

# 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.

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## CHRIST AS A PREACHER.

MARK II. 1-12.

THERE is much said and much done to get sinners to hear the gospel—some place posters on the walls, distribute thousands of bills, and many other expedients and efforts are tried. And these may be used and blessed to souls. We do not write to criticise these methods, but desire that our eyes may rest on Christ.

He entered Capernaum. There needed no bills to announce Him. No human agency need be set on foot. Indeed, like Paul at Philippi, it was “after some days ; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door : and he preached the word unto them.” And it will be found in the history of the work of the Holy Spirit, that it has been after this manner. Take the work in 1857-60, there was no need for bills, or efforts of that kind.



It was noised abroad that the Lord was bringing souls to Himself, and the house was filled. A deep sense of His presence was felt. The difficulty was in finding a place to hold the people. Sometimes two or three large buildings would be filled, and then others come in for a second service after, often until near midnight. At every meeting souls were saved for eternity.

We would not for a moment judge any evangelist using whatever means he feels led to use for winning souls to Christ, but let us not lose sight of our divine pattern. Is it not well to wait on Him, until it is noised that He is in the house? This is the character of the work in Egypt, and now in Mesopotamia. We have also just heard of a similar case in this country. As it was in Capernaum, so it is noised around that the Lord is in the house, and anxious souls are coming morning and evening. And the Lord is present to heal them.

If the reader is a Christian, may we ask why may it not be so in your house? It was a delightful sight the last summer to see two hundred come together in a christian farmer's house, and the power of the Lord was present to meet every case. There had been no bills, but earnest invitations. And at this farm house, the next Lord's day, "straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about

the door." We had to go into the open air, and the word was preached to them.

The next thing in this divine pattern is this : "And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four." Did you ever bring a sinner *unto Him*? It is one thing to bring a person to hear a favourite preacher; quite another thing to bring souls to Jesus. How soon man may take the place of the Lord Jesus in the house. We would esteem the servants of the Lord highly in love for their work's sake, but the great thing is to come unto Him, bringing sin-sick souls. This man was perfectly helpless, "was borne of four," and nothing could turn them from bringing him to Jesus. The press and crowd was great. It is so now. But do we know, unless the sinner is brought to Jesus Himself, he will be lost for all eternity? Those who came to Jesus were in earnest. O Lord, awake us from our indifference. "They let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay." How many an unsaved soul has a bed on which he rests, it may even be the law, that can only curse him.

Oh how great was their faith to let both the sick man, and that on which he lay, down to the feet of Jesus. How unlike this are the efforts of thousands in our day. See the vast machinery called Christendom; see multitudes of professed but mistaken servants of Christ; their

great effort is to lift the sick and helpless sinner higher, a little higher, make him a little better, a little more sober, or a little more holy, and then we may have a shadow of a hope that Jesus will hear him. Not so our copy: no, the very opposite. Just as he was they let him down at the feet of Jesus. O religious teachers! would to God your eyes were opened to see the copy. Did Jesus spurn him and them away?

“When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” He did not tell those who brought him, to cure the sick man first, and then bring him to Him. He did not tell the sick man to get up and walk, or climb a little higher. He did not tell him to give his sinful heart to God, or to serve God, and then he might be brought to Him. No, just as he was they brought him to Jesus. They did not look to the sick man to improve himself, even the least bit. Their faith was not in the sick man, but in Jesus. “And when Jesus saw their faith.” O ye preachers of England! does Jesus see your faith? Do you really believe Jesus receives sinners just as they are, utterly helpless? Do you bring the sick to Jesus, or do you do your utmost to hinder them from coming to Jesus just as they are?

Hearken to the preacher come from God, the Eternal Son, and the Son of man. He says: “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” Reader, have

you ever been brought to Jesus just as you were? Have you heard Him? Has He said to you, "Thy sins be forgiven thee"? What, all your sins? All the sins of youth, of middle age, or it may be of old age? All forgiven—never to be remembered again? Have you heard Jesus speak thus to you? Oh, have you?

I think I hear a reader say, Why this is contrary to all the religion of the world! Yes, that is true; it was so then. The very scribes of the religious Jews were astounded. And how many now would be filled with hatred at the truth of the unmerited grace seen in our copy. They would say, No, it is not enough to believe, there must be a walk—a holy walk first—or work also. Jesus says, "Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" Now granted there must be a holy walk: but the question is just this: Are sins forgiven first in free grace? or is there to be a holy walk first, and then sins forgiven? Well, look at Jesus in this divine copy. Most surely forgiveness of sins comes first, and then rise up and walk.

Did Jesus tell this poor helpless man to walk first, though seeing he could not, and then promise him if he did He would forgive his sins? "He saith to the sick of the palsy, I say unto

thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." And immediately he did so.

How clearly the true gospel shines out in this divine picture, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. Some are so dark that they would tell you no man can know whether his sins are forgiven or not, and thus a poor soul so deceived will often say, I cannot believe. Oh think of it. Do you say you cannot believe Jesus, simply because man says you can never know whether He speaks the truth? If you have never thus come to Jesus, God grant that you may come just now, and just as you are. You will find Him the same Jesus. He freely gives both forgiveness of sins and the Spirit's power to walk.

C. S.



## CHARACTER THE TEST OF CREED, BY ARCHDEACON FARRAR.

A CUTTING from a paper, which I judge to be the *Christian World*, with the above heading, is duly received. It is an able exposure of the thinly disguised Romanism of England. But is not the rationalism of the article as dangerous as the ritualism it combats? The writer says: "We may lay it down as an eternal truth, which no casuistry can modify, no priestcraft sophisticate, no system over-ride, that 'WHAT THAT SUPREME

AND SACRED MAJESTY REQUIRES OF US IS INNOCENCE ALONE.'” And again: “The lesson I would urge is not meant to be polemical, but practical. It is to insist upon the truth which lies at the heart of all the revelation of CHRIST, that we shall be saved neither by our opinions, nor by our observances, *but simply and solely* by our character, and by our life, justice, humility, purity, the love of truth, the fruits of the Spirit—these are worth more than burnt-offering and sacrifice.”

And is this the man, and this the doctrine, which this religious *world* delighteth to honour? It only proves what we have ever found, and shall find, that the man who denies the eternity of the punishment of the wicked, who finally rejects Christ, will sooner or later reject the atoning death of the Lord Jesus, the sacrifice offered for our sins as the only means of man's salvation. And what does F. W. Farrar give us in its place? “What that supreme and sacred majesty requires of us is innocence.” That we shall be saved *solely* by our character, and by our life, justice, humility, purity, &c. Now if there be any meaning in words, salvation to F. W. Farrar is impossible. And if he continues to reject the death of Christ as the sacrifice for our sins, he will certainly find salvation to him is impossible. To hold this creed, he must set aside the whole word of God; he must deny that man is a guilty sinner. For

unquestionably the plain teaching of God's word is, that all have sinned, that all are guilty, "That there is none righteous." He might have said, but I am an exception; but the word says, "No, not one." If then all are guilty, how can there be one found "*innocence*." And yet, according to F. W. F., this alone is what God *requires*. He thus makes God as ignorant as himself, to require what does not and cannot exist! For by no means can the same person be both guilty and innocent.

Could innocence be found in the dying thief? Yet, believing in Jesus, he went straight to paradise.

What kind of a gospel of glad tidings would it be to twenty men all proved guilty of some capital crime, under sentence of death, for the judge to declare that what the majesty of the English law demands is innocence—innocence or hanging? Truly that is law, the very principle of law; but would there be a particle of gospel in that demand for innocence?

And are we to give up the blessed glad tidings of free forgiveness through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, for this no-gospel of *innocence* of F. W. Farrar? Which is most suited to you, reader, as a guilty sinner—pardon, or the demand for what you never can have, innocence? Is it the "love of truth" to teach and trust in absolute falsehood? For it is utterly

false to say that we shall be saved solely by our character, works, purity, &c. Read Titus ii. 11-14, and iii. 4-8. The plain teaching of these infallible words is this, salvation first, and works as fruit afterwards. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." No such a thought is there in scripture as poor guilty man returning to the impossible, to innocence. Free justification there is, but not through our works, or innocence; but "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. iii. 19-28.) Could God speak plainer than this? And could man more distinctly contradict God, than does this article?

This is a question of eternal importance to millions; and we do not understand (or if it is supposed we misrepresent) this "different gospel" of F. W. Farrar—salvation by innocence, and good works—let him, lest he sends souls to hell by it, tell us how a guilty sinner is to be made innocent, or how he is to have eternal salvation, and know it. And let not this be his mere opinion, but shew it us from the word of God. The law was what God required; the gospel declares what God gives. The more we know God the giver, and the gift, the more we shall



delight to serve Him. The importance of the subject is our apology for the plain words we use. What is the use of objecting to the mere idolatry of the ritualists, and at the same time teaching this soul-destroying error of salvation by works? Only ignore the infinite value of the one atoning sacrifice of Christ, by which the worshipper is for ever perfected, and Satan does not care what you put in its place. Alas, nothing will please men better than their supposed innocence and good works. But we never met a man yet that was quite sure he had eternal salvation on such false grounds.

God grant, should the reader have been allured by these wandering stars, that he may be restored by the plain teaching of the word of God. We can say after enjoying it through a long life, it is more precious every day. And, believing "on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," we have this blessed assurance of being through Him accounted righteous before God: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through [not our own innocence, or character, or good works, but through] our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. iv. 24, 25; v. 1.) Thankful should we be if F. W. Farrar is ever able to say the same.

C. S.

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## QUESTIONS OF INTEREST

### RELATING TO THE COMING OF CHRIST AND HIS REIGN ON EARTH.

WE have noticed lately, as the coming of Christ draws nearer and nearer, that many Christians who have spent years in complete darkness on these subjects, are being stirred up to serious inquiry. Take the following extract from a letter before me :—

“I now wish for a little more light on the church during the millennial reign. You say in harmony with Joel that Christ will come to this earth and gather the living nations for judgment. Will Christ, in administering judgment, and the after blessing, be on this earth during His one thousand years’ reign? In your tract on the millennial reign, page 9, you imply that the saints will look down upon this earth. If so, how will the church be reigning with Christ? Will not the church be helping to administer in the government of the earth during the millennial reign, in harmony with the parable of the ten pounds in Luke xix. 17, ‘Have thou authority over ten cities;’ and so with the five pounds?”

Let us turn to the scriptures for answers to these questions—questions evidently on the minds of great numbers of Christians. It will be

important to notice what we find in the Old Testament as to God's purpose of blessing to this earth, centering in the people of Israel. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." (Deut. xxxii. 8, 9.) "Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words." (Deut. xxxiii. 3.) These and all the words of Jehovah shall be fulfilled to them, His chosen nation.

The Psalms are largely occupied with the sufferings of their Messiah, and the sufferings of the remnant of Israel. And after the sufferings, the reign of Christ, Jehovah, Messiah. In Psalm ii. the kings and rulers of the earth take counsel against Him, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." He asks for the inheritance of the earth for judgment, but asks not for it during the period of the church being gathered. See John xvii. 9.

We thus learn that the millennial reign will be brought about, not by the gospel, but by judgments. Then in Psalm viii. we have a greatly enlarged view of the millennial glory of Christ, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory

above the heavens." And though there is not one word in this Psalm about the church, yet the Spirit in Paul refers to it, as applicable to the great truth of Christ the Head of the church: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 19-23.) The apostle does not go on to quote Psalm viii. 7, 8. He carefully distinguishes between the celestial and terrestrial glory of the kingdom. We must keep this distinction before us in our inquiry: the glory above the heavens; and His kingdom and glory on the earth.

If you now read Psalm lxxii. you will have no difficulty in seeing that this is entirely the theme of the earthly dominion of Jesus, as Israel's *Messiah*. *But over the whole earth, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."* (Ver. 8.) The Psalms will become a deeply interesting study if we read them as referring to God's future dealings with His ancient people. "In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion." (Ps. lxxvi. 1, 2.)

We are told expressly that it is Israel that is before the mind of the Lord in the prophecy of Isaiah: "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." (Isa. ii. 1.)

No doubt the Holy Ghost often uses these precious chapters to the Christian. Indeed, as in the Psalms, we see a far wider range of the glories of Jehovah Jesus, than only as the Messiah of Israel, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." (Isa. ix. 6, 7.)

That child, who is the mighty God, &c., has been born, and rejected by Israel. Yet He must be established on the throne of David, according to these words of God. True, there is no statement as to His being *on* the earth, or the church with Him during the one thousand years.

That in chapter xi., which gives a very full description of His millennial kingdom, is all on earth. And the same judgment as is named in Psalm ii. 9 is shewn to be the prelude to the millennial kingdom. "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth," &c. (Ver. 4.) Then the peaceful millennium, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Israel and Judah are gathered from the ends of the earth. Yet there is no

evidence again of the residence of the Messiah during the one thousand years. No doubt there is a reason for this, and that reason will yet be plain to us, as we go on. Yet He is in the midst. "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." (Chap. xii. 6.) "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Read chapter xxv. 6-9.

Precious also are the promises to Israel in Isaiah lii., and then the atoning death of the Lord Jesus in chapter liii., and the blessing as the result in chapter liv., and when iniquity has come to the full, chapter lix., then the Redeemer shall come to Zion. (Ver. 20.) As Paul also quotes in Romans xi., when the time of the kingdom and glory is come to Israel: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee," &c. But still not one word as to the church being on the earth with Christ. (Is. lx. 1.)

Let us read Isaiah lxi. carefully. We know that verse 1 and half of verse 2, as quoted by the Lord in Luke iv., refers to His presence then on earth. And though as to His body He is now above all heavens, yet all through this period of the church He still continues through His gifts to proclaim here the acceptable year of the Lord. It is actually the jubilee up to this moment. He

is still proclaiming liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Now read Isaiah lxi. 3 to end of chapter lxii. What wonderful blessing for Zion, Jerusalem, and Israel, and the Gentiles during the millennium! But no statement as to the church. Indeed it was hid, as we are told in Ephesians iii.

Many details are given as to how all this will be brought about in chapter lxvi. 8-22. All nations shall come up to Jerusalem to worship. The reign of Messiah is also foretold in Jeremiah xxiii. 5-7: "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely," &c. And there can be no doubt to those who believe the word of God, that all this shall be fulfilled.

In the prophet Ezekiel we have some most remarkable details as to the millennial kingdom. The wondrous grace of God to Israel, chapter xxxvii. 23-28. We learn here that David will have the place of king and prince in the millennial kingdom. "My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." Then after the destruction of their great enemy of the north in chapters xxxviii. and xxxix., we have the description of the millennial temple in chapters xl. to xlvii.. Yet there is no special reference to Messiah having His residence,

or bodily presence, in this temple. In other words, there is nothing to indicate that this temple is the centre of Christ's throne or reign. The prince of chapter xlv. must not be mistaken for Christ; verse 2 could not be true of Christ, "He shall worship at the threshold of the gate."

Daniel says: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days." And the glory of the terrestrial kingdom is given to Him. (Ver. 14.) The same kingdom and dominion is also given to the saints of the most High. (Ver. 27.)

In Micah also very distinctly is it foretold that that blessed One, who was born in Bethlehem, and has been taken up to the Father in heaven, is to be ruler in Israel, "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." Margin.

In Zephaniah iii. after the judgment (ver. 8), comes the glorious reign: "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."

So, in Zechariah again, after the judgment comes the reign of Messiah. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives." (Chap. xiv. 4.) "And the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. . . . and the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that



day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." How great is the blessing reserved for the remnant of Israel, who shall be saved as objects of mercy. The earthly supremacy shall surely be theirs, and theirs the earthly glory with Jesus, when He shall be King over all the earth. Yet we must admit there is nothing in the Old Testament that implies that the supreme place of the throne of Jesus, Lord of all, will be on this earth, or that it will be the dwelling place of Himself and the church His bride. Whilst it is as clearly revealed that Israel will have a place of wondrous dominion and glory in their land, when we come to the New Testament fuller revelation of the purposes of God, we shall then see the perfect harmony of all scripture as to the coming reign of Christ. Before we do that, the reader would do well to turn and compare the whole scope of promise and prophecy in the Old Testament. Study carefully the context of the scriptures referred to in this short paper. Do not forget that the Holy Ghost means what He says. When He speaks of Israel or Jerusalem, He means Israel and Jerusalem, and not the church.

This world's cup of iniquity and apostasy is fast filling up. How rapid the increase of worldly pleasures and amusements, infidelity and superstition, and the nations preparing for mutual slaughter. Soon He will come. He says, "I come quickly." All this makes our inquiry,

the millennial reign of Christ, deeply interesting  
Let us then look in the next place at the teaching  
of the New Testament.



## FREE WILL.

WHAT angry discussion there has been on this matter, and it is said there is still much heated disputing on it, especially in the south of England. Our desire is not to dispute, but to inquire calmly what is the truth on this subject. We meet with one great difficulty at the outset; we do not find a scripture that speaks directly on the subject of *free will*, at least I do not remember one instance where the words *free will* occur.

Have you ever thought what the words "free will" mean? Do they mean that man has power in himself, in his natural unconverted state, to choose salvation, and that he is free to choose it, or to choose sin, and choose to remain in sin? Let us take this illustration. A man has a strong inclination to go poaching at night for game. Would it do for the government to say, Very well, you are free to poach, for you are a free agent? Or a child has a propensity to steal—would a father say, Yes, you are a free agent; you are free to steal, or free to be honest? If he was free to steal, and had a propensity to steal, then he would steal. Would it not be

wickedness to tell the man that liked it that he was free to poach ? or the child he was free to steal because he chose it ? Then it is plain a holy, righteous God could not tell men—fallen men, whose nature is evil, and have a constant tendency to do evil—that they are free to do the evil they delight in. For man to be told he was free to do evil would be real wickedness. Or put it in this way—you tell your son what you wish him to do ; but he says, No, father, I am a free agent, and my free will tells me I must just do what I choose. The more we look into it, the more we see how free will may be, nay, is it not simply lawlessness ? and lawlessness is sin. If I say I am free to do evil there is an end to all obedience.

If we look at the Lord Jesus we see the very opposite of this kind of free will. “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” (Heb. x. 9.) Hear His agonising prayer in Gethsemane : “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” (Matt. xxvi. 39.) Was not Satan’s one object in the temptation to get Christ to exercise free will as man ? One moment of free will and the perfect obedience of the holy dependent second Man would have fallen like the first Adam. Remember it was that very act of Adam’s free will that brought in sin and all its consequences. Not so the Lord. It was ever

His delight to do His Father's will. He could say, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John v. 30, vi. 38.) If the Son of God should thus repudiate any free will of His own, but ever manifested entire subjection to the Father's will, what then becomes us? His blessed path was perfect submission and dependence. Yes, the only perfect One did not His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him.

But some of my readers will say, That is not our question. It is this: Have not all men a free will to choose or refuse salvation by Jesus Christ? and does not their salvation depend on their willing to choose Christ? Well, that seems clearly put; in other words, what is man's real condition in his natural unconverted state? There is one other question we had better look at before that.

Is there anything on God's part to hinder man's free choice of salvation? The word of God is quite plain and clear as to that: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." (Acts ii. 21.) "Whosoever believeth on him

shall not be ashamed." (Rom. x. 11.) "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Ver. 13.) See also 2 Corinthians v. 19-21. What then is the WILL of God in this matter? "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." (John vi. 40.) "Who *will* have all men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth," "Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. ii. 4-6.) "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life *freely*." (Rev. xxi. 6.) "AND LET HIM THAT IS ATHIRST COME; AND WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY."

These and many other scriptures prove that there is nothing on God's part, to hinder or prevent all men coming to Christ if they will. Let us not seek to explain away a single text. Surely there is no need to do so, if we only desire to know the truth.

Let us now return to our question, Has man in his fallen state a free will, or free choice of Christ and His work for salvation? We see there is no hindrance in God. He says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." But has man a will to take it? That is the question. The doctrine of Christ is, that man is so bad that he needs to be born again, with

wholly a new nature from above. And without this new birth, he cannot even see the kingdom of God. (John iii.) This involves the setting aside of the old man, or the fallen nature, and the bringing in of a new man, or new nature.

The thought and teaching of men is the very opposite of this—that man is not so bad, not so utterly lost in sin. He only needs improving and restoring, and the beginning of that restoration he calls regeneration, however it may be effected. If we look at the figure, the birth of a child, we see the folly of this theology at once. Is the babe the improvement or even the change of an old person? Nay, is not that babe wholly new, a new person, the beginning of a new man? And further, neither the conception nor the birth is by the will or choice of the babe. And nowhere is the new birth viewed as by the act or choice of the one born again, or born anew.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power [the right] 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.” (John i. 12, 13.) No words could be plainer than these, could they? The first communication of life and a new nature is not of man, but of God. So that He who is the truth, says, “And ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” (John v. 40.) On God’s part Christ

was freely presented to men ; on their part, they would not have Him, they would rather spit in His holy face, and prefer a murderer. And mark, this was the last trial as to free will in religious humanity. It is the same to this day. Fallen humanity is not changed a bit.

But believing the words of Jesus as we do, we must go a little deeper still. Not only "Ye will not," but "No man *can* come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 44.) This is the true condition of fallen, utterly lost man. If our salvation depends on ourselves, on our free choice in coming, then clearly we are not lost.

Shipwrecked sailors wrecked on the rocks are surely not lost if their safety depends on their own free choice to come to shore. You need not dive to the bottom after a drowning man surely, though he has gone down the third time, if his safety depends on his own free will to come out; he is not lost yet.

What then did comfort the heart of Christ in view of this awful condition of man? Hear his words: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.) This was the great sustaining fact that kept Him in perfect peace on the very night of His betrayal. Read John xvii. Had He counted on man's free

will, or free choice, what an eternal disappointment—for all refused. Yet in the midst of His utmost rejection, “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.” (Matt. xi. 25.)

All depends on our seeing the true condition of fallen man—whether there be any good free will, free will in a good sense, whether there be sufficient good in him to choose the good; or have we seen the end of man? Whether we see it or not, God sees it, just as He saw it of old: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” And God said, “The end of all flesh is come before me?” (Gen. vi. 5–12.) And when Noah stepped out of the ark into this present world, after the flood, we see a beautiful figure how God will deal with man through the sacrifice of Christ, in the type of Noah’s sacrifice; but as for fallen man, “The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” (Gen. viii. 21.)

If we pass through the history of fallen man, even on to the Epistle to the Romans, we see man proved by every trial to be only utterly lost, utterly guilty, all under sin. Yes, an utter slave in sin, and needing a redemption wholly of



God's providing. So that the words of God must surely be true. How can they be false?—words He spake long ago to Moses: "I will have mercy on whom I WILL have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I WILL have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Rom. ix. 15, 16.) This is the real truth of the case.

You may say, But is it not also true, that when a sinner is converted to God, he does will? Yes, he does then will and desire to be saved, and to serve God. If it is not his own free choice as a lost sinner, how is it? This is the scriptural answer: "For it is God which worketh in you both *to will* and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 13.) This, you notice, is the very explanation how those that are saved and sanctified in Christ are to work out their own salvation. It is God that works in them to will. He gives them a new will, and works in them by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Compare Romans viii. 2.

As I write by request for the help of evangelists, local preachers, &c., who often meet with much contention on the subject, we will notice some further scripture illustrations, difficulties, and consequences of this truth, both as to God's readiness to receive the sinner who comes, and man's inability to will to come.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

1. S. B., Caermarthen.—Punishment eternal is clearly the truth revealed to us in scripture. Awful as it is, the wrath of God ABIDETH on the unbeliever. (Matt. xxv. 46; John iii. 36.) If a teacher denies this, then he believes nothing, because God says it is so. He neither really believes the atonement, as scripture speaks of it, nor anything else. He may find when too late that the punishment in the lake of fire is not for a time, or temporal, but eternal. Scripture teaches that from this there is no escape. Give up the plain teaching of scripture, and all is darkness. There is indeed nothing vague as to the atonement. It was Christ, the holy One, forsaken of God, suffering the wrath of God due to us. Nothing can be plainer than Isaiah liii. and abounding texts in the New Testament. God's righteousness is revealed in it. And there is no other ground by which God can be righteous in justifying the ungodly.

On no account should the Christian have fellowship with the infidel who denies the statements of the word of God as to eternal punishment. "What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (2 Cor. vi. 15.)

We have arrived at the days when the little leaven is fast leavening the whole lump. And we have no safe directions but the word of God. "The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) Read also verses 20–22. It is no doubt a painful path of trial to walk according to the word of God, but it is the only safe one.

In the beginning it was, "Purge out therefore the old leaven." (1 Cor. v. 7.) In the end, *now*, it is, "If a man therefore purge himself from these," &c. (2 Tim. ii. 21.) Thank God, there will be a small remnant, "that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." The path may be very narrow: but let us take courage, we only read of one, Enoch, who walked with God; but "he had this testimony, that he pleased God." As it was then, so it is now: the world is ripening fast for judgment, but a few more days, and then, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth? In that day we shall not regret having walked in a path of separation from all evil, however lonely. And we can only say, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe."

2. J. W., Liverpool.—Isaiah liii. 12 presents Christ as the mighty conqueror dividing the spoil, and that beyond death. We know Him as such, gone up on high, even now. (See Eph. iv. 8-13; compare Ps. lxviii. 17, 18, see margin, "in the man.") This chapter (Isa. liii.) is Israel's repentance after they are fully restored, as Ezekiel xxxvi. 22-31. Israel, or the remnant of them, after they have seen Him with wounded hands, will thus repent. (Zech. xiii. 6.) It will then be revealed to them, that He, their Messiah, has made the atonement for them. They had despised Him, but He had entered in full, deep sympathy into all their sufferings—carried their sorrows. (Ver. 4.) But far more, He had borne their iniquities. (Ver. 5 to end.) And that despised Jesus, having passed through death for them, is the mighty Conqueror, dividing the spoil. This is a figure understood by observing the customs of the East.

## FREE WILL.

### II.

It may be asked, How then is this new will, or new nature, imparted ? It is the direct operation of the Spirit of God. How ? "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." The word also is the seed imparted by the Spirit in the new birth. Water is a figure of the word. But do not think for a moment that this means a change of the flesh, or an improvement of our old nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," remains the same flesh ; "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Now would it not be absurd to say that the new nature was begotten by the free will of our old evil nature ? But what saith the scripture : "Of HIS OWN WILL begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." (James i. 18.) Do you see the difference ? Then again, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter i. 3.) "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but

of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (Ver. 23.)

But it is time we looked at a few illustrations as to man's will. Take the great supper in Luke xiv. 16-24. God the giver, the provider of the supper, sends out the invitation to many. "Come; for all things are now ready." On God's part no hindrance—salvation as free as the air we breathe. But what of man's free will—did one accept the invitation? Not one. "And they all with one consent began to make excuse." Not one of those that were bidden came. Grace, free grace, had to go out and fetch the guests, compel them to come in.

Again as to free will, take the great picture of man's condition: Israel, slaves in Egypt. Is a slave a free man to do his own will? Nay, he needs redemption. He cannot redeem himself, this must be the work of another. God came down to redeem Israel. God in the Son has come down to redeem the sinner. If the figure was the work of God, surely the reality is so also. If a man is free, he is not a slave—his state is not so bad as that—then it is also true, must be true, if he is a slave, he is not free. If man is free, he does not need redemption. Free will and the need of redemption cannot go together. A man is taken prisoner, and with a great chain round his leg, he is put in a dark dungeon. Would you talk to him through a hole in the iron door, and

tell him he has a free will, and he may come out if he likes? And is not our state by nature far worse than that? We were not only in the dark dungeon with sin as a chain to the leg, but *we liked it*, the darkness and the chain of sin, rather than the light.

If a man knows his real condition as Satan's captive, and knows that he is so vile, that he prefers the horrid slavery of Satan, to the holy liberty of Christ, he will know that he is as far from free will as light is from darkness. How can he be free and a captive to sin at the same time? He cannot be a slave, or a captive, and free at the same time. His very nature is sinful and prefers darkness to light, sin to holiness. Free, ah, he will prefer anything to Christ. No man can ever talk of free will if he knows and believes in the total ruin of man through sin.

And there is still a deeper thing yet. A slave really desiring to be free, hating slavery, and not delivered from it, is a slave still. Who is this? This is a quickened soul, like Israel when they believed God and longed to escape, but were slaves still. This is the very case described in Romans vii. Here we have a quickened soul, a new will, an earnest desire to do the will of God—one who can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Yet I am a slave, and how to perform that which is good "I find not." Could you say that one, even born of God and

under law, with the experience described from verses 8 to 23, can do that which he chooses? The law provokes sin in the flesh, and the more he struggles, the more he discovers that he is without power to do what he longs to do, and he is a slave to what he hates. Have you known deliverance from that state? If not, you may be in that very state, and not know it. Years you may have gone on in this state, under law, a complete helpless slave, and not have understood it. Can you say, WHEN I was in the flesh, under law, trying to improve it, I found there was not a bit of good in me, that is in my flesh. You never can say this until you are delivered out of it. Is it not then folly to talk about free will while you are a slave? Now when your eyes are opened by the Spirit, you see how the "I" has been judged on the cross and set aside. It is no longer "I" but Christ. Then you can say, "I THANK GOD, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."

Mark, you will not say, I thank my free will, I have chosen to be free. No, that will not do. It is all of God, I thank God. Not of him that willeth, but of God that sheweth mercy, but all is through Jesus Christ.

Just one further scripture illustration of man's condition as to free will. If you will read carefully with prayer Ephesians i. forty times, you will be surprised how all is of God; and in

chapter ii. a still deeper description of our real condition, as God sees us. We may make mistakes, but He never can do so. There both Jews and Gentiles are viewed as *dead* in trespasses and sins, by nature children of wrath.

Now where is free will? As to all good, man is *dead*. Have you seen a corpse laid in the coffin, screwed down, laid eight feet deep in the ground? Has that dead body a free will and power to break the coffin-lid and rise out of the grave? If it has, it is very far from being dead. Talk not then of free will.

How then is man to be raised, either from the literal grave at the resurrection, or now, from the grave of sin and death? GOD—it must be God. It is not the free will of man, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ: by grace ye are saved.” Read Ephesians ii. 1–10. Thus man, with his boasted free will, disappears, and God is all, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### OBJECTIONS.

“If all that is true: if man has no free will, and no power to do what is right even if he desires to do so, then there is no such a thing as responsibility.”

Let us try two cases. A man has stolen a sheep, and he has no free will, no desire even to



restore it ; his will is to keep it, and eat it ; or he has killed it and eaten one half, and means to eat and enjoy the other half. A policeman raps at the door. The man is eating a leg of the mutton, and half the sheep is in the cellar. The representative of the law is about to apprehend the man. " Oh, dear, no," says the man, " I admit I stole the sheep, and do you not see I have killed it, and eaten one half, and I have no *will* to give up what is left even ; indeed plainly I have no desire to do so." Can you tell me of a policeman who would say, " Oh, I see, then as you have no will and no desire to restore the sheep, of course there is no responsibility ?"

Take another case. A man borrows a hundred pounds from the Bank at five per cent. But instead of paying the interest he spends the hundred pounds in bad ways. What bank is that where the directors would say : " You have spent the hundred pounds in drink and evil ways, have you ? Very well, the principle of this bank is, that where the money is spent, and there is neither free will nor power to pay what is spent, that man has no responsibility to pay his debts ?" Could there then be greater folly than to say, because man, the sinner before God, has spent all in sin, and has neither free will nor power to make good what he has done, that therefore there is no responsibility ?

Another objection. A local preacher says :

"If I thought that man had not a free will and power to accept, I never could preach again. I could not say, 'Whosoever WILL, let him come.' What's the use of doing so?"

As this is a very common objection let us look at it carefully. We have seen that the Lord and His apostles held distinctly, that it was *not of him that willeth* but of God that sheweth mercy, that they that are born again are born of water and of the Spirit; not of man's will in the least. And they were not discouraged. They did not say, if it is not of man's free will but of God, we can never preach again. Now, dear local preacher, if you say so, you miss good company. But you ask, "What is the use of preaching?" Well, just read through the Acts of the Apostles and you will see the truth of that word, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. i. 21.) And again, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" &c. (Rom. x. 14.) "For by grace [the free favour of God] are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Eph. ii. 8.) God gives you the high privilege of proclaiming free forgiveness of sins, and justification from all things, through Jesus. And He gives faith by the Spirit using the water, that is the word, He gives by you. It is by the word of Him who said, "Let there

be light," that light and life is given—this new creation power. What a privilege to be an instrument in His hands.

### CONSEQUENCES.

Ah, this would take a volume to tell. If salvation has its spring and beginning in man's free will, then (as we know is held by such as believe this) salvation all the journey through will depend, not on God, but on man's continued free will. All safety ever depends on himself, not on God : and if so now, why not in eternity ? Such a one can never on such ground have true peace here or hereafter. This is a most distressing aspect of free will, and brings many a poor soul to despair. But if the new will and power, and new birth and salvation, be of God from eternity to eternity, then my soul rests on the Rock of ages. He changes not.

And yet remember that on God's part His salvation is as free as the air. Only open the window and the air comes in. The question is, who opens the window ? Man will not ; but God hath mercy on whom He will have mercy.

As this paper is very condensed, perhaps you will read it again, and especially the scriptures. The Lord use it for help to those for whom I was requested to write it ; and I believe the request was of the Lord.

C. S.

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QUESTIONS OF INTEREST,  
RELATING TO THE COMING OF CHRIST, AND  
HIS REIGN ON EARTH.

II.

WILL He be on this earth during the 1000 years? Will the church be with Him on earth? We have already seen there is no evidence in the Old Testament that the church will be on this earth during the millennium. And further, that though Christ will come to this earth in Person, and be King over the earth, yet we need further light before we can fully answer the question, "Will He be on this earth during the 1000 years?" We will now turn to the New Testament.

We find that though there may be fuller revelations of the glory of Christ, yet all is in perfect harmony from Genesis to Revelation, quite as much so, though written during so many centuries, and by so many men, as if God had spoken by one writer only. The angel said to Mary, "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall

be no end." (Luke i. 31-33.) Thus to simple faith His future reign over Jacob is as certain as His past incarnation. Exactly as foretold by Isaiah, the very JESUS, who was born of the Virgin Mary, shall sit on the throne of David, and every promise in the Old Testament shall be fulfilled. "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." (See Matt. xxiv. 30; Luke xxi. 27.)

They shall not see a spirit, nor will it be a spiritual coming; but the very same Jesus will come who died on the cross, and rose again. "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? THIS SAME JESUS, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts i. 9-11.) He will then surely come to this earth in Person—that same Jesus. This is clear and certain. It is also as clear that He will come at the commencement of the millennium. Christ having suffered all things foretold by the prophets, Peter calls on Israel to repent. He says, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when [or and] the times of refreshing shall come

from the presence of the Lord ; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you : whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii. 19-21.) Yes, God hath spoken, it must come to pass. Do we read the prophets as God speaking to us ? Yes, Jesus is received up to heaven, and He will remain there until the millennium, or times of refreshing, as here described.

But nowhere have we yet found such a thought as that He will be merely an earthly potentate, dwelling on this earth. His glorious reign on earth is only a part of His dominion and glory.

Now, as Paul found it impossible to utter the things that he heard, "when he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful [or possible] for a man to utter" (2 Cor. xii. 4), so we believe there are future glories of Christ, which do not yet appear to us, and therefore of which we cannot write or speak—even glories of Jesus, as Man, which He will share with the church. As we further read, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us . . . . Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.)

Whilst this is so, yet we may enter a little into the distinct heavenly blessing and glory of the church, very peculiar and quite distinct from, or even in contrast with, the earthly glory of Israel on earth. Let us now turn to further unfoldings of the purposes of God, "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

In the first eight verses of Ephesians i. we have the complete salvation of each saint predestined for the *heavenly* glory. If you are a believer, beloved reader, here is your complete salvation. But what a contrast to every blessing promised to Israel. God our Father takes the place of their Jehovah. They will indeed be blest in earthly places. We now worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. All is of God, He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. What a salvation! And more than this, having predestined us unto the adoption of CHILDREN by Jesus Christ to Himself. To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, or brought us into the same favour in the Beloved. And Christ has accomplished this eternal purpose of our God and Father, "in whom we have redemption through his

blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

What a salvation of God our Father, by and in Jesus Christ our Lord. It would be very sweet to our souls to go over each part of this salvation, and thus give "thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.)

You will notice in Ephesians i. 9 to the end, the heavenly inheritance is opened up to us, so far as we can bear it now. Our Father makes known to us the mystery of His will—what He hath purposed in Himself. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Mark, we are not here spoken of as His inheritance, but "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance," &c. (Ver. 11.) And further, the purpose of God is to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him. At present believers are sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory. The purchase is paid, but the redemption of the inheritance has not yet taken place. Now what is that inheritance but all things in heaven and earth? Alas, not those in hell, or in the lake of



fire. They have rejected the riches of His grace until it is for ever too late. The apostle says, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." And what is that revelation? God has raised Jesus far above all the heavens, "and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." We see not yet all things put under Him (Heb. ii. 8, 9), but we see him crowned with glory, having tasted death for all things. We further see when all things shall be put under him. (1 Cor. xv. 24-28.)

Oh how vast the inheritance. He who created all things in the heavens and the earth shall reign over all. (Col. i. 16, 18.) View those vast heavens, all the works of His hands. Is it not impossible to describe that which is infinite? Oh the glory of that grace that has made us co-heirs with the Son. Faith knows no difficulties, with God all things are possible: distance inconceivable disappears. Jacob at the foot of the ladder can see Jehovah at the top. Jesus above all heavens is seen by the dying martyr

Stephen. In a moment he appears in glory to the persecutor, Saul. Absent from the body, the spirit of every believer who departs is present with the Lord. This is all beyond a mortal's ken, but clearly revealed in the wondrous word of God.

Soon that morn will break, far too bright for mortal eyes. This earth is indeed a part, a wondrous part, of His inheritance. Here sin has run its course. Here the greatest event, the very central act of eternity, has been accomplished, the atoning death of the cross for my sins; and here shall the Saviour shine in His glory. But you will see this earth will be far short of being the centre and the circumference of His glorious inheritance, and the glory given to Him as man, is given to us. Oh, the riches of His glory.

If we look at the heavenly millennial glory of the church, the bride, we see the same wondrous connection between the heavenly and the earthly during the millennium. (Rev. xxi.) But the church is heavenly, "descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light [or shining] like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." And yet the administration is evidently connected with Israel and the earth. (Ver. 12.)

From all these scriptures we may learn that the reign of Christ and His bride will be over

the heavens and the earth ; so that the parable of ruling over ten cities, or five, &c., is just to shew this, that the *reward* will be in proportion to the diligence in serving Him. This must not be confounded with our salvation, perfect and eternal, of God, in Christ Jesus.

Oh the riches of the glory of God !

C. S.

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## GOD'S GLAD TIDINGS.

### IV.

#### EVERY MOUTH STOPPED.

THE apostle has declared that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness." And now he proceeds to shew that the Gentiles, to whom were manifest the "eternal power and deity" of God through the things that were made, were "ungodly ;" and that the Jews, to whom "were committed the oracles of God," were unrighteous. Both had sinned against the light they had ; the Gentiles *without* law ; and the Jews *under* law. Both Jews and Gentiles were guilty. *Every* mouth was stopped ; the *whole* world was guilty before God. Such is the solemn truth contained in the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans.

The Gentiles were *without* law, but they had the knowledge of God as Creator, and they sinned against that, and were "without excuse, because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." Such was the downward course of the Gentiles in their departure from God, when they knew Him as Creator. "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever." Sad result of departure from God! Not only most fearful guilt, but most terrible corruption, and most deplorable degradation! And if any one will read through the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he will see more in detail the Gentile character and condition delineated in the most fearful colours. And yet this is just what is true of *man* as an apostate from God. There might have been philosophers among them, teachers and reformers and philanthropists,

perhaps less degraded outwardly, but they too were inexcusable, for, while they judged others, they did the same thing. There was not one to help another. All were overwhelmed in one common ruin.

Was the Jew better? In no way. The Jews had the law, and through breaking the law dishonoured God. They had the oracles of God, and obeyed them not, and through them, while they professed to be teachers, the Name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles. Thus Jews and Gentiles were alike under sin. The Jew had no room to boast, for the very law in which he boasted condemned him as a law-breaker: "As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one: there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes." Such was the testimony of the law. To whom did the law thus speak? It spoke to those who were under it, the Jews: "We know, that what things

soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law." Thus every mouth is stopped. The Jew cannot boast more than the Gentiles. If the Gentile was lawless and ungodly, the Jew was a law-breaker and unrighteous. The *whole* world was brought in guilty before God, and the solemn conclusion reached, that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."

Reader, do *you* think to be justified by the deeds of the law? Then let me say to you, that you *deny that you are now a sinner*, and thus nullify the word of God, and make Him a liar, for He says, "*All have sinned.*" (Rom. iii.) "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John i. 10.) Besides, you think to accomplish a task that not one of Adam's race has ever performed, or can perform. The word of God distinctly teaches that righteousness *cannot* be had by the law. "There is *none* righteous, no, not one." "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; 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." (Gal. iii. 10.) "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Gal. ii. 21.) Let him who thinks to be justified by the law ponder these solemn declarations of God's word. Instead of

getting righteousness by the law, he who is under it only gets the knowledge of sin by it, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." The law is a righteous plummet by which man's moral condition is measured, and which proves the presence of sin in him, and declares him a sinner.

When the law is applied to man, and its spirituality is known, the exceeding sinfulness of sin is discovered. It causes the offence to abound. It does not create sin, but it provokes it; because it forbids the will of the flesh—forbids the working of sin. So it was with Israel. They thought to do whatever the Lord said. Did they keep the law? The first of the ten words the Lord uttered was, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." How did they keep this commandment? They made a golden calf, offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, danced around it, and sang its praises, saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." And such it was to the end, for the bright days of Solomon's reign were scarcely passed, till they were sunk with the nations around them in the grossest idolatry. So it is always, whether with the individual, the nation, or the race. The law knows the presence of sin, but can never remove it, or give righteousness. Man is a sinner, and only a sinner before God. From the crown of

the head to the sole of the foot there is no soundness, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; and for this condition there is no help in the law. The law only shews more fully that the evil is there, and, instead of removing, provokes it by forbidding its workings.

Reader, do you still expect to get righteousness by the law? Then you expect something contrary to the word of God. If God's word be true, righteousness does not come in that way. The law will give you the knowledge of sin, but that will not heal your malady. If a man is dying of consumption, knowing it will not cure him. It was never God's mind that the sinner should be healed by the law. It was His mind by it to let man know that he is a sinner; and he who has not discovered this has read the word of God to little purpose. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." "The law entered that the offence might abound:" "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions till the Seed should come." It was not given to *hinder* transgressions, for there were none\* before it was

\* Adam transgressed God's command in the garden; and sin was in the world until the law; and death reigned over men; but they did not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression. There was no law for them to transgress until it was given by Moses.



given; for where no law is there is no transgression (Rom. iv. 15): but it was given *for the sake* of transgressions, that is, to prove that man who was lawless without law, is a transgressor under law. Thus law brought out sin in the character of transgression, and proved man a lost sinner without righteousness and without strength.

The whole scenery of Mount Sinai, too, falls in with this truth. God kept Himself there shut up in the enclosure of His own holiness. The law was given by the disposition of angels. It was not God *coming down* to meet man's need, but *sending* him a law demanding righteousness, while He Himself remained at a distance and unrevealed. But man had no righteousness, and so the law was only condemnation and death to him. God shut Himself up in the midst of the fire, and man was held at a distance. There was no approach to God at Sinai. Barriers were placed around the mountain, and not even a beast was to touch it. Man or beast touching it was to be stoned, or thrust through with a dart. The mountain, too, was all in a flame, it burned with fire, "because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly."

Sinner, let me lead you into the presence of

this scene. Gaze upon that burning mount, and tell me, Do you think you can meet God on that ground? Can you pass these barriers? Can you ascend through the "blackness and darkness and tempest?" Can you, a sinner, meet the "great and mighty and terrible God" in that pavilion of fire that covers the mountain, while He utters a "fiery law," demanding absolute obedience on pain of death? Ah! no. Your mouth is closed. God is walled around with fire, and you are shut out from His presence. There is no approach on that ground. It could only be death. Who can speak in the presence of such a scene? Not man, surely. His mouth is closed—every mouth. Man is shut up to condemnation and death, and has nothing to answer, his lips are sealed because he is guilty.

But, oh! sinner, before closing this little word, let me tell you this: if God as a Lawgiver has closed *your* mouth, He has opened *His* mouth now in grace from a blood-sprinkled throne in heaven, and utters these wondrous words: "Be it known unto *you* . . . . that through this Man [Christ Jesus] 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." "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." And how different the

two! When God gave the law, He kept Himself in the distance, and gave it by angels in the hand of a mediator (Moses); but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. It was the Son declaring the Father—the One who dwells in the bosom of the Father, laying bare the Father's heart, and telling out all its fulness. God has come near in Christ. He has come to man in all his need, has met that need, and has taken up man in Christ, opened heaven for Him, and received Him in. In Christ man has now a place in the Father's bosom, dwelling in love; for God is love. Wondrous thought! Oh, sinner, let this take hold of your heart. Would you dwell in love? Believe in the Son of God, and that becomes your dwelling place, too. Would you have a place in the Father's heart? His heart is going out after you. It is not Sinai's thunders; it is grace proclaimed from the throne of God—forgiveness and salvation through the blood of Jesus. Look up at that throne of grace. See! the blood is there! the blood that has glorified God, and that "cleanseth from all sin." That blood has met your need as guilty, and through faith in it you are washed, and made whiter than snow.

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## EXTRACTS FROM THE EAST.

BEYROUT, SYRIA,

*December, 2nd, 1889.*

I AM still improving slowly, I am now up all day, and can go out for an hour or two; but that does not signify a very great amount of strength. I wrote you a fortnight ago that my journey northwards is impossible at present; but I am sure that all my exercises about it have been of the Lord. If nothing occur to prevent, the young brother I have spoken about, will set off on his journey next week. He was here last week, and went up to the mountains to bid his mother good-bye, so may be down to-day.

I have had late word from there and from Mousul also. And it is good and cheering from both places. My correspondent in Mousul is a nice stedfast man, who has corresponded with me for five years, and has got all his light and comfort through reading. I will give you some extracts from his last letter, because I am sure they will comfort you. He writes the 2nd of last month. He says, "After presenting my desires towards you, and my christian love, beloved brother, I thank God, the Father of mercies who has made us meet, along with all saints for fellowship in the glorious inheritance reserved for us. Lately, while reading Philip-pians I derived an unusual spiritual benefit. Especially while I was reading iii. 20, 21, the Holy Spirit enabled me to grasp the glorious form in which the children of God shall be; even the form of our glorious Head, the Lord

Jesus, who is soon to return for us ; when we shall be with Him and like Him, therefore we have no citizenship here ; for our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we expect a perfect Saviour, &c. Again while studying chapter iv, 1-4 I got something as it were new to me, as to the only foundation of the believer's joy, and it is *Jesus Christ in glory* ; while all our names are written in the book of life, from which nothing can ever blot them out, for they have been written there by virtue of Christ's blood, and by the love of God our Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. O, beloved brother, are we not deficient in joy in the Lord, and should we not confess this deficiency to Him ?”

“I also informed you that a little while ago there was with me a young man, a christian brother of the Chaldean Church, who knows the Arabic language, and I gave him the diagram tract on the ‘Coming of the Lord, and rapture of the Church,’ &c.; and he became greatly awakened as to the coming of the Lord in glory and His millennial kingdom. He began to ask his priests about this important subject ; but they could give him no answer, except, that this was an heretical opinion. But he pressed them with the plain testimonies of holy scripture, and they failed to convince him to the contrary ; and he declared that he would live and die in the hope of the return of Jesus Christ to take us to glory.”

I give you these simple extracts, dear brother, for I am sure they will refresh you. Mousul, you know, is near the site of ancient Nineveh. You can see *how* the Lord Himself is working to give His truth to souls. My heart is quite

in the work in that vast region, where there are thousands of Christians, many of whom, I doubt not, are dear to Christ, the great Shepherd, risen and glorified, but leading on His own after Him in the path of resurrection.

I have good word from Upper Egypt also. It seems that I am to be kept here for the present at routine work. I never leave Beyrout to find work, but am often glad to get away for a change of work. The burdens here are heavy and continuous; it is this that weighs me down physically here. S. was with us a few days last week. He has now gone back to Palestine, and will soon be on his way to Egypt. He is uneasy about my health, and thinks I ought to take some change. But I am in the Lord's hands who has put me here; and what with my regular printing work, and sending off books, and keeping up links by constant correspondence in Arabic with many different places, I see no way for a change to the West; and I have not been exercised about it. I am happier in my soul in the East than I ever was in the West, because here I feel that I am in my place. I am sure we have a good Master, who knows all our wants and trials, and will not overburden us. *Weak* we must be, and contented to be so, for He needs our weakness not our strength, He joins not His strength to ours, but perfects it in our weakness. Blessed be His name.

(Signed), B. F. PINKERTON.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

3. S. T., London. The Hebrew words translated "sons of God" (Gen. vi. 2, 4) are never used in the Old Testament to mean the sons of Adam. And from Job i. 6, ii. 1, xxxviii. 7 we learn that these words cannot mean sons of men, or of Adam, but evidently angelic beings. It further seems evident that Peter refers to the same thing (in Gen. vi.) 2 Peter ii. 4, 5. Mark this is in connection with the flood. Then Jude 6 speaks also of these fallen angels. The subject is peculiarly awful, and God has thrown a veil of obscurity over it, as much as to say it is not for our profit to dwell on it.

The word "wives" is said by some to be incorrect in Genesis vi. They took all they chose of the daughters of Adam.

Surely all this is very dreadful, and sufficient is named in holy scripture to account for the Titans, &c. of ancient mythology. All mythology may be Satanic perversion of facts before the flood. He who has thrown a veil over all this fearful wickedness has also forewarned us that "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man."

Already there are, it is said, over twenty millions of Spiritualists, or persons getting more and more under the direct influence of demons or fallen angels. What will it be for those who are left behind when they that are Christ's are taken away at His coming?



## THE POWER OF FAITH AND PRAYER IN CONNECTION WITH THE DIFFICULTIES OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

MARK XI. 22-26.

THE Lord cursed the fruitless fig-tree, and the next morning as they passed by they found it "withered," "dried up from the roots." Peter calls the Lord's attention to it, evidently wondering at what had been done; and the Lord seizes the opportunity to give instruction to Peter—instruction, I believe, of very great importance to us all, in connection with difficulties too great for human power to grapple with.

I desire to notice the principle that underlies the passage, applicable at all times, not the special application of the passage to Israel.

There are three things: Faith, the prayer of faith, and the spirit of grace in forgiving.

"Have faith in God." More literally, it is "Have faith of God." It is the *faith* that is emphasised rather than its object. It is faith that takes its character from the divine Object in which it rests, God Himself. It is *divine* faith. That is the kind of faith for great difficulties. In other words, it is faith that has



its rest in God, and that brings Him into the difficulty.

Suppose you have a difficulty as great as the highest mountain, have you confidence in God? Can you bring *Him* into the difficulty? Well, He is greater than the difficulty—greater than the greatest mountain. What is a mountain to Him “who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?” “Have faith in God. For verily, I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.” It is a simple question of confidence in God.

I need hardly say, however, that this involves the knowledge of God, and communion with Him. If we are living practically at a distance from Him, this confidence is impossible. We cannot know what would be suitable to Him, and according to His ways, unless we have a heart-acquaintance with Him. “He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.” It is not said that Israel knew His ways. They knew His *acts*, but Moses knew His ways. This is much more than to know His

acts. His acts may be seen afar off, but His ways are learned in the secret of His presence. Moses was one with whom Jehovah spake face to face ; and in the intimacy of communion with Him he learned His ways.

When Israel sinned in the matter of the golden calf, Moses knew how to act in a way suited to Jehovah. He maintained His truth both in judgment and in grace. He burnt the calf in the fire, ground it to powder, strewed it on the water, and made the children of Israel drink it. He also stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Who is on the Lord's side ? let him come unto me." And then he commanded the sons of Levi, who had gathered to him, to gird on their swords, and to go in and out from gate to gate, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. All this was judgment.

But there was a question of Jehovah's glory also, of the accomplishment of His purposes, and the fulfilment of His promises to the fathers in blessing the people, and bringing them into the land. And now Moses goes up to the Lord, and falls on his face forty days and forty nights in intercession for Israel. This was the energy of faith that counted on the goodness of God in that dreadful hour. How could he have persevered those forty days and forty nights, if he had not known Jehovah ? It was the knowledge of

Jehovah he had acquired that gave him confidence, and this knowledge was the secret spring of his whole action.

The difficulty was like a great mountain. Israel had been put under the law as a covenant of works; they had broken the law, and a breach of that law was death. On the other hand, Jehovah had sworn to the fathers that He would give them the land, and bless the seed of Abraham. The people have sinned, and are the subjects of deserved judgment; but if Jehovah consumes them, as He had threatened to do, what will become of His word, His oath, His name? Moses has the knowledge of God and is full of faith—faith that has had its growth in the secret of Jehovah's presence; and he falls on his face and pleads the word and name of Jehovah. He brings Jehovah into the difficulty. Will the difficulty prove too great for Him? or will He deny Himself? He cannot bless the people because of what they are; but He falls back on His own resources—His own absolute and sovereign grace—as a ground of action. He shews grace to whom He will—mercy to whom He will—and pardons His guilty people. Christ is the true solution of this difficulty in respect of guilty man—Christ in whose Person on the cross grace and judgment were both maintained. But what we see here is the faith of Moses acting in view of Israel's fallen state, and the character of

Jehovah's great name. His intercession prevails, and the mountain is removed, and is cast into the sea.

Now, if we would have this "faith of God" which renders us superior to all difficulties, we must also have this heart-acquaintance with Him by which we learn His thoughts and ways. There must be an habitual seeking of His face, so that our thoughts and desires may be formed in His presence. And is not this worth while? The right state of the soul depends on it. God's presence is the atmosphere in which faith is formed, and has its growth. It is when we are near Him that confidence is developed in the heart. He searches the heart, and if the heart is uncovered before Him, and everything judged that is unsuited to Him, confidence is established. If, however, there is guile in the heart, we are not at ease; we cannot hide our real state from Him; our heart condemns us; and "if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the

petitions that we desired of him." (1 John iii. 20-22 ; v. 14, 15.)

We have to do with the Searcher of hearts, and our hearts must be in His presence without guile. There must be submission too, and keeping His commandments ; and where there is submission to His will, the desires being formed in His presence, we ask according to His will, and have the confidence that He will give what we ask. When this is our state, our wills do not run counter to His will. We desire what He wills. He forms our hearts, and awakens desires within us ; and He answers the desires which He Himself has awakened. We not only ask what *He* wills, but we ask what *we* will, and He answers, because our wills are His will, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what *ye* will, and it shall be done unto you." (John xv. 7.) Where there is this dependence—this abiding in Christ—and His words abiding in us, and forming our desires, we have communion with Him. We ask according to His will, but it is our will too, because His words have wrought desires in us, and He cannot refuse the requests He Himself has moved us to make.

This, then, is the great thing : to be in His presence without guile, and to have the heart open to Him, that He may fill us with His own thoughts and desires. This produces confidence and assurance. "Therefore I say unto you,

What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." There is no limit set to the power of believing prayer. Only, as we have seen, this faith will be in exercise only when we are in a state which is according to God. The next verse shews there must be the grace in the heart that forgives, in order to have such confidence in God: "And when ye stand praying, *forgive*, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

Here, of course, it is no question of eternal forgiveness of sins, or of being justified before God as guilty sinners. It is His governmental ways with those who are in relationship with Himself. Nor is it a question of going to one who has wronged us, and *telling* him, we forgive. In such a case the word would be, "if he repent, forgive him." (Luke xvii.) In the passage before us it is the state of the heart in the presence of God. If I am in His presence whose grace took me up when I was a guilty rebel, and has gone on with me ever since, keeping me day by day, or restoring me when I have fallen, how can I hold something in my heart against my brother? A brother says, "I cannot feel just right toward brother A." What is at the bottom of such a

remark? It is *self*. The feelings have been wounded in some way, and there is *bitterness*. Something is held in the heart against the brother. The heart is not formed by grace. Himself forgiven ten thousand talents, he holds the smallest thing against his brother. This is not the way of grace; nor is it the way God has acted toward us in Christ.

You have hard feelings toward some brother on account of some real, or supposed injury. This is no uncommon thing among the saints. Now, speaking with all reverence, can you conceive of *God* having "hard feelings" toward one of His children, or bitterness in His heart because of something that child has done? Instinctively you shrink back from the very thought, as utterly abhorrent to your soul, and as falsifying completely the revelations of God you have received in Christ. It is not that God makes light of evil in His children; but what we call "hard feelings," or bitterness one toward another, is impossible to Him.

Now we must rise up to God's thoughts; we need to get above ourselves and our feelings, judging in ourselves the spring of all bitter thoughts, of all hard feelings, in order to have confidence in His presence. Without this we have no power, and our prayers will be unanswered, and we ourselves will remain the subjects of God's governmental dealings. "If ye do

not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

How often have wars and conflicts arisen among the saints, which had their origin in some little root of bitterness, some lack of grace, or some nursing of feelings toward one or another! And how often the saints are apparently powerless in the presence of these things! Is there, then, no remedy? Thank God, there is; but it is not in anything that *we* can do, but in the faith that brings God into the difficulty. Is there one among the saints living so in the thoughts of God, that he has God's mind in the matter, and can count on Him? God is able to solve the difficulty. But do you find yourself in His presence with an unforgiving spirit toward your brother? You must begin with yourself, then, instead of your brother, for until you do, God will not hear. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." When we have judged ourselves, so that the heart is free before Him, He forms the heart, and faith comes into activity, so that we can, with confidence, present our request, and the mountain is removed. When the grace of God gets to working in hearts, troubles and difficulties soon begin to disappear. They pass away like the morning clouds before the warm rays of the rising sun.

May the Lord give His beloved saints, amid the increasing difficulties of these last days, to know



more of His own grace, and in the presence of that grace, to lay aside all questions of personal feelings one toward another ; so that their hearts may be free in His presence, and that they may rise up to His thoughts of grace toward His own. Abiding in the sense of this grace, and acting in the spirit of grace in forgiving others in the heart before God, we have confidence before Him, and can count on that grace which never fails, bringing the God of all grace into the difficulties which beset His beloved people, and removing them out of the way, as mountains cast into the sea.

A. H. R.

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### “CLOVEN TONGUES, LIKE AS OF FIRE.”

ALL the readers of this paper may not have noticed that the Lord Jesus was anointed by the Holy Ghost and received the Holy Ghost under vastly different circumstances. On this earth He was thus recognised as the Holy One of God, but was alone : in heaven He received the Holy Ghost to shed upon us.

Let us turn to Matthew iii. for the first occasion. John the Baptist says, “I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance : but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear : he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor,

and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

On this occasion Jesus came to John to be baptised. "But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me?" Now mark the answer of Jesus, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him." Thus we see Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, enter upon His mission from heaven, fulfilling all righteousness. We must remember this. "And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

He, the Holy One of God, was the only man on earth to whom the heavens were then open. He stood alone as the One who could really fulfil all righteousness. "Lo I come to do thy will, O God." That will had *then* to be done. Oh, look at that blessed Jesus in this world of sin and foul dishonour, engaged to fulfil *all* righteousness. Yes, to enable God, His Father, in absolute righteousness, to justify guilty sinners. And as a man, to glorify God—to manifest Him in this guilty world.

But mark, in the first case, John "saw the Spirit of God descending *like a dove*, and lighting

upon him." There was no fire, or symbol of judgment. It was as angels had announced: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." He descended as emblem of peace. It was God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not in judgment now, not imputing their trespasses unto them. How pleasing was all this to God, for God is love. Harken to that voice from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But mark, He stands alone: no brethren here with Him. The voice from heaven does not proclaim, *These* are they in whom I am well pleased. Jesus alone then could hear those words. To Him alone *then* those heavens could be opened.

Yes, we see Him alone, the Holy One; and He must remain alone or die, as He says later on. He had been offered to men, to His own nation, and had been utterly rejected. He says, "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." (John xii.)

We will now pass on to another scene, not on this earth, but in heaven. Jesus has now fulfilled all righteousness. He has now glorified God His Father. He has now been delivered for our iniquities; as our substitute, He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree. The infinite claims of God's righteous wrath against sin have been fully met. God has shewn this by

His resurrection from the dead. God has raised Him from the dead for our justification. And more, as Peter declares: “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and *having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost*, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” (Acts ii. 32, 33.)

Let us now look at Jesus receiving from the Father the Holy Ghost for a special purpose.

What a change from the river Jordan to the right hand of the throne of God in heaven. The same Jesus by the right hand of God exalted, now, as man, receives the Holy Ghost—and He, the risen, glorified Jesus, *He hath shed forth this*. Everything is in contrast with the anointing of the Holy Ghost on earth. Then the work of our redemption had to be done, now it is done—done never to be repeated, wholly or in part. Such a thought would imply that He had failed to fulfil all righteousness. He has made peace by the blood of the cross, and now, in heaven as the exalted One, receives the Holy Ghost. We shall see how intimately this is connected with the righteousness of God.

At His baptism we have seen He was alone. Not so now. Then the Holy Ghost descended, and lighted, as a dove, on Him alone. Now, “When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And

suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them : and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." What a contrast to the baptism of Jesus at the Jordan ! Now all believers are baptised by the Spirit into one body. "For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles," &c. (1 Cor. xii. 13.) And Jesus received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost for this purpose. "He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." What a revelation this is. May our eyes be fastened on Him in heaven, receiving the Spirit that He might baptise all believers by the Spirit into one body : His body ; He the heavenly Head ! A heavenly company, baptised into one body.

There are, however, other deeply important matters to notice in this baptism in contrast with the first. The Spirit did not now descend as a dove. Great is the change in this respect. There was a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, or "as of a violent, impetuous blowing," and there appeared unto them (not as a dove, but) as cloven or parted tongues of fire, and it sat upon each of them. Have you ever thought of this striking contrast ? What does it mean ?

Fire is the emblem of judgment: our God is a consuming fire; and here there was a mighty rushing wind. And this appearance of parted tongues of fire sat upon each of them. How little we have understood this. If we turn to John xvi., we shall find the promise very remarkably in keeping with the fulfilment in Acts ii.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." If He had not died for us and risen again, we never could have been one with Him in heaven. The Father could never have given Him the Holy Ghost to baptise us into this one body.

"And when he is come, he will reprove [or convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." It is the very contrast of the dove resting on Him. "Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Tongues of fire are needed for this testimony of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven: needed for witnesses of Christ in a world that has definitely rejected Him as peace and good-will on earth. The world stands convicted of sin, because they believe not in Christ. It is no use trying to cover this sin, by pretending to keep the law. Do we as with tongues of fire

declare to this world its damning sin in not believing on Christ? It was this that marked the preaching at Pentecost. The Holy Ghost did not come down from heaven to split hairs of theology. "Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more." The righteousness of God was fully proved; for He had received to glory the Man that had made atonement for our sins. This same Jesus, who had fulfilled all righteousness by obedience unto death, the death of the cross, was exalted at the right hand of God. God, who had forsaken Him when made sin on the cross, now gives Him the Holy Ghost, as man, this same Jesus, and this in heaven. There is righteousness then in heaven. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Oh, Christ-rejecting, unrighteous world, that has murdered the Son of God! There is righteousness proved by the Spirit come down from heaven, for the Jesus you rejected, and still reject, is gone to the Father. Talk not of probation, all is out as to the race of Adam; Christ has been rejected by us. More guilty we could not be. Wondrous grace! that which proves the world's deepest guilt, reveals to faith Christ the righteous One, to be our righteousness before the face of God; and we in Him, the righteousness of God. Yea, all this the righteousness of God;

for it is what God has done, the sending of His Son ; the acceptance of that blessed One who has done the will of God, by raising Him from the dead ; by receiving Him up to glory ; by sending the Holy Ghost to bear witness of Him. All is of God.

Still we have the tongue as of fire on each one. “Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” Satan, this world’s prince and god, is judged. His trial is over. He led Jew and Gentile to reject and crucify the Holy One of God. It was Satan’s deepest possible act of sin and rebellion. Yes, both man and Satan have been tried and proved guilty. Mercy is still proclaimed to men, but Satan awaits his doom. What light this throws on the present scenes around us in Satan’s world ! Oh, reader, have you received the Holy Ghost ? Or are you still in the darkness and chains of Satan ?

. If you have received the Spirit, you are linked with heaven ; yea, with this same Jesus, now Lord and Christ. “Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

We are found now in circumstances very similar in one respect to those who received the Holy Ghost, as parted tongues of fire, sitting on each of them. Coming judgment had to be proclaimed to Jerusalem and the Jews ; for God was



about to judge her and them as rejectors of His Christ, and of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. Much in Christendom now, as Jerusalem then, has rejected Christ, and the judgments are at hand. Let us next look at the preaching of the apostles then, and the need to proclaim the judgments about to fall on Christendom now. Oh for tongues as of fire, to proclaim the same glad tidings of mercy, and also of judgment which will as surely fall on Christendom as it fell on Jerusalem.

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## GOD'S GLAD TIDINGS.

### V.

#### RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

THE word of God pronounces man a sinner, and declares that between Jew and Gentile "there is no difference." "There is none righteous, no, not one," is a sweeping statement: it makes no exception. I have sinned, you have sinned, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

The word of God also declares that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against *all* ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Put these two solemn truths together, and what do you see? All guilty, all condemned, all under God's wrath, and every mouth closed.

Does the unsaved reader bow to these truths?

Do they put you in your true place before God as a child of Adam? Then you know, that as a child of Adam, you are *lost!* *You are utterly undone!* But, blessed be God, though man's resources fail, His never fail. God's resources are inexhaustible. Hear Him tell out His own blessed resources for the poor lost sinner who is utterly destitute of righteousness: "But now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, 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; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 21-26.)

Here we have the announcement of divine righteousness, righteousness of God manifested as His blessed answer to the precious bloodshedding of His own spotless Lamb. The Lamb was the provision of His love and sovereign grace, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Through the sacrifice of

this Lamb, God was perfectly glorified. His majesty and glory vindicated, and the manifestation of His righteousness is the blessed answer to the delight He has found in that sacrifice.

What then is this righteousness? What is its basis? What is its scope? To whom, and on what principle is it applied? Let us examine God's word as to these questions.

(1.) What is this righteousness? The word of God clearly shews that it is a different order of righteousness from that which is by law-keeping. If it were righteousness of law it would be man's righteousness, for the law is the measure of human righteousness. But man has utterly failed as to righteousness, and hence something else was needed; and that is what we have here—God's righteousness. It is another order of righteousness, and contrasted with man's, as Paul says: "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." (Phil. iii 9.) Here the contrast is plain. It is not accomplished by law-fulfilling at all. It is not on that principle. It is not a Superior coming and saying, I must have so and so, and the demand met. It is not something wrought out *for* God because due *to* Him. This is what would have been by law, but in this, man failed. What then is it? *It is God's consistency with His own nature and character in His*

*dealings with others ; first, with His own Son ; second, with those who believe in Him.* It is what God has done for man, not what man has done for God. It is God's righteousness man-ward, not man's righteousness God-ward. If man had been righteous toward God, it would have been only what was due to God. But God's righteousness toward a poor sinner who believes in Jesus is something entirely unmerited. It is not earned or deserved. Instead of righteousness, wrath was deserved. Wrath was revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness. Man was ungodly and unrighteous, and so God's wrath was upon him. But now, through grace, "righteousness of God" takes the place of "wrath of God" in the case of all who believe in Jesus. How, then, is this? It is by grace. "Being justified freely by his grace." In God's wondrous grace, the wrath which overhung the guilty sinner is replaced by righteousness in the case of every one who believes the gospel, and this is not the sinner's righteousness, but God's. We shall see, by-and-by, the basis on which this takes place ; but it is important to see just now that it is not human, but divine righteousness, which has its source and character in God, not man ; and if it is God's, surely it must be perfect, making the sinner on whom it rests an object in which God Himself delights. God cannot reject or deny it, for it is His own, per-

fect, divine, according to His own nature. God is just, and the Justifier, justifying consistently with His own character.

(2.) What is the basis of this righteousness? We answer, The precious sacrifice of Christ. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth a *propitiation* through faith in *his blood*, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

God acted in forbearance toward the Old Testament saints, passing over their sins. His righteousness in doing so was not then manifested. It is manifest now through the cross. The blood of Christ declares it. God has set forth Christ as a propitiatory or mercy-seat, presenting His blood as an object for faith, for this very purpose. God's righteousness in passing over the sins of saints before the cross is no longer a dark question. The blood of Christ declares it.

But this is not all. God is—not now *passing over* sins, but—*justifying* sinners who believe the gospel. How is He righteous in doing so? Through the blood of Christ. Through the blood of His own spotless Lamb, He is just in justifying him who believes. His righteousness in justifying is thus declared. The blood of

Christ is the basis of all God's dealings in grace with sinners; and through that blood, His dealings in grace are declared righteous. God has found an adequate motive in the blood of Christ for shewing grace to sinners, and justifying those who believe; and He is righteous in doing this, in virtue of the blood. The display of His righteousness in justification is His blessed answer to the blood-shedding of Christ. How is this?

Let me ask the reader's earnest attention to this question. Mark this: God is justifying *sinners*, not righteous people. And if God is justifying sinners, it cannot be on the ground of their works. Their works have only been sin, and for this very reason they need justification. God's motive in doing so, then, must be found in something altogether outside of the sinner. It is found in Christ and His blood. Again I ask, How is this? It is because Christ has perfectly glorified God as to the very thing by which the sinner dishonoured Him, and on account of which he needed justification. This He has done through the shedding of His blood on the cross. God had been dishonoured by sin. His law has been broken, His justice despised, His majesty and glory set at nought, His love and His grace trampled under foot. Yes, reader, this is the part, and the *only* part, you and I have had in bringing about the stupendous work of redemption. Our wretched guilt only created the need

for it. Blessed be God, this need has been met by Another. The Lord Jesus Christ has glorified God in every way in the very scene where He has been dishonoured. He gave Himself an offering for sin, gave Himself freely, and drank the cup of judgment to the dregs, leaving not one drop for us to drink. He went down into a fathomless abyss of suffering. Waves from beneath, and waves from above rolled in upon His holy soul; and out of the depths He cried—depths of darkness and sorrow and anguish unutterable—depths which He alone could fathom—out of the depths He cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Of sorrow’s cup He had drunk before, He was the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; but what is this cry we hear from this unsounded abyss of suffering? His path down here was indeed a path of sorrow, and lay through a scene where His God was dishonoured, and where man was suffering from his own sin, and yet hating and despising the One who came to give relief. Such was His path, a sorrowful path indeed, and the sorrow deepening at every step, as the hatred increased, and the snares set in His path multiplied. There was nothing around Him, nothing in all this sin-stricken, sorrowful scene, to comfort His weary, suffering heart. But He could always look *up*, and always find comfort there. The beams of a loving Father’s face, and the radiancy of heavenly

glory always shone upon Him ; and thus He trod His sorrowful path, for while all was dark below, all was light above.

*To be continued.*

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## TIDINGS FROM THE EAST.

Beyrout, Jan. 22, 1890.

THANK God the word is good about the Lord's work, and very comforting. From Egypt I have had many letters of late telling of peace and quiet among those gathered, and of new places where the Lord is working in grace. Dear — is much comforted. He had already seen a good many gatherings, and finds them fresh and occupied with the Lord, and labourers diligent and humble, with evidence of blessing in their service. Perhaps he is by this time as far up as Assouan, near the southern limit of Egypt. There is no gathering yet in the far south, but a good many pious persons whom he has long known, who are interested in the truth, and whom he likes to visit and comfort, and convey to them books.

Others have written to me, and their letters are encouraging. For instance, one of them from an old gathering writes about the recent conversion of a man whom I have known for some years, but who bore a very bad name, although a man of means and fortune in the world. He says of this one : " He had spent his past life in the service of the devil, but the Lord has wrought



in him by the Holy Ghost, and he is born from above, and now he assembles with us daily and prays with tears, and you will now find him singing with joy, and expecting the return of the Lord from heaven. He now longs to see you." Such items of news refresh the heart. I remember well at both my last visits to this place that I saw this man present at every meeting, and I told the brother who now informs me of his conversion, that that man was under conviction, although he perhaps could hardly think so, as he knew what a bad life he had been leading. Hence my heart has been specially refreshed by the news. But oh, think of the joy in heaven over even one sinner that repenteth! I think, too, that it is a good sign in an old meeting when souls are drawn thither and converted. It shews that there is freshness and life. We are all so apt to become formal, and assume a kind of stereotyped condition. We become estranged from heaven's joy over returning prodigals, and perhaps think that this work only belongs to evangelists. Thank God, it does pertain to their blessed mission, for God has sent them for it, and pronounces their feet "beautiful;" but this does not exclude His other saints from participating in this blessed service. Christ Himself is "the truth," and this is needed by sinners and saints, and what is specially needed to convict the former will always refresh the latter.

From Mesopotamia I hear very good news. The brothers there had been anxious lest I was on the way, and feared that the rain and the cold would be too much for me, and were relieved when they got my letter telling them that another brother was coming instead of me. I thought this an evidence of real love. The brother will have reached there before this, but there has not been time for a letter to reach here telling of his arrival. I am sure the Lord is working in those regions to cause the midnight cry to be heard, and to proclaim the grace of the gospel. Patience is always needed in order that we may work with God: as Paul tells Timothy that the husbandman must first labour before he gathers fruit.

You will be interested to hear that I had the other day a visit from one who has been evangelising a little among the Yezidees, "devil worshippers," of that region. He cannot report fruit, but has been among them a good deal, and says they received him kindly, and allowed him to read to, and talk with them, only he must not speak against Satan. They admit that he is fallen, and under God's displeasure, but say that, as God is merciful, He will not be wroth with him for ever, and when He pardons and restores him into favour, they will share in his mercy, that is, the mercy shewn to him. There are 72,000 families of them in the region where this brother has laboured, and are said to be rather

superior as a race of people. Few of them can read. They date the beginning of true religion from the time of the Mahommedan conquest, as their founder, "Yezreed," lived about that time and rejected the new creed. One can suppose that their ancestors had a measure of Jewish and Christian light, but had lost hold of Christ, and only had Satan, His adversary, left. This shews us, in a naked, undisguised form, what took place, very extensively, amongst the mass of the Christians in those countries about that time. Only some remnants of them retained the confession of *Christ the Son of God*, and that under oppression and loss. However, the principle of what then took place is, I suppose, always true; if we lose or give up Christ, one then falls under the direct power of His adversary. Did not the Lord shew this to Peter when He rebuked him? However God can work among "devil worshippers," for He has done so among us, who were at least his slaves! Let us all seek to hold fast to the Son of God and grace."

B. F. PINKERTON.

Thus after years of deep interest and trusting God to reach these poor Yezidees, the Lord has again answered prayer. I ask all who read this, who are Christ's, to join in prayer for these remarkable people, and for the work of God in those vast regions of darkness. God is working, praised be His name.

C. S.

## GOD'S GLAD TIDINGS.

### VI.

#### RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

A MORE terrible hour awaited our Lord, the last in His earthly path and life of sorrow. As the end drew on, it cast its dark and gloomy shadow over His soul, and He uttered such words as these: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." And when the horrors of that hour were pressed upon His soul by the power of the adversary, we find Him sweating as it were great drops of blood, and crying with strong crying and tears to Him who was able to deliver. Even then He was heard—heard for His piety—and an angel sent to strengthen Him. He was still in the enjoyment of the unbroken communion with His Father: the light was still shining down upon Him from above. But the hour of deeper sorrow came, and with fixed purpose He met it. He gave Himself up into the hands of men, and presented Himself to God, to be made sin for us, a curse for those under the curse, a victim to bear the judgment of God against sin. Thus He offered Himself to God, was made an offering for sin though He knew no sin. And now the light which hitherto shone full upon

Him all along His path was withdrawn. Darkness covered the land at mid-day, and His holy soul, shut out from the light of God's presence, was wrapped in the mantle of night. As a sin-offering, accursed of God, He underwent divine judgment, judgment measured by the inflexible holiness of God's nature, holiness too pure and bright to endure a single stain of sin: the light of God's face was withdrawn, and He was plunged into an abyss of infinite wrath, out of which He cried in His deep agony of soul: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" O blessed Son of God! Thou didst give Thyself up to all this for Thy Father's glory, and that poor, vile worms of the dust might be lifted up to be Thy companions in eternal glory and blessedness! O Lamb of God, slain for us! we adore Thee, and bless Thy holy name for ever!

Yes, reader, the blessed Son of God underwent all this, and far more than tongue or pen can describe, in order to glorify God about man's sin so that God might be just, and justify the sinner who believes in Jesus. Having accomplished redemption, the Son of God has passed through the heavens to the very throne of God, having eternally vindicated the righteousness and holiness and majesty of that throne in the shedding of His blood, so that the justified sinner can stand in the unveiled presence of God, and behold His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and praise

and worship the Lamb that was slain, but who now lives, and is enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

“ O Lord, we adore Thee,  
For Thou art the slain One  
That livest for ever,  
Enthronèd in heaven ;  
O Lord ! we adore Thee,  
For thou hast redeemed us ;  
Our title to glory  
We read in Thy blood.”

Such is the basis on which God's righteousness is displayed, and announced in the gospel for the salvation of sinners. Such a work, and such devotion of heart to the glory of God on the part of Christ, could not go without a divine answer ; and that answer was righteousness.

Let us look for a moment at God's righteous answer to the work of Christ. First of all, we see God raising up Christ from the dead, then setting Him in glory at His own right hand, and then justifying sinners, to bring them into the same glory. All this is righteousness on the part of God. God was glorified in Christ as Man down here, and He has glorified Christ as Man in heaven. This was God's righteous answer to the work of Christ. But there is more than this, for Christ's work in glorifying God was on behalf of the sinner, and so God justifies the sinner. This, too, is righteousness. Having been glorified

in Man, God has glorified Man : this is in Christ. But the same righteousness that raised Christ from the dead, and set Him in glory, justifies the sinner, and sets him in Christ. The work of Christ deserves it, and God answers that work in righteousness. Blessed work ! blessed answer ! In the Man at God's right hand, we see God's righteousness completed. It was completed in setting Him there. It is righteousness accomplished for man according to the value of the Person and work of Christ. Without the blood of Christ it could not have been. By that blood God was glorified about sin : it was the ransom paid—paid to God—paid for the sinner—the redemption price. We have redemption through His blood. God has set forth Christ a mercy-seat through faith in His blood. Through this redemption God justifies freely, without price at the sinner's hand. Christ has paid the price, the redemption money, His blood ; and the blood on the mercy-seat declares God's righteousness in justifying freely. The blood alone declares God's righteousness in justifying a sinner. Yet the whole life of Christ went up as a sweet savour to God, and if we speak of the measure of the believer's acceptance, it is according to all the sweet savour that went up to God from Christ, both in His life and in His death, only we must not forget that it was in His death, in which alone was displayed the

full measure of His infinite devotedness to God, that God was glorified in all that He is, and in every attribute and moral perfection of His being, whether in the display of His righteous and holy majesty as against sin, or the maintenance of His truth and display of His love to the sinner; and it is according to the measure of this infinitely perfect work of the Lord Jesus that God's righteousness is displayed in glorifying Christ, and justifying the sinner who believes in Him.

(3.) What is the scope of God's righteousness? It is universal. It is not *applied* to all, but its bearing is *toward* all. It is as broad as the foundation on which it rests. The blood of Christ has glorified God in His whole character. The whole question of sin, as it affected God's character and throne, has been met—fully and blessedly met—by the blood of Christ. Because of this the righteousness of God is “unto all.” This is its scope, or bearing. It is revealed in the gospel, and revealed for man. The gospel was to be preached to every creature, and where it goes, tidings of God's righteousness are announced. The claims of God have been so fully met that He declares it everywhere. It is toward all, free to all, sufficient for all. Sin is no barrier now. God has been glorified, and in virtue of the blood of Jesus He announces His righteousness for justification through faith in that blood—righteousness *toward all*.



(4.) To whom, and on what principle, is God's righteousness applied? It is "righteousness of God, by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe." Here we have its scope, its application, and the principle on which it is applied. Its scope is "unto all." It is applied to *believers*—"upon all who believe." The principle is, "by faith of Jesus Christ." Let us look a little at these last two. It is "revealed from faith to faith," or "on the principle of faith to faith." It is not the principle of works. Had it been so, it would have been man's righteousness. But it is God's righteousness, and available for us on the principle of faith, not of works. And if it is on this principle, it is *to* faith; that is, wherever faith exists, there the righteousness of God is applied, whether it be to Jew or to Gentile. "*On the principle of faith*" shuts out law and works as a means of attaining to this righteousness. "*To faith*" lets in the Gentile, if he has faith, as well as the Jew. If a Jew was on the principle of law and works, he was not submitting to God's righteousness, and consequently missed it. If a Gentile came "on the principle of faith," he was justified as truly as a believing Jew. It is "by faith of Jesus Christ," not "by works of law." These two expressions are the contrast of each other. "Faith" is contrasted with "works;" "Jesus Christ" is contrasted with "law." "Works" take their measure and

character from the "law;" "faith" takes its measure and character from "Jesus Christ." (See also Gal. ii. 16.) Faith takes its character from its object; if its object be man, or man's word, it will only be human; if its object be Christ, its character will be divine. "Faith of Jesus Christ" is *divine faith*. It is by this faith that we have part in the righteousness of God; it is "upon all them that believe." Be it Jew or Gentile, high or low, rich or poor, the most moral, or the most degraded, there is no difference as to their standing before God. All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; but now God's righteousness is *toward all*; and it is *upon all who believe*. Does any poor sinner (no matter what has been his previous character) believe in Jesus? The righteousness of God is upon him. He is justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. God has set forth Jesus a propitiatory, or mercy-seat, through faith in His blood, to declare His own righteousness in justifying the guilty one who believes. The blood is on the mercy-seat, and the moment the perishing sinner believes God, his sins are forgiven, and he is justified, and that blood declares that God is righteous in doing it.

Reader, is God's righteousness upon you? Have you been justified? If not, what hinders? Do you say, your sins? Your sins are no barrier now. Through the blood of Christ, God's

righteousness is *toward you*, ready to justify, the moment you submit to have righteousness in this way. The only thing that hinders is your unbelief. God tells you the blood is on the mercy-seat. Believe God, and your sins are gone, and His righteousness takes their place. It is upon *all* who believe. Do you believe in Jesus? Then you are justified. And remember, "It is God who justifies." Who shall condemn? It matters not who. He who condemns the justified sinner condemns God's righteousness. You can therefore challenge the universe. God has glorified Christ on high, and, in Him, *man* has got a place in that glory. This is righteousness. God has accomplished His righteousness in setting Him there, and in Him the believing sinner. He is the measure of the believer's standing and acceptance before God. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new; and all things are of God." What is the ground of this? "He hath made him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 17, 18, 21.) Christ is in glory, the Head, the Beginning, of the new creation, and we, through grace, a new creation in Him. And this is righteousness on the part of God. The old creation has met its judgment in the cross: all things are new, all things are of God, who has set Christ

there, and us in Him. This is the accomplishment of divine, eternal righteousness. This righteousness will have its eternal display in Christ glorified, and in a justified and redeemed race brought to God in Him. This is what God has wrought; and it may well bow our hearts in worship before Him for ever.



## “CLOVEN TONGUES, LIKE AS OF FIRE.”

### II.

WE will now look how the Spirit enabled these poor, unlearned men to speak words “like as of fire.” The rushing, mighty sound from heaven had been noised abroad in Jerusalem, and had gathered great multitudes together—devout men, Jews out of every nation. That great multitude was composed chiefly of two companies, much as it is now.

One company was composed of Pharisees, or those who were seeking to attain to righteousness by works of law; the other were rationalists, or infidels. But both had rejected Jesus, and the whole world had joined together to kill the Prince of Life, the Holy One of God. And thus the action of the Spirit of God was no longer limited to the dove as it rested on Jesus whilst here below. The days were now at hand when these words of Jesus should be fulfilled, “I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?” (Luke xii. 49-53.)

Yes, to the Jews, days were at hand when judgments, like a figure of their last days of tribulation, should fall upon them.

Peter stood up and spake as if with a tongue of fire, quoting the words of Joel, the prophet, "And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come." All this is yet in connection with infinite grace: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

But hear the fearful charge against the men of Israel as to their treatment of Jesus. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and, by wicked hands, have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up," &c. Yes, "this Jesus" (whom they had cruelly murdered) "hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." Thus the descent of the Spirit was the proof of two things: man's wickedness and God's righteousness. Man's wickedness in rejecting and murdering the only righteous One, in whom was no fault: God's righteousness in receiving Him to glory. "Therefore let all

the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Oh, how the Spirit used these words of fire in pricking the conscience of thousands. What a cry arose: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Yes, the very murderers of the Christ of God, the Saviour Lord, were called upon, in the mighty power of the Spirit, to repent and become the very disciples in baptism of the Jesus they had rejected and slain. What a change of mind! What judgment of themselves and their mad and wicked conduct; and what a burst of God's forgiving love. "For the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Mark, this was no "do penance as a merit of salvation," that Peter preached as with a tongue of fire. "Then they that *gladly* received his word were baptised." And read the wonderful effect of this preaching so as by fire. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." . . . "And the Lord added to the assembly daily, such as should be saved." Yes, the words of the apostles were the words of God. "And our God is a consuming fire."

In chapter iii. 13, we hear Peter again speak piercing words of judgment. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." And then how he shews them that the prophets had foretold it should be thus. "That Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," &c.

Hear again the cloven tongue as of fire in chapter iv. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Yes, if you read through the Acts, you will find, "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all," They had no need

for gorgeous services and sacerdotal robes; for music, and paintings; for services of song; for stringed bands; religious concerts, and Sunday theatricals—all these sadly become heathenised Christendom of idolatry, or rationalism. But let us return.

“This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” There is a beautiful figure of this in Psalm cxxxiii. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”

A new company was formed on that day when Jesus, received up to glory, shed forth the Holy Ghost, and brethren dwelt together in unity! As we have seen, when He was anointed by the Holy Ghost as Man on earth, come to do the will of God, He was alone: the Spirit abode on Him alone, as a dove; but now the Spirit was given Him to shed on the new company. Just as the precious ointment upon the head of Aaron ran



down upon the beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments: so our Aaron, our Great High Priest, has passed into the heavens. Thus, all believers, baptised into His body, are a heavenly company. He in the heavens received the promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost, and shed this, like the anointing oil on the head, and it descends, covering every member of His body—the assembly.

On the banks of the Jordan, the Father could only say of one, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." But now the new company of believers are brought into favour in Him in the heavenlies. And the same precious ointment flows down from Christ, the Head, and covers all.

Our dear brother in the East tells us that the dew of Hermon is very peculiar. It is not like dew, or mist, or fog; but if you happened to pass through it, as he has done, you would find it most reviving and strengthening, as it falls on the mountains of Zion. And is there anything like the anointing of the Holy Ghost? How reviving, refreshing, and strengthening! The intellect of man cannot in this particular imitate it. All that is in imitation withers the soul. Have you received the Holy Ghost? Then you belong to this unity of the Spirit, and are responsible to endeavour to keep it.

Now if your sins are forgiven, and you have

received the Holy Ghost, then what company do you belong to? Do you say, "I belong to a company of Christians that began about fifty years ago, or a hundred, or three hundred years ago?" That will not do, a sect may have begun at these dates. But a sect is not the new company of Acts ii. The date of this new company would be about 1856 years ago. Very blessedly did that company dwell together in unity, persecuted and hated by the Jews. We read: "And being let go, they went to their own company." (Acts iv. 23.) This was the company on whom the Holy Ghost was shed. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. . . . And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." Those were the days of the dew of Hermon.

As to their bodies these persons were all on earth. And though as yet they may not have understood it, yet they were a heavenly company one with the Saviour Jesus raised from the dead, received up to heaven, Lord and Christ. All this comes out more fully in the inspired writings of Paul. But this is the date of that entirely new company, the assembly of God. It has no other date, no other beginning. And all true believers ever since, who have received the same Spirit, belong to this same heavenly body.

It may easily be distinguished from all the

earthly bodies that man has made. No doubt it has been the special aim of Satan to disfigure, by earthly imitations, this wondrous heavenly reality. And men have ever been found ready to spoil what is put into their hands. It has been so from the beginning. It might be well to ask yourself, Is that with which I am identified as a Christian earthly or heavenly? A very serious question. If it be of heaven, it will have no earthly show. Of this, the new company, set up of God, was absolutely destitute; so much so, that the men of the earth regarded Christians as having no religion at all, but as being atheists. The world, as it always will, called them a sect, and they were everywhere spoken against.

Well, time is short: it matters little for the world's scorn. This new company that began at Pentecost, is about to be caught up to meet the Lord, this same Jesus. I do not ask, Do you, or I, belong to any of the companies formed since: but do we belong to that new company formed that day when Jesus received the Holy Ghost to shed forth on man? Then let us remember the same Holy Ghost who, as cloven tongues like as of fire sat on them, is still with us. May the Lord grant that there may be more of that same truth preached with tongues as of fire. May we have more faith in the continual presence and mighty power of the Holy Ghost.

C. S.

## ARE YOU RECONCILED TO GOD?

How earnestly did the apostle beseech men to be reconciled to God ! He says, " Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us : we pray in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin : that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 20, 21.) Now some may suppose that reconciliation is not like justification ; that justification is a present thing to the believer, as may be clearly seen in Romans iv. and v., but that reconciliation, in its completeness, is a future thing. This would take away all present enjoyment of being reconciled to God. If we turn to the scriptures we shall find to our joy, that both are alike *now*.

First, as to justification—all is of God. It was He who sent His Son. It was God who raised Him from the dead. Is it not thus that we are accounted righteous before God, believing " on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead : who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification ? Therefore, BEING justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now, dear reader, if you believe God, is it not clear that you

are both justified from all things, and also that you are reconciled, that you have peace with God? Oh, let not Satan rob you of this divine certainty. For the strengthening of your faith, read four verses in which you will find justification and reconciliation equally certain to you, and equally a present thing. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being NOW justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we *were* reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, BEING reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *we have* now received the reconciliation." (Rom. v. 8-12.)

Now what care the Holy Ghost has taken to shew us that both are alike certain; both now: "*being* justified by faith;" "*being now* justified;" "*much more being reconciled.*" All is of God; we joy in God. Not only shall we joy in God, when all that grieves and hinders is passed away, but we now joy in God, not through anything *in us*, but through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation. We joy in God: He has received the Holy One who made atonement for our sins, and we receive the result—the peace He has made by the blood of the cross: the reconciliation. Mark, He has

met the whole question of our guilt, our sins, "our offences;" and we are reconciled to God in perfect peace and righteousness—righteousness of God.

I do not ask, Do you assent to these great foundation doctrines of God's word? but are you reconciled to God, so that you joy in God? Do not say that this is inferior truth; you want the gold. Such a craving would indicate that you have not the enjoyment of present peace, reconciliation, joy in God.

We will now turn to another scripture. "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight." (Col. i. 20-22.)

Oh, doubting one, is not this present? Look not at self, look at Him who hath done it all. We were alienated by wicked works: *He* hath reconciled us by that peace which He has made by the blood of His cross. And what He has done, and what we are as reconciled to God through His death, shall certainly be manifested, even as it is now in His sight. But more as to this shortly.

So far as we have gone, can you say, Through the mercy of God, I have this perfect peace with Him, according to all that He is? You may have struggled hard to find something *in yourself* as the basis of all this. You may have sought to attain to a righteous state first in yourself before you can have reconciliation—as millions seek: some by works, and an infused, inherent righteousness *in us*. You may say, It may be true in some uncertain way; but how can I have perfect reconciliation to God, and joy in God, whilst I find sin in me? Must not that be entirely eradicated by some means, and righteousness take its place *in me*? Do not you see, perplexed reader, that is the old question? Is it to be our righteousness *in us*; or the righteousness of God? Is our *state* to be the ground of our reconciliation—what we are; or is what God has done, and what God is revealed to be, through the work of Christ for us, the only basis of our reconciliation to Him? That is the question of infinite moment.

The Council of Trent teaches it is our state; we become righteous by infused, inherent righteousness. Surely you do not wish to become a Romanist. Others suppose they reach this righteous (or holy) state by an effort of faith, sin entirely displaced by holiness. Others, again, think it cannot be reached until death—not many, I trust—but some, that it cannot be

reached until the coming of the Lord. Now, do you think any of these theories would give the soul perfect peace with God, joy in God? *Never.* I do not believe any person, on any of these principles, knows in his own soul what reconciliation to God is, so as to joy in God. As surely as you turn to any of these, you will sooner or later find darkness to your soul. It is not righteousness of God. It is not what Christ is before the face of God.

Still you say, "You do not relieve me. You do not shew me clearly how I can be reconciled to God now, and yet have a sinful nature which I abhor. How can I enjoy peace with God, whilst sin is still not eradicated and righteousness has taken its place?" We will turn to the chapter we first quoted, 2 Corinthians v. It is a very solemn chapter, and this is a question of the utmost moment.

You will notice that the deep enjoyment of divine certainty, even in the presence of death, shewed the same peace. (Vers. 1-9.) Then the fact that we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ. Are we justified? It will be manifested then. Are we reconciled? It will be manifested then. Blessed thoughts! Hence we are perfectly free to labour for Christ, and He will give us each our reward. We know the terror of the Lord to such as are not justified and reconciled, and thus, we persuade men.



Only mark, that we are made manifest unto God. We have to do with God : and if we know that we are reconciled to God, all is as clear now to faith, as it will be then to sight. Still it is most important to think of being manifested there. Are you quite happy about that ?

There is also new creation brought before us as a present thing : “ Therefore, if any man be *in Christ*, a new creature [or new creation].” But is this present ? Yes, “ old things *are passed away* ; behold, all things *are become new*. And all things are of God, *who hath reconciled* us to himself by Jesus Christ,” &c. Notice, that present certainty as to reconciliation, is quite as strong as to justification, as put in Romans. Thank God. There is not a word about your own state as, or in, the sense of your own righteousness, or righteousness infused into you, or displacing sin in you by any of the means named above. Be it standing or state, it is all of God. He sees you *in Christ*, a new creation. Oh, fellow believer, the Holy Ghost declares that God hath reconciled you to Himself. Will you doubt Him ? Surely it is only as we believe God that we can proclaim the true gospel, and beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, to cease their fighting and rebellion.

But there is still the difficulty of sin in me. Does God reconcile my sinful nature to Himself ? Surely not ! Now mark the last verse, “ For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no

sin; that we might be made [or become] the righteousness of God in him." Compare this with another scripture: "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [or by a sacrifice for sin] condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. viii. 3.) In both places, all is of God. If the Holy Son of God was thus made sin, a sacrifice for sin, as well as bare our sins in His own body on the tree, then both our sins, and sin the root, have been dealt with by God, in the blessed Person of His Son, so that before Him there is nothing left to condemn. "There is, therefore, *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Mark, it is not in us, in ourselves, but *in Him*. He has been made sin; He has endured its awful judgment; and in Him we are a new creation. *In Him* we are the righteousness of God. In Him, whiter than snow. In Him, the believer is a justified and a reconciled *person*. And all is of God.

Do you say, I have had the fear that I am in a condition here in which sin and the flesh are taken account of? You could not make a more fatal mistake. Your sin was taken account of when Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" To say that it is again taken account of would be to deny the righteousness of God. Your sin has been judged: there is nothing left to condemn. If you are a believer, this is as true of you as of the believer

1800 years ago. Why should you doubt? And will all this be displayed in us when in the glory? Certainly; that is, we shall be the display of the righteousness of God as in Him. Nothing short of this would satisfy the perfect love of God to us. So that as to judgment, all fear is gone for the child of God. What we are now, such we shall be presented, "holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight." Oh, take care that no one moves you away from this certain hope of the gospel. It does not yet *appear* what we shall be, but we shall be like Him when He appears. (1 John iii.) Oh, how blessed to be manifested, justified, and reconciled, without spot before God. But do not look within at your own state, or your own righteousness for all this, but at the testimony of God to His risen Son at His right hand. Think what it cost Him, that you might become the righteousness of God *in Christ*. If an unconverted soul should read this, I entreat you to cease your striving; be ye reconciled to God. The work is done; peace is made by the blood of the cross; Jesus risen from the dead, shews His hands and His side, and says, Peace be unto you.

C. S.

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## QUESTIONS OF INTEREST, ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

### III.

“PLEASE explain the meaning of the last day in John vi. 39 and 44, as compared with the second resurrection.”

In this gospel the word “hour,” or “day” is used sometimes to denote a period of time, not a literal hour, or day. “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” (Chap. iv. 21, 23.) “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.” Now this “hour,” of which the Lord spoke, has lasted more than eighteen hundred years. There is no true worship but that which is in spirit and truth, and still dead sinners are made to hear the voice of the Son of God and live. Now all this is connected with the Person of Christ the Son of God!

The full revelation of the taking of the church as a part of the first resurrection, was not yet given. But the distinction of the two resurrections is clearly implied, “for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the 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 damnation [or judgment]." (Chap. v. 28, 29.) Who can describe the immense difference of these two resurrections ? Oh, my reader, which will be your portion ? Should you die, or fall asleep, will you hear the welcome voice of Jesus calling you to the resurrection of life ?

Since there have been eighteen hundred years in the "hour" of worship, and the "hour" of gospel spiritual resurrection, there is no difficulty in finding a thousand years between the first resurrection to life, and the second, the resurrection unto judgment, described in Revelation xx.

I need not point out how often the word "day" is used in scripture to denote a period of time. The day of the Lord. The day of salvation, &c. It was the Jewish habit to use it as referring to the last period of time. As Martha said to Jesus, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." (John xi. 24.) You will find "day" used in this gospel the same as "hour," to denote a period of time. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father," &c. (Chap. xiv. 20.) "At that day ye shall ask in my name," &c. (Chap. xvi. 26.) That blessed "day" of intimacy with the Father and the Son continues, and will continue all through this period of grace.

Now let us turn to chapter vi. 39. What is the subject? The glorious truth that there is a company out of this sinful world given of the Father to the Son; and the absolute fact that not one of them shall be lost, no, not to the very end of their time here below, even to the last period, the last "day." A precious privilege is indicated: Jesus says, "I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." What is on His heart is, that He *will Himself raise it up again*. He uses the usual word "last day," but what is so dear to Him is that He will do it. As He says again, "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: and I WILL raise him up at the last day." Oh, may we not trust this precious Saviour? What joy it gives Him to declare the will of the Father that sent Him for our exceeding comfort. Do you say, Is it true of me? He says, "That every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life," or eternal life. If you believe Him, with what joy will He raise you from among the dead at His coming. Thus, should you die, it will not alter the question of your blessed security in Christ.

Other scriptures will fully explain the difference between the two resurrections. In Luke xx. it is quite clear there is a resurrection of great privilege. Some will "be accounted worthy to

obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead" (or from among the dead). Again, what gave offence to the Jews was that the apostles "taught the people, and preached, through Jesus, the resurrection from [among] the dead." (Acts iv. 2.) Paul says, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead," as it should read. (Phil. iii. 11.) "And the dead in Christ shall rise first." (1 Thess. iv. 16.) "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection," &c. (Rev. xx. 5, 6.) May our hearts rest in the sure words of Jesus; apart from Him, what a dark uncertain future. Yes, He will have the joy of raising up from among the dead all that the Father hath given unto Him.

That bright and blessed morn is near  
When He the Bridegroom shall appear,  
And call His bride away.  
Her blessing then shall be complete,  
When with her Lord she takes her seat  
In everlasting day.

O may this hope our spirits cheer,  
While waiting for our Saviour here;  
He said, "I'll come again."  
O may our hearts look for that day,  
And to His word responsive say,  
"Come, Jesus, Lord, Amen."

## “THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS.”

PHILIPPIANS III. 10.

WE must notice that these are not the first words in this text. Many sincere souls try to put them first in their experience, in order to attain to a higher state of resurrection power. And this is the case with many devout Romanists, and others who seek, but never find, this higher state. Penances, and all kinds of self-inflicted chastisements are all in vain, except it be to feed our religious pride and Pharisaism. How many have sunk into dark infidelity through thus reversing the order of the word of God. Let us look at the scripture just as it stands.

“That I may know him.” We will begin one verse previous: “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law [or which would be on the principle of law], but that which is, through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” We cannot understand verse 10 if we have not utterly renounced all thoughts of attaining to righteousness on the principle of works of law: otherwise we shall be putting our own sufferings, or our own conformity to His death, call it what we will, in the place of the atoning death of Christ. And



this will imperceptibly lead us into the heresy of infused righteousness, and thus deny "righteousness of God." Satan may use this soul-destroying error in a great variety of ways.

Are you, my reader, seeking to have on "mine own righteousness"? Are you struggling for this? Then dream not of fellowship with the sufferings of Christ. Your refusal of the great truth of righteousness of God is direct antagonism against Christ. Oh, how Saul of Tarsus would have sought righteousness on the principle of works of law, had he not been led by the heavenly vision of Christ to utterly and for ever renounce all his own supposed righteousness as dung! Think of his own righteousness being, to Paul, as loathsome as dung! Have you learnt this lesson in the light of the heavenly vision? When God gives faith, He gives faith's object—His beloved Son, who has accomplished all His will in our redemption. What would faith be without this object? Hence he goes on to verse 10:

"That I may know him." Do you know Him? We may read about Him, and preach about Him, and yet not know Him. Next to seeing Him at His coming, above all things, the believer longs to know Him, our Great High Priest in every sorrow and temptation; to know Him our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption; and to know Him in all the tender intimacies of

His infinite love—that same Jesus who was in an agony at the prospect of bearing my sins. And yet He did bear them, nailed to the cross—that Man who passed through the darkness of God's wrath due to me.

Not only this: "And the power of his resurrection"—that new creation, where all is new, and all is of God. To know the power of this "usward." To know Him, raised from the dead, the beginning of the new creation. To see our old selves passed away out of sight. To know Him, and to know the power of being in Him in that new creation of resurrection, where all is of God. All this must be known in our souls before we talk of conformity to His death. Nothing can be more dangerous to souls than to seek a sort of Romish attainment of death first.

Twelve stones must be taken out of Jordan first in resurrection power. We must first know Him, and our place with Him in resurrection, before the twelve stones can be put into Jordan, and there remain. We must be perfectly clear about our place in the heavenlies with Christ, in actual possession on the principle of faith, before we take the place of conformity unto His death. It is quite true we get into this place of life through death; but is it through our death or dying, or through His death for us? The moment we admit the thought of its being through our death, we are going rather fast on

the road to Rome. We may not know it, but there is not a more dangerous road, and, perhaps, nothing we need to be more on our guard against.

But if we well know that we have been brought, through the riches of the grace and the exceeding greatness of the power of God, into this resurrection place of blessedness through the death and resurrection of Christ, we may now go on to what is "the fellowship of his sufferings," and what it is to be made conformable unto his death. With His atoning suffering at the hands of God, we can have no fellowship, no share. He was absolutely alone, bearing the wrath of God due to our sins. He was alone when made sin for us. But what He suffered at the hands of men, led on by Satan, we may share. The Satanic hatred of man against Him still continues, and God, in His own tender mercy, still endures the hatred of man.

Oh, how little did Saul know that his mad and cruel persecution of the saints was hatred against God! Yes, God the Son, revealed in glory, said, "Why persecutest thou me?" It was the continuation of man's hatred, and His suffering in every member of His body on earth. And Saul the persecutor had soon, as Paul the Christian, to have fellowship in these sufferings. Does not our head feel what any member of our body suffers? so Christ as Head of the body feels what affects His saints.

If we know our place in Christ, in resurrection standing, shall we desire to be with that world which still hates and persecutes Christ, in His true members, though it be as sincere and religious as was Saul? Or shall we not, like Paul the converted, be desiring the rather to know the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ? Which way lean you, beloved Christian? To the world that still hates Christ, or to the Christ that is hated? Have you not been separated from that world by the death of Christ? Have you not been baptised into this very profession of death with Christ?

Now where is the practical conformity to His death? You may say, Oh, well, all this is now given up in Christendom. Within the last few years all is changed. Yes, even as it is written, there are "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God: having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." (See 2 Tim. iii. 1-5.) It is like the story of the spider and the fly. Come into my parlour, says Satan, and enjoy my world's pleasures, and pastimes to your hearts' content; and do not really believe a word God says in the scriptures. Reader, will you listen to the old serpent? Remember it is written, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Here you join issue. The Father loves

the Son: the world hates Him. Can you have fellowship with both? You must then give up the world that hates Christ, and take your place, bearing His reproach and suffering here; or you must give up Christ, and accept Satan's world, with its pleasures, lusts, and pastimes. But not for long. These are the last days. The widespread giving up of Christ for worldly pleasures proves it. The Judge is at the door. Do not dream that God will allow men to go on for ever persecuting and hating Christ. It is blessed to suffer with Him, for they that suffer with Him shall reign with Him for ever. May the Lord separate all who are His from a world doomed to speedy judgment. C. S.



## QUESTIONS OF INTEREST, ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

### IV.

"WILL you notice Acts iii. 21? I have lately seen it stated with confidence, that no one could answer the objections contained in that text which reads, 'Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution,' &c. But the writer does not say what the prophecies are, that remain to be fulfilled; but dwells largely on death, of which Isaiah speaks in chapter xxv. 8, 'He will swallow up death in victory.' So that

Christ cannot come before the millennium. May it be said, when Christ comes for His saints and they are caught up, that Christ is still in heaven ?”

On the repentance of Israel, Peter assures them that God would “send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you : whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” It is very strange that the writer should find difficulties in this verse and its context. I remember about fifty years ago, this scripture was specially used to many to shew them that the Lord would come at the commencement of the millennium. Take this illustration. There has been a revolution in Brazil. The emperor has been rejected ; he is received in, say, England. And it is said England will receive him until the restitution, or restoration of the empire in Brazil. Would that mean that England would receive the rightful emperor until after the empire, or until the time when the empire should be set up again ?

The Jews had murdered the Christ of God, their true Messiah, long foretold in scripture. God had raised Him from the dead, and received Him up to heaven. The heaven must receive Him until the times of restitution, or restoration of His empire. At present they are rebels against God and against their Messiah.

Could anything be plainer? To say that this means the heavens must receive Him, until after His millennial kingdom is over, come to an end, would not only be contrary to all scripture, but would have no meaning in it.

Let us, however, turn to the scripture referred to—Micah iv., v. In chapter iv. we have the future reign of Messiah; all nations going up to worship in Zion; no more war; swords and spears turned into implements of happy husbandry. This blessed scene shall surely come, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. "And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever." "The first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." Then a time of great labour, and sorrow, and pain is spoken of. "Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail." Then the Judge of Israel shall be smitten with a rod upon the cheek. Now mark the special verse referred to by Peter. "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting [or the days of eternity]." (Chap. v. 2.) "Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth." Then follows the millennial blessing of Jacob.

Such is the absolute inspired word of the Lord. How much has been fulfilled at this hour? Evidently chapter iv. 1-8 has not in the least had its fulfilment. It would have had it, had they repented at the preaching of Peter. But they did not. It is no theory, but an undeniable fact that the kingdom has not yet come to the people of Israel. Then has the great pain and tribulation spoken of come? No, for at that time they shall be delivered; or at least the remnant of them. At the destruction of Jerusalem they were not delivered, but destroyed by hundreds of thousands, or scattered among all nations. And they are, according to the sure word of God, to be given up, until the time of travail, and until she hath brought forth the remnant spoken of in chapter v. 3.

Has the Judge that is to reign been smitten with a rod upon the cheek? He has. The Son of God has been smitten, bruised, spit upon. Has He come from Bethlehem? He has. That was the place of His incarnation, or birth.

Has He gone forth into the heavens unto God? "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted," &c. (Act ii. 32, 33.)

How long will the heavens retain Him? "Until the times of restitution," &c. That is plainly the time of the kingdom of God on earth. Who is He? He that is to be Ruler in



Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity. Yes, He is the Eternal Son of God.

Do the Jews know all this? No, they are blind yet. But the day will come when He shall say to them, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Read that chapter of their coming glory, Isaiah lx. In no sense has this been fulfilled yet.

How long now has Israel to wait for these scenes of blessing and the reign of Messiah at Zion? "Until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth."

Was not that travail when Christ the man-child was born? No, there was no travail then. "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child." (Isa. lxvi. 7.)

What does she bring forth then when she travaileth? "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Then follows her millennial joy. (Isa. lxvi. 8 to end.) Oh, who believes the word of God—the glories of our long rejected Jesus—the blessings of His earthly people Israel? Do not mistake. In all these scriptures there is no reference whatever to the church. But He who is Israel's Messiah is also the Head of the church—His body. Hence, His coming to take the church does not affect these questions in the least. The Jews will not see

Him come for His bride, may not know of it, except the great wonder there may be when every true Christian is gone in the twinkling of an eye. If we confound the hopes of the church, and the future kingdom and earthly glory of Israel, all must be confusion and difficulty.

You say the writer dwells largely on death; speaks of Isaiah xxv. 8, &c., so that Christ, he says, cannot come before the millennium. Now if you read the whole chapter you will find that this event, "He will swallow up death in victory," is really what ushers in the millennium. As it goes on to say, "And the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people [Israel] shall he take away from off *all the earth*." "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of *Judah*." Oh, how simple all this would be if we believed God meant what He said. He is not speaking of the church in Isaiah xxv., but of Israel and Judah. (See ii. 1-3.)

Surely the writer could not have been aware that the Holy Ghost had explained *when* this would take place. In 1 Corinthians xv. we have the coming of the Lord, and the resurrection of those that are His at His coming (ver. 23), and the blessedness of that resurrection, and the change in a moment of those that shall be alive when He comes for them. Read to verse 53. Now the Holy Ghost says that it is when all this has taken place that Isaiah xxv. will be

fulfilled. Verse 54: "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, THEN shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Is it not then perfectly clear that this resurrection, described in 1 Corinthians xv., takes place at the coming of the Lord? "They that are Christ's at his coming." (Ver. 23.) It is quite true that the end, or second resurrection, takes place after the kingdom is delivered up. (Ver. 24.) The order of resurrection is thus described. "Christ the firstfruits." Then, "Afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." We know that more than eighteen hundred years have intervened between these two parts. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God." And we know from Revelation xx., that at least one thousand years will intervene between the resurrection of "they that are his," and the rest of the dead.

This also is certain, that as the apostle refers to a scripture in Isaiah, that ushers in the millennium, as the time of the resurrection of "those that are his" in verse 54—"Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory"—that therefore the coming of the Lord, and this the first resurrection, takes place before, and not after the millennium.

C. S.

## GOD'S GLAD TIDINGS.

CHRIST: A PROPITIATION, AND THE BEARER  
AWAY OF OUR SINS,

THE terrible effect of sin is to shut the sinner out from the presence of God. He is the Holy One. What is unholy can have no place in His presence. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Not only is there no place in His presence for what is sinful, but He can only deal with it in unsparing judgment. Thus has He dealt with sin at the cross, and so will He deal with the rejecters of His grace by-and-by. He will judge the world by that Man whom He has appointed. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. i. 7-9.) Solemn testimony as to judgment! Wrath alone is the response of His nature to sin. Man is a sinner, and therefore unfit for God's presence, and not only unfit for His presence, but under His wrath. From this the believer has redemption. But "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Awful state! Unconverted reader, it is *your* state. What do you think of it? How will you meet

that Saviour whom you have long slighted and rejected, when He comes "in flaming fire, taking vengeance?" A slighted and rejected Saviour taking vengeance! Terrible thought! Oh how will you meet Him before the great white throne, when heaven and earth have fled, and there is neither rock nor mountain to hide you from the fire of His wrath? Dear reader, your sins must be blotted out by the blood of the Lamb now, while God reveals Himself in grace, or else inevitable, unsparing, eternal judgment must be your portion—the lake of fire! the undying worm! the smoke whose torment ascends for ever and ever! no rest day nor night! Oh, the anguish, the indescribable anguish, of a lost soul! Perhaps, reader, you have experienced the sufferings of a burning fever, with its restless tossings, for a few days and nights. How at night you longed for the morning, and when morning came there was still no rest, and you thought the weary hours would never pass! But what is this in comparison? Only a moment; no, not even that, for time is not even a drop in the shoreless ocean of eternity. When countless ages have come and gone, hell is but begun; the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth find no answer; the tossings of the lost on the fiery billows approach no nearer an end; IT IS ETERNAL! Such is the doom of those who reject God's gracious remedy for sin, and whom sin shuts out

from His presence. Oh! unsaved soul, how awful must be your state if you can pursue your path unconcerned to such a doom! May God in mercy arouse your conscience, and arrest you in your fatal course.

But do you say, I know I am a poor wicked sinner, and the judgment of God is only what I deserve; but how can such a sinner escape that judgment, and get clear of all his sins? Let us look then for an answer to this question in God's blessed word. You have sinned against God, and you need forgiveness and justification. But these you cannot expect at the expense of God's character—His justice and holiness. You have dishonoured God, and ruined yourself; and you can neither undo the dishonour, nor repair the ruin. Here then are two things to be provided for, the dishonour done to God, and your need as a guilty ruined sinner. God in his free and boundless mercy has provided for both. If the sinner's resources were at an end, this only became the occasion for the rich display of inexhaustible resources in God Himself. His eternal fulness has been displayed in Christ, His Son, the gift of His love to a lost world. Most blessed God! most precious Gift!

The sacrifice of Christ answers every question that can be raised, whether as to the character of God, or the sinner's need. He has more than blotted out the dishonour done to God by sin,

and He has more than answered for the sins of those who believe on His name. "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation [or propitiatory] through faith in his blood" declares the one; "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" declares the other. One of these texts declares that God is satisfied as to the whole question of sin; the other declares that our need is met—met fully and for ever. Happy those who have received into their hearts these two blessed truths.

Dear reader, let me call your attention to a blessed and beautiful picture of these two things. You will find it in Leviticus xvi. It is the great day of atonement. The sins of a whole year have been accumulating against the children of Israel. The day has come when Jehovah makes provision for the people in a way suitable to Himself. Two goats were chosen—one for Jehovah, and one for the people. These were both types of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first goat was killed, and the blood was carried by the high priest within the veil of the tabernacle into the most holy place, and sprinkled on the mercy-seat, between the cherubim and before the mercy-seat. Then the blood was applied to the holy place, and to the tabernacle of the congregation, and to the altar. Almost all things were purged by blood. When this part of the work was done, the high priest came

out again to the people, and taking the other goat alive, confessed on its head all the sins of the people, and sent it away, by a fit man, into a land not inhabited.

The holy of holies behind the veil, was the presence chamber of the divine Majesty. The mercy-seat was His throne. Jehovah said, "I will appear in the cloud on the mercy-seat." His dwelling-place was between the cherubim; and the Shekinah, or glory-cloud, was the symbol of His presence. Here the high priest approached on behalf of a sinful people. How could he stand in the presence of that glory as the representative of a sinful people? Israel had sinned, and the high priest, being one of themselves, was also a sinner. How then could he enter the presence of that glorious and holy Majesty? There was a prescribed way. He came with blood in his hand, and with sweet incense on his censer, burning with coals from the altar—the holy fire. And while the perfume of that burning incense (the sweet savour ascending out of the death of Christ, under the testing of divine judgment, of which the holy fire was the type) ascended between him and that cloud of glory, he sprinkled the blood on the mercy-seat and before it. The inflexible justice and holy majesty of the throne were thus vindicated. The blood had made propitiation; Jehovah was satisfied; and He could now send out blessing to the



people. Peace having been made by the blood, the high priest retraces his steps outward toward the people, reconciling the holy place, the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar—everything defiled by a sinful people. The waiting people see their high priest coming out again. How do they know that his work has availed for them? Because he has been in the presence of Jehovah on their behalf, and has come forth again without being consumed. The blood which he carried within, has settled all; and not only this, but the high priest comes forth, and, in the name of Jehovah, sends away the sins of the people on the head of the live goat, to be remembered no more. Thus Jehovah is satisfied, the sins of the people are gone, and their relationships with Jehovah are maintained in righteousness.

Now, dear reader, all this is a blessed picture of what the Lord Jesus has done for those who believe on His name. Through the eternal Spirit, He has offered Himself without spot to God. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." (Heb. ix.) By His blood, the truth and righteousness, holiness and majesty of God's throne have been established for ever. As a sacrifice for sin, He bowed His head on the cross under the wrath of God. There He drained the cup of divine judgment, and there He cried, "It is

finished." God's immediate answer was the rending of the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom. God has set forth Christ a mercy-seat, or way of approach into His presence. It is "through faith in his blood." God's righteousness in remitting sins is declared through the blood of Christ. God is now just in justifying the sinner who believes in Christ. God has been so perfectly glorified about sin, that now, in virtue of the blood of Jesus, from a throne of mercy He extends the arms of mercy, and invites the sinner to come. To every sinner in the wide, wide world, God's gracious call is, "Come."

But this is not all. To every sinner who does come—to every one who believes His gracious message—He says: "Your sins and iniquities I will remember no more." He, of whom the scape-goat was the type, has borne them all away into the land not inhabited, where they are eternally forgotten.

Dear reader, do you believe in the sacrifice of Christ? Do you believe that sacrifice has gone up as a sweet savour to God? Do you believe the blood of Jesus has met every claim of God's throne? Do you believe God is now saying, "Come?" Does your heart utter its "Amen" in response to all this? Then your sins are gone—gone for ever—gone never to be remembered more.

You say, "Well, I do believe in Christ, and I do believe God has found satisfaction in his sacrifice, and that He is inviting sinners to come, but I do not quite see how it applies to me and that my sins are gone." Come, then, and let me point out to you another side of this truth as to the blessed work of Christ. You will find it in the end of Romans iv.

We have been looking at the work of Christ. His sacrifice has glorified God. It has met every claim of His holy nature. In this sacrifice the veil was rent. The veil was Christ's flesh. (Heb. x. 20.) Through this rent-veil God has been revealed—revealed in Christ providing a sacrifice for the guilty. You look through the rent-veil, and you see Him sitting on a throne of mercy, sitting between the cherubim, as it were, over the mercy-seat, and addressing Himself to the world as a Saviour-God, and saying to sinners: 'I have provided a sacrifice for your need, my own holy Lamb; in the presence of your sin I have been glorified by the shedding of His blood; I am satisfied; come to me, and be ye saved.' Thus, God addresses Himself to a world of sinners. You say, you believe it. This then is the God you have found through what Christ has done. Yes, I say this is the God you have found, for you have been looking at the work of Christ, and it has rent the veil, opened the way right through to the mercy-seat, and brought you face

to face with God, the Saviour-God, and you hear Him saying, "Come." But now, this God in whose presence you stand, and whom you hear beseeching you to come—has He done nothing? Has He had nothing to do in the wondrous transaction of the cross? Ah! yes, reader, this is the God who gave His only begotten Son for you, and who did not spare, but delivered Him up to the death for you. He delivered Him up for your offences, and raised Him again for your justification. Fix your eyes for a moment upon this blessed God of all grace. See Him bring forth His own holy Lamb! See Him lay your sins on the spotless Victim. He made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin. The cross is the scene of action, where Christ, the Son of God, is nailed to the tree, numbered with the transgressors. There He "bare our sins in his own body." There He suffered, the Just for the unjust. There, reader, the Holy One of God "was delivered for our offences." He died, and was buried. Was that the end? No, thank God, that was not the end. Had that been the end, hope would have found its grave in the sepulchre of Christ. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." "But now is Christ risen from the dead." (1 Cor. xv.) Yes, reader, the same God who delivered Him for your offences, also raised Him again for your justification.

But you were looking at God as the One who brought forth His holy Lamb, and laid your sins upon Him, and delivered Him up to death because of them. Did God raise Him up again with your sins upon Him? Impossible! If God could do that, He never would have delivered Him to death. It was for your sins He died; and by His death He paid the penalty. It was because He was under the judgment of God for your sins, that He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" If He had not gone to the end of that judgment—exhausted it—God could not have turned His face toward Him again. But the Son of God could not fail, blessed be His name! He took from the hand of God the cup that was yours, and drank it, until not a drop was left for you to drink. God poured out His judgment on Him till not a drop of judgment remained for you. Then the darkness was past; the heavens were clear again; and God raised Him up from the dead. Thank God, your sins are gone! Him who bore them God has raised from the dead—raised Him for your justification. It is God's own word. The offences are gone, and justification takes their place. As surely as He was delivered for your offences, so surely is your justification a consequence of His death and resurrection. It was *God* who delivered Him; it was *God* who raised Him again: ~~and~~ "it is God who justifies." And

this is *our* God, the God we have found, and to whom we have access by Jesus Christ. It is the God who has taken our sins, and buried them in everlasting forgetfulness in the grave of Jesus, and who has brought us face to face with Himself with purged consciences, washed in the blood of Jesus, and made whiter than snow. God Himself has settled the question of our guilt—settled it with Christ, on whom He laid our sins. The question is settled, never to be re-opened. The resurrection of Christ proves it, and has secured our justification. All is bright now in the presence of God. All is peace. All is love.

Reader, is it all bright with you?



## THE COMING OF THE LORD.

1 THESS. IV. 16.

THE morning greys, the moment now is near  
When the archangel's voice from heaven is heard,  
When our loved Lord, descending, will appear,  
To change and raise the ransomed by that word.

What triumphs then! what songs our lips employ!  
When Jesus' love and beauty wake our praise,  
When naught of sin or self to mar our joy,  
Salvation's song eternal we shall raise.

Oh wondrous theme! what wisdom of our God  
To make His enemies supremely blest!  
For thousand thousand sinners, cleansed by blood,  
In God's own home above shall find their rest.

Awake, ye saints, awake, His coming nears;  
Count all here loss (in Christ all things are yours);  
Be watching faithfully, when He appears,  
Spending for Him these last few fleeting hours.

A. W. F.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

4. F. F. C., Liverpool.—1. It is scriptural to call any gathering together *an* assembly. (See Acts xix. 32, 39, 41.) This heathen concourse of people could not have been called “the church,” and this shews that the modern use of the word church is not the correct one. Thus also, believers gathered together, whether in Egypt or elsewhere, can be called “assemblies;” but strictly, not any one of them could be called “*the assembly* which is the body of Christ.” If all believers in one place were gathered to Christ, as at the beginning, then they could be scripturally called the assembly of God in that place.

2. There is no necessary connection between the temple of Malachi iii. 1 and 2 Thessalonians ii. 4. The prophecy refers to the first coming of Christ to the temple then standing, and to John the Baptist. But owing to Israel’s rejection of Jehovah, which was evidently Christ, it goes on to His second coming in judgment. Jesus did come to His temple, but was rejected. The period of the church, or assembly, is passed over, as in other prophecies, and runs on to the judgment and millennial blessing. Without the light of the New Testament we could not separate the first and the second coming, yet all is in the most perfect harmony. John came in the power of Elias.

3. There is no veil of the temple set up again in the millennial temple, but there are doors which take its place. (Ezek. xli. 3, 4, 23, 24.) Jehovah will again dwell with His people of Israel (Ezek. xliii. 1–7), and great shall be the privileges of the prince of Israel. But the way

into the most holy does not seem to be even open unto him. (Ezek. xlvi. 1-18.) The people of the land shall worship at the door. (Ver. 3.) Surely all this shews us the unspeakable privilege we have now, even to enter with boldness the holiest, by the blood of Jesus. (Heb. x.) Do we understand this?

4. There is no scripture instruction as to any particular time when we should break bread. 'It is as oft as ye do it, &c.

5. The difference between "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" may be stated thus. "Psalms" are the psalms of David and others, known as psalms; "hymns" are compositions of holy praise, suited for corporate worship; and songs of praise, or spiritual songs, are holy poetic compositions, more expressive of individual faith, and joy in the Lord, such as the song of Hannah at Shiloh. It is the will of God that believers should speak to themselves thus, "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. v. 19.) "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col. iii. 16.) May we never sing except it be to the Lord.

6. It is remarkable that there is little said as to the idolatry of Israel in Egypt. Exodus xxxii. would leave no doubt that they had been idolaters; but scripture is chiefly occupied with their idolatry, after they were a redeemed people from Egypt. What a lesson for us, who profess to have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.



7. The helmet of salvation is the real certainty that we are saved eternally.

Your other questions do not seem to us to be for the profit of the readers of this magazine. And this is our object, not to be occupied with curious, or merely intellectual, questions. May the Lord graciously give food for the whole flock of God.

5. H.—“But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Cor. ii. 16.) No doubt these words apply in a special way to the apostles. And it is a matter for great thankfulness that we have the very inspired words of those who had the mind of Christ. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual discerneth all things.” Thus, though we have the very inspired words of God, yet the natural man is still in darkness, yea, is darkness. But it is evidently the privilege of every spiritual man to discern them.

Divisions, however, proved that these Corinthians were not spiritual, but natural, or carnal; which is the sad condition of Christendom at this day. These divisions prove that Christendom is not spiritual, and cannot say, with the apostle, we have the mind of Christ. There were no such divisions to rebuke at Philippi, hence the tender admonition: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Surely we are responsible earnestly to seek this.

1 Corinthians vi. 4, 5, is a rebuke.

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## NOTE.

It is our sorrowful duty to have to inform our readers that it has pleased the Lord to take to Himself His servant, our beloved fellow-labourer, Mr. CHARLES STANLEY, who for more than ten years has edited THINGS NEW AND OLD. In these pages he has told out, in his own simple way, the truth as taught him by the Holy Spirit, while pondering over the word.

For more than fifty years it was his privilege and delight to proclaim all over the country the glorious gospel of God, and to have the joy of knowing that there were given him many souls for his hire.

He was also used of the Lord to write many tracts, millions of which have been circulated, and he had the happiness of knowing that these were blessed to the salvation and deliverance of many souls. Some of his tracts have also been translated into various languages, one quite lately being published in Japanese. He was written to from all quarters for tracts, and gave them away very freely. His preaching and his tracts brought him a widespread correspondence in this and other lands, in which he was greatly interested, and he gladly gave aid and advice as the Lord enabled him.

On Saturday, March 29th, Mr. Stanley penned his last paper for this magazine on "Christ Feeding the Multitude." He had had a hard

week of correspondence, and was feeling weary, but was otherwise in his usual health. On Lord's day morning, the 30th, he read with his dear wife Psalm xxxix. and went to the breaking of bread. Hymn 79, "Rest of the saints above," was sung, and also Hymn 12.

He prayed in the meeting and was expecting to preach in the evening. He returned home and sat down to dinner, rose for a moment, but on returning to the table he immediately stretched out his arm, and his head sank upon it. On his dear wife endeavouring to raise him, she found his spirit had fled: he was with his long-loved Lord and Master. His remains were interred in the Rotherham Cemetery on Thursday, April 3rd, in presence of a numerous company of sorrowing friends, but who were able to rejoice for his sake, as one for whom it is now "far better."

The principal events connected with Mr. Stanley's labours have been published in "INCIDENTS OF GOSPEL WORK."

May all the readers of THINGS NEW AND OLD be as "meet" and as "ready" for a like summons, and for the coming of the Lord, as was the late Editor, and one day join him above, to be for ever with and like their Lord, is the desire of

THE PUBLISHER.

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Correspondence to be sent to 20, Paternoster Square.

## THE PRESENT NEED OF SOULS.

AN earnest enquirer asks, "In Romans i. 17, there is revealed the righteousness of God by faith unto faith. What does Paul mean by the two faiths in this verse?"

This enquiry contains one of the deepest needs of souls—one which lays at the very root of solid peace with God.

The literal translation of this scripture is given thus: "For I am not ashamed of the glad tidings; for it is God's power to salvation, to every one that believes, both to Jew first, and to Greek: for righteousness of God is revealed therein, on the principle of faith, to faith: according as it is written, But the just shall live by faith [or on the principle of faith.]" Righteousness of God is a new thing—a new thought, revealed in contrast with righteousness of man required by the law. It is important to understand this clearly. The glad tidings is thus in direct contrast with the law.

The law was concerning man, God's righteous claims on man, God claiming righteousness from man, the just and holy commands of God to man—that was the principle of law. It was no question of faith, but of perfect obedience.

Now mark this entirely new revelation, the glad tidings, is God's power to salvation to everyone that believes. Surely then it is of the first im-

portance to understand what this new revelation is. "For righteousness of God is revealed therein, on the principle of faith, to faith." That is, it is not at all, neither can be, on the principle of works of law; but is entirely on the principle of faith. And it is still further remarkable what follows: "according as it is written, But the just shall live by faith." In the original "by faith" is the same as "on the principle of faith."

The apostle then proves that on the principle of law, man, whether Jew or Gentile, cannot be justified. Those under law were sinners, guilty of the most shameful sins. Those not under law were no better; all were proved guilty. "For we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin: as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one," &c. The applied principle of law only brought out this: "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty BEFORE God."

Let it then be fully understood that on the principle of law and works no one can be justified—all are concluded under judgment to God. Man has been fully tried, found guilty, and is under judgment. Like a prisoner who has been fully and fairly tried by a jury of twelve of his countrymen. All that counsel could say for him has been said. The sentence is past: he is under judgment of death. Look at him in

his condemned cell, waiting the awful moment of execution. Here the illustration must stop. Nothing can illustrate this new revelation of God. No judge could pass sentence on a proved-guilty prisoner, and then declare himself to be the very justifier of this guilty man. Could he say, "The prisoner at the bar has been proved guilty. I have, according to the principles of the law of this land, passed sentence of death upon him; and now I justify him from every charge, and declare there is no condemnation to him?" On the principle of law, even human law, this would be impossible.

Have you ever been taken up? It is not unlikely that you have been trying to attain to righteousness and justification by the principles of law. Have you ever felt the horror of the condemned cell—guilty and under judgment? You may say, "I am not a Jew, I was never under law." Very well, but you have sinned; you are guilty; you are under judgment if you belong to this world. Now the very principle of law is what you are to God, and you never can be satisfied that you are what you would like to be to God. No, if you stand before God on the principle of what you are, and what you have done, or what you feel, &c., if it is concerning yourself, you are in the condemned cell; and you cannot get out on the principle of your works to God. God is true; you have no

righteousness, not even as much as would satisfy your own conscience. Have you?

Hence the deep need of your soul to have righteousness of God. This is, not what you are to God, but what God is to you. It is entirely what God is, in justifying you, a guilty, condemned sinner. Oh, the need in this day of this new revelation, righteousness of God, on the principle of faith. This is without law; if we bring in the principle of law, God could not be righteous in justifying what His law condemns. It is wholly apart from law, though the law with all its sacrifices bore witness of God's provision and purpose to justify the sinner. The prophets speak of the Holy Sufferer, who should bear the iniquities of His people. Abraham believed God, and was accounted righteous.

Now, how has righteousness of God been revealed? On the principle of faith. "Righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ towards all, and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." (Rom iii. 22-24.) You will notice these glad tidings are concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord; not concerning us, or our feelings, or our works.

What then has God done? We are guilty, only guilty. What has God done? is the ques-

tion. He has loved us when guilty in the condemned cell. He has given His Son to die for us, to redeem us from guilt and judgment. All this was pure grace to the guilty under judgment. God, in sending His Son to redeem us, is set before us as the object of faith. In the life of Jesus we see God for us, not reckoning our iniquities unto us, but in love, beseeching us to be reconciled to Him. And when this utterly failed to win the heart of man, when the very priesthood of His people Israel hated Him with inveterate hatred, even unto the most cruel and shameful death, even there in that death, grace and righteousness shone forth as never known or seen before. When we had done our utmost against God in the person of the eternal Son, in that very place, on that very cross, God was for us. He was delivered for our iniquities. If God is to be righteous in justifying us, Jesus must suffer the infinite wrath due to our sins. Yea, more : He must be made sin, and as the one sin offering, He must be forsaken of God. Yes, Jesus, lifted up on the cross, explains, reveals righteousness of God in justifying both Old Testament saints before, and all who have believed since that death on the cross. Jesus said, "It is finished." He bowed His head in death, gave up the Ghost, and was laid in the sepulchre.

But how am I to know that God has accepted the atoning death of Christ for me? "Who



was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification :” precious certainty for faith to rest upon. Now, have our works, or our feelings, or our keeping the law, anything to do with this certainty of faith? Did our feelings raise Him from the dead? Oh, the blessed principle of faith: God the object of faith to our faith. That is, we believe God; and believing God, we have all the eternal benefit of righteousness of God. It is upon us. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,” &c. (Rom. v. 1.)

You notice the article, “the,” is omitted in the original. “Righteousness of God,” not *the* righteousness, as if there were any other righteousness. “There is none righteous, *no, not one.*” How vain then must be the effort to seek righteousness by works, or on the principle of works, or law. There is no such thing as righteousness on the principle of works. God sets His Son before us as the object of faith, all on the principle of faith. Will you try any longer to prove that God has made a mistake? that after all you hope, with His help, to attain to salvation by your works, and by your prayers, or fasting, or by any other means? You must see that all this is not on the principle of faith. And you never can have peace with God on the principle of works.

No, righteousness of God is what God has done. Do you say, What has He done? He set Christ before you as the mercy seat. The blood of Jesus is the answer. The atoning death for our sins is the answer of God. God hath laid our iniquities on His only begotten Son on the cross. Yes, God so loved us when we were in, not our righteousness, but in our sins, and had no righteousness. God undertook our redemption. He provided the Lamb. This is "righteousness of God, which is, by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe." What a wonderful thing the principle of faith is. Many hundreds of years before Jesus thus died as the sacrifice for sins, Abraham believed God, and faith was reckoned for righteousness. But now Jesus *has* died, God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (all who believe). Jesus, sent of the Father, has taken the entire responsibility of all our sins. He has endured the wrath due to them; and He has put them away. The believer is justified in Him.

Can you doubt that God has accepted Him as our representative? Look at that empty sepulchre. Where is Jesus? Look up to the throne of God. Jesus is there, crowned with glory. He was once crowned with thorns, bearing the shame that we deserved; and then soon far deeper sorrow, bearing the wrath of God—made sin for us. Once all our sins were on Him when forsaken of God. Oh, mystery of love!

Is one of our sins on Him now? If one of our sins is on Him now in heaven, He must be as forsaken of God as He was on the cross. Such is sin in the sight of righteousness of God. No, sins are gone, to be remembered no more: and all this on the principle of faith according to righteousness of God, not according to my righteousness of law. Jesus has made peace by the death of the cross, according to righteousness of God. Thus everything that was on the principle of our works is gone. All things are now new, and all of God.

Now, do you believe that God is righteous in putting away your sins by the blood of Jesus? and further, in raising up His beloved Son for your justification? If you believe God, righteousness, His righteousness, is reckoned to you. You are reckoned righteous before God. You are reckoned what that blessed Man, God's Son, is in the glory. "As He is, so are we in this world," and soon to be as He is, like Him for ever. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Do not forget Satan's object is ever to take the eye off Christ, the principle of faith, to self, the principle of works, or what I am to God. Satan knows well, how this fills the soul with darkness and unbelief. The principle of faith is what God is to me revealed in Christ.

C. S.

## GOD'S GLAD TIDINGS.

## PEACE WITH GOD.

"ABRAHAM believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." He was reckoned righteous *on the principle of faith*. What gave character to his faith was divine—the *word of God*. "The word of the Lord came unto Abraham . . . . and he believed." So when his faith was put to the test it was found to be divine. He offered up his only begotten, accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead. Here was simple faith, and divine. It was faith in "God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things that be not, as though they were." He received promise of a seed innumerable as the stars of heaven when nature's resources were at an end; he received promise of a son when he and Sarah were as good as dead, and he believed the word of the Lord. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was reckoned to him for righteousness." (Rom. iv.)

But why was this written? Not for his sake alone, "but for us also, to whom it shall be reckoned, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: who was delivered

for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Just here, however, there is an immense difference as to what "the word of the Lord" communicated to Abraham was, and what is presented to us by the same word. What Abraham received was a *promise*—something to be fulfilled by-and-by. What is presented to us is an *accomplished fact*. Of course Abraham's faith rested in God, and so must ours; but with this difference, that his had to wait for fulfilment of the promise, while ours joyfully receives the word which announces the fulfilment as already accomplished. God promised, Abraham believed, and waited; now God has wrought, we believe, and rejoice.

And how blessedly God has wrought! Look at it! God spared not His Son, but gave Him up to be a sacrifice. The sacrifice has been offered, and the blood is on the mercy-seat. The vail is rent, and the sinner can approach in virtue of the blood. But more, God has raised up from the dead the One who bore our sins. He delivered Him for our offences, and in proof that our offences have been cancelled, He has raised Him for our justifying. All is accomplished. We do not await the fulfilment of a promise. We believe God's testimony to a work which He Himself has accomplished, and accomplished for all who believe. Do you believe that Christ died for sinners? Do you believe that God

raised Him again from the dead? Do these truths find a place in your heart? Be assured, then, that through Christ Jesus, you have found God as your Justifier. As truly as Christ's death has cancelled the guilt of His people, so truly His resurrection secures their justification; and "being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." If God has justified, the question of guilt cannot be raised again; it is settled for ever. God says: "I will remember no more." "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 7, 8.) "Will not impute!" What a word! Yet God has said it, that He *will not* impute sins to the believer, that He will not remember sins against them any more. The reason is plain. Our sins were all laid on Jesus; *God* laid them on Him; and He died, the Just for the unjust, to put these sins away. His blood which puts them away speaks on the mercy-seat. God sees the blood. Guilt for the believer He sees no more. He sees only the blood that put it away. With this He is satisfied. And if He is satisfied, why should not I be satisfied? Every claim of His holy nature has been met. He says, It is enough, and in proof has raised up Christ for our justification. He is just, and the Justifier. I believe in Jesus; I believe He died for me, a poor sinner. But

more, I believe God gave Him for me, and laid my sins on Him when He hung on the tree, and because of my sins God brought Him down into the dust of death. What is the result? My sins are gone. God has dealt with them in righteousness in the person of my Substitute, and they are put away for ever. What is the proof? How do I know? The answer is simple. God has raised up from the dead His Son Jesus Christ who bore them, and His word tells me I am justified. Once my conscience told me God was *against* me because I was a sinner. Now I know God is *for* me. In Christ He has shewn me this. In Christ I have seen Him *against* my sins, but *for* me the sinner. He has dealt with my sins in unsparing judgment, and that judgment fell on His holy Lamb; but He has dealt with me, the sinner, in absolute grace, and has set me in His own presence in Christ according to divine righteousness where sin cannot be imputed. My sins He remembers no more—imputes no more. I cannot be charged with guilt, because the blood of my Redeemer is on the mercy-seat, the witness of eternal redemption. There might be redemption in Israel by the blood of goats and calves for *a year*; but Christ by His blood has entered into the holy place, having obtained ETERNAL REDEMPTION. (Heb. ix.) Here, blessed be His name, my guilty conscience, weary with its burden, has found

rest! It is purged for ever! No burden of guilt to carry any more! No more dread of eternal judgment! The cup of judgment has been drained by another. The wrath which conscience dreaded has all been spent on Him who cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—the God whom I have found, and whom I now know, is a Saviour-God. In His unclouded favour I stand, and into His blessed face I look, and gaze in perfect peace. Heavings and tossings there may have been fearful forebodings, dread of an angry God, and of judgment to come, but now the storm is hushed, the sky is bright, and all is peace. Peace has been made through the blood of Jesus' cross. Glorious basis! The blood of the cross answers every question that can be raised as to God's character, and on that basis God is reconciling sinners to Himself. God was the offended and injured One, not the sinner; and the sinner is the enemy, not God. God, therefore, was the One who needed satisfaction, not the sinner; and the sinner was the one who needed to be reconciled, not God. God Himself has provided satisfaction according to the requirements of His own nature, and has found it in the blood of the Sacrifice. His own heart provided, and His own hand led to the altar, and the holy fire of His own judgment consumed. And now God is the Reconciler. It is not war that He now announces,



but peace. The message the gospel contains is a message of peace from the Reconciler of guilty men; and the word is "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Thus the message runs. Blessed message to every one who knows himself a lost sinner and bows to the truth of God. Believing, we are justified; and "being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Enemies afar off we were, but now reconciled and brought nigh. He who has done this is the One who gave His Son for us, and who by the blood of Jesus has cleared us of every charge, and justified us in righteousness. The distance gone, the enmity abolished, we are in the presence of Him who is Love; and this in divine righteousness. God's own presence fills the scene. His peace, His love, eternal and divine, are shed on all around. Blessed scene! Reader, are you in it? If not, why not? God, whom you offended, has provided the satisfaction you could not make, and now He stoops to beseech. His call from the mercy-seat is, "Be ye reconciled." Do you refuse? Are you resolved on warfare? Does the message of peace find no response in your heart? Is your puny arm still raised against God? Well, you shall meet Him by-and-by, not in peace, but in judgment, Poor worm of

the dust, "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD," prepare for war with thy Creator. Alas! alas! poor blinded mortal! One look from His holy eye in that day will pierce you through and through! Oh! let me beseech you now by the mercies of God, by His infinite love and grace, by His patience and long-suffering, by the agony and bloody sweat, by the cross and passion, of His dear Son, be ye reconciled to God! Dear reader, the issues are eternal, eternal either in joy or sorrow, in heaven or hell. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

But do you say, "As a lost sinner, I know I have no hope of salvation except through Christ, but somehow I do not get this peace you speak of?" Well, why do you not get it? Perhaps you think you have some condition to fulfil; or perhaps you are trying to get it by feeling it. This is all wrong. There is no meritorious condition to fulfil, and it is not gotten by feeling. Do you believe that God has found satisfaction in the sacrifice of Christ? Do you believe that God raised Him up from the dead? You say, "Yes." Well, how do you know? By fulfilling some condition? Or because you feel it? You say, "No, but because God's word declares it." Well, God's word also declares that, on believing on Him who raised up Jesus from the dead, you are justified? How do you know,

then, that you are justified? By feeling it? Certainly not; you cannot feel it, but you know it because God's word declares it. Well, God's word also declares that "being justified by faith we have peace with God," and you know it simply because God's word declares it. Faith receives the word of God, and there it rests with divine assurance, and the peace which the gospel announces fills the soul.

And now let me lead you back to a little company that followed the Lord Jesus during His ministry in the flesh. Foolish they were, and slow to take in their Master's thoughts, and words, and ways. Nor is it otherwise with man still. Well, Jesus set His face to go up to Jerusalem the last time; the cross is in His thoughts, and He speaks of this to them, but they understand not; and while He is on the way to that, they are thinking about the best place in the kingdom. He passes on with fixed purpose. Nothing can turn Him aside. In Gethsemane all the horrors of the cross are pressed upon His soul, and in His agony of prayer He sweats as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. The disciples all go fast asleep. A band of soldiers come to take Him, and He gives Himself into their hands. The disciples all run away. He goes to the cross, and dies, and is buried. All their hopes are buried with Him. Early in the morning, the first day of the

week, the sepulchre is found empty. Angels announce His resurrection. He appears to Mary, to Peter, and to others. The news is spread abroad among the disciples, and all are filled with wonder. Up to this point all is darkness. They understand not the strange things that happened. You wonder, perhaps, at their stupidity. But such is man. Light and love had begun to shine in the Person of the Lord Jesus, yet He was straitened up to the time of the cross. "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" The pent-up ocean of divine love could break forth, and flow unhindered only through the cross. It is in Jesus Christ, through the cross, that God has given the full revelation of Himself—Light and Love—to man. In the cross sin was judged, and God was glorified, and after the cross the darkness broke. If the earthly hopes of that little band were all blasted by the death of Christ, it was only that brighter hopes might soon dawn. If His resurrection was at first a cause of wonder to them, it was indeed life out of death to them, and the bringing in of a hope that cannot die. Let us follow them a little further. In the evening of the resurrection day they are all gathered together in an upper room, with bolted doors, and as one and another tell what they have seen and heard, He appears in the midst of them. And now, as all eyes are

turned upon Him, He greets them with these blessed words—words never uttered before, and now uttered as the fruit of His blood-shedding on the cross—“PEACE BE UNTO YOU.” And then (oh wondrous grace !) to confirm His words He shews them “His hands and his side.” Out of those hands, and out of that side, had flowed the blood by which He had made peace ; and having made peace, He announces it as theirs, as soon as He is risen from the dead. Was ever anything more sweet and blessed than such grace as this on the part of the Lord Jesus in telling out the love of God to those He had drawn around Himself ? Weak, foolish, halting, doubting, understanding nothing aright, what pains He took to lead them into the enjoyment of that peace which was the fruit of His blood-shedding on the cross ! “Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.”

And now, doubting one, put yourself in that little company in that upper room. Fix your eyes on Jesus in the midst, and listen to His assuring words, as He says to all around, “PEACE BE UNTO YOU.” His word to all such is the same now ; and those hands and that side tell the same blessed story of peace to all who believe. Jesus has made peace, and now preaches it. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord ; and there is gladness still for those who believe His

blessed word. Oh! what gladness! Gladness in the presence of God, in a cloudless scene of light and love, where grace reigns through righteousness, and where divine love delights in those brought nigh through the blood of Jesus.

A. H. R.

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QUESTIONS OF INTEREST,  
ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

V.

"It is said, with the greatest confidence, that it was a mistake of the Thessalonian saints to be expecting the coming of the Lord; and that this is proved by the second epistle to that church, in which it is declared that the day of Christ is not at hand, or near; and that there must come a falling away before that event can happen. How is this difficulty to be removed? How can we be expecting the Lord at any time if something must happen first?"

That it is the duty as well as the privilege of the Christian to be expecting the coming of the Lord at any moment is quite clear from other passages. Take for instance Luke xii. 35-37: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed

are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching."

Clearly the attitude of such servants is to be always ready, so that they can open the door *immediately*. Blessed are the servants found watching. All this would be entirely nullified if it were true that certain occurrences must take place *before* the return. Then we might be looking for some event to happen, let it be what it might, but we could not be expecting the Lord, for He would not be coming until *after* that event, whereas scripture puts nothing between. "We look for the Saviour."

We are like virgins that have already gone forth to meet the bridegroom : surely not because He is *not* to be expected ; but because the proper attitude of the Christian is to be watching for and expecting His coming. This, indeed, is the blessed hope of the Christian, and not our dying and going to the Lord, blessed as that is.

When Paul wrote the first epistle to the Thessalonians he records how God had turned them from idols to serve the living and true God ; and to wait for His Son from heaven. (Chap. i. 9, 10.) If this waiting had been a wrong thing would he not have corrected it then and there ? But instead of this, he thanks God for them, for they had become examples to other believers, and the word of the Lord had sounded out from them ; and indeed it was God Himself who had

turned them . . . . to wait for his Son from heaven. It is impossible therefore that it could be a mistake on their part to be thus waiting.

Neither is this waiting for Christ from heaven in any way said to be a mistake in the second epistle. It is well known that many think it is so; but it is because they do not distinguish between "the coming of the Lord," and the "day of the Lord" (as 2 Thess. ii. 2 should read), which are two totally different events. What can be a happier thought for the Christian than to be hoping for the Lord to come and take him *and every other saint on earth and in the tombs* to be for ever with and like the Lord Himself? Well may the apostle add, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. iv. 18.) Whereas "the *day* of the Lord" is connected with *judgment*. Let us look at a few of the passages.

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." (Isa. xiii. 9.) "Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand: a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains." (Joel ii. 1, 2; see also chap. iii. 14, 15.) "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt



with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." (2 Pet. iii. 10.)

Now if we turn to the second epistle to the Thessalonians, we find that some one had been troubling the saints (by a false epistle or message) and teaching that because they were in tribulation therefore the day of the Lord *had come*, or was "present" (as it should read in chap. ii. 2). The apostle tells them that the day of the Lord could not come before the revelation of the Antichrist, the man of sin, whom the Lord when He comes in judgment will destroy with the brightness of His coming. And further, he tells them that though the mystery of iniquity was at work, yet *the* Antichrist could not then be revealed because of Him whose presence hindered; but He would be taken away, and then the man of sin would be revealed, and would be destroyed by the Lord Himself.

The apostle reminds them that he had told them these things; but the enemy had come in with false teaching, and the saints were in distress. The passage gives an awful description of the end of those who now will not believe the truth; then they will believe a lie, and will perish with the one who will have been the instrument of their apostasy.

But all this is entirely different from the blessed hope God sets before His saints, and with

which He bids them encourage one another. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God;" and then we shall all be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

May we all be looking for this blessed event, the coming of our Lord, and be found ready and watching when He shall come.



## COMMUNION OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST.

(1 CORINTHIANS x. 16, 17.)

It is to be feared that because some who are called Christians make too much of the Lord's supper, or rather misapply it, and run for a priest to administer it to a dying man to ensure his salvation; others are apt to make too little of it, and think of it solely as a table of remembrance. It is blessedly true that it is a table of remembrance. Our Lord said, "This do in remembrance of me," and to partake of the Lord's supper without remembering the Lord Himself, is surely not really partaking of it at all. The

Lord knew what poor forgetful creatures we should be, and how much we should need a frequent ordinance by which to call Him to remembrance, and He instituted His supper for that very purpose.

But is there not more than this in the Lord's supper? God has caused it to be written, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.) Now here it is plainly a question of communion—communion in its double aspect. In verse 16 it is communion with the body and blood of the Lord, the body of our Lord that was nailed to the cross, the blood of our Lord that was shed to put away our sins. In verse 17 it is communion of the body of our Lord that is composed of His saints; though we be many, we are but one loaf—one body; and this is proved by being all partakers of the one loaf.

The communion between the offerer and the offering is illustrated from the Old Testament: "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" (ver. 18) or "in communion with the altar?" That is, the saints have communion with the One offered on the altar, Christ Himself.

If we refer to the book of Leviticus we find this subject further elucidated. In chapter i. it is the burnt offering, and in this all is burned upon the altar and nothing of it is eaten by the priest; so it is clear that this is not the same aspect of the death of Christ as in our chapter in Corinthians, for here it speaks of eating the sacrifice. The burnt offering is what Christ in His death is to God, offering Himself without spot to God as a sweet savour.

In Leviticus ii. we have the meat offering. Here a part is eaten by Aaron and his sons; but this does not otherwise answer to our text, inasmuch as in this offering there is no blood-shedding, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission. The meat (or meal) offering represents what Christ was in His life down here, in His nature tried by the fire of God. It was a sweet savour to God, corresponding to the words heard from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In Leviticus iii., it is the peace offering, and this it is that corresponds to what we have in Corinthians. It has the two characteristics that we need; there is the shedding of blood, and the partaking of the offering.

It should be noticed that as with us there may be greater or lesser appreciation of the sacrifice, so the peace-offering might be of the herd, or of the flock, of the lambs, or of the goats. There

may be also in us the *weakness* of appreciation, and so the animal was allowed to be male or female ; whereas in other sacrifices it must be a male only.

The thought of "communion" is manifest by parts of the sacrifice being consumed on the altar, and parts eaten by the priests, and parts by the offerers themselves. Of the herd, "The fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys," was to be burnt upon the altar, a sweet savour unto the Lord. Thus the Lord claims the inward energy of the heart and of the will ; and in verse 11 it is called "the *food* of the offering made by fire unto the Lord." It is the Lord's portion in that which typifies the "communion of saints."

The wave-breast and the heave-shoulder were the portions given to the priest and to his sons. (Chap. vii. 32-34.) The right shoulder—the type of strength—was for the priest that offered the blood—our Lord Himself (for He is both Priest and Victim). The breast—the seat of affections—was for Aaron's sons ; the rest was for those who brought the offering. How wondrously the type which sets forth the worship of the saints expresses "communion" between Jehovah and the offerer. The

victim was partly consumed as food upon the altar; partly eaten by the priests; and partly by those who brought the offering.

We see, too, that it must be eaten the same day in which it is killed—eaten in all the freshness of remembrance and devotion.\* (See Lev. vii. 15.)

We learn also that there must be no uncleanness upon him that eats, nor must he even touch anything that is unclean, or he would be cut off from God's people. (Vers. 19. 20.) So none have any place at the Lord's table unless cleansed by the blood of Christ; and surely holiness becomes God's house, which is ourselves. Far be the thought that any should approach the table of the Lord with "unholy hands."

Let us not forget that we are warned that "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (1 Cor. xi. 27, 28.) Every Christian, unless some sin excludes him, is worthy to partake of the Lord's supper; but he may eat and drink in an unworthy manner, and may not be "discerning the Lord's body." For this cause many at Corinth were weak and sickly, and

\* In the case of a vow or a voluntary offering it might also be eaten on the second day; but in no case must any be left to be eaten on the third day.

many slept, were taken away in death. Is not this deeply solemn to be found in connection with the Lord's supper?

It is communion with the body and the blood of our Lord who has died for us. We are purged worshippers, and must worship God in spirit and in truth. The Father seeketh such to worship Him. May we all, when gathered to remember our Lord in the breaking of bread, come in the freshness of the divine life, calling to mind that we do not worship simply as individuals, but that we are in communion with the many members, forming together the one body typified in the one loaf; and above all, that our communion is with the body of Christ in the bread which we eat, and with the blood of Christ in the cup of which we drink. Happy people to be thus engaged! What can equal in solemnity the being thus gathered to remember, with chastened spirits, what it cost our blessed Lord to bring us into such a communion? What can equal it in blessedness as we remember that while our act sets forth His death, yet we know that He is now exalted to the highest place in heaven, and that He graces the feast with His presence (Matt. xviii. 20), and in the midst of the congregation He sings praises? (Ps. xxii. 22.)

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## "A MAN IN CHRIST."

2 COR. XII. 2.

PAUL says, "I knew a man in Christ," or, more correctly, "I *know* a man in Christ," and a little lower in the chapter he speaks of himself and the abundance of revelations he had had, so that there cannot be a doubt that Paul refers to himself as "a man in Christ." He was caught up into Paradise, and revelations were communicated to him in such a way that he could not tell whether he was in the body or had been carried out of it.

But let us try to discover whether the term "man in Christ" was something that applied exclusively to Paul, or did it apply to him more strictly than to any one else?

Let us first look at 1 Corinthians xv. 22: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This points us to two headships. In Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all live. This speaks of the resurrection, but our passage refers to a man being in Christ while in the body. Our Lord said, "Except a [the] corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24), shewing that the death of Christ was needful before His people could be brought into the closest association with Himself.



In another passage Christ is called the last Adam : "The first man Adam was made [or, became] a living soul ; the last Adam, a quickening spirit." (1 Cor. xv. 45.) Here it is as two heads of creation : yes, we can speak of two creations, for we read that "if any man be in Christ [there is] a new creation." (2 Cor. v. 17.) Such a one is united with the last Adam, and as to his standing before God he has been severed from the first Adam.

Another passage will confirm this : "The first man is of the earth, earthy [or, made of dust] ; the second man is the Lord\* from heaven." (1 Cor. xv. 47.) Now why does the passage speak only of two men when there have been millions ? Surely because the first man, Adam, and the second Man, Christ, are the heads of two races or generations, and every human being belongs to the one or the other. All did belong to the first, but through the 'new creation,' some, by God's grace, are taken out of that and made a part of the second.

Let us look at another expression—a formula we may say—the apostle speaks of a past condition, and says, "when we were in the flesh" (Rom. vii. 5) ; "they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in [the] flesh, but

\* Most editors omit 'the Lord ;' but this does not affect the sense. It was perhaps added to make it clear who the 'second man' is.

in [the] Spirit, if so be that [the] Sprit of God dwell in you." (Chapter viii. 8, 9.) Now what can the expression "in the flesh," as a bygone position, be except that the Christian has been lifted clean out of that standing, and has been placed into an entirely different one—in Christ?

It is true that the expression "in the flesh" is used in the scripture, and by the same apostle, with the simple signification of being alive in the body, as "nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." (Phil. i. 24.) But when a living man says, "*When* we were in the flesh," it must refer to a position which has been left.

Many a Christian has but very vague ideas of what is meant by the expression, "When we were in the flesh." Some seem to take it to mean that sometimes we are in the flesh, and sometimes we are not, and make it to be christian experience, the same as is explained in Galatians v. 17: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." But in Romans vii. there is not a word about the Holy Spirit. The converse of being formerly in the flesh is, "but *now* we are delivered from the law, having died in that wherein we were held" (as ver. 6 should read). There is a dying out of the old position of the first creation in association with Adam, and under the law, and a being brought into a new position in Christ Jesus and under grace.

The standing or position of the Christian is very apt to be confounded with his walk and ways. But the two things are quite distinct. This is seen under many figures in scripture. We have to thank God that he "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath *translated* us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col. i. 13.) We are emancipated from the authority of darkness, ruled over by Satan, and are brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son—an entirely different place. We are not simply changed in character and left in the old place; but are brought into the kingdom of which Christ is Lord and Master.

Again, we who were the children of wrath, being also dead in sins, God hath quickened together with Christ, and "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 6.) This is our place and inheritance, and, though we are still in the body, *in Christ* we are already there. We are not *with* Christ until we are actually there. But this is an entirely new position or standing from being children of wrath, when we were wilful followers of our first parent Adam, and as to any life Godward we were dead in sins. We were then in Adam; but now, if Christians, we are "in Christ."

"Therefore if any man be in Christ [there is] a new creation: old things are passed away;

behold all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Cor. v. 17, 18.) The new creation here spoken of entirely confutes the thought of our being restored to the status of Adam in innocence: the status believers are brought into far exceeds this in blessedness, and it is entirely and emphatically a *new* creation, brought about for us by the death of the Lord Jesus, by our being quickened together with Him, and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; and the new position into which we are thus brought may be summed up in two words, "in Christ."

Now it is important to see that as this is true of one Christian, it is also true of all Christians. Thus the Epistle to the Colossians is addressed "to the saints and faithful brethren *in Christ*:" scripture does not recognise any middle place. As heads there are only the first man and the second Man; the first Adam and the last Adam—the Lord Jesus Christ.

With which head is the reader connected? The thought of a mortal man being "in Christ" is something entirely beyond what we could have conceived, and it doubtless seems to some to be presumption to take such a place; but if God says this of us, it is unbelieving not to own it, and dishonouring to Him who in

grace has declared this respecting the believer. It may seem to some to be humility to want to take a lower place; but it is not: true humility takes the place assigned to it, and forgets itself, in love and admiration of the One who has accomplished it all.

Privilege and responsibility flow from relationship. If God has placed us in a position, we cannot shirk its responsibilities, nor should we think lightly of its privileges. This would be despising our birthright. Let none think that by shutting their eyes to what God has revealed respecting them, they can avoid much being required of them. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." (Luke xii. 48.) Of Israel it was said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: *therefore* I will punish you for all your iniquities." (Amos iii. 2.)

The high position of the saint should affect all the details of life: thus the apostle writes, "*Dare* any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. vi. 1-3.) How unbecoming it would be for saints to seek justice from those whom they are destined to judge.

But to return to our passage that speaks of Paul as "a man in Christ," let us note that

his being caught up into the third heaven had nothing to do with giving him that standing. He was a man in Christ *before* he was caught up just as much as he was afterwards. Surely a godly walk becomes all such, but if any do not walk well, if Christians at all, this does not deprive them of their position: it would rob them of the *enjoyment* of their relationship, but it would not destroy it. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, says, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal [or fleshly]; as unto babes in Christ. . . . ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (1 Cor. iii. 1-3.) Note that though they were fleshly and carnal, and were babes, yet they were babes "in Christ."

Once in that position, by being quickened together with Christ, nothing can bring them back again into the old standing of being "in Adam." Disciplined they will be, and if need be they may be delivered by God unto Satan for the breaking them down, for the destruction of the flesh. That they may be finally lost? No, "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (Chap. v. 5.)

We see in the case of Paul how careful God is that His saints should not go astray, and that they should not even be exalted above measure. Paul had been caught up to the third heaven. No

fear of his being puffed up when there; but when he came down, could he not boast of being the only man alive that had ever been into such an exalted position, and of having heard things that it was not possible to utter in a world like ours? God cared for His servant, as He cares for each one of us, and He gave Paul a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him. It was not a mere finger-ache, we may be sure, but something that *buffeted* him, tried him exceedingly—perhaps something that made him contemptible in the eyes of the gainsayers. (See 2 Cor. x. 10.) He besought the Lord thrice that the thorn might be removed; but he received the assurance that God's grace was sufficient for him: for His strength was made perfect in weakness. Paul could then glory in his infirmities that the power of Christ might rest upon him.

May all God's beloved people know, and understand better, and own the high and holy position He has placed them in. And then seek grace that their state, their condition of life, should correspond to that position. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection [your mind] on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

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## THE PATH IN A DAY OF DIFFICULTY.

### A LETTER.

I THINK you mourn over Christendom as a camp of corruption, and as contrary to the church of God, as seen in the New Testament, like Judaism was in the days of the apostles. If we turn to the word of God, we are not therein directed to go outside the camp to anything man has built up. Let us read the all important words. "Let us go forth therefore unto HIM without the camp, bearing his reproach." (Heb. xiii. 13.) Study this carefully, and compare it with 2 Tim. ii. 19-22. Is not our path distinctly marked out individually, to go out to Christ Himself, purging ourselves from a corrupt Christendom; and yet not to be isolated, "but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, WITH THEM that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Read also chapter iii., which describes the very days in which we live. Yes, this is God's view of boasting Christendom.

Just as the last four addresses in Revelation ii., iii. describe the last states of Christendom, you will learn there what the Lord approves in the address to Philadelphia. This is a blessed relief to the heart to know what He approves. The church has failed; but He has not failed, and He never will fail. Yes, the church has utterly failed as a testimony to Christ, as Israel,



and indeed everything before failed; and there is not the slightest intimation that the church will be restored on earth. We must not let our thoughts run on where scripture is silent.

Now, for instance, you speak of the church beginning when Jesus called Peter, Andrew, &c. There is no such a thought in the scriptures. Jesus, some time after this, spoke only of the church as a future thing: "On this rock I *will* build my assembly," or, as it is translated, "church." In the word of God, that assembly is never spoken of as existing on earth until *formed* by the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost; indeed, how could it exist before as a heavenly body joined to the Head, Christ, as Man in heaven? Believers could not be baptised into one body by the Spirit before the Spirit came. (See 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.) It would be so much better to give up your theology, and cleave only to scripture. Have you ever really searched the scriptures to know what the church is? This is a subject of deep importance.

You say, "Peter being president in the church is an undoubted fact." I search in vain in scripture for such a thought. The truth of the church, the body of Christ, does not seem to have been given to him to minister. Does Peter ever name the church? Did he ever speak of Christ as Head of the church? The keys of the *kingdom* were committed to him;

never the keys, so to speak, of the church. Look carefully over his preaching in the Acts, and you will find he, as the apostle of the circumcision, preached the coming kingdom on earth. If the nation of Israel would repent, God would send Christ, their Messiah, from heaven to earth again. There is not one word about the church or its ascension to heaven; *all* as to the church was committed to Paul. So far from Peter being the president of the church, if we had only his epistles we should not know one word about the church. Peter baptised by water; but the baptism into Christ, forming the one body, is by the Holy Ghost, as we have seen in 1 Cor. xii.

You will find it of great help to your soul to search the scriptures, as to the contrast between the kingdom and the church—it is very little understood—it would give you light on many subjects. If you turn to the words of Jesus, you hear him say: “Suffer little children and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. xix. 14.) He did not say, Of such is the church. And why not? Read in Matthew xiii. the seven parables. The church is the building of Christ, and stands impregnable; but in the kingdom of heaven there is the distinct work of the devil—tares and leaven and birds of the air. There is the outward kingdom—as we say, baptised Christendom—and there is the true church of God.

And one word further: even when the millennial kingdom is set up on this earth, it will have earthly "glory;" but not the glory and privileges of the church. We never read that they will be blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, which is our portion. (Eph. i.) The veil is now rent, and we have holy liberty in the holiest. (Heb. x.) But if you turn to the millennial temple with its worshippers, you will find that even the prince of Israel in the days of the millennial kingdom, will not enter the holiest; but shall stand by the post of the gate—"and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate." Likewise the people of the land "shall worship at the door of this gate before the Lord," &c. (Ezek. xlvi. 2, 3.) What a contrast is this to the present privilege of the saints of God. (See Heb. x.) Christendom has lost the knowledge of the church, and all its present privileges, and future heavenly glory, as the bride of Christ. Hence they put Peter in the place of Christ, as head or president of the church.

The church is heavenly, and its ministry was direct from heaven to Paul. (Acts xxvi.) He had no human authority or ordination (see Gal. i.), but was separated to a special mission by the Holy Ghost. (See Acts xiii. 2.) Who ordained the labourers at Thessalonica? Who told you that Linus was bishop of Rome? or Timothy, bishop of Ephesus? or Titus, of Crete? This is

all mere human history, and utterly contrary to scripture. Paul sent not for the bishop of Ephesus, but for the *elders*. Search the Epistle to the Romans; Paul never names the bishop. There is no such a person named in scripture, unless it be Diotrefes. (3 John.) There was apostolic authority, but even then it was subordinate to the Holy Ghost, each seeking the guidance of the Spirit. (Acts xiii. 1-4; xviii. 27.) You will find nothing in scripture that agrees with Eusebius. Long before the days in which he wrote the Holy Ghost had alas, been set aside and man put in His place. There is positively nothing in God's word about "*one bishop in a catholic or christian church.*"

You will find no such church as you are seeking: all is in ruin and confusion. As to our bodies we are in Christendom, but we have distinct instructions for our path in these last days: "from such turn away." And until He comes there will be a few calling on the Lord out of a pure heart. Nay, if it even comes to this, that you find Christ knocking at the door outside all that professes to be His, even there He will sup with you. (Rev. iii.) And if He knocks at the door, let us open to Him, and seek to bring all we can to *Him*.

I only desire to be helped, and to help all that are His: until we see His blessed face. C. S.



## FORGIVENESS.

THERE is much confusion with many Christians as to what is meant by forgiveness, and as to what it embraces. How many thousands repeat every week that they believe in "the forgiveness of sins," but could give but very vague answers as to what they understand by it. For instance, if an undoubted Christian were asked whether he believed in the forgiveness of sins, he would doubtless answer, "Certainly"; and if he were asked whether he was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he would again say, "Certainly." Then ask him if *his* sins are all forgiven, when he will, perhaps, at once draw back from the "certainly" to the "hope it may be so." From this we see that many a Christian believes in the forgiveness of sins only abstractly: that God forgives some people's sins, and he has a hope that *his* sins may be forgiven. Again, ask him *when* he hopes to be forgiven, and he will perhaps answer on his death bed, or it may be at the day of judgment. All, alas, is vague.

Now in the scripture there are various aspects of forgiveness. Let us then first notice that God *forgives the sinner*, the natural man. The gospel preached to the unconverted includes forgiveness. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." (Acts xiii. 38.)

Then to those who had received the gospel the apostle does not hesitate to say that in Christ Jesus "we *have* redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 7.) Why, then, should any Christian hesitate to say that God has forgiven his sins? It is the common heritage of all believers. "I write unto you, little children," says the apostle, "because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.)

It might have been God's plan to have forgiven us our sins, and to have given us eternal life, but to have hidden it from us, if He had seen that such would have been safer for us. But He has done the very reverse; He not only gives forgiveness and eternal life, but would have its recipients know it and enjoy it. "These things have I written unto you . . . that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John v. 13, as it should read.)

So that no one is a Christian unless his sins are forgiven, and he has eternal life, though, alas! as we know, many do not fully credit such grace as this and thus do not live in the full enjoyment of it. But let all remember that forgiveness is a present thing, as also is condemnation: "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John

iii. 18), though the day of grace still runs on, and such an one may yet believe, and be saved.

Some, however, will give a sigh, and say, What of the future: must we not all be judged in a future day? God has taken pains to meet all such fears of his weak ones. Listen to the words of our Lord: "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 [judgment]: but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.)

Therefore the Christian will not come into judgment. Indeed, how can he be judged for sins that have all been forgiven? The One on the throne will be the same blessed One that died on the cross to put those sins away. As each Christian dies he goes at once to be with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8), and certainly has no sin upon him for which he will have to be judged, though he will be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ.

Still with many a question arises, What if I sin after I have been forgiven? This introduces our second point, that God *forgives His children*. Let this not be confounded with being forgiven when unconverted. When Christ died on the cross for our sins, all our sins were *future*; but He foresaw them and died for them all. Still there is a vast difference in the sins before conversion and after conversion; the latter are

worse, because contrary to the new nature, and against increased light and known love, and surely need as much expiation as the former. But they are not on the conscience in the same way that sins were before conversion. Christ has done a work, that the worshipper once purged should have no more conscience of sins. (Heb. x. 2.) If anyone sins after conversion, he would surely have a consciousness of his sin, and God has made provision for its being forgiven, and for communion being restored. "If we [Christians] say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. . . . My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John i. 8-ii. 1.)

Here we find that we have to confess our sins, and God assures us that they shall be forgiven. Notice that it does not here say that God is merciful: surely He is ever that, but here it is the Father, and He is "faithful and just"—faithful and just to give us the forgiveness already purchased for us by the death of Christ. Notice, too, that we have an ADVOCATE with the *Father* to restore the communion of the Christian when he fails. This is not for the unbeliever: for such Christ is the MEDIATOR between *God* and man.



There is still a *third* aspect of forgiveness, namely THE CHURCH FORGIVES when a Christian is repentant after having failed so far as to bring upon him the discipline of the assembly, and it may be, has been "put away." The authority to bind and loose on earth was first given to Peter (Matt. xvi. 19); then to the disciples generally. (Chap. xviii. 1, 18.) The same is differently expressed in John xx. 23: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained." The word here translated "remit" (*ἀφίημι*) is translated "forgive" in the Authorised Version nearly forty times, so that we have the question of forgiveness fairly before us. Now at Corinth we have exactly a case in point. A "wicked person" was excommunicated, but on his repentance the apostle urged the assembly at Corinth to forgive the man (2 Cor. ii. 7-10), and to which the apostle would add his forgiveness. It is "*ye forgive*"—ye the assembly and not an individual, except in the case of the apostle. Now, doubtless, this forgiveness may be declared by one person, but clearly it should be the carrying out of the judgment of the assembly.

This must not be confounded with eternal forgiveness of sins: it is *administrative* forgiveness on earth. It would be sad, indeed, if the church of God had no power to expel a wicked person; and equally sad if it had no power to restore

such a one on his repentance. But the assembly has this power, and is bound to exercise it, and has the assurance that if rightly exercised it is ratified in heaven. In heaven the person is held to be cast out of the assembly on earth, not that he may be finally lost, but that he may repent and be restored, "that the Spirit *may be saved* in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Cor. v. 5.)

It is well known how this forgiveness, under the name of "absolution" has been misapplied. It is clear from scripture that unless what the church does is ratified in heaven it is worthless—is nothing but a solemn mockery leading souls to perdition. It is not eternal forgiveness, and it is not forgiving unbelievers: it is discipline in the assembly, and that alone. Notwithstanding the abuse of it by some, it is a scriptural doctrine, and should not be given up. The parable of the wheat and the tares is often quoted by others as proving that both good and bad should be tolerated in the church until the end. But in Matt. xiii. 24 this is said to be like the kingdom of heaven, which by careful comparison will be seen to be not the same as the church. In the same chapter indeed we are told that "the field is *the world*" (ver. 38). In an assembly the injunction is very plain, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. v. 13.)

It is true, alas! that real discipline is very difficult in the professing church, because of

its being so much divided. A person put out at one church or chapel can easily get admittance into another. There are so many so-called churches that are independent of each other, that a person's antecedents would seldom be known. Indeed, being aware of this, a guilty one, as soon as he knows his sin has been found out, quietly leaves, wanders about for a time, and then finds shelter elsewhere. Many a Christian sees this as a serious evil. How is it that it does not open his eyes to see the sin of schism, and the making of churches so called. Were the church one as formed by Christ, discipline could have been carried out, and a wicked person be put outside. It is man's arrangements that frustrate order in the church.

To complete the range of forgiveness there is still a *fourth* point—FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER. The prayer our Lord taught his disciples shews that we are to forgive those who trespass against us if we hope to be forgiven; other passages forbid our enforcing our rights where we ought to forgive, and if we cherish an unforgiving spirit we need not expect the forgiveness of our heavenly Father. (Matt. vi. 14, 15.) This is altogether distinct from eternal forgiveness, and God knows how to discipline us if we are hard and unforgiving with those who have offended or are indebted to us. There is the *government* of God with His children as well as His grace.

But some think the gospel has altered the character of governing and punishing the world. Take, for instance, capital punishment. How often it has been urged that this should give place to imprisonment. But God's law is inflexible—a command enacted long before the law was given to Moses: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Gen. ix. 6.) This is God's demand, as due to Himself for the destruction of one made in His image. And there is nothing in the New Testament to set this aside. Indeed, it is confirmed by the magistrate bearing the *sword*. (Rom. xiii. 4.)

In conclusion, we have seen that the Christian *has been* forgiven his sins, or he is not a Christian at all: he is *being* forgiven, as a child of God, if he sins, and confesses his sin. . He is subject to the discipline of the church if he does wrong; but on repentance it has power *administratively* to forgive him. And if he is a recipient of all this, he must cherish a forgiving spirit to others, even as he is being forgiven by his merciful Father in heaven. May we that have God's own thoughts about forgiveness, both in His boundless mercy, and in His ordering and governing His church and His saints individually, ever remember to forgive others as we have been forgiven by God, with eternal forgiveness.

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## QUESTIONS OF INTEREST, ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

### VI.

“Is there any certainty in the study of prophecy, and in looking for the coming of the Lord? Various periods seem marked out by ‘weeks’ and ‘days,’ and some mysteriously, as ‘time, times, and a half;’ and these have set many to foretell the time of the coming of the Lord, calculations which have again and again proved erroneous: the periods passed and the Lord did not return. Now, seeing that the scripture gives the materials by which to foretell the date (however man may have failed in interpreting them) how can this agree with our habitual looking for the Lord’s return?”

This question shews clearly the need of seeing that all scripture is from God, and that all prophecy is connected, one part dove-tailing into another, if such an expression be allowable. It was never intended by God that any part of prophecy should explain itself irrespective of what is revealed in other places. “No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2 Pet. i. 20, 21.) We need to understand in some measure at

least the general scope of prophecy before we can grasp the meaning of any part. It may be compared to a dissecting map: each piece *must* be placed in its right place, or there can be no complete map; and one piece misplaced may throw the whole into disorder.

Most of the prophecies, whether they are found in the Old or the New Testament, are concerning God's ancient people, the Jews, and are connected with the earth. Many do not see this, and apply these prophecies to the church, and this throws all into confusion.

Another constant source of error is that Christians do not recognise that the church holds a peculiar place in scripture. If what God calls "the church" did not commence until Pentecost—and this seems plain from scripture—and will be complete when the Lord Himself shall come to fetch it (1 Thess. iv. 15-18), it is easy to see that as there were "saints" on earth *before* the church was commenced (Old Testament saints), so there may be saints on earth *after* the church is taken to glory. (Rev. xiii. 7.)

Another popular error is the not keeping the prophecies that refer to the Jews perfectly distinct from any that refer to the Gentiles and to the church. "Spiritualising" (as it is falsely called) the prophecies respecting Israel so as to apply them to the church is also a sure means of preventing their being understood.

A right interpretation of the seventy weeks of Daniel (chap. ix. 25-27) will throw great light upon the questions asked. Without entering at all fully into the prophecy, it may just be pointed out that sixty-nine weeks are kept separate from the seventieth week. If the weeks are weeks of years, and the sixty-nine weeks refer to 483 years, and they began when the command went forth to build Jerusalem (not the temple) in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (Neh. ii. 1) ; and if the true date of this is B.C. 455 (the date given by Usher, Hengstenberg, and others), it would bring the cutting off of Messiah to about A.D. 29, and this is believed by many to be the true date of the crucifixion.

This leaves the last week unaccounted for. The prophecy relates to the Jews, and there is not anything in their past history that answers to some prince making a covenant with them for one week (seven years), so that it is evident that this last week is *yet future* when the Jews, according to many prophecies, will be again gathered to their own land, and then the prophecy will be resumed.

Now if this is so, its importance to us is that it shews the church comes in as a sort of parenthesis, and has nothing to do with these weeks : it was begun after the end of the sixty-nine weeks, and (as seen by other scriptures) will be taken to glory before the last week begins. So

that we can have no place whatever in this prophecy.

It will also shew that we have no part in other prophecies where dates are referred to. Thus Daniel ix. 27, when speaking of the last week, also refers to "the midst of the week," thus dividing it into two halves. Now this agrees with Daniel vii. 25, where the oppressor is spoken of as wearing out the saints of the Most High, for "a time, times, and the dividing of times;" and this well agrees with the latter half of the last week, three and a half years. This last half of the week is also referred to in Revelation xii. 14 as "a time, and times, and half a time," when the woman (Israel) is nourished from the face of the serpent.

The desire to know the time when our Lord will return for His saints does not evince a healthy state of soul, but rather the reverse. If we knew that it was yet future, we could then say, "My Lord delayeth His coming," and be careless and indifferent as to being ready when He should come.

It is declared that "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God;" and it is but a morbid curiosity that desires to pry into what is *not* revealed, and is often accompanied by neglect of what *is* plainly revealed. The apostle warns us against being beguiled of our reward by *intruding* into things we have not seen. (Col. ii. 18.)



With some the effort to discover when the Lord will return may be mere curiosity, but in others it arises from their dwelling upon one or more subjects of prophecy to the neglect of others, and, as we have said, in their not seeing the unique place of the church. The whole area of prophecy concerning the coming glory of the Lord Jesus on earth, and the return of the Jews to their own land in great blessing, after sore tribulation, is all complete in itself, without touching the question of the church, and the special hope set before the saints of this present dispensation.

Thus it is clear that many (and we may say all) of the dates referred to in scripture do not in any way apply to the time the church is on the earth, nor to the event of the coming of the Lord. Indeed, all those teachers referred to as calculating the time when our Lord would come may well have spared their labours; for our Lord, when the disciples, after His resurrection, asked Him, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" said, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." (Acts i. 6, 7.) Now mark, it does not say that the times are contained in the prophecies, and if they would search there, they would find them, as we might suppose by the many who have devoted their labours to find the date of our Lord's

return. How is it that such do not heed the words, "It is *not* for you to know the times or the seasons?" The Father has them in His own authority.

It is therefore not true that the scripture gives the material by which to tell the date of our Lord's return. As we have seen, it is expressly said we are not to know the times; and again and again in the Gospels has the exhortation to watch, been based on the fact that the time is *not* known. Thus after the parable of the wise and foolish virgins we read, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (Matt. xxv. 13.) Again, "Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." (Mark xii. 35-37.)

This is the true attitude of the Christian—watching and waiting for the Lord, without any desire to know when He will come. The expectation is conducive to a healthy condition of soul: to be always ready, with an earnest desire to be with the Lord and like Him for ever. It is a glorious hope for all His saints.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

6. J. R., Carrickfergus.—When Paul gave his charge to the elders of Ephesus (Acts xx.) he foretold that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in who would not spare the flock; and that of themselves would some arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Under such circumstances the question is, What resource of safety did he point out to them? The professing church would point to some man from the pope downwards, or to a council, or some human creed; but the apostle does not refer the elders to any one higher in authority than themselves, nor bid them call a council to judge of the coming evil; he said, "Now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Doubtless the reference is to the whole word of God.

At the time when Paul spoke he had already written the epistles to the Thessalonians, to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, and to the Romans; but he speaks of a *future* apostasy "after his departure"—and the resource is equally applicable to all apostasies, and so he does not refer to any particular part of scripture. The scriptures divinely interpreted will fortify us against every apostasy. It is lamentable that many of God's beloved people should go astray with the Bible in their hands, but this shews that we need both "God" and the "word." It is a day of grace, and God's word is "the word of grace," though it speaks also of judgment; yea, judgment begins at the house of God.

## "I HAVE COMPASSION ON THE MULTITUDE."

It is well to remember that Jesus in these days is the same Jesus as in those days described in Mark viii. Let us see, then, what He was then, so that we may know a little better what He is now, and what He would have us to be now as His representatives on earth. "In those days the multitude being very great." And what is the multitude now? Millions of China, millions of India, Japan, Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the vast regions around; dark South America; the United States; Canada; the teeming millions, too, of the European continent; yea, the millions of this little Island. And at this moment the door is open everywhere for the gospel; for the spread of the bread of life.

"The multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat." Is not this a fact now? Nothing to eat! Millions of Brahmins, Buddhists, Romanists, and nothingists. Well, "Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them." And what did He say? Despise them? let them alone to perish in their delusions? No, precious Jesus, the revelation of God: He said, "I have compassion on the multitude." And is He the same Jesus to-day?

But mark, the starting-point is this: "Jesus called his disciples unto him." What a question this would be to every preacher in this land: Have you heard the call of Jesus? Have you come unto Him? Do you know Him? You cannot be a river of water if you have not come and drunk yourself. If you do not know Him you cannot break the bread of life to others. If you do not know your own sins are forgiven, you will not be able in faith to preach forgiveness to others. If you know Him, then just come unto Him; He has something to say unto us. He says, as it were, *I want* to tell you how I feel about those millions of lost souls on that earth where you at present dwell. I have compassion on the multitude. I have been offered up a propitiation on the cross: I freely offered up myself the sacrifice; I am the mercy-seat—God my Father is just, is righteous, in sending a free pardon to those millions, and you have never told them. You have never made the proclamation of forgiveness of sins in my name to millions within your reach—"I have compassion on the multitude."

And there was a large company that had been with Him three days—He says, "And have nothing to eat." And all around are great numbers of readers of this paper, and there have been multitudes of professors around Jesus, very busy in religious activities, but they have

nothing to eat. They have sacraments and outward services, periodicals and religious books; and still may have nothing to eat. They are unconverted, are in their sins, guilty before God, hastening on to judgment, and literally no real gospel has been set before them, suited to lost, guilty, hell-deserving sinners.

Jesus says, "I have compassion" on them; He further says, "If I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far."

Is it so, dear reader—is your house very far from Jesus? Is Jesus known in your house? Is the holy perfume of His dear presence there? If a stranger comes to your house, does he feel that Christ reigns there? Or is it a mere Sunday profession with you, and Satan and his world all the week? Ah, when you come on Sunday you come from afar; but Jesus has compassion on you; He knows how it will end with you if you are not saved—when your heart shall cease to beat, and there is a hush in your house, and they whisper, 'he is gone.' But oh, where? Will you have refused the compassion of Christ until it is too late? where will you be? Will it be to lift up your eyes in torment! What a mercy it is, as you read this paper, that it is not yet too late. Think, then, of the compassion of Jesus.

How little sympathy the disciples had, then,

with Jesus. How little now. They say, "From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?" Did they not forget the Lord? He who fed the millions daily for forty years in their wilderness journey, the Jehovah of the days of Moses, was in their midst. They forgot the infinite resources they had in Him. And do we remember the compassion and power of Him who says, "I am with you alway, unto the end." Is anything too hard for the Lord? How little we feel the claims and the needs of these perishing millions. How little sympathy with those devoted servants of the Lord who are true distributors of the bread of life in the regions far from home and comforts. But they have the joy of fellowship with Him who said, "I have compassion on the multitude." "And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven." They had the perfect number, and, with His blessing, more than enough to meet the need.

And now, fellow disciples of Jesus, whose heart is full of compassion and love for the multitude, how many loaves have we? We will take first the great multitude of Christendom, who have no bread of life ministered to them: infidelity and superstition enough, but no bread of life—what have you got for them? Do you say, A very few loaves for so many? Jesus says, "Give ye them to eat."

And remember that amongst them there are dear redeemed children of God, very faint on the way; long have they been without food, that gives real nourishment. Give ye them to eat. One means which the Lord has greatly owned—He only knows how much—is the distribution of tracts. Have you a few of these loaves? Never was there such a need to mind that there is no poison in them—poison where little expected. Do not give any one to eat what you have not eaten of yourself, and proved to be the bread of life.

It may be said, But you forget the deep enmity of the human heart against Christ. Think of the bitter hatred of the followers of the false prophet Mahomet, and the cruel hatred of the superstitious Romanist, and the indifference of the Buddhist. Think of the condition of the world at this moment, and "Give ye them to eat." How can this be done? who can even get their attention?

"And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground." He who commanded this vast universe to be, and it was; who spake, and it was done; *He* commanded the people to sit down on the ground. Look at Him in the midst of that multitude—every eye turned to Him; yes, the very multitude who had requested Him to depart from their coasts in chapter v. Yes, precious Jesus, Thou hadst compassion on the men who preferred



their swine to Thee. Have you heard His voice? Have you been brought to sit down in His blessed presence? All the needed supply goes out from Himself. "And he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them, and they did set before the people. And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them."

The disciples gave nothing except what they had received. May it ever be so with us. It is most cheering to hear of souls in so many distant lands being brought to sit at His feet; to sit down and rest in His dear presence, to prove His tender compassion—and then themselves to be the distributors of the bread of life. It will be so everywhere if there is fellowship with Him in His compassion for lost souls. Oh, my brethren, where should we have been but for His compassion on us? He has mercy on whom He will have mercy.

"And they had a few small fishes, and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them." Have you a few small tracts that contain the true gospel of God? Will you look to Him to bless them? Can you in faith obey Him? He commands you to set them before those who have nothing to eat. You have now the privilege of distributing tracts in Japanese, Arabic, Chinese, Chaldaic and many other

languages. Will you give them to such as have nothing for the soul to feed upon? Our compassionate Jesus is using them, in spite of the disciples' coldness, in regions far from where our feet can tread. Oh, to be a transcript of Him who has compassion on the multitude. Oh, blessed Lord, to be more like Thyself!

Seven loaves and a few small fishes seemed very little for four thousand persons. They would have been utterly insufficient, but Jesus was there, and He delights to use our littleness, our weakness, our insignificance. It is thus His fulness and all-sufficiency are made to appear. Waggonloads of loaves and boatloads of fishes would have been more to the disciples' ideas then and now. Oh, the grand secret of sinners being brought to Him is, He all, and the disciples nothing; but this does not suit man. The need is great around, let us measure it by His infinite fulness.

"So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left, seven baskets." Well, dear reader, have you eaten? are you filled? If so, you will hunger no more. Jesus said: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John vi. 35.) This is the sure mark of the one that has been brought to sit at His feet to receive Himself—the Bread of life—he hungers no more. He

knows the truth of the word, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." He thirsts no more. He needs nothing more to fit him for the holiest. He is complete in Christ, and has perfect peace and rest for evermore.

If this is your singular and happy place, what will you do with your basket? Will you send nothing to those who have nothing to eat? Will you have no compassion on the multitude? It is a wonderful feast—always as much left as when we began. If Christ is enough for you, He is enough for every poor, guilty, hell-deserving sinner on earth. Oh, to be off with our baskets, and take good portions to them for whom nothing is prepared! "And they that had eaten were about four thousand: *and he sent them away.*" Will you ask Him where you shall go with your basket?

Oh, blessed revelation of God, the heart of God, the love of God to a lost and guilty world! Yes, Jesus says: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) May this be true of every Christian who shall read these lines.

C. S.

## WAYFARING MEN, THOUGH FOOLS.

THERE is a wonderful lesson for our souls in Isaiah xxxv. 8: "An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Doubtless it primarily refers to Israel, when the time arrives for God to favour the nation, and bring the people into blessing: but, in principle, it refers to all times.

There has always been a way of holiness: Enoch walked in it, and it was so even under the law, not that man could attain to holiness thereby, but God was in their midst; and the priest had to wear upon the mitre a plate of pure gold, on which was graven, like the engraving of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. (Ex. xxviii. 36.) When David brought back the ark of the Lord, he says, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." (1 Chr. xvi. 29.) The message that God bid Moses convey to the people was, "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." (Ex. xix. 6.) True, comparatively few may have discovered it, and a less number really walked in it: but the failure of the people

in no way nullified what God was for His people, and the position He had made for them.

Little need be added to shew that God has planned a way of holiness for His people now: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. ii. 5.) "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." (1 Thess. iv. 7.) "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii. 14.)

But the point before the writer was more how God's path is to be found, and who are the people that shall be able to walk therein? We read that the outward acts of God were made known unto the people of Israel; but His *ways* were made known unto Moses. (Ps. ciii. 7.) Do we not instinctively place with this, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth"? (Num. xii. 3.) And this so well agrees with the passage, "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." (Ps. xxv. 9.) This then is the spirit in which we should approach God's word to learn His ways. It is not the high-minded and clever that are named here. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." (Ps. ii. 17.)

We also find that none can expect to learn God's ways, who seek to know them out of curiosity merely, nor those who think that, when they have discovered them, it is left to themselves to walk in them or not, just as they please: for thus saith the Lord, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." (Is. lxvi. 2.) Here God graciously classifies the poor, and those of a contrite spirit, with those that tremble at His word.

It is a solemn thing to have to do with God's truth. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is *sin*." (Jas. iv. 17.) It is not left to man to pick and to choose, to do or not to do, just as he may think well. It is God that has spoken; who is he that dares to contend with his Maker? God has now spoken by His Son, and has come forth in grace; but, alas! man abuses the grace, just as he did innocency in the garden, and the law under Moses.

It is to be feared that many of the lost will have to bitterly lament that they did not seek grace to profit by what they knew. Listen to what God says of some: "If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them

not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." (2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.) It would have been better for such to have been ignorant, than to have heard the word, and to have had a knowledge of the Lord Jesus, and then to have acted as is pointed out in the true proverb, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." How sad to be compared to the dog and the swine! Oh, that all professors would take solemn warning from God's holy word!

The warnings of God's word seem strikingly applicable in the present day, when men are setting up their own wisdom in opposition to God's word, and hesitate not to refuse what parts they think well, and receive or patronise, after their own fashion, the rest. Do they truly know that they are refusing part of what is really *God's word*? Well, perhaps, they do not know this, or are not willing to know it. Thousands admit that, in a sense, the Bible is God's word, but affirm that such latitude was allowed to the writers, that they often wrote what was incorrect; forgetting that no conscientious author of even a penny book, would allow his thoughts to be thus misrepresented by his amanuensis. Yet this folly is attributed to the omniscient God.

It is mostly the wise and the learned that

make such fatal mistakes. They taunt others with not knowing Greek and Hebrew, in which languages the scriptures were written; and how can any judge of what is written, say they, without a knowledge of the originals? It is very striking that our Lord, who surely did know Hebrew, constantly quoted the Septuagint translation in preference to the original, doubtless, because it was the edition that was best known to His hearers. We are not depreciating a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew; but one taught by the Holy Spirit will understand, through a translation, far better what God has caused to be written, than will one who trusts to his learning and his own natural acuteness.

Let us take heed to the passage we started with: "Wayfaring men, *though fools*, shall not err therein." And thus we find that many a poor old man or woman, who can just read, knows a great deal more of truth and what God has revealed, than do some of the learned divines, as they are called.

This, indeed, is what our Lord Himself expressed. He rejoiced in spirit, and said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Luke x. 21.) Oh, that the learned, who are sitting in judgment on God's word and on



what He has taught, would quietly weigh this passage. Poor, simple souls gladly receive what God says; they have nothing that leads them to call the scriptures in question, and God blesses their simple, confiding faith; whereas, the learned may have, what they call, advanced views to maintain, and are too often full of high thoughts, and ability to test everything as they think, and are thus not in a right spirit to be taught anything correctly.

Listen again to what our Lord said. He called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xvii. 2-4.)

How contrary is this to what we see around us, and to what is the tendency it may be of both writer and reader, who may unintentionally be influenced by the spirit of the age. To be as a little child! to believe, unhesitatingly, everything that God tells us in His word! this is the way to be taught by the Holy Spirit. Oh, to be more like Mary, to sit at the Lord's feet, and just to drink in all the gracious words that proceed out of His mouth! And then to study all that He has caused to be written, believing it *all* to be inspired by God, and find it profitable for

doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that we, as men of God, may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.)

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## UNEQUALLY YOKED WITH UNBELIEVERS.

2 Corinthians vi. 14.

FOR the Christian to keep himself free from being yoked with unbelievers, becomes more and more difficult, because of the many confederacies that are formed on every hand, and for every purpose.

It is well that it is seen that this applies to marriage, for there is scarcely anything that leads to greater dishonour to the Lord, and to the hindrance and discomfort of the Christian, than a mixed marriage; and yet, alas, even this is disregarded by many Christians, who are often satisfied with a profession where there is no reality.

It was a law in Israel that they should not give their daughters in marriage to the sons of the Canaanites, nor let their sons marry the daughters of the land. Even Solomon disregarded this, and sad was the result. We read that "King Solomon loved many strange women (together with the daughter of Pharaoh), women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites. Of the nations concerning which

the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love." (1 Kings xi. 1, 2.)

Now Solomon was the wisest man, but his wisdom was no protection when he was in disobedience. The wisdom that cometh down from above is *first pure*; and Solomon had departed from that which was pure, and only evil could be the result.

"For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord." (Vers. 4-6.)

Solomon may have thought that he would make proselytes of his strange wives, and that they would have worshipped the God of Israel: in a similar way to the thought that many Christians have had, that they will be the means of the conversion of their unbelieving partners; but, alas, in Solomon's case, instead of the wives becoming worshippers of Israel's God he became a worshipper of their idols, and erected high places before Jerusalem for their abominations.

So with many a Christian: the unbelieving partner has not been converted, but the believer has been dragged into the world, lived a miserable life, and been dealt with in discipline by God.

How sad an ending it is, after the victorious reign of David, and the glorious reign of Solomon, that God should say, in reference to Solomon's idolatry, "Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant." (Ver. 11.) And all this was the result of loving "strange women," who turned his heart away.

Let all take warning from the fall of this wise man. We all have the flesh remaining in us, and it is only when walking in obedience to the word that we are in the path of safety, or can count upon His keeping us from falling. The injunction is very plain: "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." And if a Christian marry, it must be "only in the Lord."

But there are many ways in which a Christian may be unequally yoked with unbelievers besides in marriage; indeed, the passage in Corinthians does not mention marriage, so that the injunction is general. And it is amplified in a very full way. The apostle asks what fellowship is there—what is there in common, between

Righteousness and unrighteousness ?

Light and darkness ?

Christ and Belial ?

He that believeth and an infidel ?

The temple of God and idols ?

These things may sound harsh, and be deemed uncharitable, when applied to those who dwell in what is called a christian country ; but are not the terms simply the characteristics of the Christian and of the unconverted ? And the passage asks, what communion, what concord, what part, what agreement, can there be between the one and the other ? And sums it up by declaring of the Christians to whom he was writing, "Ye are the temple of the living God."

And this is followed by the injunction, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

To be yoked with unbelievers in matters of business, or in having shares in a company, is one of the great snares laid for the Christian. The question is, Is it being yoked with the world ? Is it becoming a member of any worldly organisation ? If so, surely it comes under the above injunction, that we are not to *touch* the unclean thing. Many a Christian has touched them, and has become a shareholder with unbelievers,

and has greatly suffered therefrom. God has given the promise, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom viii. 28.) But if I place myself in a union, in which God cannot make things work together for *my* good without making them work for good to the unconverted in the same community, how can I possibly reckon on this promise? No, indeed, I have placed myself outside the sphere in which God has promised to make things work for my good. He has not said that He makes them work for good to the unbeliever. Again, we may surely say that the path of obedience is the only place of blessing, as well as of safety. May God keep all His beloved people in this path.

There is also the snare of association with the world on the plea of philanthropy, doing good to the poor and afflicted. It is urged, how much better this can be effected in associations than it can be done by individuals; and why need the same strict rule be enforced when the purpose is a good one, and not for one's own profit?

God's word is, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. vi. 9, 10.) Now, here it is "well doing," "doing

good," and while caring for the needs of the body, how can this be separated, by the Christian, from the need of the soul in the gospel to the unconverted and the word of truth to God's people? And how can association with the world help in these higher aims? It can only hinder and destroy them. If we can associate with other Christians in doing good to all, it is well; but if not, let each do that which his hand findeth to do, looking for God's guidance as to when and where to do it, and count upon His blessing on what is done. The injunction, not to be yoked together with unbelievers, cannot be in view of doing evil simply, but for all and every purpose: there must be no fellowship with such.

There is also, in these days, a great temptation to both employers and employed to form unions for the maintenance of their several rights; indeed, in many places great efforts are being used to *compel* the workmen to unite for protection, as it is called, against what is held to be the oppression of the employers. Christians are, at times, placed in great difficulty as to such demands, and many give way and join the unions.

Well, the simple question is, Is it being unequally yoked together with unbelievers? And if so, how can it be attended with the blessing of God? It may seem to lead to quietness in some instances, but in others it has led to distress; for

joining a union, has involved joining in a strike, and that too, where the Christian had to own that he had good wages, and had no personal complaints; but for some grievance the majority of the union had decided on a strike, and all the members were compelled to submit.

Ah, that word "member," shews what a false position a Christian would be in. He is a member of the body of Christ, and should not be a member of any human society. "Come out from among them, and *be ye separate*, saith the Lord, and *touch not* the unclean thing." And what then—get on the best way they can by themselves? No, but God says, "I will receive you, and will be a *Father* unto you." Cannot such a Father guide and protect you?

Yes, our heavenly Father has helped many a one who has been faithful to him, and delivered them out of their difficulties: for "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations." (2 Pet. ii. 9.) And "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." (Prov. xvi. 7.) He gives instructions to both masters and servants, to which all do well to take heed, as well as to the golden rule, that "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

The times are indeed difficult, as has been foretold, but our God is the God for difficult times, as well as when all is smooth and easy; and



often has He intervened for the welfare of His saints who trust in Him ; and, indeed, He is ever true to His promise in making all things work together for good to those that love Him, and are the called according to His purpose.

May God increase the faith of all His beloved people, in separating from this dark and evil world, through which we are passing, of which Satan is the god. Satan's great effort, where he cannot destroy, is to seduce, and lead God's saints into union with the unbeliever, knowing only too well how this will hinder their progress, and bring them under the discipline of their Father in heaven. May God keep the feet of all His saints in these difficult times ; they will soon be over, and faith will be consummated in sight.



## QUESTIONS OF INTEREST ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

### No. VII.

"IF the proper attitude of the Christian is to be at all times expecting the return of his Lord, when did this attitude commence ? Paul is said to have completed the scripture as to doctrine (Col. i. 25, 26), though he was not necessarily the last who wrote. Did Paul expect the coming of the Lord ? Apparently John was the last who wrote any part of the New Testament : did he expect the coming of the Lord ? If

the apostles thus expected the Lord, how is it that God begat a hope in them which HE knew would not be realised? And how is it that the hope of Christ's coming was not handed down in the church along with all the commonly received truths of Christianity? We find little or nothing of it until about sixty years ago."

It should be borne in mind, that whether we are personally expecting the return of our Lord or not, it is plainly revealed in scripture that He will surely come again. While those who saw Him ascend from this earth were looking up into heaven, it was said, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts i. 11.) That the Lord Jesus will bodily come again to this earth, is, we take for granted, commonly believed by all Christians. The simple question at issue is, ought we to be watching and waiting His return, or shall we be expecting other events to happen, and *not* His return at present? If the latter, what are the events? and where are we told to be watching for them?

To ask these questions seems almost to answer them, for passage after passage occurs to the mind which tell us that we *are* to expect our Lord. Indeed, before He suffered He began to teach that this should be our attitude.

Listen to what He says: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching." (Luke xii. 35-37.) Can words be plainer? And if a servant should say in *his heart* (though he might not express it in words), "My lord delayeth his coming," his portion would be with the unbelievers!

It is a solemn thing, therefore, to be putting off the coming of the Lord, and to say that He delayeth His coming; for here this is associated with dissolute living. On the other hand, it is declared that those who cherish the hope of His coming, and the being with Him and like Him for ever, purify themselves, even as He is pure. (1 John iii. 3.)

It is remarkable that the first allusion to the return of our Lord, after His ascension, was made to the Jews. In grace, they were again exhorted to repent, and be converted, for the blotting out of their sins, that God might *send Jesus Christ*, whom heaven had received. (Acts iii. 19.) Alas, they repented not; but, as we know, the casting of them away was salvation to the Gentiles.

The first epistle that was written, was by

Paul to the Thessalonians, and it is in this very epistle that those saints are commended who waited for God's Son from heaven. And it is there also, that Paul speaks by the word of the Lord—a special revelation—of the sleeping saints and the living ones being caught up to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thess. iv. 15–18.)

Thus we see this blessed hope was taught by our Lord when He was on earth, and was more fully explained after His ascension in the very first epistle that was written. That Paul expected the Lord is quite clear: notice how he says, in the above passage, "*we* which are alive and remain;" he does not say, "they," as if referring to those who would be alive in some future period. Again, he shewed the church a mystery, and said, "*we* shall not all sleep, but *we* shall all be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51.)

As "the hope" was fully revealed in the epistle that was written first, so the *last* book in the New Testament (and perhaps the last written) also names it again and again, and closes the whole word of God with this self-same thing: "Surely I come quickly." To which is responded, "Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

There cannot be a question that the return of the Lord Jesus was the common hope held by the church in the days of the apostles. Peter did say that *he* was shortly going to put off his

tabernacle; but how did he know that? He tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ had shewed it to him. (2 Pet. i. 14.) So we see that an apostle did not know that he would die and not be alive when the Lord returned, except by a special revelation. Paul also, when he had finished his course, and was a prisoner, was able to say, "The time of my departure is at hand."

It is not right to say that God sets before the saints a hope that will not be realised. It has been sometimes stated that we are to expect the Lord *in our lifetime*; but scripture never states it thus. As we have seen, the Lord Himself taught His disciples that they were to be looking for His return: this was to be the habit of their mind; they were not to look forward for *death* as their hope, but *life* and glory by the return of the Lord Himself. And should they fall asleep, that would not destroy their hope: it would be realised just the same: at the coming of the Lord "the dead in Christ shall rise first," and their hope will then be realised. Let us remember that the Lord Himself is waiting. He became a man, and suffered the shameful death of the cross: He is now exalted, and is *ready* to come forth to receive His saints, and also ready to judge the quick and the dead. But He waits for the moment when the last one forming the church shall be gathered in, and for the Father's time to arrive, which He keeps in His own

authority. The living believers and the dead in Christ also wait that moment.

That the hope of the coming of the Lord, and many truths held in the early church, were soon lost sight of, or were given up, in no way disparages what is taught in the word of God. See how almost entirely the knowledge of the doctrine of justification by faith had died out before the time of the Reformation, but what Christian thinks of calling it in question on that account? We believe that there are glimpses of the coming of the Lord as a hope being held at various times in the earlier history of the church, though they may have been very faint. But supposing that it was quite lost sight of, does not this rather agree with the description in the parable of the Ten Virgins? They went forth to meet the bridegroom; but they *all* slumbered and slept—the wise as well as the foolish, and slept until the cry was raised, “Behold the bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet him.” Happy those who have heard the cry, and have gone forth in spirit to meet their Lord, and who are still watching and waiting for that blessed moment that will bring them to the Lord they love. Because He tarries, the tendency is to sleep again. May the Lord brighten the hope in the hearts of all His beloved people. He will soon be here.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

7. J. Flotterton. It is not wise to say that one portion of the New Testament is *more profitable* than another: surely we need the teaching of every part of it. Of the Revelation it is specially said, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." (Chap. i. 3.) We do not see that the Revelation is unsuitable for a reading meeting. Doubtless some parts would be dwelt on more in detail than other parts. For instance, what is more profitable than to dwell minutely on the addresses to the seven churches in the first three chapters? Other chapters might be considered more as to the periods they refer to, with the general scope of their meaning; and other parts again be taken up in their detail as the book is gone through. If there is dependence upon the Holy Spirit, will He not lead and guide in all these matters? Certainly the Revelation is important; for we are exhorted not only to read it, but to *keep* the things written therein: for the time is at hand. Guidance should be sought from God on each particular occasion as to what part of scripture should be read at a reading meeting. He knows the hearts of those who usually attend the meeting, and knows best what portion of His word would be most suitable for them at the time. If there is real dependence upon His guidance, He will guide, and all will be well. We must not read only favourite portions, or we shall not be thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

## GOD AS FATHER.

THERE is scarcely any delusion of the present day that is more popular than what is called "the Fatherhood of God." Many who use the term may not discern who is the author of it. It is interpreted to mean that God is the Father of every human being; but, as with many similar things, no attempt is made to prove this from scripture. It sounds nice, and is acceptable to human nature; for along with it is also proclaimed the "brotherhood of man." If God is the Father of all, then all are brethren. A very pleasing dream.

It is well to see that in Old Testament times God as Father was not declared even to Israel, who was brought into a nearer relationship with God than was any other nation. When God appeared to Moses, he asked, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." (Ex. iii. 13, 14.)

In another place we read, "God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: and I



appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known unto them." (Ex. vi. 2, 3.)

We see by this that though the name of Jehovah occurs as early as Genesis ii. 7, in the account of the creation given by Moses—saying, "The LORD [Jehovah] God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul," shewing that God was in relationship with man—yet God was not known to man generally, nor indeed to the patriarchs, by the name of Jehovah.

When God says, He was known to some by one name, and to others by another name, it surely becomes us to seek to learn the difference, and to follow on to know by what name He has been pleased to make Himself known to His followers now; and to the poor world at large.

To the patriarchs God was known as "God Almighty," the strong One who, having made an unconditional promise to Abraham, would surely perform it. To Israel He was known as "Jehovah," the covenant name of relationship; as He who would dwell among them, and would perform all He had promised in bringing them into that relationship.

But when we turn to the New Testament, and see the Lord Jesus as a man on earth, we find

that He was constantly speaking of "the Father;" and when He had gathered around Him a few disciples He made known unto them "the Father." He also represented God as *their* Father, thus: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. v. 16.) When asked by His disciples to teach them to pray, He said, "When ye pray, say, Our Father, which art in heaven." (Luke xi. 2.)

And yet we know that until our Lord suffered on the cross, there could be no union between Him and His disciples: "Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii. 24.) But after His death and resurrection He called His disciples His "brethren," which He had never done before, and sent them this striking message, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." (John xx. 17.) They were then in the same relationship with God as their Father as the blessed Lord was Himself. How blessed to receive such a message from the Lord Himself: it is sent to all whom He graciously calls His brethren.

This relationship is still further brought home to us for our experience and our enjoyment when the Holy Spirit is given: "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father,

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

Here the very same title is put into our hearts and our mouths as was used by our Lord when in the garden of Gethsemane: "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee." Reader, do you know this relationship? Can you truly say, "Abba, Father"? Do you know yourself to be a son? How blessed the relationship! What fellowship there should be between such a Father and His adopted children—adopted not for a season, not on probation; but His sons for time and for eternity! To Him be all the praise!

But the closer and more blessed we see this relationship to be for the Christian, the clearer it is that it was not made known to Israel, though the word Father does occur in a few places in reference to their relationship with God; as in Deuteronomy xxxii. 6: "Do ye thus requite the Lord [Jehovah], O foolish people—and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" It will be seen that God was their Father in reference to making them and redeeming them, and not because He had adopted them as sons, as in the New Testament.

We have seen "Jehovah" was the special name by which He was known to them.\*

And it must follow that if God was not made known to Israel under the name of Father, how much less will that name apply to the unconverted—the mass of mankind! Where do we find God represented as the Father of all men? In Romans i., where the heathen world is represented, we find the name of God repeatedly: "That which may be known of God is manifest in [or, among] them; for God hath shewed it unto them." "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." "As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Thus we see that God was made known to them "by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead;" but they knew Him only as God.

There is a measure of relationship between God as Creator with every one living; but they "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things . . . . [and] changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more

\* As is well known, the name Jehovah constantly occurs in the Old Testament, but is mostly translated LORD in the Authorised Version.

than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."

As we know, God did His work perfectly, and man and woman were created in the image of God, and after His likeness. (Gen. i. 27.) He held intercourse with Adam and Eve; for they were innocent; but when the Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day, and called to them, alas! they had hidden themselves from their Creator, for they had sinned, and now knew that they were naked. God "drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

Thus all was changed morally and remains so to this day: man is a fallen being, and scarcely anything can be more dishonouring to God than to pretend that all this is nothing, and that man can come to God as if he were sinless, and even claim God as his Father, as thousands are doing.

For man to be regarded by God, he must come to Him in his true character. We see this vividly in the case of the Syrophenician woman. She addressed our Lord as "Son of David;" but "he answered her not a word." What had a woman of Canaan to do with Him as Son of David? Nothing; but as soon as she took her true place of being a dog, without any claim of relationship to Him, then she is heard and answered. How

much more then will sinful man be disregarded when he comes as if there had been no fall, and dares to claim God as his Father?

Besides this, God has made a way for him to come—to come in his sins, and as a sinner. In His boundless mercy He has now been revealed as the Saviour-God, “who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” (1 Tim. ii. 4-6.)

It is to be feared that there are multitudes who think nothing of Jesus as a Mediator to whom they can go *as sinners*, they despise and think needless any ransom to be made for them. God is declared to be love, and they say they will go to Him and claim Him as their Father, and do their best to obey Him.

Fatal delusion! If they come by any other channel than that which God has appointed—the *one* Mediator between sinful men and the holy God—they will surely be rejected: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts iv. 12.) Yes, man must have a Saviour, for he is lost; and he must be saved and be made a son before God can be his Father.

May God open the eyes of any who are under

the delusion of Satan in supposing that there is any other way to become the children of God, and may they come in His way, and then be able to know truthfully that God is their Father.



## QUESTIONS OF INTEREST ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

### No. VIII.

“THE doctrine of the speedy return of our Lord seems to make a radical change in the whole aspect of Christianity. Instead of having the conversion of the world as an object before the soul, which is the duty and privilege of all Christians, we are told that things will get worse and worse until Christ Himself comes and sets things right. And how does this agree with the words of our Lord, who said, ‘Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it?’ (Matt. xvi. 18.) If things are to get worse and worse, is not this by the agency of Satan? and would not this be prevailing against the church?”

We have elsewhere seen that God does not lead us to expect a time of universal blessing by the preaching of the gospel. He is now taking *out of the nations a people for Himself*, and He speaks of those believing who are ordained to eternal life, in no way implying that the result will be universal blessing.

We have also seen that the millennium will be brought about by entirely different means, and in connection with the Jews being again brought into blessing in their own land.

Therefore the text quoted from Matthew cannot in any way alter that which is founded upon plain statements of the word of God. Nevertheless let us look at the passage.

It must be first noticed that our Lord here speaks of what *He* was going to build, not what His servants would build. It is highly important to notice the difference. The apostle Paul speaks of himself as a wise master-builder who had laid the foundation: others build thereon. But then he adds, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon." He is evidently here speaking of a different aspect of the building from that which Christ Himself builds, or what need would there be of this warning voice?

Paul goes on to say, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The foundation is good; indeed, there can be no other; but it is what is built that may eventually prove worthless.

"Now if any man build on this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work



abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. iii. 10-15.)

From this it will be seen that there may be unsound building in connection with the true foundation, such as is represented by wood, hay, and stubble. How can this stand the fire? Impossible; it will be burned up. Satan is not mentioned here, though there can be no doubt that he is helping it all on; but it is what *man* is doing, and such work will be all burnt up.

This is not different from what we get throughout scripture, even from the garden of Eden to the present time, namely, that the result of whatever is committed to man is characterised by *failure*. So that when the scripture speaks of things getting worse and worse, it is what *man* will be.

It is surprising that so many Christians do not see that this is foretold in the word, but are constantly speaking of great progress, and of things getting better. Look, for instance, at the declension manifest in the addresses to the seven churches in the Revelation. To the first it is simply, "Thou hast left thy first love," which, indeed, we may say is the first point of departure; but to the last the message is, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because

thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." And yet how deceived they are, for they say, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," whereas God sees them to be "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

This is not a description of the world, but of the church, and therefore God here and in other places teaches us that there will be dreadful failures connected with that which is associated with the name of Christ. It will become so loathsome that Christ is represented as spueing it out of His mouth.

See also the destruction of Babylon in Revelation xvii., described as an abandoned woman. "Here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth . . . the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." (Vers. 9-18.) What city but Rome is known to be built on seven hills? and what but papal Rome can be this profligate woman—though, as she is called the mother of harlots, the description may includethose churches which have had their origin from her?

Yes, scripture in many places speaks of the failure and degeneracy of Christendom; but this is what has been committed to man, and in no way touches that which Christ is building. It is what He is building that the gates of hell shall

not prevail against. Many passages plainly speak of the eternal security of all that are Christ's. "My sheep shall never perish," said our Lord. And we know He will present to Himself "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." This is the church that Christ is building, and against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

It is true that what He builds may be by human instrumentality; but then it is compared to gold, silver, and precious stones (1 Cor. iii. 12), which will bear the fire, and will not be burned up. No, they, "as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. ii. 5.)

It is hoped that these scriptures make it plain that, though Satan will not be allowed to prevail against the church of the living God, and though there is eternal security for all that Christ builds, yet much that man builds in the *professing* church will be burned up, and that things therein will get worse and worse until the Lord comes. This in no way clashes with the coming of the Lord being the true hope of the church, indeed it confirms it in every way; for we have not to look for universal blessing—great as that will be when it comes—nor to await any events before He comes. We may be greatly depressed if we look around at what man is

building ; but if we look up all is bright there, and we know that suddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of the eye, we know not how soon, the dead in Christ will be raised, and we shall be changed : we shall be with our Lord, and like Him for ever. May those who are the Lord's be always ready and looking for Him !



### FIT FOR HEAVEN.

FIT for heaven ! How could any mortal man, with his old nature still clinging to him, say that he was fit for heaven, where the four living creatures rest not day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come ?"

On the other hand, how can any one be taken to heaven unless he is fit to be there ? How could the Lord say to the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," unless that poor culprit had been made fit to be there ? Or how could Paul speak so positively that to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord ?

It is well known that people generally refer the fitness to some gradual improvement during life, or to some change on the death-bed ; while others expect a process of purification will be effected in another world. But for these things there is not a particle of evidence in the scrip-

ture, and what can we possibly know of the future except what God has been pleased to reveal in His word?

It is not happy to be living in any uncertainty as to this fitness for heaven. We are quite sure that there will be a glorious company there, and we are quite sure that they will not be taken there unless they are fit; the only question is when and how does any one become fit to be there?

We must first see what God says about our fitness for heaven, for He alone is the One that can judge of it. The apostle wrote, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) This does not ask that we *may be* so, but declares positively that we *are* meet. And this is not written to one or two highly-favoured Christians, who may be supposed to be in any way different from others: it is addressed to the whole of the saints who were at Colosse; and if it applied to them all, which surely it did, would it not equally apply to all saints?

Notice, too, that the passage is very full: it does not say fit to be a *candidate* for the inheritance, but a partaker, fit to take our place in that inheritance, to take our share of it, which has been purchased for us, but which we do not yet possess.

It is "the inheritance of the saints *in light*," where the least speck or spot would be at once discovered; for it is the light that makes all things manifest. And as we know that no stain would be allowed in the realms of light, so it is evident that saints are fit for the inheritance of the saints in light, and are a part of the church which the blessed Lord will present to Himself, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

The reader will perhaps ask, How can this be, seeing that we have the flesh attached to us still; and though it is a condemned thing, it is ever ready to break out into action?

True, but this same epistle distinguishes between the walk of the Christian and that which God has done for him. The apostle prays for the saints at Colosse that they *might be* filled with the knowledge of God's will, and that they *might* walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, with many other exhortations to a godly walk, which all believers agree should characterise the Christian.

But the above prayer being in the same epistle, and in close proximity to the declaration of the meetness of the Christian, shews clearly that the two things are distinct; and that the one cannot nullify the other. A consistent walk should surely be enforced, but it must be based upon the place into which God has brought us. What do we mean by a *consistent* walk but

a walk agreeing with the place into which God has already brought us by His grace?

Let us now look at a few points as to our meetness for heaven. If we think of our being guilty before God, He declares that we *are* justified (1 Cor. vi. 11); we are "justified freely by *his* grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24); "Being now justified by *his* blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (chap. v. 9); "Being justified *by* faith we have [or, let us have] peace with God" (ver. 1); "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" (Chap. viii. 33, 34.) What can be more reassuring than this? It is based upon the precious blood of Christ, which cannot leave a charge unmet; and being all brought about by God Himself, who shall call it in question? Surely with such complete justification we should have perfect peace with God, who in His grace has accomplished it for us, and surely such a justification will fit us for heaven.

We were also defiled, but God declares that the believer *is* washed and sanctified (1 Cor. vi. 11), and what God has cleansed, we must not call common or defiled; but we can say, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood . . . to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. i. 5.) Surely what God has done He has done perfectly, so as to fit us for the glory.

We have committed many sins ; but God *has* forgiven us all trespasses. (Col. ii. 13 ; iii. 13.) The apostle wrote, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.) Our sins, therefore, can be no hindrance to our being made partakers of the inheritance in the glory, for their penalty has been borne by Christ, and we have been forgiven.

We were enemies ; but we read, "All things are of God, who *hath* reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. v. 18.) "And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight." (Col. i. 21, 22.) What can possibly be more complete ? God hath reconciled us through the death of Christ, and, we repeat, what He has done He has done perfectly.

We were also in bondage to Satan ; but this is one of the things that we have to thank the Father about, namely, that He "*hath* delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col. i. 13.) The transference has been complete, out of the one into the other ; and we no longer are under the bondage of the god of this world.

We thus see what marvels have been wrought for us by the Lord Jesus Christ ; indeed, "By



one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Ponder these words: "perfected." Can anything be added to that which is perfected, and perfected by the Lord Himself? Impossible. And it is a lasting thing: it is perfected for ever, "in perpetuity;" not a changing or a fluctuating thing; it is a perfection that will never change. Is not that which the Lord Jesus has perfected fit for heaven? and what can we ever be as to fitness beyond that which He has already perfected for us by His one offering?

But there are statements that go beyond all these marvellous things. God has "predestinated us unto the adoption of *children* by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us *accepted in the beloved*." (Eph. i. 5, 6.) God, "when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Chap. ii. 5, 6.)

If we are accepted in Christ, and if we are sitting in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus—and these passages shew that these things are true of the believer—our inquiry is complete: we must be fit for heaven because we are accepted in the Beloved, in all the worthiness of His holy Person and His boundless work, and are already seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus; not

*with* Him yet, but already *in* Him, never to be in any other standing, and never to be more fit than His perfect grace has already made us.

Many feel a difficulty as to these glorious things being true of them now, because they are still in the body compassed with infirmities, and still have the flesh within them, and may often fail; but the same epistle that states that God has made us fit for the inheritance of the saints in light, also speaks of our increasing in or *growing* into the knowledge of God, and the apostle prays that they might be fruitful in every good work, and indeed, that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.

The two lines of truth do not clash. God has done all these marvellous things for us, tells us what they are, and then upon the standing which He has given us He bases the exhortations to walk in all things so as to please the blessed Lord.

He would surely have us not only know what great things He has done for us, but would have us give full credit to them, and *enjoy* them; while our hearts go out in the deepest gratitude to the blessed One who, at such a cost, has obtained them for us. This would beget in us an earnest desire to live in entire separation from the world from which He has delivered us, and to walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto His kingdom and glory. (1 Thess. ii. 12.)

## NO DIFFERENCE.

Romans iii. 22.

It is worthy of remark that the verdict of God on mankind affects man in every direction, and men of every grade from the highest to the lowest.

It is a difficult thing for the highly civilised and strictly moral man to believe that he is, as regards his standing before God, on the same level as the most degraded. As to his conduct he may be and doubtless is very different; but as to his bare humanity God says there is no difference, and He surely knows best what man now is in his fallen condition.

In Romans iii., where the apostles declare that there is no difference, he adds the proof that it is so, namely, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Can any one say that he has not sinned? He may think he has sinned but little—much less than others; but can he say honestly that he has never sinned? No, he cannot; neither can he say that he has not come short of the glory of God.

But there is another side to this subject. While there is a class of people who think they are too good to be reckoned with the general run of mankind, there are others that are judged to be much too low to be treated as a part of the common manhood.

This has been shewn in many parts of the world. When missionaries first went to the

South of Africa, the colonists declared that they might as well preach to the pigs as to the Hottentots; and even after some churches had been formed there a missionary found written over the door "Dogs and Hottentots not admitted!"

Similar things were said of the native inhabitants of Madagascar, of Australia, and of the islands of the sea—said by traders and travellers who counted themselves Christians.

But God has shown the folly of all this. The glorious gospel has gone forth into these dark places of the earth, and the Hottentots and the most degraded savages and cannibals have been converted, and live consistent lives.

God's commission to His servants was, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark xvi. 15.) It is the same glorious gospel for the high as for the low. All have descended from Adam and Eve in their fallen condition. Some may have been raised in the matter of civilization and education; but as to their standing before God there is "no difference." All are lost sinners, and need the same salvation, through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus. May that glorious gospel go forth everywhere, bringing down the high from their supposed elevation, and raising up the degraded, that both may become members of the body of Christ.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

8. D. R., Carriglong. We think it is a mistake to refer Luke xii. 36 to the marriage of Christ and the church: it is *any* wedding. None are taught to be like men waiting for the Lord when he returns from His wedding. It is not *prophecy*, but an Eastern wedding (in which men waited and watched for their master—a thing our Lord's hearers no doubt had often witnessed) is used simply as an illustration. Matthew xxv. is quite different. There it is our Lord Himself that the virgins wait for. "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage." (Ver. 10.)

9. J. H. Beek. (a) We do not think that John v. 25 refers to the resurrection; but to the dead in sins being quickened into life. It does not appear probable that the resurrection would be brought in between verses 24 and 26, which both speak of Christ having and giving life to dead sinners. Then verse 27 says that our Lord had *also* (as something else) authority for judgment given to Him, and then He speaks of the resurrection: some raised unto life, and some unto judgment. Notice that verse 24 speaks of *death* unto life, which well agrees with *the dead* (in sins) hearing and living, in verse 25.

(b) We do not see any difficulty in believing that there will be saints on earth *after* the church is caught up to be with the Lord: not Old Testament saints, they have long since fallen asleep, and they will have part, we believe, in the resurrection named in 1 Thessalonians iv. 16. When Enoch prophesied that the Lord would come *with ten thousands* of His saints (Jude 14) did

not this include Old Testament saints? As to there being saints on earth after the church is caught up, does not Revelation vii. 9-17 point to such saints? and there will be others that will be on the earth during the millennium. We do not think that Daniel xii. 2 speaks of resurrection, but of the nation being raised up, as in Isaiah xxvi. 17-19 and Ezekiel xxxvii. 1-14.

(c) By examination of the various passages that speak of the coming of the Lord, it appears evident that at times (as in Matthew xxiv.) reference is made to His return generally, without being restricted to the moment when He will come *for* His saints. So also 'the day of the Lord' (though emphatically a day of judgment) is sometimes spoken of in reference to the saints, because it will be also a day of manifestation. Thus in 1 Corinthians v. 5 discipline is exercised "for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus;" see also 2 Timothy iv. 8. We therefore do not think that Philippians i. 6 teaches that there will be progress in sanctification after the saints are with the Lord. We are already "*meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12), though while here there is *growth*. When a saint dies he goes at once to be with the Lord, and we cannot conceive of progress in sanctification *after* that. 1 Thessalonians v. 23 speaks of our being preserved blameless now while here until (or *at*) the coming of the Lord. So 2 Peter iii. 14. 1 Corinthians iii. 12-15 refers to ministerial labour: every man's work will be tried by fire, and only that which is true will bear the fire, and will stand. Bad workmen may

suffer loss, but be themselves saved through the fire. No doubt we shall wait for the full glory which God has in store for us until we have our glorified bodies.

10. "T. F. C.," Liverpool. (a) Isaiah liii. 11, 12 represents Christ's entering into the fruits of His work, when He will be satisfied. Jehovah will divide Him a portion with the great, and our Lord Himself will divide the spoil with the strong. This carries out the figure of a great warrior entering into his triumph, when he divides the honours showered upon him with his soldiers. We are made "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17), and are to endure hardness as *good* soldiers of Jesus Christ. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." (1 Cor. xvi. 13.) See John xvii. 22.

(b) The term 'kingdom of heaven' occurring only in the Gospel by Matthew seems clearly to refer it to Israel. They were looking for an earthly kingdom, but their eyes were directed to heaven. Their Messiah being rejected, He returned to heaven, and for the reception of blessing on earth their eyes must be turned heavenward. This is confirmed by finding that some of the parables, which represent the kingdom of heaven in Matthew, are referred to the kingdom of God in the other Gospels. In their present aspect the kingdom and the house of God may have similar applications, but the thought of a 'kingdom' is very different from that of a 'house.' The former supposes a ruler, with subjects owning his government; but a house implies more the *internal* organisation. Paul wrote to Timothy that he might know how to

*behave himself* in the house of God. (1 Tim. iii. 15.) This house is said to be "the church of the living God," whereas the 'kingdom' is never said to be the church.

(c) We are not aware of any symbolical teaching in the *five* pillars to the door of the tabernacle. They divided the end of the tabernacle into *four* entrances, thus affording, when liberty of access was given and the inner veil was rent, an abundant entrance. Christ is the door.

(d) In the "lace of blue," Exodus xxxix. 21, 'blue' is the *heavenly* colour, and is often named in connection with the tabernacle. The breastplate was fastened by chains of gold (divine righteousness), and the lace of blue (heavenly purpose and relationship). Thus are we bound to our exalted Lord, though we are on earth.

(e) Moses was Jehovah's representative when he consecrated Aaron for the priesthood. (Exod. xxix. 24.)

(f) After Aaron and the people had sinned by making the golden calf, Moses became the mediator between Jehovah and the people, and as such must go up alone when he went up the mount the second time. There he was so near to God that his face shone when he came down.

(g) The tabernacle referred to in Exodus xxxiii. 7, 8, 9, was not *the* tabernacle, and should be here translated 'tent:' it was perhaps the tent of Moses, though used as the tent of meeting before the tabernacle was finished. It will be seen that further instruction for making the tabernacle is given *after* chapter xxxiii. It was not set up and anointed until chapter xl.

(h) To see why imperfect animals might be accepted for a free-will offering in Leviticus



xxii. 23, it should be noticed that in verse 21 anything in beeves or sheep for a free-will offering "unto the Lord" must be *perfect* to be accepted; but in verse 23 the words "unto the Lord" are omitted. To *meet God's claim*, only such an offering as could be a type of Christ could be accepted; but He graciously accepts the devotions of our feeble and imperfect service as to free-will offerings. The offerings for a vow would have to be sacrificed to Jehovah, and must therefore be perfect.

(i) We can see no intimation in scripture as to whether the linen curtains for the court of the tabernacle were hung inside or outside the pillars. If *we* are typified by the pillars, the linen would probably be *outside* to typify the righteousness of the saints, who should so live before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

(j) The "brotherly covenant" of Amos i. 9 does not refer to relationship, but simply to friendship. See 1 Kings ix. 11-14, in which Hiram, king of Tyre, called Solomon his "brother." The covenant is in 1 Kings v. 12.

(k) "The day of visitation" (1 Pet. ii. 12) is not "*the* day," as some special time, but more like "when God visits," and this may be in grace, as in Luke i. 68, 78; vii. 16; xix. 44; Acts xv. 14. When any are broken down under the power of God's grace, they have to confess that God had acted in those Christians in their acceptance of Jesus Christ, whom they formerly condemned.

(l) In Hosea vi. 2 it must be noticed that it speaks of Israel being "revived" after two days; and being "raised up" and "living" in the third

day. It calls to mind Ezekiel's vision of the resurrection of the dry bones of the whole house of Israel, and a nation being born in *one day*. "Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." (Isa. lxvi. 8.) After two days they will be revived; and in the third they will be raised up, and shall live in God's sight. What more marvellous display of the power of God, in not only raising up the whole house of Israel into a nation, but the speedy way in which it will be accomplished in a yet future day.

(m) We see nothing typical in the seventh day in Ezekiel xlv. 20. On the first day of the first month the sanctuary was to be cleansed: on the seventh day an offering was graciously provided for the erring and for him that is simple; so all would be ready for the passover on the fourteenth day.

(n) In Zechariah x. 4 out of Judah came forth the corner stone (the Lord Jesus Christ); out of Judah the "peg" (in allusion to a strong peg which was built in the wall of houses in the East, on which their property was hung; see Isaiah xxii. 23-25, "a nail [or peg] in a sure place"), that which gave safety and security.

(o) Malachi ii. 14-16 charges home upon the people the lightness with which they divorced their wives, the wives they had chosen in their youth. Did not God make them one? God's Spirit did not lead otherwise. His ordinance was that they should be and remain one, and then He could bless their seed. It was in connection with marriage (when the sons of God took wives of the children of men) that we read, "My Spirit

shall not always strive with man." (Gen. vi. 1-3.)

(p) Matthew xxv. 28 signifies that if a person does not use the gift God has given him, he loses it; whereas to one that uses his gifts, God gives more; in the same way that a master discharges a faithless servant, and trusts more and more to a faithful one. Rewards in the kingdom will be for service done. May we each be greeted by our Lord with a "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

(q) 1 Timothy i. 18. It was pointed out to Paul and others in a prophetic way that Timothy was a fit person for the ministry. Notice also that in chapter iv. 14 the gift given to Timothy was also "by prophecy," a special gift for this devoted servant. At a time when the scriptures were not complete, and even forged epistles were written (see 2 Thess. ii. 2), it was needful that those should be acknowledged who had a "form of sound words" which they had personally received from the apostle.

(r) We doubt not that Assyria will be brought into blessing in the millennium: it had been used by God to carry away and keep captive His people Israel. Their kings had acted for God in punishing His people; in the same way God says, "Nebuchadnezzar, *my servant*." (Jer. xxv. 9, &c.) Egypt, which sheltered our Lord when Herod sought His life, will also be brought into blessing. "The Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation . . . the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." (Isa. xix. 21-25.)

## “I HAVE LABOURED IN VAIN.”

IN Isaiah xlix. we have a beautiful unfolding of the purposes of Jehovah, notwithstanding the refusal of the people of Israel to welcome their Messiah when He was presented to them.

The chapter opens with our Lord Himself—for it is He who speaks, as we shall see—calling to the isles and the people afar off to give ear to what He was about to proclaim. It was something that concerned the wide world. “Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.” (Ver. 1.)

Our Lord’s name was prophesied of both in the Old Testament and the New, before He was born. “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name IMMANUEL.” (Isa. vii. 14.) The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Matt. i. 20, 21.) Gabriel appeared to Mary and said, “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great,

and shall be called the Son of the Highest." (Luke i. 31, 32.)

This is the one who calls upon the inhabitants of the isles and those at a far distance to listen. And His miraculous birth was the sign given to Israel that they might know the One whom Jehovah was sending to them. No one but the blessed Lord was ever born of a virgin; it was above nature. It was by the Holy Ghost; He was Jehovah's sent One.

The prophecy then proceeds to point out some of the characteristics of this sent One. "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft: in his quiver hath he hid me." The sharp sword and the polished shaft speak of judgment. We find precisely the same in the New Testament, both in connection with Israel and with the church. When our Lord was born, the angel that appeared to the shepherds said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke ii. 10, 13, 14.)

Here were good tidings for Israel and not a word about judgment. It is to bring glory to God, peace to the earth, and goodwill to man.

Well, we know that all this will be accomplished in a future day in the millennium; but in the meantime, soon, there was a great change. To the very same people our Lord declared, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but *a sword*." (Matt. x. 34; see also John ix. 39.) We know why there was this great change: one little sentence explains it all, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." This is what we get farther on in our chapter.

In reference also to the professing church, we find the Lord prepared for judgment, for "judgment must begin at the house of God." Examine well the appearance of our Lord in Revelation i. John says, "In the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went *a sharp two-edged sword*: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." Is it to be wondered at that John, who in former days had leaned his head on the bosom of our Lord, should fall at His feet as dead! That meek and lowly One is transformed

to One ready for judgment ; and, alas, " judgment must begin at the house of God," for evil and apostasy cannot be tolerated there by Him that is holy and Him that is true.

To return to Isaiah, Jehovah says, " Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." It may seem strange that our Lord should be called " Israel ;" but the passage as a whole makes it quite plain that it can refer to no one else. Israel is interpreted as " Prince of God " or " one prevailing with God." When Jacob's name was changed to that of Israel, we read that the one who wrestled with him said, " Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel : for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." (Gen. xxxii. 28.) Our Lord answers to both significations. He is a Prince with God, and He is the One that prevails.

Our Lord being here called " Israel " throws light upon another passage. " When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." (Hos. xi. 1.) The literal Israel was as a nation in its infancy in Egypt, and it is Jehovah who calls it His son, and brings it out of Egypt. But this passage is also referred to our Lord, when Joseph fled into Egypt, " and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." (Matt. ii. 15.)

The prophecy in Hosea was given after the people had been declared by God to be Lo-ammi, "*not my people.*" Were then all the prophecies respecting Israel to fail? No, our Lord identifies Himself with them, enacts their history (not their failure) as it were, over again; He goes into Egypt, and is called from thence by God, as was Israel in by-gone days. In our Lord's death also we get the antitype to the passage of the Red Sea and the Jordan; and it will only be when Israel owns and bows to the Lord Jesus that they will be brought into future blessing.

In respect to Jehovah being glorified in the Lord Jesus, compare John xiii. 31, 32; xiv. 13; xvii. 1, 4. He was obedient *unto death*. Our Lord answers, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with Jehovah, and my work with my God." We see at once, by this verse, the mistake of applying such a prophecy as this to the church. Our Lord does not say, respecting His work and labour for the church, that it was vain; but when presented to the Jews as Messiah, was it not in vain? Was not His strength spent for nought? This is testified of in both the Old and New Testaments. In the prophecy of the seventy weeks, we read, "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have *nothing.*" (Daniel ix. 26, margin.) "He came unto his own, and his own



received him not." Their conduct is compared to husbandmen who say, in reference to our Lord, "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." (Matt. xxi. 38, 39.)

Listen again to the lamentation of our Lord: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." (Matt. xxiii. 37.) It was here that our Lord laboured in vain, and spent His strength for nought. He was cut off and had nothing. Yet in the midst of this treatment, our Lord says, "My judgment is with Jehovah, and my work [or reward] with my God." He refers all to God.

That the "labour in vain" refers to Israel is quite plain by the next verse, wherein our Lord says, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God shall be my strength."

To this Jehovah answers, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." This opens up a much wider field for the gospel and the reception of

God's sent One. In comparison to that which was before God, to send His gospel to the end of the earth, to every creature indeed, it was a small thing to be the means of gathering the remnant of Israel; yet this will not be forgotten. The restoration and blessing of Israel rests upon the infallible word of God, as is plainly stated in many passages.

The "labour in vain" of our Lord was only temporary, though His rejection brought about the destruction of Jerusalem and the final scattering of the people; yet Jehovah calls Himself their Redeemer, notwithstanding their rebellion. "Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of Jehovah that is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee."

Yes, the despised and abhorred One will return surrounded with glory, and be owned King of kings and Lord of lords. Jehovah has glorified Him, and will yet glorify Him on this very earth where, alas, because of the perversity and sin of man, He laboured in vain, and spent His strength for nought; where He had to say, "Reproach hath broken my heart."

How good to look forward to that time, not simply because we shall be delivered from all our groaning and pain, and be with Him and like

Him for ever; but the prayer of our blessed Lord will then be fulfilled, when He said, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold *my glory*, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John xvii. 24.) Hasten it, O God, in thine own time.



## QUESTIONS OF INTEREST ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

### IX.

"Is not the coming of the Lord inseparably connected with an earthly millennium? And if the millennium is to be a spiritual one, what hinders it being brought about by means of the various agencies at present at work—missionary, Bible and tract societies? Our Lord distinctly said, 'My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.' (John xviii. 36.) Does not this prove that the kingdom of Christ is a spiritual one, which is now going on, and is extending, and may extend until 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea?' (Isa. xi. 9.) And if so, why should we not be looking for *this* event, rather than for the personal return of our

Lord ; though surely He will come at the end of the world ?”

None of the prophecies or the promises of God can fail ; therefore we are quite sure that there is a time coming when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, for He Himself has declared it. But let our first inquiry be, By what means is this to be brought about ? And is it anywhere stated in the New Testament that this is to be the result of the present preaching of the gospel to every creature ?

In Acts xv. 14 we read that God was visiting the nations to take out of them a people for His name. To *take out* a people from the mass is surely a different thing from the whole mass being taken. And this in no way clashes with the gospel being preached to every creature. It is proclaimed to all, but God has taken means by which to ensure some being saved. We read that when the Gentiles heard the gospel, they “glorified the word of the Lord : and *as many* as were ordained to eternal life, believed.” (Chap. xiii. 48.) Instead of hindering any one from preaching the gospel, this is the very thing that makes it certain that some will be saved, and should send forth the evangelist with greater energy.

Again, what can be plainer than the parable of the Wheat and the Tares ? We have our Lord’s own interpretation of it, and He tells us that He Himself is the Sower : “The good seed are the

children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one: the enemy that sowed them is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world [or, age], and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this age." (Matt. xiii. 37-40.) The question was asked by the servants whether they should gather the tares from the wheat, but the answer was, "Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest."

Surely the teaching of this parable is quite opposed to the thought of the world being converted (to use a common phrase) by the various agencies at present carried on to spread the gospel. The wheat and the tares are to grow together until the harvest, and that will be at the end of the age. How then can the millennium be inaugurated before that period? It is only at that time that "the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." (Ver. 41.) We are compelled to see, therefore, that the state of universal blessedness on the earth cannot be the result of the gospel under the present dispensation.

What are the means, then, that are revealed in scripture that will bring about the millennium? They are found to embrace an order of things

entirely different from the present dispensation. God's ancient people Israel will be brought into their own land ; will pass through great tribulation ; will own our Lord as their Messiah ; will become missionaries to the nations ; and will eventually be the centre of universal blessedness on the earth. The nations will bring their riches and their glory to Jerusalem, for that will then be God's centre of blessing. (Isa. ii. 1-3.)

From this it will be seen that the millennium will be celebrated *on earth*. The passage quoted in the question raised at the head of our paper says, "*the earth* shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." The church that is now being gathered is heavenly, and belongs to heaven. God had in time past an earthly people, and they will again be gathered and blessed on earth ; for they are only set aside for a time, and if any one of the promises made to them can fail of being accomplished, all God's promises can fail, and we can be sure of nothing. But we know this is impossible. The blessed Lord, who was so ill-treated by man, and turned out of the earth, will yet have glory on earth, and be hailed as King of kings and Lord of lords.

When our Lord said, "My kingdom is not of this world," He did not mean that He had not an earthly people, and that He would not have a kingdom on earth. We read that He came unto *His own*, and His own received Him not ; and

*they* said, "This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and let us seize on *his inheritance*." (Matt. xxi. 38.) Of the temple, too, He said, "*My* house shall be called the house of prayer." (Ver. 13.) Thus our Lord had an earthly people, and lingered in grace over them, guilty as they were, and died, too, for that nation as well as for those who had never known the true God.

Our Lord meant that His kingdom was not of this world in its origin: notice that He says, "*My* kingdom is not *from hence*." But when Pilate asked, "Art thou a king, then?" Jesus confessed that He was, and as we read in 1 Timothy vi. 13, our Lord "before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession."

Now our Lord is not said to be King of the church, nor, indeed, is He called, "King of saints," for Revelation xv. 3 should unquestionably read "King of nations;" but He is called King of the Jews, and will be hailed in the millennium as "King of kings and Lord of lords."

The objections, therefore, raised in the questions are shewn to be without foundation, and on a fuller view of the subject they all fall to the ground. There is absolutely nothing that we are taught to look for before the coming of the Lord. He said, "Surely I come quickly," "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." How is it that any who form a part of the bride of Christ cannot heartily say, "Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus"?

## CHURCHES AND CREEDS.

THE question has been asked whether a godly living Roman Catholic, dying in his faith, seeking the intercession of the Virgin Mary with Christ for his sins, can be saved.

We ought, of course, to refuse entirely the pretensions of the Church of Rome, and to shrink from its system of priestcraft, with its indulgences, its absolutions, and its miracles, as an abominable delusion, and believe that it is portrayed in scripture as "the mother of harlots."

Still it is a part of Christendom, it bears the name of Christ, and we could not say that none of that church will be saved. We believe some will. If Thyatira represents popery, in the addresses to the seven churches (Rev. ii., iii.), we read (after describing her misdeeds), "Unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come." And then is added a promise to the overcomer. May we not gather from this that even in that corrupt system there may be some who by the grace of God have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust in Him alone for salvation?

There is abundant evidence in the history of the church that there have been such. Without



referring to what Luther himself taught—for he was far beyond his compeers—yet he himself was helped by others who were rigid Romanists. When Luther was groaning under the power of sin, saw not forgiveness, and sought relief by making promises and keeping under the body, one (and he a vicar-general) said to him, “Why do you distress yourself with these high thoughts? Look to the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood which He has shed for you: it is there you will see the mercy of God. Instead of torturing yourself for your faults, cast yourself into the arms of your Redeemer. Trust in Him, in the righteousness of His life, in the expiatory sacrifice of His death. Do not shrink from Him; God is not against you: it is you who are estranged and averse from God. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to assure you of the divine favour. He says to you, You are My sheep: you hear My voice: none shall pluck you out of My hand.”

The same man hearing Luther exclaim (for he yet had no peace), “Oh, my sin! my sin!” answered, “Well, would you be only the *semblance* of a sinner, and have only the *semblance* of a Saviour? Know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of those even who are *real* and *great* sinners, and deserving of utter condemnation.” The same man gave Luther a Bible, and bid him study the scriptures.

But Luther was long in finding peace, and was one day in despair, when an old monk entered his cell, and referring Luther to his *Credo*, repeated "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Well, Luther had often repeated that and believed it. "Ah," said the monk, "you must not only believe that David's or Peter's sins are forgiven: the devils believe that. The commandment of God is that we believe that *our own sins* are forgiven." The old man then repeated what St. Bernard had said: "The testimony which the Holy Ghost applies to your heart is this, 'Thy sins are forgiven *thee*.'"

Another Romanist warned his son against indulgences as being nets for money, and deluding the simple. "Remission of sins and eternal life," said he, "are not to be purchased by money. . . . The blood of Christ is the only ransom for the sins of the whole world. Oh, my son, if there were but three men to be saved by the blood of Christ, *only believe*, and be sure that you shall be one of those three. It is disparaging the Saviour's blood to doubt its power to save."

Now all these counsels were given by rigid Romanists, who doubtless at the same time prayed to the Virgin Mary and to the saints, and practised many things that could not be reconciled with what they said. And though what they confessed may not have been the clearest gospel, yet does it not shew that what they really

trusted in for salvation was the blood of Christ?

Thus we may say of these—and many other instances might be quoted—that they were above and beyond the teaching of their church. And there may be others in our day, hidden up in the dark corners of the earth, who have been educated in the Church of Rome, who have yet been reached by the Holy Spirit, and taught to trust for salvation to the precious blood of Christ.

The question asked—whether a Roman Catholic can be saved—suggests the solemn question, Can some Protestants be saved? We are all apt to consider Protestantism as greatly superior to Romanism; but there are really very solemn things connected with the former as well as the latter. In the address to the church in Sardis (which answers historically to Protestantism) we read, “Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead!” Profession without reality! Yet it is graciously added, “Thou hast *a few* names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.” (Rev. iii. 1, 4.)

*A few* names! How solemn! when *all* may be rejoicing that they are delivered from the delusions of Rome, and have no idea of being lost. Satan cares not whether it is Romanism or Protestantism if it is mere profession.

Let us not forget that there are peculiar

dangers in Protestantism. Some therein boast that they are delivered from priestcraft, and that every man is perfectly free to choose his own religion. This agrees with man's cherished thought of "liberty;" but has not God given us Christianity? And if He has given us a religion, what choice have we except to receive or reject it?

Alas, many do reject it, who at the same time pride themselves on being Protestants, yet some are farther from salvation than the poor deluded Romanists. Those who deny the divinity of Christ, and yet call themselves Christians—can *they* be saved? No; the death of a mere man could not atone for one soul, much less for millions. The precious blood of Christ is no atonement to them, and indeed they deny the need of any such thing.

There are others, professedly orthodox, who speak so slightly of the blessed Lord that it is difficult to know what they believe. And some of these are in "high places" in their churches or colleges, looked up to by others, and to whom the training of the young is entrusted. One of such lately preached and published a sermon that gave such an uncertain sound that professed Unitarians circulated it by thousands. It was pleasing to them to find that one who would have declared *them* to be heterodox, was coming near to what they held. What can we expect of the young who are being taught by such men?

It was supposed that creeds and confessions carefully drawn up were a sufficient guarantee that nothing erroneous could be held and taught; but these have had to be altered to make room for the freedom of modern thought, and now it has been found that even that concession does not satisfy; too tight a rein cannot be held in these days of the march of mind! But what Christianity is there in all this? God's word cannot be altered. True; but its inspiration can be denied and be trodden under foot.

Many others, who are not Unitarians, virtually deny the atonement: they deny that there is any need that another should die for them, or that this is God's way of salvation. They do not believe that "without shedding of blood there is no remission." Alas, such have chosen *their own* religion; but how can such Protestants be saved?

Some deny the inspiration of the scriptures, and many deny the eternity of punishment, &c. Yes, man likes to assert his liberty, and choose his own religion; but the tendency of all this is that it leads to infidelity.

Many other Protestants are shewing their relationship to "the mother of harlots" by imitating their "mother" in her ritualism, and drawing nearer and nearer to her corruptions and her delusions.

How refreshing to turn away from it all, and have simple faith in God, believe His word,

trust in the precious blood of Christ for salvation, see the deliverance He gives us from the whole scene around us, and to be looking for the Lord Himself to come and fetch us to be with Him and like Him for ever. May the reader not be content with boasting of his Protestantism, but be drawn to Christ as his Saviour, and have a bright hope of eternal life which nothing here can rob him of, for it is founded on the imperishable word of God.



## RESOURCES IN AN EVIL DAY.

### THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

It is clear that the Epistle of Jude gives a picture of the most frightful state of Christendom. In another epistle (1 John ii. 19) the false ones are represented as going out, but here they are shewn to be inside. They are not described as having been knowingly admitted, but as having "crept in unawares." Under the garb of profession, they have eluded detection, and are thus described as having "crept in unawares."

It may have been carelessness on the part of the true-hearted in not discerning the real character of those thus admitted. We are naturally glad to hear of conversions, and to find that those who profess faith in Christ are desirous of commemorating in the Lord's Supper

the death of the Saviour. The thought of "numbers" is often a snare, even where there is a real desire that only the truly converted should be gathered.

But the Epistle of Jude clearly proves that Satan's aim is to defile the house of God by bringing into it *his* candidates. We are elsewhere exhorted to try the spirits, for many false prophets are gone into the world. Saints, therefore, should not be too hasty in admitting into the house of God ; for Satan knows how to dress up his followers and teach them to repeat what he knows will please every Christian to hear. Who, indeed, can be aware of his devices except as led and preserved by the Holy Spirit ?

The apostle then gives instances of apostasy from the Old Testament history. The first, alas ! is in Israel itself : the Israelites had all been brought out of Egypt, but those that believed not were destroyed.

The second is that of the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation : they are reserved in everlasting chains for punishment in the great day.

The third is Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

Then follows a dreadful description of the false ones who had crept into the house of God, with a "Woe unto them ! for they have

gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core." (Ver. 11.)

As to Cain, we read: "We should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." (1 John iii. 11, 12.) Instead of love in these professors, there was hatred against those who were righteous—a hatred that in Cain led to murder.

Of Balaam we also have God's own description: he "taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." (Rev. ii. 14.) Balaam was not allowed to curse Israel; but for "reward" he taught their enemy to seduce them into idolatry, with which was connected fleshly indulgence.

With Core (or Korah) it was different. It is here called "gainsaying;" it was speaking reproachfully against God's representatives and His priests, typical of the priesthood of Christ, and declaring that they themselves were holy.

Thus we see there was hatred instead of love; ecclesiastical evil with its enticements to sin, instead of seeking to remove all temptations; and despising God's authority in His true representative and Priest. And all this was connected with the profession of Christianity.



“These are spots [or, rocks] in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear:” like sunken rocks upon which the mariner might at any time be wrecked. “Clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead [by nature and by apostasy], plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” (Vers. 12, 13.) Great pretension, but no reality or godly fruit.

Now it is to be remarked that though ungodly ones existed at the time when the epistle was written, mention is made of a prophecy by Enoch as to the *return* of the Lord to execute judgment upon them. From this we learn that the very same thing will exist at the end when the Lord comes for judgment.

The saints had been already warned by the apostles that there would be “mockers in the last time [or, at the end of the time] who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves [as more holy, like the Pharisees], sensual [or, natural], not having the Spirit.” They are not only unconverted, but are not even moral men; and yet, alas! they are inside the professing church. It is near to open apostasy.

In such a state of things what are the saints

to do? They are to build up themselves on their most holy faith. This is the only place where we read of 'holy' faith; and here even that is not enough, it is 'most holy' faith, in striking contrast to the unholiness of the mere professors. It is a 'holy Father' (John xvii. 11) who is our Father; it is "He that is holy [and] he that is true" (Rev. iii. 7) that is our Saviour; and it is the Holy Spirit who has quickened us, and who indwells us. Yes, ours is the most holy faith. We are to build up ourselves on it. We cannot separate the faith from the truth. There is no real faith without the truth; and there is no holding the truth without faith. We are to build up ourselves on our most holy faith: to seek to be rooted and grounded in the truth; to "stand fast in the faith." The building up is to be "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." (Eph. iv. 13-15.)

"Praying in the Holy Ghost," stands in direct contrast to those who have not the Spirit,

though they had been able to creep in. Prayer is the great resort in an evil day: to whom can we turn but to the One that is able to keep us from falling?

“Keep yourselves in the love of God.” Not our love to Him, but His love to us, which nothing can affect or even touch. Surely His love is set upon us for good; and however dark the day, or however crooked all things may become, let nothing shake our confidence in God’s love: it is eternal.

“Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.” It is mercy, because the evil being so great we are addressed as individuals. “His mercy endureth for ever.” We can always count on this. What strong bulwarks are these in an evil day—God’s love and His mercy. They are boundless and are certain. Oh that we might never lose heart, but by prayer in the Holy Spirit be cast on God, rejoicing in His love, and trusting in His mercy.

How cheering to be able to close, even when things are at their very worst, with “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”



## CORRESPONDENCE.

11. Y. B., Liverpool. (a) It helps us to understand our Lord's cursing the fig-tree to examine what the prophets did to bring some fact or some prophecy vividly before the people. Take, for instance, Jeremiah. He had long prophesied to the people without effect, he was then told to *do* something in the presence of the ancients, or elders, of the people and of the priests. He was told to take a potter's earthen bottle, and to carry it forth to the valley of the son of Hinnom, and there to prophesy. Then he was to break the bottle in the sight of the men that went with him, and say, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again." (Jer. xix. 11.)

The Lord Jesus came to His own people and they would not receive Him. The day previous to cursing the fig-tree He had entered into Jerusalem with the people crying, "Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." This fulfilled the prophecy, "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass." (Matt. xxi. 5.) The Jews should have remembered this prophecy and should have thus seen its literal fulfilment; but instead of this we read that "when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did

[He had just healed the blind and the lame], and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased." (Ver. 15.) Then we have the emphatic words, "*he left them.*"

The next morning our Lord being hungry, and "seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." (Mark xi. 13, 14.)

Our Lord knew perfectly well there were no figs on the tree before He went to it, and to denounce it would seem an action unworthy of Him, unless in His so doing there had been an important lesson for them to learn. He had often spoken to the people, and had just been presented to them as their king; but the heads of the nation were only sore displeased at Him. He would now *do* something that, had they eyes to see it, would vividly portray their coming desolation and destruction.

Israel is the fig-tree: this they should have recognised from their own prophecies; see Hosea ix. 10 and Joel i. 7. It was quite according to God that when our Lord was here He should have looked for fruit; but, alas! He found none. We are told that the natural fig-tree produces fruit before its leaves; and therefore there was, as it were, a pretension of fruit, because the tree had leaves. Israel boasted of being the children of Abraham, of having the law, &c., and despised the nations around as unclean; but it bore no real fruit to God.

It may seem strange, if this is the teaching of the miracle, that our Lord did not explain its meaning to the people, as Jeremiah did when he broke the bottle; but our Lord had already brought before them the fact of their unfruitfulness, and this by the type of a fig-tree. (Luke xiii. 6-9.) The owner had come for three years seeking fruit, but had found none, and ordered it to be cut down, when the dresser begged for it to be spared for one year more, and then if there was no fruit it should be cut down. Surely this was a type of Israel. Our Lord had laboured among them more than three years, and still there was no fruit. He left them, and the tree was cursed.

Some writers speak of the early spring fig as being an especial delicacy, and Isaiah speaks of "the hasty [or early] fruit before the summer, which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up." (Chap. xxviii. 4.) And the cursing of the fig-tree would appear to have been near the time of the passover in the spring. Whereas when our Lord speaks a parable of the fig-tree in another connection, he says, "When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." So that literally the usual time of gathering figs had not arrived, though where there were leaves there should have been fruit.

So in Israel, the time of figs was not yet. There should have been figs, because there were leaves; but the time when Israel will bear fruit for God is yet future. No one could eat fruit of that old stock *for ever*, and yet there will be a shoot of it that will be planted again in that

land, that will produce fruit to God ; but it will be when they own the One who came seeking fruit and found none. Then will be the time when God will bless Israel, and that will be "the time of figs."

(b) It is said of John the Baptist that there had not been a greater born of woman (our Lord excepted, of course), but it is added, "notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matt. xi. 11.) This surely implies that John was not in the kingdom, that which our Lord was announcing. Another passage confirms this: "The law and the prophets were until John: *since that time* the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." (Luke xvi. 16.) The kingdom of heaven cannot be said to have really begun until Christ was in heaven. When Jesus began to preach He said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is *at hand*;" and when He sent forth the twelve it was still the same. He told them to say, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iv. 17; x. 7.) Israel was taught that, instead of expecting an earthly kingdom at that time, their eyes should be directed to heaven: their Messiah, being rejected by them, could only be found there.

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## IRON AND CLAY.

DOUBTLESS many a Christian—surrounded as he is, in this or in other civilised countries, by various commotions and conflicts between the rulers of the land, and those who are ruled—has turned his eye toward scripture to see if that gives any key to the cause of these contentions.

Happily we are relieved by God from taking any part in the politics of the world. "Our citizenship\* is in heaven" (Phil. iii. 20), and we cannot be a citizen of two places at the same time. We must renounce the one before we can take up the other. God has delivered us from the earthly citizenship, and given us that of heaven. This is also seen in the division of mankind into Jews, Gentiles, and the church of God (1 Cor. x. 32), "the church of God" is distinct from the Jews and the nations, *out* of which it is gathered.

Doubtless some would have been pleased to have enlisted our Lord, when on earth, to take up the cause of the Jews against the bondage of the Romans. On one occasion they related to Him how Pilate had committed the grave

\* This word, *πολίτευμα*, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It signifies citizenship, community: from which our word "politics" is derived.



desecration of mingling the blood of some Galilæans with their sacrifices. It was an event that was well calculated to arouse the spirit of a Jewish patriot. But our Lord turned their attention at once from the outrage of Pilate to the sin of the Galilæans, and from thence to that of His hearers, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." The people did not repent, and perished at the destruction of Jerusalem, by the same Roman power. Pilate may have abused his power, as we know he did in condemning our Lord; but it was a part of God's dispensation that the Jews should be subject to the Romans at that time.

This is further seen when the Pharisees and the Herodians tried to entangle the Lord in His talk by asking, "What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" If He said, Yes, how could He be a good Jew? and if He said, No, they would have something to accuse Him of to the governor. The money the people were using settled the question as far as the Romans were concerned. The inscription on the money was acknowledged to be Cæsar's. Then our Lord said to them, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." (Matt. xxii. 15-22.) How simple the answer, but how wise! There are certain things, as tribute, custom, honour, obedience, &c., that are due to

Cæsar: let them be given to him; and this will in no way clash with what is due to God.

The great image, seen by Nebuchadnezzar, and explained by Daniel, clearly points to different forms of governmental power. The head of the image was of fine gold; his arms of silver, his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, and his feet part of iron and part of clay. These referred to different kingdoms, and the kingdoms that succeed the first are explained as being "inferior."

It is to be remarked that Nebuchadnezzar—who was described as "a king of kings;" for the God of heaven had given him a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory, and had made him ruler over the beasts of the field, and fowls of heaven—was declared to be the "head of gold." He was an absolute sovereign: "all people, nations and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down." (Dan. v. 19.)

This is the form of government that God compares to gold. The people had simply to obey; the responsibility of what was commanded rested with the monarch, and as we know, God called him to account, and punished him severely.

We will pass over the silver and brass and look at the iron and clay. The last of the four kingdoms is, we know, the Roman empire, the relics

of which yet remain, and we also learn from scripture that it will be again revived in a future day. Its "ten horns" exactly agree with the ten toes of the great image. The way the emperors were often set up by the army, the contests they had with the people, and the violent death many of them endured, are vividly portrayed by what we read of the iron and clay: "Whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided: but there shall be in it of the strength of iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of man: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." (Dan. ii. 41-43.)

Surely this is a true picture of what we see all around us. It is not to be mistaken as to the iron representing those in power, and the clay representing the people. Well, God tells us that "they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." We need not wonder then at the conflicts that exist in so many places. God has forewarned us respecting it. We read of some in the New Testament who "despise government," and "are not afraid to

“speak evil of dignities” (2 Pet. ii. 10); and even some inside the professing church “despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities” (Jude 3), usurping an authority which even the angels which excel in strength would not venture to exercise. Such is man in his pride; and yet he is but “miry clay.”

Thank God, that amid all the contentions around, the Christian’s duty is simple, and the spirit he should manifest is plainly revealed in scripture. “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation [judgment].” (Rom. xiii. 1, 2.)

This was written to the Christians at Rome about A.D. 59, when Nero was emperor, which makes it clear that the injunction to obey “the powers that be” had nothing to do with the *character* of the ruler. Nero was a notoriously wicked man, and yet it was true of him that “the powers that be are ordained of God.” All rulers are of course answerable to God for how *they* rule the people, while it is the people’s duty to obey those whom God has ordained.

There is, as we know, one exception to obeying the civil authorities, namely, when their orders clash with what God has bid us do. Peter, when

commanded by the rulers of Israel not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus, said, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." And on another occasion he said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts iv. 19, 20; v. 29). On both these occasions it was the religious rulers that ordered them to be silent; but there have been instances in which the civil powers have given similar orders.

This in no way clashes with the general instruction to obey those in authority. And this simple rule is a great blessing. Many of God's beloved people, not seeing this, mix themselves up in the various commotions, and deem themselves competent to judge of what the rulers do, and thus get entangled with all the political questions of the day, to the great detriment of their spiritual progress.

As we have seen, our citizenship is in heaven, and God has graciously relieved us of all care and anxiety as to national matters. We have nothing whatever to do with them: we belong to another country, and are only strangers and pilgrims here. And what have strangers and pilgrims to do with the politics of the land through which they are passing, in which they lodge, but to which they do not belong?

May God open the eyes of all His beloved people to see this happy liberty He has brought about for them, and may they walk as a heavenly people, even as the blessed Lord Himself walked when He trod this earth. It will surely be for His glory, and their own blessing.



## THE CHRISTIAN AN EPISTLE OF CHRIST.

It is good for our souls to dwell on what it is to be an epistle of Christ, though I am sure none of us can express the greatness of the calling. Any gathering of saints is an epistle of Christ "to be read of men." They are His letter of recommendation to the world. The world needs to ascertain what Christ is from the lives of the saints; although they might learn it, it is true, from the word. And the great importance of this place of witness is brought out by the tacit contrast with the law, "written in tables of stone." Just as the ten commandments were the declaration of the mind of God, under the dispensation of the law; so now the church is the engraving of Christ, "written not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart;" to shew forth the virtues of Him "who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light."

I would refer to one great thing in the life

of Christ, namely, that He never, in one simple act, word, or movement of His heart, did a single thing to please Himself. "Christ pleased not himself;" and so "we ought not to please ourselves;" for "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Jesus said, "that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." This was obedience flowing out of love, and manifesting love. Nothing ever moved Him from that. The temptation to move from obedience to a commandment might come in a very subtle form, with all the ardour of affection; as when Peter said, in answer to the Lord's word about His sufferings and death, "This be far from thee, Lord." It was affection in Peter; but the Lord would not own it, for this would have been to turn from the Father's commandment. And what does He answer? "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Another thing I would remark. Not only was Jesus heavenly in His nature, but, as Son of man, He lived in heaven—as He said, "the Son of man which is in heaven." The whole spirit of His mind, the tone of His feelings and thoughts, was heavenly. So if there is any motive in my heart which I could not have if I were in heaven, I am not like Christ.

Again, all the grace that was in Him was brought out to meet man's sorrow and misery, and to bear on every earthly circumstance. In this we often find our failure. Even when the motive is right, the manner is wanting in graciousness. But it was never so with Christ. He was always seeking to promote the glory of God; but never did He in manner, on any occasion, depart from the spirit of grace.

We often are not close enough in our communion with God to have confidence in Him. We become impatient, and resort to means that are not of God, as Jacob did, who had not confidence enough in God to say, "He will secure the blessing." Would not God have made Isaac give the right answer? Surely He would. So we often fail by not waiting upon God, who will bring the thing to pass most surely, though we know not how. So it was in the sorrowful case of Saul. He would not wait; yet Samuel came at the end of seven days; and Saul lost the kingdom. And those who really are the children of God always sustain loss when they depart from confidence in Him. Christ was always trusting in God, and always waiting for Him; and so He was ever ready for every sorrow and misery; ever ready to bring out the resources of God to meet every necessity. It is touching to read Matthew v. Every beatitude is a lively portrait of Christ. Who so poor in



spirit as Christ? Who mourned as Christ? Who so meek? So hungering and thirsting after righteousness? His whole life was hungering and thirsting after righteousness. "The life was the light of men."

But, further, Jesus was the victorious man over all opposition, even though it were death itself. There is a great difference between good desires and power. The quickened soul may say, "O wretched man that I am;" but we cannot be the full epistle of Christ, unless we exhibit power over all obstacles—even over death. Death is given us. The believer, living in the power of Christ's life, has entire power over death.

Again, the Lord Jesus, amidst all His zeal, never failed in love. Strictly speaking, there is no motive in love, though there may be joy in its exercise; and this is our triumph. If I look for a motive, it is not love. Therefore love enables a man to meet all trials. Should one spit in his face, this makes no difference, for love abides; because it never draws its strength from circumstances, but rides above all circumstances. Nothing can be presented to a saint which can separate him from the love of God. The love which he enjoys triumphs over all circumstances. If we do not shew this heavenly-mindedness of the love which is of God, doing nothing from any motive but obedience, we are

not a pure epistle of Christ. I might be walking lowly, but if I did not shew out Christ, I should be nothing. So Christ: He gave no answer when God gave no word. And we, in passing through the world, should stand still and wait, if we cannot see how we may walk so as to please God.

In the latter part of 2 Corinthians iii., the apostle tells us how we may be acting as the epistles of Christ—ministers, not of the letter, but of the spirit. “The letter” refers to the requirements of God from man, which necessarily was a ministration of death. But the gospel is the manifestation of God, not from Sinai, requiring righteousness; but from His own throne revealing the accomplishment of His own righteousness, and sending a message concerning it to draw our hearts to Himself. To those who submit themselves to this righteousness, the Holy Ghost is given on the foundation of righteousness, and He is in them a Spirit of power. So now we can use great plainness of speech because we are speaking of grace. We can tell men that they are wicked, wretched, and hopeless. We can speak all things plainly, because we are not expecting anything from them, but telling them of God’s grace to just such as they are. We can speak plainly of God, for it is the God of all grace.—*Extracted.*

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## DEVELOPMENTS.

VERY much is said in these days about development. As there has been a steady growth in all the arts and sciences, so, it is asserted, there must be the same in religion. Man's mind, it is said, has made such advances in examining everything, that it is impossible to restrain deep thinkers from dealing also with everything connected with religion in the same spirit. All that will not bear the strictest investigation must give place to something that will. It is admitted that this may lead to giving up some of the things we have hitherto held sacred ; but if so, it is said, it will be giving up only that which is not worth holding, because it will not bear investigation.

Well, this to many minds may seem to be sound reasoning ; but should it not be noticed that God's religion stands upon a footing entirely different from everything else ? It is no theory of man, but is wholly of God. If we think of any science as being a knowledge of what God has done, or is doing, and that man, in trying to explain this, has put it into words ; we can understand that, as we might have expected, he has made many mistakes, and has had to alter his theories over and over again ; and of course even now cannot say that they are perfect. So that in such things there may be room for development and growth.

Christianity is quite different: God has not

only planned the whole thing, but He has described it in His own words. What in this has man got to investigate? Will he dare to think that God might have planned it better, or that He might have described it better? No, the bare truth must be told: man must receive it as it has been revealed, or, to his peril, he cannot be benefited by it at all.

But objectors say that it is reasonable to expect development *after* what we find in scripture; because the same is seen *in* the scripture itself. For instance, the law, they say, was not at first given in a complete form, suitable to meet any case that might occur; but was added-to piecemeal, as the idea of a perfect law was developed. The case of a man found gathering sticks on the sabbath is named. There was no law touching his case, and he had to be kept in custody until it was revealed by God what his punishment was to be. (Num. xv. 32-36.) So also the case of the man who blasphemed the Lord, and cursed; he also was put in ward until God had made a law to meet his case.

Now, it is granted that there may *seem* to be additions and even repetitions in the laws given in the book of Leviticus; but all is given designedly, and by God as it pleased Him: it is for us to seek wisdom from the Author Himself, to understand, not simply what is said, but the beautiful way in which it is all given. Incidents

being interspersed among the precepts of the law give the whole a living reality not to be found in a mere detail of laws.

It is further urged that developments are also seen throughout scripture. Man in innocence; man under law; the monarchy; the prophets; the mission of our Lord; the epistles detailing the doctrines of the church; and finally the Revelation. If there is this uniform development *in* scripture, is it not reasonable, it is asked, to suppose there may have been developments since the completion of scripture? Man wants something in advance; his mind cannot rest with what he has received; he must and will seek development.

Well, let us examine the above a little. In the list of events recorded in the Old Testament, why omit such a thing as the fall of man? Was that a development? Why omit the captivity of the Jews? Was that a development? Why omit the crucifixion of our Lord by wicked men? Was that a development? Yes, yes, they were developments, but *of evil*. God did put man to the test in various ways, and it always made manifest his evil nature, until he crowned it all by putting the Lord to death. And we have not far to look to see further developments of the same evil nature in those who refuse the gospel of salvation now so fully proclaimed.

But objectors will say, This is not what we

mean : we want, as our minds expand, to satisfy ourselves by developing that which God has given.

Then let it be remarked that this will never be attained. God has *completed* His word (Col. i. 25), and has given the solemn warning to "every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.)

Thus we are confined to THE BOOK : this is complete, and must not be added to nor taken from. Of course we should seek to understand it better ; but if men *will* have something beyond, it must be something weaved out of their own minds, as a spider weaves his web out of his own body. You may give it the finest name you can find, but what will be its value ? Will it save a soul, or tell the way of salvation ? Will it bring peace to a troubled conscience, and give a happy triumph in the presence of death ? Will it teach what is pleasing to God, and be to His glory ?

No, no : it will only puff up man with pride, and will be well-pleasing to the great enemy of souls. The prophet well describes such : " Behold

all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of *your* fire, and in the sparks that *ye* have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; *ye shall lie down in sorrow.*" (Isa. l. 11.)

There may have been some in the later days of the apostles who wanted some further development; for they tried to intertwine philosophy and Christianity. But John, who wrote last of all, impressed upon them that they must turn to "that which was from the beginning." It was doubtless the beginning of Christianity; for the apostle refers to what they had seen with their eyes, looked upon, and handled of the Word of life. He writes: "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father." (1 John ii. 24.) What can go beyond abiding in the Son and in the Father? Surely nothing: and this was to be brought about by the truths abiding in them.

Again the same apostle writes: "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." The safety is in that which was given from the beginning.

Now why does the apostle impress again and again the importance of what had been revealed? Doubtless because then, as now, man's mind was at work, and was stretching out towards something new, something novel. It may have been then, as now, that they looked for some more refined way of salvation than for a man to own himself a lost sinner, and be saved alone by grace. It may have been then, as now, that men did not like to be judged by Christ's words neither then nor hereafter; so they criticise and judge God's word, and unblushingly say which part they would recognise as God's word and which not.

Is this the development that men are looking for in these days? If it is, let them know that it has nothing whatever to do with Christianity, no matter how high the profession may be. There is no development of Christianity beyond what is found between the covers of God's book. All outside that, no matter what name it bears, is but what the prophet has described as a man compassing himself with sparks. Hear again his words: "Ye shall lie down in sorrow."

All that has been foretold in the scriptures which has not yet been fulfilled, will surely come to pass in due time. Christ will come to fetch His Church, to be with Him and like Him for ever. It is also foretold that the professors will wax worse and worse. How is it that those who are talking about development cannot see



*that* sign of the times in which we live? Are not such crying peace, prosperity, progress, when sudden destruction may be at the doors?

There will also be the unrolling of that great roll, with its seals, trumpets, and vials, described so vividly in the Revelation. The book is full of judgments; but this is not what people want. They would rather shut their eyes to such developments; for these things will not contribute to the exaltation of man, nor feed his pride.

God's revelation also speaks of the great white throne to be set up hereafter, when the dead, small and great, will stand before God, to be judged according to their works. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 15.) By this we see that it is *life* men need, and this is only to be had by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the old-fashioned gospel proclaimed more than eighteen hundred years since. A curse is pronounced against the man or angel that shall preach any other gospel than that which is found in God's word, and which was fully revealed to the Apostle Paul. There is no development from that. Man must as guilty sinners accept this salvation, or perish for ever. May God open the eyes of all who are looking for any new or different way of being saved. It is Satan who is blinding their minds.



## ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST.

It is interesting and profitable to study the different words used by the writers of the New Testament, as led by the Holy Spirit, respecting our Lord in the sense of His being our Master.

1. The word most commonly used in reference to our Lord as Master signifies *teacher*. It was used occasionally by the disciples; for instance, when they were in the boat in a storm and He was asleep they said, "Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?" He was indeed their Teacher. When he had spoken parables in the hearing of the people, He explained to His disciples the meaning of what He had been saying, for He wished them to understand what He taught. "He said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables." (Mark iv. 11.) The disciples brought their difficulties to the Lord, and He solved them. Thus we find them asking the question, "Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?" (Mark ix. 11.) Had Elias come first? Yes, in the person of John, and yet he was still to come, for John had been rejected by the rulers.

Our Lord on one occasion calls Himself *the* Teacher. When He sent his disciples to prepare the last passover, He told them to say to the good

man of the house, "The Teacher saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples." (Matt. xxvi. 18.) This was not exactly a family gathering to keep the passover; the *Teacher* with His disciples would meet for that purpose in the guest chamber. On the same occasion the Lord's supper was instituted.

On another occasion our Lord said, "Ye call me Teacher and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." (John xiii. 13, 14.) If the divine Teacher could thus humble Himself to wash His disciples' feet, how much more should we seek to help and restore one another?

Our Lord was constantly addressed by His opposers under this title. It cost them little to account Him to be a teacher, who was gathering disciples around Himself; and they could do this without in any way owning His heavenly character. Nicodemus was beyond them, for he said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher *come from God*; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John iii. 2), and he received further instruction.

It is to be remarked that this title is never applied to the Lord in the epistles. It was while He was on earth, and was with His disciples to instruct them, that He was thus addressed. Before He left the earth He said,

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *he shall teach you* all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John xiv. 26.)

2. Another word used to designate our Lord as Master is Rabbi. It was an honourable title among the Jews given to their learned men, doctors of the law, &c. The title is applied to our Lord by His disciples and by others. In Matthew it is addressed to our Lord by Judas only, when he said, at the passover table, "Rabbi, is it I?" and again, when our Lord was arrested in the garden, he said, "Hail, Rabbi, and kissed him." Alas! what honourable words can be used with treachery in the heart! In Mark's Gospel (ix. 5), Peter on the mount of transfiguration says, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here." Nathanael said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God: thou art the king of Israel." (John i. 49.) Noble testimony!

Our Lord never uses this as a title for Himself, but allowed others to thus address Him. He was among 'His own' while in Israel.

Our Lord said that the scribes and Pharisees loved to be called, Rabbi, Rabbi; but He warned His disciples not to be so addressed; for they had a Master, even Christ.

3. Another word translated Master and referred to our Lord is the word commonly

translated 'Lord.' Paul wrote to the masters at Colosse, to give to their servants that which was just and fair, knowing that they had a Master in heaven. (Chap. iv. 1.) He is the One to whom we owe allegiance, and who has dealt with us in such marvellous mercy: we shall have to give an account of our actions to Him. He is our Lord.

4. Another word is used in six passages only, and is always addressed to our Lord. It signifies an overseer or one in authority. It is used by the apostles in Luke v. 5; viii. 24, 45; ix. 33, 49, and by the ten lepers in xvii. 13: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." It is recorded that when the ten were healed, only one of them returned to give Him thanks, and he was a Samaritan. Thus we see how easy it is to own Him as Master, in order to be benefited by Him, and at the same time to render no real homage from the heart.

5. Another word is only once translated 'Master' when referred to our Lord. It signifies ownership, and is the correlative of 'slave.' 2 Peter ii. 1 refers to some "denying the Lord that bought them," and who had thus become their owner, which our Lord is of all men. The passage in which it refers to our Lord is significant. (2 Tim. ii. 21.) If a Christian purge himself from vessels to dishonour, "he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the

Master's use : " fit for the use of the One that owns him. May this be the earnest desire of all God's beloved people in this dark and evil day. The Lord is using one here and one there : let all seek to be so separated from evil as to be *fit* to be employed by Him.

6. There is still another word, which occurs only in Matthew xxiii. 8, 10. It signifies 'a guide,' and thence 'teacher.' "Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ ; and all ye are brethren. . . . Neither be ye called masters ; for one is your Master, even Christ." Thus our Lord is declared to be our Guide—one to go before us ; and hence to guide us into all truth, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Oh that we were more apt scholars, to sit at the feet of our Lord, and learn of Him. We should then never have to unlearn, as we often have to do.

From the above we see in how many aspects our Lord is called Master in scripture. Teacher, Rabbi, Lord, Owner, Guide ; to whom we owe obedience, and whose authority over us we can never slight without receiving damage to our own souls, and giving grief to His tender, sympathising heart. Let us contemplate what it cost Him to purchase and redeem us : it was not with silver and gold, but with His own precious blood. To His peerless name be everlasting praise !



## QUESTIONS OF INTEREST ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

### X.

“HOWEVER plain some of the passages appear that speak of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of its being our duty to watch, and be ready to meet Him at all times, there are other passages that do not seem to accord with this expectation. Take for instance Luke xxi. 28: ‘When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.’ Here it is *when* certain things begin to happen, your redemption draweth near. The passage then goes on to speak of the fig-tree and all the trees: when they shoot forth it is known that summer is near at hand. ‘So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.’ (Vers. 29–31.) Here again it is *when* certain things happen, then they are to know that the kingdom of God is near. Is it not therefore right that we should look for the things of which Christ spoke to His disciples, rather than for the Lord to come for His saints, without any preliminary intimation?”

These questions shew how important it is to make a study of prophecy in all its main branches,

and not confine our attention to any one of them. If we simply take the words "the coming of the Lord," we may go greatly astray unless we see its connection, and always distinguish between the coming of the Lord *for* His saints—the proper hope of the Christian—and the coming of the Lord *with* His saints, when He comes to execute judgment on the wicked. (See Jude 14, 15.)

But there is a coming of the Lord that does not fall under either of the above. It is in connection with Israel, who in the future will be placed in peculiar circumstances; and unless these are seen, the nature of Christ's coming to them cannot be understood.

But before we look at what these circumstances are, we must consider a difficulty that has often arisen in the minds of the students of prophecy. What authority have we to interpret the passage in Luke xii. 36, Be ye "like unto men that wait for their lord" as applying to *the Christian* now; and apply the passages quoted from chapter xxi. of the same gospel to *Israel* in the future?

In chapter xii. our Lord is clearly not addressing His hearers as children of Israel. In verse 32 He says, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" and then goes on to address them as *servants*, some of whom are faithful and some are unfaithful.



In chapter xxi. it is quite different. Verses 1 to 4 speak of the rich men and the poor widow casting their gifts into the treasury. Then in verse 5, "some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts;" then our Lord foretold its destruction, and spoke of coming judgments: all refers to Israel. Verse 24 says that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This time is, as we know, now running on. It is now the "times of the Gentiles;" but there must be a long interval between verse 24 and what follows; for verse 25 speaks of signs in the sun, moon and stars, and great distress upon the earth; followed by "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." This we know has not yet taken place.

That this does not refer to the coming of the Lord *for* His saints is evident by its being added, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." It is clear that 'this generation' does not refer simply to the lifetime of those He addressed, for our Lord did not return during that period; but the term 'generation' refers, as it does in other places, to the people of Israel generally, as in Deuteronomy xxxii. 5, 20.

Here also the coming of the Lord is said to be with power and great glory, whereas when He

comes for His church nothing is said of this: He Himself is the all-absorbing object; hence it may be that He will come in private to fetch us, and the world know nothing of it till they find out that we are gone.

It may, however, still be asked, Why we as Christians are to have no sign of the Lord's coming, if Israel is to have a sign? Is it not because of the different circumstances in which they will be placed. This passage tells us that there will be signs in the heavenly bodies, distress of nations, with perplexity, &c.; indeed, we read of their being brought through a great tribulation, such as never was before and will not be again; and they will undergo a prolonged and varied persecution by their enemies. Their cry will be, "How long, O Lord?" and they will look and pray for the destruction of their enemies, as we find in many of the Psalms—language which *we* cannot use respecting our enemies; but which will be quite right and according to God's mind then; for He will be about to destroy their enemies, and bring His ancient people into full blessing.

With this before us, we can readily understand how gladly they will look for the signs that God has spoken of; for then they will have—what? The joy of being caught up to meet the Lord in the air? No; but their "redemption draweth near," that deliverance that will fully

establish them on the earth, and greatly bless them in their own land.

We thus see that their hope is quite different from the hope of the Christian. It is plainly revealed in scripture that before *they* can be brought into blessing as a nation they must be brought through tribulation and oppression; therefore they cannot now be looking intelligently for their redemption. Our Lord declared to them, "Your house is left unto you desolate, and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Luke xiii. 35.) If any believe in the Lord Jesus in the present dispensation, of course they become a part of the church.

It will be seen from all this that when our Lord spoke of His hearers looking for a sign He was not speaking to them as believers, but as a part of Israel; and it will be right for them when the time arrives to look for those signs. But it is quite different for His saints now. It is their privilege to be longing to see the One who loves them, and who bought them with His blood, and to be looking for Him to come and fetch them, according to His blessed promise, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." May the present enjoyment of His love keep this hope bright before us all.



## THE REWARD OF CONFIDENCE.

It is a wonderful thing that there should be a reward attached to our confidence, yet God has spoken of it. He says, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward." (Heb. x. 35.) We can easily understand what a comforting, soul-sustaining thing it is to have full confidence in the faithfulness of God to all His promises; and in the value of the blood of Christ; and in the nearness into which He has brought us; and in the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit; but God speaks of its having a recompence also.

Many passages shew the value God attaches to our confidence in Him; indeed, it is put as a sort of characteristic of the Christian. Christ is declared to be faithful as a Son over His own house; "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Again, "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." (Heb. iii. 6, 14.) These things were written to the Hebrew believers who were suffering persecution, and who were in great danger of giving up their confidence, and going back to Judaism. These were exhorted not to cast away their confidence, but to hold it stedfast, and "to the end."

In two of the above passages (Heb. iii. 6; x. 35) the word translated 'confidence' is perhaps better rendered 'boldness.' But how can there be boldness without confidence, that calm assurance in the soul that God alone can give, by faith in Himself and in His promises? In a passage in the Ephesians (iii. 12) both the words are connected. God has ordained that by the church should now be known the manifold wisdom of God, according to His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord, "in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." Here it is by the faith that God gives.

In Hebrews xi. we have a blessed rehearsal of how by faith many of God's Old Testament saints were enabled to despise the world, to become victors, and some to die as martyrs. Their great boldness and confidence may well excite us to exercise a like faith in our path through the same world in which they conquered.

We find in scripture 'full assurance' spoken of in three connections. There is the "full assurance of *faith*." (Heb. x. 22.) The word declares that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Implicit faith in that promise will give the soul full assurance. Why should it not be so? If we know a truthful, conscientious man, we believe what he says,

and have no misgivings as to his promise: we believe he will be as good as his word. How much more should we trust in the living God, who cannot lie, and who even tells us of His *love* to this poor world, yea, whose very nature is love?

We read also of the "full assurance of *hope*." (Heb. vi. 11.) It is scarcely needful to say that this has no connection with the vague hope that all will be right by and bye, which is repeated by so many. There is not a particle of assurance in that. The hope that God begets in a soul is altogether different. In the same chapter it is thus explained: "God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both *sure and stedfast*, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Vers. 17-20.) This is the hope that gives full assurance: it is linked with the glory where Jesus is.

There is also the "full assurance of understanding." (Col. ii. 2.) This goes beyond the

other two, because it is connected with union with Christ as Head, and a knowledge of the mystery of God. The apostle wished the Colossians to know the conflict he had respecting them, "that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment [full knowledge] of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." They were to find all they wanted, not in science and philosophy of men (which was their danger), but in Christ Himself.

Now to have in our souls full confidence in God is surely a great blessing in itself. Instead of being distressed by uncertainty we are then *certain*, and *confident* that God will indeed be true to the word that He has spoken. It is also honouring God, and He has declared that He will honour those that honour Him. Indeed, we have only to glance again at the worthies named in Hebrews xi., and there we find that God puts honour upon them by declaring that the world was unworthy that such men should live in it. Thus our God gives the faith that confides in Him, and then honours those that trust Him. May all God's beloved people know and enjoy this great blessing.

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## “WHAT MEAN YE BY THESE STONES?”

It has often been said that the passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea is a type of Christ dying *for* His people, and that crossing the Jordan is a type of the believer dying *with* Christ. Let us see if there are any signs of this distinction in the Old Testament, where both these events are recorded.

Some, perhaps, have often repeated the above-named difference who know not how far it is made manifest by God Himself in that which He has caused to be written; surely it is profitable for us to examine whether what we hold is really based upon the teaching of the word of God itself.

The historical course of events is plain. There was first the keeping of the Passover, when the Israelites were sheltered under the blood while the destroying angel smote all the first-born of Egypt. Jehovah made the wonderful declaration to Israel: “When I see the blood I will pass over you.” There was not a house of the Egyptians in which there was not one dead; but the Israelites were perfectly safe, and none were slain.

This is clearly typical of a believer being sheltered under the blood of the Lord Jesus: there is no destruction for him, but he is in the perfect safety that is attached to the infinite



value of that precious blood. But he is still in Egypt, and needs deliverance from the power of the enemy. This he receives by the passage of the Red Sea.

Israel was brought out of Egypt with a high hand. Pharaoh said, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them." (Ex. xv. 9.) Vain boast! Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.

Now Moses and the children of Israel could sing. We do not read of their ever singing in Egypt. How could they sing when in slavery? But now they can celebrate in a song the deliverance Jehovah had wrought for them. He was declared to be "a man of war." He was "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders."

One instinctively turns to the passage that declares that our Lord became man that "through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Heb. ii. 14.) "He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." (Eph. iv. 8.) Thus the great enemy of souls has been conquered in the death of Christ, and we have been delivered from the power of darkness.

It should be noticed that in the song of Moses they sang of *redemption*, from which we learn that we are not only redeemed by the precious

blood of Christ, but also by His power over the enemy. The Israelites were perfectly safe under the protection of the blood, but they could not sing of redemption until they were *brought out* of Egypt, and saw the destruction of Pharaoh and his host. So we need to know the annulling of the power of Satan before we can see and rejoice in our being translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

But the people were still in the wilderness, and in their song they had to speak of the possession of the promised land as a future thing. "Thou *shalt* bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." (Ex. xv. 17, 18.) It was all settled by God Himself, but its accomplishment was still a future thing.

Various passages speak of God bringing the people *out of* Egypt, and *into* the promised land, without a word as to the wilderness; and Deuteronomy i. 2 tells us that it was only an "*eleven days'* journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir, unto Kadesh-barnea." Yet, alas! they had to wander about for forty years till all had died except Caleb and Joshua.

At length they arrived at the Jordan; let us

seek to gather instruction by comparing the passage over Jordan with the passage over the Red Sea.

The first thing that strikes one in the passage of the Jordan is the fact that the priests carried the ark of the covenant into the midst of Jordan, and remained there until all the people had passed over. There was no ark in the Red Sea.

It is also to be remarked that in the Jordan the water overflowed all its banks, typifying that death was in its full power: this is not said of the Red Sea. At Jordan also the priests who carried the ark dipped their feet in the brim of the water before the water fell back so that they could pass into the bed of the river. At the Red Sea Moses had merely to lift up his rod, and stretch out his hand over the sea, and the waters divided. There it was power exercised *for* the people; but at the Jordan the priests realised the power of death, and had to go forward in faith: not alone, but with the ark of the covenant typifying the presence of the Lord. There was *association* in the passing through the Jordan which is not seen in the passage of the Red Sea, though we partake of the blessings flowing from the death of Christ for us.

The peculiar character of the passage of the Jordan is further seen by the twelve stones that were set up in the midst of Jordan where the priests' feet had been, and by other twelve stones

being taken up from the midst of Jordan and carried over for a memorial unto the children of Israel. What could be a more vivid type of the believer's being dead and buried with Christ, and also his rising out of death with Christ?

When their children should look upon that cairn—that pile of stones, and ask, "What mean ye by these stones?" they were told to answer them, "That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off; and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." (Jos. iv. 7.)

Now why should this be done at the Jordan any more than at the Red Sea? Ah, is it not to teach us that we need to be reminded of the one much more than of the other? Is there a Christian anywhere that does not know and often repeat that his only hope of salvation is in what Christ has done for him? But how comparatively few there are that see and embrace by faith the teaching of the Jordan, that there the believer died with Christ, and rose with Him?

This is true of all Christians, but all do not know it, and do not see that their being dead with Christ gives them an entirely new standing. Their old standing in Adam has been swept away by their dying with Christ, and they have now a new standing in Christ. Do you not see the need of the pile of stones? And is there not

a need that *we*, as well as our children, should look again and again at that cairn, and ask, "What mean ye by these stones?"

The apostle had to remind the Colossians of these great truths. "If ye be *dead* with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, . . . after the commandments and doctrines of *men*?" "If ye then be *risen* with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." (Col. ii. 20, 22; iii. 1.)

There is still another word given to the Israelites that we must not pass over. When they were told that the ark of the covenant would go before them and a space was to be left between, the command was, "Come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore." Not simply that they had not crossed a river before, but they had not passed *THAT* way; they had not entered into death: who has?

Thus all the details of the passage of the Jordan tell of something peculiar, of something very different from crossing the Red Sea. As has often been pointed out, the Red Sea was a passing *out*—out of Egypt; whereas the Jordan was a passing *in*—into the promised land.

In the epistle to the Colossians, as we have seen, we are spoken of as having died and risen

with Christ; but in the epistle to the Ephesians the true standing of the Christian is further stated by describing us as being made to sit together “in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” What marvellous grace to once poor lost sinners!

As the battles of the Israelites began after they had passed the Jordan, so we are exhorted in the Ephesians to put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (or, “in the heavenlies,” where we are said to be sitting in Christ Jesus).

We have thus seen that there is a marked difference in the passage of the Jordan from that of the Red Sea. God Himself has given us the description of both, and has surely some deep lesson for us to learn in the peculiar way in which He brought His people through the Jordan. We must never forget that it was the entrance into the promised land, and that it brought them immediately to Gilgal, where they were circumcised, typical of the Spirit’s power in the mortification of the flesh. Jehovah declared “This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.” (Jos. v. 9.)

Communion followed in keeping the Passover. Then on the morrow they ate "the old corn of the land," typical of Christ as the centre of heavenly things. Then the manna ceased, Christ known after the flesh. (2 Cor. v. 16.) The captain of the Lord's host appears, and the people are ready for their wars. All this typifies the true place and conflict of the Christian. Let us challenge our souls as to how far we enter into it, and how far we glorify our Lord therein.



### THE FALL OF MAN.

It is to be feared that there are comparatively few that really believe that man is a fallen creature in the sense that it is taught in the scriptures. No doubt it is acknowledged as a doctrine by many who do not really believe it in its full extent.

The command of God was, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. ii. 17.) Adam ate of this tree, and death was the result. This is shewn clearly by contrast in the gospel, which says, "believe and *live*." In the midst of life and innocence God had to speak of *death*; and now that all mankind lie in death, God in His mercy can speak of *life*, but life in Another.

The converse of this was that Satan said,

“Ye shall not surely die;” and now he uses all his influence to make man believe that he is alive. Man seems to forget that it was Satan who brought about the fall of Adam; and it was only accomplished by giving the lie to God, and suggesting that God was unkind in keeping from them some desirable thing—a knowledge of good and evil; they should be as gods, he said. This should open men’s eyes when they consider that the fall of man is Satan’s handiwork: the work of the one whom our Lord declared to be a murderer from the beginning and a liar. We know that the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty: the woman was deceived by the arch enemy of souls.

Men try to fritter away all this; and those who are infidels deny it; but there is really more danger from those who profess to believe it, and yet dull its edge as much as possible. The truth is, the mother of us all was beguiled by Satan, and the result was that death passed upon all, for all have sinned. Man fell from innocence, and became a sinner, and his conscience made him seek to hide himself from God.

Sad fruit this of listening to Satan! “God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;” but Adam “begat a son in *his own* likeness, after his image.” (Gen. v. 1, 3.) It could not be otherwise after man had fallen. The psalmist declared, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity,



and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. li. 5.)

This is a picture of the nature of man—of all men; for God "hath made of *one blood* all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth." (Acts xvii. 26.) What a levelling is this! What a bringing down of the pride of man: all are of one blood: the most enlightened and the most uncultivated; the most refined gentleman and the most degraded cannibal; the most delicate lady and the most debased squaw. Education, polish, enlightenment, morality, may make a good deal of difference outwardly, but in their nature all are the same, all are made of "one blood," all are the descendants of Adam and Eve.

The knowledge of this, and the belief of it, are of great value; because, as all are alike fallen men and women, the same glorious gospel suits all, is available for all, and is saving some of all. Whereas the denial of the fall, or the disbelief of it, is most damaging to souls. The enlightened and moral man often thinks he knows himself better than to believe that he needs the same mode of salvation as the most degraded. He owns that he is not what he ought to be, but thinks a little help is all he needs. It is clear from scripture that such a one does not know himself at all.

Another ruinous effect of not believing in

the extent of the fall is that thousands think they can approach God as worshippers just as if nothing had happened, and as if they were not fallen. We see this in the case of Cain. He brought of the fruit of the ground to God, and did not recognise that as a fallen man his life had been forfeited, and he could only be received by a sacrifice embracing *death*. God had no respect either to Cain or to his sacrifice. If he had done well and had not sinned, would he not have been accepted? and if he had not done well, a *sin offering* was ready for him at the door.

What a wonderful lesson is this—"a sin-offering lieth at the door." (Gen. iv. 7.)\* Abel found a sin-offering, and those that have faith in God find that God Himself has provided a sin-offering in His well-beloved Son. "The righteousness which is by faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend unto heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is *nigh thee*, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." (Rom. x. 6-8.) Then, to make it as plain as possible, the apostle adds that what

\* The Hebrew word used here stands for 'sin' or 'sin-offering.'

he preached was, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Ver. 9.)

Surely this is very beautiful and simple for those that believe the fall of man, and his lost condition; but to those who do not believe in the utter fallen condition of man, all this is too humiliating: they think themselves above this merely believing and confessing, and think they are worthy of being considered capable of things noble and what will redound, at least in some respect, to their own glory.

Another great sign that men do not believe in their fallen condition is seen in the way they speak of the nobility of man. Instead of bowing to the description God has given of mankind, and owning their true condition as God has stated it, they deliberately set up their own reason as the supreme judge. How well may it be said of such, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it?" (Job xxxviii. 2; xl. 2.)

If we had an intricate piece of machinery, and it was discovered that it was not working as it should, to whom could we go better than to the maker to discover what was wrong in it, and what was the needed remedy for the defect?

Well, God is the Creator of man, and He has told us plainly what is his condition. Listen to what He said of mankind before the flood. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." (Gen. vi. 5, 6.) How scatheless the judgment: it was not the condition of some, of a few, but of *all*, and of all it was "only evil continually."

Listen to God's judgment of Israel after all that He had done for them in redeeming them from Egypt and bringing them into a land flowing with milk and honey: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people *laden* with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." (Isa. i. 3, 4.) Only think of Israel having less sense as to their God than an ass has in respect to his master's crib!

As to the Gentiles, a dreadful picture of their true state is given in Romans i. And whether Jews or Gentiles, the verdict is "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he

might have mercy upon all." (Rom. iii. 23; xi. 32.)

Now, dear reader, do you believe in God's verdict—His verdict of all—His verdict of *you*: of what you and what all are by nature? Can you say, Yes, it is true of me? I can set to my seal that God is true. Then there is salvation for you. Do not be like the bankrupt who tries to appear solvent, and hides his true condition. You can well afford to make confession of your true condition as declared by God, because of the glorious gospel proclaimed by God to poor, lost, fallen creatures. When we own ourselves to be debtors, with nothing to pay, He frankly forgives the whole debt. He does not ask us to pay a part, and then He will forgive the rest. He knows and declares that we have absolutely nothing wherewith to pay a farthing. He has declared what our fallen condition is, and the Lord Jesus in mercy came to seek and to save *the lost*, and to die on the cross. "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." Reader, will you not accept this remedy, this *only* remedy for poor, fallen humanity, and be saved in God's own way? Then, instead of death, you will have life: will never perish, but have eternal life.



## QUESTIONS OF INTEREST ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

### XI.

“ONE of the greatest difficulties in believing that the Lord will return before the millennium, is that it involves a totally different interpretation of passages of scripture, upon which have been based what may be called household truths of Christianity, such for instance as the general resurrection and the general judgment, apparently held by all Christians since the times of the apostles. Many passages speak of “*the* resurrection” without the least intimation that there will be more than one, or that any particular resurrection is meant; and Acts xxiv. 15 refers to ‘a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust,’ implying that both will be raised at one and the same time. As to the general judgment, many passages speak of ‘*the* judgment,’ it is ‘appointed unto men once to die, but after this *the* judgment.’ (Heb. ix. 27.) A special day is also appointed for this. (Acts xvii. 31.) The quick and the dead are also spoken of together as being judged. (2 Tim. iv. 1; 1 Pet. iv. 5.) Is not all this upset and the passages strained to mean something else, if our Lord will return before the millennium, and only a portion of the dead arise at His coming?”

Unhappily it is too true that the terms "general resurrection" and "general judgment" are become household doctrines with many Christians. It is strange that it should be so, seeing that neither of the terms occurs in scripture. It also shews how readily certain statements are received and held as truths without the least trouble being taken to see whether they are really taught in scripture or not.

We can easily understand that in some places, as in Acts xxiv. 15, the fact that all mankind will be raised again, may be alluded to, without there being any occasion to speak of whether all will be raised at one time or not; whereas of other passages the whole force would be lost if the distinction between the just and the unjust was not kept in view.

In the first place it should be noticed that in some passages the true translation is not "resurrection of the dead" but "out of" the dead; that is, some are raised *from among* the dead, leaving the rest of the dead still in their graves. Now if God has made this distinction in His word—and He has—it has surely been done to teach us the difference. Unhappily this distinction is not sufficiently noticed in the Authorised Version, but it has been shewn in other translations. The Authorised Version does translate in several places "*from* the dead," but it has not been sufficiently noticed that this means something

quite different from a resurrection of the dead.

If we think of the resurrection of our Lord, it must be manifest to all that His resurrection was a rising from among the dead, as we read in 1 Corinthians xv. 12, 20; and if the same expression is used for any of God's people, it must surely mean the same. Take, for instance, our Lord's declaration that those who will be raised from among the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage: they are the sons of God. (Luke xx. 35, 36.)

In Acts iv. 1, 2, we read that the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees were grieved at Peter and John because they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from among the dead.

John v. 29 speaks of two distinct resurrections, the resurrection of life, and the resurrection of damnation (judgment).

And what can be plainer than what we read in Revelation xx.? "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." What can be the meaning of there being a *first* resurrection if there is to be but one? And what can "the rest of the dead" mean unless some will have been raised previously?

This seemed so plain and positive that we were



a little curious to see how it could be otherwise explained. A commentary thus speaks of it: "It is called the *first* resurrection in contradistinction from the second and last—the general resurrection—when all the dead will be *literally* raised up from their graves, and assembled for the judgment. (Ver. 12.) It is not necessary to suppose that what is called here the 'first resurrection' will resemble the real and literal resurrection in every respect. All that is meant is, that there will be such a resemblance as to make it proper to call it *a* resurrection—a coming to life again. This will be, as explained in the notes to verse 4, in the honour done to the martyrs; in the restoration of their principles as the great actuating principles of the church; and perhaps in the increased happiness conferred on them in heaven, and in their being employed in promoting the cause of truth in the world."

This may explain how the term "the general judgment" has become a household dogma among Christians; but is it not arrived at by the shameful frittering away of the plain meaning of scripture? With such treatment, alas! the inspired word may be made to mean almost anything. Surely this is the straining of scripture, rather than taking it to mean simply what it says.

As to there being a general judgment, only a few passages need be referred to. By comparing

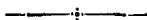
Matthew xxv. 31-46 with Revelation xx. 11-15, in both of which we have before us a sessional judgment, it will be seen that they cannot refer to the same. One speaks of the living only—the nations—the other, the dead only; one speaks of some being blessed, and some being cursed; the other, all are lost; one speaks only of a particular sin—the treatment of the Lord's brethren; the other, of men's general sins, as detailed in God's book of remembrance. How can the two possibly refer to the same occasion? and how can either refer to a general judgment of all mankind?

The Christian will not stand to be judged with the unconverted. Our Lord declared that they should not come into judgment.\* (John v. 24.) They will be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, but not to be judged for their sins; for the Lord Himself will sit on the throne, and He bore the punishment for their sins, and put them away for ever.

In all that we have been looking at there is nothing that in any way interferes with the coming of the Lord being the true and blessed hope of the Christian. Indeed, there is one passage that so links the resurrection of the righteous dead with the rapture of the living, that if taken in its plain signification would remove many a difficulty and would furnish the

\* The word in verse 24 is the same that is translated "judgment" in verses 22 and 27.

Christian with the brightest of prospects: "The Lord Himself 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. iv. 16-18.) May this be the living hope of all God's beloved people!



### ONWARD! HEAVENWARD!

SPEND and be spent would we,  
 While lasteth life's brief day;  
 No turning back in coward fear,  
 No lingering by the way.

Onward we press in haste,  
 Upward our journey still;  
 Ours is the path the Master trod,  
 Through good report and ill.

The way may rougher grow,  
 The weariness increase;  
 We gird our loins and hasten on,  
 The end, the end is peace.

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### NOTICE.

After this Number the title of this Magazine will be altered to

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