture, from chapter i. 17 to iii. 21? Is it not chiefly, in utterly setting aside all pretension of righteousness in man, whether without law, or under law? This must be done, for man will cling to nothing like the efforts to establish his own righteousness. Therefore every claim of man is examined. The eternal power of God was manifested in creation, and again in the flood. God was certainly known to Noah and his descendants. "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." In a word, they sank into idolatry. They apostatised from God until God gave them up. This is repeated thrice. "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness," &c. (ver. 24); "For this cause God gave them up to vile affections" (ver. 26); "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind," &c. (Ver. 28.) Read the terrible catalogue of wickedness into which the whole Gentile world sank. Where then was righteousness of man? To be given up is the act of God in judicial judgment. He thus gave up the Gentiles, and we see what man became. We also know that when the Jews had fully rejected

the testimony of the Holy Ghost, God gave them up, for the present, as a people. Such also will be the end of professing Christendom, "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 10.) The fact then that God gave up the Gentiles to the fearful lusts of their hearts, proves their utter apostasy from God. And all profane history corroborates this inspired description of human wickedness.

It may be asked, but were there not rulers, kings, and magistrates, who made laws against wickedness, and punished crime? "Who knowing the judgments of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Thus then, as now, the greatest wickedness is found in the rulers or chiefs. For proof we have only to read any of the ancient historians. If man is left to himself, the greater power he has, the greater is his wickedness. It is overwhelming to contemplate the cruelty and dreadful wickedness of heathenism. Such was that world to whom God in mercy sent His Son. In the Gentile world righteousness was not to be found. Multitudes rushed together in amphitheatres to feast their eyes on cruel wickedness.

THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD.

THE SETTING UP OF THE KINGDOM, AND
SATAN'S OPPOSITION TO IT.

THE SOWER.

MATTHEW XIII. 3-9; MARK IV. 3-9; LUKE VIII. 5-8.

“Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

IN the parables which we have already considered we saw the setting aside of Israel because they had entirely failed to produce any fruit towards God. This introduces us to an entirely new order of things: God now takes the character of a sower. Man had proved himself to be *fruitless*, and now probation had ceased, and God became a *giver*. This makes the parable of the Sower a sort of key-parable. Our Lord said to His disciples, “Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know *all* parables?” (Mark iv. 13.) And it is strange that to this day this is a point that many professing Christians do not see. They are busily looking for something in man, something that can be cultivated and improved and made fit for God. All a grievous mistake! Man had been tried in

innocence ; without law ; under law ; under the prophets ; under Christ ; but all ended in failure, and now a Sower must go out to sow His seed, and His servants sow it in the wide world.

The parable is beautifully simple. Who has not seen a sower, scattering his seed over the ploughed ground ? And in places where there are no hedges some of the seed literally falls on the way side and is now trodden down by passers by, or picked up by the birds ; and other seed falls where there is but little earth covering the hard rock beneath, and some among the choking thorns ; all forming a scene often witnessed by the dwellers in Palestine, the “ great multitudes ” to whom this parable was addressed.

Happily we have our Lord’s own explanation of this parable. The seed sown is “ the word of the kingdom ” in Matthew, and “ the word of God ” in Luke—God’s good news to man. And it very vividly brings before us the obstacles which lie in the way of man’s reception of the preached word. The chief opponent is the arch-enemy Satan. He attends the preaching and catches away the seed lest it should take root. That enmity which began in the garden of Eden still exists with all its malignity and malice : he is not only God’s enemy, but he is man’s, though poor fallen man knows it not, yea, will not believe it when he is told. *Why* man feels not the chain of Satan by which he is led on to perdition is soon told. Satan

knows what man's propensities are, and takes care to put the chain in the direction which man *likes* to go; so he feels not the pulling, but blindly follows.

The seed by the way side is when the hearers understand not the word, and Satan immediately catches away the seed, and none takes root.

A very solemn fact we find as to the stony-ground hearer. He is said to hear the word, and immediately he receives it with joy. But alas! there is no root, and so when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he is offended: the seed seems to spring up, but by the heat of the sun it is scorched and withered away. The hearer has indeed heard a lovely story—the story of God's grace—and is pleased with it; but alas! that is all.

Now here are two “immediately's:” he receives the word *immediately*; but when persecution ariseth because of the word, he *immediately* gives it all up. Surely this should teach us wisdom as to pronouncing hastily as to the results of the seed sown. The expressions used are strong: the word is received, and received with joy; and we might too hastily conclude that the work must be real. But, alas! the conscience may not have been reached, and thus the hearer is described as having “no root in himself,” and no sooner does persecution arise than he gives it all up. And we, if we have hastily pronounced it “a conversion,” are put to shame.

The hearer who receives the word among the thorns is one who "heareth the word," but it is choked by the ordinary cares of life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things. The heart is full of its own troubles; and this, combined with what the man is pursuing, renders the seed unfruitful: it is lost.

The last named is when the seed falls upon "good ground," and it brings forth fruit in various measures. But how came the ground to be good? Is there any good ground in fallen humanity? We know from other scriptures that there is not: "the whole world lieth in the wicked one." "There is none good; no, *not one*." Then we are sure it must have been "prepared" beforehand. Even in nature, the soil in this sin-stricken earth requires to be prepared for the seed: how much more then is it needed in that which is "shapen in iniquity." Thus we see how the whole work is of God from first to last, as we sometimes sing—

"Of all the gifts Thy love bestows,
Thou Giver of all good!
Not heaven itself a richer knows
Than the Redeemer's blood.

Faith, too, that trusts the blood through grace,
From that same love we gain;
Else, sweetly as it suits our case,
The gift had been in vain."

Those who receive the word on good ground are,

in contrast to the way-side hearers, said to understand it, and keep it (Luke) ; and now it is too deep to be caught away by Satan, or to be scorched by the sun ; for we are God's husbandry. In Luke it is described as "an honest and good heart," whereas man's heart is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."

This parable, in a wonderful way, draws aside the curtain between us and the unseen world. God has sent forth His servants to preach "the word ;" but Satan, who is unseen, is busy to prevent its taking effect. And it is worthy of remark that in none of the cases named does the word fail to produce fruit because of the sins of the hearers. In one it is persecution because of the word, and in another the cares of life and the deceitfulness of riches. In each case it is Satan. If he does not catch away the seed at once, he knows how to stir up persecution because the word has been listened to ; and then the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things (and that latter expression would include mere pleasure seeking) are powerful weapons in his hand for the destruction of souls. Yes, as we have said, the work of salvation must be of God from first to last ; and thank God, He does this and does it all. He prepares the seed, and sends forth His sowers ; He prepares the soil, and makes the seed take root ; and thus it brings forth fruit that shall abound to His glory for ever and ever.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM.

No. III.

WE now propose to examine its meaning as a figure, or type, of doctrine in the epistles.

The flood in the days of Noah is spoken of: "While the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. THE LIKE FIGURE whereunto baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven," &c. (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.) Now we must admit there is no thought of sacramental grace here, or any inward and spiritual grace, but it is a like figure to the flood. Eight persons passed figuratively through death unto a new existence. There was no sacramental grace in the waters of the flood, but death. It was death to everything behind. The answer of a good conscience is not by any sacramental washing, but by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism, then, is a figure of the believer's death with Him. The thing signified by this figure is stated elsewhere thus: "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God." (2 Cor. v. 17.) And is not baptism a striking figure of this? We shall see this same figure wherever baptism is spoken of in the epistles. In

Galatians iii. 22-29, in order to prove that the Christian is no longer under law as a schoolmaster, the apostle says, "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek," &c.

A man that is dead ceases to be under the law, ceases to be Jew or Greek. Therefore baptism, being a figure of death with Christ, the believer could be no longer looked at as alive in the flesh, under law, or a Gentile under idolatry.

In Romans vi. this truth is largely unfolded. The Holy Spirit's object here is to shew that the believer is not to sin, that grace may abound.

Now, bearing in mind that baptism is a figure, or type, of doctrine, nothing could be more expressive of death than burial in water. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death." Dead to sin, dead to law; old things reckoned passed away; all things new, and all of God. The Lord Jesus went through real death for us. Our bodies go through the figure of it in baptism. We are thus identified with Him in death; and if we have thus been planted in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. If, however, we mistake the figure—that is, buried in water—for the reality, that is, association with Christ in death and resurrection by faith, through the operation of the Spirit of God, nothing could be more fatal. We are not born again, or made children of God

by baptism. Nowhere do the scriptures thus speak. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." If we say baptism is a figure of that faith, or birth, there is no objection.

Again, we read, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, *through the faith* of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Col. ii. 12.) The figure is here most striking. Thus baptism should utterly forbid all return to ritualism and ordinances by those who profess to be dead. Believing God, we are justified in His sight. (Rom. iv., v.) In baptism we obey a type of doctrine, which declares us disciples of the dead and risen Christ.

We have not said a word as to John iii., as it is evident the Lord did not refer to baptism, but to the new birth, as foretold in Ezekiel xxxvi. As has often been said, Nicodemus could not have understood christian baptism. Baptism is used as a figure of death, but that it is not the new birth is most evident. The sure mark of the new birth is this—that he that is born of God cannot sin, or practise sin. He has a nature which cannot sin. (1 John iii.) He that is born of God has put off the old man, is renewed in spirit, and has put on the new man. If born of God, the new nature will, and must, be manifested. But in the great house of Christendom are there not vast numbers of the baptised who

distinctly prove, by practising sin, that they are not born of God? No one can deny it.

In the beginning the house, that is, profession and reality, were identical, but would not the certain men crept in unawares (Jude) all have been baptised? And also, would not those having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof (2 Tim.), and the vessels of dishonour in the great house, have all been baptised? No doubt the baptised are in the great house of profession; but let us beware of trusting in the figure, however instructive.

There is another scripture, often quoted as though it meant baptism in water: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD." (Tit. iii. 5.) Now, can this mean either salvation or washing by literal water? Is it abundance of water that saves? Let it be observed, the word translated "regeneration" is not the same as the word used for "new birth." It is never so used—indeed it only occurs in one other instance, Matthew xix. 28, and there it cannot mean the new birth. Just as Israel will then pass into that new order of millennial things, so now the believer has passed from the old to the new—all new, and all of God. But this is not by water, but by the hearing of the word, and faith in God,

who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. It is the application of the word by the Holy Ghost. No doubt the washing of water is a figure of this, and so used—"the washing of water by the word." (Eph. v. 26.) Is it not, then, a fatal error to put the type of baptism in the place of the great anti-type—the death of Christ, by which the believer is reconciled "in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unproveable in his sight." (Col. i. 22.)

What we find in scripture, then, is this—believers were separated from Judaism and heathenism unto Christ. Further, to believers it signified in figure death with Christ; dead to law, sin, the world, and the flesh; and if dead with Christ, risen with Him. Since then, it has been utterly perverted, and made to be the beginning of religious fleshly ritualism. In scripture it is the outward sign of death. As a figure it is most expressive. The Lord grant that we may realise more what it is to be dead with Christ, and alive in Him. Not merely once baptised, and then forgotten not there is one baptism; this is named amongst that which surely continues. (Eph. iv. 4-6.) Thus baptism is the continuous figure of that which we reckon ourselves to be. (Rom. vi. 3-11.)

C. S.



ETERNAL LIFE: HAVE YOU GOT IT?

THE writer was visiting a small town on the Lancashire coast, lately, and in conversation with a working man, he asked him, "Could you tell me of any persons in G—— that have eternal life, and who know of it?" After some reflection, the man said, "I cannot truly say that I have eternal life myself, but I think there is one man in the town who has eternal life, and I should like you to call and see him." This was, if we may so say, remarkable, as, in walking through the town, the writer had had a strong leading to call and see this very man. Well, he called, and found it was so. Mr. H. had eternal life, and knew it. We soon found we were not strangers. He had written for tracts years ago; God had blessed the truth to his own soul, and he was preaching the gospel to the poor.

The next day we had an hour's conversation with an aged and intelligent man on the same subject. He was quite sure he had *not* eternal life. He felt the immense importance of having it, and knowing it, but had no conception how this desired certainty could be obtained. He knew well the controversies and contradictions amongst professing Christians, their sad bitterness and animosities, but to the inestimable blessing of the certainty of having eternal life he was as yet a stranger. And more, from long observation of

the professing church, he said he felt assured there were comparatively very few that knew they had eternal life. As we passed a little farm, we said, "How strange it would be, if a man was working on that land which a nobleman had given to him, and you asked him if it belonged to him, and he was to reply, 'I am not at all sure whether it is mine, or not.' " We never shew such unbelief in the word of a man as we do in the word of God.

Is it, then, really so, in the midst of so much profession? Are there really few that know they have eternal life—that they are eternally saved? What! with the scriptures on this subject in their hands? The last of the inspired writers brings out this great subject most fully. Was it not the very purpose of God in the gift of His Son? For this was He not lifted up on the cross, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"? Is not this the result of the pure, unmerited love of God? "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." "He that believeth on the Son, hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Mark, in both cases this is a present thing. It is not, shall have, but HATH, eternal life. In like manner, whatever professions of holiness in the flesh, "he that be-

lieveth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God ABIDETH on him." Surely it is a fearful thing to deny and attack this teaching of Christ, and call eternal life "fictitious life." Nothing is more clearly taught by Christ than this blessed truth, as He says, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

But an anxious soul may say, "How am I to know that I have eternal life?" Hear the answer of the Lord Jesus: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." Now, to such as hear the word of Jesus, and believe God that sent Him, could anything be more plain or certain?

But you say, "I have been taught that a great deal has to be done by us; and if we do it, and continue to the end, we may hope to get eternal life in the next world." We ask you to compare this hearing the word of men with hearing the word of Jesus, and believing God that sent Him. The one is all uncertainty, and in the future; the other, the word of Jesus, gives present certainty—"HATH ETERNAL LIFE." Yes, Jesus says, "Verily, verily." If you believe Him, you have eternal life; if you have not eternal life, or deny it, you

do not believe Him. Do not reject this great truth, it is the very will of God. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me HATH everlasting life." Is it not most evident that if we have not eternal life, then we have not, and do not, believe on Christ, or receive Him by faith? For He saith, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Thus, to doubt or deny that the believer has eternal life, is to deny, in effect, both the incarnation and atonement of Christ. Eternal life, then, is one of the marks or characteristics of those that are Christ's. He says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." (John iii., iv., v., vi., x.) It is God the Son who thus speaks, and it would not be eternal life if it could perish.

This brings us to an important point. Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life." (John xi. 25.) He did not say, I am the life and the resurrection—He was the self-existent life. "In him was life." But, as the Holy, Incarnate One, He must die, and rise again, and thus be to us the resurrection and the life. In incarnation He was holy, apart from sin, yet He

died for us, bearing our sins ; being made sin for us ; and endured death for us. Without this, there could have been no atonement. In order to meet the case of man, of death, of Lazarus, to take him out of the grave, He Himself must go into it.

In incarnation He must remain alone, as He explains : “ 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.”

Thus the foundation of Puseyism, the communication of life by the incarnation, is all false, and it follows, its continuance by sacraments is equally false.

Thus we now see the importance of the words of Jesus to Martha, as meeting our need, communicating life to us. He is first the resurrection, and then the communication of life to us. As to life, then, resurrection-life is the gospel ; and life by incarnation a delusion, which well suits the deniers of eternal life. Let us, then, lift up the eye of faith, and behold the Son of God, risen from among the dead. The life—yes, the source to us of life, but life beyond the reach of sin and death—He dieth no more. In incarnation he died once for us ; in resurrection He is alive for evermore. In Him we see risen, glorified humanity, incorruptible, one Person, the Eternal Son. Now all believers, Jews or Gentiles, are not quickened

by His incarnation, but with Him, and in Him, risen from the dead. (See Rom. vi. ; Eph. i., ii.)

Thus the life the believer has is eternal. Christ is the resurrection and the life, and He says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Is it not wondrous that we should have the same eternal life now as He has, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high? And when we see Him, then, this will be manifested, even as to our raised, or changed, bodies. We shall be like Him. It might be asked, "What! will this be the case should we die, and these bodies be dissolved in corruption?" Yes, for Jesus says, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Is there a necessity, then, that the body should die? No, for He further says, "and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die."

This is true of all believers as to the true character and power of death. If, as to the body, we should die, it is to depart, and be with Christ. Death has lost its terror and power, and the body shall be raised in the full glory of redemption. Therefore, at that blessed moment when He shall come, the dead in Christ shall be raised in glory; and those that are alive shall not die at all, but be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. xv.); and also, "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 them which are asleep: for the Lord him-

self shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 15-17.) Thus the precious words of Jesus will be fulfilled at that wondrous moment: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?" He did not reveal all He meant to Martha, as afterwards to Paul.

In conclusion, we ask the reader's solemn attention to the record that God hath given on this subject: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." Could the teaching of Christ, or the record of God, be more clear on this blessed, all-important truth?

It may not be known to all the readers of this magazine, that one great object of what is called the Salvation Army, is, to train all its officers to attack the above teaching of Christ on this subject, and to deny this record of God. In a tract,

written by an admiral, sent to us from headquarters, eternal life is called "fictitious life." It is a solemn thing to make God a liar. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." It is not something that we can lose—it is in His Son. Reader, do you believe the record of God? Do you ask, Can we possibly know that we have eternal life? Is it the will of God that we should know? Hear the aged inspired apostle: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life." (1 John v. 9–13.) We do not wish you to be occupied with the "army's" attack on the teaching of Christ, but we do ask this—Have you believed the record of God, or do you make Him a liar? How wondrous the infinite grace! How stupendous the gift of God—eternal life! There is nothing the proud heart of man rejects with such disdain as eternal life, and that the pure, unmerited gift of God. Believing God, and knowing that we have eternal life, and that life is in His Son, may we walk as the children of the Father, divinely-assured faith sustaining our souls at every step!

C. S.

Praise the Lord! He died to save us,
'Tis by Him alone we live,
And in Him the Father gave us
All that boundless love could give,
Life eternal
In the Saviour we receive.

NOTES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

III.

CHAPTER II.

CONSCIENCE leaves man without excuse. There is in man a sense of responsibility, and, through the fall, a knowledge of good and evil. The fact that one man judges another is a proof of this: "For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." How true this is, whether of Jew, Gentile, or professing Christian! And man cannot deceive God. "But we are sure the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" What a solemn question! We may judge and punish others for wicked acts in this world, but if we ourselves have to be brought, with all our sins, into judgment—and judgment is sure to come, and be according to truth—how are we to escape? The punishment of evil amongst all nations proves that we admit that evil ought to be punished. The righteous government of God demands, then, that after death there shall be the judgment. Do look at this question. Reader, dost thou think thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness,

and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" How many are doing this? Indeed, the way in which repentance is preached tends to lead men to despise and ignore the wondrous grace of God altogether. Many preach repentance as works for salvation, as preceding faith in the riches of the goodness of God. Now it is as we know and believe the goodness of God in sending His beloved Son to die for our sins, that this leads us to, produces in us, repentance—indeed, we can only know the depths of our sin and guilt by knowing the depths into which He had to descend to save us. Thus the goodness of God leads to an entire change of mind; the full judgment of ourselves, in deep abhorrence of our sins, and full confession of them to God; and, at the same time, an entire change of mind about God. Thus, the difference between truth and error is this: it is not our repentance that leads to, or causes, the goodness of God to us, but it is the goodness of God that leads to, and causes, repentance in us. Oh, beware lest thou shouldst so despise the grace of God, and, "after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Mark, it must be either the goodness of God *now*, and repentance *here*, or the righteous judgment of God in that coming day of wrath hereafter.

Some have had difficulty in understanding chapter ii. 6-29; others have perverted these statements, as though they taught salvation by works. This would be in direct contradiction of the whole teaching of the epistle. What, then, do we learn here?

First, the righteousness of God, in His reward to the Jew under law, or the Gentile not under law. This is distinctly and fully stated. Then, secondly, the inquiry, Are there any Jews or Gentiles who answer to these requirements of God, and can thus be rewarded?

We start, then, with the certainty that, in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, He "will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life," &c. Also, in like manner, in that day, "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil," &c. This, then, is the basis of righteous judgment on which God will act: "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." The police go about the streets, and arrest men, and take them to be judged for public crimes; but is it not equally true that Death goes about the streets as God's policeman, to take men, who, after death, shall have every secret thing judged they have done? Can you stand in that searching judgment? God will

judge in righteousness. "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." And all brought out—every hidden thing!

It is well to dwell on this. From that righteous judgment there will THEN be no escape. Man, when left to himself, sank into doing evil continually; as we have seen, the whole Gentile world had sunk into the grossest sin. What, then, of the Jew, the religious man? Yes, the religious man, is he not superior every way? He rests in the law, boasts of God—the only true God. He knows His will, is instructed, and is an instructor, a confident guide of the blind. Now, if he knows the will of God, and does it, and has the law, and keeps it, will not this give him boldness in the day of righteous judgment? But if he is not a doer of good, if he is a breaker of the law, what better is he than the Gentile who has not the law? Nay, he is even found to be worse. How, then, can the Jew under law meet God in judgment?

And, reader, if this is your position — a religious man under law, desiring most earnestly to keep it, and yet breaking it; knowing the will of God, and not doing it—how can you meet God in righteous judgment, and, however religious before men, to have every secret brought out in judgment? Do all your efforts give you confidence in looking forward to the day of certain judgment? The Jew had great advantage every way. (Chap. iii.) He had the oracles of God; so have you.

What an advantage to have the very inspired word of God! And the oracles of God were committed to them.

Let us notice here (ver. 3) how remarkably faith is introduced again. Righteousness of God had always been on the principle of faith. "For what, if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" However the bulk of the nation had disbelieved, yet their unbelief and unrighteousness had not changed God—He remained the same; He remains true to the unchangeable principles of right and wrong; otherwise, how shall He judge the world? In setting aside the law as a means of acquiring righteousness, this might be perverted, as some did, and affirmed that the apostle taught that we might thus do evil that good might come. This is strongly condemned, the righteousness of God having been maintained in the judgment of all evil-doers. The apostle now appeals to the Jews' own scriptures, and from them proves that all are guilty: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God."

It was impossible to deny that these words were written to those under the law. What a terrible description of man under law! Every mouth is thus stopped, and all the world stands guilty before God. Yes, mark, this is not what man is before his fellow-men, but what he is before God.

And if all under law, and all not under law, are guilty, what can the law do for the guilty? Its very perfection as a perfect rule for man, can only condemn the breaker of the law. If a man has got false weights in his shop, what could the test of standard weights do but condemn him? The standard weights would shew how far he was short; but if short, could not shew that they were just weights. The law just did this, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Since, then, all are guilty, it is evident, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified IN HIS SIGHT."

Man is thus set aside, and all his efforts and pretensions to righteousness by works of law. "But now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." This is altogether new, and distinct from everything that is of man. It is not the righteousness of man, for he has none. What a fact, that in all this world there was not one found righteous! No, not one. It is the righteousness of God, entirely and apart from the law—what God is in Himself, and what He is for man. Now God could not be righteous in justifying man by the law, for the law could only condemn man. He was guilty. God was surely always righteous in his dealings with man—perfectly consistent with His own glory. But this is now manifested apart from law, though witnessed by law and pro-

phets. This, then, is the revelation, "even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all, them that believe ; for there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

How distinctly faith of Jesus Christ now takes the place of law, and this unto all, both Jews and Gentiles ! The righteousness of God, then, is what He is in Himself, and what He is to us. It is apart from law ; for there was, and could be, no law or command to God. All is absolutely of God. He so loved ; He so gave His beloved Son, that, through His sacrifice on the cross, He might be eternally righteous in justifying us, or accounting us righteous.



THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD.

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES.

MATTHEW XIII. 24-30.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field : but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field ? from whence then hath it tares ? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up ? But he said, Nay ; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest : and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them ; but gather the wheat into my barn."

Here again we see how busy Satan is in seeking

to mar the work of God in building up His kingdom. What Satan cannot hinder he will try to corrupt and spoil. We have our Lord's explanation of the parable. He Himself is the Sower ; the field is the world ; the good seed are the children of the kingdom ; but the tares are the children of the wicked one, called here *His* " enemy."

Thus we get the distinct teaching that ungodly people are being associated with the kingdom by Satan, and are there so mingled with the saints, the " children of the kingdom," that the instruction is to let both go on until the end of the age. Then the Son of man will send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. These shall be cast into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Along with the fact here revealed that there are " children of the wicked one " associated with the kingdom of heaven, it is important to see that the instruction to let all go on together has nothing to do with allowing evil or wicked persons to remain in an assembly. Here it is in the world, and concerning the great outward profession called " the kingdom of heaven." There are other scriptures quite as distinct, shewing that evil is not to be allowed in the assembly. For instance, when evil had been made manifest in the assembly at Corinth,

the injunction is, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. v. 13.)*

Another important point to see is that "the children of the wicked one" will continue in this connection until the end of the age, and at the last it will be God's instruments who will purge out the evil. This at once shews how vain and delusive it is to expect that the world will be converted by the means of Missionary, Bible, Tract and other Societies, together with the preaching of the gospel. God's messengers are sent, not to convert the world, but to "visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts xv. 14), and then to instruct and edify the same when called out. Now surely it is very important to have God's thoughts about what He is doing, so that our prayers and labours and expectations may be in unison and fellowship with the Lord Himself.

And this should in no way cool down our zeal. The gospel is to be preached fully and freely to every creature under heaven, and men are to be exhorted and invited with all the earnestness

* Notwithstanding that it has been pointed out long since that the parable speaks of "the world," and "the kingdom of heaven," and not "the church," yet Archbishop Trench argues that this parable expressly forbids all attempts to root out evil from the church, and treats the kingdom of heaven as synonymous with "the church," quoting the words of Augustine, "not two bodies of Christ, but one body in which now are wicked men, but only as evil humours in the natural body."

that the love of Christ and a love of souls can beget, *praying* men to be reconciled to God. (2 Cor. v. 19.) Yea, with all the more zeal, because we know from the parables that Satan is busy, endeavouring to hinder the work, and it was while men *slept* that Satan accomplished his purpose.

Before leaving this parable it may be well to see that it does not clash with the Christian's hope of the coming of his Lord. The parable does say, "Gather ye together *first* the tares," thus leaving the wheat; and some may not easily see how this agrees with the church being taken up first, leaving the wicked, according to the epistles to the Thessalonians.

The explanation, we doubt not, is, that here it is the *kingdom* that is under consideration, and not the church. *We* may be in both; but when we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, according to 1 Thessalonians iv. 15-18, the kingdom will go on. And the end of the world, or age, is not till after the church is taken away. We know from scripture that there will be saints on the earth *after* the church is taken up. So that the order of events is

The taking up of the church.

The kingdom goes on, and others are brought into the kingdom.

The wicked are taken *first* at the end of the age.

God will establish His kingdom in righteousness.

Thus we see that this parable is concerning the kingdom of heaven, and not the church ; that evil men will be in the kingdom to the end of the age—the direct work of Satan. They shall be eventually gathered out and sent into perdition. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”—a glorious portion surely, but not to be confounded with the glory that awaits those who will be caught up to meet their Lord in the air. May the Lord hasten it in His own time !

THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD-SEED.

MATTHEW XIII. 31, 32 ; MARK IV. 30-32 ; LUKE XIII. 18, 19.

“The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field : which indeed is the least of all seeds : but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

It has been found to be a difficulty to point out a “mustard-seed” that would grow large enough to answer the description in the parable.* This does not, however, affect the teaching intended to be conveyed. The kingdom of heaven began as a small, insignificant thing in the eyes both of the world and of those who claimed to be God’s people on earth. It has, however, grown to be like a

* It is judged by most to be the *Salvadora Persica*, which (1) has a small seed ; (2) it grows large enough for birds to lodge in its branches ; (3) its berries are used as “mustard.” A tree has been found near the Dead Sea which answers the above description.

tree, with "great branches." The only difficulty is, as to who are pointed out by the "birds of the air." We get the key to its meaning in the parable of the sower. In that there are also "fowls of the air," but they devour the seed sown by the wayside, and this, in the interpretation by our Lord, is said to be the work of Satan (Mark iv. 15); they must, then, be associated with that which is evil. (Compare also Acts x. 12; James iii. 7; Rev. xviii. 2.) Now, as we see plainly in the parable of the wheat and tares how evil men are introduced, so it is here: they take shelter among the branches of the great tree.* And, alas! we have only to look around at the professing church to see how many of the unconverted are sheltered under its branches. *These*, too, are not simply those who come to quiet their consciences by becoming religious, but, alas! many are to be found in the higher branches of place and power, daring to take upon themselves the "cure of souls," and purchase the same as they would a mere worldly profession! Over their heads is said, in the Church of England, "Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a priest in the church of God, now committed unto thee

* The tree "with great branches" seems to point out in scripture a great public power, something that can be recognised by all. Thus Pharaoh and Assyria are compared to great trees (Ezek. xxxi.), and Nebuchadnezzar was "a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great." (Dan. iv. 10.)

by the imposition of hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained," &c.; and forthwith they take shelter under the great tree. If the blessings connected with the kingdom were alluded to, doubtless we should read of the fruits to be gathered from the tree; but of this there is not a word. It is simply a tree with great branches, in which the birds take shelter; not, indeed, becoming actually a part of the tree but simply finding shelter among its branches—a type, surely, of the evil we see all around us. May God open the eyes of those who can see nothing but progress and blessing. Blessings we have, through mercy, but they are not what the parable teaches.

THE LEAVEN.

MATTHEW XIII. 33; LUKE XIII. 20, 21.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

This follows the parable of the mustard-seed, and is similar in its teaching. Seeing that scripture uniformly uses leaven as a type of evil,* it is surprising that this parable is so repeatedly ex-

* See Matthew xvi. 6, 11; Mark viii. 15; 1 Corinthians v. 6-8; Galatians v. 11; as well as leaven being forbidden in all the sacrifices by fire set forth in the Old Testament. (Lev. ii. 11.) Leviticus xxiii. 17 may seem to be an exception, but it is not, for there the church on earth is typified, and, alas! with this there is more or less of failure.

plained as teaching the “invisible working of *grace*.” It must be because Christians, who look for universal progress, improvement, and a converted world, are loth to see that our Lord, instead of this bright prospect, foretold evil first—evil in the kingdom of heaven, or the professing church which now answers to it. There will, indeed, be a time of universal blessing, as we know (Is. xi. 9), but not until the Lord Himself comes, and *purges out* of His kingdom all things that offend, as is taught in Matthew xiii. 41, and other passages.

Without a doubt, then, leaven signifies evil *doctrine* (as “the tares,” and “the birds of the air,” pointed out evil *persons*), and, as its name implies, it works *secretly*, as yeast when mixed with meal. And can any one be so blind as not to see how wide-spread are evil doctrines in this our day? The Bible, that was once appealed to by all, is now itself called in question, and assailed on every hand. Instead of *that* being their judge (John xii. 48), men, while calling it the word of God, are judging it! We must not wonder, then, that doctrines are thought little of amid the running wild of men’s thoughts. “Damnable heresies” is God’s own term respecting the evils that are associated with His professing people, and by “feigned words” many are drawn aside. (2 Pet. ii. 1–3.) How needful, then, to be able, by the word and the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to discern all that is not of God, and to turn away from such!

CORRESPONDENCE.

32. "G. G.," Plymouth. The meaning we attached to the word, "hades," in page 138, was simply that of the separate state of such as have died. We do not judge that the scriptures you quote favour the thought that the resurrection is past, or that all believers who died in faith arose with Christ from the dead. All that scripture says is this: "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." (Matt. xxvii. 52.) It is a remarkable passage, and shews the complete victory of Christ over death, no doubt. John v. 25 evidently refers to the present work of the Spirit, as Ephesians ii. to the moral state of man dead in sins.

The fulfilment of most of the other scriptures you mention, we judge, will take place at the coming of the Lord. We fail to see any evidence, then, that ALL the Old Testament saints had been raised up from the dead with Christ. (See Acts ii. 34.) Blessed for us to wait for the day. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand."

33. "E. P. Curdridge," Southampton. "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked." (2 Cor. v. 3.) Adam was naked and had no covering for himself, or his sin. The apostle is looking at the solemn question of death and judgment. As to death then, the unclothed state, he has no fear, but is quite confident and willing to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. But what he earnestly desired was to be clothed upon with the glorified body at the resurrection from

among the dead. But then the solemn contrast comes before his mind—the being clothed, or the being found naked. Not one at the first resurrection can be found naked like Adam. Each one shall be clothed in the righteousness of God. The rest of the dead shall stand naked before the great white throne. No covering there for a single sin.

34. “J. J.,” Walker-on-Tyne. The church, or assembly, of Christ (Matt. xvi. 18), and the assembly of God (1 Cor. i. 2, &c.), is evidently the same assembly (1 Thess. i. 1), but may be viewed under two aspects. As the church of Christ He is the builder: “I will build my church.” He does not speak here of Himself as the foundation, but founds His church on the action of the Father in revealing Him, the Son of God, to Peter. Looked at as the church of God, it is founded on Christ. (1 Cor. iii. 10, 11.) Here God is the builder, and Jesus Christ the foundation. Thus the church is God’s house, or temple, “an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Eph. ii. 19–22.) All is in perfect harmony. God revealed the Son to Simon, and gave him, a stone, to Christ, the builder of His assembly.

35. “J. K.,” Kennington. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” No doubt this is a general principle, applying to marriage, business, &c. We must, however, remember there is a difference between entering into such relationships, and separating from them. We must act in righteousness, if found in such a relationship, when brought to own the Lord. (Compare carefully 1 Cor. vii. 12–17.) As to marriage, this is conclusive. If a believer is found in partnership with an unbeliever, and he or she cannot, in righteousness to such partner, and also to cre-

ditors, separate or dissolve the partnership, let him act faithfully in that business, and look in faith to God; and the unbeliever will either be converted, or will not be able to bear the true ways of a Christian, and will himself seek a dissolution. We judge from this scripture, the Lord would not have a believer, in such a case, to act in any way dishonourably; and if the eye be single, He will guide.

36. "A. S.," Bristol. We are not aware of any scripture that forbids either the selling or partaking of intoxicating liquors. Romans xiv. 21, taken alone, might seem to do so, but if you read the context, and compare it with 1 Corinthians viii. 1-13; x. 19-31, you will find it is not the question of meat or wine, *in itself*, that may stumble a weak brother; but, as was the custom, and still is in some parts of China, it was eating flesh, or drinking wine, which had been offered to an idol. This might lead a weak brother to remain in, or even become identified with, idolatry. It is not that there is sin in the meat, or in the drink, but in man who abuses either. We do not find that abstinence from these leads either the millions of Buddhists or Mohammedans to Christ. We desire to hold fast the fact, that the gospel is the power of God to salvation. Beware of adding to it.

37. "G. R.," Yarmouth. As to a sister asking a question at a reading meeting, according to 1 Corinthians xiv. 34, 35, it must be noticed that this scripture, by its full context, refers to a very different meeting than "a reading meeting." We would fully recognise the present ruin of the church, yet is it not sad that, amongst Christians, there should be so few meetings for worship,

which answers at all, during the week-days, to this scripture? We believe, if there was real dependence on the Holy Ghost, such a meeting, open for worship or teaching, in real dependence on the Spirit, would be far more profitable than many reading meetings in the assembly; and also reading meetings, of a simple character, in each other's houses, where a sister might be free to ask a question, would be far more profitable than the present larger ones are.

38. "F. S.," Wincanton. The angel of the church, or assembly, in Revelation ii. 1, we understand to mean all those who fill the place of responsible ministry in the different stages of the church's history. There is no intimation in the New Testament that any *one* person took such a place over any assembly, except one, and he is distinctly condemned for so doing. (See 3 John 9.)

39. "J. T. T." The unity of the Spirit is whatever is of, and only what is of, the Spirit. There is one body. The Spirit would always act on that blessed truth. All things rightly done in an assembly is by the leading of the Spirit. There may be unity of action—say in an army, a club, a sect. This is not of the Spirit, therefore cannot be the unity of the Spirit. The unity of the Spirit will have Christ for its centre, and Him as the ONE LORD; and thus, if walking in the power of the Spirit, the church would be in unity as to all else—one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. If we are led of the Spirit, we shall surely seek to speak and act in the Spirit, and so may we endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

40. "F. A. F.," Erith, Kent. Colossians iii.

3: "For ye are dead," &c. It is evident this cannot be understood to imply that the flesh is actually dead. "Mortify your members," &c., would have no force, as there would be no members to mortify, if the flesh was actually dead. But as identified with a dead and risen Christ, we are dead to all the rudiments of ritualism. We take the place of death to all improvements of the flesh. So in Galatians ii. 20—we only need read the context. It is dead to the law, and to all hope of obtaining righteousness by law. I own myself identified with Christ crucified, and pass from that state with Him from death to life, and in that new state live to God. Reference to your other question might provoke discussion, which we wish to avoid in this serial.

41. "W. J.," Pen-y-graig. Many souls will give the same answer you receive when presenting the gospel: "We know that the cross and resurrection are the base, or ground, of every blessing, but we do not see the proofs that we are saved." And they say, How can we know, if we do not see the proofs as in 1 John ii. 3-5; iii. 14? Is not this very much like the Pharisees' question, which made Jesus sigh deeply in His spirit? (Mark viii. 11.) Would a slave speak thus if he heard the proclamation of his freedom? He must believe that proclamation first, and then proofs will soon be seen. Would a prisoner, though in his condemned cell, speak thus, if his pardon was read out to him? No doubt many merely assent to the gospel, without realising that it is God who proclaims through Jesus forgiveness of sins, and deliverance from bondage. If they look into themselves for signs that God speaks truth, they do not believe God; any more than the man who

does not believe God, unless his church says it is true. They have never known that God is the Justifier of the ungodly. (Rom. iv.)

Works will surely follow as the effects of faith. Though it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." Yet we also read, "that being justified by his grace . . . I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works." (Titus iii. 4-8.) The objectors you name, want to believe in themselves by looking for evidences in themselves, instead of believing God, and then being careful to maintain good works. They must first learn the wondrous lesson that God is the justifier of the ungodly. They are looking for godliness, supposing that He is the justifier of the godly—a very common mistake.

42. "A. M. F.," Brixton. If you examine the context of those words of our Lord, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved," you will see He was speaking here to His disciples of events which would happen to the remnant of the Jews in those days of tribulation yet to come. (Read on from Matt. xxiv. 13-22.) No doubt this will be exactly the case. Those who endure through that period of tribulation will be saved for the millennial kingdom on earth. But this is altogether another question from the security of the believer in Christ, who has eternal life, eternal redemption, and who shall never perish—who is kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. The more simply you rest on the words of Jesus, "He that believeth *hath* eternal life," the more will you delight to keep His commandments.

GOD'S SALVATION.

WHAT must I do to be saved? How often has this question been asked since the words were first uttered by the jailor of Philippi? How necessary it is that the divinely-given answer should be before us in this our day, when thousands are clinging, with a terrible zeal, to human righteousness and fleshly ordinances as a means of salvation! How refreshingly simple is the reply of the Spirit given through the apostle: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But how difficult it is to persuade the sinner that this is *all* that God requires of him! And yet, turn to whatever portion of God's word I may, I fail to find that man has ever been his *own* saviour.

Take an example. On the sands of the desert were stretched a multitude of Israelites, writhing in the throes of death, through the bite of the fiery serpents, the reward of their sin. (Num. xxi.) What can save them? If their prayers and works of righteousness, surely the time to do so has now arrived. Their religion is one of works and ordinances, but they have sinned, they are guilty—yea, they are lost and dying, and nothing can for one moment avail them, save God Himself, the One against whom they have sinned; and, blessed be His name, He interposes, and, by the mouth of His servant, Moses, proclaims *His* salvation.

“*One look*” at the serpent of brass, and the deadly wound is healed, the Israelite is saved from death. It was a salvation outside of man, it was God’s salvation; man had neither to merit it by good works, nor obtain it by ordinances—he had simply to BELIEVE it.

All that he could do was to turn his dying eye to the uplifted serpent, and this was all Jehovah required of him, for He had said to Moses, “Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.” The bitten Israelite’s faith grasped the promise of God, and expressed itself by a look. Healing and life were the immediate result.

Thus has it ever been. Man in his extremity has always had to go for help and succour to that God, whom, in his moments of prosperity or trial, he has treated with proud neglect. But, blessed be His name, flowing from His heart is an exhaustless supply of grace, which is ever at the service of all who, confessing their sins, turn away from creature help, and trust implicitly in Him.

And now a word with you, reader, if unconverted. Know you not that you are suffering from the bite of a serpent more terrible than those which retribution brought upon the sinful Israelites in a bygone day? In what are *you* trusting for salvation from the awful consequences of your sin, the hell towards which you are travelling so

rapidly? Who can rescue you from that dread abyss, on the brink of which you are even now tottering—that abyss of eternal judgment?

Will your ceremonies, baptism, confirmation, teetotalism, blue-ribbonism, reformation, the keeping of feasts, and observance of holy days, your good works and prayers, avail you in this matter? No! No! No! Not all the ceremonies and good works in the world, ten million times repeated, can ever atone for one sin; they do but come in as a barrier between your soul and God. I tell you, He will accept neither you nor them. You are lost, poor sinner, and none but God can save you, and He will only save you in one way.

You must come to Him as the prodigal came to the father, in Luke xv., *just as you are*, in all your nakedness, wretchedness, filthiness, and unworthiness, with no good thing about you, and nothing to recommend you to God but your need, your penitence finding expression in the cry, welling up from the heart conscious of its guilt, “I have sinned,” with faith that God can, and will forgive, you, through the work of His Son.

Listen, while Jesus proclaims the gospel of God's salvation.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoso-

ever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 14-16.)

How unspeakably precious is this ! The blessed Son of God is using the story of Israel's sin and Jehovah's mercy, to illustrate God's present way of saving sinners. As then, so now, the sinner of that day looked, and lived. The sinner of to-day, weary of that sin which threatens him with God's eternal wrath, looks back in faith to that wondrous scene at Calvary where Jesus suffered, the Just for the unjust; sees Him there as the One who came from the glory, out of the love of His heart, to bear in His own sinless person the judgment due to fallen man; and believing God has raised Him from the dead, receives everlasting life.

Oh ! mystery of mysteries—love unfathomable, unutterable—God's love to man !—to man who had trampled His glory underfoot, and whose vile heart took perpetual delight in transgressing His holy laws. Yet forth from the Father came the Son of His love, and trod the earth as the "Man of sorrows," and the Father traced, with ineffable delight, each step of His blessed journey, while was sounded forth from the glory the Father's voice of loving recognition : "This is *my* beloved Son." Wondrous word, the heart of Jesus, dishonoured by man, was refreshed and cheered by the sense of the Father's full delight in Himself.

It was the Father's presence, the abode of

eternal light and love, exchanged for a world which understood and loved Him not; the cold indifference of men pressed upon that loving heart, and grieved it to its core. It was the joy of heaven exchanged for a cross and a grave. The form of God, with its supernal glory, laid aside, that He might assume a body prepared for Him, in which He could suffer and die.

Only the Father and the Son will ever know the depths of the sorrow and anguish of Gethsemane and Calvary: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was the dying cry of the Son of God. Dost thou know, my reader, why God forsook Him in the hour of His awful agony? It was because He was bearing sin, and a holy God hid His face from the Sin-bearer, in order that He might bless the sinner with eternal glory.

Yes, Love's gift in death has satisfied infinite Holiness. The heart of the Father finds eternal rest and satisfaction in the shed blood of His dear Son, that blood which is to Him the blessed proof of a perfect obedience rendered in the scene of man's terrible failure. Heaven's gates are thrown wide open, a holy God, seated on a throne of grace, beckons the prodigal to Himself, and offers him the kiss of eternal reconciliation; bids him come just as he is, and partake of the feast which everlasting love has spread, bids him come and partake, without money, and without price.

Loudly sounds forth from God's own lips, over

land and sea, the glorious proclamation of pardon and peace. Harken, oh, poor, perishing world—hearken to what a God of love is saying to thee: “PEACE HAS BEEN MADE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS.” “HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON HATH EVERLASTING LIFE.” The message is to the poor, as well as to the rich and the noble, and the command to His servants is, “Go out into the highways and hedges, and *compel* them to come in, that my house may be filled.”

The presence of the Son of God on earth, His wondrous death at Calvary, His resurrection and ascension to glory, His being seated at the right hand of God—all this explains why God does not make man’s salvation depend upon his own obedience and righteousness. Salvation has been procured for the sinner by the work of another, the divinely-appointed Substitute, who Himself bore God’s wrath against sin, and rose from under it triumphant, bursting asunder the bands of death and the grave, and crushing beneath His pierced feet the enemy of souls—thrice blessed proof of an accomplished redemption.

Here may the weary, heavy-laden sinner find rest, joy, and everlasting peace.

Hail, glorious Saviour! Worthy art Thou to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing throughout the eternal ages, Amen.

And yet—oh, sorrowful truth!—spite of all

this, millions of unsaved men and women are marching on towards hell, supremely indifferent to what God has done in love to save them from its endless woes.

And millions of others are groping about in a maze of ordinances, vainly seeking for a salvation which has already been procured for the sinner by the atoning death of the Son of God.

Oh, my reader, as you value your deathless soul, let me beseech you to tear from your heart everything in which you are resting for salvation apart from Christ. Look away from everything to Him, just as the dying Israelite looked away from everything to the serpent of brass. Look unto Him, the all-glorious, God-appointed Saviour, once nailed to a cross of wood, from whose pierced side flowed that blood which alone could make atonement for the soul. Base ALL your hopes, for time and eternity, upon that precious, precious blood, AND UPON THAT ALONE.

Think of it, "one look," and the virus of the serpent's bite was annulled, the Israelite leaped to his feet, made perfectly whole. One look of faith at Jesus, and the load of sins is gone, buried for ever in the sea of God's forgetfulness; all fear of wrath removed, and everlasting life gained.

Oh, do you not believe, my reader?—*God asks nothing more of you*, He waits to save you—He waits, I tell you. What a wonderful sight, God waiting to receive the sinner! The God who, in

His mercy, came to the rescue of rebellious Israel in the wilderness, has sent His only-begotten Son to suffer in the sinner's stead, and to bear his judgment; and He now waits to pardon all who accept that Son as Saviour. Oh, will you not accept salvation in God's own way? You are not expected to save yourself, or even to contribute towards your salvation. Jesus, the Saviour, procured salvation, amid inexpressible sorrow and agony, at Calvary, for all who shall believe in Himself.

All things are now ready, sinner; the banquet is spread, the guests are pressing in through the open door of grace. Will *you* be among the blessed number? Pass in, poor wanderer—pass in.

Oh! says some one, my sins are so many and great. Of course they are; the wound of the bitten Israelite, no doubt, smarted dreadfully, but that did not hinder him from looking away from his wound to the God-appointed means of healing.

Jehovah had not said, Whoever is occupied with his wound shall live, but, Whosoever *looketh* shall live. Jesus did not say, Whosoever is occupied with his many and great sins shall receive everlasting life, but, Whosoever *believeth* in ME.

God speaks of man's ruin, and of His own gracious remedy, in the same breath. For example, we read in Romans iii.: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" but what follows immediately afterwards? "Being justified

freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." The man who has sinned, and come short of His glory, is he whom God justifies FREELY.

Instances could be multiplied shewing that God's mode of dealing with the sinner, is, to convince him of his sin and danger, and then point him to what He has done, in His boundless love, to put away the sin, and avert the judgment.

Hence, when a sinner is convicted of his guilt, then God would have him look outside himself, away from his own helplessness and vileness, to His Son, once lifted up at Calvary, and obtain salvation by believing in Him.

God sent the earthquake, to awaken the Philipian jailor out of his sleep of indifference, and shew him his need of salvation; and his lips gave immediate expression to the fear of his startled soul—"What must I do to be saved?" In an instant came the answer—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

There need be no pause between conviction and salvation. All the exercises of soul, the doubts, fears, cries, groans, and endeavours to find something meritorious in oneself, always end in the believer's ultimately looking away from himself to Christ, and finding, to his joyful astonishment, that real peace and salvation are connected, entirely and absolutely, with Him and His finished work.

W. H. S.

NOTES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

IV.

“BEING justified freely by his grace.” Yes, accounted righteous freely, without anything on our part, except believing Him—and even faith is the gift of God—it is by His free favour, grace. But how is God righteous in justifying us freely by His free favour, “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”? Not merely—blessed as that is—justified from every charge of sins; not merely sheltered from judgment, like Israel in Egypt, by the blood of the Lamb; but redeemed, fully delivered—redemption through His precious blood.

Well, you may say, that is all very blessed, but how am I to know that I have a share in it? How am I to be assured that it applies to me?

Well, since God is righteous in freely justifying us, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, let us inquire what that redemption is, and how you may know it is unto you, and applies to you. What is redemption? The emancipation, or redemption, of all the slaves in the West Indies, some years ago, will illustrate what redemption is. A vast sum was given, voted by the English government, for the complete redemption of the slaves. They were, so to speak, redeemed for

ever. For ever emancipated, delivered from the wretchedness of slavery.

Now, when the proclamation, or glad tidings, of their redemption arrived in the West Indies, how were they to know it applied to them? Suppose an aged slave, with many a scar of whip and chain upon him, had inquired, in the following words: "Yes, I have no doubt so many millions have been paid—I have no doubt the proclamation of redemption, emancipation, everlasting deliverance, is good and glorious—but how am I to know it applies to me?" What would you have said? "Why, are you not a slave; are not those scars a proof of it? Were you not born a slave? If you were a free man, it could not apply to you, but since you are a slave, it must, it does, apply to you; the proclamation is to you. Believing the proclamation, this moment you are, in perfect righteousness, for ever free." Would you not say so?

Ah, if we took our true place, and owned our true condition as born slaves, conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, then all difficulty would soon vanish as to seeing how redemption applies to us. Have you ever owned, do you own, that by nature you were the bond-slave of sin—sold under sin? The poor West Indian slave might possibly escape from his master, but have you not found yourself utterly without power to escape from Satan and sin? Have you any ugly scars of sin? If

you think, bad as you are, that God will help you to keep the law, and so at last you hope to get to heaven; then you do not know your need of redemption. If the English government voted so much in the council of Parliament, what did God vote in the councils of eternity? Was it to give silver or gold for your redemption? It was to give His well-beloved Son. Yes, He is the ONE "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." Poor helpless slave of sin, that redemption is unto you. If you are such, then it must be unto you. Yes, the SLAVE that believed the proclamation was that moment for ever free. It is just so with you. God grant it to thousands who read this paper.

Dear young believer, it is most important to understand this: that you are not only justified freely (all sins being forgiven, God sees no iniquity), but you are also redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Yes, delivered from that state of slavery for ever. If that great sum of gold set the slaves free for ever, has not the infinite propitiation of Christ set us free, redeemed us for ever? Shall we allow a shadow of a doubt? No; He gave Himself for us — all free, unmerited favour. Not one thing did we do for our redemption; it was all accomplished before we had one desire or thought of redemption. And now we hear the glad tidings unto us poor slaves of sin; we believe, and are for ever free.

Glory, glory everlasting,
Be to Him who bore the cross.

But we must further inquire how the righteousness of God is affected by all this.

“Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Verses 25, 26.

You notice God hath set forth the propitiation of Christ to declare two things. His righteousness needed to be revealed in these two things. His passing over, in forbearance, sins that are past; and that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Here we would warn our readers of a serious mistake, often found, as to “sins that are past,” as though it meant sins that have been committed before our conversion to God; that sins up to that time are pardoned, or remitted, through the propitiation of Christ; that God would therefore be righteous, through the death of Christ, in thus pardoning past sins before conversion. This error leaves the believer in utter perplexity as to sins, should they be committed after conversion; indeed, this view leaves the Christian worse off than the Jew, as he had another day of atonement every year. But if the propitiatory sacrifice of

Christ only met our sins, or atoned for sins, up to conversion, then there remains no sacrifice, no remedy, for sins after conversion. For "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." (Heb. x.) On this finite view of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, who could be saved? The one infinite sacrifice must have met all the sins of a finite sinner, from first to last. What, then, does this scripture mean? Simply this: God had passed over, in forbearance, past sins, the sins of all believers before Christ died; and *now* He was the Justifier of all that believe, reckoned them as righteous, as though they had never sinned. But the great question was this: How could God be righteous in doing both these things? How could this be revealed, declared, explained? Without an answer to this inquiry, how can any soul have peace with God?

If all had been guilty, how could God be righteous in passing over the sins of those who believed, whether Jews or Gentiles? And if all are proved guilty *now*—if you are proved guilty—how can God declare of you, like Israel of old, that He hath not beheld, and does not behold, iniquity in you? Clearly He could not be righteous on account of anything in us, or done by us, under law, or not under law. Here the eye of faith must rest solely on the blood of Jesus—"a propitiation, through faith in his blood." This alone explains, declares, the righteousness of God,

both as to the sins of past believers, and ours now. Let us, however, remember, that on the propitiatory mercy-seat the blood was placed before the eye of God! "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times." (Lev. xvi. 14.) This had to be done again; the blood of a bullock had to be sprinkled before God on that golden mercy-seat once every year. And blood of other victims had often to be shed. Not so the blood of Christ; that blood, once shed and sprinkled, can never be shed or sprinkled again.

Oh, my soul, think what that blood is for all thy sins before the eye of God! The blood, sprinkled on the gold, shews what the blood of Christ is, as meeting, upholding, declaring the righteousness of God. Yes, He was righteous in justifying David a thousand years before the blood was shed; just as He is righteous in justifying us eighteen hundred years after. Jesus must needs suffer for both.

Thus we see the great mistake of those who say, "The righteousness of God is that by which He maketh us righteous." No; the righteousness of God is that by which He Himself is righteous, in reckoning us poor sinners righteous. The difference is immense. If the voice of what calls itself the church says one thing, and the

word of God says another thing, which am I to believe? Doubtless the latter.

“Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness : that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Dwell on each sentence. Is it not the righteousness of God that He might be just? Do you believe in Jesus—that He has thus glorified God by His expiatory sacrifice—that now, at this time, through that death, He is in righteousness able to justify all that believe? Is God thus revealed to your soul *just* in reckoning you righteous?

Since righteousness therefore is wholly of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, “where is boasting then?” Is it on the principle of works that we have done? No, such a thought is excluded. “By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.” For we have seen faith finds righteousness in God. I cannot, then, boast of having been, or being, righteous in myself, since we are proved guilty, and know it to be true, and, on the principle of works or law, we can only be condemned. Justification cannot be on that ground, however we may struggle to make it so. Justification, then, must be on another principle. “Therefore we conclude that a man is

justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." What else could scripture conclude, since all are guilty, and justification is not what we are to God, but what He is to us, set forth in Christ? Do not mix these two things together. Let your salvation be entirely on the principle of faith—what God is to you.

To be justified by faith is what God is to us through Christ. Deeds of the law are on the principle of what we are to God. Amazing grace! we are justified by the one, without the other. And in this the "no difference" doctrine is fully maintained. The same righteousness of God to all, Jews or Gentiles, on the principle of faith, and by means of faith.

Those who maintain that we are still under the law, make it void, because it curses those under it, because they do not keep it. Those who were under it once had to be redeemed from its curse by the death of Jesus. Thus, if scripture put us under it again, then Jesus would need to die again to redeem us from its curse. (See Gal. iii. 10-13; iv. 4, 5.) "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish law." Jesus revealed to the eye of faith, bearing the curse of the broken law for those that were under it—if this does not establish the claims of the law of God, what could do so? But if we were put under it again, then its claims would have to be established again, or it would be made void.

THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD.

THE GROWTH OF SEED.

MARK IV. 26-29.

“So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

THE teaching here is that the seed is completely fitted to produce fruit. The seed is placed in the ground by man, but *he* cannot make it grow, nor does he understand how it is that it does grow. He sleeps at night, and rises at day, and can see that the seed has taken root, and is springing up, but “he knoweth not how; for the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself.” Even in nature God has so ordered it that the seed should fructify: “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” Then the harvest, and the sickle gathers in the fruits of the earth.

So is the kingdom of God. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” (John iii. 8.) Thus it begins—takes root; and God is the Husbandman. A Paul may plant, and an Apollos water, but God must give the increase. And thus, as all must be begun by God, all is

increased by God, and all will surely be gathered into His garner by-and-by. On the other hand, our Lord said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." (Matt. xv. 13.) While, of the Christian, we read, "Ye are God's husbandry" ("tillage" in the margin). He sows the good seed; He waters watches over, and tends the growing, that we may grow up into Him in all things. And a glorious harvest is approaching, when we shall be gathered into His heavenly garner. To Him be all the praise!

THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

MATTHEW XIII. 44.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

THE interpretation commonly given to this parable, is, that when a man sees the value there is in Christ, he gives up and abandons all that he may possess Christ.

We doubt not that this is a mistaken view of the parable. When does any man ever sell "all that he hath"? and if he did, would it purchase Christ? The mere giving up is not enough. We read, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Cor. xiii. 3.) Whereas, the invitation of the gospel is, to buy, "without money, and without

price." (Isa. lv. 1.) Christians are, indeed, called to be loosed from all earthly ties. Our Lord said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 26.) But that is not simply that I may win salvation, but when I have that, I am called to forsake all that I have (ver. 33), that I may be Christ's *disciple*, or true follower. Philippians iii. 4-11 has also been quoted, but surely this was in consequence of the apostle possessing salvation that he desired to win Christ, and not that he might gain salvation by his self-denial.

We doubt not the parable points to Christ as the One who finds a treasure in His people, and for joy sells all that He has, that He may obtain possession of it; as, indeed, we read, "who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." (Heb. xii. 2.) "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes *he became poor*, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.) Yes, as the parable says, He sold all that He had; and, as the passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews proves, He kept in view the *joy* that was set before Him, which joy our parable also speaks of.

We must, indeed, look at who Christ was, and the position He had as Creator (all things were

made by Him, and for Him), and as God from eternity; and then look at our Lord in His humiliation, His agony in the garden, and His shameful death—being made sin for us, and enduring the hiding of God's face—before we can even get a glimpse of what it cost Him to purchase the field in which lay hidden the treasure of His heart.

But there is another point in the parable. It says, not only that the man purchased the treasure, but also that he bought *the field* in which the treasure was hid. Now, in the same chapter, our Lord, in explaining the parable of the Sower, says, "The field is the world." Then our Lord bought the world—all mankind. And here lies an important truth. It is like a rich man going to a plantation of slaves, and after paying down a price for the whole of the slaves, he sends forth a proclamation, that whosoever will may be free. But, alas! the slaves like their plots of ground, and their earthly ties, and prefer to remain in slavery.

So our Lord bought, in His death, all mankind, and has sent forth His ministers, to beg men to be reconciled to Him. But, alas! men prefer the chains of Satan, and the baits he skilfully lays for them.

This illustrates also the difference between "buying" and "redeeming." Many are now deluding their fellow-men with the thought of universal salvation; whereas there is a wide difference be-

tween buying slaves and offering them liberty, and the actual bringing them out of their slavery. We read of some—lost souls—who deny the Lord who *bought* them (2 Pet. ii. 1), whereas, those who are redeemed are actually translated *out of* the kingdom of Satan, and *into* the kingdom of God's dear Son." (Col. i. 13.)

Such, then, is the parable of the hidden treasure. Christ is the purchaser ; His saints are the treasure ; all men are the field. It is called the *hidden* treasure, for none could have discovered that Christ had a treasure where *all* was sin and wickedness. The doctrine of the church, too, had been long hidden ; as we read, Paul made known "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations." (Col. i. 26.) Then all were to see "what is the fellowship of the mystery which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God." (Eph. iii. 9.) Christ had then endured the shameful death of the cross—having become poor, sold all that He had—but He will have the treasure with Him by-and-by—a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ! To His name be all the glory !

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

MATTHEW XIII. 45, 46.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls ; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

This parable is very similar to the last under

consideration. Here the merchant-man sold all that he had to possess the prize. There is nothing said of buying the field : it is simply the pearl that is bought, the pearl of great price.

It is Christ who sought goodly pearls. Israel was, and will yet be, one of God's pearls, and He may have many others. But the church was the pearl of great price—the bride, the Lamb's wife—and our Lord sold all that He had, and bought it. Here also, who can tell what is included in that saying, "sold all that he had"? We must look at the *height* from which Christ came, and the *depth* to which He stooped, and then we can never fathom how much it cost our Lord in becoming poor. We can, indeed, only wonder, admire, and adore !

Now, if Christ calls His church a pearl of great price—of such value, indeed, that to obtain it He gave up all—what value should not we set upon it, and think of *every* saint as a part of that pearl of great price? And how anxious we should be to answer to that value He set upon us! It should, indeed, cause us to give up all, and count all but dung and dross, that we might win Christ. (Phil. iii. 8.) But this can surely be done only by those who already have Him as their Saviour, and who desire to have Him solely as the object of their hearts, though never fully realised till we see Him as He is and are with Him in the glory.

"THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR."

THOU "bright and morning Star,"
Arise within our hearts,
 Before the day,
 Shed forth Thy ray,
Which heavenly joy imparts;
Though darkness reigns around,
Our hearts anticipate
 That hour so near,
 When we shall hear
Thy shout, for which we wait.

Thou "bright and morning Star,"
We wait to see Thee shine,
 Then we shall be
 Made like to Thee,
And wholly, wholly Thine;
"The Spirit and the bride,"
To Thee, blest Lord, say come,
 Oh! let Thy beam
 Of glory stream,
And take us to Thy home.

Thou "bright and morning Star,"
Oh! with what deep delight,
 Thou'lt come again,
 And claim us then,
To dwell in cloudless light;
And oh! what boundless joy,
Shall fill each raptured heart,
 When we abide
 At Thy dear side,
No more from Thee to part!

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G. W. F.

