



Vol. II.



No. 1.

The
Remembrancer.

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

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NOTICE.

This little periodical does not profess to put forth anything new or original, but chiefly extracts from J. N. D., J. G. B., G. V. W., and a few others. "To stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance," or bring the truth in them before some who may never have read them.

The initials are left out, in order that the reader may judge what he or she reads, not by the reputation of the writers, but by the word of God. It is not promised that a new number shall come out every month regularly, but as the Lord may lead and give matter for it. This makes it difficult in asking for subscriptions. But trusting that the Lord will help us to provide for mostly every month, and counting on the love and forbearance of God's dear children who may subscribe for it, your prayers are asked that God would graciously use it for blessing to souls, and that it may not take Christians away from the written Word of God, but to it, more than ever.

J. DUNLOP.

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AN OLD CHRISTIAN'S ESTIMATION. OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

“ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”
—1 *Tim.* iii. 16.

I have a profound, unfeigned (I believe divinely given) faith in the Bible. I have, through grace, been by it converted, enlightened, quickened, saved. I have received the knowledge of God by it, to adore His perfections—of Jesus,—the Saviour, joy, strength, comfort of my soul. Many have been indebted to others as the means of their being brought to God, to ministers of that Gospel which the Bible contains, or to friends who delight in it. This was not my case. That work, which is ever God's, was wrought in me through the means of the written word. He who knows what the value of Jesus is, will know what the Bible will be to such a one. If I have, alas, failed it, in nearly thirty years' arduous and varied life and labour—at least such, as far as the service of an unknown and feeble individual usually leads, I have never found it fail me; if it has not for the poor and needy circumstances of time, through which we feebly pass, I am assured it never will for eternity. “The word of the Lord abideth for ever.” If it reaches down to my low estate, it reaches up to God's height, because it comes thence: as the love that can reach even to me, and apply to every detail of my feebleness and failure, proves itself divine in doing so: none but God could, and hence it leads me up to Him. As

Jesus came from God and went to God, so does the book that divinely reveals Him come from and elevate to Him. If received, it has brought the soul to God, for He has revealed Himself in it. Its positive proofs are all in itself. The sun needs no light to see it by. . . .

I beg to avow, in the fullest, clearest, and distinctest manner here, my deep, divinely-taught conviction of the inspiration of the Scriptures. That is, while of course allowing if need be, for defect in the translation and the like, when I read the Bible, I read it as absolute authority for my soul as God's Word. There is no higher privilege than to have communications direct from God Himself. . . .

My joy, my comfort, my food, my strength for near thirty years, have been the Scriptures received implicitly as the Word of God. In the beginning of that period, I was put through the deepest exercise of soul on that point. Did heaven and earth, the visible church, and man himself crumble into nonentity, I should, through grace, since that epoch, hold to the word as an unbreakable link between my soul and God. I am satisfied that God has given it me as such. I do not doubt that the grace of the Holy Spirit is needed to make it profitable, and to give it real authority to our souls, because of what we are: but that does not change what it is in itself. To be true when it is received, it must have been true before it was so. And here I will add, that although it requires the grace of God and the work of the Holy Ghost to give it

quickenings power, yet divine truth, God's Word, has a hold on the natural conscience from which it cannot escape. The light detects the "breaker-up," though he may hate it. And so the Word of God is adapted to man, though he be hostile to it—adapted in grace (blessed be God!) as well as in truth. This is exactly what shews the wickedness of man's will in rejecting it. And it has power thus in the conscience, even if the will be unchanged. This may increase the dislike of it; but it is disliked because conscience feels it cannot deny its truth. Men resist it because it is true. Did it not reach their conscience, they would not need to take such pains to get rid of and disprove it. Men do not arm themselves against straws, but against a sword whose edge is felt and feared.

Reader, it speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God's grace and love, who gave His only-begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with Him, know Him, deeply, intimately, truly know Him—and enjoy Him for ever, and enjoy Him now; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear. And to be there in His love, in such a way, is perfect joy. The Word will tell you the truth concerning yourself; but it will tell you the truth of a God of love, while unfolding the wisdom of His counsels. . . .

Let me add to my reader, that by far the best means of assuring himself of the truth and authority of the Word is to read the Word itself.

GOD IN EVERYTHING.

“ Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.”

—Matthew xi. 26.

One of the great obstacles to living a life of peace and rest, is the difficulty of seeing God in everything. People say, “I can easily submit to things which come from God; but I cannot submit to man, and most of my trials and crosses come through human instrumentality.” Or they say, “It is all well enough to talk of trusting; but when I commit a matter to God, man is sure to come in and disarrange it all, and while I have no difficulty in trusting God, I see serious difficulties in the way of trusting men.”

This is no imaginary trouble, but it is of vital importance, and if it cannot be met, does seem to make the path of faith an impossible and visionary theory. For nearly everything in this life comes to us through human instrumentalities, and many of our trials are the result of somebody's failure, or ignorance, or carelessness or sin. We know God cannot be the author of these things, and yet unless He overrules the matter, how can we say to Him about it, “Thy will be done?”

Moreover, things in which we can see God's hand always have a sweetness in them which consoles while it wounds. But the trials inflicted by man are full of bitterness.

What is needed, then, is to see *God in everything*,

and to receive everything directly from His hands, with no intervention of second causes.

The question here confronts us at once—But is God in everything, and have we any warrant from the Scripture for receiving everything from His hands, without regarding the second causes which may have been instrumental in bringing it about? I answer to this, unhesitatingly, **Yes!** To the children of God everything comes directly from their Father's hand, no matter who or what may have been the apparent agents. There are no "second causes" for them.

The whole teaching of Scripture asserts and implies this. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Matt. x. 29-30.) We are not to be careful about anything, because our Father cares for us. We are not to avenge ourselves, because our Father has charged Himself with our defence. We are not to fear, for the Lord is on our side. No one can be against us, because God is for us. We shall not want for the Lord is our Shepherd. When we pass through the rivers they shall not overflow us, and when we walk through the fire we shall not be burned, because He will be with us. He shuts the mouths of lions, that they cannot hurt us. "He delivereth and rescueth. He changeth the times and the seasons; He removeth kings and setteth up kings." (Dan. ii. 21.) (2 Chron. xx. 6.) "He ruleth the raging

of the sea; when the waves thereof arise He stilleth them." He "bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought! He maketh the devices of the people of none effect." (Ps. xxxiii. 10.) "Whatsoever the Lord pleaseth, that does He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."

And this "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." (Ps. xlvi. 1, 2, 3.)

To my own mind, these Scriptures, and many others like them, settle for ever the question as to the power of second causes in the life of the children of God. And this is how the blessed Lord took things. (Matthew xi. 20, 25, 26.) They are all under the control of our Father, and nothing can touch us except with His knowledge, and by His permission. It may be the sin of man that originates the action, and therefore the thing itself cannot be said to be the will of God: but by the time it reaches us, it has become God's will *for us*, and must be accepted as directly from His hands. No man or company of men, no power in earth or heaven, can touch that soul which is abiding in Christ, without first passing through Him, and receiving the seal of His permission. If "God be for us," it matters not who may be against us; nothing can

disturb or harm us, except He shall see that it is best for us, and shall stand aside to let it pass.

An earthly parent's care for his helpless child is a feeble illustration of this. If the child is in its father's arms, nothing can touch it without that father's consent, unless he is too weak to prevent it. And even if this should be the case, he suffers the harm first in his own person, before he allows it to reach his child. And if an earthly parent would thus care for his little helpless one, how much more will our Heavenly Father, whose love is infinitely greater, and whose strength and wisdom can never be baffled? I am afraid there are some, even of God's own children, who scarcely think He is equal to themselves in tenderness, and love, and thoughtful care; and who, in their secret thoughts, charge Him with a neglect and indifference of which they would feel themselves incapable.

The truth really is, that His care is infinitely superior to any possibilities of human care; and that He who counts the very hairs of our heads, and suffers not a sparrow to fall without Him, takes note of the minutest matters that can affect the lives of His children, and regulates them all according to His will, let their origin be what they may.

The instances of this are numberless. Take Joseph. What could have seemed more apparently on the face of it to be the result of sin, and utterly contrary to the will of God, than his being sold into slavery? And yet Joseph in speaking of it said,—
 “As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God

meant it unto good." (Gen. i. 20.) Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life. (Gen. xv. 5.) To the eye of sense it was surely Joseph's wicked brethren who had sent him into Egypt, and yet Joseph, looking at it with the eye of faith, could say, "God sent me." It had been undoubtedly a grievous sin in his brethren, but by the time it had reached Joseph, it had become God's will for him, and was in truth, though at first it did not look so, the greatest blessing of his whole life. And thus we see how the Lord can make even the wrath of man to praise Him, (Ps. lxxvi. 10.) and how all things, even the sins of others, shall work together for good to them that love Him. (Rom. viii. 28.)

If we look at the seen things, we shall not be able to understand this. But the children of God are called to look "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 18.) Could we but see with our bodily eyes His unseen forces surrounding us on every side, we would walk through this world in an impregnable fortress, which nothing could ever overthrow or penetrate, for "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." (Ps. xxxiv. 7.)

We have a striking illustration of this in the history of Elisha. The King of Syria was warring

against Israel, but his evil designs were continually frustrated by the prophet, and at last he sent his army to the prophet's own city for the express purpose of taking him captive. We read, "He sent thither horses, and chariots, and a great host; and they came by night, and compassed the city about." This was the seen thing. And the servant of the prophet, whose eyes had not yet been opened to see the unseen things, was alarmed. And we read, "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold an host encompassed the city, both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, "Alas, my master! how shall we do!" But his master could see the unseen things, and he replied, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." And then he prayed, saying, "Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." 2 Kings vi. 14-17.

The presence of God is the fortress of His people. Nothing can withstand it. At His presence the wicked perish; the earth trembles; the hills melt like wax; the cities are broken down; "the heavens also dropped, and Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God." And in the secret of this presence He has promised to hide His people from the pride of man, and from the strife of tongues, "My presence shall go with thee," He says, "and I will give thee rest." Ex. xxxiii. 14.

I wish it were only possible to make every Christian see this truth as plainly as I see it. For I am convinced that this and being "careful for nothing : but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus," (Phil. iv. 6, 7.) *is the clue to a restful life.* Nothing else will take all the risks and "supposes" out of a Christian's life, and enable him to say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Abiding in the light of God's presence we run no risks. And such a soul can triumphantly say—

"I know not what it is to doubt,
My heart is always gay ;
I run no risks, for come what will,
God always has His way."

I once heard of a poor coloured woman, who earned a precarious living by daily labour, but who was a joyous triumphant Christian. "Ah, Nancy," said a gloomy Christian lady to her one day, who almost disapproved of her constant cheerfulness, and yet envied it,— "Ah, Nancy, it is all well enough to be happy now ; but I should think the thoughts of your future would sober you. Only suppose, for instance, you should have a spell of sickness, and be unable to work ; or suppose your present employers should move away, and no one else should give you anything to do ; or suppose—"
" 'top !" cried Nancy, "I never supposes. De Lord

is my Shepherd, and I know, I shall not want. And honey," she added to her gloomy friend, "its all dem *supposes* as is makin' you so mis'able. You'd better give dem all up, and just trust de Lord."

There is one text that will take all the "supposes" out of a believer's life, if only it is received and acted on in childlike faith: it is Heb. xiii. 5, 6,— "Be content, therefore, with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, **THE LORD IS MY HELPER AND I WILL NOT FEAR WHAT MAN SHALL DO UNTO ME.**" What if dangers of all sorts shall threaten you from every side, and the malice, or foolishness, or ignorance of men shall combine to do you harm? You may face every possible contingency with triumphant words, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." If the Lord is your helper, how can you fear what man may do unto you? There is no man in this world, nor company of men, that can touch you, unless your God in whom you trust shall please to let them. "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber . . . The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore." Ps. cxxi. 3, 7, 8.

Nothing else will completely put an end to all murmuring or rebelling thoughts. Christians often feel at liberty to murmur against man, when they

would not dare to murmur against God. But this way of receiving things would make it impossible ever to murmur. If our Father permits a trial to come, it must be because that trial is the very best thing that could happen to us, and we must accept it with thanks from His hand. The trial itself may be hard to flesh and blood, and I do not mean that we can like or enjoy the suffering of it. But we can and must love the will of God *in* the trial, for His will is always sweet whether it be in joy or in sorrow.

In short, this way of seeing our Father in everything makes life one long thanksgiving, and gives a rest of heart, and more than that, a joy that is unspeakable. Some one says, "God's will on earth is always joy, always tranquility." And since He must have His own way concerning His children, into what wonderful green pastures of rest, and beside what blessedly still waters of refreshment is the soul led that learns this!

He who sides with the Lord cannot fail to win in every encounter! and whether the result shall be joy or sorrow, failure or success, death or life, we may, under all circumstances, join in the Apostle's shout of victory, "Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ!"

"If my soul has no home, my life as a Christian, however active, will not be happy. If my soul has a home in heaven to turn to, and *really now in spirit enjoy*, I shall not be restless and unhappy."

“A USEFUL WORD OF EXHORTATION.”

What is your example? *Christ*. You must give yourself up entirely, because Christ did. If you are always grieving the Spirit, the Spirit must occupy you with your state. If I say I am in Christ, I say Christ is in me, and my business is to show Christ, and nothing else.

It is having Christ always before us, and really walking in the presence of God. The great secret is, *to be more with God than anybody*, and if not, we shall go astray. The moment I get away from the conscious presence of God, self has a certain place, whereas, if I am really in the presence of God, I am nothing, *I am more what I am before Him, than what I am in His power for others*. You are not competent to discern the will of God if you are not with Him. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.”

If power rests on me that does not put me in the presence of God, as to my conscience or heart. It may be for others, but we have to be before *God Himself*, or else we shall never keep straight; *and for that we must be in the path of God*, for Him to lead us. I cannot realize God's presence out of the path of His will. The instant we lose the sense of dependence we are in danger.

Obedience and dependence, these are the two living principles of the new man; “Man shall not live by

bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

I do get another principle to help me through, and that is *confidence in God*. I cannot depend if I have not confidence. We do need confidence, or we have not courage to go through sacrifices, if I have not confidence in God's faithfulness. *It is everything*. Whatever I do, I ought to do it as serving Christ. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

DELIVERANCE AND STANDING.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

I know well how few know deliverance, but it is a great thing to know that I, a poor worm, should be before God and the Father, in the same acceptance and favour that Christ is, loved even as He is loved.

But it is the greatness of infinite love. Then it is not generally preached with intelligence, next it is experimental, and above all we must be in earnest to have it.

Who is willing to be dead to what nature and flesh would desire, yet that is the only way of deliverance. People will tell you it is our standing in Christ. I admit it as in Col. iii., and as faith owns in Rom. vi. and Gal. ii.; but who is willing to be in the standing?* It is standing, or else we are in the effort of Rom. vii. or narrow monks' labour,

* *i.e.* To be in it consciously.—Ed.

which I have tried, and even if we have experimentally learned, as it must be learned, who is carrying out 2 Cor. iv., so as to have the conscience living in it, by an ungrieved Spirit; but if experimentally taught it is of the greatest use to souls, and the joy of being blameless in Christ before God is exceeding great, and one that is eternal and divine in its source and nature, a wonderful thing, "for he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." The world is a terrible snare, and a subtle one, and greatly hinders this deliverance. A soul enjoying deliverance has its object elsewhere, see Rom. viii. Then we must remember "the diligent soul shall be made fat." I press when souls are in earnest, "My grace is sufficient for thee, and My strength is made perfect in weakness." For we learn that we are without strength for deliverance, and walk in the sense of it if we can be used in service, but His grace is sufficient. Knowing we are nothing is the place of blessing, for then God is everything, and the place of strength, for then Christ can put forth His strength. In this, 2 Cor. xii., is a most instructive chapter.

EXTRACT FROM AN UNPUBLISHED
LETTER.

"MY LOVED BROTHER.—I think I have had my mind more occupied of late than ever with the subject which your letter suggests—the being with the Lord. I am sure it is deeper, happier, fuller acquaintance with himself that our hearts need; and then we should long and desire and pant

after Him in such ways as nothing but His presence could satisfy. I know souls in this state; and yet it is not knowledge that gives it to them, but personal acquaintance with the blessed Saviour, through the Holy Ghost.

“I alighted, as by chance, the other day on some fervent thoughts of an old writer, in connection with this dear and precious subject. In substance they were as follows, and almost so in terms, only I have somewhat condensed them:—“It is strange that we, who have such continual use of God, and His bounties and mercies, and are so perpetually beholden to Him, should after all be so little acquainted with Him. And from hence it comes that we are so loathe to think of our dissolution, and of our going to God. For, naturally, where we are not acquainted, we like not to hazard our welcome. We would rather spend our money at an inn, than turn in for a free lodging to an unknown host; whereas to an entire friend, whom we elsewhere have familiarly conversed with, we go boldly and willingly as to our home, knowing that no hour can be unseasonable to such an one. I will not live upon God and his daily bounties, without His acquaintance. By His grace I will not let one day pass without renewing my acquaintance with Him.”

“Beautiful utterance this is. It expresses a character of mind which, in this day of busy inquiry *after knowledge*, we all need—personal longings *after Christ*. May the blessed Spirit in us give that direction to our hearts! It is a hard lesson for some of us to learn, to reach enjoyments which lie beyond and above the provisions of nature. We are still prone to know Christ Himself ‘*after the flesh*,’ and to desire to find Him in the midst of the relations and circumstances of human life, and there only.

“But this is not our calling—this is not the risen, heavenly life. It is hard to get beyond this, I know, but our calling calls us beyond it. We like the home, and the respect, and the security, and all the delights of our human relationships and circumstances, and would have Christ in the midst of them, but to know Him, and to have Him in such a way as tells us that He is a stranger on earth, and that we are to be strangers with Him, ‘*this is a hard saying*’ to our poor fond hearts.”

WORK FOR THE LORD.

Now, as to work for the Lord. The simple inquiry, and recorded as the first utterance of Paul to our Lord, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is the duty and expression of every one distinctly awakened to the claim Christ has on him. This inquiry cannot be too earnestly instituted, or the reply to it too rigidly attended to. The inquiry is the offspring of a soul sensible that the Lord has entire and full claim on me, without the knowledge which authorises it. The soul feels "I am taken out of the world, and I am given to Christ, and hence I look to Him for my place and occupation *in future in it.*" If we are given to Christ "out of the world," it is evident that it is He *alone* who has right to determine our way and course *in the world.*

I could not say, If I believe that I am given to Him "out of the world," that I have any right to re-occupy any place or engagement which I had previously held in the world. True, He does not require or permit me to infringe on any legal lord under whom I was held before I was given to Him—but, excepting where the rights of others would be compromised, I am Christ's bondsman—vested legal rights are not to be compromised because of my being given to Christ: but I am Christ's bondsman, and necessarily if I am, both from duty and inclination, my inquiry ought to be "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The more I own and

realize the relationship which now exists through grace between us, the more simply and continuously will this be my whole-hearted cry to Him. Now, if it is, I will, of course, accede to and attend to whatever He may intimate to me, and this only. That is, the heart true to Him, and devotedly making this request, will *wait* on Him for guidance and counsel, and would find no real satisfaction in being anywhere or doing anything which was not according to His mind; our place and our occupation here would be only determined by the pleasure of Him whose we are and whom we serve; any departure from the tie or rule of this relationship would sensibly interfere with the mutual satisfaction therein known, there would be a break in on, and a disturbance of, the true order of life, and the blessings connected with it.

Nothing so simple and nothing so important in our walk down here! I belong to Christ, and I find it my happiness and His pleasure to do nothing but as He desires and instructs me. *I live where He likes, and I do what He likes*. If we did this there would be no mistakes one side or the other. But we do make mistakes on both sides; on one side at one time, and on another side at another time. At one we *plan* out work for ourselves, and at another we do none at all. Now the first is the most difficult to deal with, simply because the counterfeit deceives one, and hence, while it is comparatively easy to convict the idle and slothful, it is not so easy to convict the Martha that she is

unwisely occupied. The work seems so right and necessary, that it appears almost impossible that there could be any plan in it. Nothing so deceives and leads astray as the conscience working at a distance from Christ; for instance, if I feel in my conscience that I ought to be Christ's servant (true enough, I am His bondsman), but if I am not near Him, if I am not in His confidence, and I begin to do something to satisfy my conscience, there is no doubt I am doing it legally, and not as simply suits Him. It is to make *myself* easy and satisfied. When this is the case I do not consult what *He* would like me to do, but I do what *I* think best to be done. It is not His pleasure guides me, it is my own mind, as to what is suitable and proper. It may be quite necessary, as Martha's service, but Martha was evidently thinking of the services which were incumbent on her to render, and not governed by the pleasure of Christ.

Here is where we fail, undertaking to serve where it is in a degree creditable to ourselves, or we get disappointed (if we are true-hearted) because we have not the acknowledgment of His pleasure. How can He acknowledge what we have undertaken and done to satisfy our own conscience and to please ourselves therein? It is evident that when I am occupied with services, however useful and necessary, which I have undertaken of myself, feeling they devolved upon me, that I must lose the sense of His presence. Sitting at His feet, Mary-like, is lost and neglected. There is no growth of

soul in Christ. Self is in the service from beginning to end. It is most blessed to work for Christ, it is fruit-bearing; but if my work engrosses me more than Christ, there is damage to me, and I am not working for Him; "Without me ye can do nothing." If I am really working for Christ, I am getting from Christ, and growing up into Him. Sitting at His feet is the natural posture of my soul. Whenever you find any one serving without sitting at His feet, you may be assured they are Martha-like. When any are sitting at His feet, hearing His word, they will not be behind in true and pleasing service. If you begin with serving (as many do now-a-days), you will never sit at His feet, whereas if you begin with sitting, you will soon serve wisely, well, and acceptably. The serving quiets the conscience, and the sitting is overlooked and neglected. The enemy gains an advantage, for it is at the sitting the conscience is more enlightened, and the pleasure and mind of the Master are better known; and hence there is damage done, and loss sustained by the soul when service pre-occupies one to the exclusion of sitting at His feet, or where it is *most* prominent.

I never met with any one making service prominent who knew what it was to sit at His feet; but, thank God, I know indefatigable workers who enjoy sitting at His feet above any service, and it is clear that they who sit most at His feet must be most competent to serve, and most in His confidence, which, after all, is *the clue* to all efficient service.

FRAGMENTS.

How emphatically Christ is *the truth*. Not His work merely, but *Himself*—His own blessed self. We speak of the preciousness of His blood, and of all He has done for us, [and right, all right to do so], but after all we must have *Himself*—we cannot do without *Himself*. Oh! to be clear of the horrid selfish Christianity which covets the benefit of His work, but has little or no heart for *Himself*. What would heaven be without Christ? and where would be our happiness if He were not there, the sum, the substance, the crown of it all?

A true affection for *Himself* will make us true to Him, and bring us on cheerfully, and decidedly, and unflinchingly, in the path of *obedience*. Obedience! that is the thing so much wanted, and so much needed in these degenerate days:

Let us be assured of this, *the time is short*, “He that shall come will come.” Oh! to hear the sweet words, “Well done,” from His own gracious lips, who was ever tender yet *ever faithful* too.

Beloved children of God, let us seek to know *Himself*—go after, and with purpose of heart, get to know intimately the One who loved us and gave *Himself* for us, and to whom the Father has given us, to whom we belong. Him who says “seek and ye shall find,” and who “satisfieth the longing soul.” May God in His infinite grace awaken

(revive and sustain where it is) this desire in all our hearts with power.

Be thou the object bright and fair,
 To fill and satisfy the heart:
 My hope to meet Thee in the air,
 And nevermore from Thee to part,
 That I may undistracted be,
 To follow, serve, and wait for Thee.

PART OF A LETTER ON CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD IN DRESS.

We most cordially agree with you in deploring the sad conformity to the world as exhibited in the dress of many professing Christians. It is most sad, and evidences but too plainly the bent of the heart, the tone of the mind, and the moral condition of the soul. We are often deeply pained in looking round at assemblies of Christians gathered for the purpose of showing forth the Lord's death, to mark the style of dress, the fashionable appearance, so unlike what one would expect to find on the persons of those who profess to be dead to the world.

It is not, we may truly say, that we desire to see Christians adopting a certain costume or livery; or that we should like to see them slovenly in appearance. Far from it; we love neatness and simplicity—"modest apparel"—moderate, suitable attire. It may perhaps be said that many take their place in the Christian assembly who have been accustomed all their lives to dress elegantly and they never think of such things. This we can quite

understand, and make allowance for; but, at the same time, we feel called upon to offer a word of warning to Christians on the subject of *conformity to the world in dress and other things*. It is a subject which demands serious attention. We believe that where the heart is true to the Lord, the word of exhortation will be received and acted upon; the Lord knows we offer it in love. May He act on the hearts and consciences of His people by His word and Spirit, and give them to carry themselves aright in these things, that His name may be glorified in the deportment, walk, and appearance of His people.

“I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God, that ye, be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”—Romans xii. 1, 2.

Oh! the importance of being faithful in the “little,” for he that is faithful in the little is faithful also in much.

Oh! the happiness of “abiding” in Christ, being *near* to Him! Oh, the misery of distance and estrangement!

The more intimate I become with Him, the more sensitive to anything that comes between Him and my soul, even to a hair's breadth.

The finer the machinery, the more easily is it disturbed in its action: a single hair will suffice to obstruct the action of a watch. So the closer, and

finer, and purer my relations with the Lord, the more intolerable is anything that can interfere with my enjoyment of those relations. But, blessed be His name, He is ever ready to receive, to restore, to "heal" and to "lead;" He is the one magnet of unfailing attraction to which His own ever turn—my own only "refuge and portion."

MIXED MARRIAGES

AND

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

[The following remarks were made on a particularly solemn instance, where a young sister (converted in 1853) fell into the snare of accepting an offer of marriage made by a worldly man.

This she had contrived to conceal from the assembly of Christians where she lived; but a delay, which arose out of seemingly accidental circumstances, gave occasion to a brother's discovering her intention and warning her solemnly. She owned the wrong, but persisted; left for a relative's, where she sickened of a violent fever, which for the first she owned to be the chastening of the Lord, and died after three days, His word having penetrated and brought her not only to entire self-judgment, but fulness of joy. The details for various reasons are omitted.]

The preceding history relates, in all Christian simplicity, facts which show how God can interfere in judgment to deliver His children from the sad spiritual consequences which flow from a want of faithfulness. A young Christian allowed herself to be drawn into accepting an offer of marriage with an unconverted man. Her conscience plainly showed her that she was acting against the will of

God. But she did not know how to stop at the first step, and not having at once rejected, as unfaithfulness and sin, the thought of that which was offered to her, she had not afterwards the strength to give it up; and God was forced to take her away from this world to keep her from a sin which she did not desire to commit, but which she had not the strength to resist. Oh, how difficult it is to stop, when once we have set out in such a road!

Anyone who has closely observed the walk of Christians, and who has cared for souls with a heart in any little measure zealous for the glory of the Lord, and desirous for the spiritual welfare of the dear children of God, will not have failed to perceive the fatal influence that the world exercises over them when it gains an entrance into their hearts. God only knows, and the one who has suffered from it, by what subtle means, and under what an amiable guise the world often invades the heart of the Christian. But the manifestation of Christ to the soul, and the power of His presence, are never ways by which the world insinuates itself into the heart. Those therefore, who are found, by grace, near Christ, are shielded from the influence of such feelings, and can judge them and everything which tends to make a way for the world within the heart, or for desires which are connected with the world.

Here we are in warfare with the enemy. He seeks to surprise us when we are not upon our guard; and in order to accomplish this, he knows

even how to transform himself into an angel of light. If we are not near to Christ, and are not clothed with the whole armour of God, it is impossible to resist his devices. To resist the power of Satan is not the principal difficulty, for Christ has conquered for us this terrible enemy, but it is to discover the snares which he lays for us, and, above all to discover that it is himself who is at work.

In our combats with the enemy, it becomes a question of knowing the state of our own hearts. The single eye (that is to say, the heart filled with Christ), discovers the wile, and the soul has recourse to the Saviour for deliverance: or even its affections being fixed upon Christ, the heart presents no prize for the efforts of the enemy. A heart that is simple and occupied with the Lord escapes many things which trouble the peace of those who are not near Him. Thanks be to God the troubled and tormented soul finds a resource and complete restoration in the grace of the One whom it has so foolishly forgotten; but it enjoys the fruits of grace through many sorrows and exercises of heart. Yet let us take courage. He knows how to deliver, as well as to have compassion. Now these are the two principles which regulate the ways of God with regard to us. On the one hand, God keeps the heart to cause it to discern His own purpose; and, on the other, Christ intercedes for us with respect to all that may be called infirmity. There are real difficulties along the way, and there is weakness in us, and alas! a will which does not

like to be bridled, and which betrays itself in a thousand forms of thought and deed.

Our weaknesses, like our will, tend to hinder us from reaching the end of our journey ; but there is a great difference in the way in which God acts with regard to our weaknesses, and with regard to our will, and the thoughts which flow from it.

“The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” God judges our thoughts and our intentions by His Word. Nothing escapes Him ; He is faithful towards us—His word is in the heart like an eye from which nothing is concealed ; all is naked and open to the eye of Him with whom we have to do. Do you hear that, foolish soul, that would desire to feed upon the illusions that you love ? Nothing is hidden ; not one of your thoughts or intentions is hidden from the eyes of Him with whom you have to do. Nor is that all. His word is simple, plain and clear : it speaks to the conscience, do you hear it ? Do you know that when God speaks you have to do with Him who speaks, as well as with what He says ? Will you resist Him who speaks and provoke Him to jealousy ? You cannot escape Him : He has already hold over your conscience, and He will never give it up.

Will you kick against the pricks ? But think rather of the end that God has in view. He might

have left you to yourself; He might have left you to fall into things which, if His grace interfere not, may render the whole of the wilderness journey sad and humiliating to you. He might have said to you what He said to His beloved servant, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." (Hosea iv. 17.) Terrible punishment! Harder than the most severe outward chastening! But our God will not deprive us of the light of His countenance and the sweetness of His communion. For God does not chasten willingly: it is a strange work for Him as He says, (Is. xxviii. 21.) But sin is always sin in His eyes and He cannot allow it.

How then does God work in our poor hearts? He reaches them by His word, in order that our conscience may see everything as He sees it Himself. His eye is upon us, upon our hearts, and the eye of our conscience is enlightened as to what is passing in the heart by that word which reveals God to it.

(To be continued D. V.)

**LETTER TO A YOUNG SISTER IN REPLY
TO ONE FROM HER TELLING OF THE
LORD'S LOVE AND GRACE IN RESTOR-
ING HER TO HIMSELF AFTER TWO
YEARS' WANDERING AWAY FROM HIM.**

"Your letter is indeed a living tribute to the efficacy of our Saviour's present grace as an Advocate

with the Father. Sweet, indeed, to our taste is the first sense of that grace in our poor hearts, when we are brought into living touch with a Saviour-God. But with a *deepened sweetness* do we learn what He is to us and for us, even when the heart has, if only for a brief moment, been going along without Him. How beautifully it is told out in the "Song of Songs." In chap. ii. 16, the Bride says, "*My beloved is mine, and I am His,*" the first utterance we may say of the soul, the sense of *her* possession in *Him* being prominently enjoyed. In chap. vi. 3, her language is, "*I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine,*" and here the place she occupies in *His* affections is the prominent feature, the sense of *His* possession in her, and this learnt through failure upon her part. How very precious is this! Having loved *His own* (the same thought here, is it not? *i. e.*, what *we are to Him*, more than what He is as enjoyed by us, although both are unspeakably blessed). But when I say *He is mine*, it brings in the thought that I am enjoying Him as my own. "*I am His,*" strikes a higher note, as you say, "to think that I am a joy to Him!" But one step more, chap. vii. 10, "*I am my beloved's and His desire is towards me,*" We said one step more, but it is a wonderful one, is it not? That is to say, the soul is absorbed in His side of things, and now, instead of "*I am His,*" we read, "*His desire is toward me.*" How precious that little word "*is.*" I can never speak of His desire toward me in the past tense, I may to-morrow act like a Peter,

and practically (if not with the lips) deny Him, but be that as it may, His desire is toward me, unalterably and eternally toward me, and not only eternally in the sense of its never ceasing, but eternally as never having a beginning. For His love to me and His desire toward me are like His own blessed Person, infinite and date-less.

Do you know as I read your letter I fell to coveting the fresh sense of that grace of His just imparted to you.

You are just like a very thirsty child and He is holding His wondrous draughts of grace to your lips, saying to you the while "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." While you and I respond to that well known voice in something like this strain, "Ah, Lord, it's but a sip from an ocean tide after all."

"Oh, Christ, Thou art the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love;
The streams on earth I've tasted,
More deep I'll drink above."

But while the heart-yearnings will never be fully met until we are actually spirit, soul and body at the fountain head, yet it is well to remember that there is no limit to our enjoyment of Him, nor to our joy in Him as we pass along. "In Thy presence is fullness of joy," is true, and to that we are speeding onward, but by the way we rejoice, (altho it may be in heaviness through manifold temptations) "with joy unspeakable and full of glory," and again, "these things write we unto you, that

your joy may be full." And that is really in its way more wonderful even than the joy that shall be ours when we are at home with our Lord Jesus in the Father's house. No marvel *then* that joy in its fullness finds its never-ceasing expression. But *now*, passing through the valley of weeping, making it a well, passing through the valley of the shadow of death, fearing no evil, ah, for "*Thou art with me.*" What a beautiful change in the language takes place in that verse (Ps. xxiii), up to this point it had been testimony as to what Jehovah was, speaking of Him to others. Now note the change—it is as if it had said, 'if it is a question of walking through the valley of the shadow of death there is nothing but Thyself can suffice me there,' and so it is no longer testimony to others, it is not, "He is with me," but "*Thou art with me.*" How beautiful is this! If we testify of Him to others as those who have learnt what it is "never to hunger, never to thirst," or ever we are aware of it we will be saying "Thou." instead of "He."

See something like this in Paul; his heart was, as he says, filled with "great heaviness and continual sorrow," as he thought of his brethren, the Jews, and he dwells upon their external relationship with God, until he mentions Christ's name, and then what happens? His great heaviness, his continual sorrows do not burden his joy nor interrupt his communion. Weak bodies, daily conflicts, sorrows and troubles do not, nor should they, affect our communion, (our wills do), and so if Paul mentions

that blessed name, at once adoration seizes upon his heavy and sorrowful heart and he says "Christ who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen."

I do pray the Lord Jesus that you may be kept in the freshness His loving truth has imparted, and with increasing appetite feed upon what was His own food down here, even the Word of God. Remember that it is written, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer," and again, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." There is truly a great difference between "reading the Bible," and living "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," "the word of Thy lips." These last expressions imply communion with the author, listening for what comes fresh from His mouth,—His lips, for us, and there is our preservative. Our joy isolated from its source will not keep us, and in this the Adversary may try your dear heart, for we are effervescent things at best, and your joy may fluctuate, but remember your joy is not *in* your joy, but the Lord, and does He ever change? Ah no, a thousand times no.

" My love is oft times low,
My joy still ebbs and flows."

but "Jesus Chrst the same yesterday, today and for ever." So that you and I never look within ourselves to see how we are getting along. To learn that we must look at the Glorified one at God's right hand. There are no springs of freshness in ourselves, "all my springs are in Thee."

ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD.

HEBREWS xi. 8-18.

Such a thing as personal connection with God would never have entered into our minds unless He had revealed Himself. We see in Abraham's history how God comes to him, and introduces Himself as a living Person to his soul, drawing him out of his own country and from his own kindred after Himself. Henceforth all Abraham's associations were to be with the living God, who promises to be to him a shield, and his exceeding great reward. Abraham had nothing to act upon but faith in God's word. What a fool he must have appeared to his worldly relatives, leaving all at the bidding of One whom he did not see, and in whom they did not believe.

All went well with him as long as he trusted in God to act for him, but when he tried to arrange matters for himself, it was all failure. We see this in his taking Terah and Lot with him; God never called *them* out, the word was, "Get *thee* out of thy country and from thy father's house." Abraham did not *leave all*, so he had to stop in Haran till Terah dies, and is at last obliged to desire Lot to separate himself from him; after that we find progress. Mark in the 8th verse, when called to go out, Abraham obeyed, *not knowing whither he went*.

This was a trial to which God put his faith, for the testing of it. Nothing tries human nature so

much as uncertainty; we can bear anything rather than be kept in suspense; there is relief in the worst certainty.

But that is just God's principle of acting with us: He does not want us to know beforehand how and when His promises are to be made good to us, for then there would be no exercise of faith.

God told Abraham that his seed was to be as the stars of heaven. How was this to be, seeing he had no child? Everything but that he had got, silver and gold, flocks, tents, and three hundred trained servants. But who was to inherit all this? Naturally this question would often suggest itself. Poor Sarah tried to help him out of the difficulty in *her way*, by smuggling a child into the house; but it was not *an Isaac, a son of promise*.

How we see ourselves in Sarah! We have no patience to wait God's time for *giving*, so we put forth our hand and take, often to our sorrow and spiritual loss. Had we just kept hanging on God, He would have given us something far better than the thing to which we had helped ourselves in our impatience.

From the 9th verse we see that the pilgrim and stranger character was kept up—dwelling in tents; houses are for *Canaan*, tents for the wilderness. God's dwelling in the wilderness was a tabernacle or tent, in *Canaan* a temple. Abraham kept true to the pilgrim character, Lot did not. He pitched his tent first *toward Sodom*, afterwards had a house

in it, and sat at the gate. -What a place for a child of God to settle in and *receive honour!*

Abraham had his eye on a far different city, "whose builder and maker was God." Meanwhile he was satisfied to live in a tent, with God for his portion.

When tested, Abraham refused to take anything from the king of Sodom, from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, lest he should say, "I have made Abraham rich." The very next thing we find is God saying to him, "*I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*" Whenever we are enabled to surrender what nature clings to for Christ's sake there is blessing in a clearer revelation of Himself to the soul: as it were, room is made for the Lord by the displacing of lower objects, and the promise of John xiv. 23 is made good in our experience—"If a man *love me*, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

What a wall of fire the Lord is round the soul that is *separated to Himself!* He plants the blood of Christ right behind us. Has He spoken to us of His glory, and told us of the glories awaiting us as fellow-heirs with Christ, and shall we turn back and *mind earthly things!* Shall not His country be our country, His associates our associates, while we are waiting in strangership down here, confessing ourselves pilgrims by our walk and ways, showing by our blessed independency of all the good things which nature esteems so highly, and our indiffer-

ence to the attractions by which so many are dazzled and blinded, that we are passing through this scene in haste to a better country, choosing nothing for ourselves, but receiving all as God's gift?

Does anything bright offer itself? Our first question should be, Does my Father give me this? if not, I don't want it. If I am a true pilgrim, I won't be thinking of settling down in a world like this; I will say, That can't be God's gift for me; it is not good enough; He has prepared for me a city; I am going *home*; meanwhile I want to keep my mind and heart free for Him who gave *Himself* for me.

We never read of God being the God of Lot; not but that He was Lot's God quite as much as Abraham's but He could not associate His holy name with Sodom, of which Lot was a citizen. He is not ashamed to be called the God of pilgrims and strangers, and to associate His name with theirs.

The trial to which God put Abraham in offering up Isaac was very remarkable. He wanted to see whether he was hanging all his weight on the promise or not. He tries us often in the same way. How blessed when the faith He has given, when tried, is not found wanting!

In many ways our faith is tested. Do we know what it is to be kept in suspense? When we put forth a single thing to help ourselves, God just moves it out of His way, that He may work unhindered.

Walking with God, what is it? To hang on His word often kept in suspense—but taking nothing till He gives—living as a pilgrim and a stranger, looking on the glory beyond. Happy experience! The Lord grant it may be ours!

MIXED MARRIAGES

AND

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

(Continued from No. 2.)

Is that which you find in your heart the thought of one that loves God? Is it a thought in accordance with the will of God—a thought suitable to one whom Christ has so loved as to humble Himself even to death for? Stop, poor soul, and ask yourself if you are allowing the thought which occupies you, because it is agreeable to Christ, to the Christ who gave Himself for you, to save you? He has your salvation at heart: He loves you; He knows what tends to ruin you, to make you fall in the wilderness. He will govern by no principles except His own, those of holiness—those which belong to the new nature. He cannot deny Himself. (2 Tim. ii. 13.) He desires that you should not incur the terrible discipline which awaits the soul that has wandered. He desires that you should not suffer the losses into which your folly will drag you, if you allow yourself to follow your own will. He desires that you should not lose the enjoyment of His communion, and that the proofs of His love

towards you should not be suspended or weakened in your heart. He speaks to you in His word, He judges the thoughts and intentions of your heart. Would you rather hear Him judge you, than ask Him to deliver you from what is too mighty for you? Or will you say like Israel, "I have loved strangers and after them will I go." (Jer. ii. 25.) You know that this thought does not come from Christ; you have not consulted Him, although you may, perhaps, have dared to ask Him to bless your intentions and direct you. You know that the word judges what you are still keeping in your heart, and what has power over you; you are the slave and not the master of your thought. No, that thought is not from Christ, and while you allow it, you are neglecting God and His word. Well, you are bringing on you the chastening of God. God is full of mercy and has compassion on us and on our weaknesses. He is tender and pitiful in His ways; but if we are determined to follow our own will, He knows how to break it. He governs everything, and He governs His children in particular. He is not mocked, and what a man sows he will reap later on; (Gal. vi. 7.) The worst of all chastenings is that He should leave us to follow our own ways.

The second point I wish to lead you to remark is the government that God exercises with regard to His children. He warns them by His word, and if they do not listen, He interposes in His power to stop them in order that He may be able to bless

them; (see Job xxxvi. 5-14; xxxiii. 14-30.) In the dealings of God salvation is not brought into question. He looks upon His children, and chastens those whom He loves. The persons of whom the Holy Ghost is speaking in Job are called "the just." God does not withdraw His eyes from them, and He says also to Israel by the prophet Amos, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." (Amos iii. 2.)

In the Epistle to the Corinthians we see that, when the Christians turned the Lord's Supper into a scene of dissoluteness, God laid His hand upon them. Some of them were sick and others had even fallen asleep, (that is, had died); and the Apostle in calling attention to it adds, "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." Solemn thought! We are under the hand of the Lord who punishes sin wherever He finds it. He is a consuming fire, and when the moment is come, judgment begins at His house. What a difference between such relations with God, and the joy of His love and communion when one has not grieved His Spirit, and when one is walking under His eye and in the light of His countenance! I do not doubt that a large part of the sicknesses and trials of Christians are chastenings sent by God on account of things that are evil in His sight, which the conscience ought to have paid heed to, but which it

neglected. God has been forced to produce in us the effect which self-judgment ought to have produced before Him.

It would, however, be untrue to suppose that all afflictions are chastenings. Though they are sometimes, they are not always sent because of sin. There are things in the soul connected with the natural character, and which need to be corrected in order that we may live more in communion with God and glorify Him in all the details of life. What we do not know how to do with regard to these things God does for us; but there are many children of God who commit faults which their conscience ought to feel, and which they would discover if their soul were in the presence of God.

Jacob had to fight all his life against himself, because God had known his ways; and in order to bless him. God must wrestle with him too, and on this account also He was not pleased to reveal His name to him. It is totally different with Abraham. A thorn in the flesh was given to Paul to hinder evil; for in his case the danger did not arise from carelessness, but from the abundance of the revelations which he had.

Where there is a real affection which acknowledges God and all the relations in which He places us with Himself, it is absolutely impossible that a Christian should allow himself to marry a worldly person, without violating all his obligations towards God and towards Christ. If a child of God allies himself to an unbeliever, it is evident that he

leaves Christ out of the question, and that he does so voluntarily in the most important event of his life. It is just at such a moment that he ought to have the most intimate communion of thought, affection and interest with Christ; and He is totally excluded! The believer is yoked together with an unbeliever. He has chosen to live without Christ; he has deliberately preferred to do his own will and to exclude Christ rather than give up his will in order to enjoy Christ and His approbation. He has given his heart to another, abandoning Christ and refusing to listen to Him. The more affection there is, the more the heart is attached, the more openly has something been preferred to Christ. What a fearful decision! to settle to spend one's life thus, choosing for a companion an enemy of the Lord's. The influence of such a union is necessarily to draw the Christian back into the world. He has already chosen to accept that which is of the world as the most beloved object of his heart; and only things of the world please those who are of the world, although their fruit is death. (Rom. vi. 21-23.) "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." What a dreadful position! Either to fail in faithfulness to Christ, or to have constantly to resist just where the tenderest affection ought to have established perfect unity. The fact is, that unless the sovereign grace of God comes in, the Christian man or woman always yields and enters little by little upon a worldly walk. Nothing is

more natural. The worldly one has only worldly desires. The Christian, besides his Christianity, has the flesh ; and further, he has already abandoned his Christian principles in order to please his flesh, by uniting himself to one who does not know the Lord. The result of such an alliance is that he has not a thought in common on the subject which ought to be most precious to his heart, with the person dearest to him in the world, and who is like a part of himself. They will have nothing but quarrels, for it is written, "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos iii. 37) If not, they must first yield to worldliness and then take pleasure in it; but this sad result is lost sight of when they first place themselves in the position which renders it inevitable. The Christian is drawn away little by little : he is not in communion with his Saviour, and he can find pleasure in the society of a person who is agreeable to him without thinking of Jesus. When he is alone he does not think of praying; and when he is with the one whom he loves, though his conscience or his Christian friends may warn him, he has no strength, and Christ has not sufficient power over his heart, to lead him to turn from his way and give up an affection which he knows to be disapproved of by the Lord. He binds himself more or less by other motives, such as a feeling of honour, sometimes, alas ! by more detestable motives, such as pecuniary interest, and he sacrifices his conscience, his Saviour, his own soul as far as it depends upon him, and at

all events, the glory of God. That which at first was nothing more than a fancy, has become unrestrained will.

There is another remark which the history of this young person leads me to make. The first start of a converted soul, however sincere it may be, produces anything but the judgment of self and the flesh, which by unveiling to us our weakness, causes us to lay down our burden at the feet of Jesus. We then seek for strength only in Him, and we confide in Him alone. The confidence which a soul that knows and distrusts itself has in Jesus, is what gives it a lasting and solid peace, when it has understood, not only as a doctrine, but by the acceptance of the heart, that He alone is our righteousness. But we only arrive at this when we have been in the presence of God and have there made the discovery that we are only sin, that Christ is perfect righteousness and God perfect love. From that time we distrust ourselves, we fight against ourselves, and the flesh and the enemy have no longer the same power to deceive us.

I do not think that the young person of whom these pages speak, had been stripped of self. There are many Christians in this condition, and although we may all be exposed to the same dangers, yet such have more particularly to dread the wiles of the enemy, because they have not learnt how far the flesh deceives us, and do not know with how terrible a traitor we have to do. When we have come to a knowledge of this, although there may

be a lack of watchfulness, yet Christ has a larger place in the heart, and there is more calm, and less self.

Observe how deceitful the heart is, and how it loses all self-command when it departs from God. That poor young girl (when she was getting further and further into the slough, on the borders of which she had been trifling, to use her own expressions), asked her mother's friend to do all she could to remove every obstacle; and she, who was a woman of some piety, was surprised that A. should be disposed to unite herself to a worldly man. How wily and deceitful is our heart! What slaves does an idol make of us! For although we may endeavour to escape the danger, yet we take means to secure the accomplishment of the thing we desire, even while we flee from it! What a terrible thing it is to get away from God! This young person, before she was entangled through this affection, would have shrunk with horror from the idea of such an action. When the heart has abandoned God, it dreads man more even than God. The God who loved A., and who was beloved by her, must needs take her away from this world, where she had not courage to return to the right path. God took her to Himself. She died in peace, and through pure grace she triumphed.

The Christian, whilst enjoying peace in his last moments, should always feel that it is God whose hand is there. What a solemn lesson for those who wish to depart from God, and from His holy word,

in order to satisfy an inclination which it would have been easy to have overcome at first, but which, when cherished in the heart, becomes tyrannical and fatal! May God grant to the reader of these lines, and to all His children, to seek His presence day by day.

A FAITHFUL WORD.

MY DEAR M.,

I don't forget you, and often do I hope that your soul is cleaving fast to the Lord Jesus, and feeding on the rich pasture which He provides for the lambs and sheep of His flock. Perhaps the most important thing for us is to keep our first love bright and real. You will serve him whom you love. The great motive in the heart of Paul was the love of Christ: "*He loved me,*" he said; and that which the Lord Himself pressed thrice on Peter was, "*Lovest thou me?*" Full well does the Lord know what is the mighty spring of faithfulness to Himself, and that which stands higher in His estimation than intelligence or gift is simple love to Himself. He delights in the heart that values Himself. He could say of her who had taken her place at His feet to hear His word, that she had "*chosen the better part:*" He could say of her who anointed Him for His burial, rather than lavish the cost of the ointment on the poor, "*She hath wrought a good work on me,* and wheresoever the gospel should be preached, this also that she had

done should be preached, this also that she had done should be spoken of for a memorial of her."

On the other hand, what led Ephesus to leave off their first works? Simply the fact that they had left their first love. Ah, what a secret! How closely the Lord observes the pulsations of the heart, the movement of the affections! How sensitive He is to the smallest alteration of His throne there!

Yes, you will serve and obey gladly him whom you love. Does your heart ever become weary of the word and ways of your Lord and Saviour? Does it find less freshness, sweetness, and delight in learning of Him? Has the world come in to spoil and wither? Think of His love, and charge your soul to retain the sense of it as a treasure. "Keep yourselves in the love of God," said Jude to an apostatising Christendom; "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God," said Paul to a suffering church; and easy it is to discover what furnished the wondrous impulse to that same apostle in his words, "I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, *for whom*," &c. The constraining love of Christ, apprehended in, and responded to by, our hearts, is that which alone can keep us true and faithful in a world where everything takes the character of a hindrance rather than a help in our heavenward course.

Dear young brother, you must be passing through much experience of the evil ways of this world in

your busy life in ———. Remember that you have your own part to play upon the stage of life—as a witness for Christ. It is well to recollect that God is commenting on our life. He is our Biographer, as He was of Abel, Enoch, &c., in Heb. xi.; nor is any event omitted by His careful pen. Take care of the little things, and the great ones will not be overlooked. Rest not in present attainments. Thirst for more of God, as the hart for the water brooks. The Lord bless you. I trust all are well. My fond love to your family, and all the saints. I am well, and working still for the glorious Master.

Yours in the Lord,

A SHINING FACE.

To have Christ,—I mean practically to walk with Him and after Him, to have communion with the Father and the Son, to walk in unfeigned obedience and lowliness: to live in realised dependence on Christ and have His secret with us, and realise a Father's love; to have our affections set on things above, to walk in patience and yet confidence through this world, this is what we have to seek, and if we realise it we shall be a testimony, whether individually or collectively, but in possessing the things themselves, and they form us through grace, so that we are one (*i.e.* a testimony), but seeking or setting up to be it does not. Moses did not seek to have his face shine nor *even know* when it did, but when he

had been with God it did so. A shining face never sees itself. The true heart is occupied with Christ, and in a certain sense and measure self is gone. The right thought is not to think of self at all—save as we have to judge it.

“THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.”

“Not only did the blessed Lord meet for us who believe all our sin as children of Adam, by His death, so as to clear us according to the glory of God from it all in His sight, but He perfectly glorified God himself in so doing. ‘Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him.’ See John xvii. 4, 5. Hence, as stated in both these passages, man in the person of Christ entered into the glory of God. But it was wrought for us, our sin was put away by it. Christ, as having glorified all God is, is our righteousness. We are thus the righteousness of God in Him. We have a positive title to enter into that glory as regards righteousness, though owning it all to be grace (grace reigns through righteousness), and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, by the work and worth of Christ ‘As He is, so are we in this world.’ But this took place in Him, as entering into, beginning in His person a new place of human existence, a risen man entered into glory. The power of eternal life was in it. Dead to the old scene and all that state of being and place and ground of relationship to God. He lives, in that He lives to God. Christ has thus His perfect place of acceptance as Man with God, and we in Him. He is gone in the power of divine life, save according to divine righteousness into divine glory.”

“The Gospel proclaimed righteousness on God’s part, instead of requiring it from man, according to the law. Now the Holy Ghost could be the seal of that righteousness—He could come down upon the Man Christ, because He was perfectly approved of God. He was righteous—The Righteous One—He can come down upon us because we are made the righteousness of God in Christ.”

THE PLEASANT LAND DESPISED.

NUMBERS XIII., XIV.

Beloved, do our hearts indeed say

“ We are on our way to God ? ”

Do we believe that, with the innumerable throng of the redeemed, we shall soon sing the everlasting anthem of praise to the Lamb? It is astonishing the simplicity of heart there is when we believe that “ we are on our way to God.” Whenever the soul has really got hold of this, believing in God, knowing His love, that He has brought us out of Egypt, and that we are on our way to Canaan, there is a spring of heart that surmounts everything. There may be a great many things by the way to exercise our hearts and thoughts; but if this feeling predominates, they only come in by the way. If my mind be fixed on present circumstances and present difficulties, and on God's helping me in them, there will not at all be the same spring of joy. For then I make God to be simply the servant of my necessities. The heart rests and centres there, and God sinks down into a mere help in time of trouble. It is quite true that “ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble ” (Ps. xli. 1); but to bring Him down to be only this changes the whole aspect of things. Himself, as our portion, is infallibly ours. If our hearts are fixed on being with Jesus in His rest and glory, on being in the “ Father's house,” our own

present difficulties have the character of difficulties by the way; we can then rise over trouble, however felt. And our thoughts about God are not merely that He will help us in the circumstances in which we are—our hearts being fixed on Him, we live in the freedom that arises from the constant certainty that all that is Christ's is ours.

It is important to have our minds fixed on the hope of glory which is set before us.

One form which unbelief takes is the not having this hope fresh on the mind. Supposing I had to live twenty years, the next thing to my heart ought to be the glory. In the children of Israel unbelief took many forms; one character of it was that "they despised the pleasant land." (Chap. xiv. 31; Ps. cvi. 24.) Now very often there is in our hearts practically, though not wilfully, the despising of the pleasant land. I am not speaking of any doubtfulness as to the land being ours. If there were something that a friend had given me as a great treasure, and I was sure of its being mine, and yet I looked at it but seldom and cared to think of it but seldom, this would be a proof (not of certainty respecting its being mine, but) that I despised the thing, that I had no real value for it. This is very often the way we treat the heavenly glory that belongs to us. We do not question the truth of the promises; but, when our souls are not dwelling upon and delighting in the glory that is set before us, there is a "despising of the pleasant land." It is too much the case with the saints,

And no occupation with present things—with present duties even—can make up for the loss of peace and comfort there is to the soul from not dwelling on the things which God has laid up in store for them that love Him, (1 Cor. ii. 9) as its own things. Instead of God's being the strength and fulness of our present joy in the midst of present tribulation, as it is said, "We joy in God" (Rom. v. 11), we only make Him a help in time of trouble. There is weakness and infirmity instead of rejoicing in God. The heart being brought down here and kept down, it brings down God after it (so gracious is He, that He will even come down), instead of rising above present circumstances up to God.

Of course this character of unbelief will not be manifested in the hearts of the saints as it was in the children of Israel, but in measure, it is the same thing.

The "spies" (Num. xiii. xiv.) had been sent by Moses, at the command of Jehovah, to search out the land of Canaan, "which" Jehovah said, "I give unto the children of Israel," and to bring of the fruit thereof. The Spirit of God, personally dwelling in present witness in us, takes of the glory of the Lord Jesus, of the things of the land of promise (that true Canaan, of which faith says, My land), and thus shews us of our portion.

"So they went up, and searched the land, from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes,

and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land wither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it." (Vers. 23-27.) There was no gainsaying the report of the spies, these grapes told of the goodness of the land. It was a land that produced such fruit. So, when the Holy Ghost brings the earnest to us of our joy and glory, who would gainsay? who does not feel that it is worth anything by the way to get there—the earnest is so sweet?

"Nevertheless," said the spies, "the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great, and moreover, we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south; and the Hittites and the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains," &c. When the people heard that there were difficulties, there began to be restlessness and uneasiness amongst them.

"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and

said, Let us go up at once, and possess it! for we are well able to overcome it." (Ver. 30.) He was strong in faith.

"But the men that went up with him, said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." (Vers. 30-33.) That is, they get hold of the thought of the people in unbelief: and venture to deny all that they had previously said, when they see that their report was not received. The first thing they told Moses was the simple truth, that it was a very good land; but when they see this unbelief at work in the minds of the people, their judgment respecting it is quite different, and they say, it is a very bad land. The whole sense of the goodness of Jehovah in giving them the land is gone, and consequently they break down in despair when looking at the difficulties by the way. There is not merely distrust about their overcoming these enemies; they lose the sense of the goodness of the land, and then they have no encouragement in their difficulties. Their state becomes weakness. Just so with the Christian; if I lose the joy of the

glory, the difficulties I meet with by the way are insurmountable, for my heart does not know what it has to contend for.

This and more will be seen coming out in chapter xiv. "And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried, and the people wept that night," &c. When, in the first freshness of their setting out, their sin had manifested itself (bad as it was), they did not lay the blame upon God; they said, "This Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt." (Ex. xxxiii.) But the moment this unbelief gets hold of their hearts, the desert becomes thoroughly and insupportably painful to them, and they say, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in the wilderness! and wherefore hath Jehovah brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make us a captain, and let us return into Egypt." (Vers. 1-5.) See what a miserably wicked state of unbelief they had got into, so as to attribute to Jehovah Himself their trials and difficulties. This is a snare to which even Christians are exposed. We are conscious that it is the Lord that has brought us up out of bondage, and hence when trials come upon us our hearts are apt to say, This comes of my being a Christian, the Lord has brought me into these difficulties. Now, had Canaan been on the hearts of the children of Israel, they would have said, Thank

God that we are thus far on our way to Canaan. Let the difficulties be what they might, if they had felt, By the word of Jehovah we have been brought here, there would have been thanksgiving and not murmuring. But they stopped at the point where they were, instead of looking at it as but a step on the way to the glorious land before them. There was the pretence of thoughtfulness for others—their wives and children, though in reality it was only selfishness.

Verses 6–9. Joshua and Caleb speak of the exceeding goodness of the land, and add, “If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against Jehovah, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them; and Jehovah is with us: fear them not.” Their confidence is in Him.

“But all the congregation bade stone them with stones.” The moment that was spoken which should have cheered the people, it brought out positive hostility.

Verses 13–19. The intercession of Moses comes in, based on the testimony Jehovah had given of Himself. (Compare Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7.) The principle of it is this, the perfect identification of Jehovah with His people. He presses on Jehovah that His own glory is bound up with the preservation and blessing of His people inseparable from them.

Two things result. Jehovah acts according to the faith of Moses, as He ever does according to the faith that is in us (ver. 20); but He sends the children of Israel into the desert to remain there until all the men that came up out of Egypt fell.

There is another thing also to notice. When the children of Israel will not go up in faith into the promised land, Jehovah sends them a long way round the desert. Two things accompany this: one as the result of it, the other pure grace. If they have to march round the desert, Jehovah cannot leave them alone: He must go round with them, guiding them by His pillar of fire and of cloud all the way. His grace abounds over sin. Secondly, Caleb and Joshua must go the long way round too. They had not gone with the people in their evil: but as to the pain and trial of the march which the unbelief of the others had caused, they are obliged to go along with the people, and to bear a part of it. This is what we must make up our minds to. If the church has failed, we must make up our minds to accompany it in its course of sorrow, though not in its course of sin. As far as Caleb and Joshua were concerned, there was the exercise of grace, and patience, and love. It was blessed to them, for God was faithful in keeping them, whilst the rest fell in the wilderness. Caleb is able to say, at the end of the forty years, that he is as strong for war as at the beginning, "both to go out and to come in." (Josh. xiv.) But the faithful, though they had the consciousness that God

was with them, were obliged to accompany the unfaithful in their course of sorrow, arising from the position into which they had brought themselves.

This is our place. In the spirit of love, of patience, and of humiliation, we have always to take the place of those who have sinned. See Daniel. Though himself personally righteous, Daniel confesses the people's sin as his own, saying, "O Lord we have sinned, and have committed iniquity to us belongeth confusion of face," &c. (Dan. ix.) The sin and evil of those who have sinned should be confessed by the remnant, who, though not partakers of the sin, must yet be partakers of the consequences of it, suffering in all the affliction with true sympathy and fellowship.

In applying this practically to ourselves, what was it that led to the very need of their having Jehovah with them on the march? The soul not being set on (their not having their affections occupied with) the blessings of the promised land. And that which we have to seek is that our souls may "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost dwelling in us becomes the earnest of those better things in our hearts; and reveals to us that it is Jehovah's land, the land which He has given us, that He is bringing us into. If we are able to say, This is the fruit of the land which Jehovah has given us—if our hearts' affections are dwelling on the land, all the strength of the Anakim is as nothing. No matter, then, as to preventing us from getting there, what may be the

trial and difficulty by the way. But the moment we lose the consciousness of what is ours, the moment we forget that Jehovah has given us the land, difficulties and trials occupy our mind, and become too great for us; we fall under the power of them. This results from our losing sight of what belongs to us in hope. We cannot have our hearts fixed on Canaan without being conscious that Jehovah's strength is with us.

If I rest in circumstances I am apt to blame the Lord for bringing me there. Nobody ever thought of the blessedness of being with Jesus in the glory, and of being like Him there, no one ever entered in spirit really there without being conscious that it was Jehovah's strength that would bring him there. Then all in the way is a mere circumstance.

What I desire for you and for myself, beloved, is that we may avoid "despising the pleasant land." And do not let us say that we are not despising it if we are not thinking often about it. If we are not thinking of Jesus where He is, and of being with Him there, we are "despising the pleasant land." May we "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

We must not suppose that the scriptures do not supply to the new man the details of the glory that belongs to us. But they are details known only to faith. It is only just so far as we are in present communion with the Lord that we shall understand

and enjoy them. Memory will not do. There is no possibility of exercising memory about the objects of hope. We must be filled with the Spirit. That which will fill up our joy is Christ Himself who fills all things. We find a fund of detail about the glory when we know, by the power of the Holy Ghost, what Christ is for us—Christ glorified. Just as the poor robber (taught of the Holy Ghost) could state the whole life of Christ, though He had never known Him before, as if he had been His intimate friend, saying to his companion, "This man has done nothing amiss," so the soul, when taught by the Holy Ghost, has Jesus as the object of its affections, and knows and realises it. The mind then becomes occupied with the object of its hope in glory, and the individual is able to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." All the circumstances which happen to us only come in by the way. Instead of having the thoughts down here in the trouble, bringing God down into it, we are lifted clean out of it into glory. This sets us on our "high places," when, otherwise there would be the feeling in the heart, "Why hath Jehovah brought us unto this land to fall by the sword?" &c. The Holy Ghost delights to take of the things of Christ and shew them to us. (John xvi. 13-15.)

The Lord give us, in realising the fulness of Jesus, to have our souls in the sweet savour of divine delight in Him, dwelling by faith in the

promised land, that we may know what our hope is, as well as what is the ground of our hope. And ever let us remember that it is not by any effort of memory, but by the power of communion in the Holy Ghost, that we can have the present consciousness and enjoyment of those things "which God hath prepared for them that love him."

"THEM THAT ARE PERFECT."

A perfect Christian is a full-grown man in one sense; it is the same word as the "perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And what is that? It is certainly not being like what Christ was when He was down here, for there was no sin in Him; so the thought of being like Him thus is a mere delusion. He that gazes on Him up there walks like Him down here; but to be like Him as He *was* down here is not possible. To walk like Him, I repeat, is said; but to *be* like Him would be to be absolutely sinless. To be conformed to Him in glory—that we shall be, and therefore the heart desires and runs after it now: and that is what is called a perfect Christian. It is not one who knows what it is to have got the sins of the old creation cleared away; it is not merely knowing the work of Christ which puts away sin, hardly measured either by the sin, for it is the whole state of the nature. All is settled, and I know that "by one offering He has perfected for

ever them that are sanctified;" that there is no more a question of anything to be settled between me and God, and I have liberty before Him in the sense of His favour. But then I say, Is that all? All my debts paid; but am I to have nothing to buy anything with? Am I henceforth to starve without possessing a farthing? Then it is that the believer comes to see, that having part in this forgiveness he has also part with the last Adam: he has got hold by grace of this Man in the glory, and knowing this, I say my whole soul is in that. I have seen the excellency of Christ Jesus my Lord, and it has set aside everything here; I have done with it all; I belong to another place, and no longer own the old man.

It is then the Christian has got to be what he calls a perfect man. He has this object before him; he has got Christ's place before God, and he grows up into the stature of Christ, not that he has not much still to learn, but he has got into his place; he is of full age; he discerns good and evil; he has got hold of his place in Christ, and he knows it. This sets aside the flesh altogether, and also that which is a deceptive thing to many—perfection in the flesh; for Christ in glory is my only perfection. In the world I am running a race I have not attained yet; but Christ has laid hold of me for it. Those who are not thus perfect are then put into the strongest contrast—"If in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already

attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." I can walk with one who only knows his redemption in Christ with just the same love; but I look for him to get hold of this also.

EXTRACTS.

"Before we are in the glory, we are never on a level with the position we hold, while we have only this position to sustain us. We must look *above* our path to be able to walk in it. A Jew who had the secret of the Lord and who waited for the Messiah was pious and faithful according to the law. A Jew who had only the law assuredly did not keep it.

"A Christian who has heaven before him, and a Saviour in the glory as the object of his affections, will walk well upon the earth. He who has only the earthly path for his rule, will fail in the intelligence and motives needed to walk in it: he will become a prey to worldliness, and his Christian walk in the world will be more or less on a level with the world in which he walks.

"The eyes upwards on Jesus will keep the heart and steps in a path conformable to Jesus, and which, consequently will glorify Him, and make Him known in the walk. Seeing what we are, we must have a motive above our path to walk in it. This does not prevent our needing also for our path the fear of the Lord, to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, knowing that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ."

“There is a divine righteousness in which Christ stands before God as risen; that is, in which I stand in the power of a new life as risen with Him. I am made the righteousness of God in Him. As He is, so am I in this world. This is in the reality of a life in which we live, which is Christ; and of a divine righteousness in which we stand before God, which is Christ. Not I, but Christ lives in me. It is a real living certain position before God, in which I, through grace, and Christ are one, though all flows from and, thank God, is dependent on Him. ‘He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life,’ but then it is perfect righteousness already before God. More than this I am a child, a son. Such is my relationship with God. I have eternal life. I am in a known, blessed, fixed, relationship with God, where grace has placed me through the working of the same power in which Christ was raised from the dead and set at God’s right hand. I am not only in it, but it is my relationship with God, and there is none but that.”

“God’s plan is to have a people connected with Himself, with His house on high as their dwelling-place, and for them to act here according to the position that God has set them in there, though they have the flesh within, with its lusts and its desires.

“And can any thus placed go and connect themselves with that which crucified the Son—with that

whose friendship is 'enmity with God'—without losing, as an immediate result, peace of heart and conscience? Why does a Christian's place ooze out? Often, one must reply, because he is walking carelessly through the world, forgetting it is the place where Christ was crucified. My cup of joy can never be full if the world be the place where I am found, and I am walking in its spirit."

“ MY DESIRE FOR THEE.”

That thou mayest daily gather fresh droppings of
His love,

Forever round thee falling as manna from above,
That ever midst the worry of busy outward life,
Thine inner one may flourish unhindered by the
strife.

That thou mayest know His presence to brighten
all the way,

And prove His grace sufficient for each succeeding
day.

That more increased attraction in Jesus thou
mayest see,

And mine is but an echo of His desire for thee.

THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF DIVINE LOVE.

I JOHN iv. 16.

This passage is one of much beauty and comfort to the earnest and lowly soul, for it presents to us God, thinking of us from our state of utter sinfulness on to judgment itself, and displays His love from beginning to end.

In general, the epistle presents us Divine life, that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested here below in the person of the Lord Jesus, communicated to others, that thing, as it is said, which is true in Him and in us.

The Gospel of John, besides the doctrine of the Comforter, presents to us God manifested in the Son, and life in Himself; the Epistle, life communicated to us, and that life known in its fruits of love to the brethren, and obedience or practical righteousness.

In the passage before us, love is especially the subject, and first love as partaking of the nature of Him who is love. He that loveth is born of God and knows God; partakes of the nature and knows Him who is it, as partaker of it.

Possession of a nature, (and without possessing it is impossible,) makes us know what that nature is, what the being is who has that nature. A mere animal does not know what a man is, his way of thinking, feeling; a man knows what a man is.

What an angel is, save as the part of connection with God necessarily reveals some elements of his nature, he does not know. He that loves, knows God, for he is born of Him, being partaker of the divine nature: a blessed truth, the spring (righteousness being introduced,) of eternal joy and infinite delight.

But when we come to the practice down here, we find difficulty in it. I love the brethren: what coldness after all, often self has come in, and I fail in love. I cannot trust my own heart a minute. Can I really say I am born of God and know God when I find so much in a treacherous heart that belies after all what I desire? I hope, I fear—there is no liberty of spirit. And it is so far well; but, therefore, the blessed Spirit gives us the knowledge of love from another side, and where it is perfect: in God Himself, His ways and dealings. In this the love of God is *manifested* towards us, in our case. But let me briefly analyse the passage, that we may seize its completeness and bearing. First, in verses 9, 10, God's love to the sinner; verse 12, the enjoyment of His love in the saint; and 17, perfected in the boldness it gives us for the day of judgment.

First, His love to us as sinners. The eternal object of God's delight, His only begotten Son, was sent in blessing to us, and with this two fold object—first the positive blessing, what is given, that we might live through Him. We were dead in sin, God gives us a new life—a divine life. We no

longer live through Adam, but through the Son of God. He that hath the Son hath life. Our existence towards God is divine life in Christ. God has thought of our ruin in love, and given us eternal life in His Son.

But we were guilty also, as responsible beings before Him. Here His love has met us. He has given His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. It is not law, nor duty, though it was there, but because it was there, ruin, failure, and condemnation. But love is not in that we love God; (which is what we have to look for in our hearts if we seek the proof of life there, but then really under law), that law required, and rightly—but in that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. It is not requiring what we ought to be from us, just as this is, but putting away, making a holy propitiation for our sins. We were dead in sins, and He gives us life. We were guilty, and He has given Him to make propitiation for our sins. He has met our whole case, in both its aspects as sinners. Now the love of God is known, the heart free, the conscience purged, He can exhort us to love one another.

Now we have to do with a saint, and he has more privileges than being forgiven and having life. No man has seen God. How know Him, even if we have a life and nature which capacitates us thereto? know Him as an object fully before our souls, and so known. Before the world this was in Christ personally present revealing Him (see John i. 18),

and He was rejected. But how in us? If we love one another *God dwelleth in us*, and His love is perfected in us. Here is the saints privilege. He enjoys the love of God, poured out in his own soul. God dwells in him by His Spirit, and makes His presence known in infinite and enjoyed love, but as dwelling in the believer. It is not still that we love Him, but that His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us. It is in our hearts, but what is there is the love of God, known and enjoyed by His own presence. If God thus dwells in us—which we know, because He has given us of His Spirit, and sheds that love by His very presence abroad in our hearts—we may well say perfected in love, for what more perfect exercise and display of it in *communication* to us than His dwelling in us Himself, who is it perfectly, and sheds it abroad in our hearts by His presence; but even this looks out when the proof of it is to be given. We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. You cannot separate the enjoyment of God's love in us by His presence, from that in which it has been perfectly displayed in His own work to His own glory. And this portion of the Christian is not a special or extraordinary proof of progress. It is the Christian state. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God. For God, if He dwell in us, is infinite, and we dwell in Him; feel surrounded, and are, by His goodness, love, power,

so that our abode and rest is in Him, and in the fulness of His love. All this may be realised in different degrees, but it belongs to every one that confesseth JESUS, the lowly man, to be the Son of God. Of course, he does not speak of hypocrites.

But again the Apostle carefully brings us back to look at the love as in God, as displayed towards us. We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. Whatever the enjoyment of the love and realization of it, it is always the love in Him, sovereign love, which He hath had to us. We know God. God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. Here, though the love is ever the same, what God is and what He displays to us, yet the order of thought is somewhat different. I am dwelling in love, the enjoyment and consciousness of this love, and its power in exercise towards others. I dwell then in God, for God is love; dwelling in this he dwells in God, for this is what God is. His soul rests, reposes, and confides in Him, surrounded by His goodness, and so as that love is active in his soul, shed abroad and exercised there, God is in him, God being love, and deigning to dwell in us. First it was the fact, God dwells in the saint, and as infinite, the saint in Him. Now as to his enjoyment and privilege he dwells in God; and then as to the activity of love, God dwells in him. The first fact is this state, and the double blessedness of God Himself, and the activity of His love. All this is simple. Rich and eternal and pure life now enjoyed in joying in God

Himself, and exercised as it was in Jesus, in love to His, and every sinner around.

We now come to the *third* step in this blessed chain of love. Herein is love perfected with us, that we might have boldness for the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. Love has looked on from the time of our sin, looked in and dwelt in us by the way, and now tells the tale of its perfectness for that day, when God's judgment calls all in question but the fruit of His love. But how should this meet the day of judgment? Here love is perfected with us, we are as Christ is, who is the judge; what fear, then? Oh, how has love thought of us, from the state of sins and death right on to judgment, and given us to stand now "in this world" as Christ Himself is before God. Who shall find fault in that! Shall Christ whom we are like, or God whose delight is in Him? We have boldness for the day of judgment. No place in which the Christian is so bold, when he knows his place in Christ. When we stand before His judgment seat we shall be perfectly like Himself; and as He is, so are we *in this world*. Many a sincere person, I mean sincere Christian, does not see this his place in Christ. He may say, I am a poor sinner, and the cross just suits me. Blessedly true. But change the phrase: I am a poor sinner, and the judgment seat just suits me! That will not do. Yet we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10). There we must be fit for the judge. A dirty man is fit to be washed—a

debtor for one who comes to pay his debts, but a righteous person for a judgment seat; and we have here the measure of this: Christ, who sits to judge, is my righteousness. When I appear there, I shall appear in glory, shall be like Him, bear His image, having been *raised* in glory—my vile body fashioned like His glorious body. Here there is no room for fear. Grace has put the believer in Christ now, and through His work he is accepted in the beloved; as He is so is the believer in this world. How can I fear if I am as Christ? Note, it is not as He *was*. He was without sin, knew no sin even when He was down here. If I say I have none, I deceive myself, and the truth is not in me. But my place before God is in Christ, not in the flesh. There is no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus. But as He *is*, now He has finished the work and by Himself purged our sins having by one offering perfected for ever those who are sanctified, through the offering of His body once for all, and now as He *is*, so *are* we in this world, accepted in the beloved. I repeat, what room is there for fear? Is not this love, perfect, thoughtful love, that in the place of judgment, there we find perfection? Then, I know I am like the judge, like the Lord in glory, like my Saviour. Gracious love that has thought of my sins, and spiritual death in them; blessed and blessing love, God's dwelling in me; and perfected love, in that I am as Christ, God's own Son, so that where surely fear might be, fear is cast out. Love has made me know now what love has done,

and while it makes me enjoy itself now, God dwells in me and I in Him, makes me look back and see it active when I was a dead sinner, a love that flows from itself out to me, so that I reckon on it, yea, learn its perfectness when I might fear, and find that love had counsels of infinite wonder, to make me as Christ the Son of God, a man in glory, and righteousness of divine perfection, even the one before whose judgment seat I shall stand, like Him, His righteousness mine. Love has left nothing unthought of that could make me exalt God as infinite in grace, and enjoy His goodness in a righteousness which He has made mine. There is no fear in love. Where shall fear find a place, from my state of death in sins up to the judgment seat of Christ? He cannot love me too much, but He cannot love me more, and my heart is at rest.

And note here, though we pass through it, and it is very natural that we should, yet *hope* as to the judgment day is not the true feeling of a believer at all. We hope because we see goodness, and know there is such a thing as redemption; and we fear because we see that there is that in us which cannot stand before the judgment of God. We vacillate, are ill at ease, and when the thought of judgment comes in, there is torment because there is fear. God would not have us so. He would not we should have torment. He would have us walk with Him happy, and in *confidence*. Fear is not confidence. But if we have to be judged, that is, our state decided according to our works in that

day, (for we shall all stand before the judgment seat), we shall certainly be condemned. Enter not, says the heart that knows what sin, and what flesh is in God's sight—enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight *shall no man living be justified*. But the believer has learned this as to himself before the judgment comes, and has fled for refuge to the hope set before him, and knows that redemption is as certain as complete, and divine righteousness as satisfactory, if I may use so feeble a word, as his condemnation was certain. He does not mix up as his portion judgment for sin, and redemption from sin. He owns fully the one and his own deserved condemnation; and believes fully in the other. He does not destroy the force of both by mixing them together. Judgment according to what he is, would, he knows, have been certain condemnation. Divine righteousness, (and we are the righteousness of God in Christ,) is necessary and perfect acceptance. Grace has given it to him, has made it his. As He is, so are we *in this world*, for we have it by faith, we have boldness in the day of judgment, and there is no fear in love, our portion is perfected in this. *Raised in glory*, he is manifested before the judgment seat, but glorified before he is there, his vile body fashioned like Christ's glorious body, by that power which can subdue all things to itself. Knowing then as he is known, he looks back from that blessedness, bearing the image of the heavenly, on the countless ways of love, which has brought a poor

feeble creature, justified through Christ the Lord, all the way along, that he might know himself, and the love which has led, thought of, sustained, borne with, lifted up, and brought there to enjoy and praise, made like the Lord, the love that has done it, and to dwell in a holiness where no evil can enter, and which is only joy, and find Jesus the Lord of Glory, the first born among many brethren. We love him because He first loved us. But oh, how imperfect are all our thoughts of that day. Our part is to dwell in, and think of Christ, to serve Him with an undivided heart here.

“ I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE.”

JOHN VI.

If a person is neither feeding, digesting, nor hungering, he is in an unhealthy condition; if he feeds, and the process of digestion follows in natural order, he hungers again. Just so is it with things of God and the child of God, and in order to health, each of these three operations has its proper time and place.

A man that eats nothing must sink in decay while another who cannot digest his food suffers from a train of attendant maladies, not one of the least (because of the bad effect it has around) is *discontent*; he is discontented with himself, and with all about him. So it is with divine things; if I cannot digest what I have taken, the food does

me no good; not that the fault is in the food, it is *in myself*.

A hungry man does not find fault with his food, because he is hungry, and the plainer the food, the more easy is it of digestion, and even a crust is acceptable to a hungry man. To be complaining of my food is neither hungering, digesting, nor feeding; and a saint in a healthy condition of soul himself, will not be finding fault with others, or with the meetings, he will be helping them both by the flow of health in himself.

It is not a sign of a healthy state for the appetite to need "pampering," or for us to desire that the manna should be made up into pleasant morsels by *natural skill*. (See Num. xi.) It is a sign of health to be hungry, and the soul that digests most regularly is the one you will most frequently find again hungry.

If you see a saint who is never hungry, may you not conclude that something is wrong? If all were right would he not digest? would he not hunger again and again? And if we are in secret with God, we shall be found at that place where food is dispensed.

Only such souls "grow," according to 1 Peter ii. 2, 3, and only such help others. The manna was to be gathered *each day*. Your supplies must come directly from the Lord himself, and what you were supplied with yesterday gives you no power for to-day, and if the Lord did supply us with more than was necessary for each day, such are we that

we should immediately become independent of Him; it would take us out of the path of faith. He does not do this; He will have us dependent on Himself.

This world is as really destitute of food in itself for the redeemed, as was the wilderness for Israel; hence the need of "bread from heaven." Like a humming bird plunged under the water, they have come down into an element that is not only foreign to them, but that ministers death to the soul that imbibes it; and it is by a strength ministered from above, they are enabled to live, because they partake of a suited supply from thence. If I am longing "for cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic," (Num. xi.), I am sighing for Egypt's food, and not for the supplies of God. These feed *the flesh*, while the word feeds the *new man* and judges the flesh, with all its desires,—condemns it, and no longer owns it. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, even so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (John vi.) But as Israel needed the manna, so do you and I need a *daily* supply. Be careful that you do not loathe this "light food;" if you do, be assured that your heart has already gone far into the land where *you* will presently be—"among the flesh-pots of Egypt," where you may, alas! "eat bread to the full," but where all you get can only minister to and nourish *the flesh*. "For to be carnally minded is *death*." (Rom. viii.)

JESUS, THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF FAITH.

HEBREWS XII. 2.

All the witnesses for God spoken of in Hebrews xi. are for our encouragement in the path of faith; but there is a difference between them and Jesus. Accordingly the Apostle here singles Him out of all.

If I see Abraham, who by faith sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, or Isaac, who blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come, or Jacob on his dying bed of blessing and worship, they have all run their race before; but in Jesus we have a far higher witness. Besides, in Him there is the grace to sustain us in the race.

Therefore in looking unto Jesus we get a motive and an unfailing source of strength. We see in Jesus the love which led Him to take this place for us, who, "when he putteth forth his own sheep, goeth before them." For if a race is to be run, we need a fore-runner. And in Jesus we have got one who did run before us, and has become the Captain and Completer of faith, in looking to whom we draw strength into our souls.

While Abraham and the rest filled up, in their little measure their several places, Christ has filled up the whole course of faith. There is no position that I can be in, no trial whatever that I can endure, but Christ has passed through all and over-

come. Thus I have got one who presents Himself in that character which I need ; and I find in Him one who knows what grace is wanted, and will supply it; for He has overcome, and says to me, " Be of good cheer : I have overcome the world," not, you shall overcome; but, I have overcome. It was so in the case of the blind man, (John ix. 31, &c.,) who was cast out of the synagogue; and why? Because Jesus had been cast out before him. And now we learn, that however rough the storm may be, it does but throw us the more thoroughly on Christ, and thus that which would have been a sore trial does but chase us closer to Him.

Whatever turns our eye away from Christ is but a hindrance to our running the race that is set before us. If Christ has become the object of the soul, let us lay aside every weight. If I am running a race, a cloak, however comfortable, would only hinder and must be got rid of; it is a weight, and would prevent my running. I do not want anything to entangle my feet. If I am looking to Jesus in the appointed race, I must throw the cloak aside: otherwise it would seem strange to throw away so useful a garment. Nay, more; however much encouragement the history of antecedent faithful witnesses in Hebrews xi. may give, our eye must be fixed on Jesus, the true and faithful One. There is not a trial or difficulty that He has not passed through before me, and found His resources in God the Father. He will supply the needed grace to my heart.

There were these two features in the life of Christ down here. First, He exercised constant dependence on His Father: as He said, "I live by the Father." The new man is ever a dependent man. The moment we get out of dependence, we get into the flesh. It is not through our own life (for indeed we have but death) that we really live, but by Christ, through feeding upon Him.

In the highest possible sense, He walked in dependence on the Father, and for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame. Secondly, His affections were undivided. You never find Christ having any new object revealed to Him so as to induce Him to go on in His path of faithfulness. Paul and Stephen, on the other hand, had the glory revealed to them, which enabled them to endure. For when the heaven was opened to Stephen, the Lord appeared in glory to him, as, afterwards to Saul of Tarsus. But when the heavens were opened on Jesus, there was no object presented to Him, but, on the contrary, He was the object of heaven; the Holy Ghost descends upon Him, and the voice of the Father declares, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Thus the divine person of the Lord is witnessed to. The Apostle here gets hold of the preciousness of Christ in the lowliness into which He has come; but he never loses sight of the glory of Him who has come there. So when I get Christ at the baptism of John, I see Him at the lowest point (save in another way on the cross); and find-

ing Him there, I find all the divine compassion of His heart.

The ear is the gate by which the christian receiveth embassages of the highest aims and holiest purposes, those which God Himself giveth for His own eternal ends, calling His people by glory and virtue; therefore the word of Christ, "take heed how ye hear."

BE IN EARNEST.

Love will infuse into every man the spirit of the Gospel, and will render him an evangelist in his own sphere. Let love to the Saviour—love for souls, be true and fervent, and it will naturally burst forth in earnest entreaties and exertions. It will appeal to souls, plead with them, lay hold of them, agonize for them. It will never forget that with them it is a matter of life and death—of ineffable eternal blessedness, or of unutterable eternal woe. And wherever the Gospel is preached, it will realize the future in the present, and raise the cry in the heart to the God of all grace, that not one soul may go away unimpressed, unblessed, unsaved.

Dear reader, it is true this work is God's work from first to last. Yes, but He will work through *thy* zeal and *thy* energy. Oh! then, let the flame of thy love be unquenchable. Be in earnest. Heaven is in earnest. Hell is in earnest. Be thou in deep, deep earnest. The Master wept over a city. Thou hast a world to weep over,

ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED
AND
ONE SPIRIT WITH THE LORD.

Fellow-believer, do you know in your soul, as taught of God from His word, the above two blessings that are ours through grace.

Look up into the heavens, look up at the man in the glory, the accepted man at God's right hand, for that is where Jesus is now. And then hear the words of the Holy Ghost, the words of God, saying to you (in Ephesians i. verse 6) "He hath made us *accepted in the Beloved*," and just let your soul take it in. For that is how, "to the praise of the glory of His grace," He, the God of all grace, looks at you and me, as to our acceptance. Oh, what rest, what joy, what peace, to know this? Yes, "As He is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) What a perfect standing God's perfect love has given us. But you ask, perhaps, "What about what I am in myself? I find that the more I go on, the more I learn that 'in me, that is in my flesh dwells no good thing.' What about that?" Listen again to the written word. "*I am crucified with Christ.*" (Galatians ii. 20.) "Knowing this, that *our old man is crucified with Him.*" (Romans vi. 6)

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and *by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh*, (as well as judged sins) (Romans viii. 3.) And now, though it is actually

in us, (till we actually die, or the Lord comes, and we get glorified bodies like His own,) (Romans viii. 11; Philippians iii. 20, 21; 1 John iii. 2,) yet in God's reckoning, *we are dead, as sinful children of Adam*, (as well as cleared from our guilt) in the death of Christ. And our life is hid with Christ in God, for *He has become our life*. (Colossians iii.) And so we may truthfully sing:—

Like Thee, O Lord, how wondrous fair,
 Lord Jesus, all Thy members are.
 A life divine to them is given,
 The bright inheritance of heaven.

Just as we were we came to Thee,
 As heirs of wrath and misery,
 Just as thou art—now we are Thine,
 We stand in righteousness divine.

Or again,

Once we stood in condemnation,
 Waiting thus the sinner's doom;
 Christ in death has wrought salvation,
 God has raised Him from the tomb.

Now we see in Christ's acceptance,
 But the measure of our own;
 Him who lay beneath our sentence,
 Seated high upon the throne.

Quickened, raised, and in Him seated,
 We a full deliverance know:
 Every foe has been defeated,
 Every enemy laid low.

It may be that some one reads this and says, "Yes, I know all this is true of me, but I do not enjoy it as I did when I first learnt it. Why is this?" Because dear brother or sister you have

not been holding fast what God showed you, or it may be you have not been walking consistently with this place God has put you in. And then of course you do not and cannot enjoy it. For if, though you know "ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God," and "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory," you seek the things below, instead of the "things above," where Christ sitteth. If "having put off the old man with his deeds," and "having put on the new man," as every true believer has, you do not "put to death your members which are on the earth," (see Colossians iii. 5 to 13.) and do not put off the old man's ways and put on the new man's ways, thus allowing the sinful flesh in you to act in some way or other, of course you cannot enjoy the place that God's grace has put you into: (for though "not in the flesh but in the Spirit," the flesh is in us, as bad and vile as ever it was,) *our enjoyment of it depends upon our walk.* We must not take the standing and acceptance we have in Christ and through His sufferings and death for us, and then expect to enjoy it, when we are not walking consistently with it. Indeed we cannot do so. But if you know that "you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." And as He tells you to do, "*reckon yourself dead to sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord,*" then "*yield yourself up unto God, as one that is alive from the dead. And your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*" "*Present your body, a living (i. e. a continual) sac-*

rifice unto God." "Put to death your members which are upon the earth." *Put off* the old man's ways, and *put on* the new man's ways. Yes, dear brother or sister, give yourself up *to God*, and *for others*, instead of living to please self, as Ephesians v. 1 to 7 tells us we are to do, and thus "walk in love," and you will enjoy your place and acceptance in Christ before God, more and more as you go on, thus walking with the God who has given you such a place. But now as to our being united to Him. For the true Christian is both *accepted in Him*, and *united to Him* also. Christians are united to Christ in glory, and to one another down here, by having the Holy Ghost in them. Please look at 1 Corinthians vi. 15-17. also verse 19. "What know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" "What know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and ye are not your own?" And in verse 17, "He that is *joined to the Lord is one Spirit*," in contrast to "he that is joined to an harlot is one body, for two, saith he, shall be one flesh," verse 16. Ephesians i. 12, 13, tells us, *when* we get the indwelling of the Spirit, viz., "After ye believed." 1 Corinthians xii. 12, 13, that the one Spirit baptizes all believers into one body. The passage in chapter vi. already referred to, shows us we are "joined to the Lord." And in Colossians i. 18, ii. 18, 19, Ephesians i. 22, 23, also chapter v. 29, 30, we learn that every real Christian is a member of Christ and members one of another, therefore *united to Him* up there in glory,

and to one another down here on earth in one body.

“One Spirit with the Lord,”
 Oh blesséd, wondrous word,
 What heavenly light, what power divine
 Doth that sweet word afford.

“One Spirit with the Lord,”
 Jesus the glorified,
 Esteems the Church for which He bled,
 His body and His bride.

Now, if you read in the 1st of Colossians, from verse 14 to end of verse 19, also in chapter ii. verses 9 and 10, and then read verses 18 and 19 of chapter ii. you will I trust see first of all, what a glorious Person the Head of this body is, to whom we are united, One who is “*the image of the invisible God.*” who *created everything, for whom everything was created, was before everything, and upholds everything.* One in whom *all the fulness is pleased to dwell. All the fulness of the Godhead bodily;* and then I trust you will see as you read again verse 19 of chapter ii. (which tells us that from this glorious Person, the Head, to whom we are united, flows down to us the members here on earth all our spiritual nourishment and strength,) what an infinite source of supply we have in Him as thus united to Him, who loves us too, as a man loves himself. (Ephesians v. 29,) and what a blessing it is to be “*united to Him,*” as well as “*accepted in Him.*”

Yes, we are livingly united to this glorious Person, up there in glory. And there is no telling what blessing and comfort and power would be

ministered to us, both individually and corporately if we only took in more simply who He is, to whom we are united, and if we only were more constantly "*holding the Head,*" as we are exhorted to do in Colossians ii. 18, 19.

If you ask me, what is "holding the Head"? I believe, it is not allowing anything, or any person, angel or man, to come in between us and the One who is our Head.

Now this is just what Satan is always trying to get us to allow. Just as a clever general tries by manœvering to get some of his forces in between his opponents army and their source of supply, because he knows that if he can, then he can more easily overcome them, their supplies being cut off from coming in to them of food and ammunition, etc. So Satan tries in all manner of ways to get something or some one in between us and our blessed infinite source of supply, our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. For if we allow him to do so, he knows well that then we are practically cut off from the one from whom *all* the nourishment and spiritual power, etc, flows, and then he can easily overcome us as to our walk and ways down here.

Here in Colosse he was getting angels in between the Christians there and their Head. But it does not matter what it is, whether angels or men, we must be careful not to allow any one or any thing to come in between us and the blessed One up there in glory, to whom we are livingly united by

the Holy Ghost. For though this union between us and Him can never be actually broken, yet the practical enjoyment of it, and the blessing that should be flowing consciously down from the Head to us the members on earth, can be, and is hindered if we are not "holding the Head."

May God give us to be going on then steadfastly, and continually, not only knowing we are "accepted in Him" and "united to Him," who is up there at God's right hand, the accepted man, and the Head of the body, the Church; but so walking, through His grace, according to the place we are in, that we may be filled with joy and peace in believing, and that, allowing nothing to come in between us and Him we may know the wonderful sweetness of being "one Spirit with the Lord" as well.

And though by storms assailed
 And though by trials pressed,
 Himself our Life, He bears us up
 Right onward to the rest.

There we shall drink the stream
 Of endless bliss above:
 There we shall know, without a cloud,
 His full unbounded love.

DISCIPLESHIP.

LUKE ix. 23.

We have here an important lesson, indeed, more than one lesson. First the Christian needs to understand well that the way which leads to glory and

to heaven, the way in which Christ Himself walked, and in which He wishes us to follow Him, is a way in which we must *deny* ourselves, suffer and conquer. Secondly, that a Christian can have true faith, and be taught of God, as in Peter's case (Mark viii.,) without having the flesh in him judged, so as to render him capable of walking in the way into which this truth brings him. It is important to remember this; sincerity may exist without knowing oneself. Peter's heart was not ready for the cross; how many hearts there are in this state! Sincere, no doubt, but they have not spiritual courage to accept the consequences of the truth they believe. See the difference in Paul, made strong by the presence of the Holy Ghost, and by faith. He says in the presence of death, "To know Him (Christ) and the power of His resurrection and the communion of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death"—Phil. iii. 10. There was in him the power of the Holy Ghost, and "he bore always in his body the death of Jesus in order that the life of Jesus should manifest itself in his body." Happy man! always willing to suffer everything rather than not follow fully the Lord Jesus, and to confess His name whatever the consequence might be: and having walked faithfully, by grace to obtain at last the prize of His heavenly calling.

But the Lord does not conceal the consequence; He warns us that if we wish to be with Him, if we wish to follow Him, we must deny ourselves and

take up our cross. Let us receive the Lord's words—if we wish to go after Him, we must follow Him, and, if we follow Him, we shall find upon the road that which He found. Of course it is not a question of expiatory sufferings—of that which He suffered from God's hand for sin—but of His sufferings from man, the contradiction of sinners, the opposition of men, abuse, and even death. We know but little what it is to suffer for the name of Jesus; but remember, Christians, that which the Lord says first, "Let him deny himself;" you can always do this by grace. It is by doing this that we learn to suffer with Him, if God should call us to it. And what shall we give in exchange for our soul? Man's heart, alienated from God, tries to make the earth, where he was set at a distance from God, as pleasing to himself as possible; and in order to accomplish this, he uses God's gifts and creatures to be able to do without Him. It is said that there is no harm in these things; it is said that there will be music in heaven also, but in heaven it will not be employed in order to divert the mind without God. It is a question of the use we make of these things. For instance, there is no harm in strength, but in the manner of employing it: with it one does harm to one's neighbour. Is it not true that the world, which knows not God, uses all kinds of pleasures to enjoy itself without Him?

For the Christian, too, amusements only lead him away to a distance from God, and destroy his communion with Him. All that is in the world, the

lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. The world and its lust pass away, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. The prince of this world is Satan, who seduced Eve with these things, having first of all, destroyed her confidence in God; and it was with these things that he tried to seduce the Lord also, although, we know, in vain. But with little trouble he succeeds but too often to seduce the hearts of men and of Christians; and to cause the pleasures of the world to have more power upon the soul than Christ Himself, than the love of a dying Saviour. . . .

The Lord puts these two principles before the disciples: first, the soul is worth more than everything, it is not to be exchanged for anything; secondly, the Lord is about to come in glory, and whosoever shall be ashamed of Him in this corrupt world where He is rejected, of him will the Son of man be ashamed when He shall come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

Beloved reader, are we following Christ? Or in other words, are we *denying ourselves*, and taking up our cross *daily*? Or are we *pleasing ourselves*, and going after the pleasures of the world? Oh, that the love of Christ may so constrain our hearts, (His blessed, unchanging, wonderful love towards us) that we may heartily and willingly, in the strength He gives to those who wait upon Him, give up ourselves wholly, to live for Him, who gave Himself up wholly to save us.

“I'D RATHER SUFFER LOSS.”

“It was that very spot, sir,” said a working shoemaker, pointing to a place in his little workshop; “Yes, in that very place, sir, six years ago, that the Lord spoke peace to my troubled soul; and how good and gracious He is.” Such was almost the beginning of our happy and profitable intercourse, on paying a visit to this dear servant of the Lord Jesus.

After talking generally together, and having had sweet fellowship in the things of our precious Saviour and Lord, and we were about to leave, he said, “I should like to let you know something about the exercises of soul I have been lately passing through.” To this we readily assented.

He then said something like this: “When I was converted to God, and knew the Lord Jesus Christ His Son as my Saviour, I thought I shall now surely prosper in my little business; but in this I was sadly mistaken, for my earnings very soon fell off. The first year I earned three shillings a week less, the second year three shillings a week less, the third year four shillings a week less, and of late my earnings have been so little that I thought I must give it up, and seek some other employment, though I have so enjoyed the Lord's presence with me in this little place.

“Accordingly, knowing Mr. M. to be a kind christian man, and that he held a good situation in a large factory near this, I asked him if he thought

he could procure me employment of any kind in his place of business, and he promised to let me know when there was a vacancy.

“But after this I became deeply exercised before the Lord as to what I was about. Is this that I am seeking according to my own will or the Lord’s will? Is He bidding me to give up my present calling and seek another? for I have had much of the Lord’s presence, and enjoyed His sweet company when working alone in this corner.

“And just then the Lord seemed to say to me, Which will you have? Will you go into the factory, and mix with the ungodly multitude with large wages, or remain in this corner and enjoy my presence with small earnings; which will you have?

“I assure you, sir, it was a serious moment. I turned it well over in my mind. I considered how weak I am, how easily turned aside, and began to think that if I went into that factory to work, I might soon be drawn away, and lose my blessed Lord’s sweet company.

“So I said, ‘Lord, let me have Thy company even if it must be with small earnings; I’d rather suffer loss, than not enjoy Thy presence with me.’ From that time I became perfectly settled, and told Mr. M. not to think anything more about procuring a situation for me. Now, sir, it is remarkable that from that time work began to come in more than for a long time before.”

We could not help thinking that the result was

just what we should have expected. We believe that one of the greatest hindrance to souls is their being so taken up with desire for worldly prosperity. The consequence is that the Lord hath not got His rightful place in their hearts; and, however many excuses they may make, the question really is, "Am I seeking earthly gain, or the enjoyment of the Lord's presence?"

"Is communion with Him the uppermost desire of my heart?"

Perhaps no point is of more importance for us really to settle in the presence of God. If worldly advantage, to say nothing of the accumulation of wealth, has the *first* consideration, let it not surprise us if such go further and further away from the Lord; but if we are willing to suffer loss, and to lay aside everything that hinders our enjoyment of His sweet company, then we may be sure that He will not forsake us as to food and raiment.

We believe the Scripture is as true as ever, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." We do well to remember that to the believer it is said, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ. not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." (Matt. vi. 33; Phil. i. 29.)

LIVING to God inwardly is the only possible means of living to Him outwardly. . . . I dread great activity without great communion; but I believe that where the heart is with Christ, it will live to Him.

THE POSITIVENESS OF LIFE IN CHRIST.

I JOHN III. 1-10.

If we weigh the state of the church, we shall find a great deal of what is negative in the Christian life, and contentedness with what is negative. For example, a man sees sin, he takes for granted that there must be sin in him, and it is true and well that he should know it, providing it be not working; he sees the blood of Christ and is happy. If his flesh is kept in check as to positive sin, and the blood of Christ is seen, he is content. That is what I call *negative*—a person settling in himself that sin is, and is met by the cross of Christ. (It is not as speaking lightly of the cross that I say this. There is nothing like the cross. God Himself is glorified by it. The glory we can have with Christ. On the cross He was alone.)

This condition flows greatly *from all that is of nature not having been judged*, and the heart then occupied with Christ. When there is a positive life in exercise which attaches itself to Him, and sees the excellency in Him, it never can be satisfied without seeking to have, and to be, that which it sees in Him. Being free from sin, freed, if you please (for when this word is used in Scripture it refers to slavery), there is the positive activity of delighting in Christ. The heart is so far delivered from sin as to delight positively in Christ.

John takes up a positive active life, in the activity of which he supposes the Christian lives, and which has joys and delights of its own, "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons (children) of God!"

I get the nature of which we are made partakers shown from the life which is lived. If He is righteous, we know that every one who doeth righteousness (has the manifested character of that nature) is born of Him. Where has it come from? From God. I recognize this relationship of a child by the nature that is manifested. The Apostle is not merely thinking of what we are in the title of righteousness, but of whom we are born—whence we draw our life. Hence it is that he says in verse 9, "cannot sin," for it is the nature of God *in which we live as born again*. He takes the truth up, as he does on every subject, in its own absoluteness, without modifying it by the contradictory principle in us. But the result of the possession of this life is brought in in remarkable terms. We are born of God, but the life which we have received is that eternal life which was manifested in Christ. (Chap. i. 1-3.) Hence he says, "It doth not appear what we shall be," no one has seen the glory, "but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." We shall be like Him; it is from the blessed consciousness of

this, and the object thus set before us, that the activity of this life now flows. "And every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself," (he does not say, is pure, but) "even as He is pure." That is, the measure and standard which he has before his soul is that which belongs to Christ as the object before his soul. How different this is from the negative state, occupied with sin, perhaps thinking how I shall get rid of it! I am a child of Adam is the thought of such an one; no, I say, I am a child of God.

If we are sufficiently emptied of self to have Christ before us in this double way, *as the life in which we live, and the object for which we live*, then the affections are associated with the object we like; and He is not merely object, but life. The power of the life is exactly in the measure in which Christ is the object. There, is where a Christian is happy. His soul's affections are set free and occupied with Christ. He is the one we love and delight in, and we want to be like Him and with Him.

If your heart is dragging through the world, and you are trying to get as free from all the spots as you can, you cannot be happy. This positive life is real liberty of heart, and that is what happiness means. He purifies himself as He is pure.

If I am not living this life of Christ, the old lawless thing is active. When there is not the activity of divine life, there is not merely failure in this, but there is the activity of the Adam life, and it is always lawless.

(To be continued, D. V.)

THE POSITIVENESS OF LIFE IN CHRIST.

(Continued from No. 6.)

“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not,” and whosoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood abides in Christ and Christ in him; that is, if I am eating Christ and occupied with Christ, I do not commit sin, nor is my mind living in the sphere in which it has power.

If you are not abiding in Him, you will get down to the other state I have spoken of, the mere avoiding of positive evil, while living in the sphere of thought in which flesh can find itself at home, while the spiritual affections are dull and inactive.

“He that doeth righteousness is righteous even as He is righteous.” I am in Christ, on the same footing of righteousness, as to my walk down here, that He is: as partaker of the same nature and looking forward to a perfect conformity to Him. We have a positive life in itself, which is itself. There is this positive life in connection with Christ who is our life, and this life lives entirely on Him. “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God,” &c. This is the way it lives. It has these two traits—pointed out in this passage—practical righteousness, and love of the brethren.

A word on the way the soul gets into this living

on Christ and with Him. I do not believe you can ever do that until you get free in your conscience. Till then you cannot get beyond this negative conflict with sin, which avoids the evil the new life sees and judges. If I have the new life, I find the sin in me; and if I have not the consciousness of divine righteousness, I cannot delight in Christ as set free; that is, I must think of the sin. Is not God holy? And have I not sins? not merely guilt, but sins in my members? Yes; then "he that committeth sin is of the devil." Well, I commit sin, and am afraid. That is, the workings of flesh come back on my conscience, and I must be occupied with self. The soul is not discharged from self, as the ground of its standing before God, through divinely-wrought and self-humbling conviction of sin, enough to be cast over on divine righteousness in Christ. It has not been brought to see that the case is perfectly hopeless, and then to be cast over entirely on Christ. When brought to this, I am taken out of flesh by this work of redemption in Christ, so that I am made the righteousness of God in Him, and I do not look at myself to know if I am righteous before God.

What a contrast between that kind of negative life, with the head just above water, and which says, "I am alive, so I ought to be thankful," and this positive, joyful life which goes out in active energy after Christ! But in order to this the staff of confidence in self must be snapped.

If our hearts are grovelling on with the world,

this is not living on Christ. *Why have you got these difficulties? Because you are inclined to them, and nourish what is the seat of them by continually letting your heart move in the sphere where Christ is not. Christ Himself is not enough your object.* There is surely grace enough in Him to help us, where through grace He is looked to, and a strength which is made perfect in weakness.

[Italics by ED.]

G O D F O R U S .

ROMANS VIII. 31-39.

In this portion of scripture the apostle sums up the exercise of heart, and the work of grace, first in these exercises of heart, and then in the revelation of real liberty through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, which we enjoy as redeemed from all that we were in the flesh, from sin and Satan and the world, and from law too. But then, having gone through all this, and having shewn the way by which we, having the Spirit, are children of God and heirs, joint-heirs with Christ, and possessing the consciousness of the bondage and corruption which is still around us here, he closes the whole by shewing how, before it, and in it, and above it, and beyond it all, God is for us. He brings out this great truth to shew, not that Christ is in the heavenly places, but that He is in the difficulties. He shews, (and what a blessed thing this is, for by it He gets to God Himself!) though He

goes into the trouble of time, that, before trouble was, and before you ever were, it is Himself that is for you; and if so, no matter what is against you!

After going through the exercise of soul before redemption and shewing redemption accomplished, he takes up the great truth that overrides it all and goes through it all, and this is not what we are for God, for we were condemned, and, as he says in the same chapter, enmity against God—not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be—but, by means of the process by which He discovered to me my misery, He has brought out the revelation of what He is for me. And the conclusion he draws from the whole is, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” And you will find that, in the way in which he looks at it, he takes up every side of the question. He does not content himself with looking at the bare fact, though that is blessed in itself, but he takes up every side.

And it is exceedingly precious, beloved friends, to see the way in which God is for us. Not only nothing can escape Him, but He occupies Himself with everything that concerns us. Just in the same way, if a person were ill, a friend might go to inquire for him to know how he did; but if it were a child whose mother was occupied about it, it would have all her care and all her thoughts, for her heart is there. She is for it, and would give everything she has for it, and would not let you come into the house if you made a noise. Yet that is only a human mother, who may forget her suck-

ling child. At the same time it is the character of that perfect love of God in its condescending character. Nothing can escape Him, and He neglects nothing. Surely we may say, "If God be for us, who can be against us"?

"He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all," First, I find here that God is a Giver. Well, I say, He has given His well-beloved Son. I have God as a giver in the highest possible way, so that nothing is to be named after this. Observe the reasoning too, the Apostle reasons from what God is and does, to the effects on us, and not from the effects on us, or from what it is in us to God. If I reason from what I find in myself, I say, I am a sinner. God will not have me. He must condemn me, though there may be a little hope. Still I draw conclusions from what I find in myself, and then, though there may be some true thoughts of God, it is partly truth and partly mistakes. That is not faith, beloved friends. It is so far true the soul knows that God is a holy judge; but then the real conviction of sin makes us feel that God cannot have us.

Take the prodigal son. He was converted: he came to himself; he knew his father's goodness; but he immediately begins to draw conclusions from what he was. So he resolves to say, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." He thought this was a more proper condition to be in at his father's house. His confession of sin was all right, but the conclu-

sions he drew were all wrong. This is what persons are doing now. It is perfectly natural and true also if this were all that were to be known. But they mix up the truth with human notions, just as the prodigal mixed up his sense of sin, which was all right, with thoughts of his father, which were all wrong. When we thus reason, we have not met God ; for when the prodigal met his father, he was on his neck, and the best robe was put on him. Till then he never got the father's own testimony to his dealings from what he was in himself.

Just so is the way the Spirit reasons when drawing conclusions for God. The soul may be thinking that it is humble, when reasoning otherwise ; but it is only proving that it is not cast upon grace by an adequate conviction of sin. The Apostle had gone through it all ; and he says, God has given His Son, and I should like to know what He will not give after that. If I have got hold of this—God has not spared the very best and brightest thing in heaven—I must say, What will He not give with Him ? If I have debts, I do not like to look at my books (if I am not honest) ; for I know what I shall find there. What is there presses hard upon me ; but if some one comes and pays my debts, I am not afraid (when they are paid) to let my creditors see my books. I open them up ; and if I find the great amount of them, the more I see of them the more I think of the man who paid them. So it is in redemption. The effect in me,

when I see the greatness of what has been done, is to make me think more of Him who is for me; and so repentance goes on growing all a man's life. For the more I know God the more I see the evil of sin.

But first I said it is God giving. If He gave His Son, glory comes in as a kind of natural consequence. If I really feel and know what Christ is, the more I see this. Our being in glory with Him is His seeing the fruit of the travail of His soul: and if we are not in glory with Him, He is not seeing the fruit of His travail—that *does* follow.

But, further, the Apostle says, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" He is for me both about the sins, in putting them away, and about righteousness. It does not only say, he is justified of God, but God justifies. So what matter if Satan accuse? as he did in Zechariah. This is "a brand plucked out of the fire," says the Lord. Are you going to cast it in again? We can triumphantly ask, Who can condemn us? He cannot of course; it is absurd to think of it. That which is justification here is that Christ is my righteousness. I am in Christ who has glorified God, and is standing before God. As He said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; and if God be glorified in Him, He will glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." The work on the cross has glorified all that God is; and now Christ is in the glory, and I am a righteous man in Him. Not only have I got what

I was in Adam put away, but "as He is, so are we in this world."

Then comes another thing; for we can expect everything after the gift of His own Son. Nevertheless in fact there are difficulties in the path: still it is the same thing, "God is for us." But mark here how He changes the term, "It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Why does he change to Christ? Of course it does mean the love of God in Christ. But why not say the love of God? Because we have to do with the One who has taken the place at the right hand of God, after being down here in the difficulties. We have difficulties on all sides: persecution in the family, not open perhaps, but which is as hard to bear: Christ had it too. You say, "*They think me mad;*" *Christ's friends wanted to take Him, they thought Him mad too.* And so the apostle brings home to us this very love of Him who came down; "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Here I have found the divine love coming down to get the experience of what we are passing through. I want to know the sympathy of Christ. I do not get this when God is forgiving me. God has no sympathy with my sins; but in trials I do want to know that Christ suffered, being tempted. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Principalities and powers? Christ was tempted by them and overcame them for me; so

they are no stoppage in the way. Life? He went through it too. He had plenty of sorrow in it; and so much the more sorrow we have, the better for us. But still he has said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." Life cannot separate me from Christ, for "to me to live is Christ."—Death? This cannot separate me; yea, it will bring me to Him—"to die is gain." Persecutions? I not only triumph in them, but Christ is with me in them.

In all these things I learn to know myself as an unprofitable thing, and the faithfulness of Christ. I may know a man to be kind; but if I go on knowing him for thirty years, I get the experience of it; not that he is changed, but I know him better. I find One who got me out of the grand difficulty; He intercedes for me now. He does not repeat what He did at the first, but a kind of confidence grows with every day's experience; not that I ever learn that faith is not faith, but that I find Him unchangeably the same. I am ashamed of myself for my want of confidence in Him, and the communication of His grace gives me a familiarity of knowledge of Him (speaking most reverently) and a confidence, a happy confiding feeling. We are "more than conquerors," for we are learning Him our everlasting portion, and ourselves, that we want to get rid of. Creatures are all against us, but then they are but "creatures."

God is for me—not here in the love of a sovereign who thought good for me when I thought not of

Him, but it is the love of God in Christ, in Him who passed through all difficulties for us, life, death, &c., and for us met outrage, oppression, resistance, and persecution. Now I see that the very thing which would try me is that through which He passed for me, and it is a witness of the love which passed through everything for me—whatever concerns the person God loves and Christ cares for. In this way we have to pass on to the glory, to Christ if you please, in the consciousness that Christ has brought us into it. Else we are like the children of Israel in Egypt. When they passed the Red Sea, that was quite over. They had left Egypt. Redemption brought them out. Speaking of the work as done, redemption is behind us; in another sense it is not: the forgiveness of sins is, but that is not all of redemption, though included in it.

But we are taken out of the condition in which we were into another, just as Israel was. Though still in Egypt, they were not touched when the judgment came. But this was not all. He took their bodies out too. And so He takes us out of the flesh (I do not mean physically yet, though Christ is out of it in every sense). So the Lord brought the Israelites into a new condition altogether, into the wilderness. There they had the cloud all the way through and the manna. There their garments did not grow old and their feet did not swell; everything was provided by God. They had to gather the manna, it is true; just as dilig-

ence is required by us in divine things. Next they crossed the Jordan where conflict begins, and then it is we find that the Lord comes to Joshua as Captain of the Lord's host. When He thus comes as Captain, the command is: "Take off thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

This is the character of the ways of God. It is not a question of redemption here. He has brought us to Himself; but, having come, that which weighs with us must be according to the holiness of God. Because we are called to fellowship with God, and fellowship means common happiness, common thoughts, common feelings. The Father's delight is in His Son, and we have fellowship with Him in that. Christ's delight is in the Father; and we have fellowship with Him in that. So our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Christ Jesus. "If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." The apostle at once brings the character of God to bear on the person.

Thus the effect of redemption is to bring us to God. Being brought to Him, we can say, "Search me, O God." For He does search, not that He should impute, but that He may cleanse; and therefore we desire that He should. And then it is a blessed thought, beloved friends, that while He has gone through all my difficulties here, He is suiting me for my place there. In every sense this is true, that, if the soul is not sufficiently

brought to a sense of sin and to find Christ everything as regards righteousness, it does not understand grace. The Lord only give us to know (I am not speaking of mere knowledge now, but) in our hearts and consciences, that we have to do with God. Not as Israel had; for now the veil is rent from top to bottom, and we ought to walk according to the light because we have been brought into it. This is what I do earnestly desire for us all that we may know perfect redemption, and have the consciousness that the effect is to bring us into fellowship with the Father and the Son, so that everything contrary to His holiness may be judged and put away.

A PARTING WORD.

1 COR. xv. 58.

I have one word to press on you before going away "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable." If our hearts are not close to Christ, we are apt to get weary in the way. All is a vain show around us; but that which is *inside* abides, is true, is the life of Christ. All else goes! When the heart gets hold of this fact, it becomes (as to things around) like one taken into a house to work *for the day*, performs the duties well, but *passes through*, instead of living in the circumstances.

To Israel, the cloud came down, they stayed; it lifted up, on they went, it was all the same to them, why? because had they stayed when the cloud went

on, they would not have had the Lord with them— one may be daily at the desk for fifty years, yet with Christ,—doing God's will it is a great thing. Whether I go or you go, I stay or you stay, may that one word be realized in each of us. “Steadfast, unmoveable.” In whatever sphere as matter of Providence we are found, let the divine life be manifested—*Christ* manifested—*that abides*, all else changes, but that life remains and abides for ever, *aye for ever*.

There is not a single thing in which we have served Christ which shall be forgotten—lazy, alas! we all are in service, but all shall come out that is *real* and what is *real* in us is *Christ* and *Christ only*. The *appearance* now may be very little, not much even in a religious view, but what is *real abides* and our hearts clinging closely to Christ, we shall sustain one another in the Body of Christ, the love of Christ shall hold the whole together—Christ being everything, and we content to be nothing, helping one another, praying one for the other. I ask not the prayers of saints, I *reckon* on them.

The Lord keep us going on in simplicity, fulfilling as an hireling our day, till Christ shall come, and *then* shall every man have praise of God—“Praise of God!” Be that our object; and may God knit all our hearts together thoroughly and eternally.



A LETTER ON GIVING UP ONESELF ENTIRELY TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD.

VERY DEAR BROTHER,—G., who told me that you are now settled in ———, begged me to write you a few lines, which I do very willingly : indeed, it was on my asking him for news of you that he spoke to me of you, and told me that you had some thought of applying yourself more directly to the work of the Lord. Nothing is more desirable, dear brother ; there is the greatest need of labourers, and when our blessed Saviour raises them up, it is a sign that He would do a work Himself in this world of darkness. The gathering together of His own, and the sanctification and joy of those who are manifested, are always the thoughts predominant in my soul. There is every appearance that the Lord is hastening the time ; for the rest, our duty is certain. It is for you, dear brother, before God to determine whether the Lord calls you certainly to this work of faith. The more devotedness there is the more trials there will be, but a hundred times more will there be of happiness and of joy, and when the Lord returns, the crown of glory that fadeth not away. From the circumstances in which you are placed, it is difficult for me to speak, and probably those in which you will be placed would occupy your thoughts. This is a matter of faith. G. committed himself to the Lord, and the

Lord has sustained him, and he has always been maintained without difficulty, and has even provided for the wants of those who had trusted men. In any case, such a step is always an act of faith, and *one ought never to induce any one to follow it.*

If, for example, it will be always my delight to help the brethren whether in England or abroad, as our brethren do according to their power; but if I undertook to do such or such a thing, all that I have might fail me, through the providence of God, or a more pressing need might present itself, and I, already bound, should fail, either as to the will of God or my engagements; and further, I have a very strong objection—I am, in fact, entirely opposed—to sending anyone into the Lord's field with a salary of so much per annum. I can only say that it will be my joy, by the grace of God, to relieve the needs of my brethren according to my power, but to engage anyone to work is, it seems to me, to take the place of faith at least, if there were not some special direction. I wish to make you understand all the interest I should take in helping you if God call you to the work, on one side, and on the other, to prevent you from counting on me or any man whatever. . . .

That the Lord may raise up many workmen, and send them out into His harvest—this is the earnest desire of my heart. May God grant me to devote myself to it with all my strength, and may He strengthen the faith of all His servants, so that they may not distrust His goodness.

For myself, I can bear witness that He has never failed me, feeble and faithless as I have found myself to be, but always sustained beyond my expectation by His goodness.

You will find it the same, dear brother, if you feel yourself called to work for the Lord. My faith has been feeble, and the Lord has been good to me; if your faith is stronger, you will gather a more abundant harvest. May God bless you and keep you, and direct your thoughts and your steps. May He ever increase your faith, and make you feel His abundant love. May the Lord reveal Himself more and more to your soul.

Yours affectionately in Jesus,

FRAGMENTS

What is the mark of the action of the Holy Ghost on the soul? The Lord Jesus gets a place which He had not before, and if you are full of the Holy Ghost, you will have no object but Christ, no thought but Christ, no end but Christ, no will but Christ.

Whatever enfeebles attachment to Christ destroys power—It is not gross sin that does it, which of course will be met and judged; but *it is the little things of every day life, which are apt to be chosen before Christ.* When the world creeps in, the salt has lost its savour, and we shew that a rejected Christ has little power in our eyes. The Lord keep us in the path with Christ, where all is bright and blessed. If the film of this world has been drawn over our spiritual vision, hiding Christ from us, He alone can remove it.

THE ETERNAL LIFE.

1 JOHN I. 1-2.

The Epistle of John is the eternal life manifested in Jesus, and imparted to us—the life which was with the Father, and which is in the Son. . . . This life is so precious, manifested as it is in the person of Jesus, that the epistle has in this respect quite a peculiar charm. When I turn my eyes to Jesus, when I contemplate all His obedience, His purity, His grace, His tenderness, His patience, His devotedness, His holiness, His love, His entire freedom from all self-seeking, I can say, that is *my* life. This is immeasurable grace. It may be that it is obscured in me; but it is none the less true, that that is *my* life. Oh, how do I enjoy it thus seen! How I bless God for it! What rest to the soul! What pure joy to the heart; At the same time Jesus Himself is the object of my affections, and all my affections are formed on that holy object. And this is morally very important; while it is in *Him*, not in myself that I rejoice and delight. . . .

The law promised life on obedience; but life *came* in the person of Jesus, in all its own divine perfectness, in its human manifestations. Oh, how precious is the truth, that this life such as it was with the Father, such as it was in Jesus, is given to us! In what relationships it sets us, by the power of the Holy Ghost, with the Father and with the Son

Himself! The life has been manifested. Therefore we have no longer to seek for it, to grope after it in the darkness, to explore at random the indefinite, or the obscurity of our own hearts, in order to find it, to labour fruitlessly under the law, in order to obtain it. We behold it: it is revealed, it is here, in Jesus Christ, and he who possesses *Christ* possesses *that life*.

Now inasmuch as that life was the Son, it could not be known without knowing the Son, that is, that which He was, entering into His thoughts, His feelings; otherwise He is not really known. It was theirs, they had communion with Him—with the Son. Precious fact! to enter into the thoughts (all the thoughts) and into the feelings of the Son of God, come down in grace; to do this in fellowship with Him, that is to say, not only knowing them but sharing these thoughts and feelings with Him. In effect, it is the life.

But we cannot have the Son without having the Father. He who had seen Him had seen the Father, and consequently he who had communion with the Son had communion with the Father, for their thoughts and feelings were all one. He is in the Father and the Father in Him. We have fellowship therefore with the Father. And this is true also when we look at it in another aspect. We know that the Father has entire delight in the Son. Now He has given us, by revealing the Son, to take our delight in Him also, feeble as we are. I know when I am delighting in Jesus—in His obedience,

His love to His Father, to us, His single eye and purely devoted heart,—I have the same feelings, the same thoughts, as the Father Himself. In that the Father delights, cannot but delight, in Him in whom I now delight, I have communion with the Father, so with the Son in the knowledge of the Father. All this flows, whether in the one or the other point of view, from the person of the Son. Herein our joy is full. What can we have more than the Father and the Son? What more perfect happiness than community of thoughts, feelings, joys and communion with the Father and the Son, deriving all our joy from themselves? And if it seem difficult to believe, let us remember, that in truth it cannot be otherwise; for in the life of Christ, the Holy Ghost is the source of my thoughts, feelings, communion, and He cannot give thoughts different from those of the Father and the Son. They must be in their nature the same. To say that they are *adoring* thoughts is in the very nature of things, and only makes them more precious. To say that they are *feeble* and often hindered, while the Father and the Son are divine and perfect, is, if true, to say the Father and the Son are God, are divine, and we feeble creatures. That surely none will deny. But if the blessed Spirit be the source, they must be the same as to nature and fact.

“SEEN OF ANGELS.”

In earlier days the angels had desired to look into the things of Christ, (1 Peter i. 12). When these things themselves were manifested and accomplished, this desire was answered; for in the history, as we find it in the Evangelists, the angels are set to be eye-witnesses of that which they had long desired to look into. They are privileged to find their place and their enjoyment in the history of Christ in ‘the mystery of godliness;’ and to find it, just as of old they had found it, in the sanctuary of God. In that sanctuary all, it is true, was for the use and blessing of sinners. The altars, and the laver, and the mercy-seat, and all else, were provided for us. The action and the grace of the house of God were for sinners; but the cherubim gazed. They were set in that house to look at its deepest mysteries. And so, in the same condition shall we find them in the day of the great originals, or of the heavenly things themselves, when ‘God was manifest in the flesh.’ For then, it is equally true, all was for the service and salvation of us sinners, or that God, so manifested, might be ‘preached unto the Gentiles,’ and ‘believed on in the world;’ but still all was as surely for this end, that He might be ‘seen of angels.’

Thus they took the same place in the sanctuary of old, and in the great mystery itself. They gazed—they looked—they were eye-witnesses. And

further, the sight they took of the mystery was of the same intense and interested character as the cherubims had before expressed in the holy of holies. 'And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy-seat, with their faces one to another: even to the mercy-seatward were the faces of the cherubim.' And so, in the history of Christ, the True Ark, they will be thus again seen.

The angel of the Lord comes, in his commission and ministry from heaven, to announce to the shepherds of Bethlehem the birth of Jesus. But as soon as He had fulfilled His service, suddenly there was with Him 'a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.' And when the time came for another great event, and 'God manifest in the flesh' was raised from the dead, soon to be 'received up into glory,' the angels are again present with the like intense and interested delight. At the sepulchre, as Mary Magdalene looked in, two of them were sitting, 'one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain;' and at the crisis of the ascension itself, they are again present, instructing the men of Galilee in the further ways of Him who had just then gone up on high.

What hanging over the mercy-seat was all this! What cherubim-gaze again and again was this! This utterance of the heavenly host in the fields of Bethlehem was not part of their ministry to man,

but an act of worship to God. They were not then instructing the shepherds, or even formally addressing themselves to them; but breathing out the rapture in which their own spirits were held in thoughts of the One that had been then born. And so their attitude in the sepulchre. When Mary appears, they have, it is true, a word of sympathy for her; but there they were in the sepulchre before she had come, and there they would have been though she had never come. As the cherubim in the tabernacle had hung over the ark and mercy-seat, on either side one, so now in the sepulchre the angels hang over the place where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and the other at the feet.

What ways of *seeing* Jesus were these! As we read, 'God was manifest in the flesh—seen of angels.' Well may we, beloved, covet grace to have like utterances and like attitudes over Jesus. And well may we grieve over what in our hearts is short of this, great indeed as some of us know that to be. I believe that many of us need to be attracted more than we are wont to be, by these things. Many of us have dwelt (if I may distinguish such things by such terms) more in the *light* of the knowledge of the divine *dispensations*, than in the *warmth* of such *mysteries* as Bethlohem, the garden, and the Mount of Olives, revealed to the enraptured angels. But in this we have been losers—losers in much of that communion which marked the path and the spirit of others in other days.

My desire has been to turn to this great sight, led that way by the condition of things around and among us. Glorious, I need not say, is the object—the same Person, ‘God manifest in the flesh,’ followed by faith from the manger to the cross, from the cross through the grave up in resurrection, and thence to the present heavens, and eternal ages beyond them.

REMARKS ON PRAYER AND THE WORD OF GOD.

As Mentioned Together in Scripture.

Prayer and the word of God are frequently mentioned together in the gospels and epistles. Their importance cannot be too forcibly impressed upon the saints. The writer does not doubt that very many are far more diligent in this respect than himself, but he is encouraged to make the following remarks, being assured that those, who are the most earnest in prayer, and the study of the word, will be the foremost to approve of, and have communion with anything that may tend to remind the saints of the importance or lead them on to the more diligent observance of these things.

They are, as remarked above, often mentioned together in the Scriptures. When the word of God joins together things in themselves distinct, the one from the other, it is not only important to notice the things themselves, but also to notice the

connection in which they are found. Thus it is with *faith* and *love*, the former to the Lord, the latter to the saints.

In like manner as *faith* and *love* are joined together, so also *prayer* and the *word* of God are joined together. From among the passages where *prayer* and the *word* thus occur, I quote the three following, viz :—Acts vi. 4, Luke, end of chapter x. and commencement of chapter xi., and Ephesians vi. 17, 18.

The first occurs at a memorable epoch in the history of the assembly of God here upon earth. Acts vi. makes mention of the first failure collectively of the saints. Individual sin had occurred in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, but now the change from the freshness and devotedness of chapters 2 and 4 begins to mark the saints in their collective character. How sad this scene! The blessed Lord had suffered, had been crucified, had risen from amongst the dead, and ascended on high; thence he had shed forth the Holy Ghost, the power that wrought in His disciples, so as to make them vessels of testimony in Jerusalem, both for the conversion of thousands and also for bringing home to the consciences of rulers and people that there was a power in these witnesses which was superior to all the power that was of the world; the apostles were faithful, the blessing was abundant, the proof that the Lord was working with them was manifested to the least as well as to the most spiritual (Acts iv. 31), and yet, with all this grace and privilege

before their eyes, there was a murmur amongst some as regarded the manner of serving the food. Even in early days how soon thoughts similar to those which influence man in his natural state entered into and had power over the minds of those who were the first fruits of the grace of God and the work of Christ. The attack of the enemy, as is ever the case, was directed against those who were foremost in the battle, for from verse 2 it is clear, that the apostles themselves were to be taken from their hitherto glorious testimony to Christ in heaven, in order to bestow their time and labour upon that which might serve to lessen the murmurings of saints on earth. Wisdom was given to the apostles to meet the danger and to still the murmurings, "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables," (v. 2), and again, "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word," (v. 4). If in these early days prayer and the ministry of the word was needed for the work, how needful in these days that the saints should continue stedfastly in both prayer and the reading of the word !

Although occupied in the daily business engagements of this life (engagements doubtless for the most part necessary), the earnest Christian will when such engagements are fulfilled, find time for prayer and reading the word. He is thus refreshed and strengthened, and keeps fresh in his own

spirit, whilst performing that which appertains to his calling to perform; but when the energy of his first love is tested by time, there is a danger of his gradually ceasing this habit of prayer and study of the word, and at length he may find himself passing day after day, and the Bible hardly looked at; and even where the reading and prayer with the family continues, he is aware that, though the form is the same, the freshness and power is gone. What is the remedy? Let him judge himself, and he will find he will again have recourse to prayer and the word, the former making him humbly feel his dependence from moment to moment upon God, and the latter ministering to him refreshment and strength in his own soul. Again, as regards the assemblies of the saints; sometimes after years of testimony and blessing, the work in its active form ceases, the older saints leave this world, and their places are not supplied by others, the attendance at the meetings for reading the word and prayer diminish, and the meetings themselves are at length discontinued. The light is no longer the same in the village or town. And why is this? The answer given is, "Because there are so few who attend." But this is no reason why the two or more who desire to go on with prayer and the word of God, should not habitually continue to meet together. The failure in such cases is owing to our thoughts being more occupied with the things which are seen than with the things which are not seen. Matt. xviii. 19, shows us that two are

enough for prayer, and experience has often shown the earnest Christian how much blessing can be obtained in reading the word alone or with but one other Christian.

The second occasion of this joining together of the word and prayer is in Luke x. and xi. In Luke x., whilst Martha serves, it is her sister Mary who sits at the feet of Jesus, and hears His word. When Martha complains of her sister leaving her to do all the work alone, the Lord replies, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that *good part* which shall not be taken away from her." Immediately afterwards in chap. xi. the Lord is in prayer, and the disciples also ask Him to teach them to pray, and thereupon He teaches them the prayer so well known to all: "Our Father which art in heaven, etc." This prayer commences with the desire for the glory of the Father before any mention is made of the wants of those who are the objects of His love; and thus we have another lesson as regards these things, first that to listen to the word is choosing "the good part," and secondly, that in our prayers the glory of the Father and the Son should ever take precedence of those things of which we have need whilst here.

The third and last portion of the word referred to above, is Ephesians vi. 17, 18. In Acts vi. it was the work upon earth, here it is the combat in the heavenly places. For this contest the Christian

requires the whole armour of God, first, to escape the wiles of the enemy (v. 11), and afterwards, to oppose him in the combat (v. 13). The different weapons for this warfare are enumerated in verses 14, 15, 16 and 17; all are defensive, excepting the one mentioned last, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," (v. 17). But as soon as the saint being completely equipped for defence, receives the word of God, immediately prayer is mentioned. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (v. 18.)

Thus we have the word of God and prayer set before us in close relationship together again and again in the blessed testimony which God has been pleased to give us. There are other passages where they are joined together, but I give only the number three, being the full number given by Scripture itself for testimony to the truth (2 Cor. xiii. 1). I add some remarks, however, as to verse 105 of Psalm cxix, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Sometimes wrongly quoted as a light to the feet and a lamp to the path. The difference is important, the word of God being a light for the whole course of the believer, and a lamp for each particular step that he should take. The darker the night, the more valuable the light which a wayfarer sees in the distance, and to which his steps are directed, the more valuable also the lamp which gives him guidance for each step. The

lamp warns him of dangers which are between him and the light, and it may be necessary for him to stop, or alter the course for a time, to avoid some snare or pit on the path, but as soon as the lamp shows that the direct course towards the light may again be taken, the wayfarer makes straight for the light. . . . But for the believer there is another thing needed, viz : dependence ; and though he may have the lamp and the light, yet, in a pathway full of snares, pits, and other dangers, he needs the aid and strength of Him who knows every portion of the path (Heb. iv. 16). Hence the importance of prayer. Prayer is the expression of our dependence, and the word is the weapon which overcomes the enemy (Luke iv. 1-13 ; 1 John ii. 14.)

PRAYING AND WORKING.

“ We will give ourselves continually to Prayer and the Ministry of the Word.”—Acts vi. 4.

The veil is rent. Thou now mayest enter in ;
 No flaming sword of cherub bars thy way ;
 He who, without the camp, once bore thy sin,
 Appears within the holiest *to-day*
 And intercedes for all who come by Him to pray.

His Blood is sprinkled on the mercy-seat,
 His Blood is sprinkled, too, before the throne ;
 Where'er ascends the cloud of incense sweet,
 The work of reconciliation all is done :
 He lives our great High Priest, who did for sin atone.

Head of the church, behold His glorious face ;
 His members all accepted in their Head ;
 In Him all fulness dwells of truth and grace
 To meet His people's ever-varying need :
 Draw nigh by Him to God without one pang of dread.

Prayer is the breath of faith in God's own ear,
 Prayer is the open mouth He waits to fill ;
 Prayer is the voice our Heavenly Father hears,
 That brings down blessings from His holy hill :
 Wisdom to learn and strength to do His gracious will.

First PRAY ; then WORK. No work can e'er succeed
 That prayerless wit and will to do combine ;
 All prayerless strength is but a broken reed.—
 A withered branch that's severed from the Vine :
 No fruits, or works of such, shall heaven-recorded shine.

THE WORD PRECIOUS ABOVE EVERY- THING, OR AN OFFENCE.

MARK iv. 16, 17.

Note, how vital *root* is—secret life. *If the word has given life, only the word can satisfy it.* The rain which cometh oft upon it will be relished. And needed, too, for as there is no power of life in the heart, so there is no source of nourishment if life exists.

But if I have got divine life through the word, it will be everything to me. If I have found my

joy in God's word, persecution, or affliction, because of it, will make me cling to it the closer. Persecution, in such a case, would merely come to rob me of my treasure. But if the word has never separated me from myself, by the gift of a new eternal life in Christ, then if trouble comes for the word, I shall give it up to keep myself—*my* life.

‘ THIS WONDROUS MAN.’

Self-emptying obedience, subjection of a kind quite its own, is, therefore, to be seen in every stage and action of such an One. And what was that course of service in the esteem of Him to whom it was rendered? As the *born* One, the *circumcised* One, the *baptized* and *anointed* One, the *serving*, *sorrowing*, and *crucified* One, and then as the *risen* One, He has passed here on earth under the eye of God. In the secrecy of the Virgin's womb, in the solitudes of Nazareth, in the activities and services of all the cities and villages of Israel, in the deep self-sacrifice of the cross, and then in the new bloom of resurrection, has ‘this wondrous Man’ been seen and delighted in of God—perfected, untainted, recalling the Divine delight in Man more than when of old he was made in God's image, and more than annulling all the Divine repentings of old, that man had been made on the earth.

His Person lent a glory to all His course of service and obedience, which rendered it of unutter-

able value. Nor is it merely that His Person made all that service and obedience *voluntary*. There is something far more than its being thus voluntary. There is that in it which the *Person* ('My Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts') imparts—and who can weigh or measure that?

We know this full well among ourselves. I mean *in kind*. The higher in dignity—in *personal* dignity—the one who serves us is, the higher the value of the service rises in our thoughts. And justly so; because more has been engaged for us, more has been devoted to us, than when the servant was an inferior; more has the heart instinctively learnt that our advantage was indeed sought, or our wishes and desires made an object. We do not forget the *person* in the *service*. We cannot. And so in this dear mystery we are meditating on. The service and obedience of Jesus were perfect; infinitely, unmingledly worthy of all acceptance.

But beyond that—beyond the *quality* of the fruit—there was the Person who yielded it; and this, as we said, imparted a value and a glory to it, that are unutterable.

The same value rested on the services of His life which afterwards gave character to His death. It was His Person which gave all its virtues to His death or sacrifice; and it was His Person which gave its peculiar glory to all He did in His course of self-humbling obedience. And the *complacency* of God in the one was as perfect as His *judicial acceptance* of the other.

GOD'S REST.

HEBREWS iv.

It is a blessed thing, though in one sense a terrible one (terrible ever to the flesh), to know that we "have to do" with God. (v. 13.) Yet there is nothing that we so easily forget, or so often lose sight of. The natural tendency of our hearts is to get out of, and then (as the disobedient child that of the parent whose eye he fears to meet) to dislike and dread God's presence. Always, every moment, under every circumstance, it is God with whom we "have to do."

People who are ever looking at second causes are led into practical infidelity; and so is it in measure with the saint of God. If he be resting in circumstances, he loses the sense of "having to do" with God.

But whether it be for blessing or for profit to the *conscience*, we have alike "to do" with God.

Are we seeking happiness, where shall we find it? where shall we get blessing that nothing can touch or hinder, that nothing can separate from, except in God? He is not only the source of our blessing, but the blessing itself. There are indeed many outward blessings given to His children by the way, and these even the unconverted may have; but the strength, the comfort, the joy of the Christian is this—he "has to do" with God. God is the source and centre of his blessing.

When once we come really to know God, we know Him as love. Then, knowing that everything comes to us from Him, though we be in a desert—no matter where or what the circumstances—we interpret all by His love. I may be called on to pass through pain, and sorrow, and trial, as part of His discipline; but everything that comes from God, comes from a source and spring in which I have confidence. I look through the circumstances to Him, and nothing can separate me from His love.

Where God is but little known, and where there is not therefore confidence in His love, there will be repining at circumstances, and murmuring, and rebellion. In such a case the sense of "having to do" with God will cause more fear than gladness. St. John says, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Is it not quite true that we often stop, practically, at the circumstances in which we find ourselves placed, and consider only our own feelings and judgment about them? Now this is a proof that our souls are not living in the fulness of communion with God. That with which we should be occupied is not the circumstances, but what God intends by them.

Conscience must be in exercise as well; for it is equally true that in our consciences we "have to do" with God. This is very profitable, though not so pleasant. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

(v. 13.) And after all, dear brethren, is it not a blessed thing to know that nothing can escape either the hand or the eye of God? What a comfort that He discerns every thought of our hearts that would hinder blessing, or dim communion with Himself! There may be some secret evil (one of the ten thousand things that, if indulged, would hinder the enjoyment of God) working in my heart, and yet I remain unconscious of it. Well, God sends some circumstance that discovers to me the evil, in order that it may be put away. Is not this a blessing? The circumstance does not create the evil which it excites; it only acts upon what it finds to be in my heart, and makes it manifest. Since I "have to do" with God, I am made to understand evil in myself which I had never understood before, or known to be there. God discovers the "thoughts and intents of the heart;" He could not rest whilst leaving anything there that would hinder our love and confidence, our comfort and peace in Himself. The evil being discovered, circumstances are all forgotten—God's end alone is seen.

The heart of man naturally seeks rest, and seeks it here. Now there is no rest to be found here for the saint; but it is written, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." (v. 9.) To know this is both full of blessing and full of sorrow—sorrow to the flesh because, as it is always seeking its rest here, it has always to be disappointed; blessing to the spirit because the spirit, being born

of God, can only rest in God's own rest, as it is said, "If they shall enter into my rest." (vv. 3, 5.)

God cannot rest in the corruption of sin. He can only rest in that which is perfectly holy. And because He who thus rests is love and loves us, He makes us understand that He will bring us into His own rest, into His own delight.

Now let the soul once know what this rest of God is, let the heart once be set upon it, there will be joy unspeakable in understanding that God's love can rest in nothing short of bringing us into His own delight. There will then also be the full, settled consciousness that we cannot find rest elsewhere. There are indeed joys by the way, but the moment we rest in them they become, as the quails to Israel, (Num. xi.), poison.

Whenever the soul loses practically the knowledge that its rest is in God's rest, the moment the eye is off that which 'remaineth,' we begin to seek a rest here, and consequently get uneasy, restless, and dissatisfied. Every time we find something on which we attempt to settle, that very thing proves but a new source of trouble and conflict to us, a new source of exercise and weariness of heart. God loves us too well to let us rest here.

Are you content, dear brother, to have or seek your rest nowhere, save in God's rest?

What is the secret of the unhappiness and restlessness of many a saint? A hankering after rest here. God is therefore obliged to discipline and exercise that soul; to allow, it may be, some cir-

cumstance to detect the real state of the heart by touching that about which the will is concerned. Circumstances would not trouble if they did not find something in us contrary to God; they would rustle by as the wind. God deals with that in us which hinders communion, and prevents our seeking rest in Him alone. His discipline is the continual and unwearied exercise of love, which rests not now, in order that we may enter into His rest. If He destroy our rest here, if He turn our meat into poison, it is only that He may bring us into His own rest, that we may have that which satisfies His desires, not ours. "He will rest in His love."

"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his works, as God did from His own."* (v. 10.) This is not a question about justification or rest of conscience as to judgment: that is all settled. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." (Rom. v. 19.) There we rest, and there God rests. Again, "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) The believer has already and altogether come to rest on Christ's work as to that. He has peace through the blood of Christ.

The point is one which concerns those who are justified, whom God has brought into His family: God is training such, and bringing them up into full enjoyment of His own blessedness and rest. If

[Such is the true force.—Ed.]

I, being a parent, enjoy anything, it is impossible (if I really love my child) not to wish him to enjoy it with me. And if we, who are evil, do this, how much more our heavenly Father! What God desires for us, as we have seen (and He delights to do it), is to bring us into the enjoyment of all that which He Himself enjoys. He has made us partakers of the divine nature that we may enjoy it. The Hebrews were continually liable to sink into the seeking a rest here; in short, not to live a life of faith. The great point on which the apostle insists is that God has not His rest here—that while there was that which hindered the comfort of His love He could not rest. And this is proved by a variety of testimonies. (See vv. 3-8.)

As to their own state, though He says, "We which have believed do enter into rest" (v. 3.), it was not needful to prove to them, any more than it would be to ourselves, that they were not in the rest. We read of their enduring a great fight of afflictions, of their being made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions, and of their becoming companions of them that were so used. They were still in circumstances in which it could be said to them, "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." The exhortations—"Let us therefore fear" (v. 1); "Let us labour therefore" (v. 11)—are plainly inconsistent with a state of rest.

It may seem strange to have pressed upon us at one moment unqualified assurance in the love and

faithfulness of God, and at the next to be addressed thus, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." (v. 1.) But God never ceases to warn in order that there may be the exercise of responsibility towards Himself, while we are on our way to the rest. Were justification spoken of, had that been the point in question, it would have been said, "Do not fear, and do not labour; for Christ has done all for you." "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt."

This "fear" and this "labour" begin when that question is settled, and settled for ever. The blessed principle brought out is, that they are consequences of our "having to do" with God. Because we have full confidence in the love of God, and because we value the rest of God, we fear everything; not only the temptations and snares that are in the way, but every working of the flesh and the like that would come in between us and God. Blessing is secured at the end, "reserved," as it is said, "in heaven" for us; but conscience reasons thus, "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" It is "through faith" that we are "kept by the power of God" "unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Faith realizes the presence of God. Therefore there is this holy fear: we pass the time of our sojourning here in fear.

St. Paul, in writing to the Philippians, says, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehend-

ed: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" and again, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." (Chapter iii.) Was it that he did not see the certainty of the end? No, but because he saw the way as well as the end, and all the difficulties of the way. Paul greatly feared whatever might distract him in his course, or lead him for a moment in the downward path (the flesh, whenever indulged, does this); and then he adds, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I have to'd 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."

Where there is this holy fear, the promise made being that of God's rest, we know the end of the path; but we "labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." (v. 11) Grace will prevent such a result; but it is that to which the flesh—the working of man's will—must bring the unrenewed professor.

There is no such evidence of a true-hearted saint as this holy fear. An unconverted man has, properly speaking, no dread of Satan; but, if not quite hardened, he has great dread of God. The saint of

God has no fear (that is, dread) of God, whilst he has great fear of Satan. Jesus, speaking of His sheep (John x.), says, "A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." (v. 5.) There is in them the distrust of everything but the known voice of their own shepherd. (v. 27.) Above all they fear the wolf, because conscious of their weakness. If any were to say, "The end is sure, never mind the means," the sheep would know that that was no true shepherd's voice. Everything that would dim our eye as to the glory, or prevent its being single unto God, however precious or valuable it may seem, has to be watched against, for its tendency is to hurry us on in the downward road. Where the eye is single, the whole body is full of light; and therefore every evil is detected, every hindrance to the affections being fixed simply and undividedly on God.

It is not then from any uncertainty about God's love, but from the certainty of being in the desert, that we are to "fear" and to "labour." The saint knows that this is a "dry and thirsty land, where no water is:" bring him into God's presence, and his soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness—it is made to drink of the river of His pleasures. Redemption from Egypt brings into the desert. If we have not God there, we have nothing. There is nothing in this wide world, or of it, which can refresh the new man, any more than there is in heaven to satisfy the old. Should we lose sight of

God's eye and hand, we have nothing but our own folly and the desert sands around us. One may say to a saint, "The rest is pleasant at the end." "Ah!" he replies, "it is not enough for me to know that by-and-by I shall be with God, I have rest in God now, I enjoy God's presence now, I cannot be satisfied without having God as a present portion, and I exceedingly dread anything that would come in between me and God."

While the eye is fixed on God, and the soul is resting on Him, the ways, and not the end only, are in our hearts, and become to us channels of communion with Him.

Everything, dear friends, proves to us that our rest is not here. Fearing, because I am in the desert with a heart prone to depart from God, is not rest. Having to conflict with Satan is not rest. Labour is not rest. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

Then there is also the diligence and activity of the new man in its own portion. It is of real importance for our joy that we should be diligent in our own portion. The church needs to know that it has its own proper portion—its own peculiar sphere of labour. "Much food is in the tillage of the poor; but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment." When we are poor in spirit, and are labouring to enter into God's rest, there is a reality found to be in the riches which are in Christ Jesus that many a saint has no conception of. Have we not a sphere in which our life has its portion? The

men of this world have their own pursuits; they have that which occupies and engages them, and has the life of God in us no resources to strengthen it—no riches in Christ to feed on? Yes, “We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which *serve the tabernacle.*” We have a sphere in which the divine life communicated to us can exercise its own faculties, and find its own resources. The church has its own joys, its own interests, its own treasures, its own sphere of life, its own field for the affections, its own topics—its own world, in short, in which there is fruit unto God. Have you, dear reader, consciously this portion; and is it the delight of your soul to search out therein the riches of Christ? the goodness that is in God? All that I have yet got of Christ’s riches is only in order that I may become the more enriched, a means by which to attain those riches which are unsearchable.

This holy labour, in searching out the riches that are in Christ, keeps us in the lively sense of what is ours in Him, and therefore makes all else worthless. Having the soul fixed on Christ will enable us to resist temptation and sin. It is not so much by thinking of the object that may be a temptation to us that we shall get strength; it is not in letting our minds dwell on it, even though it be with the effort to resist it. Our privilege is to be occupied with Christ, and thus obtain the victory. Our liberty is to be no longer, and never, subject to sin—a liberty to serve God without hindrance of the

flesh. I do not want liberty to the flesh, but liberty to the new man, and that is to do my Father's will. If anything could have taken away the liberty of the Lord Jesus when on earth (which, of course, was impossible), it would have been this—His being prevented doing the will of His Father.

It may not, perhaps, sound like privilege to talk of "fear" and "labour," but it really is so. And because we fail so much in these things, it is also a blessed privilege to know that God searches the heart and deals with the conscience, that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

If we do not judge ourselves, God will judge us. But "when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

Is it not a comfort to the soul that really loves holiness, to know that God will come and sweep the house, lest there should be a single thing left there to offend His eye, or to hinder us from walking in the light in which He dwells? Grace emboldens the saint to say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." What amazing confidence! And God does search us, and that by the light of the Word. He shows us the evil by the Word. This is the use the Spirit makes of the Word: "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the

dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (v. 12.) We are brought into God's presence; we have, as it were, God speaking to us. He searches my heart even in the sweetest testimonies of His grace; and then, having discovered to me the evil, does He speak about it in judgment, as that which is imputed to me as sin? No; He says, "Here is something not in accordance with my love, something that does not satisfy my love."

If we have neglected to judge ourselves by God's word, there may be something more needful in the way of discipline; but still it is our comfort and consolation that we "have to do" with God. Perhaps, for instance, we have been seeking rest here, and have at last well-nigh settled down, and found a home in the wilderness. Then God begins to work in uprooting us again; unless indeed He sees it needful to leave us to ourselves for awhile, in order that, by stumbling, our consciences may be awakened.

If there are circumstances that try and perplex our hearts, let us just say, It is God with whom I "have to do," and what is He about with me? The moment the heart is brought into the recognition of God's presence all is done—it submits. The soul finds itself in communion with Him about the circumstances. All is peace.

It is not rest to be searched and tried. Rest, blessed be God, is not to be our portion here. His

holiness will not let us rest where there is sin : His love will not let us rest where there is sorrow. There "remaineth a rest" for us, His own rest—God's rest. There will be neither sin, nor trouble, nor sorrow in God's rest. There will be Himself there. And we shall rest in Him.

If we did but know a little more of the comfort and joy of drinking into the fulness of God's love, we should feel present circumstances to be as nothing. Nay, if we entered a little more into His purpose towards us, we should say, "Let Him deal with us, let Him chasten us, let Him uproot us as He will, so that we have but full fellowship with His love."

Oh, let us not be satisfied with small portions of blessing—low measure, low enjoyments! Let us press forward; let our eyes look right onward; let us seek, through the power of the Spirit, after the realization of all that is ours in Christ.

THE MARROW OF PEACE IS TO REST ON WHAT GOD SAYS TO ME.

"Why is it that the people of God are not in the full enjoyment of the Gospel? Many whom one recognises as fully the Lord's, have but little joy in the Holy Ghost. The reason often is that they have not got a clear view of the Gospel; and in others, where it has been clearly seen, it is not sustained as it should be for their comfort and the glory of the Lord Jesus.

“If I fail as much as Peter, or more than any other, the truth is that Christ is still sitting at the right hand of God *for me*—all my inconsistencies cannot change that truth of God. They had heard ‘from the beginning’ that ‘Jesus is the Christ.’ He says ‘Let that, therefore, abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that, therefore, which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father.’ This is the marrow of peace when the soul is tried—God’s certificate to the soul that the value of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ belongs to it individually. People say: It is mine, because I have had such a deep experience; I feel so and so. But God has not said that. He has said that there is the testimony of His Christ, and that if that dwell in me, I shall continue in the Son and in the Father.

“You have lost peace. Why? Because, doubtless you have forged a link of your own, and not had that of God’s invention; so that, directly your joy or experience is gone, you are miserable. *Keep fast hold of the testimony of God about His Christ.* A person keeping hold of this, cannot have a single bit of rest apart from the Person of the Lord Jesus and God’s testimony about Him. There is nothing more gracious than God not allowing peace apart from the way in which He has given it, for nothing else has sanctifying power. Though only fit for the Anti-Christ, God has taken me up and connected me with His Christ.”

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER.

It is pleasant to be in the Lord's paths, though *the cross* be found in them, only we must *walk close with Him*, or else the very *goodness* of them *reproaches us!*

I am the servant of the *Lord's will* and He will do His work, that I am assured of. May the Lord only enable me to finish the course He has appointed to me, in peace and earnestness. Here I have naught else to do, that I feel more than ever, and desire nothing else.

I trust the beloved brethren are looking for Christ's coming. Not that I am moved by events; strange to say all that is passing in Europe, though evidently leading on to it, as to *this world*, rather puts it off for me, as showing a progress of arrangements which may take time for our being caught up to meet Him, our own hope. I have *no time* at all; we "*wait for God's Son from heaven.*" I believe that where we walk in the simplicity that is in Christ it is a very happy time, we enjoy the Lord, Himself, and His coming in hope, in an especial way as to opposition and shame. If it be for Christ's sake, happy are ye. If we are in the events, of course we suffer one and hardly enjoy the other; but one hears little of them, walking with the Lord. Only they that will *live godly* in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But one ought to feel much, and in all love, for the *whole* church. They are dear to Christ, washed in His precious blood, and dwelt in by the Spirit. If *we* want to comprehend, it must be "*with all saints,*" for *they* are the dearest to His heart of all the counsels of God. The Lord give us diligence of heart *with Christ*, that is the great thing, and He, Himself, becomes infinitely precious to us with the sweet consciousness that we shall see Him face to face, and be with Him for ever. May He enable us to glorify Him here. My kindest love to—and all the beloved ones. It would refresh my heart to see them all again.

See how Christ has given us the record of *our place through redemption*, in the end of Matt. iii., and then taken up *our conflict* in chap. iv.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

REMARKS ON LUKE XXII. 14-34.

How good and precious it is that we have at all times the Lord to look to ; for if our eye had always to be fixed upon self, not only should we not advance, but we should be thoroughly discouraged by the thought of the evil within us.

We confine ourselves to the idea of this evil, and thus deprive ourselves of the strength which can overcome it.

The nature of the flesh and the blindness of man's heart are worthy of remark. What foolish things come between us and God, to hide from us that which we ought to see ! How strangely, too, do the thoughts of the natural heart follow their natural course (even when the Lord is near us), and deprive us of the consciousness of the most striking things, which have a sensible effect around us. We find this presented in the portion before us.

The Lord Jesus was about to accomplish that work which can be compared to no other ; He was on the point of bearing the wrath of God for us poor sinners ; He was in circumstances which ought to have troubled His disciples' hearts. He had just spoken, in the most touching terms, of the passover which He desired to eat once more with them before He suffered ; He had told them, too, that one of them should betray Him. All this ought to have rested on their minds and have filled

their hearts. But they? They were striving among themselves which of them was the greatest! To us the curtain is withdrawn; and when reading of this fact, we can hardly understand how they could be busied with such things, but we know what was then about to take place.

How many things have power to turn even us, who have more light than they, from the thought which then filled the heart of Jesus! Such is the heart of man in presence of the most serious and solemn things.

The death of Jesus should exercise the same influence on our hearts as on the disciples'; it should be precious to us. The Lord is with us when we are gathered, two or three together; and yet we well know the thoughts which pass through our hearts and minds. Here we see the same thing under the circumstances most calculated to touch the heart. Jesus tells His disciples that *His blood was to be shed for them*: "the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me at the table, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed;" and they enquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing.

One might suppose that they would think of nothing save the death of their gracious Master; but no! "There was a strife among them which of them should be accounted the greatest." What a contrast! But, alas! if we examine our own hearts we shall find there two things generally brought together, namely, real feelings which bear

testimony to our love of Jesus, but also, and perhaps within the same half-hour, thoughts which are as unworthy as this strife among the disciples. This shows the folly and vanity of man's heart; he is but as the small dust of the balance.

The Lord, ever full of gentleness and meekness, forgets Himself in His care for His disciples, and says to them, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger: and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." He knows how to teach them, by His own example what the love of God is; and at the same time, He shows them the grace which is in Him, and all the faithfulness for which they are indebted to Him. It is as though He had said, *Ye need not raise yourselves; My Father will raise you.* "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Instead of being irritated at the abominable conduct of His disciples, He shows them, that if there is no grace in men, there is grace in *one Man*, that is in Himself.

This grace is perfect in Jesus; and He places His disciples in it, whatever they may have been toward Him. He has fixed them firmly in the principle of grace, instead of the folly of the flesh, which had just shown itself among them; as though He had said, I am all grace towards you, and I trust the kingdom to you.

We are put under grace, and its voice is always heard. It assures us, that, notwithstanding all our weakness, we have continued with Jesus, and that He gives the kingdom as the Father gave it to Him. If He says to His disciples, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, ye shall sit on thrones," &c., &c., He takes care to show them what the flesh is.

"Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." He does not say, "Thou shalt not be tempted; I will hinder Satan from sifting thee;" no, nor does He do it. We see here that God often leaves His children in the presence of their enemy, whom He does not destroy; but even while thus in the presence of the enemy, He watches over His own; as we see, (Rev. ii. 10), "The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Peter might have said to the Lord, "Thou canst hinder me from being thus sifted," as Martha and Mary thought Jesus could have hindered the death of Lazarus: and, truly, He who can give the crown of life can shelter us; but He does not do so, that we may be tried. Satan desired to have Job that he might sift him like wheat, and God permitted him to do so; and this happens to us also. We often say within ourselves, "Why has He dealt thus with me? Why has He put me into such and

such a crucible?" Ah, it is Satan that desired and God who permitted it.

Things often occur which we cannot understand ; such things are intended to show us what the flesh is.

When God is about to use a Christian in His work, He takes the one who has gone the furthest in the path of trial. Thus here it is said, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you." The danger is presented to all ; but He adds, speaking to Peter. "I have prayed for thee," for thee in particular ; for Jesus distinguishes him from all the rest, because he had taken a more prominent position than the others, and was thus more exposed, though they were all sifted by the death of Jesus. The Lord then says to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Notwithstanding all this, Peter is full of self-confidence. "I am ready to go with thee, both unto prison and to death." But Jesus replies, "the cock shall not crow this day, before thou hast denied that thou knowest me "

The flesh acting in Peter had only power to carry him up to the time of trial, and there failed ; for Peter denied the Lord Jesus, even in His very presence. He might have seen his Saviour, if his heart had not been turned away from Him. Jesus was looking at him, and yet he denied Him to the maid, saying, "I know Him not." He had been warned ; but the Lord would not allow him to be kept by divine power at that moment, because he

needed to learn by experience what he was in himself.

If we notice all that Christ did, we shall see how He was watching at this time over Peter; His grace (so to speak) went out to meet him, and took care of Him all through the temptation.

The first thing that Jesus tells him is that He has prayed for him. It is not that Peter's repentance led to Jesus' intercession, but the intercession of Jesus brought about Peter's repentance. "I have prayed for thee," and "Jesus looked upon Peter." As to Judas, he betrayed the Lord, and when his conscience was awakened, he killed himself. But, here, the effect of the prayer of Jesus was to preserve faith at the bottom of Peter's heart, so that when Jesus looked on him, he was broken down.

The first thing to remark is, that the Lord had prayed for Peter; and the second, that He always remembered His disciple, and as soon as the cock crowed, Jesus looked on him and Peter wept bitterly. It is in this way the Lord deals with us, He prays for us and allows us to go into temptation. If He conducts us when in it, He also bids us pray that we enter not into temptation: but God permits all this because He sees the need of it.

If Peter had been conscious of his own weakness, he would not have dared to show himself before the High Priest. This trial was the natural consequence of what he was in the flesh; but it was God's purpose to use him, and even put him in a

prominent position in His work. The cause of his fall was self confidence: the flesh was actively present.

God did everything well for him, and Peter saw what was the power of Satan's sifting. The other disciples, not having the same fleshly strength, fled at once. They had not so much confidence as Peter; but God left him to struggle against Satan, and Jesus prayed for him, in spite of his fall, that his faith should not fail.

The moment Peter fell, the eye of Jesus was turned upon him. That look did not give peace, but confusion of face. Peter wept; he went out, and it was all over. He had learnt what he was. There was his failure—the sin was committed, and could not be undone; it could be pardoned. Peter could not forget that he had denied the Lord: but Jesus made use of this fall to cure him of his presumption.

It is the same with us. We often commit faults which are irreparable, from too much confidence in the flesh. Where there is no possibility of correcting one's faults, what is to be done? The only resource is to cast oneself on the grace of God. When the flesh is too strong, God often permits us to fall, because we are not in that precious state of dependence which would preserve us. Jacob had too deeply offended Esau not to dread his anger; yet God did not leave him in his brother's hand, but gave him enough faith to carry him through the difficulty.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

The sympathies of Christ are so precious to the soul, His entering into our sorrows in this world of moral woe, so comforting, so softening, and yet so elevating, that we cannot treasure too highly the realization of them in our hearts, nor guard too carefully against anything that is spurious. That is the more important, because the character of His sufferings more or less connects itself with His person and nature. In the first place we have to distinguish His sufferings from man and His sufferings from God. Their cause, and the result of them are equally contrasted. Christ did we know suffer from men. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The world hated Him before it hated His disciples, it hated Him because He bore witness of it that its works were evil. He was "Light," and he that doeth evil hateth the light nor comes to the light, because his works are evil. In a word, Christ suffered for righteousness sake; even as it was from the beginning, in that which was a type of Jesus' history in this respect. Cain slew Abel, because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous. We may add, that the love which caused the Lord to minister to men in the world, and testify of their evil, brought only more sorrow upon Him. For His love He had hatred. This hatred of man against Him never slackened till His death, when, in the folly of human exultation, they could shout, Aha!

aha! so would we have it. Righteousness and love, and what was indeed the manifestation of the divine nature and ways on the earth, brought out the relentless hatred of the human mind and will; Christ suffered from man for righteousness sake.

But he suffered also from the hand of God upon the cross. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief; when He shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed. He was made sin for us who knew no sin, and then He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. There He suffered the just for the unjust; that is, He suffered not because He was righteous, but because we were sinners, and He was bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. As regards God's forsaking Him, He could say, "why hast Thou forsaken Me?" For in Him there was no cause. We can give the solemn answer. In grace He suffered the just for the unjust; He hath been made sin for us. Thus He suffered for righteousness, as a living man from men, as a dying Saviour, He suffered from the hand of God for sin.

It is most interesting to notice the result of these two characters of suffering as expressed in the Psalms.

In Psalms xx.-xxi. we see the Messiah prophetically viewed as suffering on the earth from men. It was the day of trouble. They imagined a device against Him which they were not able to perform. But He asks life and has length of days for ever.

Glory and great majesty are put upon Him. What is the effect of His being thus glorified by Jehovah, in answer to the scorn and violence of ungodly men. Judgment. His hand finds out all His enemies. He makes them as a fiery oven in the day of His anger; as He said, "Those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring them before Me." The same thing may be seen in Psalm lxxix 1 24. The effect of His suffering from the hand of wicked men, is judgment on themselves.

In Psalm xxii. we have, besides all these sufferings from the hand of men, and when they had reached their height, (see the whole Psalm up to verse 21), His sufferings from the hand of God. When under the pressure of the others, God, His only resource, forsakes Him. This is the great theme of the Psalm. But what is the result of this? This was the bearing of sin—at least the consequence of His bearing it. It was the judgment, so to speak: it was the wrath due to us. But He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Hence the result is unmingled and full of grace—nothing else. Who was to be punished for His having drunk the cup at His Father's hand? He is heard. God takes the new character of one who has raised Him up and given Him glory, because He had perfectly glorified Him about sin. He is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. The name of His God and Father He immediately declares to His brethren. "I will declare Thy

name unto My brethren." So in fact He did, when He said to Mary Magdalene, "Touch Me not, [He was not now coming to be corporally present in the Kingdom,] for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say unto them, I go to my Father and your Father, my God and your God." The testimony was now grace, and Jesus leads the praises of His redeemed. Next, all Israel, the great congregation, is found in the praise also; then all the ends of the world. The fat eat and worship; all that go down into the dust; and the generation that shall be born, when that time of peace is come, shall also hear the wondrous story of that which angels desire to look into—that He hath done this. It is an unmingled stream of grace and blessing widening to the ends of the earth, and flowing down the course of time to the generation that shall be born.

Such is the effect of the cross. No word of judgment follows the tale it has to tell. The suffering there was the judgment on sin, but it was the putting it away. The judgment was borne, but passed away with its execution on the victim who had in grace substituted Himself; and if indeed we shall be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, He before whom we shall appear has Himself put away our sins; yea, we arrive there, because He has Himself come to fetch us, that where He is, there we may be also. In a word, it was suffering from God: and suffering from God is suffering for sin, not for righteousness; and the effect unmingled

grace, now freely flowing forth. Christ had been baptized with the baptism He had to be baptized with. He was no longer straitened in the exercise and proclamation of love. When He suffered from man through the whole of His witness among them up to death itself, He was suffering for righteousness. Sin He had not, in His Person to suffer for. He was no substituted victim in the eyes of men. The result of these sufferings from the power of men is judgment, accomplished on His return—in a providential way already in the destruction of Jerusalem, but fully when He shall return.

But there is another point of contrast, consequently very important for us. Christ suffered for sin that we never might. We are healed by, not partakers of, His stripes. What Christ has suffered from the forsaking of God as wrath, He has suffered alone and exactly, as to us, with the object that we never should taste one drop of that dreadful, bitter, to us insupportable, cup. Did we drink it, it were as condemned sinners. But in the suffering of Christ for righteousness, and in those which were caused to Him through His work of love, we are, poor and feeble as our faith is, to have a part. To us it is given not only to believe on, but also to suffer for His name. If we suffer for righteousness' sake happy are we, and yet more blessed if we suffer for His name. The Spirit of Glory and of God rests upon us. We can rejoice that we are partakers of His sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, we may be glad with exceeding joy.

The suffering for righteousness and for Christ, I may remark in passing, are distinguished by the Lord Himself, (Matt. v. 10, 11), and by Peter, (1 Peter ii. 20 ; iii. 17 ; iv. 14.).

The principle of these two kinds of sufferings, however, as contrasted with suffering for sin or evil, is the same. The difference of suffering for good and for evil is touchingly contrasted in Peter's epistle, while both are attributed to Christ, and we are warned against the latter. Christ is presented as suffering as an example, chapter ii. 19-23, where we see in verse 23, he refers to the revilings and violence of men ; in verse 24 he adds, His bearing our sins, shewing that it is in order that we may be dead to it, not suffer for that. But this is brought out touchingly, chapter iii. 17-18, the force of which I take to be this: the Apostle had been speaking of suffering for righteousness, and adds, "It is better, if it be God's will, that you suffer for well doing, than for evil doing," for he adds, "Christ has once suffered for sins." That is, this is not your part in suffering ; He has done this once for all. Suffering for righteousness may be your happy portion ; suffering for sin, as regards the Christian, Christ's part alone. I would notice two other characters of suffering in our blessed Lord. In the first place, His heart of love must have suffered greatly from the unbelief of unhappy man, and from His rejection by the people. We read of His sighing in opening the deaf ears and loosing the tied tongue, (Mark vii. 34); and on the Pharisees asking a sign,

(chap. viii. 12) of His sighing deeply in spirit. So indeed in John xi. at the tomb of Lazarus, He wept, and groaned within Himself at seeing the power of death over the spirits of men, and their incapacity to deliver themselves; and as He wept also over Jerusalem, when He saw the beloved city just going to reject Him in the day of its visitation. All this was the suffering of perfect love, moving through a scene of ruin, in which self-will and heartlessness shut every avenue against this love which was so earnestly working in its midst. It must have been—with bright and blessed moments, where its exercise proved sweetness to itself, and led His heart out by times to fields white for harvest—a constant source of sorrow. This sorrow, blessed be God, and the joy that brightens it, we are allowed, in our little measure, to partake of. It is the sorrow of love itself. A weight of another character pressed upon the Lord, I doubt not, often through His life; and must and ought to have done so. though only showing perfectness, that is in blessed submission to the divine will. I mean the anticipation, when the time was there for Him to look at it (how often are we distracted by our little anticipated sorrows), of His sufferings on the cross and their true and pressing character. On His path of life death lay. He could not, as we see, take His part with the excellent of the earth, and bring them into the purposed or indeed any real and permanent blessing, without going through death, and death as the wages of sin, for they were sinners. If the corn of

wheat did not fall into the ground and die, it abode alone. There none could follow—not indeed the disciples, as He tells them, more than the Jews. And for Him death was death. Man's utter weakness, Satan's extreme power, and God's just vengeance, and alone, without one sympathy, forsaken of those whom He had cherished, the rest His enemies, Messiah delivered to Gentiles and cast down, the judge washing his hands of condemning innocence, the priests interceding against the guiltless, instead of for the guilty, all dark, without one ray of light even from God. Here perfect obedience was needed, and blessed be God was found. But we can understand, and just in the measure of Christ's divine, while human, sensibilities, what such sorrow must have been in prospect for a soul who looked at it with the feelings of a man made perfect in thought and apprehension by the divine light which was in Him. We have examples of these sorrows of the Lord's heart in two remarkable cases, which of course, though none were like the last, do not at all exclude the thought that others may have been, nor give full light on what He may have felt when in perfect calmness He spoke of His future sufferings to His disciples. The cases I refer to are John xii. and Gethsemane. In the former we read, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour." The coming up of the Gentiles had opened out before Him the scene of the rejected Christ passing into the wider glory of the Son of Man, but

then the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die. This brings before His soul the true and necessary path of His glory—death and all it meant to His soul, and He looks for deliverance. He could not wish for nor fail to fear, the forsaking of God and the cup of death He had to drink. He was heard in that he feared. That was truth, and true piety, in presence of such a passage for His soul.

So in Gethsemane, when it was yet nearer, and the prince of this world came and His soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death; when the cup was just as it were being brought to Him, though He had not yet taken it, (for He would take it from none but from His Father's hand, when His will was that He should drink it, because it was not possible it could be otherwise, if the purpose and word of God was to be accomplished,) there this character of sorrow and trial or temptation, reached its fullness. The tempter (who on His entrance on His public service, and to hinder, His doing so, had tempted Him with what was agreeable to the flesh in the wilderness, and on the pinnacle of the temple, and had been baffled and bound, and during the Lord's life had his goods spoiled), now returns to try Him with all that was dreadful for the soul of man, and above all for the Lord, if He persevered in His obedience and work unto the end. Power had been displayed capable of delivering living man from all the dominion of the enemy.

(To be continued, D. V.)

THE 2ND AND 3RD EPISTLES OF JOHN.

Beloved brother or sister, have you ever noticed the teaching in the 2nd and 3rd Epistles of John. So important always, and especially in these last days. Please read both Epistles carefully and prayerfully and then the remarks upon them in this number.—[ED.]

2ND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth, and not I only, but
2 also all they that have known the truth, for the truth's sake which dwelleth in us and shall be
3 with us for ever. Grace be with you, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a com-
5 mandment from the Father. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.
6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment. That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should
7 walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an

- 8 antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that
 9 we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.
 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed ("and greet him not," *New Translation of J.N.D.*; "and give him no greeting," *Revised Version*;) for he that biddeth him God speed ("for he who greets him," *New Trans*; "for he that giveth him greeting," *Rev. Version*) is a partaker of his evil deeds.
 12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.
 13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

3RD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

- 1 The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.
 2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy
 3 soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.
 4 I have no greater joy than to know that my children walk in truth.

5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever
 thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers:
 6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before
 the church: whom if thou bring forward on
 their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do
 7 well: Because that for his name's sake they
 8 went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We
 therefore ought to receive such, that we might
 be fellow-helpers to the truth.

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who
 loveth to have the preeminence among them,
 10 receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will
 remember his deeds which he doeth, prating
 against us with malicious words: and not con-
 tent therewith, neither doth he himself receive
 the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would,
 11 and casteth them out of the church. Beloved,
 follow not that which is evil, but that which is
 good. He that doeth good is of God: but he
 12 that doeth evil hath not seen God. Demetrius
 hath good report of all men, and of the truth it-
 self; yea, and we also bear record; and ye
 know that our record is true.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with
 14 ink and pen write unto thee: But I trust I shall
 shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face.
 Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee.
 Greet the friends by name.

REMARKS.

The house of the elect lady was *the sanctuary* of
 the truth, and had to *keep outside* all that was not

of it; all those that did not bring the doctrine of Christ with them. The house of Gaius on the contrary, was the *guest chamber* of the truth, and had to open *itself* to the witnesses of it. She was to be the guardian of this mystery—he, the fellow-helper of it.

The atmosphere within God's house should be so full of the fragrance of the name of Christ, that all who are of a contrary part should be forced out, (1 John ii. 19); the door at the entrance should be so closed, that the same should know that they would be kept out (2 John 10); but the welcome should be so clear and fervent, that all who savour and witness of that name, should feel themselves at home in it (3 John 3). Shall we not all join, beloved, in such services as these? Surely all this is Kohathite service—this is business with the ark itself. Oxen and waggons could not aid in it, (See Num. vii.) The material of the service is too delicate for such help. The shoulders of the Levites must do the service, and even their hands must reverently and only reverently handle the sacred deposit committed to them.

NOTE.—“The doctrine of Christ” is the confession of the truth as to His blessed Person—the Christ of God as revealed in Scripture. “This is the true God and eternal life. Little children keep yourselves from idols”

REMARKS ON LUKE XXII. 14-34.

Continued from No. 10.

God would not allow Jacob to be given over to the hatred of Esau; and at the end of his course Jacob could say, (Gen. xlviii. 15, 16,) "The God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil," &c.

When God trains the heart in this way, He sometimes leaves it in Satan's hands. Judas' conscience was in Satan's hands, and therefore he fell into despair. Peter's heart was in His hands for a time but his conscience never. Therefore, instead of despairing, like Judas, the love of Jesus, expressed in a look, had power to touch his heart.

Directly grace acts in the heart, it gives the consciousness of sin; but, at the same time, the love of Christ reaches the conscience deepening the consciousness of sin; but if this is deep, it is because the consciousness of the love of Christ is deep also.

Perfect as was the pardon of Peter, he could never forget his sin. Not only was he fully forgiven, but his conscience was in the Lord's hand when the Holy Ghost revealed the fulness of the heart of Jesus to him. His conscience had been so fully purified that he could accuse the Jews of the very sin he had himself committed under the most solemn circumstances.

"Ye denied the Holy One and the Just," were his words. The blood of Christ had fully cleansed

his conscience ; but if the question of his strength in the flesh were raised, all he had to say of himself was, I have denied the Lord ; and were it not for His pure grace, I could not open my mouth. Jesus never reproached Peter with his sin in those conversations He had with him. There is never the question, Why hast thou denied me ? No ; on the contrary, He acts according to that expression of love of the Holy Spirit, "I will remember their sins no more." Jesus had forgotten all. But there was one thing He had to show Peter, it was the root of the sin, the point where he had failed. Peter had boasted of more love to Jesus than the rest ; and Peter had failed more than all.

Then Jesus said to him, " Lovest thou Me more than these ? " Where is now Peter's self confidence ? Jesus repeats three times, " Lovest thou Me ? " Peter's answer is, " Thou knowest all things ; Thou knowest that I love Thee. " He appeals to Jesus and to His divine knowledge ; " Thou knowest that I love Thee. " This is what Jesus did for Peter, and that after his fall.

Peter seems to say " I confide in Thee, Thou knowest how I have denied Thee, do with me what seemeth Thee good. " Then we see Jesus sustaining His disciple's heart. [He had said], " When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. " What enabled him to strengthen his brethren ? His denial had so taught him what the flesh was, that he would no longer bind himself to anything : he knew that he had nothing to do save to trust God.

Whatever his own incapacity to resist Satan, he could appeal to the grace of Him who knows all things. The knowledge that he could confide in Jesus, was that which made him strong. It was after reminding Peter of the utter incapacity of the flesh, that the Lord confided His sheep to him,—“Feed My lambs,”—and it was not till then that he could strengthen his brethren. The flesh has a certain confidence in the flesh, and this is often the folly into which we fall. It is then necessary to learn ourselves by conflict with Satan; every Christian has to learn what he is through the circumstances in which he is placed. God leaves us there to be sifted by Satan, that we may learn our own hearts. Had we enough humility and faithfulness to say, “I can do nothing without Thee,” God would not leave us to this sad experience of our infirmity. When we are really weak, God never leaves us; but when unconscious of our infirmities, we have to learn them by experience.

If a Christian does not walk under a constant sense of his infirmity, God leaves him in the presence of Satan, that he may there be taught by it. It is then also that he commits faults that are irreparable; and it is this which is the most sorrowful part of all.

Jacob halted all his life. Why was this? It was because he had halted morally during one and twenty years. He wrestled mightily, yet he must have been conscious what a feeble creature he was

in the flesh, although God did not leave him to struggle with Esau.

We need never be surprised if the Lord leaves us in difficulty, it is because there is something in us to be broken down, and which we need to be made sensible of; but grace is always behind all this. Christ is all grace, and if He sometimes appears to leave us to learn our weakness, still He is grace, perfect grace towards us.

It was not when Peter turned his eyes towards the Lord that Jesus shewed Himself to him. As to communion, indeed, this is true, but it was before his fall that Jesus had said, "I have prayed for thee," for it is always grace that anticipates us.

Jesus sees what Satan desires, and leaves us to that desire, but He takes care that we should be kept. It was not when Peter looked at Jesus, but when Jesus looked on Peter, that the latter wept bitterly. The love of Christ always precedes His own, it accompanies us, precedes us in our difficulties, and carries us through all obstacles. While it leaves us in Satan's hands that we may learn experimentally what we are, it is always near to us, and knows how to guard us from the wiles of the enemy. Here we see the perfect goodness and grace of the one who loves us, not only when our hearts are turned towards Him, but who adapts Himself to every fault in our characters, that we may be fully and completely blessed according to the counsels of God. All this should teach us to humble

ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due season.

When I feel cast down and grieved in thinking of myself after a fall, I ought not then forthwith to seek comfort, however natural that may be: no, it is not that which I am to seek, but rather, and first of all, the Christ who is there; I have to learn the lesson which God has traced for me.

If, in the midst of painful circumstances, you say that you cannot understand the teaching, God knows what it is, and He leaves you to be sifted, in order to bring you by this means to a deeper knowledge of Him and yourself. He wishes to shew you all that He has Himself seen in you, so that we ought not to shrink from this sifting, but rather to seek to receive the precious teaching which the Lord offers us through it; and thus we shall obtain a much deeper knowledge of what He is for us.

We must learn to yield ourselves to His mighty hand, till He exalt us. May God give us to know Him alone! If we had only to learn what we are, we should be cast down, and sink into despondency; but His object in giving us a knowledge of ourselves and of His grace, is to give us an expected end.

One can say then, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

Continued from No. 10.

Another awful, dreadful truth had now come out: man would not have the Deliverer. If the Lord was to persevere in interesting Himself in the wretched race, He must be, not a mighty living Deliverer by power, but a dying Redeemer. It was the path of obedience and the path of love. The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me; but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so I do.

But in both the cases we are now considering, we find Him still with His Father, though occupied with Him about the cup He had to drink, and His obedience only shining out in its perfection. There was no forsaking of God yet, though there was dealing with His Father about that cup which was characterized by His being forsaken of God,—“Father save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.” Here He gets the answer to obedience to death in judgment, of real and complete victory, and the wide-spread opening out of the revelation of love, though the world was judged therein. But in Gethsemane all was closing in. It was the power of darkness, and the deeper agony of the Lord told itself out in few (yet how mighty) words, and sweat as it were drops of blood. But the obedience was perfect. The tempter utterly foiled, the name

of Jesus suffices to make all his agents go backward and fall to the ground. He, as far as they were concerned and Satan's power went, was free. But *the Father* had given Him the cup to drink. He freely offers Himself to drink it, shewing the same unweakened power as ever, that of those given to Him He might lose none.

Wondrous scene of obedience and love! But whatever the suffering may be (and who can tell it?) it was the free moving of a man in grace, but of a man perfect in obedience to God. The cup His Father has given Him to drink, shall He not drink it? How utterly, though indeed there, do the unhappy instruments of this power of evil disappear before the offering up of Christ by Himself in obedience and love! The power of death, as that of the enemy, gone through with His Father, and gone, and He in blessed willing obedience now taking the awful cup itself from His Father's hand! Never can we meditate too much upon the path of Christ here. We may linger around the spot and learn what no other place or scene can tell—a perfectness which is learnt *from* Him alone. But I must turn now to other parts of Christ's sorrow, for I can only touch on its causes and character.

Sin itself must have been a continual source of sorrow to the Lord's mind. If Lot vexed his righteous soul with seeing and hearing, when so practically far from God, what must the Lord have suffered in passing through this world! I doubt not

that, being perfectly in the place God would have Him, He was not only in degree, but in the very nature of His feelings, calmer than the righteous man in Sodom. Still He was distressed by sin. He looked about upon them with anger being grieved at the hardness of their hearts. His perfect love was relief here, but did not hinder the sorrow it relieved. "Oh faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" was met by, "Bring thy son hither." But the unbelief was not the less felt. This was at the close, doubtless, and had special respect to their unbelief, which His own love instantly rises over. Still He was in a dry and thirsty land, where no water was, and felt it, even if His soul was also filled as with marrow and fatness. The holier and more loving He was, the more dreadful was the sin to Him, where His people wandered too as sheep without a shepherd.

The sorrows too, of men were in His heart. He bore their sicknesses, and carried their infirmities. Not a sorrow nor an affliction He met that He did not bear on His heart, as His own. In all their afflictions He was afflicted. It was no light-hearted remedy that, even as a living man, the Lord applied. He bore in His spirit what He took away in His power, for all was the fruit of sin in man, only it was in gracious love. The sin itself He bore too, but that, as we have seen, was on the cross—obedience, not sympathy. God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin. All the rest was

the sympathy of love, though it was sorrow. This is a blessed character of the Lord's sorrow. Love brought Him to the cross we well know; but His sorrow there had not the present joy of a ministration of love. He was not dealing with man, but suffering in His place, in obedience, from God, and for man. Hence it was unmingled, unmitigated suffering; the scene, not of active goodness, but of God forsaking; but all His sorrows in His ways with men was the direct fruit of love, sensibly acting on Him—He felt *for* others, about others. That feeling was (oh! how constantly) sorrow in a world of sin; but that feeling was love. This is sweet to our thought. For His love He might have hatred, but the present exercise of love has a sweetness and character of its own which no form of sorrow it may impart ever takes away: and in Him it was perfect. I do not indeed deny that righteous anger filled His soul when occasion called it forth—we know it did—yea, brought out such denouncement of woes, as I believe nothing but perfect love could produce; for what must He have felt of those who took away the key of knowledge, and entered not in themselves, and hindered those that were entering? Righteous indignation is not sorrow, but the love that gives birth to it, where it is *righteous*, stamps its own peculiar character upon it.

Another source of sorrow (for what has not Christ drunk at?) was perhaps more human, but not less true—I mean the violation of every delicacy which a perfectly attuned mind could feel.

“They stand staring and looking upon Me.” Insult, scorn, deceit, efforts to catch Him in His words, brutality and cruel mocking, fell upon no insensible, though a divinely patient, spirit. I say nothing of desertion, betrayal and denial (He *looked* for some to have pity on Him, and there was no one, and for comforters, but found none) but of what broke in upon every delicate feeling of His nature as a man. Reproach broke His heart. He was the song of the drunkards. Doubtless, Jehovah *knew* His shame, His reproach, and His dishonour, all His adversaries were before Him; but He passed through it all. No divine perfection saved Him from sorrow. He passed through it with divine perfection and by it. But I do not believe there was a single human feeling (and every most delicate feeling of a perfect soul was there) that was not violated and trodden on in Christ. Doubtless it was nothing to divine wrath, men and their ways were forgotten there. But the suffering was not the less real when it was there; and even when at least, anticipating that cup of wrath, He would have His too confident disciples watch with Him, He only found them asleep at His return.

All was sorrow but the exercise of love, and that must at last give way for obedience in death, where the judgment of God against sin closed over and obliterated the hatred and wickedness of man. Such was Christ. All sorrow concentrated in His death, where the comfort of active love, and the communion with His Father, could put no allevia-

ting sweetness, or be for a moment mingled with that dreadful cup of wrath. There, promises, royal glory in title, all was given up, to have them infallibly anew, received in glory, from the Father's hand, with a better and higher glory, which He had ever had, indeed, but now would enter into as man.

LUKE XV.

“This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.”—Luke xv. 2.

The Pharisee gives Him a feast inside the house, and the multitude give him respect and admiration outside; but He is rather grieved, or at the most unsatisfied. He passes on through all this, till publicans and sinners “draw near to hear Him.” Then did He in spirit rejoice; His heart tasted the desired fruit of its journey, and was satisfied. Jesus had now travelled far,—far in spirit I mean. He had gone to, and through and from, the house of the Pharisee, and along the road with admiring crowds, but it was wearisome to Him. He found no rest, till now the poor sinner came to get from Him. For the joy that fills this chapter. The fold that had received the lost sheep, the house that had witnessed the recovered piece of money, and the home of the father that had entertained the returned prodigal, set off as in figures, the Saviour's joy now in the midst of publicans and sinners.

He had been charged by the Pharisees with receiving sinners, as though His ministry did not secure righteousness, but gave liberty to evil. Of

course He might have pleaded various answers to this. He might have defended His grace to sinners, on the ground of the necessity of the case, or on the ground of God's glory. But in this chapter, from beginning to end, in each of the lovely parables, He vindicates it, simply on the ground of the joy that He, and the Father, and all heaven itself, were finding in it. Only think of that, beloved. If the Lord God be asked a reason for His ways of salvation with you and me. He says that *He* takes delight in them—they make Him and His glorious habitation to rejoice.

What assurance, what consolation spring from that. Would his neighbours, think you, murmur at the shepherd's joy over his lost sheep now found by him, or the woman's friends grudge her pleasure, as she swept her piece of money into her lap? And so it is with God. It is *His own joy* in the salvation of sinners, that Jesus proposes as His warrant or vindication.

Let us cherish the thought deeply in our souls—the Gospel of our peace is the spring of joy to Him, who planned and accomplished it; that our God has done nothing less than this, *laid the scene of His own happiness in our salvation*, as these parables testify to us.

Jesus had travelled, as we have seen, through Pharisees, guests, host, and crowds of attendants; and was now sitting with sinners who knew their need of Him and came to get what they wanted. Heaven, in one sense, is but this spot stretched out—the habitation of saved sinners and of a rejoicing Saviour.

“THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND
FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT.”

I THESS. IV. 16. .

I was on my way once in a country part to visit a family some distance from where I was staying, and as a farmer brother was taking some young cattle to a distant pasture for the summer, and was going somewhat in the same direction, we went along the way together part of the way, enjoying a little fellowship one with another. All of a sudden we heard a long, distant shout, which was repeated once or twice. We looked round but could see no one, nor could we see any house in the direction the voice came from! But on one of us looking at his watch, we quickly understood what it meant, for it was just about 12 o'clock, noon. And no doubt *the shout* was the call home from some farm house hidden behind the bush between, to some one ploughing in the field, it being dinner time. This led to a conversation about *another shout*, that is mentioned in the Scripture quoted above. And how, *any moment now*, we who believe in, know as our Saviour, the Blessed Person at God's right hand, we too may be *called home*, by the Lord Himself descending from heaven *with a shout, etc, etc.*, 1 Thess. iv. 16. and this dear farmer brother then told me that many a time when he had been working away in the field ploughing, and he thought it was *near the time*, he had stopt at the end of a furrow and listened to hear

the shout that was to call him home to his mid-day meal and a short rest for himself and his horses. And we both agreed that we Christians should now be just in the same state of expectancy with regard to our blessed Lord's soon descending from heaven *with a shout*, that will call us home, not to a short rest and then turn out again; but to "*go no more out,*" but to enjoy "the rest that remaineth for the people of God" for ever. For if Paul in his day could speak of "*knowing the time,*" and say then, "the night was far spent and the day was at hand," referring to the return of the Lord Jesus: how very, very much more spent must it be, now that eighteen hundred years and more have rolled away? Yes, dear fellow-believer, dear brother or sister in Christ, *the night is very far spent.* Our Lord is soon, (perhaps before I finish writing, or you finish reading this) coming to take his blood-bought Church, *His own* that are in the world, HOME.

Home to the Father's house in glory, who loves us as He loves Christ. *Home* to the joy and rest of being for ever with and like the Blessed Lord Himself, when we shall see His blessed face who has so loved us, so cared for us, so faithfully kept and sustained and borne with us here. When He will have *His exceeding joy* in having us round Himself and with Himself up there. And we shall have fulness of joy, in being there with Him for ever, and with one another, unhindered by anything within ourselves or around us. No wonder that it is called "*that Blessed hope,*" in Titus ii. 13.

To look within and see no stain,
 Abroad no curse to trace,
 To shed no tears, to feel no pain,
 But see Him face to face.

To find each hope of glory gained,
 Fulfilled each precious word,
 And fully all to have attained,
 The image of our Lord.

Reader, how is it with you and with me? Are we pausing at the end of the furrow, so to speak, and listening, yes, even as we go along our daily course listening, expecting to hear *that shout*, "knowing the time?"

Spiritism, (1 Timothy iv); *Formalism*, (2 Tim. iii.) and *Rationalism*, (2 Thess. ii.), together with the general Laodicean spirit, that neither hot nor cold state as to what is due to the Blessed Lord Himself, which characterises the professing church now. *The last state*, described in Revelation iii., before the Church is seen, as in the next two chapters, up in heaven, under the figure of 24 elders, etc., etc. All tell us that we may "*know the time.*" That we are in the very last of the last days: soon to be caught up to meet our Lord in the air, who will "descend from heaven *with a shout*" for us. And then *He* wants us to be looking out for Him, for He said, "Let your loins be girded about and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him immediatelyBlessed are those servants.....Luke xii. May it be thus with you and me, dear reader? May we not plan out hopes or some hope for ourselves

here, that would *put off* the hope of His coming for us till after, as it were, our plans for ourselves here are carried out here.

All right to attend to daily duties if abiding in the calling wherein we were called, "*with God.*"

All *right* according to our gift and the ability God has given us, to be *out in the field* for Christ, labouring among souls, ploughing, sowing, reaping or watering, as the case may be, as God gives us opportunities. But let it be as it was with our dear farmer brother when he was in the field, and when *he knew*, (as we ought to know) *the time* was near for *the shout* to be heard to call him home. For if we have any other hope set before us down here, it matters not what it is, that takes the place of the hope set before us *up there*, we shall not, we cannot be found watching for Him when He comes, but sleeping.

"Let us not sleep as do others, but let us *watch* and be sober."

The Lord grant that it may indeed be so and that there may be a waking up, where there has been a going to sleep. "For the coming of our Lord draweth nigh." "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

SUBSTANCE OF A LETTER.

DEAR BROTHER ———

Thank you for yours of the 8th, and I am glad to hear of your getting over your trouble of soul, and getting right with the Lord again. What an

important thing that is, to be *right with the Lord*. And what a dreadful thing the flesh is in us. A constant source of trouble and sorrow if we do not "walk in the Spirit."

But what a comfort that truth is, "Ye are not in the flesh (though it is in us) *but in the Spirit*, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." and to know that God *has condemned sin in the flesh*, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sin, on the cross. *So there can be none for us*. And we may, and ought to count it gone in the death of Christ from before God's eye, *judicially*: and though actually in us as bad as ever, "No more I," but an enemy that must not be consulted, or listened to, or trusted for a moment.

"I am crucified with Christ (I as a man in the flesh or child of Adam), nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me (Christ is become my life), and the life I now live in the flesh (here referring to the body) I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." Galatians ii. 20.

Two things I find we but feebly take in. One is, that all our spiritual nourishment and power flows down from Christ Himself, -a living risen man, a Person, at God's right hand, to whom we are livingly united by the Holy Ghost, and in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; and the other, that we are the constant unceasing objects of His love and sympathy and care *all the time*, who is the head. "No man ever yet hated his own

flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church, (so we can say, even as the Lord does *us*) for we are members of His body." And I find that I seem to be able to have Him more blessedly and constantly before me when I am bearing in mind that *I am always before Him*, and an object of love and sympathy and interest *to Him*, than when I merely *try* and have Him *before me*, as an object *to me*. For the fact is, that He becomes an object to us and before us that we look to and enjoy, just in proportion as we take in and believe that we are an object to Him unceasingly and constantly, and precious to Him, for "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous."

Yours affectionately in Him,

"BY THE WORDS OF THY MOUTH HAVE
I KEPT ME FROM THE PATHS OF THE
DESTROYER."

Jesus, enjoying in His own Person and relationship with God as Son of God, the light of His countenance, goes into the wilderness for forty days to be in conflict with the enemy. He did not go away from man, and from all intercourse with man and the things of man, in order (like Moses and Elias) to be with God. Being already fully with God He is separate from men by the power of the Holy Ghost to be alone in His conflict with the enemy. In the case of Moses, it was man out of his natural condition to be with God. In the case

of Jesus, it is so to be with the enemy : to be with God was His natural position.

The enemy tempts Him first by proposing to Him to satisfy His bodily need, and, instead of waiting on God, to employ according to His own will and on His own behalf the power with which He was endowed. But if Israel was fed in the wilderness with Manna from God, the Son of God, however great His power, would act in accordance with what Israel should have learnt by that means, namely, that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The Man, the obedient Jew, the Son of God, waited for this word, and would do nothing without it. He was not come to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. This is the principle that characterizes the Spirit of Christ in the Psalms. No deliverance is accepted but the intervention of Jehovah at His own good time. His perfect patience, in order to be perfect and complete in all the will of God. There could be no sinful lust in Christ; but to be hungry was no sin, yet it was a human need, and what harm in eating when hungry? There was no will of God to do it, and that will, by the word, He came to do. Satan's suggestion was "if thou be the Son of God, command;" but He had taken the place of a servant, and this was not commanding: he sought to get the Lord out of the place of perfect service and obedience, out of the place of a servant.

And note here the place the written word has,

and the character of Christ's obedience. This character is not simply that the will of God is a rule; it is the one motive for action. *We* have a will *arrested* often by the word. Not so Christ. His Father's will was His motive; He acted not merely according to, but because it was God's will. We delight to see a child who would run off to something it delights in, stop, and cheerfully do its parent's will when called to do it. But Christ never obeyed thus, never sought a will of His own that was stopped by His Father's.

And we are sanctified to the obedience of Christ. Note further that *the written word* is that by which He lives and by which He overcomes. All depended here on Christ's victory, as all did on Adam's fall. But for Christ, one text (rightly used of course,) suffices. He seeks no other: that is obedience. It suffices for Satan; he has no reply. His wiles are defeated.

The first principle of conquest is simple and absolute obedience, living by words out of God's mouth. The next is perfect confidence in the path of obedience.

In the second place then, the enemy sets Him on a pinnacle of the temple, to induce Him to apply to Himself the promises made to the Messiah without abiding in the ways of God. The faithful man may assuredly reckon on the help of God while walking in His ways. The enemy would have the Son of Man put God to the test (instead of reckoning on Him while walking in His ways) to see whether He

might be trusted in. This would have been a want of confidence in God, not obedience; or pride, presuming on its privileges, instead of counting on God in obedience.

We need confidence, to have courage to obey; but true confidence is found in the path of obedience. Satan could use the word in guile, but not turn Christ the Lord from it. He still uses it as the adequate divine weapon, and Satan still has no reply. To have forbidden obedience would have been to show himself Satan. As regards the place in which the Lord was dispensationally, we may remark the Lord always quotes from Deuteronomy. Taking His place with Israel in the condition they were in when without a king in the land, and, quoting the directions given to them in that book to guide them in the godly path there taught, He uses for His guidance that part of the word which contains the divine injunction on this subject, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;" a passage often quoted as if it forbade excess in trusting God, whereas it means to distrust, and try if He is faithful. They tempted God, saying, "Is God indeed among us?" And this Satan would have had the Lord do.

The enemy, failing to deceive that obedient heart, even by hiding himself under the use of the word of God, shews himself in his true character, tempting the Lord (thirdly), to spare Himself all the sufferings that awaited Him, by shewing Him the inheritance of the Son of Man on earth, that which would be His when He had reached it through all

those paths, toilsome, yet necessary to the Father's glory, which the Father had marked out for Him. All should now be His, if He would acknowledge Satan by worshipping him, the God of this world. This in fact was what the kings of the earth had done for only a part of these things, how often done for some trifling vanity ! but He should have the whole. But if Jesus was to inherit earthly glory (as well as all other), the object of His heart was God Himself, His Father, to glorify Him. Whatever might be the value of the gift, it was as the gift of the Giver that His heart prized it. Moreover He was in the position of tested man, and a faithful Israelite ; and whatever might be the trial of patience into which the sin of the people had brought Him, be the trial ever so great, He would serve none but His God alone.

But if the devil carries temptation, sin, to the utmost, and shews Himself to be the adversary, (Satan) the believer has the right to cast him out. If he comes as a tempter, the believer should answer him by the faithfulness of the word, which is man's perfect guide, according to the will of God. He does not need to see through everything. The word is the word of Him who does, and in following that, we walk according to a wisdom which knows everything, and in a path formed by that wisdom, and which hence involves absolute trust in God.

The first two temptations are the wiles of the devil, the third, open hostility to God. If he comes

as the open adversary of God, the believer has a right to have nothing to do with him. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." He knows he has met Christ, not flesh. May believers *resist* if Satan would tempt them by the world, remembering it is Satan's domain in fallen man.

The believer's safeguard, morally, (that is as to the state of his heart) is a single eye. If I seek only the glory of God, that which presents no other motive than my aggrandizement, or my own gratification, whether of mind or body, will have no hold upon me; and will shew itself in the light of the word, which guides the single eye, as contrary to the mind of God. This is not the haughtiness that rejects temptation on the ground of being good; it is obedience, humbly giving God His place, and consequently His word also. "By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer," from him that did his own will, and made it his guide. If the heart seeks God alone, the most subtle snare is discovered, for the enemy never tempts us to seek God alone. But this supposes a pure heart, and that there is no self-seeking. This was displayed in Jesus.

Our safeguard against temptation is the word, used by the discernment of a perfectly pure heart, which lives in the presence of God, and learns the mind of God in His word, and therefore knows its application to the circumstances presented. It is the word that preserves the soul from the wiles of the enemy.

There must be no other motive for action than the will of God, which for man is always found in the word; because in that case, when Satan tempts us to act, as he always does, by some other motive, this motive is seen to be opposed to the word which is in the heart, and to the motive that governs the heart, and is therefore judged as being opposed to it. It is written, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." This is the reason why it is so often important when we are in doubt, to ask ourselves by what motive we are influenced. Observe also that, consequently, it is in the spirit of simple and humble obedience that power lies; for where it exists, Satan can do nothing. God is there, and accordingly the enemy is conquered. Satan departs from Him, and the angels come to exercise their ministry towards the Messiah, the Son of Man victorious through obedience. What Satan would have Him try God about, He has fully. They are *ministering* spirits for us also.

" I AM."

EXODUS iv. 13.

Next comes the first great initiatory lesson for the soul, with whom God is about to deal with. When Moses would come to Israel, and they would ask him, "What is his name?" "What (said he) shall I say unto them?" "And God said unto Moses, I AM, THAT I AM; and thou shalt say

unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

Now here is the first thing for the soul's acceptance—God is! He is not far off but near. One out of whose presence we cannot escape. One in whose presence we ever are. Do we act on this, beloved friends, as if we believed it? Does the poor fool who says in his heart, "There is no God," believe this? How do his actions speak in reply? Just in this solemn way—that they are performed without reference to God at all!

Who could sin with impunity, consciously in God's presence? Not even the most depraved. He dare not commit his iniquity there. But his life is formed upon the principle that there is no God. He does not say this with his lips, but his heart says it, (and his walk and ways express what is in his heart.) He would love to think that his desire is true, and that when he died he would be as the beasts that perish and cease to be.

But we must return to this initial lesson of the soul. God reveals Himself as the great "I AM," the self-existing God: beside whom there is none. Let us act according to this revelation, and act always so as to prove that we believe it. There is none who can say, "I am that I am," but He. Where is the man who is not double-minded at times? Does he tell me all that is in his heart? Nay; not even to his best beloved on earth! Paul as a saved one can say, "by the grace of God I am what I am,"—I am what grace has-made me. But even he cannot say, "I am *that* I am."

Blessed be God there is a Man of whom God hath said this, even when under the very wrath of the cross. But He stands in this alone, as in all else beside. When He cried, out of those mighty depths—"He weakeneth my strength in the way—He shorteneth my days; I said: O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days," what was the reply? It was then the glory of the self-existing one is expressed: "Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But *Thou art*, and thy years shall have no end. (Psalm cii. 23-27; and Heb. i. and xiii.)

What then must be the first expression of a soul which has to do with God? It exclaims, "God is!" "He that cometh to God must believe that *He is*, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Heb. xi. 6.) God says of Himself, "I Am." He says to Jesus, as Man in weakness, "Thou Art;" and the believing soul bows in faith, saying, "He is!" This is the grammar of divine realities.

We see the result of this in Chapter iv. 29-31. We find in those verses, a lovely expression of the sinner's true attitude when first he has to do with God as a Saviour; when he has been seized with the reality of God before his conscience. He has

not yet learned His work of grace, nor has he experienced aught but the great fact that God has interfered? "God has visited the children of Israel. He has heard them; He has looked upon their affliction." What deep soul trouble might be saved were these two points grasped with a firm and mighty tenacity, "God is;" and "God has visited us, and looked upon our affliction."* What now is the soul's true response to these things? "Then they bowed their heads and worshipped." This was faith's obedience. It was not obedience to a claim from Him. It was not obedience to law. It accepts the fact that He has revealed *Himself* as a Saviour.

TROUBLES AND TRIALS.

Life down here is to most people a life of vexation, of trial. The heart wears out under it, or else there is a sort of Stoicism, and as troubles come as the sparks fly upwards, people say, "we have got to endure it, and we must." But how different this experience from that of the Christian who can say, "Show me any sharp flint scorched by the sun, and I can turn it over and find moisture underneath."

How different when all things are seen to be of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by giving us His Son! A person gets the heaven side of things who finds God in everything. It is a blessed thing

* Coming down to us as a Saviour in the Person of His Beloved Son.—ED.

that as there is not a sparrow falls to the ground, nor a flower that blossoms, without the Father, so, as sorrow turns up, and thorns and briars come in our path, to know that the Father is in it all; to be able to say in everything, "There is my Father," and so passing on quietly without care, knowing that every detail of life is watched by a Father's eye.

And when He comes to unroll our whole life since we believed, will it grieve us for Him to know it all?

When you have failed in any way, and God has brought the sense of it to your soul, do you want not to settle it till a future time? or is it not a positive relief not to cover it up but to feel that the thing has been judged? Nothing will do but making a clean conscience before God, not letting a spot remain, but confessing and taking the whole blame; rejecting the thing and condemning it in yourself first.

Precious thought, "My Father
knoweth,"
In His love I rest,
For whate'er my Father doeth,
Must be always best
Well I know the heart that planneth
Naught but good for me,
Joy or sorrow interwoven,
Love in all I see.

Precious thought, "My Father
knoweth,"
Careth for His child,
Bids me nestle closer to Him
When the storm beats wild
Though earthly hopes are shattered,
And the tear drops fall,
Yet He is Himself my solace,
Yea, my all in all.

Sweet to tell Him all He knoweth,
Roll on Him the care,
Cast upon Himself the burden,
That I cannot bear,
Then without a care oppressing,
Simply to lie still,
Giving thanks to Him for all
things,
Since it is His will.

Oh, to trust Him then more fully,
Just to simply move,
In the conscious, calm enjoyment
Of the Father's love,
Knowing that life's chequered
pathway
Leadeth to His rest,
Satisfied the way He taketh
Must be always best

CHRIST IS COMING.

He is coming, coming quickly!
Such the promise of His word;
Coming surely, coming quickly!
Even so, come, Jesus, Lord.

From the Father's throne He's coming,
Just to meet us in the air,
Then we shall be ever with Him,
All His glory we shall share.

Who is He that comes to meet us,
Comes with all the glory bright?
But the One who died to save us,
He who was this dark world's light.

Are you daily *watching* for Him,
Waiting for your Lord's return?
He is coming, coming quickly!
Let your lights then brightly burn.

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