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REMEMBRANCE R

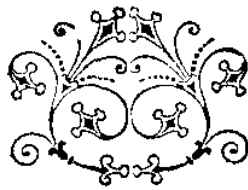
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VOL. I.

“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always
in remembrance of these things, though ye know them.”—
2 Peter i. 12.

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IF THINE EYE BE SINGLE, THY WHOLE BODY SHALL BE FULL OF LIGHT.

IF a child has been habitually heedless of its father, and taken no pains to get acquainted with his thoughts and wishes, one can readily foresee that that child, in the presence of a difficulty, would be in no position to understand what would please its father. There are things God leaves in *generalities* for testing of *individual* condition of soul. Suppose, instead of the child thus referred to, the question to be one of a wife in relation to her husband; would not a wife, with the feelings and mind of a wife, be able in all probability, without a moment's hesitancy, to know what her husband would desire, and that even though he had never expressed a will on the subject?

Now you cannot escape this testing, and God, moreover, will not let his children escape it. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." As for an easy and comfortable way of knowing God's will, as one might have a receipt for this or that, there is no such thing; of knowing it I mean, without reference to our own state of soul.

Again, we are frequently of vastly too great importance in our own eyes, and deceive ourselves in supposing that there is a "will of God"

at all, in such or such a case. He may have nothing to say to us about it. The evil is in our having set ourselves to work. God's will may be that we should quietly take a less prominent place. Again, we are searching at times after "the will of God," desiring to know how to act in circumstances, when, *that we should not be found in them at all*, is His will; and when, were conscience in exercise, its first effect would be to make us *get out of them*. Our own will has placed us there; and yet we would enjoy the comfort of God's guidance in a *self-chosen path*. This is a very common case. We may rest assured that, if near enough to God, we shall not be at a loss to know His will.

"If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Hence it is certain, when the whole body is not full of light, the eye is not single. You will say, "a poor consolation that." I reply, "a rich one to those whose soul desire it is to have the eye single and to walk with God." Not, so to speak, to avoid the trouble of learning His will in an objective way, but whose desire it is *to walk with God*.

"If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." (John xi, 9-10.) We cannot get from under this moral

law of Christianity. "For this cause we also, since we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye may be *filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*; that ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

As to *circumstances*, I believe that a person may be led by them. Scripture has settled that but this is what it calls "being held by bit and bridle." (Ps. xxxii, 9.) "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye." Such is the promise to, such the privilege of, him who has faith. He warns us against being "as the horse, or the mule" which have no understanding of the will, the thoughts, the desires of their master. They must be "kept in by bit and bridle." Without doubt, that even is better than stumbling, or falling, or jostling against Him who has us in charge, but it is a sorry condition to be in. And there we see what it is to be *directed by circumstances*. It is merciful on God's part to do it; but it is sad on ours to require it. There is absolutely nothing moral in it—that which influences is from without.

A person acting without the knowledge of God's mind is a case that ought to have no exist-

ence. The only rule that could be given is, never to act when we do not know the will of the Lord. Acting in ignorance of it, we are at the mercy of *circumstances*; God making all turn, nevertheless, to the good of His children. But why act when we do not know God's will? Is there at all times such an exceedingly pressing necessity for action?

In a word, the question is wholly moral. If a question presents itself, which, on first looking at, we are unable to determine, we shall very often find that there would be no such question at all, were our position not a false one, had we been previously in a good state of soul, had a genuine spirituality kept and preserved us. All we have to do in such a case is to *humble ourselves about the whole matter*. Then let us examine if *scripture* does not furnish us with some principle suited for our direction, and there it is evident, spirituality is the essential thing, is all.

If a thought is from God, and not of the flesh, we have only to look to God as to the manner and means of putting it in practice and we shall soon get guidance.

Let us remember that the *wisdom of God leads us in the path of the will of God*. If our wills are at work, God cannot accommodate himself to that. *This is the essential thing to*

discover. It is the secret of the life of Christ. I know not of any other principle on which God could act, though he pardons, and makes all turn to our good.

He guides the new man which has no other will than Christ. He mortifies the old, and in this way purges us that we may bear fruit. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God: I delight to do it."

It is the place of a doorkeeper to wait at the door, but in doing that he is doing his master's will.

LUKE 11, 49.

"**W**IST ye not that I must be about my Father's business."

Which of us could have said these words when we were twelve years old? His ways had been such that He would appeal to them as though they ought to have known from the tenor of His life what He was occupied with. Phil. iii shows how a man of like passions with ourselves may tread the same path, seeing and estimating the beauty of Christ. The effect was first, that he counted all else dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord; and secondly, having the death of the Lord as his substitute, and the resurrection of Christ as his

righteousness, he found that everything was against him. His position, like that of Christ Himself, he could say "Father." As a child his thought becomes, "I want to be like Christ in the fellowship of His sufferings." He had no bag with holes, like Judas, into which he could put the things of earth. They were but dung, and the whole world to him was a place savouring of the murder of Christ, and it produced in him a sort of nauseous disgust of the things in it.

The power of Nazariteship comes from the knowledge of association with Christ. Being crucified with Him, and raised up together with Him I would like to walk as He did in this world, to have the life he had when raised from the dead, manifested in my ways. How few have this as their aim and object! How few seek to track out Christ! What will produce it! If you and I could say "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" we should soon find ourselves in the fellowship of His sufferings. If I am a son, the Father has His business still to be done down here. Does it enter into our souls sitting round the table, when we commemorate the death of our Lord, that our Father has business to be done? By His spirit we can find out *what part of that business He puts on us*, and *let us do that*, letting self and the world clean go. The extent to which the simple faith

of that truth would bring our hearts into treading the same path as Christ trod, and give power to be occupied with the Father's business, is greater than we know. Christ has brought me, put me in the right place—I in one, you in another—where there is suffering or no suffering, but as he likes, and where there is his Father's business to be done.

Standing in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, conscious that His Father is our Father His God our God, and that we have the spirit of that blessed one at the right hand of God, the purpose of our hearts must be to mind the Father's business.

Have you purpose of heart? What is purpose of heart? The needle quivers restlessly till it has turned to the north; there is purpose there. "Whose service is perfect freedom" should be our word. What am I doing? Minding the Father's business for one thing. What is my confidence as to what lies before me? What would it be if I sought but the Father's will, if I had confidence in his wisdom, and desired nothing but His will? How could I fear, if I had no business but the Father's will?

**“YEA, HATH GOD SAID, YE SHALL NOT
EAT OF EVERY TREE OF THE
GARDEN” (GENESIS 3, 1.)**

This was Satan's crafty enquiry, and had the word of God been dwelling richly in Eve's heart, her answer might have been direct, simple and conclusive. The true way in which to meet Satan's questions and suggestions, is to treat them as his, and repel them by the word. To admit the question, "hath God said?" when I know God has spoken, is positive infidelity, and the very fact of my admitting it, proves my total incapacity to meet it. Hence in Eve's case, the form of her reply evidenced the fact that she admitted to her heart the serpent's crafty enquiry. Instead of adhering strictly to the exact words of God, she, in her reply, actually adds thereto.

Now either to add to or take from God's word proves, very clearly, that His word is not dwelling in my heart, or governing my conscience. If a man is finding his enjoyment in obedience, if it is his meat and his drink, if he is living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah, he will, assuredly, be acquainted with, and fully alive to, his word. He could not be indifferent to it. The Lord Jesus, in His conflict with Satan, accurately applied the word, because He lived upon it, and esteemed it more than His

necessary food. He could not misquote or misapply the word, neither could He be indifferent about it. Not so Eve. She added to the word of God. His command was simple enough, "Thou shalt not eat of it." To this Eve adds her own words, "Neither shall ye touch it." He had said nothing about touching, so that whether her misquotation was from ignorance or indifference, or a desire to represent God in an arbitrary light, or all three together, it is plain that she was entirely off the true ground of simple confidence in and subjection to God's Holy Word. "By the words of thy mouth I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer."

There is blessing in every act of obedience; but the moment the soul hesitates, the enemy has the advantage, and he will, assuredly, use it to thrust the soul further and further from God. Thus in the chapter before us, the question "Hath God said?" was followed by "Ye shall not surely die." That is to say, there is first the question raised, as to whether God had spoken, and then followed the open contradiction of what God had said. This solemn fact is abundantly sufficient to show how dangerous it is to admit near the heart a question as to divine revelation in its fulness and integrity. A refined rationalism is very near akin to bold infidelity; and the infidelity that dares to judge God's

word, is not far from the atheism that denies His existence. Eve never would have stood by to hear God contradicted, if she had not previously fallen into looseness and indifference as to His word. She too had her "Phases of Faith," or to speak more correctly, her phases of infidelity; she suffered God to be contradicted by a creature simply because His word had lost its proper authority over her heart, and her understanding.

But it is important to observe the mode in which the serpent sought to shake Eve's confidence in God's truth, and thus bring her under the power of infidel "reason." It was by shaking her confidence in God's love. He sought to shake her confidence in what God had said by showing that the testimony was not founded in love. "For," said he, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, that your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil." In other words, "There is positive advantage connected with eating of that fruit of which God is seeking to deprive you, why, therefore, should you believe God's testimony? You cannot place confidence in one, who, manifestly, does not love you, for, if He loved you, why should He prohibit your enjoying a positive privilege?" Eve's security against the influence of all this reasoning would have been simple repose in the infinite goodness of God. She should

have said to the serpent, "I have the fullest confidence in God's goodness, and therefore I deem it impossible that He could withhold any real good from me. "Get thee behind me Satan." But this was not given. Her confidence in truth and love gave way and all was lost, and so we find that there is just as little place in the heart of fallen man for God's love, as there is for God's truth.

Now it is deeply interesting to turn from Satan's lie in reference to the truth and love of God, to the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came from the bosom of the Father in order to reveal what He really is. "Grace and truth"—~~the very things which man lost in the fall~~—"came by Jesus Christ. (John i, 17.) "He was the faithful witness of what God was. (Rev. i, 5.) Truth reveals God as He is, but this truth is connected with the revelation of perfect grace; and thus the sinner finds to his unspeakable joy, that the revelation of what God is, instead of becoming his destruction becomes the basis of his eternal salvation. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." (John xvii, 3.) I cannot know God and not have life. The loss of the knowledge of God was death; but the knowledge of God is life. Let me arrive at what amount of self-

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knowledge I may have, it is not said that "this is life eternal, to know ourselves"; though no doubt the knowledge of God and the knowledge of self will go together; still eternal life is connected with the former and not the latter.

Need we wonder, therefore, that Satan's grand design is to rob the creature of the true knowledge of God? He misrepresented the blessed God? He said He was not kind. This was the secret spring of all the mischief. The most refined and cultivated moralist, the most devout religionist, the most benevolent philanthropist, if ignorant of God, is as far from life and true holiness, as the publican and the harlot. The prodigal was just as much a sinner, and as positively away from the Father when he had crossed the threshold as when feeding swine in the far off country.

So in Eve's case. The moment she took herself out of the hands of God—out of the position of absolute dependence upon, and subjection to, His word, she abandoned herself to the government of sense, as used of Satan for her entire overthrow.

The sixth verse presents three things, namely, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," which three, as the apostle states, comprehend "all that is in the world." (1 John ii, 16.) These things necessarily take the

lead when God is shut out. If I do not abide in the happy assurance of God's love and truth, His grace and faithfulness, I shall surrender myself to the government of some one, or it may be all, of the above principles; and this is only another name for the government of Satan. There is strictly speaking no such thing as free will. If man be self-governed, he is really governed by Satan; and if not, he is governed by God.

Now the three great agencies by which Satan works are, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." These were the things presented by Satan to the Lord Jesus in the temptation. He began by tempting the second man to take himself out of the position of absolute dependence on God and subjection to His will. But all in vain. "It is written," was the unvarying reply of the only dependent, self-emptying, perfect man. Others might undertake to manage for themselves; none but God should manage for Him.

What an example to the faithful, under all their circumstances! Jesus kept close to the scriptures and thus conquered; without any other weapon, save the sword of the Spirit, He stood in the conflict and gained a glorious triumph. Blessed for ever be the God of all grace,

who has laid help on one so mighty to conquer—mighty to save!

May we learn, fellow-believer, to overcome in the same way.

THE COMING OF THE LORD.

IT will be a marvellous scene when Christ presents the church to Himself, when the last Adam takes that Bride of His to share His glory. Ah! not only that, but the oneness with Himself that characterizes us. What the heart feels is our being looked at as belonging to Himself—taken out of Himself—that the Father sees us not only in the relationship that links us up with the Son of His love in the glory, but in such a relationship that He could not do without us. He the Bridegroom, must have the Bride up there. And we know we shall be for His own self in the glory. One may see the earthly side now, but when we see Christ Himself it will be the heavenly side, it will be in the full unhindered energy of the Holy Ghost, having hearts responding to that blessed grace that brought us there. The first Adam was not alone, and the last Adam will not be so. He also will have His Bride. “The Spirit and the Bride say come.” “Surely I come quickly.” Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus.

An important thing comes out here, that not only should we have communion with His mind in all that meets us in the wilderness, but there is another sort of communion to be enjoyed—communion responsive to the desire of His heart. ‘Even so come Lord Jesus.’ The effect of the bright light shining down has been, that we have found that this earth would not do for our future course, and we know because we have it revealed, that He means to come and take us to heaven. This thought has given joy in persecution. But what is the thought of being in heaven compared with the thought of His coming to take us there? At times our hearts are drooping and we are “hardly bestead;” but what is anything we have to pass through here, if one has the consciousness of being able to respond to Him “Even so come Lord Jesus.” “Thou dost desire, Lord, to take up thy people, and most blessed it will to be up there.” Is the desire of the Lord Jesus to come which is put forth here, burning in my heart? If I know his desire to come, am I able to say, “Even so, come?” It is really having communion with that heart of His, where every thought is the Father’s will, and who has been waiting eighteen hundred years to come and take up the people given by the Father—He the Bridegroom, they the Bride.

It is an immense help to remember that the

Lord Jesus never forgets His coming. There is a fixedness of heart in Him to come and fetch the Bride home to the Father's house, and I can have sympathy with Him in that.

PHILIPPIANS.

IT has been often pointed out that in this Epistle there is more about "joy" and "re-joicing" than perhaps in any other. And yet the Apostle is in circumstances that would naturally produce care and anxiety instead of joy, when writing it. But if we look carefully into the four chapters that compose this letter, we shall find that there are *four great and important points* that tell the secret of this Christian man being not only happy himself in spite of circumstances, but able to exhort others to "rejoice in the Lord alway." And yet Paul was a *man* of like passions as ourselves. The four points are these: In the 1st chap., verse 21, Paul says that "for me to live is Christ." In the 2nd chap., verses 5 to 9, he has what he exhorts others to have, "This mind that was in Christ Jesus. In the 3rd chap., verses 13, 14, 20 and 21, he had the coming of the Lord before his soul continually. In the 4th chap., verse 13, he had Christ before him as his strength.

A Christian who has thus Christ as his *object*, Christ as his *example*, Christ's coming as his *hope*, and Christ Himself as his *strength*, is and must be a happy soul. Reader, how is it with you and I?

STANDING AND STATE OF SOUL.

IN Ephesians i. we have our standing in Christ; this must not be weakened. There must be no turning aside from our place before God in Him. There I get to know that all I was as the old man, is for faith gone; I see that I am dead, and that my life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians iii., 3.)

In the flesh there is no good thing; nothing but sin, will, lusts, which lead me away from God. But I believe the testimony of God, and see that Christ died, and that, by death for sins and to sin, the entire evil thing for faith is put an end to. The next step is, that, an end being put to me as the old man, Christ becomes in me the new man, and I am put in the presence of God as in Christ Himself, entitled to consider the old as done away. This is my place and standing before God. It is not only that sin is put away, but my position before Him is in consequence of this.

Nor is this the only thing; for I know that not only am I in Christ, but Christ is in me. These two things cannot be separated. The Lord Himself said, before He left the world, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." He has brought me into the standing; and this we have in

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Ephesians i., 2. Christ is looked at as having lain in death, but now raised ; and we are raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him. There we are ; and such is our position as connected with the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Chap. i., 17, etc.) But in chapter iii., 14, it is "The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Again in chapter i. it is written, "That we should be to the praise of His glory ;" whereas in chapter iii. the prayer is founded on "the riches of His glory." (V. 16.) In the first chapter God is called "the Father of glory." Here the standing is taken as a settled thing ; but we have something further. "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." We do not ask God to raise us up ; that is an accomplished fact, and is my standing. But here the Apostle prays that something may be accomplished ; that, "According to the riches of His glory," we may be "strengthened with might by His Spirit." *The condition of soul* must answer to the place into which it has been brought. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowl-

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edge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

I know that Christ is in me, and I in Him; but I ought not to be satisfied without the consciousness of enjoying Him. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts" is a prayer as to *practical state*, not a declaration of standing. What we have to watch is, not to unsettle the truth of the standing, but to apply the blessedness of the standing to the judgment of the practical state. Thus, if you say you have fellowship with the Father and the Son, I say come, let us see. I saw you laughing just now at foolishness in the street. Is not that having fellowship with a fool? Thus it is one applies the standing to judge of the state. And here it is that the advocacy of Christ comes in, and connects the perfectness of the standing with the state. Can I have a better place and standing than in Christ? I am righteous as He is righteous. My sins are all gone. And what now? I have been brought into the light as God is in the light. But you sinned? Alas! yes. Is this the light? No. But are you going to put me back under law? No! I am going to make you own that you need and have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous. The condition of the soul does not depend on standing, but on present grace. If a person say,

“I am in Christ, and I am satisfied,” it is to be feared, and very likely, that he is not in Christ. As to doctrine he may be clear enough ; but if he really were in Him he could not be satisfied without communion. “Knowledge puffeth up” ; but the effect of being in the light is to make us value not the place only, but fellowship with the Father and with the Son (with one another, too, of course). The way it works is this : the very essence of the condition of soul in a right state is a *conscious dependence*. Now, one may use the fact of completeness in Christ to make one independent. Two things are implied in dependence : first, the sense that we cannot do without God in a single instance ; and, secondly, that He is “for us.”

In other words, there is confidence in His love and power on our behalf, as well as the consciousness that without Him we can do nothing.

That is the reason why you will find constant reference to mercy when Scripture speaks of or to the individual. When the Church is addressed “grace and peace” only are mentioned. Only in Jude we have “mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.” And then in verse 21, “Looking for the mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life,” where the departure of christendom is contemplated, and when things were rapidly going on to judgment. We find, there-

fore, the Saints exhorted to keep themselves "in the love of God." This is state of soul again, and it *shows that when the Christian profession is stopping, more personal dependence comes in urgently.*

Let us delight in dependence—that a person above us should minister to us, and care for us. What should we think of a child with its father and mother, who yet said "I do not like to have anything to do with them"? Should we not say, "these are not the feelings of a child. You may think yourself a fine man in being independent, but you are not like a father's child"?

When the heart gets this according to Ephesians iii., it is so far, very jealous of itself, and in a lowly condition; in a word, it is with God, instead of without Him. I am perfect, I want nothing—that is as to my standing in Christ; but if I look for fellowship, I want God every day and every moment. But if I think of standing; suppose you have paid my debts, and given me a capital besides, I have got the thing, and want you no more for it. So I do not want God to give the place He has put me in before Himself in Christ, but I do want Him for communion; and if I find an evil thought, I go to Him for grace to get rid of it. Do you want to be perfect in Christ before God, and not have a bit of communion? The best robe is on me. With

me it is all grace, with Him it is His own glory. But are you to be stock! Is there to be no fellowship? Not only there ought to be fellowship, but your joy should be full. Come now. Is your joy full? That is what it ought to be and is what we find in the end of Ephesians iii., "Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith"; not Christ our life, though this last is a blessed truth, but that we may be able to comprehend all the effects of Christ's blessed presence. His being in us thus.

What an unlimited extent of blessing this supposes! (Vv. 18, 19.) When the standing is known, it is but the beginning of Christian life. Then if a person is not kept in a state of soul corresponding to the standing, he may do worse even than the unbeliever. The devil may make him for a time cast off *every thing*.

A THOUGHT ON THE LORD JESUS.

"LET EVERY ONE OF US PLEASE HIS NEIGHBOUR FOR HIS GOOD TO EDIFICATION."—*Rom. xv. 2.*

IT has just struck me that we may continually observe all absence in the Lord to merely please His disciples. He never did that: nay, I am sure that He passed by many little opportunities of gratifying them, as we speak, or of

introducing Himself to their favour. He did not seek to please, and yet He bound them deeply and intimately to Himself.

This was very blessed : and the same thing in any one is always a symptom of moral power.

“If we seek to please, we shall scarcely fail to please.” That is true, I doubt not ; but nothing can be morally lower. It makes a fellow-creature supreme ; and we deal with him as though his favour was life to us, which God’s is, but His only.

But to bind one in full confidence to us—to draw the heart—to have ourselves in the esteem and affection of others, without ever in one single instance having that as our object—this is morally great, for nothing can account for this, but that constant course of love which by necessity of its own virtue, tells others that their real interests, and prosperity, and blessing are in deed and in truth the purpose and desire of our hearts.

And this was the Lord. Nothing that He did told them that He sought to *please* them, but everything that He did told them that He sought to *bless* them.

And again I say—I believe that He passed by many little opportunities of gratifying them, or of introducing Himself to their favour. And yet He met them graciously and tenderly on

many occasions which *we* might have resented. And both of these, the one as well as the other, came from those springs and sources of moral perfection which took their rise in Him. For if vanity had no part in Him, to put Him to an effort to please, malice had no part in Him to make Him quick to resent. He could not be flattered into graciousness, nor provoked into unkindness. Look at Luke xxii 24—30. They had just betrayed nature, striving through pride, about the highest place. He corrects this ; but He does not hold that object long before Him. but allows another to command His heart and His thoughts respecting them—"Ye are they which have continued with me in My temptations."

Was that exactly the moment for remembering this fact ? Was it just the time for looking at them so steadily in so favourable a light ? No, not for *nature* to do so ; but for Jesus it was just the time. And He is our example, that we should follow His steps, and partake of His mind. And after the pattern of this little occasion, we have to remember *that it is not the PRESENT act that has to decide our thoughts and hearts respecting each other*. It may have much of the vileness or working of nature in it, as this strife had, but it may be, as this strife was, the act of those in whom much of the preciousness

9

of the Spirit dwells, and the precious should be remembered for the commanding of our thoughts *often*, even in the very presence of the vile.

Strange this may appear. Yes, and the ways of Divine unselfish love are strange. Here is our pilgrim part, and the part of a stranger in a scene of multiform selfishness like this. It may not be well to be always understood. Joseph spoke roughly to his brethren in a moment of their sorrow. But Joseph was not to be the servant of the present moment, but of their good. He was seeking to *bless* them, not to *please* them. Jesus told Thomas in a moment of repentance that there was a character of still higher blessing to which he did not belong. But Jesus was true to truth, true to us all, true to Thomas himself, when he might have been flattered into softness. Like Joseph, He was serving Thomas, and not the moment or occasion.

O the perfectness of it all! O the unspottedness of the path of His spirit within, as of His feet abroad! O the beauty of all which LOVE does or says! We shall understand it all by-and-bye, and have pages opened to us which now we have no eyes to read. Through selfishness, we mistake the doings of love, and expect gratifications when we find ourselves passed by; and are sent away with the material of some solid last-

ing benefit, when we hoped for a mere present pleasurable excitement.

O for more of that love that is "in deed and in truth," which EYES the solid good of others and can sacrifice their favour towards ourselves to their own blessing.

CHRIST.

MORE and more I am made to feel that Christ does not have His proper place among the children of God. He is not *the* object. It is either a doctrine, a dogma, a party—my experience, something beside Christ. We seem possessed with very much the same spirit that actuated Peter on the mount, when he said: "Let us make *three* tabernacles." The Father would remedy this. While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud which said: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And when the disciples heard it they fell on their face and were sore afraid; and Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid; and when they had lifted up their eyes they saw no man save *Jesus only*. (Matt. xvii., 1—8.)

Have you ever been in the "cloud," brother?

11

Have you ever heard the "voice?" Have you been on your "face?" Have you felt the "touch?" Then have you heard another voice, "Arise"? Do your eyes see "no man save *Jesus only*"? Many, perhaps, have reached the top of the mount; but few, very few, have been in the "cloud," have heard the "voice," have been on their "faces," have arisen to see "Jesus only."

"*Christ is all.*" (Col. iii., 11.) O let us know more of that rich blessedness which comes of making "*Christ all*," of seeing "*Jesus only*." Our cry should be—"O, to know Him." (Phil. iii., 10.) In our selfishness we cry and beg for blessings. It is the Blessor we need, HIMSELF. He is the joy of our Father's heart. Let us taste with Him the delight He takes in His Son.

Why is it we are not changed more from "glory to glory"? The veil has been rent; the blood has been sprinkled; the spirit is given. The reason is we are occupied with ourselves and the work of the spirit in us, rather than with Christ *alone*. This is the weakness in the wide spread holiness work, so much of which is superficial. Let us look more into that unveiled face from which streams the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God. (2 Cor., 3rd and 4th chaps.) All else will pale, and fade if we but linger here.

A word here. The spirit never occupies me with His work in me.

The Father would direct us to Him. (Matt. xvii., 5.) The Holy Ghost would occupy us with Him. (Acts vii., 55-56.) The word of God would speak of Him. (John v., 39.) He is the object of faith; He is the object of love; He is the object of hope; and the faith, or love, or hope, that does not make Him the object is spurious and unreal. He is all for my path; He is all for my service; He is all for my worship; Blessed, Blessed be His Name. He is not on the Cross; He is not in the grave; He is on the throne. Wondrous fact, a *man* in the glory of God, and that man my Head, Priest, Advocate, Bridegroom; the One who died for me; the One who lives for me; the One who is coming for me. It is not surprising that Peter should say, "Unto you therefore which believe *He is precious.*" Both the worldly world and the religious *world* seem bent upon shutting Him out. The former is "reserved unto fire," the latter He will vomit out of His mouth. (See 2nd Peter iii., Rev. iii.) Keep clear from them both, dear Brother. If not clear, "Go forth *unto Him.*" (Heb. xiii.) He is enough—glory to the Lamb—and it pleases His heart for us to make *all* of Him.

May it be with us, Christ, Christ, Christ.

You will not get a greater portion or place, than He got. Your portion here will be "food and raiment" your place "*out-side.*" There your portion is "all spiritual blessings," your place "*In Him.*" And now, dear Brother, let every affection, every desire, every thought be gathered in, and centered upon Him.

EXTRACT FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D.

PAGE 333.

DEAR SISTER,—The questions you ask me, make me feel deeply, how sorrowful are subtle questions upon the Person of Jesus; they tend to dry up and confuse the soul, to cause the Spirit of worship and love to be lost, and in its place to put intricate questions, as if the mind of man could resolve the way in which the humanity and divinity of Jesus are united.

It is in this sense that it is said "No man knoweth the Son save the Father. (I need not say that I do not pretend to do so.) The humanity of Jesus is incomparable; His was a true and real humanity; body and soul, flesh and blood, like mine as far as humanity is concerned, sin excepted.

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Now, having said so much, I entreat you with all my heart not to try to define and discuss the person of our precious Saviour; you will lose the savour of Christ in your thoughts, and you will get in its place only the barrenness of the human mind in the things of Christ, and in the affections which belong to them. I have begged brethren to refrain from this, and they are all the better for it. It is a labyrinth for man, because he works from his own resources. It is as if one were to dissect the body of one's friend, instead of delighting in his affections and his character. In the church, it is one of the worst signs I have met with. It is very sad to get into this way, very sad that this should be shown in such a light before the church of God, and before the world. I would add that so deep is my conviction in man's incapacity in this matter, and that it is outside the teaching of the Spirit to wish to define the manner of the union of divinity and humanity in Jesus, that I am quite ready to suppose that even while desiring to avoid it, I may have fallen into it, and thus may have spoken in a mistaken way in something which I have said to you. That He was truly man, Son of man, dependent on God as such, and without sin in that condition of dependence, truly God in all His ineffable perfec-

tion: this I hold, I trust, dearer than life. To define everything this is what I do not presume to do, no man knoweth the Son but the Father, if I find anything which weakens one or other of these truths, or which dishonors Him who is their subject, I shall oppose it with all my might, as God may call me to do so.

May God grant you to believe all which the word teaches with regard to Him—Jesus. It is our food and sustenance to understand all which the Spirit has given us to understand, and not to seek to define that which God does not call upon us to define, but to adore on the one hand and to feed upon on the other, and to love in every way according to the grace of the Holy Spirit.

NEW YORK, Dec. 10th, 1874.

BELOVED BROTHER:

We must take care not to pretend to know all that concerns the union of humanity and divinity in the person of the Lord.

This union is inscrutable. “No *Man* knoweth the Son but the Father.” Jesus grew in wisdom. What has made some Christians fall into such grave errors is, that they have wished to

distinguish and explain the condition of Christ as man.

We know that He was and that He is God ; we know that He became man, and the witness to His true divinity is maintained, in that state of humiliation, by the inscrutability of the union. One may show that certain views detract from His glory, and from the truth of His person ; but I earnestly desire that brethren should not set to work to dogmatize as to His person, they would assuredly fall into some error. I never saw any one do it without falling into some unintentional heresy. To show that an explanation is false, in order to preserve souls from the evil consequences of the error, and to pretend to explain the person of the Lord, are two different things.

THE MIDNIGHT CRY.

THE *Lord is coming!* Most blessed, yet most solemn truth! The midnight cry has gone forth, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." Far and near the cry is sounding. Loud and clear and long it rings through the midnight air, and the virgins are being aroused from their careless and guilty slumbers. Have you *heard* the cry? has your heart answered to it? Are your loins girded? Is your light burning? Do you know Christ as the heavenly Bridegroom? and are you waiting for Him in the joyous expectation of going "in with Him to the marriage?"

The Bridegroom is coming. Most plainly has God spoken in His Word about this great event. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." We are called to hear the very words of God. It is God Himself who speaks, and woe be to those who despise His word. "Incline your ear, and come unto Me," He says: "hear, and your soul shall live." Let us then bend our ear to God, and hear His word to us at this solemn moment, when the midnight cry is calling forth the virgins afresh, to meet the coming Bridegroom.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." (Matt. xxv.) This well describes the first condition of the professing church, while the heavenly hope of the saints still

shone bright in their hearts. Christian Jews went forth from the camp of Judaism, and converted Gentiles left their dumb idols, to wait for God's Son from heaven, who had said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you *I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*" "I WILL COME AGAIN!" This was the blessed hope of the saints. This the blessed Lord set before the Jewish disciples when He was about to leave them, and it was the comfort of their poor sorrowing hearts. They had been drawn to His person; they had marked the unfoldings of the divine, eternal life in Him as a man among men; they had seen, heard, touched, and handled the Word of life; they had seen the outgoings of eternal love manifested in Him; they had seen Him pressing on to the cross, and meeting the storm of human hatred and Satanic malice; they had seen Him bow His holy head under the tempest of divine judgment, as the Bearer of their sins; they had seen Him risen again from the dead, victorious over death and all the power of Satan, presenting to their wondering eyes His pierced hands and side as the proof that it was *Himself*, their risen and victorious Saviour; they had gathered around Him on the Mount of Olives, and heard his parting words, and seen His hand uplifted to bless them as He ascended up to heaven; and now, as the cloud received Him out of their sight, and they still stood gazing up into heaven, the men in white apparel assured them that *this same Jesus*

should so come in like manner as they had seen Him go up into heaven. This was their blessed hope, their comfort, their joy. He was but gone to prepare a place for them, and would come again and receive them to Himself. What was the effect of all they had seen and heard? They were drawn to His blessed person, and *their hearts clave to Him in love*. The manifestation of eternal and divine love had bound them to Him, and as He ascended, their hearts followed Him on high. All the links that bound them to the world that had crucified Him were broken. Their links were with Him, and every chord of their hearts vibrated with holy joy at the words, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, ye may be also." He was coming again, and *they went forth to meet the Bridegroom!*

But this same Jesus was preached to the Gentiles also, and preached, not only as a Saviour to deliver them from the wrath to come, but as the One who would gather His own around Himself, and usher them into the deep, eternal blessedness of the Father's house. This was their blessed hope. The Thessalonian saints were turned from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. And if the enemy brought in confusion of thought as to those who fell asleep before the coming of the Lord, the apostle would not leave them in ignorance. He would let them know that those who fell asleep would not miss the blessing and glory of the kingdom. God would bring them

all with Christ. But there is a preliminary event necessary to take place before this can be accomplished. "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," (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) Thus, when all the saints have been caught up to meet the Lord, and to be forever with Him, *then* God can bring them all *with* Him, as His co-heirs, to enter upon their inheritance, and fill their predestined place in the kingdom and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such was the hope and such was the state of the Church when it was in the freshness of first love; but

"THE BRIDEGROOM TARRIED."

More than eighteen hundred years have passed since He said to His disciples, "Watch." Why has He tarried so long? Is it because He is *slack* concerning His promise? Oh, how could any one think this of Jesus, who died upon the cross in self-sacrificing love, that He might be "the Amen"—the verifier of all God's promises? "The Lord is *not* slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is *long-suffering* to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter iii. 9.) Ah! this is the wondrous secret of His having tarried so long. God is gathering a heavenly bride for Christ, and

divine love still lingers over the lost in long-suffering patience, and one and another and another are being brought to repentance, and screened under the sheltering blood of the Lamb from the awful storm of coming judgment. And while the activities of divine love have been displayed in reconciling men to God, the time has not grown long to Him, with whom one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

Ought the time to have grown long to us? Ah! if the saints had been in communion with their Saviour, and followed the outgoings of His heart as the great Shepherd of the sheep, they would have been but too willing to suffer and toil and wait, without counting the time long. They would not have forgotten their hope; but, having the secret of *His heart*, they would have kept the word of *His patience*. But, alas!—

“WHILE THE BRIDEGROOM TARRIED THEY ALL
SLUMBERED AND SLEPT.”

The hope of the Lord's coming ceased to be an *immediate* hope. The wicked servant said in his heart, “My lord *delayeth* his coming,” and then “began to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken.” Through how many centuries has the Church slumbered and slept, and the evil servant done his own will! Alas! the church—the great professing body—instead of keeping herself as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ, gave up the hope of His coming, and played the harlot with the kings of the earth.

But the Lord is coming; as it is said, "He that shall come *will* come and *will not tarry*." But does He want to come and find a *sleeping bride*, a bride *not expecting* her Bridegroom? Ah, no. He will have the saints, in conjunction with the Spirit, saying, "Come." He will have bridal affections in the saints answering to His own imperishable love. And oh! think of the grace that has sent out the heralding cry, "BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM; GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM!"—the cry that has aroused the slumbering virgins, and made them trim their lamps.

Oh, reader, have you heard this cry? Are you awake? Have you trimmed your lamp? Is it burning for Christ? Oh, sleeper, awake! awake! awake! The Lord is coming—*surely* coming, and coming *quickly*! Oh, awake from your midnight slumber! trim your lamp, and be ready!

But you have heard the cry, perhaps, and trimmed your lamp, and it is "*going out*." *You have taken no oil in your vessel*. So it is in the parable. "They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." There must be the oil of the Holy Ghost—the power of divine light in the soul—in order to have a place in that glorious procession that will light our coming Bridegroom in to the marriage.

Dear reader, will *you* have a place in that wondrous throng? Do you know redemption? Have your sins been washed away in the blood of the

Lamp? Have you been sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise? Oh, remember, the mere lamp of profession will not do. You must have the oil; and you must get this now, while it is the day of grace. When the Master rises up and shuts too the door, it will be too late. *Now* is the accepted time. Oh, will you not seek the oil now? Christ will give it you. You cannot get it from the wise virgins: they have it only for themselves. You must get it from Christ: He alone can supply your need. And He sells "without money and without price." You cannot buy it otherwise. The Holy Ghost is the gift of Christ (as Christ was the gift of God the Father) to all those who believe the Gospel of salvation. Having accomplished redemption by His death on the cross, Christ was exalted to the right hand of God the Father, and received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, which he shed forth in power on the day of Pentecost. This is the oil for the virgins' vessels—the oil that sustains the light of Christ in the soul amid the darkness of this world's night. Oh, have you received this oil? Your lamp will be worthless indeed unless you have the oil to keep it burning. If you have not the oil, you will be left outside, forever and ever to bewail your fatal neglect. Oh, be wise, and take the oil which Christ freely gives to all who come to Him. Believe in Christ, whose precious blood cleanseth from all sin, that you may receive the anointing of the Holy Ghost, and be numbered among the wise who took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

“And while they went to buy the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, ‘AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT.’” Reader, on which side of that door will *you* be when that solemn moment arrives? Will you be *inside* to share the wondrous joys of that blood-washed throng? or will you be *outside*, to join the cry, “Lord, Lord, open to us,” only to hear the crushing answer, “*I know you not*”?

Oh, what a moment will that be when the Lord comes and takes away His own which are in the world! What a separation will take place then! All the saints will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the “sound of the last trumpet,” and caught up to meet the Lord in the air: while the despisers of the gospel will be left behind, to fall under the awful delusion of Satan, and be carried away in that terrible apostasy in which “the man of sin” will be deified and worshipped in the very temple of God, “that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thess. ii. 12.) Too suddenly and swiftly, it may be, for human eyes to see, yet with divine certainty the separation will take place. Every believer will be taken away: every rejecter of Christ will be left behind. Education, rank, wealth, social position, will have nothing to do in deciding who shall be caught up and who shall be left behind. All turns on whether men have believed the witness of God, and received the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ,

or whether they have despised God's word and rejected His Son. The separation is between *believers* and *unbelievers*, and takes place among all classes and conditions of men—high and low, rich and poor, great and small. Wherever they are, in whatever employ, in city or country, house or field, *believers* are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord.

In one part of the globe it is *morning*. The morning light has dawned, and the sun has arisen, and all seems the same as yesterday. The family circle are in their accustomed seats at the table, and all are partaking of the morning meal. Suddenly one and another are missed. They have vanished in a moment, and no earthly call can bring them back. *They have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air.*

In another part of the globe the inhabitants are at their *daily occupations*. There also the great separation takes place. In a moment God's people vanish from earth,—some from the streets of the city, some from behind the counter, some from the workshop, some from the field. Calls are unanswered, and all search in vain. *They have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air.*

In another part of the globe it is *evening*. The work of the day and the evening meal are over. Some of God's people, perhaps mingled with the family circle, are, with the others, talking over the affairs of the day ; some are at the prayer-meeting ; some, perhaps, are preaching the gospel to sinners, and pleading with men to be reconciled to God, or,

it may be, themselves listening to the old, old story they loved so well. Suddenly, and quickly as the lightning's flash, the summons comes, and as quickly all the saints are gone. The saint whose voice was just heard in the family circle is seen no more; the voice heard in prayer and supplication is silent; the servant of God proclaiming the word of reconciliation suddenly vanishes from the sight of his hearers; those who were just now listening with delight to the old, old story, or the teaching of God's blessed truth, have gone to behold the face of Him whom having not seen they loved. The great separation has taken place. *The saints have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air.*

In another part of the globe it is *night*. The inhabitants are wrapped in midnight slumber, but the Lord Himself descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and every saint answers to the heavenly call. The unsaved husband, or the unsaved wife, is left behind, and it may be, slumbers on till morning, or awakes in the night to find the loved companion gone, and the children too, who had been taught the fear of the Lord by the faithful father or mother. Everywhere the separation goes on, all classes are divided; all relationships are broken. Oh! moment of awful desolation to the unsaved! From field and city, counting-house and workshop, stately mansion and lowly hamlet, royal palace and poor man's cottage, a cry more terrible than the cry of Egypt on the night when the first-born were

slain, a cry of anguish and despair, ascends to heaven, "LORD, LORD, OPEN UNTO US." But alas! it is too late! too late! "They that were READY went in with Him to the marriage, AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT!"

And now what is the conclusion of the whole matter? "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour." "Times and seasons" there will be for the waiting Jews after the Church is gone, but there are none for us. The Lord may come to-day, or He may come to-morrow. He may come at morn, or noon, or night. The one solemn word He left ringing in the ears of His disciples was, "*Watch.*" "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when He cometh, shall find *watching*. Verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." "*Blessed are those servants!*" Who shall tell the unutterable blessedness and joy of those who have waited and watched for Christ, and who shall be fashioned into His glorious likeness at His coming! "We shall be *like* Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2.) And what is the *power* of this wondrous hope? "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." We shall be like Him *then*; we want to be like Him *now*, *purifying* ourselves even as *He* is pure." Shall we then not cultivate bridal affections in our hearts,

and keep ourselves (as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ) unspotted from the world? Shall He find us walking with defiled garments? walking with the world that crucified Him, and now coldly rejects His message of grace? Are we members of its societies, guests at its pleasure parties, attendants at its theatres, companions of those who by these things drown the voice of God in the conscience? He who was the light of this world is gone, crucified, and cast out. And now it is *night*—the long desolate night of His absence. Shall we seek shelter and comfort and carnal ease where He was slain? Oh, may we rather cleave to Him with undivided affections, enduring the cold chill of the night, and keeping our lamps burning brightly *till He comes*. Let us *go forth* to meet the Bridegroom. “*Surely I come quickly*” are His blessed words of cheer to our lonely and waiting hearts. Let the sound tremble on the chords of our hearts, making melody there to Him, whose heart will never be satisfied until He has us *with Himself*; and let us wait for that moment when *His* heart and *ours* shall be *mutually* satisfied—when “the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready.” “Amen. Come Lord Jesus.”



BRIGHT IN THE GLORY.

:O:

Bright in the glory,
Where my Lord has gone before;
Safe in the glory,
To go out no more;
I shall soon be sheltered,
In His likeness satisfied,
All my thoughts concentrated,
In the Glorified.

Jesus, Lord Jesus!
Thou art all in all to me;
Jesus, Lord Jesus!
I would live to Thee.

Soon in the glory,
I shall see my Lord who died;
'Throned in the glory,
Lives the Crucified.
Lightly weighs life's burden,
As I journey gladly on;
Precious is my guerdon,
Christ the Risen One!

Jesus, Lord Jesus!
Thou art all in all to me;
Jesus, Lord Jesus!
All my joy's in Thee.

There in the glory,
We shall gather every one!
Loud in the glory,
Raise the joyful song;
Unto Him who loved us,
Never ceasing praise be given;
Sing we Hallelujah!
To the Lord of Heaven.

Jesus, Lord Jesus!
Praise and glory be to
Thee;
Jesus, Lord Jesus!
We shall reign with Thee.

THE LORD OF GLORY.

ALL along the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ walked on earth He manifested the Godhead in the perfection of humanity; yet His Divine Glory was hidden, except to faith, from which "He could not be hid." There was the Eternal Son, in human form; full,—full of grace and truth. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." As though the Father said to us, "I have found my pleasure in Him, and now I set Him before you to find your pleasure in

Him." The object heaven could look down upon, is the object we can look up to. Here is the meeting point for God and man. In Him there is for man true fellowship with God.

The great discovery for the soul of man is, "God was in Christ," "God was manifest in the flesh." His unclothed excellence it was not possible for man to see, to look upon; but yet, to faith, the Lord walked here as the bright shining sun, illuminating all around, and the path before. As He passed among men, the question raised was, "Who has eyes to see Me?" I do not believe that His Glory would ever dazzle or put the believing soul at a distance from Him: but to be at ease in the presence of His Glory,—of His Person,—we must know the grace of His heart. We may walk about in the joy and comfort of the light which He sheds upon us, not regarding often the *source*, from which it comes. If we would contemplate the source, we must stop and look upon Him. "Behold the Lamb of God!" "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." "A great High Priest!"

The Lord was always the perfect Servant; and as the perfect Servant He was the lover of the saints,—the people of His God. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." How familiar He was with those who knew Him, He calls them by their names: He called Philip by his name,—“He calleth His own sheep by name.” Are you prepared to be called by name? What nearness,—and what

beauty in being exercised with the tenderness of the mind of Christ. "We have the mind of Christ." But what discoveries are there for our souls to make in the display of His grace and His affections. What a thing (in man's esteem) it is to find a gold mine: a field of diamonds! How much more to find Christ! *Nothing can compensate the soul for the lack of a personal knowledge of Christ. I speak of the secret which the soul of every saint should possess, the secret of personal communion.*

The journey through this world is as a journey through a long dark path with glorious light above you and before you. Christ is that light. You want a lamp before your feet and a light for your path. The Word which speaks of Christ is that light. Christ in glory is the end to be attained. As we pass along a dark and narrow passage, with light at the far end, we get more light every step of the way we go. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." His word is, "I go to prepare a place for you." *He is our Forerunner.*

CLEAVING TO THE LORD.

"Exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."—*Acts xi. 23.*

Beloved brethren, Is the Lord Himself precious to us? Do we esteem Him as beyond all conception the alone precious one? Whilst we realize and own our feebleness and proneness to be taken up with one or another of the things of the scene

through which we are passing, let us seek to have the Lord as the one and alone object of the heart's affections. What we need is to have the heart occupied with Himself. He "who died for us that we henceforth should not live unto ourselves, but unto Him that died for us." And as we feed upon Him as He is presented to us by the Holy Spirit in the various steps of His path from the manger to the cross, marking His compassion, humility, meekness, and self-denial, treasuring in our hearts the words that He addresses to His own; and beholding the grace and glory of His person, we shall be able to esteem all else as dross; and "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." Thus we cleave to the Lord. By having Himself as the one purpose and alone aim of our hearts. This will give tone and character to our walk. And whilst we walk in the path of faith, we shall be strengthened as we behold the Lord Jesus Christ, upon whom the heart is set; and there will be such peace and joy as is known only to the heart that thus cleaves to the Lord. The unbeliever sees no beauty in the Christ of God that he should desire Him. But such is not the case with those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious; and yet, *the believer whose heart is set upon the things of this world, practically admits that the unbeliever's estimate of Christ is correct.* Let us then, "with purpose of heart cleave unto the Lord." The exhortation is enhanced in value by what God says of Barnabas in the 24th verse: "He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith."

“THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD WHEREIN YE STAND.”

God is made known to us as the “*God of all grace*,” and the position in which we are set is that of “tasting that He is *gracious*.” How hard it is for us to believe this, that the Lord is *gracious*. The natural feeling of our hearts is “I know that Thou art an austere man ;” there is the want in all of us naturally of the understanding of the *Grace of God*.

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

We must learn what God is to us, not by our own thoughts, but by what He has revealed Himself to be, and that is, “*the God of all grace*.” The moment I understand that I am a sinful man, and yet that it was because the Lord knew the full extent of my sin, and what its hatefulness was, that He came to me, I understand what *grace* is. Faith makes me see that God is geater than my sin, and not my sin is greater than God. . . . The Lord that

I have known as laying down His life for me, is the same Lord I have to do with every day of my life, and all His dealings with me are on the same principles of *grace*. The great secret of growth is, the looking up to the Lord as *gracious*. How precious, how strengthening it is to know that Jesus is at this moment feeling and exercising the same love towards me as when He died on the Cross for me.

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

It is Jesus who gives abiding rest to our souls,

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

There is nothing so hard for our hearts as to abide in the sense of *grace*, to continue practically conscious that we are not under law but under *grace*, it is by *grace* that the heart is "established," but then there is nothing more difficult for us really to comprehend than the fulness of *grace*, that "*Grace of God wherein we stand*," and to walk in the power and consciousness of it. . . . It is only in the presence of God, there we can know it, and *there* it is our privilege to be. The moment we get away from the presence of God, there will always be certain workings of *our own* thoughts within us, and

our own thoughts can never reach up to the thoughts of *God* about us, to the "*grace of God*." . . .

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

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

The "*Grace of God*" is so unlimited, so full, so perfect, that if we get for a moment out of the presence of God, we cannot have the true consciousness of it, we have no strength to apprehend it; and if we attempt to know it out of His presence we shall only turn it to licentiousness. If we look at the simple fact of what *grace* is, it has no limits, no bounds. Be we what we may (and we cannot be worse than we are), in spite of all that, what God is towards us is LOVE. Neither our joy nor our peace is dependent on what we are to God, but on what *He is to us*, and this is *grace*.

Grace supposes all the sin and evil that is in us, and is the blessed revelation, that through Jesus, that

all the sin and evil has been put away. A single sin is more horrible to God than a thousand sins,—nay, than all the sins in the world are to us: and yet, with the fullest consciousness of what *we* are, all that God is pleased to be towards us is LOVE.

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

Grace has reference to what God is, and not to what we are, except indeed that the very greatness of our sins does but magnify the extent of the “*Grace of God*.” At the same time we must remember, that the object and necessary effect of grace is to bring our souls into communion with God,—to sanctify us, by bringing the soul to know God, and to love Him; therefore the knowledge of grace is the true source of sanctification.

The triumph of grace is seen in this, that when man's enmity had cast out Jesus from the earth, God's love had brought in salvation by that very act—came in to atone for the sins of those who had rejected Him. In the view of the fullest development of man's sin, faith sees the fullest de-

velopment of God's grace. . . . I have got away from grace if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love. I shall then be saying, "I am unhappy because I am not what I should like to be:" *that* is not the question. The real question is, whether *God* is what we should like Him to be, whether Jesus is all we could wish. If the consciousness of what we are—of what we find in ourselves, have any other effect, than, while it humbles us, to increase our adoration of what God is, we are off the ground of pure grace. . . . Is there distress and distrust in your minds: see if it be not because you are still saying, "I," "I," and losing sight of God's grace.

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

Beloved, if we can say as in Romans vii., "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no *good thing*," we have thought quite long enough about ourselves; let us then think about Him who thought about us with

thoughts of good and not of evil, long before we had thought of ourselves at all. Let us see what His thoughts of grace about us are, and take up the words of faith. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

GOD IN CIRCUMSTANCES.

Nothing so helps a Christian to endure the trials of his path, as the habit of seeing *God in every thing*. There is no circumstance, be it ever so trivial, or ever so common-place, which may not be regarded as a messenger from God, if only the ear be circumcised to hear, and the mind spiritual, to understand the message. If we lose sight of this valuable truth, life, in many instances at least, will be but a dull monotony, presenting nothing beyond the most ordinary circumstances. On the other hand, if we could but remember, as we start each day on our course, that the hand of our Father can be traced in every scene—if we could see in the smallest, as well as in the most weighty circumstances, traces of the Divine presence how full of deep interest would each day's history be found!

The book of Jonah illustrates this truth in a very marked way. There we learn, what we need so much to remember, that *there is nothing ordinary to the Christian*; every thing is extraordinary. The most common-place things, the simplest circumstances, exhibit, in the history of Jonah, the

evidences of special interference. To see this instructive feature, it is not needful to enter upon the detailed exposition of the book of Jonah, we only require to notice one expression, which occurs in it again and again: viz., "**THE LORD PREPARED.**"

In chapter i. the Lord sends out a great wind into the sea, and this wind had in it a solemn voice for the prophet's ear, had he been wakeful to hear it. Jonah was the one who needed to be taught; for him the messenger was sent forth. The poor pagan mariners, no doubt, had often encountered a storm; to them it was nothing new, nothing special, nothing but what fell to the common lot of seamen; yet, it was special and extraordinary for one individual on board, though that one was asleep in the sides of the ship. In vain did the sailors seek to counteract the storm; nothing would avail until the Lord's message had reached the ears of him to whom it was sent.

Following Jonah a little further, we perceive another instance of what we may term, **GOD IN EVERY THING**. He is brought into new circumstances, yet he is not beyond the reach of the messengers of God. The Christian can never find himself in a position in which his Father's voice cannot reach his ear, or his Father's hand meet his view; for His voice can be heard, His hand seen, in every thing. Thus when Jonah had been cast forth into the sea, "*the Lord prepared a great fish.*" Here, too, we see that there is nothing ordinary to the child of God. A great fish was nothing un-

common ; there are many such in the sea ; yet did the Lord *prepare* one for Jonah, in order that it might be the messenger of God to his soul.

Again in chapter iv. we find the prophet sitting on the east side of the city of Nineveh, in sullenness and impatience, grieved because the city had not been overthrown, and entreating the Lord to take away his life. He would seem to have forgotten the lesson learnt during the three days' sojourn in the deep, and he therefore needed a fresh message from God : "*And the Lord prepared a gourd.*" This is very instructive. There was surely nothing uncommon in the mere circumstance of a gourd ; other men might see a thousand gourds, and moreover, might sit beneath their shade, and yet see nothing extraordinary in them. But Jonah's gourd exhibited traces of the hand of God, and forms a link, an important link, in the train of circumstances through which, according to the design of God, the prophet was passing. The gourd now, like the great fish before, though very different in its kind, was the messenger of God to his soul. "So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd." He had before longed to depart, but his longing was more the result of impatience and chagrin, than of holy desire to depart and be at rest for ever. It was the painfulness of the present, rather than the happiness of the future, that made him long to be gone. This is often the case. We are frequently anxious to get away from present pressure ; but if the pressure were removed, the

longing would cease. If we longed for the coming of Jesus, and the glory of His blessed presence, circumstances would make no difference; we should then long as ardently to get away from circumstances of ease and sunshine, as from those of pressure and sorrow. Jonah, while he sat beneath the shadow of the gourd, thought not of departing, and the very fact of his being "exceeding glad of the gourd," proved how much he needed that special messenger from the Lord; it served to make manifest the true condition of his soul, when he uttered the words, "Take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live." The Lord can make even a gourd the instrument for developing the secrets of the human heart. Truly the Christian can say, *God is in every thing*. The tempest roars, and the voice of God is heard; a gourd springs up in silence, and the hand of God is seen.

Yet the gourd was but a link in the chain; for "*the Lord prepared a worm,*" and this worm, trifling as it was when viewed in the sight of an instrument, was, nevertheless, as much the divine agent as was the "great wind," or the "great fish." A worm, when used by God, can do wonders; it withered Jonah's gourd, and taught him, as it teaches us, a solemn lesson. True, it was an insignificant agent, the efficacy of which depended upon its conjunction with others; but this only illustrates the more strikingly the greatness of our Father's mind. He can prepare a worm, and He

can prepare a vehement east wind, and make them both, though so unlike, conducive to His great designs. In a word, the spiritual mind sees *God in every thing*. The worm, the whale, and the tempest, all are instruments in His hand. The most insignificant, as well as the most splendid agents, further His ends. The east wind would not have proved effectual, though it had been ever so vehement, had the worm not first done its appointed work. How striking is all this! Who would have thought that a worm and an east wind could have been joint agents in doing a work of God? Yet so it was. Great and small are only terms used among men, and cannot apply to Him "who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven," as well as "the things that are on earth." They are all alike to Him "who sitteth on the circle of the earth." Jehovah can tell the number of the stars, and, while He does so, he can take knowledge of a falling sparrow—He can make the whirlwind His chariot, and a broken heart His dwelling-place. Nothing is great or small with God.

The believer, therefore, must not look upon any thing as ordinary, for God is in every thing. True, he may have to pass through the same circumstances—to meet the same trials—to encounter the same reverses as other men; but he must not meet them in the same way, nor interpret them on the same principle; nor do they convey the same report to his ear. He should hear the voice of God, and heed His message in the most trifling, as well

as in the most momentous occurrences of the day. The disobedience of a child, or the loss of an estate, the obliquity of a servant, or the death of a friend, should all be regarded as divine messengers to his soul.

So also, when we look around us in the world, God is in every thing. The overturning of thrones, the crashing of empires, the famine, the pestilence, and every event that occurs amongst the nations, exhibit traces of the hand of God, and utters a voice for the ear of man. The devil will seek to rob the Christian of the real sweetness of this thought; he will tempt him to think that, at least, the common-place circumstances of every-day life exhibit nothing extraordinary, but only such as happen to other men. But we must not yield to him in this. We must start on our course, every morning, with this truth vividly impressed on our mind, *God is in every thing*. The sun that rolls along the heavens in splendid brilliancy, and the worm that crawls along the path, have both alike been prepared of God, and, moreover, could both alike co-operate in the development of His unsearchable designs.

I would observe, in conclusion, that the only one who walked in the abiding remembrance of the above precious and important truth was our blessed Master. He saw the Father's hand, and heard the Father's voice, in every thing. This appears pre-eminently in the season of the deepest sorrow. He came forth from the garden of Gethsemane

with those memorable words, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" thus recognising in the fullest manner, that GOD IS IN EVERY THING.

Our times are in Thy hand,	Our times are in Thy hand,
Father, we wish them there;	What ever they may be,
Our life, our soul, our all we leave	Pleasing or painful, dark or bright,
Entirely to Thy care.	As best may seem to Thee.

Our times are in Thy hand,
Why should we doubt or fear?
A Father's hand will never cause
His child a needless tear.

"HAVE SALT IN YOURSELVES."

MARK ix. 49, 50.

Those who were consecrated to God, whose life was an offering to Him, should not lack the power of holy grace, which binds the soul to God, and *inwardly* preserves it from evil. Salt is not the gentleness that pleases (which grace produces without doubt), but that energy of God *within us* which connects everything *in us* with God, and dedicates *the heart* to Him, binding it to Him in the sense of obligation and of desire, rejecting all *in oneself* that is contrary to Him, (obligation that flows from grace, but which acts all the more powerfully on that account). Thus practically, it was distinctive grace, the energy of holiness, which separates from all evil; but by setting apart for God. . . . Now this sense of obligation to God which separates from evil, *this judgment of all evil in the heart* must be *in oneself*. It is not a question of judging others, but of placing *oneself* before God,

thus becoming the salt, having it *in oneself*. With regard to others, we must seek peace; and real separation from all evil is that which enables us to walk in peace together.

In a word, Christians were to keep themselves separate from evil and near to God in themselves, and to walk with God in peace one with another.

The believer may be called to deny himself for the precious service of his Saviour, in things that are not bad in themselves, but this act is accomplished *inwardly*.

Devotedness is inward. It is a secret between His servant and Himself, though the external effects are seen by others.

Let us beware in ordinary things, of the first step that would separate us from *inward holiness*. Let us keep ourselves from any lack of obedience to the word of the Cross, whereby we are crucified to the world, sin, and the law.

Moral nearness to God, separates from the world, and gives that quietness of spirit, which finding its strength in God can overcome, and drive away the enemy when God leads into conflict by the plain revelation of His will.

Nothing is more perilous than the service of God when the conscience is not pure; however let us ever recollect *that we are under grace*.

“THE VISION OF THE ALMIGHTY.”

NUMBERS xxiv. 4-6.

WOULD we have happy thoughts about the saints, we must rise up to what the Church of God really is to God. We must get “the vision of the Almighty” (the knowledge of the beauty and comeliness of the Church in all Christ’s per-

fectness) in order to have our souls soft and tender and humble about what passes around. If we do not see this, we shall not be able to maintain the sense of Christ's love. And further, unless by the power of the Spirit we get away from circumstances, so as to see the Church, and the saints individually, as Christ sees them, instead of seeking to nourish and cherish them as Christ does, we shall be disappointed. This often makes us angry; it should not, but it does. We shall either lower our standard, and be content with conformity to the world in the saints, or become discontented and judicial, angry and bitter against them, the flesh being disappointed and vexed. Faith assumes the acceptance of the saints in Christ, while it seeks in the exercise of godly and gracious discipline that they should be maintained and bloom in the fragrance of Christ's grace. "As the valleys are they spread forth, as the trees of lign-aloes which Jehovah has planted, and as cedar-trees beside the waters!" What a most blessed picture! And could we be happy in seeing them stunted, dishonouring the Lord? The glory of Christ is concerned; He gets His character from us. Paul says to the saints at Corinth, not "ye ought to be," but, "*ye are* the epistle of Christ, written with the Spirit of the living God." No, I must grieve when I find in them that which is contrary to their beauty in Christ. They are "as trees of lign-aloes, and as cedar-trees." It is not merely that God has not seen iniquity in them—He has seen beauty. Oh! beloved, our souls need to see the Church, and the saints individually, thus in God's vision, with our eyes open, in the Spirit; otherwise we shall not get into the power of God's thoughts. We do not want "the vision of the Almighty" in order to see that a saint is a saint; neither do we want "open eyes" to dis-

cover inconsistencies in the walk of our brethren. We do want to rise up, and have our eyes open to see, as God sees, this beauty and glory of the Church. God is in possession of us.

And remember this was said in the very presence of Balak. It is blessed we should have the certainty of these things in the midst of Satan's power. What does David say? "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." The enemies can only look on and see how blest I am, while I feast on what God has provided. "Thou anointest my head with oil : my cup runneth over," not only have I got mercy and peace, but I have understood its fulness—an overrunning cup. He can both dwell upon the proved faithfulness of God, and count upon it for the future also, as he goes on to say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life," and finishes with "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." "How goodly are thy tents O Jacob! and thy tabernacles O Israel!" We have the strength of God's love to think of for present comfort, and where there is a right view of the beauty and comeliness of the Church, and yet of her failure, there will be great humbleness and tenderness of spirit towards the Lord, and towards one another. The Lord grant we may not sit down content in wretched coldness of heart, with evil in ourselves or in our brethren. The waters of God are at the root of the plant, however miserable the pruning. How precious is this! May we rise in the sense of the beauty we have in God's mind, to delight ourselves in Him who is our comeliness, to glory in Him who is God's delight, and our joy and glory.

Something to learn from God Himself. "I am nothing." "Christ is all." "He must increase, I must decrease."

VOTING.

Question.—"What is taught in the Word regarding the position of a Christian when called upon to vote for a member of Parliament?"

Answer.—You will perhaps be startled when we tell you that your question involves the very foundations of Christianity. We would ask you, dear friend, to which world does the Christian belong? Does he belong to this world or to the world above? Is his citizenship on earth or in heaven? Is he dead or alive in it—which?

If he be a citizen of this world, if his place, his portion, and his home be here, then assuredly he cannot take too active a part in its affairs. He should put forth every effort to mend and regulate the world. If, in a word, he be a citizen of this world, he ought, to the best of his ability, to discharge the functions pertaining to such a position. He should vote for town-councillors and members of Parliament, he should strain every nerve to get the right man in the right place.

But, on the other hand, if it be true that the Christian is, as regards this world, "*dead*"—if his citizenship is in heaven, if his place, his portion and his home be on high, if he is only a pilgrim and a stranger here below, then it follows that he is not called to meddle in any way with this world's politics, but to pass on his pilgrim way, patiently submitting himself to every ordinance of

man for the Lord's sake, yielding obedience to the powers that be, and praying for their preservation and well-being in all things.

But the question is, "What is taught in the Word" on this point? An all-important question. What then saith the Scripture? A passage or two will suffice. Hear what our Lord saith, when addressing the Father in reference to "His own in the world." "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because *they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*" Again, hear the inspired apostle on this subject: "Brethren be followers together of me, and mark them that walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, *who mind earthly things.*) For our citizenship (*politeoma*) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Philippians iii. 17-20.) So also in Colossians we read, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ our life shall appear, then shall

ye also appear with Him in glory." Some, however, may say that the foregoing Scriptures no longer apply—that "the world of John xvii. is not the world of the 19th century"—that the former was a pagan world, whereas the latter is a Christian world. To all who take this ground, we have nothing to say. If the teaching of the New Testament was only designed for a bye-gone age, if it bears only upon the things that were, and *has no application to the things that are*, then, indeed, we know not where we are, or whither to turn for guidance or authority. But, thank God, we have a divine and, therefore, all-sufficient directory for all ages, all climes and all conditions. If, therefore, we are to be guided by Scripture, we have no warrant whatever for meddling in this world's politics. The cross of Jesus has snapped the link which connected us with this world. We are identified with Him. He is our model. If He were here, He would find His place outside the range of this world. You would not see Him at the Council Board, on the bench, in the House of Parliament, or with the sword in His hand. By-and-by He will wield the sceptre, draw the sword, and hold the reins of government in His hand. (May God hasten the day!) But now He is rejected, and we are called to share His rejection. Our path in this world, as Christians, is *obedience or suffering*. We are called to pray for all in authority, but not to be in authority ourselves. There is not so much as a single line of Scripture to guide me as a voter, or a member,

or a magistrate. If, therefore, I act in these characters, I do so without one word of direction from my Master. Nay more, I act in a way utterly opposed to Him, and in direct opposition to the spirit and teaching of the New Testament.

May God give us to be more faithful to Christ! May we be delivered more completely, in heart and spirit, from this present evil world, and be enabled to pursue with holy decision, our pilgrim path across the sand of the desert! We are quite aware that what we have written on this subject will prove unsavory and unpopular, but this must not deter us from speaking the truth, and we trust it may not deter us from acting the truth also.

—:o:—
THOU ART COMING.

Thou art coming, Mighty Saviour, ("King of kings,"—Thy written Name,)	Nation rises against nation, Trouble spreads from shore to shore.
Thou art coming, Royal Saviour, Coming for Thy promised reign. Oh! the joy, when sin's confusion Ends beneath Thy righteous sway. Oh! the peace, when all delusion At Thy presence dies away.	Thou art God's supreme "Salva- tion," Come! and chaos shall be o'er. Once Thy coming, Holy Saviour, Expiation made for sin. Wondrous coming—Lowly Saviour, Wondrous child in Bethlehem.
Thou art coming, Loving Saviour, Coming, first, to claim Thine own. Thou art coming, Faithful Saviour, Thou would'st not abide alone. In Thy Father's House, in glory, Sinners saved shall dwell with Thee.	Thine the Wisdom, in the manger, Thine the Power, upon the cross, Thine the Glory, as the Stranger, Riches—though in utter loss.
O, the sweetness of the story! Love's own record we shall be.	Thou art coming, Crownèd Saviour, Not "the second time," for sin. Thou art coming, Thronèd Saviour, Bringing all the glory in.
Thou art coming, Gracious Saviour, Ah, to see Thy face we long. Thou art coming, Blessed Saviour, Righting all creation's wrong.	All Thy Father's house, it's glory, Hangs, by sure behest, on Thee; Oh, the sweetness of the story! Saviour, come! we wait for Thee!

WHAT IS THE CAMP ?

HEBREWS ix. 1, 10 ; xiii. 12, 13.

In the last chapter of this epistle, the Spirit of God, speaking of the fact that "the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp," goes on to say, "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify [set apart] the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. *Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp*, bearing His reproach," etc.

Many are at a loss to know what is referred to by the term "camp," yet it is very important to understand it, because those who love the Lord Jesus Christ are exhorted to *go forth* from it, unto Him.

In order to learn this, we should first of all find out to whom the epistle was primarily and specially addressed, and with God's blessing it will soon be made plain.

The epistle to the Hebrews was written to professedly converted Jews, who had been born and trained up under the law given by God to Israel at Mount Sinai, when they were *in camp* in the wilderness, where and when, a system of worship was ordained of God for this nation that was perfect in its place, but which did not suppose or require that the worshippers should be born again, and under which system Israel as a nation utterly failed.

The ninth chapter tells us that there were ordinances of divine service, and a *worldly sanctuary*, consisting of a tabernacle made with men's hands, and pitched on earth.

Then they had an ordained priesthood—men of a certain family set apart to come between the worshippers and God, of whom Aaron was the high priest. And this man was the minister of this sanctuary.

The high priest offered up an atonement for the people's sins once every year (besides the other sacrifices that were offered up continually) and, as already noticed, the worshippers were not all believers, though some of them were such; they were a mixed company of believers and unbelievers, all of them on the ground of *law-keeping for righteousness*.

We learn, then, that Judaism, or the system of worship at Jerusalem, was, in Paul's day, "*the camp*." And, dear Christian reader, is it not clear at a glance that *any system of worship* of a *Jewish nature and character*, and, in consequence, a system that the flesh and sight—the world, in fact—can more or less join in, is the *camp* in our day? We know, as revealed by the Son of God Himself, that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," (John iv. 24)—a thing impossible for the natural man to do. It requires men to be born of the Spirit, and sealed with the Spirit. (Rom. viii. 8, 9; Eph. i. 13.) In John iv. 21 our Lord says, "Woman, believe Me,

the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, *nor yet at Jerusalem*, worship the Father." The time had come when the temple made with hands should be done away with. Men in the flesh had been thoroughly tested, and proved to be utterly incapable of obeying God's law, or truly worshipping Him either; and now a new order of things comes in: men born of the Spirit, indwelt by the Spirit, worship in spirit and in truth; not in a temple or tabernacle on earth, but in *the holiest*, that is, heaven itself—the only worshipping-place now—having boldness to enter there by the blood of Jesus. (Heb. x. 19–22.)

Therefore, if any system of worship exists now which has a worldly sanctuary, a temple made with hands, with an ordained priesthood, or class of men set apart to take a special place *between* the worshippers and God, where the worshippers place themselves under the law and mix believers and unbelievers together in worship, this is the camp of our day.

God says, through the apostle, to those of His dear children who are in any such system, "Let us go forth unto Him [Christ] without *the camp*, bearing His reproach."

"But," say some, "why not stay inside, and do all the good you can where you are?"

We reply, Because "to *obey* is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Samuel xv. 22.)

Because God will not have Christianity and Juda-

ism mixed up together—the new wine in the old bottles.

Because God will not have the world and the Church yoked together unequally. (2 Cor. vi.)

Because Jesus Christ has come a High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands. He was cast out by worshippers in the flesh (Jewish worshippers), and suffered outside the gate, on Calvary; proving that their worship was not a real thing, for if they had loved God, they would have revered His Son. (John viii. 42.) Yea, though these worshippers could point out in the Scriptures where Christ was to be born, not one foot did they go to find Him, but were troubled and distressed at the very thought of His being come.

He is now risen from the dead, and has entered into the holy place made without hands, even into heaven itself; not with the blood of bulls and goats, “but by His own blood,” “having obtained [not redemption for a year only, but] eternal redemption for us.” And now, the Man in the glory, the God-man, is our High Priest—“a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man.” (Heb. viii. 1, 2; ix. 11, 12, 24.)

Again, though perfectly true that God told Moses to make the tabernacle, and Solomon the temple, for a place of worship on earth under the law—now He has opened heaven to all who believe, and they have boldness to enter into the holiest by the

blood of Jesus—heaven itself taking the place of the tabernacle and temple at Jerusalem as the Christian's worshipping-place, which we enter by faith and in spirit. (Heb. viii. 1, 2; ix. 24.)

Then, though God made a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, giving them the law—a covenant of works—they failed under it; but the Christian (though under responsibility to obey, *as a child*) is not under law, but under grace (Rom. vi. 14), Christ having delivered us from the law and its curse, having been made a curse for us, and “I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.” (Gal. ii. 19.)

Unbelievers as well as believers were in the congregation of worshippers under the law; but God requires worship in spirit and in truth, and none but those who are converted and sealed by the Spirit of God, have the power and heart for such worship.

Christianity has taken the place of, and is a direct contrast to, Judaism, and God would not have us try to mix the two, and go back to the carnal ordinances of a worldly sanctuary, that were imposed only for a time. (Heb. ix. 1, 10.)

So the word is, “Let us go forth *unto Him without the camp*, bearing His reproach,” etc.

Take notice that this is not a question of salvation, it is not that souls inside the camp are not saved—indeed, it is the saved ones inside who are called upon to go outside (and no doubt many souls are being saved where the gospel is truly preached

inside)—but it is a question of obedience, and of worshipping God according to the principles of Christianity: surely a very important thing in the eyes of those who love the Lord Jesus.

Neither is a Gospel-meeting a meeting for worship, as some think. But especially for those who cannot worship, that they may be saved and become worshippers.

When the epistle to the Hebrews was written, there were many thousands of Jews that believed, and they were all zealous of the law. (Acts xxi. 20.)

If we compare dates, we find that God, in long-suffering goodness and mercy, allowed the believing Jews to remain in "*the camp*" for perhaps thirty years after Pentecost; and so Christianity and Judaism existed together for some years (Acts ii. 46, 47; xxi. 20–25), for God had not told His people to leave it as yet. However, after Paul had gone to Jerusalem, and been persuaded to go to the temple-worship again, *to please the many thousands of Jews that believed*, and had nearly lost his life at the hand of the unbelieving portion of Jewish worshippers, he was sent a prisoner to Rome, and probably from there wrote this very epistle; the Spirit of God using the apostle to call on the converted Jews to separate from the camp altogether, the time having come when God would no longer have His children go on with Judaism.

It was very trying then for one brought up as a Jew, to obey this call, and so it is now. But if we love Him who gave Himself for us, we ought to

show our love to Him by obeying His commandments and His words. (John xiv. 21-23.) And if there is reproach to be expected on obedience, let us not forget that it is "*His reproach*." And His love and His power are with us and for us to carry us through; yes, and even to enable us to rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer for His sake.

As we are to "go forth *unto Him* without the camp," where, outside the camp, shall we find Him? and in what special way is He to be found there?

Christian brother or sister, there is a special place outside the camp where the Lord vouchsafes to be, and to manifest Himself in a very special and peculiar manner to faith, and it is, "Where two or three are gathered together *unto* [not in] my name, *there* am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.) The place then is where the two or three, or twenty or thirty, or two or three hundred, are gathered together *unto His name*; which implies separation from all that is contrary to that name. And the special way in which He vouchsafes to manifest Himself there *to faith*, is not to be described in words. It is to be *felt* and *enjoyed* by those who believe and obey His words—His actual, but not of course bodily, presence in the midst. Oh that all His dear people believed it!

It should be understood that to meet together thus does not do away with *divinely-appointed* ministry in the Church of God. There is a ministry; there are gifts given unto men; there are *evange-*

lists, pastors and teachers, “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of [not a sect, but] the body of Christ.” (Eph. iv. 11, 12.) The apostles we have in their writings. But gifts are not given to lead Christians in worship; they are, as the members of one’s own natural body, for the use of the whole body; but the Head is alone that which all are to look to, to lead and guide, especially in worship. And it is Christ who is the Head of His body, the Church—of which all true Christians are members. (1 Cor. xii. 12.) And He really does lead by His Spirit where He is owned as present, and looked to as in the midst (Matt. xviii. 20), and given His proper place—the place that only He has a right to, or is qualified to fill.

Reader, are you inside, or outside the camp?

O Lord, we know it matters not,
How sweet the song may be;
No heart but of the Spirit taught
Makes melody to Thee.

Then teach Thy gathered saints, O Lord,
To worship in Thy fear;
And let Thy grace mould every word
That meets Thy holy ear.

JESUS IN COMPANY WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

We are aware by how many different ways our fellow-disciples try us, and grieve us; and, no doubt, we do them. We see, or fancy we see, some bad quality in them, and find it hard to bear it, or to go

on in further company with them. It has occurred to me that we may observe, that just in those same ways the mind and heart of Jesus were tried and grieved by His disciples in the days of His flesh, and yet He went on with them, we know, as I need not add, "*not overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good*,"—the evil that was in *them*, with the good that was in *Himself*. I would mention some of these wrong things in them that must have grieved Him, and the influence of which, upon our own thoughts and feelings towards others, we well understand and continually experience.

Vanity in another tries us—an air of self-satisfaction, or the esteeming of ourselves and the putting of ourselves forth to admiration. The Lord was tried by this spirit in His disciples. The mother betrayed it, and His kinsfolk. (John ii., vii.) Peter was thus self-confident, when he said, "Though all should be offended, yet he would not." And all of them were guilty of this, when they contended who should be the greatest; and also when they *forbade* those who followed not with themselves.

Ill-temper is a very fretful thing; it so interferes with us. Martha tried the Lord with it, when she complained to Him of her sister; and so did the apostles when they urged Him to send away the multitude, just because their privacy and repast had been intruded upon. (Mark vi.) Any show of a *covetous*, grudging spirit is very hateful to us. Jesus must have discerned this (and therefore have had to bear with it) on such occasions as Matt. xiv. 17; xv. 33.

Unkindness, whether towards ourselves or to others is very irritating. Peter's enquiry in Matt. xviii. 21 covered I believe, what the Lord must have seen to be the workings of an unkind and malevolent temper; as also we see it in Matt. xv. 23.

Indifference to others, and carefulness about oneself, is very vexing to us also—it is so selfish and cold-hearted. Jesus was tried by enough of it in His disciples. He asked them to watch with Him, but He found them sleeping; He spake of His death, but they were thinking of their place and honours in the kingdom; He spake of leaving them, but none of them asked, “Whither goest thou?” and in the ship it was of their *own* safety they thought. These were instances of cold indifference.

Ignorance is apt to try us, and make us impatient. Whoever found more of it in those He was continually teaching than the Lord? Some of the plainest lessons they had not learned; and when He spake *spiritually* or mystically to them, they listened to Him as *in the letter*—they were asking explanations of the simplest parables.

Unspirituality of mind in fellow-disciples is a trial to us. How much of this amongst His people was the Lord continually suffering! and He was always light in discovering it. We often, through vanity or self-esteem, mistake mere nonconformity with ourselves for it.

These are among the ways in which the disciples must have tried the mind of their Divine Master; and these are some of the tempers and characteristics

which to this hour try and fret us in our brethren. It may be thought that the instances here adduced are but faint and minute expressions of these different wrong tempers. That may be. But we must remember how pure and perfect the mind of Jesus is, and then we shall know that though the instance was faint, and the occasion a small one, *yet His finer sensibility gave it more than the importance of the greatest occasion.*

And comforting, let me say, it is to see the Lord going before us in such trials as these. But if He has gone before us in the *trials themselves*, He has also left us an example of a *series of victories* over them, and in these victories He has told us to "follow His steps;" for not only in His ways with His *adversaries*, but in His way with His *disciples*, is He our pattern. If, in not answering reviling with reviling, nor wrongs with threatenings, He is an example to us, so also in His *going on* still with His disciples, in spite of naughty outbreaks and many shortcomings among them. For we have returned to Him as "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls," in *all* things as the One who is a pattern to us—how we should carry ourselves to all, adversaries or brethren. (1 Pet. ii. 21–25.) And He, as I said, was never overcome of evil that was in another, but ever overcame it by the good that was in Himself. (Rom. xii. 21.)

Thus did He suffer from His disciples, and thus did He conquer. How ready are our selfish hearts to plead our right to part company if another do not

please us. But this was not Jesus. The pride, the indifference, the ill-temper, and the low unspiritual mind, which the disciples were continually betraying, did not tempt HIM to take distance from them.

For at the END of their walk together, He is *nearer to them than ever*. (John xiv., xvi.) He did not *part company* with them because they gave Him much exercise of heart, and were continually drawing upon Him. He warned and instructed them; He rebuked and condemned them; but NEVER GAVE THEM UP. Blessed, perfect Master! lover of our souls at all cost! (John ii. 6.)

THE FORM OF A SERVANT.

“For, is it mere humanity, I ask, I get in the Person of Christ? Is it not something immeasurably different, even *God manifest in flesh*? He would not as a Saviour, do for me a sinner, if He were not Jehovah’s Fellow. Every creature *owes* all that he can render. None but One who thinks it not robbery to be equal with God can *take* the form of a servant—for he *is* a servant already, as I have said before. ‘No creature can supererogate,’ as another has said; the thought would be rebellion. None could be qualified to stand surety for man, but One who could without presumption claim equality with God, and consequently be independent.

“True, humanity was capable of *sinning*. Adam in the garden was so, for he did sin. We may say

more simply and certainly, that he was capable of *sinning* than that he was capable of *dying*. The history shows us the first, but forbids us to determine the second ; inasmuch as it tells us, that death came in by sin. By nature there was a capability of sinning, but we are not told the same as to a capability of dying.

“If, then, by-and-by, another was to come, and just to illustrate, as he might say, the true humanity of Christ, he were to suggest the capability or possibility of His sinning, I ask, What would the soul say to him? We may leave the answer to those who know Him. But we may at the same time be sure of this—that the devil is in all these attempts upon the *Rock of the Church*, which is the *Person of the Son of God* (Matt. xvi. 18.) For His work, His testimony, His sorrows, His death itself, would be absolutely nothing to us, if He were not God. His *Person* sustains His *sacrifice*, and in that way His Person is our Rock. It was a confession to His Person, by one who was at that time ignorant of His work or sacrifice, which led the Son of God to speak of the Rock on which the Church was to be built, and also to recognise that truth or mystery against which the gates of hell, the strength and subtlety of Satan, were to try their utmost again and again. And they have been thus engaged from the beginning, and are still so. By Arians and Socinians, the full glory of ‘God manifest in the flesh,’ was clouded long ago with either a deeper or a more specious falsehood.

“But one can trace a kindred purpose in all—the *depreciation of the Son of God*. And whence comes this? And whence comes the very opposite and contradictory energy? What is *the Father* occupied with, or jealous about, if it be not the glory of the Son, in resistance of all that would depreciate Him, be it gross or subtle? Read, beloved, the Lord’s discourse to the Jews in the 5th of John. There that secret is disclosed, that though the Son has humbled Himself, and can, as He says, ‘do nothing of Himself,’ the Father will see to it, that He be not thereby dishonoured, or in any wise depreciated—watching over the rights, the full Divine rights, of the Son, by this most careful and jealous decree—‘he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.’

“Patience in teaching, patience with the simply ignorant, is surely the Divine way, the way of the gracious Spirit. The Lord exercised that way Himself. ‘Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?’ But no allowance of any depreciation of Christ is the Divine way also. John’s writings prove this to us—the most awful portion of the oracles of God, as well as being so peculiar and precious, because they so concern the personal glory of the Son. And they seem to me to shew but little if any mercy to those who would sully that glory, or carelessly watch over and around it.

“And let me add, other facts in the history of the blessed Lord, such as hunger and thirst and

weariness, are not to be used as the least warrant for this thought about the mortality of His flesh and blood. The Son of God in flesh was exposed to nothing. Nothing outside the garden of Eden was His portion. He was hungry and wearied at the well of Samaria. He slept in the ship after a day of fatiguing service. But whatever of all this He knew in the place of thorns, and thistles, and sorrow, and sweat of face, He knew it all, and took it all, only as fulfilling that 'form of a Servant' which in unspeakable grace He had assumed."

A CHRISTIAN.

When we speak of a "Christian," we speak of what a Christian is in Scripture, and Scripture always speaks of him—of a believer *in any state*—as to his standing. It is very necessary to see this.

We must not confound the exercises of a Christian with the standing of a Christian. The ground of his standing is God's work. In his exercises there comes in himself—his flesh, his ignorance, and many other things, alas! may be working. But it is entirely according to God's thoughts, and not according to my thoughts, that my standing is to be judged of.

When I am thinking of these, it is my actual state that occupies me; but were God to take notice of my actual state, He must condemn me.

Whatever his exercises, however these may vary, the Christian, in one sense, is just the same, be-

cause He is in God's sight as Christ. (1 John iv. 17.) Christ being the perfectly accepted man at God's right hand, the Christian is looked at by God in the same position (Eph. ii. 6 : i. 6), sitting in heavenly places "in Christ." In that sense there cannot be any difference, and the ground of our acceptance cannot ever be imperfect. I repeat, we must not confound the movements of life with the ground of our acceptance. We can never have this too simple or clear. It does not make one despise the first actings of life, its first movings and breathings, however feeble and imperfect. I do not despise my child because he is not a man.

In the Ephesians (where what a Christian is is fully brought out) men are viewed as the "children of wrath" in their very nature (necessarily heirs of wrath, because God is what He is, and man is what he is). Every other distinction is lost sight of, because, in his character of a sinner, man is brought fully into the light of God. But having thus told us *what man is*, the apostle does not stop with man. He turns round, and begins at the other end. He now tells us *what God is*—that He is "rich in mercy," and (as the effect of this) that He has set us in heavenly places in Christ. And then comes our responsibility to walk consistently with this wonderful place.

"Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children ;

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints ;

"Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.

"For this ye know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

"Let no man deceive you with vain words : for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

PEACE FLOWING FROM CONSCIOUS RELATIONSHIP.

As regards settled peace, the great secret is the full and abiding consciousness that in us there is no good, and looking ever at Christ as our only and own perfect righteousness before God. But there is another kind of peace which we must not confound with this, the peacefulness of heart which flows from conscious relationship with God. When this is in simple exercise, we rest in the sense of His goodness, and enjoy it, and this is very sweet to the soul. If we are not walking in heart or ways in consistency with this relationship, then we have to think of ourselves, and at any rate by God's own discipline, we do not *enjoy* the light of His countenance in the same way. We must not confound this with righteousness. This is ignorance of divine righteousness, and tends to put us back under law and make us doubt. This is not of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost dwelling in us cannot make us doubtful of our relationship with God. He is the Spirit of adoption, "crying Abba, Father," but He does make us sensitive of the approbation of God and what suits His presence. Abel had testimony by his gifts (that is, Christ, the Lamb,) that "he was righteous," but Enoch, before his translation, had this testimony "that he pleased God." You may find the two kinds of rest in John xiv. 27. Our present relationship is a constant

source of joy, and to be carefully cherished. Our righteousness, on which it is founded, is unchangeable in the presence of God. The gracious Lord keep us walking diligently.

PIETY.

PSALM xvi.

This Psalm depicts Christ as the dependent devoted man. Dependent, obedient, taking no place with God, but before Him as responsible as man upon earth, and looking towards the place of perfect blessedness as man with God, by being in His presence, which would be fulness of joy for Him, a place which, when having His nature, we can have with Christ. It is man, partaker of the divine nature, for so only it could be, but having God for His object, His confidence, as alone having authority over Him, entirely dependent on God, and perfect in faith in Him. This could only be in One personally partaker of the divine nature, God Himself in man as Christ was, or derivatively, as in one born of God. The divine presence in Him is viewed here in its effect in His absolute perfection as man. He is walking as man morally in view of God. He had said to Jehovah, "Thou art my Lord," that is "I am subservient to Thee." He had taken a place, while never ceasing to be God, (*and which Godhead alone could fulfil the conditions of,*) outside Godhead, but in which as man to satisfy God, to glorify God in an earth of apostacy and sin.

Jehovah was the portion of His cup. Nearer than all circumstances which otherwise could have pressed upon His heart as man—and which he fully felt. So truly was Jehovah the great circumstance and substance of His life in and through everything, that He could only wish that His joy might be fulfilled in His disciples. But then it was Jehovah only, and therein His perfection; the world a dry and thirsty land, where no water was, but Jehovah's favour was better than life; and was His life, practically, through a world where all was felt, but felt with Jehovah realized, Jehovah and His favour, the life of His soul, between Him and all. So the Christian, forsaken, perhaps, and imprisoned, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again, I say, rejoice." Nature has circumstances between itself and God; faith has God between the heart and circumstances. And what a difference! No peace like the peace which hiding in the tabernacle from the provokings of all men gives. But this is a divine life passing through the world. "Delight thyself in the Lord, He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Faith leans on Jehovah, on the Father's love and Jesus.

For the securing infallible happiness and peace we need not look to circumstances, save to pass through them with Him. This was perfect in Christ; He had only this, nor looked for aught else. We see it brightly manifested in Paul. In principle it is the path of every Christian, and some time or other he is exercised in it. The life

of faith is this: God Himself the portion of our inheritance and our cup; He maintaineth our lot.

The lines fallen in pleasant places, I believe to be His joy as man in God, and in what was before God. In what follows we have the active expression of this life, in reference to God. "I will bless Jehovah who giveth me counsel." We need in divine life the positive instruction of wisdom, counsel; wisdom, a divine clue and direction in the confusion of evil in this world—to be wise concerning that which is good. "Not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time," "not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." Jehovah gives counsel, So "if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to every man liberally and upbraideth not."

There is the immense privilege of the positive direction and guidance of God—the interest He feels in guiding the godly man aright, in the true path suited to God Himself—across the wilderness where there is no way. So Christ walked. So He guides His sheep, going before them; and now we are led of the Spirit of God, as ourselves sons of God. It is the divine path of wisdom, which the vulture's eye hath not seen; the path of man, but of man with the life of God, going towards the presence of God and the incorruptible inheritance. God gives counsel for it. I repeat He is interested in the guidance of the man of God, and the soul blesses Him. In this path Christ trod. The written word is the great means of this, still there is

the direct action of God in us by His Spirit. But there is also intelligence. "My reins also instruct me in the night seasons." The divine life is intelligent life. We can be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Thus, when removed from external influences, the secret workings and thoughts of the heart show what is suited to the path and way of God in the world. In Christ this was perfect, in us in the measure of our spirituality; but that to which the Christian has to give much heed, that he neglect not the holy suggestions and conclusions of the divinely-instructed life when freed from the influence of surrounding circumstances. It may seem folly, but if found in humbly waiting on God, will in the end prove His wisdom. And the controlling judgment of God's word which overrules the whole divine life is there to judge false pretensions. To this the divine life is always absolutely subject. Christ, who was this life, yea, was the Word and Wisdom, yet always wholly honoured the written word as the guidance and authority of God for man.

But guidance by the Lord is not quite all the practical process of the exercise of divine life. It looks entirely to the Lord. "*I have set* (says Christ, walking as man on the earth,) *Jehovah always before me.*" He kept Him *always* in view. How our hearts have to own that this is not always so! How withdrawn from all evil—how powerful morally in the midst of this world should we be

were it always so! There is nothing in this world like the dignity of a man always walking with God. What absence of self, what renouncement of all evil, what singleness of eye, and hence bright and earnest activity of purpose when the Lord is the only object before the soul! I say the Lord, for no other such object can command and sanctify the heart—all would go against duty to Him. He alone can make the whole heart full of light when duty and purpose go together and are but one. Indeed this is what James calls “the perfect law of liberty,” perfect obedience, yet perfect purpose of heart. As Jesus says, “that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, so I do.” We say, as Christians, Christ is all, and he that loves Him, keeps His commandments. Thus Jesus set Jehovah always before His face. This is man’s perfection as man. This is the measure of our spirituality, the constancy and purity with which we do this. But if Jesus did this, surely Jehovah would not fail Him nor us. So walking, He maintains the saint in the path which is His own. I set Jehovah always before my face, He is on my right hand, so that I shall not fall. This is known by faith. He may let us suffer for righteousness’ sake—Christ did so—be put to death—Christ was—but not a hair of our head can He let fall to the ground, nor fail in making us enter into life according to the path in which we walk, but here it is confidence in Jehovah Himself. Faith in walking in the path of man according to God’s

will, and towards God solely as the sanctifying end and object, knows that God is at its hand. Jehovah will secure. How or through what, is not the question. What strength this gives in passing through a world where all is against us, and what sanctifying power it has! There is no motive, no resource but Jehovah, which could satisfy any other craving, or by which the heart desires to secure itself, in seeking aught else. Hence, come what would Christ waited patiently for Jehovah, looked for no other deliverer. Nor have we to seek any other, and this makes the way perfect. We turn not aside to make the path easier.

Christ trod this path, only perfectly apart from sin, and only with God, doing His will, showed this path of life in man, then, having died to sin, (in the full result of this life in its own place, where no evil is,) lives to God. He did so, by faith, when down on earth always, but as man, in a world apart from God, and taking the word as His guide, living by every word that came out of the mouth of God, as we have to do. The resurrection demonstrated the perfectness of a life which was always according to the Spirit of holiness; but now He lives in it in its own place, and this is what, though through death, in an undiscontinued life He anticipates. "In thy presence is fulness of joy." This, always His delight, was now His perfect enjoyment, and "at thy right hand." (Divine power had brought Him to this place of power and acceptance—the witness of His being perfectly acceptable to God.) "Are pleasures for evermore."

Such is life as life with God—life shown as man in this world. Life before God, and looking ever at Him. A life which, though free from sin, neither innocent nor sinful man could know; which, in fact, had not to be lived in Paradise, which could not be lived as belonging to the world, but which was lived to God through it; setting Jehovah always before it as its object.

Such is the life we have to live. “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

In this world there is no other for a man. A life which has no object but the Lord Himself. This is a wonderful point—not one object in the world at all. For otherwise, it is not faith, but sight, or lust. Innocent man had no object; he enjoyed in peace God’s goodness. Man departed from God—had many objects; but all these separate his heart from God and end in death. But the new life which comes down from the Father looks up with desire to its source and becomes the nature in man which tends towards God—has the Son of God for its object. As Paul says, “that I may win Christ.” This life has no portion in this world at all; and, as life in man, looks to God, leans on God, and seeks no other assurance or prop, obeys God, and can live only by faith.

This life of man Christ led and filled the whole career of. Out of this Satan wanted Him to come

in the wilderness, and *have a will*, make the stones bread, distrust, try if the Lord would fulfil His promise or fail Him, have another object—the kingdoms of the world. This last destroyed the very nature of the life, and Satan is openly detected and dismissed. Christ would not come out of man's dependent, obedient place of unquestioning trust in Jehovah. His path here was with the excellent of the earth, perfect in the life which was come down from heaven, but which was lived on earth, looking up to heaven.

Whatever our privileges in union with Christ, it is all important to live in the fear and faith of God, according to the life of Christ. It is not man's responsibility without law, or under law as a child of Adam; it is all over with us on that ground. It is the responsibility of the new life of faith, which is a pilgrim and a stranger here, a life come down from heaven. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son: he that hath the Son hath life," but a life which man lives in passing through this world, but wholly out of it in its object—a life of faith which finds in God's presence fulness of joy.

We have to remember that the development of this life in us is not, as in the Psalm, in connexion with the name of Jehovah, but with the full revelation of the Father and the Son.

This Psalm gives us the inward spiritual life of Christ, and so ours, ending in the highest joy of God's presence.

HOW TO MANIFEST THE LIFE OF JESUS IN OUR BODY.

2 CORINTHIANS iv. 10.

“Then you come to the way the vessel is dealt with, in Paul, (a man with sin in him like ourselves). A thing with a will is not a vessel: a person is acting for himself if he has a will; he must not *think or will anything for himself*; and therefore it says, ‘Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.’ That is obedience of course. Christ was obedient unto death; that is not a man’s will, and I am always to bear about in my body His dying: that is Christ’s dying, or being put to death, as we have it in Peter, ‘Forasmuch, then, as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind,’ Christ did actually die, and Peter had just been speaking to them not to suffer for evil doing, but if it were God’s will, for well doing; arm yourselves, therefore, with the same mind. This would be carrying about the dying Christ had died; and this dying of Christ I apply to myself, so that the body never stirs, and the will of the body never moves.

We have then these two things: first, Paul, as a faithful man, never allows the vessel to have, for one instant, a will or a thought of its own. Just as much as Christ died, and completely died, so Paul was carrying this about constantly, and says, ‘Now you are as dead as Christ was,’ and though Paul

was very faithful in that, the Lord helped him by sending him through circumstances, so that he despaired of his life. It was not chastening, but he was having the sentence of death written in himself. He held himself practically for a dead man, and the Lord says, 'Well, now I must bring death right on to you, and so you will be a dead man.' In his case it was making it good by the trials he went through, and with this object, that nothing but the life of Christ should come out. The Lord says 'I must make this thorough that he may realise it in himself,' and then Paul sums it up by saying, 'so then death worketh in us, but life in you,' that is, Paul was so entirely a dead man, that nothing but the life of Christ wrought in him towards the Corinthians. Wonderful description ! If the vessel thinks or acts, it is spoilt. There is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ to come out, and if the vessel is anything, by so much the light is hindered; but if the vessel *is kept dead*, nothing but the life of Christ is there to come out. It ought to have been the same in them as in himself, but it was not; of them he says, 'life in you.' Death was working in him, and so nothing but Christ's life worked out in them. Death and life are both taken morally in this verse. Read verses 10 to 12. There would be no 'so then,' if it had been death in the Corinthians already. It is a wonderful thing to say for anybody, but it is said of Paul. The treasure was, as we have seen, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It 'shined' into Paul's heart.

But the vessel is in danger of working, and so he applies Christ's death to the vessel and then there is nothing but Christ's life to come out. But it was death to him as a man."

ANSWER TO A LETTER ON THE SUBJECT OF DEBT.

We fully sympathise with you in your feelings as to professing Christians going in debt.

The utter want of conscience on this subject is really dreadful. It must sadly grieve the Spirit of God, and bring in leanness, barrenness and deadness of soul. If I am in debt, I have no right to give money in charity. Were I to do so, there would at least be, as another has said, a measure of honesty in my writing on the back of whatever I bestow, these words, "Borrowed from my creditors without their consent." But, dear friend, we should go very much further than this. We believe that, as a rule, Christians should not go into debt at all. "Owe no man anything," is so plain. Romans xiii. 8. We do not here enter upon the question of how far persons engaged in trade can carry out this holy and happy rule.

There are certain terms upon which the manufacturer sells to the warehouseman, and the warehouseman to the shop-keeper. Such as, for instance, "Cash in a month." We believe that it would be far safer and better in every way, for persons in trade to pay cash, and take the discount.

It is a poor, hollow, worthless, unprincipled thing, for a man to traffic with fictitious capital, to live by a system of "kite-flying," to make a show at his creditor's expense. We fear there is a deplorable amount of this sort of thing even amongst those who occupy the very highest platform of profession. As to persons living in private life there is no excuse whatever for going into debt. What right have I before God or man, to wear a coat or a hat not paid for? What right have I to order a ton of coals, a pound of tea, or a joint of meat, if I have not the money to pay for it? It may be said, what are we to do? The answer is plain to an upright mind and a tender conscience, *we are to do without* rather than go in debt. It is infinitely better, happier, and holier to sit down to a crust of bread and a cup of water paid for, than to roast meat for which you are in debt.

We do not believe that the word of Christ can be dwelling in a person *who has no conscience as to debt*, and we are disposed to think that faithful personal discipline in all such cases, would have a good effect. We should feel called upon to mark such a person and have no company with him. (2 Thessalonians iii. chap. 6th and 14th verses.

As to persons who have failed in business and compounded with their creditors, we consider them morally bound to the full amount of their liabilities; and they are in debt until that amount is paid. No legal exemption could ever release a really upright person from the righteous obligation of pay-

ing what he owes. We feel called upon to write strongly on this subject, because of the sad laxity which obtains amongst professors with respect to it. All we want is to see some exercise of conscience; some measure of effort, however feeble, to get out of an utterly false position. A man may find himself unavoidably plunged into debt in fifty ways, but if he has an upright mind and a healthfully exercised conscience, he will use every effort, he will curtail his expenses within the narrowest circle possible, he will deny himself in every way, in order to pay off the debt, even by twenty-five cents a week. May the Lord give us to look at this great practical question with that amount of seriousness which it demands! We fear the cause of Christ is sadly damaged, and the testimony of professing Christians marred, through lack of sensibility and rightmindedness as to going into, and being in debt. Oh, for a tender conscience.

LOVE.

2 PETER i. 7.

The heart being in communion with God, affection flows out freely towards those who are dear to Him, and who, sharing the same nature, necessarily draw out the affections of the spiritual heart: brotherly love is developed.

There is another principle which crowns, and governs, and gives character to all others:—it is charity—love, properly so called. This is its root, is the nature of God Himself—the source and

perfection of every other quality that adorns Christian life. The distinction between love and brotherly love, is of deep importance; the former is indeed, as we have just said, the source whence the latter flows; but as this brotherly love exists in mortal men, it may be mingled in its exercise with sentiments that are merely human—with individual affection, with the effect of personal attractions, or that of habit, of suitability in natural character. Nothing is sweeter than brotherly affections; their maintenance is of the highest importance in the Church; but they may degenerate, as they may grow cool; and if love—if God—does not hold the chief place, they may displace Him—set Him aside—shut Him out. Divine love, which is the very nature of God, directs, rules, and gives character to brotherly love; otherwise, it is that which pleases us—*i. e.*, our own heart—that governs us. If divine love governs me, I love all my brethren; I love them because they belong to Christ; there is no partiality. I shall have greater enjoyment in a spiritual brother; but I shall occupy myself about my weak brother, with a love that rises above his weakness, and has tender consideration for it. I shall concern myself with my brother's sin, from love to God, in order to restore my brother, rebuking him, if needful: nor if divine love be in exercise, can brotherly love or its name be associated with disobedience. In a word, God will have His place in all my relationships. To exact brotherly love in such a manner as to shut

out the requirements of that which God is, and of His claims upon us, is to shut out God in the most plausible way, in order to gratify our own hearts. Divine love, then, which acts according to the nature, character, and will of God, is that which ought to direct and characterise our whole Christian walk, and have authority over every movement of our hearts. Without this, all that brotherly love can do is to substitute man for God.

1 JOHN iv. 7, &c.

Here it will be worth our while to notice the order of this remarkable passage (7-20). We possess the nature of God, consequently we love; we are born of Him and we know Him. But the manifestation of love *towards* us in Christ Jesus is the *proof* of that love; it is thus that we know it (11-16); we enjoy it by dwelling in it. It is present life in the love of God, by the presence of His Spirit in us; the enjoyment of that love by communion, in that God dwells in us, and we thus dwell in Him (17); His love is perfected with us; the perfection of that love, viewed in the place that it has given us—we are, in this world, such as Christ is (18, 19); it is thus fully perfected with us—love to sinners, communion, perfection before God, gives us the moral and characteristic elements of that love, what it is in our relationship with God.

In the first passage, where the Apostle speaks of the manifestation of this love, he does not go beyond the fact that one who loves is born of God.

The nature of God, which is love, being in us, he who loves knows Him, for he is born of Him, has His nature and realizes what it is.

It is that which God has been with regard to the sinner, which demonstrates His nature of love. Afterwards, that which we learnt as sinners, we enjoy as saints. The perfect love of God is shed abroad in the heart, and we dwell in Him. Already as He (Jesus) is, in this world, fear has no place in one to whom the love of God is a dwelling-place and rest.

The reality of our love to God, fruit of His love to us, is now tested. If we say that we love God and do not love the brethren, we are liars; for if the divine nature so near us (in them) does not awaken our spiritual affections, how then can He who is afar off do so? Accordingly, this is His commandment, that he who loves God love his brother also. (See also chap. v. 1, 2.)

But a danger exists on the other side. It may be, that we love the brethren because they furnish us with agreeable society, whose conscience is not wounded. A counter-proof is therefore given us. "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, if we love God and keep His commandments." If I walk with the brethren themselves in disobedience to their Father, it is certainly not because they are His children that I love them. If it was because I loved the Father and because they were His children, I should assuredly like them to obey Him. To walk, then, in disobedience with the children of

God, under the pretext of brotherly love, is not to love them as the children of God. If I loved them *as such*, I should love their Father and my Father, and I could not walk in disobedience to Him, and call it a proof that I loved them because they were His.

The universality of this love with regard to all the children of God: its exercise in practical obedience to His will: these are the marks of *true* brotherly love. That which has not these marks is a mere carnal party spirit, clothing itself with the name and the forms of brotherly love. Most certainly I do not love the Father, if I encourage His children in disobedience to Him.

“Moreover the semblance of love which does not maintain the truth, but accommodates itself to that which is not the truth, is not love according to God.

It is the taking advantage of the name of love in order to help on the seductions of Satan.

In the last days the test of true love is the maintenance of the truth. God would have us love one another; but the Holy Ghost, by whose power we receive this divine nature, and who pours the love of God into our hearts, is the Spirit of truth; and His office is to glorify Christ. Therefore it is impossible that a love which can put up with a doctrine that falsifies Christ, and which is indifferent to it, can be of the Holy Ghost—still less so, if such indifference be set up as the proof of that love.”

GOD'S LOVE.

1 JOHN iv. 9-18.

If we look at man, we shall find his whole history in the history of Adam. God tried man, but man only marred all that he was trusted with.

When God chose a nation it was no better. The people were idolaters, the kings rebellious, the priests soiled their garments, so that they could not stand before God. Whatever God has given in creation, providence, law, or grace, man has abandoned. When the Lord from heaven came the iniquitous nation rejected Him. But He never fails, and God will prove His love and wisdom by meeting His own people in every single thing in which man has broken down. All will come out in glory as the positive fruit of the cross. We learn a great deal more of what God is by knowing man; and we learn a great deal more of what man is by knowing God.

If we look at the Church, man is just the same. The mystery of iniquity working, the spirit of demons among them, the love of many waxing cold, until there is not one righteous one left, but all closes in perfect ruin.

God gives a power apart from man. He gives a new life—a life in His Son. In virtue of Him, it cannot fail. It is eternal life—life in Christ.

God was perfectly manifested in the Son, when He came down from heaven to give life. But this

is not enough. What about my sins? Where are my sins? To have life without the question of sin being settled will not do. Christ had them on the cross. Christ came down from heaven to put my sin away, and He did put it away. Christ's life is in me—eternal life, and this life is in the Son. I have His life, *not His Godhead*, of course. As surely as I have partaken of the life and nature of the first Adam, so have I life in the second Adam. If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation. The divine nature is there. It is in a poor earthen vessel, it is true, but the nature is divine, and I should be showing it out.

The more I know of God, the more shall I exhibit what He is. The more I look at Him, the more I shall be like Him. What made Moses' face to shine? Was it looking at himself? No. It was being with Jehovah and looking at His glory. Moses did not know that His face was shining until he was asked to veil it. He was not occupied with Himself; the object before him was God. He had been looking at God, he was absorbed in God, and so shows out God's glory. It will be the same with us. If Christ is the object before me, I shall not be thinking of myself, but of Him. If my eye is on Him, I shall resemble Him (feebly indeed) in holiness, and humbleness, and love. I find it in Him in all its blessedness and beauty. I see it in its perfectness, and in looking at Him, I am changed into His image. In Him there is all the new nature can crave or desire. In Him I can rest, and delight and rejoice.

What never-ending joy to know that the Son of God is come! Satan works, it is true, but "*ye are of God.*" (This settles the whole thing.) No longer of the old creation, living and acting according to the life of the first Adam; but in the power of the new nature, that we derive from God. This is a most blessed truth, "*Ye are of God,*" of Him whose nature is divine. And this divine nature cannot be met but by Himself. Christ has washed us from our sins in His own most precious blood. He has baptized us from above with the Holy Ghost, and sealed us with the Spirit of promise. "*He who has wrought us for the selfsame thing, is God.*" He has given us a power that is greater than Satan's power. "*Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" "*Ye are of God.*" I am brought to God. I am born of God. I rest in God. I learn to know God, because I have got the nature that can know Him, just as I could only know what man is by having his nature.

I do not know all about God, that is true; but I have no uncertainty. Suppose I have a friend, I may not know all about him; but he is my friend, and I rejoice in him as such. I have no questionings as to his affections because I do not know all about him. Well, *God is my friend*, and I have a blessed rest in knowing Him as my friend. If God is my friend, what more can I need? What can be more blessed? To know God, I must have His nature. I cannot learn the nature of what I am not a partaker of. I do not know angels. I am not a partaker of the nature of angels.

We see two things in this chapter which gives the soul immense delight. Verse 9 shows us *the way God makes His love known*. In verse 17 we see *how His love is made perfect*. In verse 9 God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might have *life* through Him. That we might have life who were dead, that we might be partakers of a life that flows from the manifestation of God's love—a life separated altogether from nature and nature's affections and pleasures. It cannot be hinged in with selfishness. And what is my nature: is it not mere selfishness? If I look at my motives from day to day, what shall I find them? Are they not self? We have no idea how we are under the influence of self. Is it not true that the trifles of dress more occupy the thoughts of many than all God has done in sending down His Son from heaven to save sinners? It is a positive fact, and it is no use to try to hide it from ourselves. We cannot hide it from God.

On the other hand, the more I look at God's love, the more I see its perfectness. It is said, "for a good man some would even dare to die." But when there was not one single good thing in us, God commended His love towards us. It was purely grace shown to us in the cross. We were just sinners and nothing but sinners when Christ died to save us. And I can never understand what God's love really is, until I can say I am merely a sinner. If you do not know what God's love is, it is because you have not learnt that

great truth, "You are but a sinner." What is it that God has given to save sinners? The very nearest thing to His heart, the most precious boon He had to bestow. *His own beloved and only-begotten Son.* There is no accounting for His love; there is no estimating it. The thing most of all dear to Him was the Son of His bosom, and Him He gave. There is no limit to His love. He has given me Christ. And what have I not got in Him? "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." How can I know that God loves me? By looking at the perfect expression of His love, and this gives me rest; why? Because I see how wondrous is this love that sent down His own Son to give me eternal life, and be a propitiation for my sins. If I have no rest, what I want is a deeper sense of sin. I must learn what sin is at the cross; and then I shall see the love that has met it and suffered for it, and then my soul gets rest.

Christ's love was not the theory of one who comes and merely tells what God is, but is the practical exhibition of Him. He shows out God in all the variety of His unreserved and immeasurable love. I have learnt at the cross what God was to me a sinner, and now I have to learn how He meets my need as a saint, *by feeling my need and bringing it to Him.* To be hungry is not enough, I must be really starving to know what is in His heart towards me. When the prodigal was hungry he went to feed upon husks; but when he was

starving, he turned to his father's house, and thus learnt the love of the father's heart.

In verse 15, how low God comes, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God." The babe who but just confesses Christ, has eternal life as truly as the strong man in Christ. It is not a question of what I am, but of what Christ is.

Verse 16—"He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." If I am dwelling in God, I am dwelling in love, and should be showing out love by looking at Him.

Verse 17. This is a wonderful thing to say, "As He is, so are we in this world." We are now before God, *as Christ is!* He is my life, and I cannot be really, nor ought to appear in anything separated from Him. "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." Does the heart get exercised about judgment? Why, the Judge *is my righteousness?* Has He not perfectly put away my sin, having been judged in my stead? "There is no fear in love." If there is the smallest doubt or distrust in the heart towards God, you are not made perfect in love; for "perfect love casteth out fear." There are things to fear, it is true; *we may well fear sin, and the influence of our own selfish interests.* But the practical effect of resting on God is to cast out fear, and make the heart perfect in love. His love is perfect. We have to own it, bow to it, accept it as ours in Christ, and bless Him for it.

THE GUIDING PILLAR.

The exodus was only the beginning
Of countless tender mercies by the way ;
God went before His people He had chosen,
With fire by night and with a cloud by day.

He took it not away, that cloudy pillar,
Altho' they oft provoked Him so to do,
Ungrateful tho' they were for all His kindness,
The pillar led them *all* their journey through.

It must have looked so *cool* and so *refreshing*—
That *cloudy* pillar in the *heat of day*,
And then at night, its shadows no more needed,
Became a fire to light them on the way.

Just what they needed, wonderfully fitted
To meet the varying wants of every hour ;
But oh, how little did they prize the token
Of His unerring wisdom, love, and power !

God's dealings often crossed their inclinations—
The pillar went too fast or went too slow ;
It stayed too long to suit their restless temper,
Or when they wished to stay, it bid them go.

It kept them so uncertain of the future !
It wrote "IF GOD PERMIT," on every plan ;
It seemed to mock the wisdom of the wisest,
And make a child of every full-grown man.

OUR JOY IN HEAVEN.

LUKE ix. 28.-36.

Let us look a little at this scripture, as shewing what our joy in the glory will consist of. We have the warrant of 2 Peter i. 16, for saying that the scene represents to us the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what we wait for. Our souls are not in a healthy state unless we are waiting for God's Son from heaven. The Church is not regulated in its hopes by the word and Spirit of God, unless it is looking for Him as Saviour from heaven. (Phil. iii.) And this passage *as disclosing to us specially what will be our portion when He comes*, is important to us in this respect. There are many other things in the passage, such as the mutual relations of the earthly and the heavenly people in the kingdom. These it may be very instructive to consider; but it is not our present purpose, which is to consider what light is here afforded on *the nature of the joy* which we shall inherit at and from the coming of the Lord. Other scriptures give instructions on the same subject, but let us now particularly look at the scene on the holy mount.

“And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and James and John and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening.” It was when Jesus was in the acknowledgment of depend-

ence—"as He prayed"—that this change took place. This, then, is the first thing we have here, a change such as will pass upon the living saints when Jesus comes.

"And behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias." *They were with Him.* And this will be our joy: *we shall be with Jesus.* In 1 Thess. iv., after stating the order in which the resurrection of the sleeping and the change of the living saints will take place, and that we shall both be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, all the Apostle says as to what shall ensue is, "and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

But in this passage there is not only the being with Christ, but also familiar intercourse with Him. "There talked with Him two men." It is not that He talked with them, though this was no doubt true; but this might have been and they be at a distance. But when we read that they talked with Him, we get the idea of the most free and familiar intercourse. Peter and the others knew what it was to have such intercourse with Jesus in humiliation, and what joy it must have been to have the proof that such intercourse with Him would be enjoyed in glory!

And then it is said by Luke, that "they appeared in glory." But this is secondary to what we have been considering. We are told that *they were with Him*, and then that *they appeared in glory*, they share in the same glory as that in which He was manifested.

And so as to us, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, *and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.*"

But there is another thing still. We are not only told that they were with Him, that they talked with Him, and appeared in glory with Him, but we are also privileged to know the subject of their conversation. They "spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." *It was the cross* which was the theme of their conversation in the glory--the sufferings of Christ which He had to accomplish at Jerusalem; and surely this will be our joy throughout eternity, when in glory with Christ,—to dwell upon this theme, His decease accomplished at Jerusalem.

We next read that Peter and they that were with Him, were *heavy with sleep*. It shows us what the flesh is in the presence of God. Peter made a great mistake; but I pass on.

"While he thus spake, there came a cloud and overshadowed them, and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, this is My Beloved Son: hear Him."

Peter tells us that this voice came from the excellent glory, "For He received from God the

Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Now *Peter and the others had entered into the cloud*, and thus we get the wonderful fact, that in the glory from which the voice comes, *saints are privileged to stand*, and there, in that glory, *share the delight of the Father in His Beloved Son*. Not only are we called to the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, we are called to have fellowship with the Father. We are admitted of God the Father to partake of His satisfaction in His beloved Son.

"And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone." The vision was gone, the cloud, the voice, the glory, Moses and Elias: but Jesus was left, and they are left to go on their way with Jesus, knowing Him now in the light of those scenes of glory which they had beheld. And this is the use to us, of those vivid apprehensions of spiritual things which we may sometimes realize. *It is not that we can be always enjoying them and nothing else*. But when for the season they have passed away, like this vision on the holy mount, they leave us alone with Jesus, to pursue the path of our pilgrimage with Him in spirit now, and with Him in the light and power of that deepened acquaintance with Him, and fellowship of the Father's joy in Him, that we have got on the mount; and thus to wait for the moment of His return, when all this, and more than our hearts can think of, will be fulfilled to us for ever.

THE LORD'S PATHWAY IN LUKE XXII.

In this particularly fine and solemn chapter, we may see the Lord in four connections, so to speak,—with *the sorrow itself* that was awaiting *Him*,—with *His disciples*,—with *the Father*.—with *the Enemy*.

Verses 1–23. As far as He is seen here, He is seen as looking directly, fully, and advisedly at the sorrow that was awaiting Him. He sits at the Paschal Table, the witness of His coming sufferings, and He tells of His body given, and of His blood shed; at the same time refusing *for the present* the paschal cup, the expression (as I judge) of Israel's joy on the accomplishing of their redemption.

Thus we see Him in full, advised anticipation of His sorrow, looking at it directly and without the least shrinking; refusing a single thought that could qualify or reduce it.

Verses 24–38. In this part of this great chapter we see Him with His disciples, but we must remember, carrying in His bosom the full sense of the sorrow He had just been foreseeing and counting on.

But it is, beloved, a great sight which these verses give us of Him. I mean in this character. When any trouble is upon us we judge right easily and without rebuke, that we may think of ourselves. *But here, Jesus thinks of others.* The con-

dition of His disciples is the anxious, diligent object of His various affections and sympathy. He warns them where their souls are getting wrong. He lets them know that He was praying for them, and providing strength for a coming hour of need and weakness. He teaches what changes they must now reckon upon, and how they must get themselves ready—thus, carrying as His heart did, a grief which might well have commanded or absorbed, He could, as though all were quiet within, spend His various cares, His sympathies and attentions, on those who were around Him.

If there be a moment in human history when selfishness is even vindicated by our moral sense, it is the moment of personal grief. We instinctively allow man to think of *himself* in such a moment. But at no other moment was the Lord Jesus ever more thoughtful of others than in the hour of Luke xxii.

It was not the hour of Sychar's well. It was not the two days spent amongst the Samaritans. It was not the season when Mary was sitting at His feet; or when the family of Bethany was at the table with Him. It was not such a moment as when the Centurion accosted Him in the language of a faith greater than what He had found in Israel; or as when the poor woman touched Him in the crowd; or as when the Syrophenician clung to Him in spite of apparent slight or indignity. Such occasions were moments of deep joy to the heart of Christ, and no wonder; to speak as a man, He was

free to wait on the occasion, and serve them, and think of others in them and through them. But it is the *Paschal* Jesus we get here. It is the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. It was natural for this Jesus of the house of Bethany to sit and teach,—but this was the Jesus of the last Passover; and knowing, as one does, the absorbing selfishness of times of sorrow, this path of the mind of Christ through part of this solemn chapter reflects something perfect and beautiful.

Verses 39–46. Here we have the same Jesus in company with the Father,—the *same Jesus*.

He had just been serving His disciples in all the various conditions and need in which He found them; warning them, praying for them, teaching them, providing for their blessing in every way. And so now He is surrendered to the Father's will, with the same self-sacrifice as He had been serving them. The moment is full in its terribleness, but the surrender of Himself to it is perfect. The mission of the angel to *strengthen*, tells that the cup was not to be taken out of His hand. He knew this, and felt it in the agony of that solemn hour. but nothing touched the spirit of self-sacrifice. The will of the Father was supreme with Him now, as the need and conditions of His poor disciples had just been, and He surrenders Himself to it all.

Verses 46–71. In these closing verses we find our Lord in His last condition in this chapter, as the prisoner of His enemies. We have already seen Him in the gaze and near sight of sorrow it-

self. Then in company with His disciples, making their need and blessing all His thought, as though He had no sorrow of His own. Then in communion with the Father,—and now in the midst of all His persecutors. There was nothing here for Him. A mad and rude rabble, set on wickedness, was making Him their sport and their captive; and then a wily and murderous, though in its way, refined Court of Elders (in its character more contrary to His spirit even than the others), purposing His death under the guise of law and religion. But in Him it is a blessed path we trace. He had been in communion with the Father. He had met His hour *there*. He had surrendered Himself, as we saw, and in that surrender there is victory, in that communion there is strength. And now that He is in the battle-field itself, He is more than conqueror. He may be borne through files of the enemy. He may meet the occasion in different characters of it; but all is strength and calmness of spirit. He challenges Judas the leader. He restores the wounded ear of one of the servants. He addresses the heads of the multitude. He has His eye upon Peter for good, when Peter was giving Him to feel at that moment that His disciples would take their place amongst His enemies. He answers the Elders and Priests. And in full triumph of His soul He anticipates His kingdom and glory. This was treading the field of battle like a Conqueror. All was perfect calmness of heart. There was no agony or sweat of blood here. No falling

on the ground. O how deeply the soul judges that that could not have been His way among the people, though it was equally perfectly His way before the Father! He had indeed already met the occasion in communion, and now He is only above it.

Such was His journey through this chapter; we see the path of His soul through these distinct stages. Was ever anything like it? *We* have need to be set to right in the time of trouble. The Psalmist had such need in Psalm lxxiii., and again also in Psalm lxxvii. Poor Job was conquered. It touched him and he fainted, though he had often before strengthened others. The stoutest, as an old writer says, are "knocked off their legs." Peter sleeps and Peter lies, and our own poor hearts again and again have told us secrets of ourselves in such moments. But in sorrow, the like of which never was tasted, Jesus is borne through every change of circumstance and connection, and all is sure to be perfection. Gold it was indeed; and when cast into the furnace, it comes out the same mass as when cast in, *for there is no dross*.

What a sight! what faith! It is found unto admiration in our eyes, beloved; and unto what acceptance was it found with God.

I feel as though I could not look at it, or speak of it longer. Having just traced this brilliant path of faith, tried in the furnace to the end, I must leave it. My own heart is so unacquainted with it. May the good Lord strengthen with might by His Spirit! "If thou faintest in the day of adversity thy strength is small."

JORDAN AND GILGAL.

Jordan represents death, but death looked at rather as the end of human life, and the token of the enemy's power, than as the fruit and testimony of the just judgment of God. The passage of the Red Sea was also death; but the people were as having (in type) part in the death and resurrection of Jesus, for their redemption, and setting them free for ever from Egypt, their house of bondage—that is, from their place in flesh, and thus from all the power of Satan, as the blood on the door-posts, had from the past judgment of God.

It is important *first* to see Jesus alone in life and *in* death, there we have the thing itself in its perfection. It is equally important then to know that God sees us as having been there, that it expresses our place; that God sees us *in Him*, and that it is our place before God. But then there is also our taking that place, by the Spirit, in faith and in fact. The former was the Red Sea: as to death, it was Christ's death; Jordan (is) our entering into death *with Him*. The Red Sea was deliverance from Egypt; Jordan, entrance into Canaan subjectively; that is a state suited to it in spirit, as Christ when risen, *for us by faith only of course* as yet, as risen with Him.

The Red Sea was the condemning sin in the flesh, in Christ in death for sin; and so deliverance, when known by faith. Jordan goes further, for it brings

us, as risen with Him, into the state that makes us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Redemption, complete salvation, purchased by the precious blood of Him, introduces the Christian into pilgrimage. With God, he only passes through the world as a dry and thirsty land, where no water is ; still, this pilgrimage is but the life down here, although it is the life of the redeemed. But there is the heavenly life, the warfare in the heavenly places, which goes on at the same time with the wilderness journey. When it is said, at the same time, it is not meant at the same instant, but during the same period of our natural life on the earth, and by heavenly life I mean *living in spirit in heavenly places*. Actually Christ was divinely there (when down here): we, as united to Him by the Holy Ghost.

The Jordan, thus, is death and resurrection with Christ, looked at in their spiritual power, not as to their efficacy for the justification of a sinner, but as to change of position and state in those who have part in them, in order to the realization of life in connection with heavenly places into which Christ has entered. The passing as a moral being out of one condition into another, out of Egypt into Canaan, the wilderness being dropt as another thing. The Red Sea and the Jordan, in this aspect, unite in one. Now every true Christian is dead and risen in Christ, the knowing and realizing it is another thing. But the word of God sets Christian privilege before us according to its real power in Christ.

The Ark of Jehovah passed over before the people, who were to leave the space of two thousand cubits between it and them, "that they might know the way by which they must go; for they had not passed this way before." Who indeed had passed through death to rise beyond its power, until Christ, the true ark of the covenant had opened the way? Man, whether innocent or sinful, could do nothing here. But Christ has destroyed all the power of death for His people, so far as it is the power of the enemy, and the token of his dominion. It is now but the witness of the power of Jesus. It is indeed death; but as we have said, it is the death of that which fetters us.

But if we are introduced into a new life which is on the other side of death, by the power of the Spirit of God, as being dead and risen in Christ, there must be the remembrance of that death by which we have been delivered from that which is on this side of it, of the ruin of man as he now is, and of the fallen creation to which he belongs. Twelve men, one out of each tribe, were to bring twelve stones from the midst of Jordan, from the place where the priests feet stood firm with the ark, while all Israel passed over on dry ground. The Holy Spirit brings with Him, so to speak, the touching memorial of the death of Jesus, by the mighty power of which He has turned all the effect of the enemy's strength into life, and deliverance from what could not enter into heavenly things, and has laid the basis for our having part in them.

This memorial was to be set up at Gilgal.

The power of resurrection life takes all strength from Satan. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." In our earthly life, the flesh being in us, we are exposed to the power of the enemy, though Christ's grace is sufficient for us. His strength made perfect in our weakness. But the creature has no strength against Satan, even though it should not be drawn away into actual sin. But if death has become our shelter, causing us to die to all that would give Satan an advantage over us, what can he do. Can he tempt one who is dead? or overcome one who having died, is alive again? But if this is true, it is also necessary to realize it practically. "Ye are dead, . . . therefore mortify." (Col. iii.) This is what Gilgal means. Nay, we are always to bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus, may be manifested in our body. Colossians iii. is God's declaration of our position. Romans vi. exhortation to take it up in faith. 2 Corinthians iv. carrying it out in practice in the inner man. (Coloss. iii. 5-17). The matter in hand is not yet the taking the cities, the realization of God's magnificent promises. *Self must first of all be mortified.* Before conquering Midian, Gideon must cast down the altar in his own house.

Remark further, the wilderness is not the place where circumcision is carried out, even though we may have been faithful there. The wilderness

is the character the world takes when we have been redeemed, and where the flesh which is in us is actually sifted. But death, and our entrance into heavenly places, judge the whole nature in which we live in this world. But then, consequent upon our death and resurrection with Christ, it is practically applied, and circumcision is the application of the Spirit's power to the mortification of the flesh in him who has fellowship with the death and resurrection of Jesus. (Compare 2 Cor. iv. 10-12). Therefore Paul says, (Phil. iii.) "we are the circumcision."

Our Gilgal is in verse 5, Colossians iii: "mortify, therefore." It is not "die to sin." Mortify is active power. It rests on the power of that which is already true to faith. "Ye are dead, . . . mortify, therefore." This being the standing, it is realized. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead," said the Apostle, (Rom. vi.) when speaking on the same subject.

This is the practical power of the type of the stones brought from Jordan. They are a symbol of our place, being the result of our death with Christ who was dead. But we are raised up together with Him, as having died with Him. But there is another aspect of truth. We were dead in sins. He came down in grace where we were, on the way, so to speak, atoning for our sins. God has quickened us together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses. All that He did was for us; and now, associated with Him in life, united to

Him by the Spirit, I am also sitting in, not yet with Him, in the heavenly places. I appropriate to myself, or rather, God ascribes to me, all that He has done, as though it had happened to myself. He is dead to sin, in Him I am dead to sin. Therefore I can "mortify," which I could not do as being still alive in the flesh. Now, circumcision being the practical application of that which we have been speaking, the death of Christ to sin, to all that is contrary to our risen position, "the body of the flesh," we remember the death of Christ, and the mortification of our members on the earth is accomplished through grace, in the consciousness of grace. Otherwise it would be only the effort of a soul under law, and in this case there would be a bad conscience and no strength. This is what sincere monks attempted; but their efforts were not made in the power of grace, of Christ and His strength. If there was sincerity, there was also the deepest spiritual misery. In order to mortify there must be life, and if there be life, we have already died in Him who died for us. The stones set up in Gilgal were taken out of the midst of Jordan, and Jordan was already crossed before Israel was circumcised. The memorial of grace and death, as the witness to us of a love which wrought out our salvation, by taking up our sins in grace, and dying to sin once, stood in the place where death to sin was to be effected. In that He died, He died unto sin once: and we reckon ourselves dead to sin. Christ dying for sins in perfect love, in unfailing efficacy, and His death

to sin, gives us peace through His blood as to both, but also enables us through grace to reckon ourselves dead to sin, and to mortify our members that are on earth.

In every circumstance then we must remember that we are dead, and say to ourselves, "If through grace I am dead, what have I to do with sin, which supposes me to be alive?" Christ is in this death in the beauty and the power of His grace ; it is deliverance itself, and introduction morally into the condition in which we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. As to the glory, as running the race down here, the Apostle says, "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." But that is another subject. Thus, in being dead, and only thus, will the reproach of Egypt be taken away. Every mark of the world is a reproach to him who is heavenly. It is only the heavenly man who has died with Christ that disentangles himself from all that is of Egypt. The life of the flesh always cleaves to Egypt, but the principle of worldliness is uprooted in him who is dead and risen with Christ and living a heavenly life. There is in the life of man, alive as such in this world, (Col. ii. 20), a necessary link with the world, as God sees it, that is, corrupt and sinful : with a dead man there is no such a link. The life of a risen man is not of this world ; it has no connection with it. He who possesses this life may pass through the world, and do many things that others

do. He eats, works, suffers: but as to his life and to his objects, he is not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. Christ risen and ascended up on high, is his life. He subdues his flesh, he mortifies it, (for in point of fact he is down here), but he does not live in it. The camp was always at Gilgal. The people, the army of Jehovah, returned thither after their victories and their conquests. If we do not do the same we shall be feeble, the flesh will betray us, we shall fall before the enemy in the hour of conflict, even though it may be honestly entered into in the service of God. It is at Gilgal the monument of the stones from Jordan is set up; for if the consciousness of being dead with Jesus is necessary to enable us to mortify the flesh, it is through this mortification that we attain to the practical knowledge of what it is to be thus dead. We do not realize the inward communion, (I am not speaking of justification), the sweet and divine enjoyment of the death of Jesus for us, if the flesh is not mortified. It is impossible. But if we return to Gilgal, to the blessed mortification of our own flesh, we find there all the sweetness, (and it is infinite), all the powerful efficacy of this communion with this death of Jesus, with the love manifested in it. "Always bearing about in the body," says the Apostle, "the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal body." Thus we do not remain in Jordan; but there remains in the heart all the preciousness of this glorious work, a work which

the angels desire to look into, which is for us, and which Christ in His love appropriates to us. We find Him with us at Gllgal, a place of no outward show or victory to attract the eyes of men; but where He who is the source of all victory, is found in the power and the communion which enables us to overcome.

ANSWER TO SOME QUESTIONS ON GUIDANCE.

What was it you meant by the sentence in a tract "God will not be a mere director?"—*Answer.*—As a general truth we may surely look for guidance, and to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. What I said as to this, was not that God would not direct us, but that, as the general principle, it was not independent of spiritual understanding, that if I were directed right, even in every act as a Roman Catholic, by their confessor, called their director, I should lose by it, it would save me being in a spiritual state myself—though, surely, a more spiritual person might help me because he was so. That God did not mean our perception of His will to be independent of our spiritual state, though He can, of course, lead any, at any given time. Psalm 32 speaks of this also. "If our eye be single, our whole body shall be full of light." But this is always true, that He makes everything work together for good to them that love Him. He overrules as

well as rules. I will suppose for a moment you were not led of Him in going to England, which I do not the least say, as I know nothing of it or your motives, but suppose the case. He makes you know what the world's giving you up is. He overrules it. Supposing you had had a tide of blessing, you would not have felt this in the same way, you would have tided it over the shoals at flood. I remember saying to dear captain W——, that our giving up the world and the world giving us up, were two very different things. It is the latter tries all the elements of self-importance which lie much deeper rooted than we are aware. There may be some little sacrifice in giving it up, but we have a sufficient motive, but what motive for being despised? It is really our glory, for Christ was, but then He must be all, and that is saying a good deal. We are poor feeble creatures without a stable centre, what would be so, has to be broken, and Christ take its place. I do not speak of failure, but what we go through. He was the despised and rejected of men. Nor does He seek insensibility to it, but superiority over it, by His being all—and that is blessed, that only lasts. It is the production in us of what is eternal joy and capacity for it. And, now to your special enquiry, more in detail. There are many points to consider.

(I had asked if we might not purpose (as Paul, in Acts, 19,21), in the spirit (after prayer) to go here or there, and do this or that).

Answer.—First, I believe this casting on, depen-

dent seeking His will ; spiritually, I believe a privilege, though connected with the ruined state of the Church. He cannot cease to guide us, or where should we be? but He may not, and does not manifest His action with a fallen as with a fresh and nascent church. He never does so. "We see not our tokens, we have no prophets any more." "There is none to say how long." Yet Haggai says "My Spirit remaineth among you as when ye came out of Egypt." I believe faithfulness, in such a time, special privilege. "Hast not denied my name" does not say much, but when this happens all around, it is a great deal, and great grace to be kept. You cannot be expected according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that *by them*, thou mightest war a good warfare. You came out with a true heart to some one who loved you, and seek souls for Him all right, and great grace given to us, but there was no "separate Me Barnabas and Paul," which, though present grace must after all sustain, still was a source of strength "by them." I don't believe it is any loss, but it is different and he that has the secret of Christ while he will not limit his power, yet will know the difference and enter into it. "Thou hast a little strength," and there were pillars when God built His temple. We find they were forbidden to go into Bythinia, sought to go into Mysia, the spirit suffered them not, they were forbidden to preach the word in Asia, and then by a vision in a dream were led into Macedonia. Now I would not the least deny that God can by His

Holy Spirit suggest to us a special place of service. I do not doubt He may ; but it is not an open manifestation as that which we here read of. I repeat, I believe it a privilege to be thus cast on the Lord's heart, if we only trust it, but it is a different thing, and there is imperfection in us, which affects this question, even an apostle had to learn this. A great door was opened at Troas, "but I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother," he leaves it. "In Macedonia my flesh had no rest, without were fightings, within were fears." He was sorry even he had written an inspired epistle which really wrought as such with power in producing its effect, as in blessing to this day, but here there was trust. It is quite the contrary to the English translation, "causeth us to triumph," the word means "leads us in triumph," and the savour of Christ for life or for death, spread by him whether at Troas or Macedonia. He trusted in Him who led him where He pleased, and that by His anxieties, as by his spirit. He could not say he was right to leave Troas, and all was distress in Macedonia. It was love to the Corinthians ; and God comforts them that are cast down, that is His way. And this is the picture I get of this great and noble heart, sent as he was openly by the Lord Himself and the Holy Ghost. He was a man and must learn it, and that the power was of God, and so must dear——perhaps as cast down, but any way as led about in triumph, for it is as true of you, God is as faithful as to you, as He was as to Paul.

But surely, beloved brother, we may ever look to be guided by His eye, led by His spirit suggesting the right thing to do, and place to go to, only that our state has a great deal to do with our ascertaining it. "The spiritual man discerneth all things."

And God is full of grace, Paul, if he could not succeed at Antioch, had revolution to go up to Jerusalem—I know not that at this moment I have more to say to you only that Paul (Acts, ch. 19.) was not, I believe, bound in the spirit, but *in spirit*, his own. It was the overruling hand of God upon him, not the actual guidance of the Spirit of God. God so ordered it for His own divine purposes. Morally, Paul was not going for testimony, but with collections for the saints.

A LETTER.

DEAR BROTHER,

There is nothing surprising in your experience, in a case in which there is a tendency to fall back upon one's self, and when the conscience is really engaged in it. It does not appear from what you tell me, that you were much exercised before being brought to believe. In such a case experience has to be passed through after conversion. In my own case, I went through deep exercise of soul before there was a trace of peace, and it was not till after six or seven years that I was delivered.

Now, when there is not at first the experience of

what one is, and there is much turning in on one's self, we must pass through it; and if there is carelessness Satan uses it to throw everything into uncertainty, to make us ask if we have not been deceiving ourselves, to give us the idea that we have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, a very common experience, although the thought even is not found in the word. But it is always in such cases that one has not given up connecting the state of the soul with the question of acceptance. Now any one that does that is under law, and he who is under law does not believe himself to be already lost. He may accept this as a truth and in relation to his guilt; but that means that we have deserved condemnation, so that we dread condemnation; and it is quite another thing from believing that we are already lost. *When we connect our state with the question of acceptance, a better state would get us out of the difficulty.* The law always supposes the possibility of a state which would give peace, of a "salvable" state. Now, such a state does not exist. If we are already lost it is no longer a question to be resolved. Moreover, this condition may be prolonged, because if one is not in the presence of God, we do not openly and really come to the consciousness of our state, and this must be in order to have solid peace; *for no state, either existing or hoped for, is the righteousness of God.*

When this work is complete, we give up looking within ourselves in order to solve the question as to whether we are in the favor of God, though not in

order to cultivate piety and to walk in communion.

We are accepted in the beloved, the righteousness of God in Him. He appears in the presence of God for us; we have the consciousness of our relationship, we cry Abba, Father, in the same relationship with God as Christ, in divine favour. We seek to keep close to God, to our Father; we seek not to grieve the Holy Spirit; we seek to please Christ and not to displease Him; all this according to the relationship and the favour; "the elect of God, holy and beloved." The affections have to do with the relationship, not our judgment *as to the relationship with the affections.* "Thou shalt love," that is always law. It is not, "God so loved." We are made perfect in love by dwelling in Him; and, "we love Him," not, we ought to love Him, because "He first loved us." Love for a superior, consists in a deep consciousness of His love which binds the heart to Him, and makes us feel how little (when the ought comes in) we love Him as we ought to love Him.

We feed on Christ: we judge ourselves as to all that is not pleasing to Him, we desire to be devoted to Him because we owe ourselves to Him. Save this judgment of self, and watchfulness, always necessary, we think of Him and not of ourselves: by judging ourselves we ward off what is evil; By thinking of Him we make progress. We have the consciousness that nothing separates us from Him, from the love of God *in Him.* I draw a conclusion, a just and holy one (Rom. v.,) that if I am recon-

ciled by his death I shall be saved by his life.

Yea, we joy in God ; and if I say too, God is for me, nothing shall separate me from this love, fully manifested in Christ—that is where I am. What happiness ! This is the joy now which will also be ours forever. Let us exercise all diligence, all watchfulness : let us watch and pray, that we may not be deceived by the enemy ; we need this. There is all the more need of it if we have been at a distance from God, in order that we may *acquire renewed strength* in His love. But when we have done with ourselves, as having no good in ourselves, we no longer look for it. Only we must get there ; then we know that by the cross of Christ, we have done with sin in the flesh, for it has been condemned and judged there as a whole. Then we think of love and of God instead of thinking of ourselves ; we feed on the Bread which came down from heaven, we become attached to Christ, we feel that He is precious, that He is *everything* to our souls. But, I repeat, we are occupied with what is in Him, not with what is in ourselves. That is far better.

“ Herein is love with us (see margin) made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world.”—1 *John* iv. 17.

“ To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.”—*Ephesians* i. 6.

BELOVED !

Beloved !—a fine ascription, is it not, my readers ? To whom is it given ? To those who were once hateful, about whom and in whom there was nothing that could awaken love. And who gives it ? The God of heaven and earth, the Almighty and All-wise Creator and Preserver of all mankind, yea, of the whole universe ! What a thought, to be beloved by the great, eternal God ! Not only objects of His care and preservation, but objects of His love ! Poor, weak, miserable creatures in ourselves, lost by nature, sinners worthy of damnation, and notwithstanding, beloved children of God ! Beloved before the foundation of the world, beloved now, amidst our weakness and on the way through an evil world, beloved through all eternity ! And why beloved ? Beloved for Christ's sake, "taken into favour in the Beloved."

Beloved ! What does each of our hearts give to the great fact of the love of God, to all the love that He has lavished upon us and now lavishes upon us each day ? Do our hearts beat for Him ?

Are they full of praise, thanks and worship, and of yearning longing to see Him who has first loved us ? Do we rejoice over every opportunity of showing Him our love, even though it be in so meagre a measure ? Do we love God ? Do we

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love all those who are born of Him? Do we seek in self-denying love to serve them? Do we follow the weak ones with patient love? Do we visit the sick and suffering? Do we assist the troubled, and cast down, the sorely tried, with sympathy and help? Have we an open hand for the wants of the poor, the widow and the orphan? Do we rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep? Do we in love and humility "esteem others as more excellent than ourselves."

Beloved! is not the contrary of these things often found among us? Does there not exist much indifference, want of feeling, want of forbearance, and—what is so opposed to the mind of Christ, and the heart of our God and Father—much self-will and self-seeking in our midst? Where is that precious "labour of love" which so greatly rejoiced the heart of the Apostle Paul? (1 Thess. i. 3.) Oh! let us cast one look into the depths of our hearts, and another into what we daily do and leave undone! We shall find much to judge, much to condemn. Let us go with it to the Lord and bring it to Him in honest self-judgment; and then let us be much occupied with Him, consider Him, learn of Him, and let His love overflow into our hearts! May we never forget that "love of self" is the first-named of the characteristic marks of the last difficult times. (2 Tim. iii. 2.)

— "To all that be in Rome, BELOVED OF GOD, called saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."—*Romans* i. 7.

WHAT GOD IS TO US IN CHRIST.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” &c., &c.

EPHESIANS I.

There are two ways in which we may look at our relationship to God. First, our coming to Him; and secondly, our souls looking at the dealings of God towards us.

Of Abel, it is said, by the Holy Spirit, God had respect unto his gifts—he came with the needed offering. We are looked at in Hebrews as drawing near to God. Who could draw near unless he could bring Christ as an offering? We must have that sacrifice in order to bring us near, consequently in that case our relationship to God is measured by our need. We come near because we find we cannot do without it, and we accept that offering as needed to accomplish it.

In another way, the measure of God's blessing we never know *until we look on our relationship as measured by God's thoughts of us—by all that which He loves to display, when He satisfies His own heart of grace with His ways of showing it out.* We never enjoy our true blessing unless we see how He thus feels and acts. *My mind must rise above what I am, to what God is:* then it is my mind is formed by

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the revelation of what God is. To this we are called.

We must come in by our need as the prodigal did. The way a sinner must come in, must be by his need, in that way he learns grace, learns love. But when I have got to God it is another thing. Then, He would form our minds and hearts *by what He is Himself*. I come as a sinner because I need it—just as a hungry man needs food; but when brought, I have fellowship with the God who has brought me to Himself. The measure is given in this epistle “growing up into Christ in all things.”

It is a wonderful thing that God has called us into fellowship with Himself—to have the same thoughts, the same feelings as God, and to have them together. All flows down from Him, and we are brought into it by grace, and we enjoy it just so far as we are emptied of self.

First, He makes us partakers of the divine nature—the same nature as Himself. This gives the capacity—I do not say the power. The new nature is capacity, the Holy Ghost is power. The new nature is entirely dependent and obedient. The Holy Ghost being there gives me power. In the first Epistle of John this capacity is brought out in a remarkable manner. (Chap. iv.) Every one that loveth is born of God—has this nature; and “he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.” Then being partakers of His nature, we, by virtue of the blood being sprinkled upon us, have received the Holy Ghost which gives power.

In order to communion, there must be perfect peace as regards the conscience. There is no communion in conscience. I am alone as to conscience, and so are you. In order to communion, I must have nothing to settle with conscience: a perfectly purged conscience is the basis of communion. We must know that God has settled the whole question of sin. The moment a child of God fails, communion ceases. The Spirit then becomes a *Reprover* to bring him back; but there is no communion. Communion is the full enjoyment of God and divine things; *when there is nothing to think of as regards oneself*. God can now let flow into his heart, that has a purged conscience, all that He delights in. He loves to communicate what He Himself has joy in. All that Christ is, is for us to enjoy. You are called into this place of Christ Himself—He, the Head of the body; and that the delight God has in Christ should flow down into your heart. How rich then the saint must be? But he is entirely dependent on the Spirit of God for power. There is no power to enjoy anything without Him. There must be an emptying of self to enjoy what He gives. The Spirit of God has no place to act where *self* and *imagination* are in exercise. It is not the glory at the end that is so much the object of a believer's thoughts, as the source of it—God Himself. There is more happiness in the fact of being in communion with Him than in the things He communicates: and I say again, because of its importance, a soul cannot have the enjoyment

of the things of God without having peace, which is connected with the conscience.

The beginning of this chapter shows how we are presented to God. It is a test to see whether the judgment-seat brings any terror to your minds. Does it give you any uneasiness? How does the saint get there? Christ comes to fetch him. He said, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." Do you ever think of your coming before the judgment-seat being the effect of His having come to fetch you? Not send for you, but coming Himself for you, because of His desire to have you with Him where He is, to be fashioned into the same image. You are to bear the image of the heavenly, as you have borne the image of the earthly. When you are there at the judgment-seat, you will be with Him, and like Him: every trace of God's unwearied hand, all His patience, there brought out. We shall be like the One who is the Judge. You will never (I speak of course to saints now) be before the judgment-seat of Christ without His coming to fetch you into the same glory in which you are to be. It is the knowledge of grace, or redemption, that leaves me at perfect liberty; and all my life should be a witness to the enjoyment of this blessedness into which we are being brought. The whole of this is through looking at Christ. He is the Firstborn among many brethren in the Father's house. We shall be with Christ and like Christ before God the Father. There will be the blessedness of being with Christ, in the

presence of the Father, loved as He is loved. This is what we have in this chapter—(how we are) set in the presence of God. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ.” We are blessed in Christ, and God is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is “my God and your God.” There is no measure of any relationship out of Christ—nothing but condemnation out of Christ. If I have known what sin is, what it is to be condemned, and how God hates sin, I know there can be no hope for me out of Christ. But God has put away sin, God does not look at my sin, but on Christ. Just as I know my condition in Adam as *ruined and condemned*, so I know my place in Christ—*accepted*. How it throws us out of self-importance, self-dependence, self-glorying! We enter into the presence of God *in Him who has perfectly glorified God*. He is the God as well as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is *that* wrought in Christ which was hidden from ages and from generations, and He has gone back, in virtue of what He has done to vindicate the character of God. We enter into the blessing, in Him who has done all. We shall know God in virtue of what (as) the Father, He bestows upon us. The Father brings many sons to glory, and brings them back perfect through the work of Christ. “Blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ:” none can be wanting; not an affection of God’s delight is wanting. He brings us into His presence without one

reserve of the affection that Christ has. We are brought back in Christ. Therefore all that Christ has we have! And how He goes on to unfold it, "That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." He brings it out so that we may know it. Suppose I saw a person with an excellent character, and I felt I could never be like that person, I should not be happy. The fact of the excellency of the person without the possibility of being like him, would make me miserable; and to have him always before me would be all the worse. But in heaven, I shall be with Christ and see Him, *without the possibility of being UNLIKE Him!* What divine inventiveness of love to make us happy, infinitely happy! What God does, and is, is infinite; and it is so much the better that He will be always above us. [And we learn from the vision on the Mount] that we shall have perfect freedom of intercourse with Him. Moses and Elias were speaking with Him of His death, (it may not be then so much of His death) but there will be communion with Him of all that He has.

"*Without blame.*" Released from all that which would hinder my loving Him; therefore I am made "holy and without blame." [Then] there is the proper joy of the heart "*before Him in love,*" but no thought of equality, "wherein He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence." Then there is another fact—"Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world." Thus we have His heart set upon us in eternity. The soul knows there is

a personal love from God towards himself, and the heart delights in that. So with Christ. In Revelation ii. there is the white stone He will give—proof of personal delight. There is the individual rejoicing in the love of Christ.

How the Spirit seeks to draw out our affections by all this! He tells it all, and would have us know and enjoy it. He would have us know that we are going to heaven, and why. He would form our hearts by what He is doing, while bringing us in, “having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ unto Himself”—still in Christ and by Christ—it is through Him, and in Him, and with Him I find it. It is having my heart fixed on God and the Father [thus known] that my affections may be drawn out to Him, and all is [as] “accepted in the Beloved.” God has not blessed angels like this. We are not servants only, (we should be servants, to be sure) but we are brought into the [place and] confidence of children. Ought not a child to have confidence? We have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.” Our heart should answer to God’s outgoings of heart in grace, and reflect this grace, “to the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” He has done it all.

Remark here, that there is not as yet a word about the inheritance. I dwell on that, as showing how the affections of the saint are formed. If I speak of the inheritance it is something *below* me.

But I am looking at what is *above* me, and my own blessedness is in what is above me. Subjects connected with the Church, blessed as they are, as prophecy, &c., are below. He will exercise us about these things, but first let me get my relationship with my Father known. My soul must enjoy the love that has given it all. The love that has saved, is more than the things given. It is of importance to the saints to feel this in the presence of God. It is not mental power, but the heart right—a single eye—that is the great thing. Unless a soul gets its intelligence and direction from God, it never understands the ways and affections of God. His own affections must be known and valued. If I have not known my place in the affections of my Father, I am not in a position to have the communion of His thoughts and purposes. When we were dead in sins, His heart was exercised for us. The sinner is here looked at as dead, not a movement of life, when God comes and creates the blessing according to His own will! When we have known the value of Christ's sacrifice bringing us to God, we are seen not in ourselves at all, but only in Christ. Then there is perfect rest. But afterwards he can tell us of the inheritance. He has called us to be "before Him in love," (verses 3, 6), then verse 11 begins about the inheritance. The end of the matter is that we are brought in to share the inheritance.

How far is your confidence and delight in God, for [what He is in] Himself? The heart of the

child will delight in the affections of the father.

Do your thoughts of God flow from what God has revealed to you of Himself? or are you reasoning about God—will He, or will He not do? [&c., &c.] When it is a settled thing with me that I am a sinner, what have I to reason about? We want to be brought to this simple conviction: I am a sinner; and if I am a sinner, what am I to do? Can I look for anything from God on the ground of righteousness? No. When brought to God, I am brought to Grace. *What He is* is the spring and source of the whole matter. We are in Christ. It could not be otherwise. We stand there now by virtue of the atonement, in that position. Christ died for my sins, and God is “faithful and just to forgive us our sins.”

God is going to take us to heaven, to be happy with Christ there; but He makes me happy out of heaven too. It is a difficult thing, but He does: and He would have the saints living up there where God is, and where we are going, and free from this present evil world.

EPHESIANS VI. 10-18.

The very blessings of the Church (as in Eph. i. 3) set us in a sort of conflict, which without such blessings we should not have. So the Church is subject to more failure than either Jews or Gentiles were, because they were not called to the same blessing. A Jew might do many things that would be monstrous in a Christian, and yet find no defile-

ment in his conscience. The veil that was over the knowledge of God being rent, the light shines out ; and the consequence is that this light which is come out of the holy place cannot tolerate evil. Christians are in a more dangerous position if not walking in the light, than Jews. Satan may draw and entice me with many things, which would have no power against me if I were not so favoured. "Be strong in the Lord;" here is the place of strength. There is no strength but in Christ. I have none at any time, except as my soul is in secret communion with Him, and through Him with God the Father. The direct power of Satan is towards this point, to keep our souls from living on Christ. Put on the whole armour of God : there is no standing against Satan without this. *Strength is always the effect of having to do with God in the spirit of dependence.*

We see in 1 Samuel xiv. the contrast between Saul and Jonathan ; between confidence in God overcoming all obstacles, and self failing with all the resources of royalty. Jonathan clambered up on his hands and feet, confident in God, and the enemies were overcome. Saul, when he saw the work going on, not knowing the Lord's mind, calls for the priest. He had a right intention, but not a simplicity of dependence on God, when inquiring what he should do, and spoils all by his foolish oath. It is said of Jonathan that "he wrought with God." God was with him, and he had strength and liberty because he wrought with God.

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When we are walking in dependence on God, there will be always liberty before God. Jonathan knew what he should do, and took some honey, because he went on in liberty, for God was with him, whilst Saul in legality had put himself and the people into bondage.

The word then, after grace in Christ has been fully shown, throughout the epistle, is, "Be strong in the Lord," (ver. 10.) We have here the privilege of individual dependence on God. Everything may be dark, but the Lord tells us to be strong. This is always accompanied with lowliness of heart; come what will, when the Lord is rested on, we are strong.

We are called to put on the panoply of God, to take it to us, (vers. 11, 12.) And no wonder: the conflict is not with men but with evil spirits, (ver. 12.) Who but an unbeliever would overlook or despise them? They are principalities and authorities; they are the universal *lords of this darkness*; they are spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places. Truly to withstand such we need the whole armour of God; which, remember, is not a question of standing, but of practical power, and this is in entire dependence.

If we pray, be it observed, without searching the Word, or read the Word without prayer, we may get no guidance, for Jesus said, "If my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will," &c.; without this I may be asking some foolish thing that would not be given. We are to stand against the wiles of the

devil, not his power. It is not knowing Satan that enables me to discover his wiles, *but the keeping in God's presence*. It was always so with Christ, because He was always dependent on God. "Stand, having your loins girt about with truth." Truth is never really ours, but as the affections are ordered by it. If the soul of the hearer be not in communion with God, in the truth he hears, his loins are not girt with it. The breastplate of righteousness supposes not merely this, but that we have nothing on the conscience, (ver. 14.) *Christ's blood made it good, and walking in the Spirit keeps it so.*

Verse 15. The gospel of peace is ours in Christ; but I must have the Spirit of peace in my heart, and be sanctified by the God of peace, the soul in communion with God, with Him in the Spirit of peace; and without this, how can a saint walk as always having peace? He is then prepared to walk by the gospel.

Verse 16. Whether I look at the sin that made grace necessary, or the power which caused me to enjoy it, I may walk in perfect peace against every source of sorrow. Every fiery dart is quenched *by confidence in God*—the shield of faith. It is as essential for the conflict as for the saving of the soul. *We need to cherish confidence in the grace of God all through.*

Verse 17. I hold up my head because I know I am safe. Salvation is mine. I must first get that which is internal; that which is wrought in me is power, before I use the Sword of the Spirit. I

must first have the loins girded about with truth, the heart covered with righteousness, the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and then (the shield of faith being up, and the helmet of salvation on) I can take the Sword of the Spirit. Nothing is more dangerous than to use the Word if it has not touched my own conscience. I put myself into Satan's hands if I go beyond what I have from God, or what my soul is in possession of. To talk with saints on the things of God, beyond what I hold in communion, is most pernicious; to fight without it is fatal.

Verse 18. The Word must always deal with ourselves before others, but prayer is the expression and the exercise of dependence. If a person asks me a question and I answer without speaking to God about it, going direct, it may be more likely to lead him away from God than to God. When a question or difficulty comes do we turn to God? We may have turned to God before and the thing is answered, and we ought to have such power of prayer, that there would be no difficulty when any circumstance arises. If supplication be thus continual, there would be no occasion to ask Him about particular things when they come before us.

“Supplication in the Spirit.” All acceptable prayer is not, I think, prayer in the Spirit. A wish or a desire expressed to God, in all the confidence of a child to his Father, is heard, but this is not necessarily “prayer in the Spirit.” It is the power of the Spirit in us looking for blessing as walking

in the Spirit of God—*that is such prayer*; not even a difficulty here, when living really in the power of communion. We have that energy of supplication which looks for answers—for all saints and myself too—watching thereunto with all perseverance. Suppose you begin the day with a sweet spirit of prayer and confidence in God: in the course of the day in this wretched world you find a thousand cares and agitations; but if you are spiritually exercised, alive to see the things of God, everything will be a matter of prayer and intercession, according to the mind of God. Thus humbleness and dependence should mark all the saint's actions.

What a blessed thing to carry everything to God! The word in verse 13 refers to a man walking in the whole armour. The apostle took the love of the saints for granted. We also, if walking in the Spirit, can always count on others being interested in our affairs.

— May we so trust the love of God, and the faithfulness of God, that we may have courage to say, “Shew me *Thy* way?” Faith in the full delight of God to bless us, so that we may do His will, even if it be the loss of everything, our souls so intimate with God, that we may seek His way and nothing else.



OBEDIENCE—THE SAINTS' LIBERTY.

HEBREWS XIII. 17-25.

The spirit of obedience is the secret of all godliness. The spring of all evil from the beginning has been independence of will. Obedience is the only rightful state of the creature, or God would cease to be supreme—would cease to be God. Wherever there is independence, *there* is always sin.

This rule, if always remembered, would wonderfully help us in guiding our conduct.

There is no case whatever in which we ought to do our own will; for then we have not the capacity either of judging rightly about our conduct, or of bringing it before God.

I may be called upon to act independently of the highest authority in the world, but it ought never to be on the principle that I am doing my own will, which is the principle of eternal death. The liberty of the saint is not license to do his own will.

An entire self-renunciation (and this goes very far when we know the subtlety of the heart) is the only means of walking with the full blessing that belongs to our happy position of service to God, our brethren and mankind.

If anything could have taken away the liberty of the Lord Jesus, it would have been the hindering

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Him in being always obedient to the will of God. All that moves in the sphere of man's will is sin. Christianity pronounces the assertion of its exercise to be the principle of sin. We are sanctified unto obedience (1 Pet. i. 7) : *the essence of sanctification is the having no will of our own*. If I were as wise (so to speak) as Lucifer, and it administered to my own will, all my wisdom would become folly. True slavery, is the being enslaved by our own will; and true liberty consists in our having our own wills entirely set aside. When we are doing our own wills, *self* is the centre.

The Lord Jesus "took upon himself the form of a servant" and "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 7, 8.) When man became a sinner, he ceased to be a servant, though he is in sin and rebellion, the slave of a mightier rebel than himself. When we are sanctified we are brought into the place of servants as well as sons. The spirit of sonship just manifested itself in Jesus, in doing the Father's will. Satan sought to make His sonship at variance with unqualified obedience to God: but the Lord Jesus would never do anything, from the beginning to the end of His life, but His Father's will.

In this chapter the spirit of obedience is enforced towards those who rule in the church, "Obey them that have the rule over you," (v. 17.) It is for our profit in everything, to seek after this spirit. "They watch for your souls," says the Apostle, "as

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those that must give account." Those whom the Lord puts into service He makes responsible to Himself. This is the real secret of all true service. It should not be right that guides, either those who rule, or those who obey. They are servants, and this is their responsibility. Woe unto them if they do not guide, direct, rebuke, etc.; if they do not do it, the Lord will require it of them. On the other hand, those counselled become directly responsible to "the Lord" for obedience.

The great guardian principle of all conduct in the Church of God is *personal* responsibility to "the Lord."

No guidance of another can ever come in between an individual's conscience and God. In Popery this individual responsibility to God is taken away. Those who are spoken of in this chapter, as having the rule in the church, had to "give account" of *their own conduct*, and not of the souls which were committed to them. There is no such thing as giving account of other people's souls: "every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." (Rom. xiv.) Individual responsibility always secures the maintenance of God's authority. If those who watched for their souls had been faithful in their service, they would not have to give account "with grief," so far as they were concerned; but still it might be very "unprofitable" for the others if they acted disobediently.

Wherever the principle of obedience is not in our hearts, all is wrong, there is nothing but sin. The

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principle which actuates us in our conduct should never be, "I must do what I think right;" but "I ought to obey God." (Acts v. 29.)

The Apostle then says, "pray for us; for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly," (ver. 18.) *It is always the snare of those who are occupied with things of God continually not to have a "good conscience."* No person is so liable to a fall, as one who is continually administering the truth of God, *if he be not careful to maintain a "good conscience."* The continually talking about truth, and the being occupied with other people, has a tendency to harden the conscience. The Apostle does not say "pray for us, for we are labouring hard," and the like, but that which gives him confidence in asking their prayers is, that he has a "good conscience." Where there is not diligence in seeking to maintain a "good conscience" Satan comes in and destroys confidence between the soul and God, or we get into false confidence. Where there is the sense of the presence of God, there is the spirit of lowly obedience. The moment that a person is very active in service, or has much knowledge and is put forward in any way in the Church, there is the danger of not having a "good conscience."

It is blessed to see the way in which in verses 20 and 21 the Apostle returns after all his exercise and trial of spirit, to the thought of God's being the "God of peace." He was taken from them, and was in bondage and trial himself; he enters more-

over into all the troubles of these saints, and is extremely anxious evidently about it. And yet he is able to turn quietly to God, as the "God of peace." We are called to peace. Paul closes his second epistle to the Thessalonians with, "Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means." There is nothing that the soul of the believer is more brought to feel, than that he has "need of patience." (Heb. x. 36.) But if he is hindered by anything from finding God to be "the God of peace," if sorrow and trial hinder this, there is the will of the flesh at work. There cannot be the quiet doing of God's will, if the mind be troubled and fluttered about a thousand things. It is completely our privilege to walk and to be settled, in peace; to have no uneasiness with God, but to be quietly seeking His will. It is impossible to have holy clearness of mind, unless God be known as the "God of peace." When everything was removed out of God's sight but Christ, God was the "God of peace."

Suppose then that I find out, that I am an utterly worthless sinner, but see the Lord Jesus standing in the presence of God, I have perfect peace. This sense of peace becomes quite distracted when we are looking at the ten thousand difficulties by the way; for, when the charge and care of anything rests on our minds, God ceases *practically* to be the "God of peace."

There are three steps:

1st. The knowledge that Christ has "made peace

through the blood of the cross." (Col. i. 20.) This gives us "peace with God." (Rom. v. 1.)

2nd. As regards all our cares and troubles, the promise is, that, if we cast them on God, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (See Phil. iv. 6, 7.) God burdens Himself about everything for us, yet He is never disturbed or troubled; and it is said, that His peace shall "keep our hearts and minds." If Jesus walked on the troubled sea, He was just as much at peace as ever; He was far above the waves and billows.

3rd. There is a further step, namely, He who is the "God of peace" being with us, and working in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. (See vers. 20, 21. The holy power of God is here described as keeping the soul in those things which are well pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ.

There was war—war with Satan, and in our own consciences. That met its crisis on the cross of the Lord Jesus. The moment He was raised from the dead, God was made known fully as the "God of peace." He could not leave His Son in the grave; the whole power of the enemy was exercised to its fullest extent; and God brought into the place of peace the Lord Jesus, and us also who believe on Him, and became nothing less than the "God of peace."

He is "the God of peace," both as regards our sins and as regards our circumstances. *But it is only in His presence that there is settled peace.* The

moment we get into human thoughts and reasonings about circumstances, we get troubled. Not only has peace been made for us by the atonement, but it rests upon the power of Him who raised up Jesus again from the dead ; and therefore we know Him as the "God of peace."

The blessing of the saint does not depend upon the old covenant to which man was a party, and which might therefore fail ; but upon that God who, through all the trouble and sea and the power of Satan, "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus" and thus secured "eternal redemption." (Heb. ix. 12.)

All that God Himself had pronounced as to judgment against sin, and all the wicked power of Satan, rested on Jesus on the cross ; and God Himself has raised Him from the dead. Here then we have full comfort and confidence of soul. "Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," argues faith, (see Rom. viii. 31-39), for, when all our sins had been laid upon Jesus, God stepped in, in mighty power, and "brought again from the dead that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." The blood was as much the proof and witness of the love of God to the sinner as it was of the justice and majesty of God against sin. This covenant is founded on the truth and holiness of the eternal God having been fully met and answered in the cross of the Lord Jesus. His precious blood has met every claim of God. If God be not

the "God of peace," He must be asserting the insufficiency of the blood of His dear Son. And this we know is impossible. God rests in it as a sweet savour.

Then as to the effect of all this on the life of the saint, *the knowledge of it produces fellowship with God and delight in doing His will.* He "works in us," as it is said here, "that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ."

The only thing that ought to make any hesitation in the saint's mind about departing to be with Christ is the doing God's will here. We may suppose such an one thinking of the joy of being with Christ, and then being arrested by the desire of doing God's will here, (see Phil. i. 20-25.) That assumes confidence in God, as the "God of peace," and confidence in His sustaining power whilst here. If the soul is labouring in the turmoil of its own mind, it cannot have the blessing of knowing God as "the God of peace." The flesh is so easily aroused, that there is often the need of the word of exhortation, "I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation," (ver 22.)

The spirit of obedience is the only spirit of holiness.
The Lord give us grace to walk in His ways.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord,"

—Psalm xxxvii. 5.

"Commit thy works unto the Lord,"

—Prov. xvi. 3.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord."

—Psalm lv. 22.

CHRIST AS OUR FOOD.

JOSHUA V.

I would say a word as to the way in which Christ may be considered as our food. He may be looked at as the food of the Christian in three ways: First, as a redeemed sinner: secondly, in connection with sitting in heavenly places in Christ; and thirdly, as a pilgrim and stranger down here. But this last is merely accessory and not the proper portion of the Christian.

The Lord said to Israel that He had come down to deliver them from Egypt and bring them into the land of Canaan.

He did not say a word about the wilderness when He came to deliver them from Egypt, because His interference for them there was in the power of redemption and for the accomplishing of His promises. However, there was the wilderness as well as redemption from Egypt and the entrance into Canaan; and Christ answers as our food to these three things. Two of them are permanent, for we are nourished by Christ in two ways permanently, that is, in redemption and glory. The third way is as the manna which we have all along the road. It is in these three ways that Christ meets His people and nourishes them all the way. Two of them remain, as we have seen, but the third ceases when the circumstances it was to meet have passed away. They did eat the passover and the manna until they got into the land, then the manna ceased; but

they continued to eat the passover.

Now there are two ways in which it is proper for us ever to be feeding on Christ. First as the passover, for they ate the paschal lamb when the wilderness had ceased and Egypt had been long left behind. When in Egypt, the blood was on the lintel and the door-posts, and the Israelites ate of the lamb inside the house. The thought they had while they were eating was, that God was going through the land as an avenging judge; and the effect of the blood on the door-posts was to keep God out, which was a great thing to do, for it brought into God's presence as a Judge. Woe unto him in whom sin is found. The state of the one who now eats of Christ is just according as he estimates the value of the cross, through fear of what sin actually merits.

When we have got into *the effect* of the blood of the paschal Lamb, we have got into Canaan and enjoy the peace of the land as a redeemed people, having crossed the Jordan—not only the Red Sea. That is, we have passed through death and resurrection; not as knowing Christ dead and risen *for us* merely, as presented in the Red Sea, but as being *dead with Him and entered into heavenly places with Him*, as in Jordan. Then the character of God is known as *their God*, that is as the accomplisher of all that which he purposed towards them. It is not keeping God out now, but it is enjoying His love; not looking at God as in the cross pouring out wrath in judgment against sin.

In Jesus on the cross there was perfect justice and perfect love. What devotedness to the Father and what tender love to us ! And this is the way the saint who is in peace feeds on the cross. It is not feeding on it as knowing that he is safe; for Israel's keeping the passover after they got into Canaan was very different from their keeping it when judgment was passing over. In Canaan they were in peace, and they were able to glorify God in this way, in the remembrance of their redemption from Egypt.

In this type we see presented, not the sinner that feels he is safe, but the saint that can glorify God in his affections; his heart confidently flowing out to Him, and feeding on Christ as the old corn of the land—the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.

We see Christ now by faith at the right hand of God as the glorified man, not merely as Son of God, but as Son of Man. As Stephen, when the heavens were opened to him, beheld Jesus at the right hand of God. We also see Him up there. We do not see Him as He is represented in the Revelation, seated on a white horse, coming forth out of heaven. He will indeed come forth and receive us up where He is, and we shall be like Him and be for ever with Him. But we shall feed on Him as the old corn of the land when we are there, and this is our proper portion now; manna is *not our portion*, though it is our *provision* by the way.

Joshua sees Jehovah as the Captain of Jehovah's host, and Israel feeds in the land before they fight.

And our portion is to sit down in it before we fight, because God has given it to us. They do not eat the manna in Canaan, because it is for the wilderness. The manna is not Christ in the heavens! it is Christ down here. It is not our portion; our portion is the old corn of the land. That is, the whole thing, according to God's counsels, is redemption and glory. But all our life is exercise down here, *or sin*, (excepting that God has given us moments of joy), because while here there is nothing but what acts on the flesh, or gives occasion for service to God. We may fail, and then Christ comes and feeds us with the manna, that is, His sympathy with us down here, and shows how His grace is applied to all the circumstances of our daily life, and that is a happy thing. For most of the time, the far greater part of our life, we are occupied in these things, necessary and lawful things no doubt, but not occupied with heavenly joy in Christ. And these things are apt to turn away the heart from the Lord, and hinder our joy. But if we would have our appetites feed on Him as the old corn of the land, we must have the habit of feeding on Him as the manna. For instance, something may make me impatient during the day, well then, Christ is my patience, and thus He is the manna to sustain me in patience. He is the source of grace; not only the example which I am to copy. He is more than this, for I am to draw strength from Him, to feed upon Him daily; for we need Him, and it is impossible to enjoy Him as the paschal Lamb, un-

less we are also feeding on Him as the manna.

We learn that God delights in Christ and He gives us a capacity to enjoy Him too. To have such affections is the highest possible privilege, but to enjoy Him, *we must feed on Him every day*. It is to know Christ come down to bring the needed grace and turn the dangerous circumstances with which we are surrounded, to the occasion of feeding on Himself as the manna to sustain us, and strengthen us in our trial.

ON THE WATER OF SEPARATION.

NUMBERS XIX.

But if, on the one hand, priesthood must lead the people through the wilderness, and if Moses' rod of authority cannot do this, it can only smite; on the other, there must be a provision connected with it for the removing of the defilements taking place during the journey, that the communion of the people with God may not be interrupted. That is why the sacrifice of the Heifer is placed here, apart from all the others, because it was prescribed in order to meet the defilements of the wilderness.

But if the consideration of Christ (even though it was Christ offered for sin, and the participation in His priestly work, in connection with that sacrifice), was a most holy thing realized in the communion of the most holy place; being occupied with that sin, even in a brother, and that to purify him, defiled those who were not guilty of it.

These are the subjects of chapter xix. What follows is the ordinance given on this occasion. To touch a dead body was indeed being defiled with sin; for sin is here considered under the point of view of defilement which prescribed the entrance into the court of the tabernacle. Christ is presented in the Red Heifer as unspotted by sin and as never having borne the yoke of it either, but He is led forth without the camp, as being wholly a sacrifice for sin. The priest who brought the Heifer did not kill it; but it was killed in his presence. He was there to take knowledge of the deed.

The death of Christ is never the act of priesthood. The heifer was completely burned, without the camp, even its blood, except that which was sprinkled directly before the tabernacle of the congregation, that is, where the people were to meet God. There the blood was sprinkled seven times, (because it was there that God met with His people), a perfect testimony in the eyes of God to the atonement made for sin. They had access there according to the value of this blood. The priest threw into the fire cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet, (that is, all that was of man, and his human glory in the world). "From the cedar down to the hyssop," is the expression of nature, from her highest elevation to her lowest depths. Scarlet is external glory, (the world, if you please). The whole was burnt in the fire which consumed Christ, the sacrifice for sin.

Then, if anybody contracted defilement, though

it were merely from neglect, in whatever way it might be, God took account of the defilement. And this is a solemn and important fact; God provides for cleansing, but in no case can tolerate anything in His presence unsuited to it. It might seem hard in an inevitable case, as one dying suddenly in the tent. But it was to show that for *His* presence God judges of what is suited to His presence. The man was defiled and he could not go into God's tabernacle.

To cleanse the defiled person, they took some running water, into which they put the ashes of the heifer, and the man was sprinkled on the third and on the seventh days; then he was clean; signifying that the Spirit of God, without applying anew the blood to the soul, (that in the type had been sprinkled once for all when the people met God), takes the sufferings of Christ, (the proof that sin and all that is of the natural man and of this world have been consumed for us in His expiatory death), and applies them to it.

It is the proof, *the intimate conviction, that nothing is nor can be imputed*. It was in this respect wholly done away in the sacrifice, whose ashes, (the witness that it was consumed) are now applied.

But it produces upon the heart the deeply painful conviction that it has got defiled, *notwithstanding redemption*, and by the sins for which Christ has suffered in accomplishing it. We have found our will and pleasure, if only for a moment, in what was *the cause of His pain*; and this in the face of

His sufferings for sin, but alas! in forgetfulness of them—even for that sin, the motions of which we yield to so lightly now; a feeling much deeper than that of having sins imputed. For it is in reality the new man, in his best feelings, who judges by the Spirit and according to God, and who takes knowledge of the sufferings of Christ and of sin, as seen in Him on the cross. The first feeling is bitterness, although without the thought of imputation—bitterness, precisely because there is no imputation, and that we have sinned against love as well as against holiness, and that we must submit to that conviction.

But lastly, (and it seems to me it is the reason why there was the second sprinkling) it is the consciousness of that love, and of the deep grace of Jesus, and the joy of being perfectly clean through the work of that love. The first part of the cleansing was in the sense of the horror of sinning against such grace; the second, the mind quite cleared from it by the abounding of grace over the sin. Here it is *the practical restoration of the soul inwardly*. There is no sprinkling with blood; the purifying is *by water*. Christ's death being fully brought in, in its power by the Holy Ghost. The details shew the exactness of God, as to those defilements, though He cleanses us from them.

They shew too, that any one who has to do with the sin of another, though it be in the way of duty to cleanse it, *is defiled*, not as the guilty person, it is true, but we cannot touch sin without being defiled. The value of grace and priesthood is also made evident.

PRAYING ALWAYS.

(From a letter to a Friend.)

Two things are essential to the nurture and maintenance of a fresh and healthy state of soul; the reading of the Word and Prayer: nor can we afford to neglect either the one or the other, if we desire that our hearts and lives may answer to the grace bestowed upon us. If the reading of the Word be neglected, there will be the danger of our prayers becoming the expression of mere natural desires instead of "intercession according to the will of God." We need to have our desires even for spiritual blessings formed in the atmosphere of the Word, in fellowship with the Lord himself, and by the power of His Spirit; while where this is lacking, the more earnest the soul is, the more danger will there be of a zeal that is not according to knowledge. An opposite danger, on the other hand, is that the reading of the Word without prayer, tends to a spirit of INTELLECTUALISM, ending in a cold, barren state of soul in which there is neither power nor joy, but abundance of spiritual pride. There is nothing more deadening to spiritual vitality than to have the mind occupied with Divine truth, while the heart and the conscience remain strangers to its power; and this is sure to be the case just in proportion as prayer is neglected. There can be no surer and more certain sign of a low, unhealthy spiritual state than the

absence of prayer, and there can be no better proof that a man is "filled with the Spirit," than to know that he "gives himself unto prayer."

Beloved brother, is there not a great lack of prayer amongst us? Alas! must we not confess that our closets, our households, our assembly meetings for prayer, bear witness to this and prove that we are oftentimes culpably indifferent to this high and holy privilege of expressing our interest in all that interests the heart of God, and affects the glory of His beloved Son.

Let us consider HIM—our blessed Example and Pattern. He commenced, carried on, and ended His ministry with prayer. We read of Him praying at the time of His baptism, Luke iii. 21; "He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed," Luke v. 16; "He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God," Luke vi. 12; "He was alone praying," Luke ix. 18; "He took Peter, and James, and John, and went up into a mountain to pray," Luke ix. 28; "He was praying in a certain place," Luke xi. 1; "He kneeled down and prayed," Luke xxii. 41; "He prayed more earnestly," Luke xxii. 44; and finally, at the very close of His marvellous life, amidst the agonies of the cross, He prays for His enemies, Luke xxiii. 34.

Consider Paul, who has exhorted us to be "followers of him even as he also was of Christ." When we think of his arduous and unremitting labours in connection with the ministry of the Word, while

pursuing at the same time, when necessary, his calling as a tentmaker, we almost wonder how he found any time for prayer, and yet as we read his epistles it seems as though he did indeed "pray without ceasing." See Rom. i. 9, x. 1; 2 Cor. xiii. 7; Eph. i. 16, iii. 14; Phil. i. 4, 9; Col. i. 3, 9; 1 Thess. i. 2, iii. 10; 2 Thess. i. 11; 2 Tim. i. 3; Philemon 4.

Remember the repeated exhortations of the Word—"PRAYING ALWAYS with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." "Continuing instant in prayer." "Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving." "Brethren, pray for us." "Praying in the Holy Ghost." "Pray without ceasing."

Think of the blessed results that have ever followed the expression of dependence upon God in united or individual prayer. The Pentecostal baptism with the Holy Ghost took place at the close of ten days spent in continued prayer and supplication. The disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, and made bold to speak the Word of God "after they had prayed," Acts iv. The angel of the Lord delivered Peter from prison in answer to the prayer which "was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him," Acts xii. Scripture

is full of instances of the prevalence of prayer. 2 Chron. xxxii. 20; and James v. 17, 18: are conspicuous examples. And without doubt when the history of the Church is surveyed from the glory, it will be seen that every wave of blessing to saints, and salvation to sinners, has been preceeded by the effectual fervent prayers of many whose labours are better known in heaven than on earth. Men and women like Epaphras, Col. iv. 12, who have prevailed with God in their closets, and like Jabez, 1 Chron. iv. 10, have had granted to them that which they required.

Again—and brother beloved, I would press this upon you with all the earnestness of which I am capable, *meditate upon the unspeakable need of the present moment.* Look at the appalling condition of the Church of God. That which was the wondrous subject of His counsels long before the world's foundations were laid—destined to be the magnificent display of His glory to admiring myriads of His unfallen creatures in ages yet to come—even now, in spite of its ruin, the object of His unceasing solicitude, and His measureless love. Oh! brother, think of the Church! Torn asunder by a hundred factions; paralysed by a practical infidelity; stupefied by the deadening influence of an indifference to Christ, which is as general as it is deplorable; bound hand and foot with tradition, organization, and human arrangement; desolated by worldliness; and shorn of that HEAVENLY aspect and beauty which is her own peculiar portion, she

nevertheless vaunts herself in the midst of her ruin, and is ready to say with the apostate whore, "I sit a Queen, and am no Widow." Awful picture! Then consider the state of individual souls. How few of those quickened by divine grace have settled peace with God! How few are personally in the enjoyment of the liberty wherewith Christ makes free! How many doubts and fears are entertained by God's people to their own loss and His dishonour! Dear brother, can we cease to pray? And are there not other things before our eyes at this time that surely might bring us to our knees in an agony of desire? Look at the twos and threes who have been gathered by the Holy Spirit in these last days to the confession of Christ's name out of the ruin of Christendom. *Is not that blessed hope, which came home to souls fifty years ago with such separating and purifying power, losing its hold upon us?* Are not the earthly-mindedness and the worldliness that so often and in so many ways are manifested, the "settling down" on the part of many, and the turning aside of many more to things which "minister questions rather than godly edifying," are not these things the sad and solemn proof that the doctrine and the hope have been dis-severed, so that many are to be found boasting of the doctrine, whose lives are the standing witness that they are strangers to the HOPE, for wherever this exists it does and must necessarily produce its proper effects. 1 John iii. 3.

Lastly, remember that God is gathering out His

elect by the preaching of the Word, and ours is the blessed privilege of interceding for the salvation of the lost. The consideration of the realities of heaven and hell, a perishing world, a loving God, a waiting Saviour, and a world-wide gospel, surely should constrain us to *more prayer*.

The word is "Praying always," by which I understand that a believer, though not always in the act, should always be in the spirit of prayer. His constant state is one of dependence, therefore his constant spirit should be that of prayer. But there are special seasons when, either alone or with others the soul turns aside from all else to have to do with God himself, and pour out its desires and requests to Him. Suffer me, in conclusion, to beseech you to embrace every opportunity of thus continuing instant in prayer. Redeem every moment, and you will be surprised to discover how many opportunities for a few minutes of prayer you have hitherto suffered to pass idly away. Then, when a brother calls, or a few saints come together for a little fellowship, what a sweet opportunity for prayer. We can then plead the promise to "two of you," and blessed it is to do so. Such a privilege should never be neglected, and would there not be much more prayer than there is, if every coming together of saints was characterized by it?

Then the assembly meeting. Well, introduce me to saints who are much in private prayer, and given to social prayer, and I will shew you a gathering where the prayer-meetings are bright, fresh, and

happy; full of vigour, faith, power, and liberty. Where the prayer-meetings are cold, formal, and lacking in fervour and liberty, depend upon it the closet could tell a tale of indifference and negligence in respect to prayer, of which the more public barrenness is only the painful indication and the sad result.

THE SUPPER OF OUR LORD.

. . . I believe that the bread remains simply and absolutely bread, and the wine, wine—that physically there is no change whatever in the elements. To seek for material and physical things in such a precious institution of the Lord is, to my mind, a poor and miserable manner of regarding it. I have a charming portrait of my mother, which reminds me of her just as she was. If I am told of the canvas or the colouring, I should feel that those who spoke thus knew nothing about it. That would not be my mother. That which is precious in it to me is my mother herself; and they turn my attention from her to the means employed to recall her to me; and the reason is, that they have no idea what my mother is to me. The portrait has no value except as far as it is a good representation of her who is not there. I say, it is my mother. I could not throw it aside as a mere piece of canvas; I discern my mother in it. I cherish this portrait; I carry it with me; but if I stop

at the perfection of the painting as a work of art, the link with my heart is lost.

There is more than this in the Supper of our Lord, because the Lord is really present *with us* in it spiritually, according to the intention of the institution; and this is very precious. But it has pleased Him to give us a physical means by which we may be reminded of Him, so that I am authorized to speak of a portrait by way of comparison.

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The Supper presents Christ in that which is so to speak, central; it presents to us a dead Christ; but this foundation of all, this precious truth, which could be a motive even for the Father Himself to love Christ—this fact, that it is a dead Christ which is presented to us, is the proof that we could not have a living Christ presented to us in the elements. This would be to deny the state of death, and to destroy the object and intention of the institution. This institution presents to us the death of Christ—a dead Christ—His body broken and His blood shed; but there *exists no dead Christ*. He desires that we should *remember* Him: “Do this in remembrance of me;” but I do not speak of the remembrance of Christ living in heaven. I live by Him, He is my life; I enjoy communion with Him; I dwell in Him; He dwells in me; there is no separation. If, through my folly, communion is interrupted, it is no question of remembering Him, but of being with Him anew—with a Saviour who manifests Himself to us as He does not to the

world.

Do we diminish the importance or sweetness of this institution? Quite the contrary; we hinder the materialising of it, and we insist that the spiritual realization, or that which it represents, be in the heart, instead of that which is called an *opus operatum*, (mere outward work) which is purely material. We are united to Christ glorified; this is the point of departure: there is no longer a dead Christ: death has no more dominion over Him. I enjoy communion with a glorified Christ; I am one with Him; I shall be like Him. I rejoice; my heart is full of love at the thought of seeing Him, at the hope of the glory of waking up in His likeness. Shall I, therefore, forget His death and His sufferings? God forbid! It is precisely this which binds us to Christ by the most tender affections. There where He had to suffer and to do everything, He was alone; my heart at least will be with Him. He does not ask me to be one with Him there; I could not have been. There He was willing to be alone—blessed be His name!--and He has accomplished all. But the heart which would give itself for me there is the same which thinks of me now, and which loves me. In remembering His death, His love, His sufferings, what shall I say?—divine though human! I am united in heart with Him there, where He is, on high, it is not another person, another love. Whether in the Supper, where we remember Him in such a peculiar and touching way, or whether at other moments, when I think

of His death, when I eat Him as dying for me, I am in communion with Him living, and I realize the love of Him who lives—that same love, that same heart of the Saviour; I dwell in Him, and He in me. It is not said exactly, “Do this in remembrance” of my death, but, “of Me.” Still we remember Him on the earth, in His incarnation, in His life of humiliation, and finally and specially as dead on the cross. I remember *Him*!—not Him in the heavens, but Him who lives in heaven as once humbled and dead for me; there is also a certain action of the heart—we eat. In John v. the Son of God quickens whom He will: here (chap. vi.) we eat the bread come down from heaven; we eat His body, and drink His blood.

It is most important to understand that it is a dead Christ, who in this state exists no longer, because we cannot have any relationship with a Christ living on the earth. If even as Jews we had had this relationship, we should have been obliged to say with Paul, “though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.” Death hath put an end to all the relations of Christ with the world, according to the flesh, and He lives now as the head of a new race—the second Man. Thus then, in John vi. 53, the Lord lays down, as a necessary condition of life, the eating of his flesh, and the drinking of His blood—receiving Him in His death. Hence we remember Him before His resurrection; as He has said, “except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die,

it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Thus our union is with a Christ glorified; we do not know Him otherwise; but the most powerful spring of affection for the heart is a Christ, man in the world, and a dead Christ. I am nourished by this; I eat it, and I live by this; but if we wish to bring back, so to speak, a Christ such as He has been in this world, as present, we overthrow entirely the intention of this institution, and even Christianity itself. Every time that we eat this bread and drink this cup, we shew the Lord's death till He come: but if we will introduce a living Christ to animate this dead one, so to speak, we destroy Him. Why then is it said, "They discern not the Lord's body"? What body? His dead body. A perfect love, His accomplished work, an obedience which was arrested by no difficulty, present themselves to our eyes! Is there anything else there but a dead body? . . . If so, I know not where I am, nor what the Supper means. Do not animate it with the life that Christ had before death; His obedience was not yet finished, nor His work accomplished, nor His love perfectly demonstrated. Do not animate it with the life of a Christ now risen; you take Him from me as dead; death is no more there—death which is the basis of salvation, the proof of obedience, the glorification of God. Take not from me this death, this body *broken*, this blood for ever shed, which tells me that all is accomplished, and—through the love of my Saviour—that sin is put away for ever. If you

can lead me to grasp more firmly what is precious in this dead Saviour, in the death of Him who is the eternal Son of God; if you can make me eat Him with more faith, more spirituality, more divine intelligence, more heart—ah! I shall be very grateful to you; but let it be my dear Saviour that is left to me! When one is in communion with Him living, there is nothing so precious as His death; yes, precious even to God. “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.” For my spiritual intelligence it is the end of, or rather the proof and the consciousness that I have done with the first Adam; that the first creation no longer exists—blessed be God!—for faith; for the heart it is the tender and perfect love of the Saviour. I am no more either Jew or Gentile, or a man living on the earth; I am a Christian. The death of Christ, Head of all, has put an end to the first creation. He has introduced us into a new creation as firstfruits united to Him.

I discern then the body of the Lord *broken*—His blood shed—His death. It is not an ordinary repast, a simple remembrance, if you will, but an institution that Christ has given to His own; not that they may find in the element anything else than the bread and the fruit of the vine, but that their faith may, in the sweetest way, by the power of the Holy Spirit, nourish itself by Jesus, by that which He has been for them when He died upon the Cross—a work of which the efficacy remains eternally, even to the Father’s eye, but of which

the love is all for us. If I treat this memorial with lightness, I am guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, for it is that body and blood which are presented to me in it. I doubt if there is any one in the world who enjoys the Lord's Supper more than I do (though I doubt not that there is with many more piety); but that which makes me enjoy it is that it presents to me the body and blood of my Saviour dead, and consequently a perfect love and a perfect work. But He cannot be in His dead body, which I discern there by faith. He is in me, that I may enjoy Him: if He is introduced living, that which I ought to discern no longer exists. All this in connection with the fact of the entirely new position of the living Christ—a doctrine which Paul presents to us with such divine energy, and which the enemy has always sought to hide, even under the form of piety, and for the preservation of which Paul so contended. What anguish he suffered from the efforts of the enemy to draw souls back to Judaism, as if they were still living in the world! "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

May God give us to discern more the body of Jesus—to eat His flesh and to realize His death more! Yes: this death is precious. It meets us in our need just as we are, and it delivers us from it by introducing us there, where He is, in the power of a new life which by His death knows not the old.

I have written you at much length. I could wil-

lingly enlarge on this subject, for instead of thinking lightly of the Supper of the Lord, it is of all institutions the most precious to me; only to be so it must be a dead Saviour that is presented to me in it. I am living with Him now in heaven.

LAYING A PILLOW FOR JESUS.

“And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow.”—MARK iv. 38.

It might be that some kind hand had placed this pillow for Jesus. He had said on one occasion, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” And it is remarkable that Matthew (viii. 19–27) puts these words of Jesus just before His embarkation, though they were possibly uttered at another time. It may be that some loving hand arranged that pillow for Him, knowing that He was weary. It was evening when He entered the ship, probably after a long day’s toil.

We may learn a lesson from that pillow. Jesus never asked for a comfort from any when He was down here. He *did* ask the poor Samaritan woman for a draught of water—not that He was seeking her care, but that He might draw out *her* need. Still, He gave opportunities to those who longed to show their love and attention to Him. Sometimes we may not have it in our hand to give when we have it in our heart. No matter; He looks at the heart. Do not let us judge Him with man’s judg-

ment, and say, "I cannot do so and so; then why need I wish to do it?"

It may be that the one who arranged that pillow (if such were the case) was gladdened afterwards to find that He had fallen asleep upon it. In any case, He accepted it then—yes; used it fully for Himself. It may be, too, that there was no one of all His disciples whose heart was open to give Him "the tribute money." If there had been one, He might have allowed that one to do it unto Him; but a *fish* must be the giver. Doubtless, if there had been one *at the moment* who would have longed to give Him the money, He would have sent Peter to such an one, and not to a fish. He displayed His lordship over creation in the act, of course; but would He not rather have had the need filled up from some loving heart which was looking for an opening to help? Could it be possible that at that particular moment not one on earth was longing to aid the Man of Sorrows? I say, "*at that moment*;" for it is not enough that life from God must be present in him who acts for Jesus; he must *also* be in a moral state of soul, in communion with God, ere Jesus will *ask* for his aid. The ravens fed Elijah. But if there is even a Sidonian widow, with nothing save a little oil and a handful of meal, she will have the blessedness of helping the servant of the Lord.

The Lord loves us to give to Him, but "a cheerful giver" is the one He wants. When He wanted the ass for His entry into Jerusalem, He knew well

who really was willing. There He sent, and *asked*. All that was needful to say was, "The Lord hath need of him." "*Straightway*" he would be sent. Perhaps the owners of that colt were anxiously waiting for some opportunity of service. If so, how it strengthened their faith to find that Jesus knew all about it!

In the case of the man with the pitcher of water (Luke xxii. 10) we see the same thing. The "good man" of that house may have been thinking of Jesus, and saying, "My room is a large one: how suitable it would be for the Lord and His disciples! How I wish He would eat the Passover at *my* house!" If so, how his heart must have leaped when the two disciples, Peter and John, came into his very house to tell him that the Master was coming! Little did the man with the pitcher know what his carrying the pitcher signalled. Anything, everything, can be used by God to accomplish His purposes.

But to return. We may say that we cannot lay a pillow for the head of Jesus now. I think we can lay many for Him. Is not every believer now a member of His body? Many of those members need our pillows—so to say. The "Head" is in glory, and *as such*, He needs them not. But Saul could persecute *Him*—"Why persecutest thou *me*?" Every word of comfort, then, every act of kindness, every little succour towards a saint, because he belongs to Jesus, is an odour of a sweet smell, Godward.

TO A SICK AND DYING ONE.

Dear———

As I hear you are very ill, I come to pay you a visit with this little note, as I had not the advantage of talking with you when at ——; yet I have but few words to say to you, as what God has graciously set before us is very simple; and thankful we ought to be that it is so. And what is deepest is simplest, that is, *the perfect love of God*.

Our difficulty is to reconcile our state, sinners as we are, with His loving us. Now that is exactly what the Gospel shews us. Through that unspeakable fact of the death of the Son of God, His love has been shewn to us in what He did *for our sins*. He commends His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. His love brought quite near to us *where we are*. Hence it is that it is *only when we know where we are*, that we understand this love; that is, when we have learnt by Divine teaching that we are mere sinners in ourselves, that in us (that is in our flesh) dwells no good thing, we find that Jesus in this love has come to us there, and, though the Holy One, has been made sin for us. Oh, what a thought that is! How it opens the heart to guileless confession of what it is, and *all* the sin that is in it, so that it gets rest and peace with God.

I trust you enjoy this rest of heart. The work of Christ is perfect: He knew all our sins and all

we were, when He gave Himself for us, and has put all away, made us, if our sins were as scarlet, *as white as snow*.

Think of your being really white as snow before God, and you are bound to believe that, because it is the sure and revealed value of Christ's blood. Death has put an end to all that we were in God's sight.

And now trusting you have this peace, and assured it belongs to you, let me speak of another thing, the love of Him who has done this work for us. Think of Him, of His love, of His becoming a man for us, of His willingly going to death for us, that we might escape, how He must have loved you to do it! Do you think He loved you so as to do it? What a wonderful thought that the Son of God should love a poor thing like you, and want (He wants nothing) to have you with Himself, for your happiness, and as a part of His own, the fruit of the travail of His soul?

So what a difference this makes of death; it is not dying as some think it, *it is going to Him*, to One we love, to One *we know*, to One who has loved and loves us: it is departing and being with Christ.

If your soul has peace, think much of Him and His love, and may He be very near you. He refreshes the spirit, raises above weakness and pain to think these are but outward things for a little moment, and what we are going to lose is only sickness and what is mental and perishable, to be with One who has loved us in spite of all, and takes us

to be with Himself. Think much on Jesus—I do not mean as if you could think much in your weak state, but looking to Him—and lean on Him as a sick child lies in its mother's arms, because it has no strength, not because it can do much.

Peace be with you, dear——, and much of His presence, the true source of joy and strength. If you go a little before us, to that beloved One, it will surely not be your loss.

Your affectionate servant and brother in Christ.

“IN CHRIST”—THE BELIEVER'S STANDING.

Our place, our standing before God, is no longer in flesh. It is in Christ.

Christ, as man, has taken quite a new place to which neither Adam innocent, nor Adam sinner, had anything to say.

The best robe formed no part of the prodigal's first inheritance at all: it was in the father's possession, quite a new thing.

Christ has taken the place consequent on putting away our sins, on having glorified God as to them, and finishing the work. He has taken in righteousness, and man in Him has got, a new place in righteousness with God.

When quickened, he is quickened with the life in which Christ lives, the Second Adam, and submitting to God's righteousness, knowing that he is

totally lost in the first and old man, and having bowed to this solemn truth, as shewn and learned in the cross, *he is sealed* with the Holy Ghost, livingly united to the Lord, one Spirit. He is a man in Christ, not in the flesh, or in the first Adam. All that is closed for him in the cross, where Christ made Himself responsible for him in respect of it and died unto sin once; and he is alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He belongs to a new creation, having the life of the Head of it as his life. Where he learnt the utter total condemnation of what he was, he learnt its total and eternal putting away.

THE SPIRIT, NOT OF FEAR BUT OF POWER.

2 Tim. i. 3-8.

Such exhortations are never given unless there are circumstances to require it. They are intended to meet some tendency in the flesh, that we may guard against it in the Spirit. It is well to remember how the Lord deals with us, just as we are; how, in all His ways, He takes into account the circumstances we are in, and does not, like philosophy, take us into other circumstances.

With regard to our cares and trials, Christ does not take us out of them. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world." While He leaves us in the world, He leaves us liable to all

that is incident to man; but, in the new nature, teaches us to lean on God.

The thought with us often is, that, (because we are Christians) we are to get away from trials; or else, if in them, we are not to feel them. This is not God's thought concerning us. The theoretical Christian may be placid and calm; he has fine books and nice sayings; but, when he has something from God to ruffle his placidity, you will find he is a Christian more conscious of the difficulties there are in the world, and of the difficulty of getting over such. The nearer a man walks with God, through grace, the more tender he becomes as to the faults of others; the longer he lives as a saint, the more conscious of the faithfulness and tenderness of God, and of what it has been applied to in himself.

See the life of the Lord Jesus; take Gethsemane, what do we find? Never a cloud over His soul, uniform placidity. You never see Him off His centre. He is always Himself. But take the Psalms, and do we find nothing *within* to break that placidity? The Psalms bring out what was passing within. In the gospels He is presented to man, as the testimony of the power of God, with Him, in these very things that would have vexed man. He walked with God about them; and so we find Him in perfect peace, saying with calmness, "Whom seek ye?"—"I am he." How peaceful. How commanding! (for peace in the midst of difficulties does command.) When by Himself,

in an agony, He sweats as it were great drops of blood; it was not a placidity because He had not heart-feeling within. He felt the full trial in spirit; but God was always with Him in the circumstances, and, therefore, He was uniformly calm before men.

We are not to expect never to be exercised, or troubled, or cast down, as though we were without feeling. "They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." He thoroughly felt it all. The iron entered into His soul. "Reproach," He says, "hath broken my heart." But there is this difference between Christ in suffering and affliction and ourselves; with Him, there was never an instant elapsed between the trial and communion with God. This is not the case with us. We have first to find out that we are weak, and cannot help ourselves; then we turn and look to God. Where was Paul when he said, "All men forsook me?" His confidence in God was not shaken; but looking around him, by the time he got to the end of his ministry, his heart was broken because of the unfaithfulness. He saw the flood of evil coming in (Chaps. iii. and iv.), and the danger of Timothy's being left alone, looking at the evil, and feeling his own weakness; and so (lest Timothy should get into a spirit of fear), he says, "Stir up the gift of God that is in thee, . . . for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou, therefore ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me

his prisoner; but be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." If we have got the spirit of fear, this is not of God, for God has given us the spirit of power. He has met the whole power of the enemy in the weakness of man, in Christ, and Christ is now set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. "Be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God." What! a partaker of afflictions? Yes. Of deliverance from the sense of them? No; a partaker of afflictions that may be felt as a man, but "according to the power of God!" This is not in not feeling the pressure of sorrow and weakness. Paul had a "thorn in the flesh," (2 Cor. xii.): and did he not feel it think you? Aye, he felt it daily; and as "a messenger of Satan to buffet him" withal. And what did he say? "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities [in those things in which I am sensibly weak], that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

The power of God, coming in on our side, does not lessen the feeling to us; but we "cast all our care upon Him, for He careth for us." Not that at the very moment we refer it to God we shall get an answer. Daniel had to wait three full weeks for an answer from God; but from the first day that he set his heart to understand and to chasten himself before his God, his words were heard. (Dan. x.) With us the first thing often is to think about the thing and begin to work in our own

minds, before we go to God. There was none of this in Christ. "At that time, Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father," &c., (Matt. xi.) We weary ourselves in the greatness of our way.

"Be careful for nothing." (Phil. iv. 6.) That is easily said. But what! not be careful about the state of the Church, or about the pressure of a family? &c. "Be careful for nothing." Whatever produces a care in us, produces God's care for us; therefore "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." So "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." Not your hearts keep the peace of God; but the peace that God Himself is in, His peace, the unmoved stability of all God's thoughts, keep your hearts. Further, when not careful, the mind set free, and the peace of God keeping the heart, God sets the soul thinking on happy things. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,—just—pure—lovely—of good report. If there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me do: and the God of peace shall be with you." God is there the companion of the soul; not merely "the peace of God," but "the God of peace."

When the soul is cast upon God, the Lord is with the soul in the trial, and the mind kept perfectly

calm. The Spirit of love—the Spirit of Christ is there; if thinking of myself, this is the spirit of selfishness.

WEANING.

“It is grateful to me to write to anyone who feels the raging of the storm, and at the same time seeking to find and finding shelter in the Lord. What can He say? Does He not remember our frames? We think He does not. The time of weaning is one of great suffering to the soul, but a necessary time, no soul learns true independence of infant helps until it is weaned. It is surprising how many nurses we have, and it is just in proportion as we attain strength to get on without any of them, our age or advance in life is determined. I believe (except very few) that each of us is going through a process of weaning, and what is it for? Simply, that in our given strength we might be able to depend on God, without the medium of that which betokens our personal feebleness. The suffering of weaning arises from the deprivation of something with which we connected the blessing of life, and this evidently may occur in many ways. Satan thought Job could not be weaned, for he said, “Take from him all that he hath and he will curse Thee to Thy face,” but Job was weaned. The soul is weaned when it worships God and prays for others. I cannot worship unless my soul is engaged with *God*. I cannot pray for others if I am

occupied with myself and the loss of any channels of comfort. God must wean. Oh! what bitter soul tears are shed while the soul is weaning from some long-enjoyed mercy. Is it that our God would not indulge us? Is it that He who gave His son would deny us anything? No! But *He must wean us*, or we should never know what it is to depend on *Him apart from any* human or natural intervention. Paul, no doubt, often spoke of having no confidence in the flesh, but it was in the prison at Rome that he felt he was entirely weaned. Any soul who has marked his own progress from the moment of deprivation until he was weaned (that is resting in God and independent of his loss) can tell the momentary lulls and rapidly succeeding agonies again, which marked the desperate dark tunnel, until he reached the light and joy of God's presence. Oh! how He pities us in all the anguish! He cannot give in or relax His hand, but He furnishes us with many lamps to modify the chill of our subterranean travel. If I have learned the righteousness on which God's love is based, I should better understand how much it must correct and subdue me, before it can enjoy itself with me. If I judge myself in the light of *His love*, I must see how much I need weaning.

How blessed for God not to let us alone then till we can truthfully say:—"Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child."—(Psalm cxxxi. 2).

A LOCAL ASSEMBLY.

A LOCAL ASSEMBLY is composed of all the believers in a city or village. Although in this day of ruin only a few of them may meet to express this assembly. The smallest number possible to form it being two. It is viewed by the Holy Ghost, as the Epistle to the Corinthians shews us, as though it were the whole assembly of God on the face of the earth. "Ye are the body of Christ." "Ye are the temple of God." Such an assembly, when gathered to the name of Christ, has Him in its midst, and has His authority for acting in binding or loosing the sins of an offending brother. (Matt. xviii.) Such an act is ratified in heaven. From this decision there is no appeal, save to Christ in glory; as Jesus "committed [His cause] to Him that judgeth righteously." (1 Peter ii. 23.) The assembly is presented in Matthew xviii. as, so to speak, the last court of appeal. "Tell it to the church." "If he refuses to hear the church, let him be," &c. Standing as the local assembly does as an expression of the whole church, all are involved in its acts, so that, for practical effect, what it does, the whole do, though the responsibility is local. Thus a person received or put out by a local assembly stands as received or put out everywhere. Hence the solemnity of such an action, and the deep sense of responsibility which should fill the hearts of those so acting to and for the Lord. The ruin of the church in no way annuls the authority

of the two or three acting in Christ's name, for it depends not on our faithfulness, but upon the presence of the Lord in the midst. It rests on His word, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them."

What if it should act mistakenly? For example, by mistake bind a sin on one not guilty. For conscience, this might be a trouble, for I might be honestly and firmly convinced that the assembly had erred if even it had not. The path seems plain, as painful paths often are, I bow to the authority Christ has set up on earth, and wait on Him to make clear who is right. I may well be mistaken rather than the assembly. It is a difference of judgment simply; serious as this is, as shewing that one at least has not the mind of God. To reject authority because I think it mistaken is lawlessness. To do so would make authority depend on infallibility. Does not heaven own the assembly's act, assuming its correctness, and must not we? It is the divine sanction of the administrative acts of the assembly. If I think the assembly in error, it is manifestly not right to call its act unrighteous, unless I am convinced that it has acted wilfully. As if, for example, it would put out a person it knew to be innocent. To speak so, would be like calling a person untruthful, who had made a mistake—from this all would shrink.

If an assembly should maintain an unrighteous act, not merely a mistaken one, it of course must

cease to be the assembly of God at all. "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee?" Can Christ be said to ratify unrighteousness?

One might be tempted to say, How shall we distinguish between a mistaken and an unrighteous judgment? But this question is like saying, "How can I tell between good and evil?" The word and conscience must decide in each particular case. The important thing being not to go on with unrighteousness, while we can bear with what we believe to be a mistake.

It might occur to some, that if a local assembly judged, as they thought, wrongly, an appeal might be made to another local assembly. For example, to restore a person wrongly put out. This has no more scripture for it than any Romish corruption. On the face of it, it denies the practical oneness of the two meetings. To entertain the question refuses that there is one body and one Spirit. If the Lord's table be one, both meetings are bound when one acts, so that appeal is impossible. If they can revise one another's judgments the unity of the Spirit does not exist there, they are but independent meetings.

Suppose a local meeting to be unrighteous, and Christ no longer to be in the midst, the reception of a person put out by that meeting denies its fellowship with the meeting receiving that person. There is no discipline towards a meeting as such. Fellowship with it may be refused, which is a denial of its being the expression of the body of

Christ, but it cannot be excommunicated, or put in ward. Scriptural discipline does not go beyond the individual.

May the Lord help us to cleave to His word, and neither to go beyond, nor deny it; as it is written, "I commend you to God and to the word of His grace."

—o—

HUMILITY.

1. There is a difference between being humble before God, and being humbled before God. I am humbled before God, because I have not been humble. I am humbled, because of my sin. If I had been humble, I should have had grace given me to prevent it. For "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

2. The only humble place is the presence of God. It is when I get out of His presence that I am in danger of being lifted up. People say it is dangerous to be too often on the mount. Now I do not think that it is when we are on the mount that we are in danger, but when we come off it. It is when we come off the mount that we begin to think that we have been there. Then pride comes in. I do not think that Paul needed a thorn when he was in the heavens. It was after he had come down that he was in danger of being exalted above measure—from thinking that he had been where no one else had been.

3. I do not believe that to think badly of ourselves is true humility. True humility is never to think of ourselves at all—and that is so hard to come to. It is constantly, I, I, I. If you only begin a sentence with I, there is nothing that a person will not put after it.

4. What hearts have we! “I the Lord search the heart.” Who but God can know them. Persons who think they search their hearts and are quick in their evil, do not really know their hearts, nor are they truly humble. The fact is, they *must* be talking of *themselves*, and their pride is nourished even by talking of how evil they are.

REVELATION XXII. 3.

“And His servants shall serve Him.” We seek to do so now. We disallow in ourselves and other believers, any and everything which we find either contrary to the walk which Christ walked in when He was here below, or which is superfluous to it. For the allowance of such superfluity by us would be practically saying that His walk down here was not a perfect standard of what our walk should be. But how blessed amid all our known and confessed shortcomings is the firm and sure promise, “His servants shall serve Him.” I say it not as making any allowance for shortcomings now; but I surely judge that now I must glory in His being the only perfect servant of God, perfection’s height secured

by Him every step of the way; and till I see Him and am made like Him, my conscience, my mind, my heart, will, can never be satisfied with my service. May He be able to say of each of us as He did of one, "She hath done what she could."

FRAGMENTS.

There is a sad lack, want of looking after souls, the first confiding commission of Christ, what was on Christ's heart: "*Feed My sheep.*"

What *I* do is nothing. Love for souls will set me to work; it is God working in me.

The Lord be with you and keep you near Himself. Attention to your business is all right, but, *do not let it get between your soul and God.* If you are not as bright with Him, and more and more so, *search out why,* and look to Him, for He giveth more grace.

The word of God recognizes the *natural* man, the *spiritual* man, and the *carnal* christian.—1 Corinthians ii., iii.

A SUBJECT MIND.

FATHER! I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me;
The changes that will surely come,
I do not fear to see;
I ask Thee for a subject mind,
Intent on pleasing Thee.

I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
To wipe the weeping eyes;
A heart *at leisure from itself*,
To soothe and sympathize.

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

Wherever in the world I am—
In whatso'er estate,
I have a fellowship with saints
To keep and cultivate;
A work of lowly love to do
For Him on whom I wait.

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

And if some things I do not ask
Thy will allots to me,
Still be my spirit filled the more
With grateful love to Thee,
And careful—less to serve Thee *much*,
Thau please Thee *perfectly*.

Briars beset my every path,
Which call for patient care;
There is a cross in every lot,
An earnest need for prayer;
But a lowly heart that leans on Thee
Is happy everywhere.

In service which Thy love appoints
There are no bonds for me;
My secret heart is taught "the truth"
That makes Thy children "free;"
A life of self-renouncing love,
Is a life of liberty.

“One Spirit with the Lord.”

THE number of those who understand the mystery of the church is very small, but far smaller is the number of persons who know what resurrection life is.

“People continually say, I know I am not what a Christian ought to be. I answer, if you are not dead and Christ your life, and if you are not walking in the power of it, how *can* you be what you ought to be?

“The life of the Son of God is my life, and it is a life of resurrection. It may be up and down again—nothing but ups and downs continually—all my ruin as a creature coming out; but from the time when God revealed His son to me, He took possession of my heart’s affections, and I know that I have been in Him and He in me from that time.

“I know Christ, and you do also, but did you ever get a full taste of Him and say, ‘I know nothing, O Lord; help Thou mine unbelief?’ I have. Such a sense of fulness in Him and of an eternity of blessedness *with Him*!

“I see my reflection in His blessed eye. No one ever looked on Him without seeing all the Father’s glory in Him. The infinite fulness of the Godhead is in Him bodily. Oh, how little we know of that fulness in Him! What will it be to see that Christ Himself with faculties given by God to enable us to take in the glories of His person!

“How blessed is the truth that we are one with Him, His body, and say to Him, “Ah, Lord, Thou knowest who and what Thou art, and I, the least of Thy members, am one with Thee. Oh, teach me, Lord, to know and to realize the wondrous mystery of the truth that I am in Thee and thou in me, the truth of this unity of the body.” It is *that* one’s heart feeds and muses on. Oh look to it that your hearts be occupied with and feeding upon that blessed truth, that we are one spirit with the Lord.”

“AS HE IS, SO ARE WE.”

“As he is, so are we in this world.”—1 John iv., 17.

Oh ! blessed wondrous words,
As Christ is, so are we ;
Washed, sanctified, and justified,
From condemnation free.

Emancipating truth !
“As he is, so are we ;”
He bore our sins, He paid our debt,
When hanging on the tree.

The Father sees us now
In Christ, His risen Son ;
In favour thus, we stand in Him,
The Head and members one.

As Christ is, so are we,
Though this poor earth we tread :
In “righteousness transcendent” now,
We’ve linked with Christ our Head.

And soon the world will know
The Father sent the Son,
And loved us e’en as He loved Christ,
The spotless Holy one.

Oh ! day of wondrous bliss,
When faultless we’ll appear,
In bodies fashioned like His own,
And His blest image bear.

Oh ! day of joy supreme,
When we His face shall see,
And know the depth of those sweet words,
“As he is, so are we.”

M. S. S.

The Bible and Tract Depot, 8 Gerrard Street East, Toronto, have for sale a number of Bagster's and Oxford Bibles. Also, British Societies Bibles and Testaments, all at current prices.

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A FEW PRECIOUS THOUGHTS.

“Christ Jesus only.”

FOUR things Satan cannot touch in these perilous times :—

1st. “*God for us.*”

2nd. “*Christ with us.*”

3rd. “*The Holy Ghost within.*”

4th. “*The Word of God without.*”

“CHRIST, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever”;—

“*Yesterday*”—at the cross.

“*To-day*”—His intercession.

“*Forever*”—when He comes.

It should not be so much with me—“What can I do for the Lord?” as “What can the Lord do with me?”

Study the Bible with prayer, *seek the Lord there and not knowledge*, that will come too, but the heart is well directed in seeking the Lord, the eye is single and the whole body is full of light. My earnest desire is that brethren may be very near the Lord and the Lord very near them, not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their minds—“Christ is all,” the more one travels on down here in His ways the more one feels it.

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"I WILL GUIDE THEE WITH MINE EYE."

(Psalm xxxii. 8.)

Our God and Father, while we tread
The narrow way that leads to Thee,
With thorns and thistles overspread,
And dangers more than we can see,
O may we walk in weal and woe,
Through valley deep or mountain high,
As those who've learnt to love and know,
The gentle guidance of Thine eye.

O Heavenly Father, God of love,
Be Thou our soul's supreme delight;
Thy presence ever may we prove,
Where all is clear, serene and bright.
Our eye to Thine, oh! ever turn,
And to Thyself e'er keep us nigh,
So with a glance shall we discern
The gracious guidance of Thine eye.

The lion lies within our path,
The wily Serpent's voice beguiles;
The world puts forth its rage and wrath,
Or else assumes bewitching smiles,
O, we shall fear to face the foe,
And with temptations shall comply,
Unless the path of faith we know,
And see the guidance of Thine eye.

Our footsteps are beset with snares,
Some erring paths appear the right;
Among the wheat are many tares,
Who hold a false delusive light;
Some silly sheep who've gone astray,
E'en they to tempt us, too, will try;
O! grant us Father, all the way,
Th' unerring guidance of Thine eye.

We have Thy holy written Word,
Which marks the way where we should tread
The Shepherd's voice, we, too, have heard,
And have been by Thy Spirit led;
Yet oft one's path's a misty maze,
And things around no clue supply,
Then, gracious God, dispel the haze,
And guide us with Thy piercing eye.

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“THEY SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH.”

We need to be constantly renewed. Without that, spiritual energy does not keep up. “They shall renew their strength,” it is said “like the eagles,” and it is not progress in knowledge which effects that, although, this is profitable for teaching christians, and well for rendering the gospel which we preach more pure. What is of moment, is the keeping of oneself near God—there love reveals itself and grows. His love in our souls, which finds its activity and its comfort in exercising itself towards poor sinners and towards the saints—and seeks the glory of the Lord in them, and their own well-being. God gives you to enjoy Himself and reveals Himself not only as infinite blessedness in Himself, but one who, (in the activities of His love in which He finds His delight, and when His love is shed abroad in our hearts), we enjoy. Assured by what He is, this love is active in us by His grace.—*Activity unless refreshing itself in His communion may be sincere, but will degenerate into routine and into a habit of acting, and is even dangerous.*

FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST.”

(PHILIPPIANS i. 21.)

To Thee, my Lord, my *all* I'd give,
My *one* desire, for Thee to live,
Content *Thy cross of shame to bear,*
And witness for Thee *everywhere.*

I'd love no more this world so gay,
Like grass its pleasures fade away,
But *live*, that when my race is run
My prize may be the words “*well done.*”

“If any man will come after ME, let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross *daily* and follow ME.”—Luke ix. 23.

“The friendship of the world is enmity with God.”—James iv. 4.

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I would bear in my body the dying,
Of Him who has died for me—
Here share, O my Lord, Thy rejection,
Ere I sit on Thy throne with Thee.

I see Thee alone, broken-hearted,
Of comforters findest Thou none;
Yet thine was the gladness of heaven,
The love and the glory Thine own.

Thus to show to the world that rejects Thee,
To show to the angels above,
How blessed Thy yoke and Thy burden,
To him who has tasted Thy love.

The maiden who gathereth roses,
Another, another would find,
So sweet are the tracks of Thy sorrow,
To him who would follow behind.

Thus would I press on to glory,
A knight in the army of God,
Whose march will be onward and upward,
Because of the foes on the road.

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AT HOME LORD WITH THEE.

When troubled in spirit—or heart seems to sink ;
When trials press in like the sea ;
What rich, priceless comfort I find when I think
I shall soon be at home, Lord, with Thee.

This world's to my soul but a wilderness wild,
It has lost its attraction for me ;
My heart would not wish in it long to abide,
And I'll soon be at home, Lord, with Thee.

The world with a cruel and murderous hand,
Has nailed Thee to Calvary's tree,
And with Thee, my Saviour, rejected I stand,
But I'll soon be at home, Lord, with Thee.

Unchanged is the world, it is still just the same,
Rebellious—not bowing the knee ;
My theme's what the world is despising—Thy name ;
And I'll soon be at home, Lord, with Thee.

And whilst in this scene, Thou would'st have me to stay,
In communion with Thee may I be ;
But ever my heart shall look on to that day,
When I'll be at home, Lord, with Thee.

Then, past all the trials, or sorrow, or care,
The heart from all hindrance set free,
Shall joy in Thyself, Lord, forever up there,
When I shall be home, Lord, with Thee.

My heart then shall worship, my tongue sing Thy praise,
Thine own blessed face I shall see,
Where all shall adore Thee, throughout endless days,
At home, Lord, in glory with Thee.

While here then I'm left in the desert to roam,
My soul ever conscious would be ;
I'm only a pilgrim, this world's not my home,
But I'll soon be at home, Lord, with Thee.

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ALONE !

“ Jesus said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile.”—MARK vi. 31.

This, *this* is rest, Lord Jesus,
Alone with Thyself to be,
The desert is a gladsome place,
With Thy blest company.
Oh! sweet to hear thy tender voice
Bidding me “ Come apart.”
Such rest for throbbing aching mind
Quiet for weary heart.

Yes. This is rest, Lord Jesus,
Alone with Thee to be,
And when I sigh for fellowship,
To find it all in Thee.
Thy saints on earth—how dear they are,
Their love is passing sweet,
But I would leave them all to sit
Alone at Thy dear feet.

Such precious rest, Lord Jesus,
Alone with Thee to be,
Thy secret words of love to hear;
Thy look of love to see.
To feel my hand held fast by Thine—
To know Thee always near,
A happy child alone with Thee,
My heart can nothing fear.

This, this is rest, Lord Jesus,
Alone with Thee to be,
The desert is a happy spot
With Thy blest company.
Amid the throng I might forget
That I am all Thine own,
I bless Thee for the “ desert place,”
With Thee, my Lord, alone.

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MY BELOVED.

“What is thy Beloved more than another beloved?”—*Cant. v. 9,*

O what is thy Beloved?
They oft enquire of me;
And what on my beloved
So passing fair I see?
Is it the heavenly splendour
In which He shines above?
His riches and dominions,
That won my heart's best love?

O no! 'tis not His glories—
He's worthy of them all!
'Tis not the throne and sceptre
Before which angels fall!
I view with heart exulting,
Each crown His head adorns;
But O, He looks most lovely
Wearing His crown of thorns.

I'm glad to see His raiment
Than snow more spotless white;
Refulgent with its brightness,
More dazzling than the light;
But more surpassing lovely
His form appears to me,
When stripp'd, and scourg'd and
bleeding,
He hung upon the tree.

With warmest adoration
I see Him on the throne,
And join the loud Hosannas
That His high virtues won;
But O most blessed Jesus,
I must confess to Thee,
More than the throne of glory,
I love that shameful tree.

I joy to see the diadems
Upon Thy royal brow;
The state, the power, and majesty
In which Thou sittest now:
But 'tis Thyself, Lord Jesus,
Makes heav'n seem heav'n to me
Thyself as first I knew Thee,
Uplifted on the tree.

Though higher than the highest,
Most mighty King Thou art,
Thy grace and not Thy greatness,
First touched my rebel heart;
Thy sword it might have slain me,
Thine arrows drunk my blood;
But 'twas Thy cross subdued me,
And won my heart to God.

Thy sceptre rules creation,
Thy wounded hand rules me;
All bow before Thy foot-stool,
I but the nail-prints see;
Aloud they sound Thy titles,
Thou Lord of lords most high;
One thrilling thought absorbs me,
This Lord for me did die.

Oh, this is my Beloved,
There's none so fair as He:
The chief among ten thousand,
He's all in all to me.
My heart it breaks with longing
To dwell with Him above,
Who wooed me first and won me
By His sweet dying love.

J. G. DECK.

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THE CIRCLE OF THE CHURCH'S AFFECTIONS.

“The Spirit and the bride say, Come.” We get the whole circle of the Church’s affections. When the Spirit of God is working in the saints, what will be the first affection? *Christ*. The Spirit and the Bride turn to Him and say, “Come.” What is the next affection? It is the saints. Therefore it turns and bids him that heareth say, “Come.” If you have heard Christ, you come and join in the cry. Even if you have not the consciousness of relationship, would you not be happier if you saw Him as He is? Therefore say, “Come.”

The first affection is towards Christ Himself; but the Bride would have every saint to join in these affections and in the desire to have the Bridegroom come. But does it stop with those who have heard the voice of the Lord Jesus? No: the first effect of the Spirit’s turning our eye to Christ is the desire that Christ should Come! And next, that the saint who hears His voice should have the same affection. And what next? We turn round to those who may be athirst, bidding them come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

The saint who has the sense of the blessedness of having drunk of the living water which Christ gives, wants others to have it also.

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What mean the words, "And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment?" (John xii.) Sooner or later, all will know what is done for and to the Lord. The people on the house-top could know that something sweet was being offered below. Do not the angels know what is done to Jesus? We smell, as it were, the sweetness of Abraham's sacrifice, although no eye saw it, save that of Jehovah. (Gen. xxii.) Envious ones may have been attracted by the odour in that house, who would not own Mary's devotedness at all. They could not help smelling its sweet savour.

We cannot do too much for the Lord; and nothing is too little or insignificant for Him to notice. Alas! how many are making pillows for their *own* comfort—beautiful pillows—provisions for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts! When we are thus occupied we have not large hearts towards the Lord. "The flesh" always narrows our hearts in divine love. When separation from self and the world is going on, there is room for enlargement in love and heavenly activities. (2 Cor. vi.)

"TAKE HEED, THEREFORE, HOW YE HEAR [OR READ.]"

LUKE viii. 18.

The soul is the dwelling place of the truth of God. The ear and the mind are but the gate and the avenue; the soul is its home or dwelling place.

The *beauty* and the *joy* of the truth may have unduly occupied the out-posts, filled the avenues and crowded the gates—but it is only in the soul that its *reality* can be known. And it is by *meditation* that the truth takes its journey from the gate along the avenue to its proper dwelling place.

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