

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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THE PERSON.

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us in [the Person of the]* Son.”—HEBREWS i.

“God has spoken in the Son, says the inspired author of our Epistle. He is then this Son. First He is declared Heir of all things. It is He who is to possess gloriously as Son everything that exists. Such are the decrees of God. Moreover it is by Him God created the worlds. All the vast system of the universe, those unknown worlds that trace their paths in the vast regions of space in divine order to manifest the glory of a Creator-God, are the work of His hand who has spoken to us. In Him has shone forth the glory of God. He is the perfect impress of His being. We see God in Him, in all that He said, in all that He did, in His Person. Moreover, by the power of His word He upholds all that exists. He is then the Creator. God is revealed in His Person. He sustains all things by His word, which has thus a divine power.

But this is not all, (for we are still speaking of the Christ), there is another part of His glory, divine indeed, yet manifested in human nature. He who was all this which we have just seen, when He had by Himself (accomplishing His own glory, and for His glory), wrought the purification of our sins, seated Himself at the right hand of the majesty on high! Here is in full the personal glory of Christ.

He is in fact the Creator, the revelation of God, the upholder of all things by His word. He is the Redeemer. He has by Himself purged our sins: has seated Himself at the right hand of the majesty on high."

"Therefore, (says the Apostle), we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, least at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience, received a just recompence of reward: how shall we escape if we neglect *so great salvation*: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him. God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His will?" Chapter ii. 1, 2, 3.

"God has maintained the authority of the word that was communicated by the means of angels, punishing disobedience to it, for it was a *law*. How then shall we escape if we neglect a *salvation* which *the Lord Himself has announced*? Thus the service of the Lord among the Jews was *a word of salvation*, which the Apostles confirmed, and which the Holy Ghost established."

Beloved reader, have you ever, calmly and quietly meditated on the above wonderful truth, of the greatness and glory of the One who has been here, accomplishing the work of redemption, and is now sitting on the right hand of the majesty on

high? No wonder it is called in chapter ii. "so great salvation," when we think of the greatness of the Person who came and who did the work that saves?

How vast, how precious the thought too, that God, in the Person of His Son, has come and *spoken to us* What a prophet! And spoken to us of what? *Salvation. "So great Salvation"*

"Brightness of Eternal Glory,
 Shall Thy praise unuttered lie?
 Who would hush the boundless story,
 Of the One who came to die.
 Came from Godhead's fullest glory,
 Down to Calvary's depth of woe,—
 Now on high, we bow before Thee:
 Streams of PRAISES ceaseless flow,"

Again, in Colossians i. 15 18 we read that, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or principalities or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him. And by Him all things consist. *And He is the Head of the body the Church*; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence, for in Him all the fullness [of the Godhead] was pleased to dwell"

The more one thinks of the glory of the Person in whom we have redemption, and of the infiniteness that dwells in Him bodily, (Coloss. ii. 9) up

there. Oh how soul-subduing, and yet how soul-sustaining is the truth, that as members of His body, we are "one spirit with the Lord." That we are united to Him, livingly united to Him up there, this wonderful, glorious, God-man. And are loved by Him as a man loves himself. Ephesians v. 29.

Reader, "do you see by faith *that* Christ up there? Do you know a Person in heaven with all the feelings and thoughts of a man, with all the glory and beauty of God? And in that beaming forth on you of that face of glory and beauty, is there nothing that addresses itself to your heart? Who can look on the face of that Lord Jesus and not see in Him the forms of eternal life? Will the beauty of that Person not win your adoring love? Will you ever find that you can look on Him as He is, and not trust Him?

Are we not only knowing what we have in that ascended Christ as the One who has put away every spot of sin, the One who is going to take us into the Father's house, but are we letting it be seen, as we pass through the wilderness, in all we do, as Paul did? He died for us, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him. Oh, what a position! not only what we are saved from and put into, but, even now, eternal life to be shown out; even now, present communion with the mind of Christ to be enjoyed; never as we pass through this world, seeking anything save to show out that mind, even as He never showed out anything but the Father's mind.

One thought pressed on me thirty-five years ago, and that was the thought of *reality*. Let it be a reality—don't let me follow a meteor! Is it, I asked, a *real fact* that God's Christ is mine, and that He is now sitting at God's right hand as my accepted sacrifice, and all God's delight is in Him?

Your heart may have to be brought into all sorts of difficulties to find out what it has in Christ—what it is to be connected with the eternal lover of the soul. Is He known to you as the One who is occupied with all your concerns? Do you realize it daily? The thought of His being occupied about us would prevent our being tried with difficulties that spring up. It would make us say, "What! is Christ on the throne of God *mine*? I, such a poor feeble thing—is He given *to me*?" Paul found the love of Christ a personal thing—it is so. It was a personal love that gave John a place on His bosom; a personal love that drew to Him the poor woman that washed His feet with her tears; and poor things down here understand the power of that love as they go on.

When we see saints like Peter and Paul failing, we feel what a poor thing man is at his best estate; but oh, what an unexpected blessing to have to do with a God that cannot fail! And I know that when I pass from earth, I have a God who means to take me up, and make of this poor body, a body of glory like that risen man at His right hand. Come what may, this God has His everlasting hand underneath us."

ZAPHNATH-PAANEAH.

GENESIS xli. JOHN iv.

DEAR BROTHER,

In Jacob's blessing of his sons (Gen. xlix.) we find those familiar and lovely words about Joseph, used by the aged patriarch: "Joseph is a fruitful bough (even) a fruitful bough by a well (whose) branches run over the wall." We know now that "a greater than Joseph" was before the prophetic mind of the Spirit in the patriarch when he spake these words, of which I now cite a part. The whole of the blessing may be seen in reading the chapter. The portion I have quoted will answer my present purpose in calling your attention to it. If we turn back in the book of Genesis, and glance at the lovely narrative of Joseph (Gen. xxxvii.-l.)—evidently that of one of the most blameless of men whose histories are recorded in Scripture—we find, in Chapter xli., the moment of his full exaltation over all the land of Egypt before us. At this time he was 30 years of age; he had been shamelessly and heartlessly rejected by his brethren, and sold to his captors, oppressed and afflicted, taken from prison and from judgment; the iron had entered into his soul. In all this, as in the many other details of his life, type of Him that was to come.

He had just interpreted the dreams of Pharoah, and had counselled Pharoah to be warned of God in preparing for the years of the famine that was to

come. "And Pharoah said unto his servants, can we find (such a one) as this (is), a man in whom the Spirit of God (is)? (v. 38.) And Pharoah raises him to be head over all the land. There was none so discreet and wise as he. He would be over his house, and according to his word should all his people be ruled; only in the throne would Pharoah be greater than he. Power over all flesh is his, and all is given into his hands," (vv. 43, 44.)

He names him "Zaphnath-paaneah," or "the revealer of secrets," as the Coptic, it is said, indicates; and "Saviour of the world," as says another authority. Of course I do not go further than to notice the double significance of this title which Pharoah gave Joseph.

In the seven plenteous years, those years of grace, the earth brought forth by handfuls from the ripened fields. The reaper received his wage, and gathered fruit for the life to come, when famine would stalk through the land. Joseph, too, married a wife in the land of his rejection, and to him were born his two sons—Manasseh, signifying "forgetting;" and Ephriam, bearing the name which means "fruitful." He forgot his toil and his father's house, and was fruitful of God in the land of his affliction.

When we turn to the Gospel of St. John (chap. iv.) and read of the opening of the public ministry of the Lord, we find the One in whom the Spirit of God is, the One to whom God gave not "His Spirit by measure" (John iii.) going forth when 30 years

of age to Samaria, on his mission of grace. "He left Judea," He left His own to whom He had come, morally rejected by them. He came to His own, and His own received Him not. He passes out in the fulness of His grace to defiled Samaria, morally now as actually again with "power over all flesh," and all things given into His hand by the Father. There He proves Himself to be the true "Revealer of Secrets"—One who told the sinful woman all that ever she did. He forgets His toil, and the long weary journey of that day through the burning heat, till He sat at noon on the side of the well—the most fruitful bough that ever shadowed it. He forgets His thirst; His hunger too—refreshed by the meat to eat of which the disciples as yet knew nothing, and in the land of His affliction He is fruitful. The woman of Samaria is found of Him who came to seek and to save the lost. His word to the disciples in those years of plenty which now were dawning, was, "Lift up your eyes, and look upon the fields; for they are already white to harvest." Many of the Samaritans too believed on Him; they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the 'Saviour of the world.'"

He is the true "Zaphnath paaneah" now as then. Surely we can say, as in 1 John iv. 14, "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." We have learned how surely He is the "Revealer of Secrets," as did

the woman of Samaria, through the window of our souls. The conscience of each can vouch for this. We need no proof or evidence that we have had to do with Christ, and He with us.

I only touch upon these few features of this lovely type. Perhaps it may encourage others to look for the more minute details for themselves. But, dear brother, when we know Christ, is it not a happy task to find some lines of Him portrayed on those who went before, and in whom His grace[^] and Spirit was working?

· Shall we deem it a less happy task now to trace in those who are Christ's, the lines of His life and ways, as the Spirit of God has done so blessedly in those who had gone before.

Yours affectionately in His love.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

WHAT IS THE WORLD, THAT WE ARE NOT TO LOVE, OR ITS THINGS?

If we search the word of God, we shall find that though sometimes the term “world” refers to the earth on which we live, yet it is more often used to denote a certain sphere, or state of things here, that though the children of God are obliged, till death or the coming of the Lord takes them out of it, to live in *as to their bodies, they no more belong to, as our Blessed Lord tells us, than He does Himself.*

John xvii., "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And which God tells us in Galatians i. 4, Christ gave Himself for our sins to *deliver us from*.

In the 4th of Luke we find that when Satan tempted the Perfect Man, one of the temptations was to offer all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them to the Son of God if He would only worship him. (See verses 6 and 7.)

In 1 John v. 19, we are told that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," literally "*in the wicked one*." Our Lord owns Satan as "the *prince of this world*" in John xiv. 30, as also in chapter xii. 31. And the Holy Ghost in 2nd Cor. iv. 4 tells us that "the god of this world" "blinds the minds of them that believe not" the gospel, referring to Satan also. And again in Ephesians ii. 1, 2, 3, those "dead in trespasses and sins," "*walk according to the course of this world*," which course is "according to the prince of the power of the air, (Satan) the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," (unbelievers.) "Among whom we all had our conversation in times past, *fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind*; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others."

The world then is composed of those who—still in their natural state—are spiritually "dead towards God, in their trespasses and sins"—who are fulfilling from morning till night, and day to day, the natural desires of the flesh and of the mind, without reference to God or God's will at all—and

are energized by the spirit of this terrible enemy of the true God, Satan, who is blinding their minds, and to whom they are in bondage, and who *is their God really, and their prince*: no matter what their form of godliness may be, or religion.

Yea, such is the state of this sphere, or condition of things called "*the world*," that the Spirit says through the inspired Apostle James, that "the friendship of it is *enmity with God*,"—that "whosoever will be a friend" of it is "*an enemy of God*"—and calls those believers who mix with it, "adulterers and adulteresses." How solemn! how awful! While the same Holy Spirit through the Apostle John, in the 1st Epistle and ii. Chapter, verse 15, says, that "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The reason given being, that "all that is in the world," the three motives that in some form or another govern the walk and ways of the world, *i.e.*, what it takes pleasure in, and seeks to find happiness in the gratification of, *viz.*, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, *are not of the Father, but of the world*," and are all going to pass away. Yes, dear reader, and just as Pharaoh ruled over the children of Israel, in Egyptian bondage, by task masters, so Satan rules over the children of this world, through the natural desires of the flesh and of the mind, so that God is shut out, and man, *the world*, is in bondage to sin, and their minds blinded to the truth: unless the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God,

shines, through sovereign grace, into the heart, giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.

Now when we see this, we see what the world is : and if we know what it is to have our own once-blinded eyes open—if the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has shone into our hearts ; is it not most important, yea, absolutely necessary, for us to be thoroughly separate from the world ? How can, (as the Spirit of God puts it in 2nd Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16), righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, the believer and the unbeliever, the temple of God and the temple of idols, *have fellowship*, go along arm in arm together ?

Listen then, dear children of God, to the Lord God Almighty speaking in those last two verses of that same chapter—"Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, and *touch not the unclean thing*, (the world), and *I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you*, (act a Father's part toward you), and ye shall be my sons and daughters," or, in other words, you shall know practically what it is to enjoy God's love as a Father, in every sense of the meaning of that word "Father."

Now-a-days, it is, perhaps, more difficult to draw the line between the world and the Church, or the world and the family of God, because alas, in these last days, the world has got into the Church and the Church into the world, since the day when Church and State were joined together : which took

place after the death of the Apostles, when whole nations embraced, *outwardly*, Christianity as their national religion. In the Apostles' days it was not so, and the assembly of God in a town or city, was a company of true believers, gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus, entirely distinct and separate from the State, or the mass of Jews and Gentiles who were around them, still going on in Judaism or in open idolatry. Now, in so-called Christian countries, almost every one professes, outwardly at all events, some kind of Christianity. And Church and State are joined together. Neither is there in consequence the same open violent persecution that the early Christians had to go through, even unto death. But the world is the same old world still, no matter if it calls itself Christian now, or not. And, *by their fruits ye shall know them.*

There can be no real, true enjoyment, of happy communion with the Father and the Son; that holy, blessed happy fellowship with God, that taste of heaven upon earth, (even now!) *where there is not separation from the world.* It is impossible. Yea, more. Friendship with the world, and loving the things of the world, so deadens the souls of those who try to go on with it, even if they do not walk on the dirty, but on the clean side of the broad way, that the world is on in its downward road to everlasting destruction and misery, that the child of God *goes to sleep among the dead—loses spiritual eyesight, and power—forgets what the grace of God delivered them from at the first; and has to be waked*

up, *perhaps on a death bed!* and that often an early one; or by some sore, bitter humbling trial, the direct loving, but severe, because needed chastisement of the Father's hand, to bitter, bitter sorrow of heart and shame and self-judgment; to look back on a lot of lost opportunities of serving the Blessed Lord, and helping souls around them, perhaps even to look back, (awful thought), *and see how they have been a stumbling block to others*, when they might have been a help, or at least *not a hindrance*. (See 2 Peter i. verses 5 to end of 11, and Ephesians v. 14.) And to be saved so as by fire, like Lot out of Sodom. .

Oh, children of God, beware of the world, which Satan would use to seduce you by, from walking with, and enjoying, that holy happy portion even here, that God's blessed Son suffered and died to bring us into the enjoyment of. The enjoyment of God Himself.

The world, like a beautiful handsome Delilah; will, if you allow it, put you to sleep in its lap, like she did Samson, the man separated to God in his day. And then like with him, it will end in your spiritual eyesight being put out, and your strength taken away, and you becoming the sport of the enemies of the Lord, if you do not, in the strength that is made perfect in weakness, the Lord's strength, learn to overcome the world.

THE APPROBATION OF THE LORD.

It should be joy to anyone who loves the Lord Jesus to think of having His individual peculiar approbation and love; to find He has approved of our conduct in such and such circumstances, though none know this but ourselves who receive the approval. But, beloved, are we really content to have an approval which Christ only knows? Let us try ourselves a little. Are we not too desirous of man's commendation of our conduct? or at least that he should know and give us credit for the motives which actuate it? Are we content, so long as good is done, that nobody should know anything about us—even in the church to be thought nothing of? that Christ alone should give us the "white stone" of His approval, and the new name which no man knoweth save only he that receiveth it? Are we content, I say, to seek nothing else? Oh! think what the terrible evil and treachery of that heart must be that is not satisfied with Christ's special favour, but seeks honor (as we do) of one another instead. I ask you, beloved, which would be most precious to you, which would you prefer, the Lord's public owning of you as a good and faithful servant, or the private individual love of Christ resting upon you—the secret knowledge of His love and approval? He whose heart is specially attached to Christ will respond, "The latter." Both will be ours if faithful; but we shall value this most; and there is nothing that will carry us so straight on our course as the anticipation of it.

FRAGMENTS.

The Christian's rule of life is to be like Christ—the only rule he has, and we find the details of it in Scripture. *We have to seek* such power of Christ over the affections, that we are longing and striving to be like Him; and there is joy in that kind of activity—the heart growing naturally like Him in real spiritual diligence—occupied with Him. Not satisfied with merely avoiding evil, you must be occupied with it to avoid it, but when the heart is full of Christ, evil looks like evil—you see it in its true character; if not it looks like a bauble.

If you only have faith to walk in the path of God, you will find He has a plan and counsel through it all.

If our hearts have courage to do God's will, all will turn out for blessing, we do not know how, but the secret thing is, to be going on in faith, that is what one has to get hold of. If I am walking in a straight path, the power of God is pushing me on; but if I am walking in a cross path, the power of God tumbles me over—it finds out that I am not going straight.

It is a great thing to be in the path of God's will, for I have all the power of God at my disposal. If you walk in the path of God's will, absolutely God makes everything work together for your good. You cannot get a thing that is out of the power of God, though it may be He chastens us if crossing His path.

GOD'S ANOINTED.

How wondrous the glories that meet
In Jesus, and from His face shine,
His love is eternal and sweet,
'Tis human, 'tis also divine.

His glory—not only God's Son—
In manhood He had His full part,—
And the union of both joined in one
Form the fountain of love in His heart.

The merits and worth of His blood
Have freed us from hell and from fear,
That we, as the blest sons of God,
May make His good pleasure our care.

O then may this union and love
Make us walk in the service of Heaven,
'Mid obedience and suffering to prove
That we to the Lamb have been given.

ECHOES OF MERCY.

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Being Remarks on the Mission held at St. Leonard's
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GOD PROMISING TO ANSWER PRAYER.

I do not think that the promises refer to prayers offered up one for another only, though this is a large part of the cases put forward in Scripture, "pray one for another," "for me also," "labouring earnestly for you in prayers," and many others; but the prayer of faith is not confined to this. There are prayers for opening the door for the gospel and for all men. If it be not the prayer of positive faith, we are told in all things to present our requests to God, but then the answer is, or may be only, that "God's peace which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." For the prayer of faith, or the promise to it, there are certain limits as to the certainty of answer, such as "in My name," "according to His will," "if ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will," "if two of you agree"; besides what stops prayer, as "a sin unto death." But then I see no limits put to the expectation of faith *if God gives it*. If it be my will asking amiss to consume it on my lusts, I cannot expect an answer. But the Lord contemplates the giving of faith and certainty of answer for drying up of the fig-tree or removing a mountain, and whatever I can ask believing, I receive it. This is a very important principle. But first the limits on which formal promise of answer rests besides spe-

cial faith. The first passage I may refer to is, "if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us..... and we know that we have the petitions." This supposes the demand according to His will, and then we can reckon on His power accomplishing it. This is the general christian confidence, a great boon to be assured of the acting of Him who is Almighty in the way of His will.

Next it is said, "if ye abide in me and *my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will*" Here I do not doubt there was special reference to the twelve ; but in principle it applies to all christians. Where the mind is formed by the words of Christ, when *they* abide in one who lives in dependence on and confidence in Him—one thus abiding in Him. having Him in spirit, and his mind guided by Christ's word, his will is (so to speak) Christ's—he asks what he will, and it will come.

Another case is where any two are agreed : here individual will is set aside. It is where Christians have a common desire and agree to present it to God. The deliberate formal agreement supposes a common Christian mind, and it will be done. So, when I ask, coming for what I can attach Christ's name to, under His auspices, (influence) the Father will do it. Here, I doubt not too, the twelve are specially in view ; still it is in principle every christian.

A man cannot in faith bring Christ's name attached to his lusts ; and all these statements suppose the disciple and faith, as James expressly

teaches us, and indeed the Lord Himself. But there are other statements which cast us more generally on the goodness of God, and His interest in us, and shew us that, where faith is in exercise, the answer will be there; "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing ye shall receive." This supposes faith, and intimacy, so to speak, with God. The heart is supposed to be in His interests, and then if there is faith as a grain of mustard seed, a mountain goes.

I do not doubt this kind of faith was much more when any, as the apostles, felt themselves interested in God's cause, identified with Him and it on the earth; but there is no limit to it. Where such faith is, such answer will be; and God is as much occupied now with the details of blessing for us as for the great deeds of those days. It might be more palpable, more concentrated too then, but not more true.

Not a sparrow falls now without Him more than then; and the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availing much is ever true: only one must, so to speak, put ourselves with God, for those to whom these things were said were identified with Him in His interests on the earth. This gave their prayers of course a peculiar place: but then if faith (that is the operation of His Spirit and grace) brings me into His interest now even in details, the promise is there, and we can reckon on God and His power exercised in love now as then. There is no limit:

only it is the working of His Spirit in us, and hence faith that reckons on the answer.

Presenting our requests, subject to His will, is always right: of this we have an example even in Gethsemane: so Paul for his thorn in the flesh. And the answer will be more glorious and blessed than the request, even when it does not *as* asked answer it. See John xii. and Psalm cxxii. So Psalm xxi., and even Paul's request about the thorn.

Let us trust His love, and this will not come short, and if He has given us faith to expect a specific answer, bless God for it. Only *our* will must not come in; even if it were answered, (this was the case of the quails), but as a rule not, as James teaches. But where there is earnest faith, God will surely bear, though He may give us safeguards against our own will in it.

GATHERED FRAGMENTS.

Read JOHN xii. 1-11.

In chapter eleven Lazarus was dead and corrupting, and the sisters Martha and Mary broken-hearted with sorrow.

Jesus, the resurrection and the life, comes into this scene of death and sorrow, and gives *life* and *liberty* to *dead* Lazarus, and *joy* and *peace* to the sorrowing sisters. Then, in chapter twelve, they *make Him a supper*.

There is not only life but liberty; for when La-

zarus heard the voice of the Son of God and came forth, he was bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and could not see, or walk, or move at all. But when the second word reached him, "Loose him and let him go," he gets liberty.

So it is with our souls, and we have in Lazarus, the man who was dead, sitting in *a new life*, and *at liberty*, feeding with Jesus, a picture of the believer. Indeed, Lazarus, Martha and Mary, taken together, make up one Christian. If Christians, we are all Lazaruses, Marthas and Marys. Martha is seen here serving, and not now, as in Luke x., cumbered with it, and careful and troubled about many things, but here it is a picture of service flowing from *life, liberty and communion* with the Son of God. Mary personifies worship, also flowing from the same, and a beautiful picture it is of worship. Mary pours out on the blessed Lord's feet, what (if she had not known and loved the Lord) she would have put on her own head—given to herself—and worship, *i. e.*, praise, thanksgiving and adoration, is just what we all like naturally to give to, and get ourselves.

When, however, we get to know and love Him, we gladly *give Him* what we used to give, and like to get for, ourselves. We adore and praise and thank Him. We thus break the box of spikenard on Him instead of ourselves. And the Lord's Table is the place where we should specially come together to *make Him a supper*, in the outside place gathered to His blessed name, like the little

group at Bethany, which was outside Jerusalem and all the Temple worship there.

But we must not think to find a box of spikenard all ready to hand because we have come to the Lord's Table on the first day of the week. Just as Mary's box of spikenard cost her something (it was very costly), so it will cost us something to have a box of spikenard to pour out upon Him. It will cost watchfulness, prayerfulness and self-denial during the week in order to keep near the Lord and walk with Him, else on Lord's day there will be no spikenard to give to Him—no worship in us.

"And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." God smells a sweet savour when we make much of His dear Son; when we pour out on Him our adoration, praises, and thanksgiving, as we remember Him together. Men, and even Christians, like the disciples (carried away by the "good words and fair speeches" of a Judas), call this "waste," "waste of time," etc., getting together for a whole hour or more and spending it all in making much of God's Son, but doing nothing for man.—But though service, too, is all right in its place, as in Martha, and will not be neglected if we are in communion with the Lord, yet the highest thing of all is to make much of, to adore, God's dear Son, giving praise, thanksgiving, and adoration to Him.

But there is another point in this picture. We not only have worship and service flowing from life, liberty, and communion with the Lord: we have testimony, too. The man with a new life in

communion with the Son of God is a *testimony*. (See verses 9, 10, 11.) Much people of the Jews came not only to see Jesus, but Lazarus also whom He had raised from the dead, and many of them went away and believed on Jesus, from just seeing the man with a new life, sitting, feeding with Jesus. This draws out the jealousy and opposition of the chief priests, who consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death, because that, by reason of him, many went away and believed on Jesus.

How blessed to know that if we are only going on in communion with the Lord, people will be attracted by it, and some of them will go away and believe on Jesus, too, through God's grace using those who have a new life and liberty from the Son of God, and are in communion with Him. And it is not here direct service, such as preaching and talking to people, (at least we do not know that Lazarus preached to anybody), blessed as that is, but the new life being manifested and so seen in the ways, manners, business, everything, that others are led to think of, and to believe in Jesus too. This draws down religious opposition and the religious leaders try and kill the testimony.

A WORD ON GOING FORTH AS A LABOURER AND DROPPING OTHER WORK. .

. . . . I suppose as to the principle that we are clear on one point, namely, that we are bought with a price, and are not our own—servants, blessed

be God in this ruined world, of the Lord, by His great grace: and if besides the joy of being forever with Him there is one, it is that of being able to serve Him down here, the little while that we have for so doing, for it is only here that we can suffer with Him.

Then the question arises as to what He calls us—for you, dear brother, if God has really called you to the ministry of the word, or if it is only that your practical faith wavers at the difficulties of the path. You must remember that God tests faith; He never fails us, but He makes us feel our entire dependence on Him. I see this in Paul: he was often hungry; he learnt to glory in infirmities that the power of Christ might rest upon him. But the result was that he was instructed to be in abundance, and to want, to be full and to be hungry—"I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me." *Without were conflicts, within were fears*—and he gained the knowledge of God as the One who comforts those who are cast down. Then it was worth while being cast down. But he was able to say, not "who causeth us to triumph," but "who leadeth us about in triumph"—having missed the open door at Troas, being in great conflict with regard to Corinth, but able to say, in order to be a sweet savour of Christ wherever he was.

The question of his call to the ministry was certain. If grace had not sustained him here, he could have returned like John Mark: woe be to him, as he said, if he preached not, and he did so without

his will: being sent assuredly of God, he could not doubt having been sent. The word of the Lord near Damascus and the prophecy at Antioch were too positive. Now neither our mission, nor any part of this work of the Lord, has this distinctness. Our work is not confirmed by accompanying signs. This does not trouble me. It demands more of the heart's confidence, confidence in Christ, and that is always good. But it strengthens the heart greatly to be assured of it. Then if there are difficulties in the way, they are but difficulties to be overcome. If I have not this assurance in starting, it is a question if I am in my place: in any case God can exercise us here for our good. Not only that, but when God has clearly called some one, either by the ardour of his faith, like Moses, or by any formal calling like Paul, He can put him aside. Moses during forty years kept the sheep of his father-in-law, and Paul had not any active mission, to reduce the fleshly activity which might mix itself in his work with the activity purely of God, and to make him learn his entire dependence. It was Barnabas who put Saul afresh to the work; then came the mission of Antioch. But the heart is in these cases always in the work, but retired with God, in such a manner that God has a larger place in the heart, and our labour is *afterwards* more directly with reference to Him. There then, dear brother, is the question for you: Are you truly called to labour for the Lord? that is to say, to go about in His work, for we all ought to labour for him. When we

are, faith may fail; yes, but we are miserable if we abandon it, as Jeremiah said when he did not wish to speak anymore. "But His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones." If it is only a fire that crackles in the thorns, it will soon be extinguished. But if you feel that the Lord has entrusted you with His word, has put it into your heart, not only for yourself, but for others, (Gal. i. 15; 16), then fear nothing. Faith tested is faith strengthened, it is to have learnt your own weakness, but to have learnt the faithfulness of God. His tender care even in sending the difficulties, that we may be there with Him. And if you have the assurance that God has entrusted you with His word, do not be troubled if you are set aside for a time. One learns one's lack of courage, at least, I have learnt it, but God takes account of what we are, gives us our thorn, that we may be humbled, and that we may feel that the strength and work are of Him. No doubt we have to judge our want of courage. For my part, it is my greatest test, the want of aggressive courage, and the way in which I shrink back before the coarseness of the world. But there is the look towards God, who has pity for us.

Profit then by your present separation from the work, to be much with Him. You will learn much inwardly in your incapacity to go forward, much of Himself, then more distinctly if God has really sent you, which gives great inward power in following out the work. But do not doubt His faithfulness.

“PRAY YE THE LORD OF THE HARVEST
THAT HE MAY SEND FORTH LABOUR-
ERS INTO HIS HARVEST.”

We must pray the Lord of the harvest that He may send forth labourers into His harvest. It is more devotedness that is lacking. There are—I know it to be the case—brothers who would be more useful in the work, if only they were more devoted. *They are absorbed by something else*, and this not only distracts them from the work, but when they do set themselves to it, there is not that maturity, that furnished condition of soul that knowledge of hearts, and of the way in which the word suits itself to their needs, which gives value to ministry. (See 1 Tim. iv. 15.) It is not that one might not, if one were to keep quietly in one's place, be busy about some occupation, *manual, or otherwise*; Paul was so indeed; but let the heart be in the work, not in a *worldly* object.

PROVING WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE TO THE LORD.

EPHESIANS V. 10.

This is a short exhortation containing nothing attractive for the intellect, but very much for the heart. Are we doing it? How much of the “proving” has there been in your course and in mine this day? How much of real, earnest, godly exercise as to what was the Lord's mind about each little occurrence? “Ye have an unction from the

Holy One, and ye know all things." (1 John ii. 20.) This is true of every Christian, whether only a babe, or more advanced as a young man, or a father in Christ. And this gives to us the power to do what the verse I have quoted exhorts us to do.

Is there anything in your daily path with which Christ can have fellowship? (You will be instructed as to this in the word.) Are this and that "acceptable unto the Lord"? If so then persevere in it, go on with it. Let no human influence deter you from this path. Why? Because the Lord is with you, and can there be anything like *that*? You have His own blessed presence, and favor, and *sympathy*, and they will compensate, even if you have to face all the world's frown.

But again, is there anything in your daily path or allowed in yourself, that is *not* "acceptable unto the Lord"? If so, (suffer one to exhort you and himself too) judge it, have done with it, refuse it, and do all this *at once*; and why? You are risking the loss of the Lord's present favor and company with you. To lose the sense of these is to lose all that is worth living for in this world.

To have to tread this world *alone*! What a cheerless blank the Christian life would be. And I *do* tread it alone if Christ is not practically with me, and this when I may be looked upon by others as a pious person.

It is an established truth for our hearts that the Lord has not only dealt with and settled the question of our sins, but that now the desire of His

heart is to be *with us*—daily—continually near; the One I can consult in every difficulty, and on whose love I can rest all the day long? What is my Christianity worth, if it does not minister these to my soul? To have Christ (as He was at Bethany) at home with *me* on earth, is only surpassed by one thing, namely, the blessed future, when I shall be at home with Him in heaven. (John xiv. 3.)

EVIL THOUGHTS, UNBIDDEN AND HATED.

(*Extract from a Letter.*)

Dear—, I have your letter, and I am sure that the enemy is very busy, as well as the evil heart within. What you need is thorough deliverance from yourself, that is, the flesh. You speak of evil thoughts, unbidden and hated, springing up in the heart even when you seek to be occupied with the Lord, this too when really thinking of Him. Then you stop to confess them, and the occupation for a moment in confession only provokes another evil thought. And so it is as you say, an unending, all-day work.

My feeling is that you have never yet enjoyed full deliverance from self and flesh. You are what scripture calls still "in the flesh," though a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe if your soul were free you would find the simple yet profound truth of "reckoning yourself dead" (Rom. vi. 2),

would so act that the thought of turning aside to confess what would spring up unsought for in your soul, would be found to be really and only *allowing the flesh a triumph*, in leading you to be occupied with it.

When there is no will, such thoughts will be left, turfed aside from, and treated as "not I." Of course when the soul is not free I could not say you could do so at all, *but were freedom enjoyed you would not be the sufferer from such things*. What I would simply say to you is, when evil thoughts are present to your soul, unsought for and hated, do not stop or cease from your measure of occupation with the Lord, to confess them. *If will enters they must be confessed, but if not, pass them by as you would avoid an evil person who is not yourself, and who you know is incorrigible, and with whom contact is only misery and defilement. "Avoid such, pass not by them," but leave them there. To own them at all, is but to give the flesh the place it seeks—a recognition in some way or another. This, even when it is only to abhor its workings, will be a satisfaction to the flesh.*

Oh that you had grace to leave "the flesh," unrecognised and disowned, and to pass on conscious that it is always there and will be in you to the end. How blessed that we can by grace disown and refuse to hear its suggestions when it works, knowing through mercy that it is no more "I." Your case is one that has been and is common to most of the Lord's people, if not all. I refer to un-

solicited, hated and wandering thoughts. You should simply go on and take no notice of them whatever, as by doing so you only give the flesh the place it seeks. Go on as not hearing the suggestions—be as it were deaf to them. Confess to God if you find *will* at work, but not so as to be occupied with the analysis of the evil: rather look up to Him, the sense of weakness and impotency filling your heart, and in the attitude of dependence of soul, pass on with your eye resting on Him, out of whom strength comes whenever there is conscious weakness.

JUDÉ VERSE 24.

It is important to observe the way in which the Spirit of God speaks in the Epistles of a power that can keep us from every fall, and unblameable; so that a thought only of sin is never excusable. It is not that the flesh is not in us, but that, with the Holy Ghost acting in the new man, it is never necessary that the flesh should act or influence our life, (compare 1 Thess v. 22.) We are united to Jesus; He represents us before God, He is our righteousness. But at the same time, He who in His perfection is our righteousness is also our life. He who says, "I abide in Him," ought also to walk as He walked.

I'M GOING HOME.

I'm a stranger here ;
No home, no rest I see,
Not all earth counts most dear
Can wring a sigh from me,
I'm going Home.

Jesus, Thy Home is mine,
And I, Thy Father's child,
With hopes, and joys divine ;
This world's a dreary wild ;
I'm going Home.

Home, oh, how soft and sweet,
It thrills upon the heart—
Home—where the brethren meet,
And never, never part—
I'm going Home.

Home, where the Bridegroom takes
The purchase of His love ;
Home, where the Father waits
To welcome me above !
I'm going Home.

And when the world looks cold,
Which did my Lord revile
(A lamb within the fold)
I can look up and smile.
I'm going Home.

When its delusive charms,
Would snare my weary feet,
I fly to Jesus' arms,
And yet again repeat,
I'm going Home.

And as the desert wide,
The wilderness, I see,
Lord Jesus, I confide,
My trembling heart to Thee,
I'm going Home.

While severing every tie,
That holds me from the goal,
This, this can satisfy
The craving of the soul—
I'm going Home.

Ah, gently, gently lead
Along the painful way,
Bid every word, and deed,
And every look to say,
I'm going Home.

“ WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST.”

(EXODUS xxviii.)

We are told in Hebrews that “we have a great high Priest, who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God;” and again, “we have such an high Priest who is set on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens;” and again, “If He were on earth He would not be a priest.” The place of the exercise of the priesthood of Jesus is the heavens; and He has gone there as Priest, “when He had by Himself purged our sins.” His priesthood follows redemption for us. He is gone as a priest there to sustain, according to the light and perfections of God’s presence, those whom He has redeemed. “We see not yet all things put under Him,” says the apostle, “but we see Jesus . . . : crowned with glory and honour.” The same words (see lxx.) as those in verse two of our chapter, when speaking of Aaron’s garments of “glory and beauty,” or “honour;” so we find that what Aaron was typically and officially, when clothed in these garments, Christ is personally. But before we see Him thus as represented in our chapter, let us look on Him in His life down here, before the way into the holiest was made manifest. We read in Exodus xxvi. 31, of a vail which separated the holy place from the most holy, and concealed the glory of God within. A vail composed of “blue and purple and scar-

let, and fine-twined linen of cunning work; with cherubims shall it be made." This veil figured to us the flesh of Christ, as we are told in Hebrews x. 20. The materials which composed the veil tell us of the purity and graces of Christ. We find that the "blue" was the first of these things, the heavenly colour. Heavenly was He in all His ways, walking through the world as "the Son of man who is in heaven." (John iii.) Truly perfect in His humanity, yet with a savour of heaven in all His ways. The royal colour, the "purple," was there too; born a king as we read from the Gentile mouth, "Where is He that is born king of the Jews?" And then the "scarlet," which conveys to us the human glory of Jesus. (Psalm viii.) "And fine-twined linen," His own perfect personal spotlessness, and inherent righteousness. With the cherubims added, for God the Father had "given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man," as we read in John v. The cherubims are always the companions of the throne, the judicial executive of the throne in government. (See them in Gen. iii., Ex. xxv., 2 Chron. iii., Ezek. i.-xi, Rev. iv., etc.) Thus we have in the veil that which concealed God within, and in it the figure of Christ's flesh. And He was thus presented to man, and He put forth His claims; but one after another they were refused, rejected and set aside. His earthly claims being thus refused, He must die and rise again that He may have a heavenly people, and bring them in divine righteousness before God.

In verse 4 of the chapter before us, we find certain garments which were to be made; a breastplate, an ephod, and a robe, a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle. Now the ephod was that which peculiarly characterized the priesthood. In 1 Sam. xxii. we read of Doeg, the Edomite, falling upon and slaying fourscore persons who wore the linen ephod. David when he inquired of the Lord, put on the ephod. (1 Sam. xxiii. 9-12.) The ephod was composed of the same materials as the veil, (without the cherubims), but there was one material *added* to those composing it, which was *gold*. Gold is the figure of divine righteousness in Scripture. The inner part of the tabernacle and the furniture and the vessels were of gold. We learn from this, that while God's Son had come down in divine and perfect love, and "had taken not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He had taken hold;" He who was "in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation; and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him." God took Him up and set Him, in divine righteousness, in His presence. He is "with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And we find Him thus set there in divine righteousness before God, and girded with the girdle of service for His people; to wash their feet and cleanse them

practically according to the purity of what God is, not merely according to what they *ought to be*. We find Him thus in John xiii. All His earthly claims had been put forth before this and refused,—as Son of God, Son of David, and Son of man. (See John xi., xii.) He looks beyond it all into the heavenly glory; and, in the washing of the disciples' feet, we learn that which He girded Himself to do in the glory into which He was about to go. He had come from God and went to God. In the end of chapter xiii., He speaks of His work that gives Him a title to be there. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." And in chapter xiv. He enters into the Father's house, now as a glorified man, upon a title that brings others in too, and we find those others in our chapter, His people, associated with Him. (Verses 9 29.) Their names are borne upon His shoulders and His heart; on the "stones of memorial," and the "breast-plate of judgment:" and they *are set in their places in GOLD!* Brought in and set in *divine righteousness* in Him in the presence of God, "who hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. v. 21.) He bears the weight and burden of His people on His shoulders before God Himself; and more. He cannot be there without representing them, for we read in verse 28, "they shall bind the breast-plate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod and that the breast-

plate be *not loosed* from the ephod. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually." And more than this, He bears their judgment according to the light and perfections (the Urim and Thummim) of God's holy presence. The robe of blue was under all the official garments—the personal, heavenly character of Christ. But when He went into the holy place, to "heaven itself," He left them behind to a "holy Father's" care. As the Father had sent Him into the world, (John xvii.) to bear testimony to Him, and for His name; and to manifest the saviour of His life on earth, to bring forth fruit to the praise and glory of God. Thus, as at Pentecost, as our great High Priest went into the holy place, to heaven itself, He sent down the Holy Ghost to His people; and as the golden bells and pomegranates were on Aaron's robe, that "his sound shall be heard when He goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord." So was the sound of Jesus, the testimony and the fruits of the Spirit (the golden bell which made the sound, the testimony; the pomegranates, the fruit,) heard upon earth at Pentecost, when He went into the holy place.

But the precious fruits are often mingled in their purity with something of the flesh and the natural man; and we read that, "Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, *Holiness to the Lord*; and thou shalt

put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things (the testimony and fruits when mingled with anything of the flesh or the natural man) which the children of Israel shall hallow, in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be upon *his* forehead that *they* may be accepted before the Lord."

Precious and varied and beautiful are the offices He thus sustains for His people—sustains, not merely according to their inconsistencies, but according to the light and perfections and holiness of what God is, to whom they have been brought in Him.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

I have just been thinking how the great apostate systems, whether civil or ecclesiastical, are to advance in strength and magnificence just as their day of doom and judgment approaches. Witness the woman in Rev. xviii., and the beast in Rev. xiii. And, I ask, Is not this moment through which we are passing giving pledges of this? Do we not see the great ecclesiastical system advancing to occupy itself of the world with something of giant strength? And is not the world, as a civil or secular thing, spreading itself out in luxuries and attainments and cultivation and magnificence beyond all precedent? And are not all these things the

pledges that all is on the road to the display of the woman and the beast in their greatness and grandeur, which are divinely-destined to precede their judgment?

But again, I ask, Is there any such notice under the hand of the Spirit that the *saints* are to rise to their great or beautiful condition before their translation? The *apostate* things are to be great before their judgment comes, but, I ask, is the true thing to be great in its way before its glory comes? This is an affecting enquiry. What answer does the oracle of God give it? The 2nd Tim. contemplates the *ruin* or *break-up* of the Church. But what condition does it anticipate things to be in afterwards? No restoration to spiritual strength or beauty in the order of the Church, but *the pure in heart* calling on the Lord together outside (the disorder of) the great house, and following the virtues, and cultivating the graces that become them in company.

Jude anticipates the last days. But what then? He promises nothing in the way of restored order and power, but encourages "the beloved" to build themselves up in holy faith, and to be looking for the mercy of God unto eternal life. The 2nd Peter also contemplates the last days, and fearful *unclean* abominations among professors, and the *scorning of promises* in the world. But he gives no hint of restored order and strength in the Church, but tells the saints to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, in the assurance that the

promise of *His coming and majesty is not a cunningly-devised fable.*

John contemplates the last days also, but it is under one strongly-defined aspect or characteristic—the tampering with, and the denial of, the inestimably precious mystery of the Godhead Persons, and the truth about the Son.

The judgment of the seven churches takes place in Rev. ii. and iii. It is a solemn scene. There is some good and much evil. There are many healthful admonitions for us, both in our individual and gathered condition—but there is no promise of restored order and power. The churches are judged—left under the word of judgment, and we hear no more of them *on earth*—the next sight of the elect is *in heaven*, in chapter iv. All this beloved, is serious and yet happy, for it is strikingly verified by the great moral phenomena around us at this moment. . . . It is well. It is gracious in the Lord to cast up before our eye, in His word, the high-road along which we were destined to travel, and the sights we were appointed to see. And it is happy to know that *our translation does not wait for our regained condition of corporate order and strength.* We might wait long if that were so, according to present appearances.

The *wrong* things will be in their *magnificence* just when their *judgment* comes,—the *true* thing will be in *weakness* till its *glory* comes.

“FAINT, YET PURSUING.”

JUDGES VIII. 4.

“And Gideon came to Jordan and passed over, he and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing.” The opening of a campaign, the carrying on of the struggle, with endurance to the end, are all included in Paul’s memorable summary,—“I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a (‘the’ in the original) crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day.” (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.) A ship may be making little progress and yet answer her helm; ready to take advantage of a favourable breeze. Delays unlooked-for may occur: yet her log-book of the course she kept, with the winds that blew, may justify the master and the crew in the eyes of her owners, that all had been done that could be accomplished. In our Christian career unlooked-for difficulties may arise (and necessarily so for the trial of our faith.) We may have to encounter opposition where we looked for assistance. We may have to suffer most from those with whom we once held sweet fellowship. It may be our lot to have bitter experience of the words in Psalm lv. 12: “For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me, then I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, a man mine equal,

my guide and mine acquaintance, we took sweet counsel together and walked to the house of God in company." How little, after all, have we been prepared for it; how impatient under it! What scope has been given to the exercise of reason; how little for the exercise of faith? We have held truth in the head, and it could not meet the necessities or trials of the heart. And it is gracious of the Lord to show this to us, and to bring us to acknowledge it before him, and to have bowels of sympathy for those who entered into conflict without tried weapons of war. (1 Sam. xvii. 9.)

Yet, let us not be misunderstood. Strength to pursue a course depends upon the course being right. The right object attracts forward, has propelling power in it, because it is right. Hence the immense importance of truth simply as truth. How well does it repay any real regard for it. What provision for necessities, what charges it undertakes! In Proverbs iv.: "Forsake her not and she shall preserve thee; love her, and she shall keep thee. . . . Exalt her and she shall promote thee to excellent honor." And what is here advanced of Wisdom is true also of the Lord Jesus. A due regard to His glory and His honor is the charge of His people's safety. The precept given by Him, "No man goeth a warfare at his own charges," is made good in His service. He amply provides for every emergency. It is true wisdom to apprehend this. And here the simplicity of faith enters. The doctrine of justification by faith

may be peremptorily insisted upon and Scripture ransacked in support of it; yet the very ablest advocates of this truth, and, convinced too, of its being true, may break down in the sister fact, that we must walk by faith, put on faith;—have faith in God, and whatever we enter upon or undertake, perform it in dependence upon God.

What mistakes arise from forgetfulness of this! How men plunge into the Lord's battles with their own weapons; bringing their own artillery to play upon their antagonists, and exposing, in their censure, of other men's motives, the whereabouts of their own. But the Lord hath no need of this. The dignity of the truth is above this. Faith will act the part of a general who makes his observations before entering into the *melée*, and disposes his forces for the attack, and continues his plans unmoved by the din of conflict, or the clouds of smoke and dust. Combatants there will be in the ranks who fight on for fighting's sake, without principle to lead them into action, and having no energy but their self-will to maintain them there; and if this be crossed, and their own importance interfered with, are forward to throw away their weapons in disgust, or discharge them, when retreating, in the faces of those who had been companions in service. Alas! how sorrowful is all this to the heart quickened of Jesus to have sympathy with Him. The triumph of the truth, swallows up in its grandeur, the individual share in promoting the victory. So the fall of an opponent in

such a struggle gives no room for self-exultation, but rather for commiseration. Victory is hallowed by tears of regret for those who, from love of ease, carnal security, carelessness of walk, error in judgment, or weakness of faith, were led into a position where they were sure to be vanquished,

Still, while it is the privilege of faith to anticipate the end, ever assured of blessing from God, yet the way is weary, and often the hands are heavy, the spirits droop, and then the trial of constancy of purpose comes on: and though faint, yet to be found pursuing, is the precursor of blessing and triumph. And this is the turning point of the career. Unbelief sheers off when difficulty threatens. Faith escapes none of these trials, yet holds on her course "though faint yet pursuing." Let us beware of misjudging our condition by our feelings or perceptions; of putting our enjoyment in the service, in place of the service itself: and so, contrariwise, of confounding our trials, which necessarily arise from it, with the end in view. It is easy to do this. How many are the ways by which men delude themselves into supineness. It is the cause of a controversy which justifies one. It is at all times unpleasant in itself, but still it may be imperative duty to engage in it. The plea of the evil of it, as such, may be made an excuse of by some. Its tendency to lead bystanders to mock at the truth, the apology of others. Yet if it comes in the way of duty, we cannot avoid it. To everything there is a season; "a time of war and a time

of peace," (Eccles. iii. 8), but servants have no right to be choosers, much less to refrain from action, when the service is arduous, and attended with difficulty, seeking into the future for excuses for inertness, instead of being earnest and zealous in the work of to-day.

The book of Judges gives the history of man's unfaithfulness in the very place of blessing, sinning in the very face of the bounty and grace which had put him there. It also gives the dealings of God with His people, in chastisement, and repeated deliverance. Such was His love and regard, that He pitied them in their sufferings, which their own sin brought upon them. "Yea, many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath." (Psalm lxxviii. 38.) The sixth chapter of Judges opens with a renewed account of Israel's iniquity, and the consequences of it. "The hand of Midian prevailed against Israel, . . . and Israel was greatly impoverished, . . . and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." How gracious His ways! He sent a prophet unto them, to remind them of His goodness, how He had deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all them that oppressed them, and gave them their land. "And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but ye have not obeyed my voice." The testimony to their evil is recorded. The bounty of His grace is unfolded to meet it. Gideon is appointed a deliverer. And the

angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, "the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." And Gideon said unto him, "If the Lord be with us, why then is this befallen us? and where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?" It is hard in the midst of the chastening for departure from God, to realize that it is because relationship had existed that this had befallen them. To recognise His hand, was the germ of faith; to see His deliverance in purpose, the growth of it. "If the Lord be with us, why then has all this befallen us?" When He was grieved with their sins, and insulted by the setting up of false gods, He left them to reap, as they had sown, confusion and strife,—to be scattered and peeled. Yes, He noticed them in chastening, because they were His. And Gideon said, "O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And the Lord said unto him, **SURELY I WILL BE WITH THEE**, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." And it is just here that the spring of confidence rises.—"*I will be with thee.*" It was so with Moses of old. If the Lord be not with me, carry us not up hence. The starting point of faith is, "God with us" Without this, all contest is in vain and worthless. He met them as they were, and acted on His faithfulness to His promise to their fathers, passing by in marvellous grace their own sinfulness and unbelief."

But how should Gideon be assured of this? The Lord would accept of his offering; and so little did Gideon apprehend His ways, that the seal of his acceptance was regarded by him as the knell of his death; for he said, "Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face." And the Lord answered him, "Peace be unto thee; fear not; thou shalt not die." And Gideon built an altar there. His soul is awakened for his work. There is struggle for establishment, and the Lord condescends to his weakness, and submits to be proved, that His servant might trust Him, (verses 36 to 40). He has evidence of His favour, and starts on his career. What wretched confusion was around! What prospect of remedy! How hopeless, to reason, the task! Yet faith shrinks not at impossibilities, for they exist not before Him with whom we have to do. Omnipotence sees hills as the plains, and water in the flinty rock. Now Gideon had got hold of a great principle—the Lord with His people in chastening them, and therefore His hand in deliverance. Being *His*, they were sure of the *former*, and equally safe for the latter. Looking at troubles amongst saints apart from the Lord's hand in permitting them, the eye discerns no remedy; the heart is overwhelmed with consternation. Fear enters: and that which in communion would have been the precursor of blessings, becomes to unbelief the harbinger of defeat. But, blessed be God! it is not so, the name of the Lord invoked, the two or three assembled together in that name, the Holy Ghost re-

cognised in the body, surely the Lord will shew He acknowledges us by chastening when needed, that He may bless us the more. "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord and shall not we receive evil." But, as was before stated, this is the trial of faith, it is a step in the right direction to discern the Lord's dealings with His people. "The Lord with them," becomes recovered strength to Gideon; and accordingly as this was discerned, there was blessing in his career. How his faith sought encouragement, and how the Lord dealt graciously towards him, the Scripture records.

"FAINT, YET PURSUING."

(JUDGES viii. 4.)

"Though faint, yet pursuing,
We go on our way,
The Lord is our Leader,
His word is our stay,
Though suff'ring and sorrow
And trial be near,
The Lord is our Refuge,
And whom can we fear

"He raiseth the fallen,
He cheereth the faint,
If the weak are oppress'd,
He hears their complaint,
The way may be weary,
And thorny the road,
But how can we falter,
Whose help is in God."

"And to His green pastures
Our footsteps He leads
His flock in the desert
How kindly he feeds"

The lambs in His bosom
He tenderly bears,
And brings back the wanderers
Safe from the snares.

"Though clouds may surround us,
Our God is our Light,
Though storms rage around us,
Our God is our might,
So, 'faint, yet pursuing,'
Still onward we come,
The Lord is our Leader,
And heaven our home.

"And there, all His people
Eternally dwell,
With Him who hath led them
So safely and well,
The tollsome way over,
The wilderness past,
And Canaan the blessed
Is theirs at the last."

(To be continued, D. V.)

“PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT.”

EPHESIANS vi. 18. ·

This kind of prayer denotes confidence in God. It is not the cry which, as to a judge, the poor sinner would make under conviction of sin, but the appeal of a child in trial and difficulty unto the known love of its father,—the prayer of those who are spiritual, and who find themselves to be in a condition wherein they are thrown simply on God. Again, it is not the seeking to gain strength, in order merely to know that our strength is there, but that we may practically learn what God is, by the power which He exercises toward us and for us.

This “praying always” supposes the person not to be fainting, but to be *using* the “ARMOUR” in connection with it; “having the loins girt about with truth,” for instance, the soul not resting vaguely on God, but whilst casting itself on Him, reckoning on an answer according to the mind of God as revealed in His word. The saint may not always get a direct answer to his petition: Paul, we know, prayed that the “thorn in the flesh” might depart from him: what was the Lord’s answer? was it removed? No: “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness”—that is to say, “It is better for thee to know the sufficiency of my grace, than to have the thorn taken away.” He got the victory over it, but he did not lose it. He was able

to say, "Most gladly therefore will I rather *glory* in infirmities, *that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*" It was not sin in which he gloried; people often call their sins, the spirit of unbelief, and the like, infirmities; the things wherein he gloried were—affliction, persecutions, distresses for Christ's sake, &c.; for through them he learnt the sufficiency of the Lord's grace.

John says, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, *if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.*" Now how are we to know the Lord's will from our own fancies and imaginations? By His word. If I go and pray for a thing not founded on the knowledge of the Lord's will as revealed in His word, I cannot have confidence about it. Were He to grant me what I desire, He might very likely only be answering my own foolish, corrupt will. If my flesh is at work, and my soul is not brought into obedience and subjection to the word, I cannot be "praying in the Spirit." The first thing the Spirit would do would be to humble me by the word into a sense of the condition in which my soul is. Supposing, for instance, I am walking carelessly and inconsistently, and yet am beginning to ask, as a very great Christian, for things only suited to the state of such an one; if the Lord were to answer my petition, it would only tend to make me a hypocrite: the first thing the Spirit would do in such a case would be to make me

humble under a sense of my real need. *Prayer in the Spirit* is always from a humble sense of need; then be it but a sigh or a groan, it is *prayer in the Spirit*; if we know our spiritual need, and cry to the Lord under the sense of it, we may always reckon on an answer. If our desires are according to God, they cannot be according to the flesh. The very thing the Lord would ever have us to learn is *our real need*; and He would have us do this in order that we might draw out of His fulness for its supply.

In Jude 20, 21, we read, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, *praying in the Holy Ghost*, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." We do this, "pray in the Holy Ghost," when in putting up our petitions we are conscious of His presence, and conscious too that we are asking according to His will, even though our understanding may not be able fully to unfold to us what we need. When Jesus came to the grave of Lazarus He wept and groaned within Himself; this was not merely because Lazarus was dead, but because of the power of Satan which was there displayed. Then lifting up His eyes to heaven He said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth." Here was the

full answer—power and victory exhibited over death. If we at all rightly estimate the condition of misery in which man is, the way sin is abounding, and Satan triumphing, the dishonour done to the name of God; if our eye is fixed on the glory into which ourselves and creation around us will shortly be brought, and we then look at the groaning and travailing in which it all is now—we too must “groan within ourselves.” But then we shall often “*know not what to pray for as we ought;*” there will be that felt by us which we have not the capacity to express; this is taken up and expressed by that blessed Spirit which dwelleth in us (Rom. viii. 26, 27); He “helpeth our infirmities; . . . He maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints *according to God.*” *This groaning is not the cry of the wounded spirit* (though God’s ear is ever most open to that), but groanings against the evil within and around us, yearnings for the day of the glory of Jesus, and of the manifestation of the sons of God, which is the only possible remedy for all that evil through which the name of God is now dishonoured.

If I am standing myself in truth, without guile of heart, having no hidden sin, I can look to God in intercession for others. Just accordingly as the word of God is used by us in self-judgment, can we pray with the confidence of being heard and answered. (1 Jno. iii. 21, 22.) In Heb. iv. we read, “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," &c. Here we first see the word searching the heart, then in the discernment of what we are, we are brought in truthfulness before God, and then, Jesus being our High Priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Just so far as we rightly understand what is our own place and the place of the Church by the word, can we "*pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.*" Nothing short of this is "*prayer in the Holy Ghost.*"

But let not this weaken our sense of the liberty we have to bring *all* our desires, our every request, to God in prayer. Whilst we can look for a definite answer to our prayers, if acquainted with the mind and will of God, yet we know that it is according to His will that we should "*cast all our care upon Him.*" Have we a care or an anxiety about any thing; remember that He bids us "*be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*" However foolish our "requests" may seem, let us not demur on that account to draw nigh, but in childlike confidence bring them unto Him; He will grant them if it would be good for us, and if not, if they be foolish, or wrong, He will teach us

better. He says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." Your very difficulty may be darkness and uncertainty of mind; go and tell God that you do not know what to ask for, this is your need, and your need is the very thing to be carried to God. He will meet you there—"it shall be given him." God loves the confidence and seeking to Him of His children. We should ourselves like our children to tell us all their wishes, all their wants, leaving it to us to act as we saw right about them. He has all the feelings of the father's heart towards His little ones. But "*praying in the Spirit*" is our privilege, and the more blessed when in full understanding also.

This "*praying always*" is that which meets the tendency there is ever in us to faint. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint." How can I wield effectually the "SWORD OF THE SPIRIT" unless my arm is strong, or hold up the "SHIELD OF FAITH" if I am weary? We are cast in the use of these things entirely upon God. As the poor widow mentioned in Luke xviii. 1-5, our refuge is "*always to pray, and not to faint.*" There must be the sense of continual, abiding dependence upon God. This is the place which our blessed Lord took, and it is ours. Where Satan seeks to come in is just here, as to communion between us and God. His effort is to weaken our actual power of communion. He does not try all at

once to destroy a person's faith, but he saps the source of it as well as he can. Thus was it with the Church of Ephesus, "Thou hast left thy *first* love." There was still found in it the work, the labour, the patience, but the power of communion there had once been was gone, and therefore the message, "Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place. except thou repent." The way by which Satan ever gets in is by giving some little satisfaction in *self*, thus weakening the "*praying always*," the very thing which sustains practical righteousness, then he draws on the soul further and further, till at last he makes it doubt whether it has ever prayed at all. The sense of God's love gets weakened, and then the world becomes more attractive. Communion with God maintains two things, the sense of blessedness in His presence, and separation from the world.

"*And watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*" Watching unto prayer is the continual, the habitual exercise of the priestly function; the taking up every matter that falls within our cognizance in the power of fellowship with God—so using persons and circumstances as to make them matter of intercourse with God.

We do not sufficiently seek to have the Lord with us in the *prospect* of suffering. How was it with Jesus? Our blessed Lord, when the hour of His conflict was coming on, when, in the garden of

Gethsemane, He was entering by anticipation into the bitterness of death, spent the whole night in *watchings and prayer*. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry ye here and *watch* with me. And He went a little farther and fell on His face and *prayed*, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Coming to His disciples, He finds them "sleeping for sorrow," they sank under it. He says to Peter, "What, could ye not *watch* with me one hour? *watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation*: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Jesus prays yet more earnestly, and is strengthened for "this hour"—so that when the "great multitudes with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people," come to take Him, He steps calmly, firmly forward, saying, "Whom seek ye?"—"I am He." Then "they (the disciples) all forsook Him and fled."

Christian, when you feel or fear any trial approaching, go at once with it to the Lord, pass through the trial in spirit with your God; and then, when you have actually to pass through it, He will give you strength to bear it, He will be with you in it; and, like the children passing through the fire, you will lose nothing but your bands, or you may even find the Lord has put the trial away.

This watchfulness of the Spirit is ever contrary to the flesh; but remember the words, "*Watch and*

pray, that ye enter not into temptation." When in this state of watching unto prayer, I see Satan's hook under the bait, I detect him who laid the snare, and then, "in vain is the snare spread in the sight of any bird." "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." When I am watchful everything turns to prayer. I can "put on the **WHOLE ARMOUR** of God," and am "able to stand against the *wiles of the devil*:" but on the contrary, when walking in the flesh my prayers are turned into confession and self-reproach, and my life will be a life of sorrow. Watchfulness sees the host, but looks to the Lord against the host; it sees the evil before it is brought out, but remembers the word, "Greater is He that is for us, than all that can be against us."

The real anxiety, the watchfulness, and caring for the Church, of Paul, brought him into very much difficulty and conflict. (See 2 Cor. vi. and xi.) He passed many a sleepless night because he so cared for it, and where this is found in its measure in us there will also be "in *watchings* often" for "all saints." There can be no true energy of love in the Spirit in us towards *one* saint apart from the rest; we shall find ourselves to be connected with *all* saints. Christ loves *all* saints: when we shut up our love to *one* or even to *so many* saints, it matters not what the number, we shut up ourselves in narrowness of spirit, we lose part of the comprehensiveness of Christian love; Christ intercedes for *all* saints. The blessed place in which we are set (as brought before us here), is that of intercession

with Christ for all saints—“*praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for ALL SAINTS.*”

When the deacons were chosen (Acts vi.), why was it? That the apostles might give themselves “to prayer, and to the ministry of the word:” the very first thing they thought of was recognized dependence upon Him from whom all the ability to minister in the word came. And this was not merely a casual circumstance, the way in which Christ has knit the members of His Church together, is, in making them dependent one on another; the greatest minister that ever was, dependent on the weakest saint for power in his ministry, as we see here; “*and FOR ME, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak.*” When Paul was sent forth of God anywhere, he went dependent on the prayers of the saints—“Brethren, *pray* for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified.” Whilst he had a great gift of ministry for the comfort and edification of the saints, he felt his dependence on their prayers for the profitable exercise of it. Whether he was “afflicted,” or whether he was “comforted,” it was for their sakes, for their “consolation and salvation,” and they in turn were “helping together by *prayer*” for him. (See 2 Cor. i.) Just as the eye, the ear, the foot, the hand, are all

necessary (1 Cor. xii. 14-26) in the natural body, so we read of the Church the body of Christ, that "fitly joined *together* and compacted by that which *every joint* supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of *every part*, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love," (Ephes. iv.) Thus the very feeblest saint *has his place* in the Church, as well as the most highly gifted, but the blessing that each is *practically* to it, depends on personal communion, not on gift; we cannot have light without oil. It is quite true that God gives as He sees fit, "dividing to every man severally as He will," but it is only as we are kept in humble dependence on Him that there is real profit in any thing.

"*Praying always,*" &c. If we are not walking in the Spirit, Satan will turn even our very cares and duties into occasions of sin, by making us do them in the wrong time or in the wrong way. He will seek to make our duties and our prayers conflict, because he knows that it is only as they are done in a prayerful spirit that we shall have blessing in them. If otherwise there may be much busy activity, it will but deaden the soul. If you say, "I cannot pray, I cannot find God's presence now," it is just the very time you need to pray; where will you find strength? in staying away? No. When people say they cannot find God's presence, the truth is very generally that they *have* found it, and that it has discovered to them the evil, careless, unprofitable state in which they were before, though

they did not know it then because they were not in His presence. There may be distraction of thought, but let not that hinder your "praying," it is the very thing which shows you have a need to be supplied. Why is there this distraction? because your mind has become occupied with other things beside the Lord. Go to Him; you may whilst in this state have less freedom in your prayers; the joy you would otherwise have had may be denied, yet you will return with profit, and more power of communion.

You will be humbled, and is there no profit in being humbled? yes, very great; for grace, whilst it humbles, always encourages.

The Lord is ever a "sanctuary," a "hiding place for His children;" but in order habitually to realize this there must be the "*praying always,*" the "*watching thereunto.*" We hear people say continually, "I am able to look up to God in the midst of my work." This may be very true, but can you say that you are thus able to look up to God at any time in the midst of distraction of mind? No; it is only by carrying the presence of God with you into your work that you can do so. It is true that the grace of God often abounds over our carelessness, but it is by the habitual power of communion that we can fly to God at any time. We never can tell in the beginning of the day *when* and *how* a difficulty may arise during the course of it; it is only by having the presence of God with us to suggest right thoughts and words by living in the power of communion, that we shall

be able to meet it when it occurs. Then in every place, in every company, we may "hide" "in the secret of His presence from the strife of tongues" around. *Better never enter into company at all, even with Christians, if we do not take our hiding-place with us.*

Accordingly as we are filled with the Holy Ghost, shall we be able to look up steadfastly into heaven. We may go on carelessly—return back to God and find grace; He may quicken, refresh, and stir up our souls; but it will not be with us as if we had walked in the strength and power of communion.

The presence of the Holy Ghost ever makes us find out fresh short-comings, some dark shade unknown before, but then Jesus is now in the presence of God for us, and thus, whilst we learn our own emptiness, we practically learn what is the fulness, the riches of the grace of God.

Is there no joy in having fellowship with the Spirit of Christ in the things his heart is occupied about here? Yes, great joy! Then "*pray always with all prayer, and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints,*" &c.; but let us remember that it is only by being rooted and grounded, and made to stand in *grace*, that we can do this.

Heaven is to us the place of grace. I could never have looked to God at all but for grace; and it is only as our hearts are "established with grace," that they are set at liberty in the wide field of love, to embrace and supplicate for "all saints." May

we learn more of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of that grace. Knowing that "nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;" "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature!" may we practically be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

It is very hard for us to see ourselves and Satan to be as nothing, and God to be everything. The moment we get out of dependence on God, we find out our own weakness. We may perhaps think that one good battle with Satan, and all will be over; but no such thing,—we have the security of victory, but no cessation from conflict till the Lord comes. Then Satan will be bound, and then we shall have the full result of victory; but now we are called to unceasing dependence, moment by moment to be reckoning on the grace and strength of God. Where there is not this dependence there is not blessing, joy, and comfort. The tendency of the flesh is ever to get out of it, and then we have not strength with us in the battle, but have to learn our need of grace through weakness and failure, instead of in joy and confidence in God.

“ FAINT YET PURSUING.”

(Continued from No. 3.)

How pride should be hid from man, and salvation of the Lord fully manifested, the sequel discloses—three hundred only of the many thousands of Israel, and with such weapons of war as appeared very folly in the eyes of the world. But the deliverance would be more manifestly of God, and the hearts of His people brought back to *Him*; for this was the object, not the triumph of a party but the blessing of the whole people of Israel. We lose sight of this. . . . Surely there is encouragement for faith from the very fact of our chastening. Let us beware of writing (as has before been observed) the sentence of death upon our *position* and *privileges* instead of upon ourselves. To recognize the hand of our Father, and to acknowledge the needs be, is the first step towards recovery

This was attained to by Gideon. The Lord's hand was seen in permitting the chastisement; the Lord's hand made bare to faith in working deliverance. But the position of faith is the path of trial and that, too, because it is the one of faith. We have forgotten this in our folly. We have asked, with Gideon, if it be so, why, then, has all this befallen us? And, instead of the language of Nehemiah, “Should such an one as I flee:” (Nehemiah vi. 11), “we have run every man into his own house,” whilst the Lord's house lay waste, (Haggai

i. 9.) Trial by the way is no excuse for getting out of the way; failure in man, no reason for quarrelling with God. But the rather, our every discomfiture should quicken our feet to our hiding place. "Thou art my hiding place," (Psa. cix. 114.) But the path of faith is one of trial. Service for God can only be sustained in the power of God. There is danger whilst working ostensibly for Him, of ceasing to abide in Him: and then leanness of soul enters, and the heart, unsustained by communion, shrinks under trials which, in a healthy condition, would have had no pressure upon us. Now Gideon had eminent service, and consequently trials in it. He wrought a victory in the energy of the Spirit of God, and this exposed him to the envy of Ephraim, (chapter viii.) He came to Jordan and passed over, he and the three hundred men that were with him, "faint, yet pursuing." And he asked bread of the men of Succoth, and he was mocked of them: the princes of Succoth saw nothing imposing in the small band of the faithful, so wearied and famished, for whom unbelief had no sympathy, and less of discernment when acting for God. And he passed on to Penuel, where a like reception awaited him. There are few allies for faith, and few spirits to lead on a forlorn hope into conflict. Yet pursuing God's enemies, and employed in His service, though faint, *He* sustains them. "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." The hosts of Zeba and Zalmunna are defeated in Karkar, and

the two kings taken, (chap. viii. 11) and slain; the elders of Succoth taught with thorns and briers in the wilderness (verse 16); the men of the city of Penuel slain, and their tower beaten down, (verse 17), and all this by a feeble few, "faint, yet pursuing."

What comfort and encouragement is here! Have faith in God. How imperative the precept! How certain the results! The Lord strengthen the hands that hang down! *May the good of His church be the object of pursuit, the truth of His presence where two or three are gathered, the testimony borne; and though Ephraim wax wroth in the spirit of envy, and Succoth and Penuel will furnish no sustenance, yet onwards is the word. "Speak to the people that they go forward." May the Lord encourage us that we may be found though "faint, yet pursuing."*

"THE GOD OF ALL GRACE."

I have lately been meditating on the rich and perfect display of the grace that the Lord makes in David. Indeed it is *grace* that the Lord exhibits in David, as it is *glory* that He exhibits in Solomon. But it is grace in all its actings, that shines in this wondrous and varied history. The sinner and the saint get all godly consolation and encouragement from it, and find (a) fulness in the treasures of grace for (their) need whatever complexion or character that need takes. *Election* of grace shines in

David, for he was chosen when he was the despised one. (1 Sam. xvi.) The *preserving* power of grace shines in David, for he is kept, and kept holy and harmless too, when persecuted and tempted of the enemy. (1 Sam. xviii. 30.)

The *victory* of grace shines in David for the hand of the Lord leads him through all resistance and enmity up to the place of honour and safety. (2 Sam. i.-x) And lastly, the brightest too of all displays, the *restoring power* and love of grace shines in David, for when after all the divine goodness he sinned against the Lord and caused His Name to be blasphemed, grace restores the soul, and leads it again in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake. (2 Sam. xi. 23.) Thus grace makes a blessed shew of itself in this wondrous and varied history, that whether we be sinners still at a distance, or saints who have been overtaken and lost our due place and honour in joy and blessing, we may still know what God is to our holy encouragement and comfort. The (saint) wants the same treasures of grace after he has believed as he did before. Nothing but fulness of it will do for him. But Jesus still has it to the end. He not only *elects, preserves* and *blesses*, through His grace, but He *restores* also, and this is to His highest praise. . . . David the blotted, tainted David has a song. (2 Sam. xxiii.) He tasted 'tis true the dreadful bitterness of trespassing against the God of all goodness, but grace had its way in his soul, and *gives David a song again.*

FRAGMENTS.

“The cross and the crown go together : and more than this, the cross and communion go together. The cross touches my natural will, and therefore it breaks down and takes away that which hinders communion. It was when Peter rejected the thought of the cross that Jesus said, “Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me:” it is with a rejected Saviour we have to walk. The whole system of the world is a stumbling-block to turn the heart from God—dress, vain show, flattery, even the commonest things which tend to elevate nature. All that puts us into the rich man’s place is a stumbling-block. Heaven is open to a rejected Christ. Remember this. God’s heart is set upon carrying His saints along this road to glory; He would have us walk by faith and not by sight. Whatever tends in me to exalt the world that rejected Christ is a stumbling-block to others; in short, anything that weakens the perception of the excellency of Christ in the weakest saint.”

“It is *He* who has not only given free access to Himself by the blood and by the presence of Christ in heaven for us, but who is continually occupied with all the details of your life; whose hand is in all your *trials*, who thinks unceasingly about you in order to make you partakers of His holiness.”

"MARK YE WELL HER BULWARKS."

PSALM XLVIII.

Mark ye well her bulwarks,
 'Tis God that made them strong,
 With mercies sure and grace divine,
 His City loved so long;
 Mark ye well her bulwarks,
 Her site how wondrous fair!
 Her palaces a refuge are,
 For God Himself is there!

Mark ye well her bulwarks—
 Behold, "what God hath wrought!"
 In dust she lay, her beauty gone,
 Forsaken and unsought;
 But graven on *His* hands is she,
 And Israel's God is true;
 He loved her, and He raised her up,
 And built her gates anew.

Mark ye well her bulwarks—
 Was this the guilty one?
 That killed and stoned the messengers,
 Cast out and slew the Son?
 Messiah's blood lay at her door,
 Her hands imbrued in sin
 Of crimson dye—blood-guiltiness
 Like this had never been!

Mark ye well her bulwarks,
 And praise the grace divine,
 That raised her when in death she lay,
 And called her light to shine;
 Messiah's blood lay at her door,
 But 'twas for her He died;
 Her stones are laid, her walls re-built
 Through Him—the Crucified.

Mark ye well her bulwarks,
 And see that "God is love,"
 Where sin abounds, grace o'er abounds,
 His matchless love to prove;
 Consider well her palaces,
 And all her streets explore
 This God of grace is our God,
 E'en now, and evermore!

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

IN ITS APPLICATION TO THE

WORLD'S FAIR.*

(Read 5th Chapter of Daniel.)

While Jeremiah was left at Jerusalem to witness the course of moral corruption there, and to warn of coming judgments, and while Ezekiel was among the remnant in the place of discipline or of righteousness on the river Chebar, Daniel is set among the Gentiles, even at Babylon, to learn the history and the ways of the Gentile, or the world.

We may see this in his first six chapters, which constitute the first part of the book. In chapter i. we see the Gentile, or the world, set up. Then in chapter ii. we get the same system, the world, in its political career onward to the kingdom, figured in the great image, seen in all its parts, from its head of gold to its toes of clay-iron; and judged in the appointed hour, by the Stone which becomes a Mountain, to occupy the scene of power all the world over with an untransferable kingdom. Then in the four following chapters, the stories of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius give us the moral course of the world. In Nebuchadnezzar we get a persecuting power, connected with human religion or idolatry. The king sets up an image and

* This paper was written some years ago in connection with "The Great Exhibition." The principles referred to, and the truth brought out are, however, applicable to all similar occasions. Therefore the title, "The World's Fair," is substituted for "The Great Exhibition."

demands the worship of it on pain of the fiery furnace. The righteous refuse and suffer. In Belshazzar we get the easy, worldly, self-indulgent thing, with contempt of religion. The king makes a feast, worshipping all that which ministered to his pleasures. The righteous are utter strangers to it all. In Darius we get a persecuting power again, but it is in connection with self-exaltation. The king makes an interdict, that none are to be treated as God but himself for so many days on pain of the lion's den. The righteous again refuse and suffer. These are plain and sure distinctions in the progress of Gentile iniquity. And it may strike us, I judge, very clearly, that we are at present rather in the day of Belshazzar. Persecution and idol-service gave character to the preceding day, and persecution and deification of man to the day which followed: but all was easy indifference, with thorough satisfaction in the present things of the world, in the day of Belshazzar. Refusal and consequent suffering form the path or history of the righteous in the times of the idolatrous, persecuting Nebuchadnezzar, and of the self-exalting, persecuting Darius; but in the times of Belshazzar, perfect and thorough separation is the place of the saints of God.

There is a voice for us in all this. Daniel is not seen at the feast. And there is one, though not in his strength yet much in his spirit, who is absent also—the queen, the king's mother. The king is ignorant of the man of God who was then in his

dominions. He is also unmindful of the doings of God which had been in the same dominions in the days of his father. But the queen has recollections and knowledge of these things, and she is a stranger to his feast

Is not the question then with us to be this: Who is the separated one now? Who is going to the king's feast, or who, in the light of the Lord, is separated from it? The present is an easy, self-indulgent, worldly moment. The gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of wood and of iron, are praised. All the capabilities in the world to make a feast are produced, and displayed, and gloried in. Social accommodation and social delights are the great object. Man's works, the fruit of his skill and the resources of his country, adorn and furnish the scene, and are the host of the feast, that which gathers and entertains. Man is providing the joy of this awful hour in the world's history—awful indeed, not in the judgments or sorrows which are upon it, but in the moral principles which are quickening it. The captivity of Zion was heedlessly forgotten by Belshazzar, and the vessel's of God's temple were profaned. The operations of His hands were not considered, but the wine and the tabret were in his feast. So now; the rejection of Christ is by common consent forgotten, that man may meet his fellow, greet him with a common joy and with a common welcome, because they are all of one earth, of the same world, of kindred flesh and blood; and all God's claims on His elect and testi-

mony against the world are thrown together as what for a season must be passed by, till the feast-day is kept.

Where then, again I ask, is the separated one? Where is Daniel? Where is the king's mother? The feast does not attract either of them, though they may be in different measures of strength. Daniel knew the character of it before the judgment was pronounced. He does not wait for the fingers of the man's hand to put him into his place in relation to it. He is not moved by the mysterious writing on the wall. Sudden destruction, as a thief in the night, does not come upon him. He and his companion, though "a weaker vessel," are, in the spirit of their minds, in the place from whence these fingers were sent—they were "children of light and children of the day." The judgment upon the feast had no terror for them, for they were not at the feast. They had judged it already. Their separation was not sleep. "They that sleep sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night." (1 Thess. v. 7.) But they were no more indifferent to it than taking their pleasure at it. Their separation therefore, as I said, was not sleep. In a divine sense they watched and were sober. (1 Thess. v. 6.) In the separated place Daniel knew the judgment of God about it all, long before the writing on the wall announced it to the world. All this is full of meaning for us.

I am not going to say that the form of evil which

Belshazzar's day presents is the worst. Nebuchadnezzar set up an idol before that day, and Darius set up himself after it. The fiery furnace was heated for the saints in the former reign, and the lion's den was open for them in the latter. The day of Belshazzar witnessed nothing of this. The abomination in the plain of Dura did not demand worship then, neither did the royal statute forbid worship toward Jerusalem then. But still there is something in Belshazzar himself, if not in his day, which especially provoked the Spirit of the Lord. Daniel can feel for Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar is brought to a right repentant mind, and the judgment of God is reversed. Daniel, too, can feel for Darius, and Darius is seen in humbled gracious meltings of soul, and we can all pity him—pity him when we see him unwittingly involved in results which a moment's vanity and easiness of nature had led to. But from us Belshazzar gets no kindly movement of heart, from the Spirit of God in Daniel nothing but stern rebuke, and from the hand of God nothing but swift destruction, the fingers on the wall announcing it, and the sword of the Median executing it. "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."

He was the easy man of the world. He despised all religious fear. What he worshipped was his pleasures, the gods of silver, of brass, and of gold, the vessels which could fill out his entertainments and make provision for his lusts.

He did not summon the world to either his idol

or himself, but to his board and to his holyday. Nebuchadnezzar makes an image, Darius a royal decree, Belshazzar a feast. But Jerusalem and her sorrows are forgotten, the temple and its furniture despised. The wonders which the God of Jerusalem and of the temple had freshly wrought in the land were all a dream or a fiction with him, and the very spoils of His house he can use in making merry with his friends.

This was easy worldliness--the heartless way man who can forget God's wonders, and the rejection and humiliation of Christ. And all this is terrible. The harp, and the pipe, and the tabret are in such feasts; but the operations of God's hands are forgotten. Till now the vessels of God's house has been held in some fear and honour. But now they are profaned and made to serve the king's lusts. God had ordained them to witness the separation of His priestly nation, and to His own worship in the midst of His people; but the king makes them the instruments of his sport.

And what, I ask, is the effort to deck out the world, to enjoy it, and to boast of it, while Jesus is rejected by its citizens? Is it not a thing in kindred spirit with this? The rejection of Christ is forgotten, yea, despised—for that is gloried in and displayed which continues the word, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Is not this somewhat of taking of the choice vessels of God's house, in the very day of their captivity, to make merry with them?

The present moment may thus surely remind us of Belshazzar's feast. Gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, and of wood are praised; the resources and capabilities of the world are displayed, thoughtless of its rejection of Christ. And are any of the captivity at the king's least? Israel was captive together with the vessels of the temple. Would any of them be so thoughtless as to make merry with the king who was despising the spoils of that house? Would any of the servants of the rejected nobleman take part with the citizens in setting forth the wonders of their blood-stained land? (See Luke xix.)

The mind turns with these thoughts to the present moment. It cannot refuse to give itself, in some sort or in some measure, to the subject of "The World's Fair." It would not be fit that it should be indifferent to it—for it is no common sign of the time and ought to be morally judged.

It will be pleaded for. No doubt of it. It will be said, that it is designed to encourage brotherhood among the nations, and to promote the great business of social comfort and happiness as wide as the human family. But, I ask, are these God's objects? God has scattered the nations, and never proposes to gather them till He gathers them to Shiloh. God would have us strangers here, "content with such things as we have," without making it our business to increase or improve them. God would have us testify against the world in its present condition, and therefore neither flatter it, nor reconcile it to itself, nor glory in its capabilities. The World's Fair is

therefore in full collision with the mind of God. Christ exposes the world; the World's Fair displays it. Christ would alarm it, and call it to a sense of judgment; the World's Fair makes it on better terms with itself than ever.

It is indeed a mighty advance in all the apostate reprobate principles of man. Efforts of a like kind we may be familiar with; but they are commonplace in comparison with this. As prophets speak, touching advance in the ways of evil, this is indeed "adding drunkenness to thirst." I regard all admiration of it as a step in the way to "wonder after the beast." That will be but a further expression of the same mind; and how serious, if evangelical religion be sending its contributions to it, or becoming one of the Exhibitors at it! Deep must be the infatuation. To tell the world one day what it is in God's esteem, and the next day to become one of the wonderers after its resources and capacities! Admiration like this savours of worship.

Like the old prophet at Bethel, when a saint is in a place or a position unwarranted by the call of God, the enemy will find easy occasion to use him. Still I own, when I think of it, it is to me wonderful that a Christian should find satisfaction in this thing. That it is an awful advance in the development of those evil principles which are to mark the day of Christendom's ripened iniquity, I have not the least doubt.

~ The Lord of old scattered the nations. (See Gen. xi.) This was judgment on a bold attempt of theirs,

when they were of one speech and one language, to make themselves independent of God. And has He reversed that judgment? There is indeed an appointed time when it shall be reversed. ~ Jerusalem shall be a centre, and Shiloh a gathering object. The nations will flock to Zion, there to see the King in His beauty. And none of them there, we may say, shall appear before the Lord empty. The tributes of all the lands shall beautify the place of God's sanctuary. The fruits of Midian and of Ephah shall be there,—gold and incense from Sheba, the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nabaioth, the glory of Lebanon, the forces of all the Gentiles. All shall flock there, like doves to their windows, and kings shall minister there. Gold too shall be for brass, silver for iron, brass for wood, and iron for stones. All shall be for glory and beauty in the earth then. But this is still future. This is for "the world to come," after the Redeemer has come out of Zion, and turned away ungodliness from Jacob. (See Isaiah lix, lx. and Rom. xi.)

The reversing of the judgment at Babel is left for the kingdom of God at Jerusalem. He that scattered must gather. He is Lord of the nations. "The powers that be are ordained of God." It is His pleasure that they should be scattered nations still; for one universal monarchy is appointed of God for Jesus only—as it is written, "every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." "His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

The name of Jesus was, indeed, proposed as a gathering object in the day of Pentecost. Tongues were then cloven as they had been at Babel. But it was to re-unite what had been already severed. But this proposal, like every other on God's part to man, was disappointed. The hard unbelieving heart did this. And what is man now proposing? He who refused God's proposal to gather to Jesus, in the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, is proposing to gather to himself. He will exalt himself as at Babel. He will be independent of God. He will be like the Most High. The beast will issue his decree on pain of death, his mark will be received on the forehead, and all the world will wonder after him. (Rev. xiii.) This is in the prospect of the world's history. He who will not let Christ be exalted will surely seek to exalt himself. And such a one is man.

Isaiah, anticipating in the Spirit the last days, warns the people of God against saying a "confederacy," in common with the world around them. (Chap. viii.) And I ask myself and others, do we in deed and in faith receive these notices from the prophets? Do we judge that man will thus exalt himself and confederate—thus gather round himself? And if we treat these warnings of the character of the last days as divine, can we doubt from all we see and hear, that man has already begun to practise his hand in kindred attempts, in efforts which shall issue in all this? The facilities and the speed in linking the nations one with another is

now well known. It is used and gloried in. And what is this "Great World's Fair," but another trial for his skill in forwarding the main leading purpose of man's heart? No doubt it suits the spirit which is moving all this, to have it under the sanction of *religion*. When he can use it for his own ends, nothing suits the devil better. He would fain have had Christ exalt Himself under the sanction of Psalm xci. And again and again, he would have acknowledged Christ, had He allowed it—as the spirit of divination would have witnessed to Christ's servant, had he received it. (Acts xvi.) But this could not be. The beast, however, will have his false prophet. He will use religion for his own ends. But divine religion takes us only into *God's* ends. And it teaches us this (with the authority of the real intrinsic holiness of such a principle); we can have no fellowship with that against which we are called to testify. (Ephes. v. 11.)

Nor can we say that the judgment we form on this matter is a small or indifferent thing. It is not so. The subject is well fitted to exercise the judgment of a saint of God. It is eminently so, I believe. His mind *generally* will be much affected by his sense of this thing and his decision respecting it. The mind can become dull. The eye gets dim betimes. And if such a process as that be going on, the next attempt of the enemy finds us less prepared. And I ask, Is not all that dangerous, when delusions are multiplying as they are and as they will?

We are counselled to buy eye-salve of Christ, that we may see. That is something beyond or beside faith and confession of the gospel. Laodicea had the common faith, and in a sense boasted of it, but Laodicea wanted eye-salve. And sure I am that let this great shop of the world's ware expose what it may, that eye-salve is the very thing which will not, cannot be had there. It is the article which would detect the whole character of the place, and it could not therefore be had there. It is a palace, Man is not enthroned there as God, it is true.— Things among the children of men are not quite ripe for that yet. It is not a temple where man sits, shewing himself as God. (2 Thess. ii.) But man's works are displayed there. Man's art is enthroned there, and man expects to be admired and wondered at there, and thousands enter it (as another as observed) in the spirit of doing homage to man. It is a mirror in which the world is reflected in a thousand attractive forms, and the unworldly, humbled, earth-rejected Jesus is forgotten. Jesus may be named there, it is true, but an unworldly Jesus is practically forgotten there.

It is indeed as I surely judge, solemnly, awfully significant. It is full of the spirit of the last days. This palace for man's productions to be gazed at, is but a stage before the temple for man himself to sit in—and admiration of it is getting a generation ready, morally ready, to "wonder after the beast." One is amazed that any Christian can find the least satisfaction in it.

This World's Fair,—for it calls itself by that significant name—in its way shews all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. It does not hide this. It professes to do this. Like John Bunyan's Vanity Fair, there is the Italian row, and the German row, and the English row. It has human skill and resources in all variety, and from all lands. It presents the kingdoms of the world, and “the glory of them.” And who, I ask, was it that did this before? The Spirit led the Son of God into “the wilderness,” a place of stranger-ship and pilgrimage—but the devil shewed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

The world, according to the Scriptures of God, is a lost and a judged thing. It is incapable of recovery. The word of God does not, in a single passage of it, warrant the thought that it can be advanced or cultivated for God. He has judged it—though in grace the judgment tarries, and the long-suffering of God is salvation. But the world is a system past all hope of recovery, till the judgment be executed. But confederacy is an attempt to fix the world in its present condition, to settle it, though it be in departure from God and in enmity against Christ. This was the thought at Babel of old.

Separation of His own out of the world is God's way now. And this separation is the deepest and most thorough judgment that could be passed upon the world. This is a more complete judgment of it than by the waters of the flood, or by the plagues of Egypt, or by the sword of Joshua. The with-

drawal or separation of all that God owns bespeaks final thoughts about the world, and not merely a purifying of it from present corruptions, as by the waters of Noah, in order to put it on a fresh trial. The trial of it is over, the judgment of it is pronounced, and the delay is "salvation." (2 Peter iii. 15.) The attitude of the Church, that is, separation from the world, and heavenly calling, tells us of the full moral condemnation of the course of things here. And thus the Church judges the world. Her position and calling do so.

The "servants" of the departed "nobleman" very well know that the country of the "citizens" has very great resources, and very great capabilities; and they know that in due season such will be both used and displayed. But they cannot allow this thought while that country is as it is now—stained with the blood of their rejected Master. The cry, "we will not have this man to reign over us," is ever in their ears. And with that cry from the land, can they, in company with the "citizens" who raised it and still keep it up (for the character of the world, as we have said from scripture, is unalterably fixed), be occupied in investigating and producing the treasures of their country and the skill of its people, and glory in the thought of the common advancement?

They cannot, when alive to the character of the place where they are, and awake as they should ever be, to the cry which followed the rejected Jesus as He left it—they cannot. The cup of the Lord's

indignation is to go round the nations, and they must drink it. An awful reverse this will be from Belshazzar passing the wine among his courtiers and concubines in the cups of the Lord's house. And solemn it is in those nations feasting and praising the gods of gold, and of silver, of iron, of brass, and of wood, while such a handwriting as that is on the wall against them. If not on the walls of the palace, it is in the books of the prophets. (Psalm lxxv. ; Jeremiah xxv.)

Incorruption, I may say, cannot inherit corruption. The spotless Jesus cannot hold an unpurged dominion. The woman of Revelation xvii. glorifies herself, and lives deliciously on the earth during that very time in which the judgment of God is awaiting it; but the bride of Revelation xxi. does not become manifested in the earth till it has been cleansed and is ready, not for the judgment of the Lord, but for the presence of thè glory.

There is infinite moral distance there. The world must be judged ere it can be adopted of God. The earth must be purified before it can be furnished and adorned for Him. This has been again and again transacted in the progress of the divine government. Noah, God's saint and representative, took the earth to rule and to enjoy it, but it had previously passed through the purifying of the flood. Israel, God's people and witnesses, took the land of Canaan to possess and enjoy it, but it had been judged by the sword of Joshua. And according to these types the earth is to be cleansed; out of the

kingdom is to be taken all that offends and does iniquity ere Jesus will take the power.

Ornament and furniture well becomes it, for it is the Lord's footstool. Eden had not only its plants and trees, and fruits, and flowers; but its gold, its bdellium, and its onyx stones. Solomon, in typical days of glory, trafficked in all desirable riches. And the millennial Jerusalem will receive all the treasures of the provinces. (Isaiah lx.) But the present age is not millennial; the earth is not yet an extended Eden. Corruption is not judged; the things that offend and do iniquity are not taken away, nor is there any divine commission to that end. The field of tares is not to be cleansed now—it waits for the angels and the time of harvest. The saint submits to the "powers that be," knowing that "God" will stand in the congregation of them for judgment in due season. (Compare Rom. xiii. 1. with Psalm lxxxii. 1.)

It is despite of the holiness of God, we may therefore say, to be presenting this evil world in its ornaments and furniture, in its resources and capabilities, as this World's Fair is doing. And it is also despite of the wrongs and sorrows of Christ. The citizens who have cast outside their city and country the blessed Son of God, are exhibiting what their country can produce, and what their hands can skilfully weave and fashion. I ask, could a servant of such a rejected Master aid and encourage such things? Could he be a servant a moment beyond the time that he thus practically forgot his

Lord's rejection here? He could not. He might, indeed, be a useful member of society, and serve his generation in their generation well; but a servant of Christ (properly speaking) he could not be if once he forgot the world's rejection of Christ; and acceptance of the invitation of the citizens (see Luke xix.) to come and rejoice with them in the resources of their country and the skill of their people, would at once be such forgetfulness.

The sorrow and the humbling of a saint is that he remembers the rejection of his Master so coldly and acts on that great fact so poorly. But to have it estranged from the soul so as to consent to take part with the citizens from one end of the world to the other, in a great confederated effort to display the world as a wealthy and desirable place—to do this in full and hearty fellowship with all, on the ground of the common humanity, is confounding light and darkness, Christ and Belial. The language of the whole thing is this—we will forget, at least for a season, the claims and the sorrows of Jesus, and have a holiday with the world that has rejected Him.

Has so little "eye-salve" been bought of Christ as to leave the saints in such a blinded condition of soul as this? "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." When Daniel and his companions entered the place of the Gentiles, they carried one purpose of heart with them, that they would not defile themselves with the king's meat. (Dan. i. 8.) He knew not what this might cost

him, but this was his purpose. He had bought this eye-salve of Christ, ere he stood among the uncircumcised. And in the strength of the Lord, he and his dear companions stood. The fiery furnace and the lion's den witness the victory of men strengthened by Christ. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us." And so at Belshazzar's feast. Daniel entered it as a conqueror, as afterwards he entered the lion's den. He had no affinity with the feast—not a bit. He was, in the day of it, as we have seen, a separated man. But he was called to it, and he entered the banqueting hall as a conqueror. The king who was there promised to make him "the third ruler in the kingdom." "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and thy rewards to another," said the servant of Christ. He was as much a conqueror in the day of the feast, as he was in the day of the lion's den.

Noble attitude of a saint of God! Could such a man have accepted an invitation to the feast? Morally impossible. And the "eye salve" which Christ had supplied him with, disclosed its further virtues, as he stood in that palace of the world's enjoyments. There was nothing in the language of the writing on the wall beyond the astrologers of Babylon more than beyond Daniel. Not so much, I might say: At least the words were as familiar to a Chaldean as to a Hebrew. But the wise men of Babylon, the scribes of Belshazzar's court and kingdom were not equal to interpret them. They were morally incapacitated. A single eye to Christ

alone can do so to this day—the “eye-salve.” If we test a thing by any test but Christ, we shall misinterpret it. It will appear fair, and good, and desirable, if we try it by its relationship to the welfare of society, or to the advancement of man and the world; but if we look at it in the light of a rejected Jesus, its bloom will be found to be corruption. Standing in the festive hall, Daniel traces the whole scene in Babylon at that hour in relation to God. He rehearses before Belshazzar God’s way with Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar’s way with God, and then Belshazzar’s own hardness and infidel pride in defiance of Him who had wrought the wonders. This was Daniel’s key to the writing—of course, I know, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But still this was the prophet’s moral apprehension of the king’s feast. He judged it in reference to God—and what could the end be, but awful and sudden destruction? The writing must speak of judgment, though the lords and the captains, the wives and the concubines, sport themselves in the king’s hall

“Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.” It is blessed so to do, but it is hard. We judge of things in reference to ourselves, and not in reference to Christ. We think rather of the world’s improvement than of His rejection. We talk of human capabilities rather than of human and incurable apostasy. We want the eye-salve, without which we cannot see—we cannot discover the feast, or read the writing on the wall.

The disciples wanted it on the Mount of Olives, as they looked on the Temple. They saw the building, but not with the eye of Christ, not as anointed with the eye-salve. He had seen it, and all that surrounded it, with the eye of God; and costly as it was, and beautiful beyond comparison, He had written the judgment of it; yea, on the very wall He had written the judgment of “that beautiful

house." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,—behold your house is left unto you desolate" This was writing with the same divine authority which had sentenced Belshazzar and his feast. But the disciples still eyed the beauty of the stones, and Jesus, in patient grace, but because of their demand, and unanointed eye, had to re-write the doom of that place "Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down"

Sad to tell of it then, sad to see it now, sad to know, in our own worldly hearts, the secret of all this darkness We may be sorry to find it thus among disciples, though prepared to get it plentifully among the children of this world The kings of the earth, the merchants, and the mariners bewail the fall of Babylon, and we wonder not. They judged Babylon in reference to themselves—they had lived deliciously with her How could they have eye-salve to know her, and to see her with the mind of heaven? God "remembered her iniquities," but they remembered her as one "wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness" They therefore bewail, when heaven rejoices The lords at the feast tremble, when heaven traces its doom But sad it is that saints should be admiring the 'costliness' which the mind of heaven has already judged.

What words in our ears, beloved, are all these—what writings under our eyes! O for the anointing which Christ has for His saints! O for power in our souls to judge the king's feast, the Gentiles' greatness, the world's advancement, the jubilee of Babylon, in the light of the rejection of the Son of God, in the hearing of that cry, "We will not have this man to reign over us" Then let us ask ourselves, if we have a pulse of affection or allegiance to Jesus, can we glory in this present moment with all its costliness and pleasures

"NO MORE CONSCIENCE OF SINS."

HEBREWS X.

The object of redemption is to bring us nigh to God, as it is written, "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." But what is our state before God when brought nigh? The right understanding of this is most important. It is impossible that we could be happy even in the presence of God, if there still existed a thought of His being against us. I need the perfect settled assurance that there is no sin upon me before Him. The sense of responsibility ever makes a person unhappy where there is any question as to sin standing against him; see the case of a servant and his master, or that of a child and its parent—the conscience is miserable if there be upon it the sense of that which will be judged. So God's presence must be indeed terrible, unless the conscience be perfectly good. If there be happiness for me there, it can only be in the sense of His favour, and of the completeness with which we have been brought back—the perfect assurance of "the worshipper once purged" having "no more conscience of sins."

God speaks to us according to His estimate of our standing: it may not be our heart's experience. There is a distinctness between the operation of the Spirit of God in bringing me unto Jesus, bearing witness to me of God's love, and of the efficacy of what Christ has done, and His operation in my soul

in producing in me the love of God. That which is the subject of experience is what is produced in my soul, whereas that which gives me peace is His testimony to the work of Jesus. A Christian who doubts the Father's love to him, and who looks for peace to that which passes in his own heart, is doubting God's truth.

The gospel is the revelation God has given of Himself: it displays the love of God towards us, and what is in His heart. I can trust the declaration of what is in God's heart, and not what I think of myself.

The apostle speaks of a due time; "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." It is almost always true that there is in us a terrible process of breaking the heart, in order that we may be brought to the ascertainment that we are lost and ruined sinners; but the gospel begins at the close of God's experience of man's heart, and calls us from that in order that we should have joy and peace from the experience of what is in His heart.

Man left alone before the flood, put under the law, in Canaan, indeed under all and every trial of his nature and tendency up to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, was just God's putting him to the test.

One would have thought, after Adam had been turned out of paradise for transgression, that would have been a sufficient warning; but his first-born became a murderer. We should have supposed that the flood which swept off the workers of iniquity

would have repressed for a time at least, by the terror of judgment, the outbreak of sin; but we find immediately afterwards Noah getting drunk, and Ham dishonouring his father. The devouring fire of Sinai, which made even Moses fear and quake, seemed sufficient to subdue the rebel heart and make it bow beneath God's hand; but the golden calf was the awful evidence that the heart of man was "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Again in Canaan a part of the world was tried to the utmost to be cultivated, but it would not do. A bad tree producing bad fruit was the only type by which God could set Israel forth. (See Is. v.) He might dig about it and dung it, but after all these efforts it could only bring forth more bad fruit. At last He said, "I have yet one son, perhaps they will reverence my son," but man preferred having the world to himself, and so crucified Jesus. Looking to His cross, Christ said, "Now is the judgment of this world." (John xii.)

At the crucifixion of Jesus, the veil was rent, and the holiest opened; what God was within the veil then shone out in all its fulness. When grace reveals this to me, I get confidence. I see God holy and expecting holiness—true; but the peace of God is in knowing what He is to us, and not what we are to Him. He knows all the evil of our hearts. Nothing can be worse than the rejection of Jesus—man's hatred is shown out there, and God's love, to the full. The wretched soldier (who, in the cowardly impotence of the consciousness that he

could with impunity insult the meek and lowly Jesus, pierced His side with a spear), let out in that disgraceful act, the water and the blood, which was able to cleanse even such as he. Here God's heart was revealed, what He is to the sinner; and this is our salvation.

Death and judgment teach me redemption. God judged sin indeed in sacrificing His well-beloved Son to put it away. It must be punished; Jesus bore the blow—this rent the veil, and shewed out what God really is. The very blow that let out the holiness of God put away the sin which His holiness judged.

The perfect certainty of God's love and the perfect cleansing of the conscience is that which the defiled and trembling sinner needs.

“By the grace of God” Jesus Christ has “tasted death.” Death, the wages of sin, is seen in the cross of Jesus as the consequence of “the grace of God.” “Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness.” Were anyone to demand of me a proof of God's love, I could not give more than God has done in that “He spared not His own Son;” none other could be so great. But then, it might be asked, may not my sin affect it? No, God knew all your sin, and He has provided for it all; “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

In real communion the conscience must be purged: there can be no communion if the soul be not at peace. We read here, “By one offering he

hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." There is very frequently the confounding of what faith produces with what faith rests upon. Faith always rests upon God's estimate of the blood of Jesus as He has revealed it in His word; faith rests on no experience. Jesus said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!"—"by the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." "We are sanctified," it is not that which is proposed for our attainment; it was the good will of God to do it, and the work is done, to bring our souls back unto Himself. Jesus has said "it is finished." But then there must be the knowledge of this also, in order for us to begin to act. You might have a person willing to pay your debts; nay, you might even have them paid; but if you did not know it, you would be just as miserable as before. We are not called upon to believe in a promise that Jesus should come to die and rise again. The work is *done*; He "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," "when he had by himself purged our sins." But then this is not sufficient for me; I must *know* that the work is done; and therefore He sent down the Holy Ghost to be the witness that God is satisfied.

Knowing perfectly their guilt and amount, God has declared, "your sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Faith rests on this, "God is true;" "he that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." The Lord said to Israel in Egypt concerning the blood of the paschal

lamb, "When I see the blood, I will pass over." Could there be hesitation if we were in a house marked with blood on the door-post? should we not know that He would pass over? Faith is always divine certainty. God has said, "I will remember no more." This is the ground on which we enter into the holiest. "The worshipper once purged" has "no more conscience of sins."

God has found His rest in Jesus; our peace and joy depends upon knowing this. Were anything more necessary, it could not be His rest; God is not seeking for something else when at rest. None else could have afforded this. "God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God; they were all gone out of the way; there was none righteous; no, not one." But God bore witness unto Jesus, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God is well pleased in Christ; God rests in His Son, not merely in His life, though that was holy and acceptable unto Him, but in His work on the cross. Jesus said, "except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," and that meets our need. When He shews His glory to the angels, He points to what has been done by man. In man was God glorified; as in man, the first Adam, He had been dishonoured. Christ reversed all this—"Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him:" which God recognizes in straightway glorifying Him. Righteousness cannot be looked for

from the creature, but the fruit of righteousness will—the thing itself is only in Christ.

God is not a grudging giver. Did Satan, tempting Eve, question this in the forbidden fruit? He has given His Son; He rests in Him; the sinner likewise rests there. What can man do for me? Nothing. If I were to come to him to deliver me from death, could he help me? No. He might fill my hand with those perishing things which only swell the triumph of death and decorate the tomb, but there his power ends.

In Jesus God has found His rest—this is mine also; I know it from the testimony of God's truth. Have you found rest in God's rest? If you say, I have not, will you say that God has not found His rest there? will you look to your own heart? In that you can never find it—it is only in Jesus; who had said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Would that all knew the perfect rest to be found there!

BURNING AND EATING THE SACRIFICES.

HEBREWS xiii. 7-19.

There was twofold character in the offering which has its counterpart for us in Christ; and the want of firm grasp of this, to distinguish and yet maintain them together, lies at the root of much want of enjoyment and of feebleness in the children of God. The first and most fundamental point was

that in the offerings there was that which was consumed. Being identified with the sin of man, it was consumed under the wrath and indignation of God; or it went up a savour of rest, as that which was sweet and acceptable to God, as for instance the burnt-offering. In the sin-offering there was God's judgment of sin, and therefore the greater part was burnt outside the camp. But, besides this, there was another character that entered into the sacrifices. In very many cases men partook of them. In the meat-offering and peace-offering such was the fact; and even in the offering for sin the priest had a portion.

And I believe this is what is referred to here. These Jewish Christians were in great danger of forgetting their privileges. They had abandoned everything that they had once revered as the religion given them by God; they were no longer gazing on things that shadowed His glory. The grandeur, the magnificence, the glory of the Levitical institutions—all was left behind. God was not now as of old thundering from heaven. He had wrought with infinitely greater moral glory. He had sent His Son from heaven; pardon and peace had been brought, and joy and liberty in the Holy Ghost; but all this was unseen. It is, however, one thing to enter into the comfort of the truth when all is bright and fresh, and another thing to hold it fast in time of reproach, shame, derision, and the falling away of some. When the first joy is somewhat lessened, the heart naturally

returns to what it had once rested on. And there is always this danger for us—when evil is felt, the blessing not being so present to the soul. Who among us that has long known Christ—known His ways—has not felt this snare?

And what is the divine remedy? It is just that which the Holy Ghost here uses—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." We must not sever this verse from the succeeding one; "be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines," &c. The Holy Ghost would guard these Jewish believers against that which, compared with our own proper christian blessings, is mere trash, earthly priesthood, holy places, offerings, tithes, &c. These things after all, were but novelties compared with the old thing, which is Jesus.

Looked at historically, Christianity might seem a new thing. He had been but recently manifested; but who was He? and whence had He come? He was "the first-born of every creature"—yea, the Creator! "All things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." He was the One whom God intended to manifest from all eternity. And here we see Him in His complete person—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Through Him God could bless. With Him He would have us occupied.

We are told a little before to remember them that have the rule over us—to follow their faith, even if themselves were gone. But all these pass out of

the scene, while "Jesus Christ, is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." This is the only thing that abides unchangeably and establishes too. "Meats have not profited those who have been occupied therein." Many might have abstained—it was God's bidding that they should; but if occupied with the thing, it was not their profit. Christ was the substance; all else was shadow. Therefore He goes on to say, "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." If others have the husk, we are feeding on the kernel. (The "tabernacle" was used to express the Jewish thing.) Everything had passed away in Christ. In Phillipians the apostle could speak contemptuously of circumcision in contrast with having Christ, even though it was of God. To be occupied with it, now that Christ was come, was to be outside, to be of "the circumcision."

"To eat." It was not merely the offering, nor the burning of the offering, but the partaking of it. We have got Christ Himself, and our sins put away—sin, root and branch, dealt with by God. There is not now one question unsettled for us who believe. Has He one question unsettled with Christ? and if not with Christ, He has not with us, for He died and rose for us, and we are one with Him. As in the Jewish system, God and the offerer had their portions in the sacrifices, so now we may say, that God has His own portion in the same Christ on whom we feed. The entrance into this exceedingly blessed thought is one of the things which the chil-

dren of God greatly fail in—that we are seated by God Himself at the same table where He has His own joy and portion. Of course there is that in which we cannot share. In the burnt-offering all went up to God. The sweet fragrance of all that Christ was goes up to Him. We must remember that God has His infinite joy in Christ; and not only for what He is in Himself, but for that which He has done for my sins. When we think of this, all of self is absorbed, and must sink before it. The old nature we have still; but it is in us to be crushed. We have to treat it all, its likings and dislikings, as a hateful thing. But the new life needs sustaining. It grows by feeding. As in natural life, the mere possession of riches will not sustain life, but it has to be nourished; so in spiritual life, it is not only true that Christ is my life in the presence of God, but I must make Christ my own for my food—eating of Him day by day. (John vi.) He is in very deed given to us to be turned by faith into nourishment for us. And the sweet thing is that we are entitled thus to think of Christ, given by God to be this food for us. It is not only that Christ is God's, but He is ours too; our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Let Jesus be praised,
 Praise Him for what He's done,
 And praise Him too for what *He is*,
 He in Himself alone.

Let Jesus Christ be praised,
 O praise His faithful love,
 God only knows the worth of Him,
 Whose constant grace we prove.

JEREMIAH II.

There is an impression arising in the soul from this chapter, and it is this, *first, love never cools in the heart of the Lord towards us.* He never forgets it, though as we know, we may and do towards Him. This chapter opens with the Lord telling Israel this:—"I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals."—Thus Israel was "holiness to the Lord, and the first fruits of His increase." Then all that would dare to devour *them* would offend Him. Such was then the mind of the Lord towards His elect one. She was precious to Him. This is the force of verse 2. His love to her, not hers to Him. He had chosen her for His own. He was a husband to her, and He hung over her in the freshness of the fervour of love. Had He changed? Was any iniquity to be found in Him? Had He become to Israel a wilderness, or a land of darkness? As in another Scripture He says, "Is my ear heavy that it cannot hear, or my hand shortened that it cannot save?" This is not so. He was "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." It was nothing less than a "fountain," and that of "living waters." Israel had been invited to drink of a spring whose waters never failed, but which were as fresh as ever for Israel's use.

This is the reasoning of the Lord in this striking chapter, with His people. They were now a home-born slave, they were now spoiled it is true—but

this is to be accounted for by everything rather than change in the Lord. He at that moment remembered the love of Israel's youth, and was ready to act in all fervency as well as devotedness—but Israel themselves would not. He was ever as a hen ready to gather under His wings—but they would not. This had been His constant way throughout, and at last the life and ministry of Jesus, after so long a time, is the witness of the same fresh, first love of Jehovah towards Israel, the witness of it, may I not say, in more than its earliest fervency. What affection, what self-devotedness, patience of love, what labours of love, what associations of love were expressed in it! Surely many waters could not quench it then. It was stronger than death. And we do not rightly regard the ministry of Jesus through the cities and villages of Israel without seeing this “great love” of her Lord in all its fervency and faithfulness.

Surely again it says, in the words of our Prophet, “I remember *thee*, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals.” And again it tells us that there was that love of His ~~self~~ still burning in the heart of Him who had espoused her to Himself. All this is happy both for poor saint and sinner. And this beautiful chapter from God's mind, gives us to know that the Lord never does, never can, forsake His object. He is “the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever.” Love never faileth. If it abated in its ardour it would fail, as it would if it slackened in its toil or service. But love

never faileth, with the Lord it is ever warm and fresh, for He ever remembers the day of espousals. It was Israel that lost the honour of it. It was Israel that changed her God for that which was no God. Blessed to know it to be thus. Blessed to know the prospect of enjoying it for ever and ever. Our God is a "fountain," and that of "living waters." And though Israel has lost the fruit of all this by her departing from Him who had thus espoused her to Himself, because she trusted in her beauty, and went from Him, yet when He returns to her in the day of her repentance, it will be in this way of His first love. As in the kindness of her youth, as in the love of her espousals He will return and still prove that love never faileth to the very end, but holds to its first and blessed intent. All scripture verifies this. It was One that loves her with the love of Him who has chosen her for Himself that the Lord will return and take Jerusalem. Isaiah teaches us this, for speaking of Him he says, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee."

So says the Lord of Israel by Hosea, "And it shall be at that day that thou shalt call me Ishi, and shall call me no more Baali." And Zephaniah tells Jerusalem "He will rejoice over thee with joy, He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." Language which sweetly and fervently tells the heart with what affection the Lord will retake Zion to Himself. And Jeremiah is very bold and says, "they say if a man put away his

wife," etc., etc., yet "return again unto Me saith the Lord." This and far more than this which we might gather from Scripture, lets us know that not only up to the day of Jeremiah, not only up to the day of the ministry of Jesus, but even to the last when He takes the daughter of Zion to Him again, He will still be able to say, "I remember the kindness of thy youth, the love of espousals." He remembers the affection, the fervour with which He at the first betrothed her to Himself,—and that in its earliest fervency He will win her and claim her and look on her again as His,—re-taking her to Himself in an everlasting covenant.

Happy truth! It is not merely that He is ever faithful to His object, but ever true to that affection in which He first took up His object. "Nothing changeth God's affection." Happy truth indeed! The fruit of it to us eternal and perfect joy.

FRAGMENT.

"And Christ's love rose beyond and above every littleness and stupidity and failure of His disciples. Do you seek to love each other as He did, in such a way that it will rise above every pettiness, every bitterness every hindrance, 'As Christ loved you?' Divine love is never thrown back and never changed by the unworthiness of its object; it is superior to everything. Like a stream whose banks may for some distance be smooth; but when they become crooked and rocky, the same stream runs on and on, unchanged in its course and in its quality; such is His love. 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.'"

"I'LL HEAR THE TRUMP."

Lines written on hearing that an aged and paralysed Christian, who was afflicted with total deafness, was accustomed to say, "I'll hear the trump."—1 Thess. iv. 16.-18.

"I'll hear the trump," thus spake an aged saint,
 Whose ears against the human voice were closed,
 Who on her pilgrim journey, weak and faint,
 In faith upon the Word of God reposed,
 "I'll hear the trump,"—Yes, Sister, thou shalt hear,
 And hearing rise to meet thy Saviour dear.

Blessed assurance! though thy deafened ear
 Can listen to the song of birds no more,
 Though friendly voices can no longer cheer,
 And intercourse with others thus be o'er,
 Though paralyzed and deaf, cut off from all
 The world around, thou'lt hear the trumpet's call.

And, glorious truth! the day is hast'ning on
 When God's redeemed, from sin and suffering free,
 Dwelling in light before the Eternal throne,
 Shall, fully blest, their Lord and Saviour see,
 When at the shout, and voice, and trumpet blast,
 They'll soar aloft and reach their home at last.

Yes, soon that trump will sound—on wings of wind,
 Bearing us onward, time fleets fast away,
 Glory before thee, judgment dread behind,
 How gladly, Sister, wilt thou hail that day
 When thou, and all God's saints, the world around
 Shall hear—extatic thought! God's trumpet sound.

Hark! through the heaven it rings, its potent notes,
 Pierce the dull grave and bid the dead arise.
 Hark! o'er the world the sound mellifluous floats,
 Calling the saints to mansions in the skies.
 Hark! to the thrilling sounds! now shout for home,
 Ye joyful saints—shout, for the Lord is come.

2 CORINTHIANS XII.

The way in which, in this chapter, we find the highest state to which a Christian can be elevated, an exceptional one, no doubt, as an experience, and the lowest condition to which he can fall, and all the practical principles on which the divine work is carried on between these two extremes, is very striking. In the beginning of the chapter we find a saint in the third heaven, in paradise, where flesh could have no part in apprehension or in communication. He knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body. There was no consciousness of human existence in flesh; so he could not tell, nor could he utter what he had heard when he returned to the consciousness of flesh again. Such is the saint at the beginning of the chapter. At the end we find one, perhaps many, fallen into fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness; and unrepentant yet of their sins. What a contrast of the highest heavenly elevation, and the lowest carnal degradation! And the Christian capable of both! What a lesson for every saint, though he may reach neither extreme, as a warning; and how suited to give the consciousness of what natures are at work, and of the elements which are in conflict in him in his spiritual life down here! Another part of this chapter will show us where power alone is to be found to carry him along his path upon the earth in a way consistently with the heavenly good to which he is called. Paul uses a remarkable expres-

sion as to himself when speaking of his elevation to the third heaven: "I knew a man in Christ."

A few preliminary thoughts as to the law will facilitate our understanding this expression. The law gave to man a perfect and divine rule for his conduct upon the earth. But it never took him up into heaven. Heavenly beings, indeed, such as the Angels, act upon the abstract perfection of this divine rule as it is stated by the Lord Himself: they love God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves. This is creature perfection. But that is their nature in which God has maintained them. To prescribe feelings and conduct by law is another thing. Christians often forget this. The contents of the law are perfect in their place and for their objects. It tells us what the right state of a creature is, and forbids the wrong that the flesh is inclined to. But why *prescribe* this? No doubt obedience is a part of perfection in a creature. Mere doing right would not suffice for a being subject to God to walk righteously, because God has absolute authority over him. Thus God can, and we know does, prescribe certain particular acts of service to angels; and they obey.

But when a state of soul is prescribed—why is that? Because it is needed. It becomes necessary because of the state of the person to whom the command is addressed. He is otherwise inclined, in danger from other dispositions of doing otherwise. To command a person to do a thing supposes that he is not doing it, nor about to do it without a

command. If we add to this that nine out of the ten commandments forbid positive sins and evil dispositions, because men are disposed to them (or there would be no need to prohibit them), we shall find that the very nature and existence of a law which prescribes the good on God's authority, supposes the evil in man's nature which is opposed to it. This is a deplorable truth, take either aspect of the case. You cannot command love (that is produce it by commanding it), and you cannot put out lusts by forbidding them to a nature which has them as nature. Yet this is what the law does, and must do if God gives one. It proves that what is forbidden is sin, and that it is in man to be forbidden; but law never takes it away. It prescribes good in the creature, but does not produce it. It shows what is right on earth in the creature, but how far is it from taking man into heavenly places! Law can have no pretension to it. Man has now, *by the fall*, the knowledge of good and evil. The law acts on this amazing faculty, of which God could say, "the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." But how? Man is under the evil; and it requires good in him which is not, and shows him all the evil which is in him. It presses the evil on him, and its consequences in judgment; and, as to the good it requires *in* him, it only gives the consciousness that it is not there.

Further, it shows no good to him as an object before his soul. I repeat, to make the distinction clear, it requires good in him, (loving God and his

neighbour, for example,) but it presents no good to him. There is no revealed object to produce good nor be man's good in him in living power. It works therefore wrath. Where no law is, there is no transgression.

Now grace works quite otherwise; it does not require good where it is not, though it may *produce* it. It does not condemn the wicked, but forgives and puts away their sin. It presents to us an object, God Himself, but God come near to us in love. It does more, it communicates what is good. It is not a law. It does not require good where it is not, but produces it. It does not condemn the wicked, but it forgives and puts away their wickedness. It does not lead us to carry on the conflict between good and evil by pressing the evil on us, and making us feel it a burden not to be got rid of, and ourselves slaves to it, which the law does, making us feel "this body of death" as that *under whose power we are*, sold to sin, and, supposing we are regenerate, making us feel more truly and deeply that even this does not make us meet its requirements, so that we should be righteous by it, however much "to will is present with us," but the contrary. In a word, grace does not, in the knowledge of good and evil with which it deals, lead us to carry on the conflict by the sense of the power and dreadfulness of evil to which we are subject, and its consequences, but by the possession of perfect and divine good through which we judge the evil as raised above it by the possession of an ob-

ject perfectly good, and which is our delight as well as our life, by the possession of Christ (being in Him and He in us) "I knew," says the apostle, "a man in Christ."

But this we must a little explain and open out. It is often very vague in many a Christian's heart. In paradise, without law, under law and through the presenting of Christ to him, man was responsible for his own conduct as a living man for things done in the body. He was viewed as a child of Adam, or "in the flesh." He stood, that is, before God in the nature in which he had been created, responsible for his conduct in it, for what he was in the flesh. The result was that in respect of these conditions he had failed, failed in paradise, lawless without law, a transgressor when under law, and last and worst of all, the closing ground of judgment, when Christ came, proved to be without a cloak for sin, the hater of Him and His Father. Man was lost.

In a state of probation for four thousand years, the tree had been proved bad; and the more the care, the worse the fruit. All flesh was judged. The tree was to bear no fruit for ever. Not only had he been proved to be a sinner in every way, but he had rejected the remedy presented in grace, for Christ came into an already sinful world, and He was despised and rejected of men. It was not all that man, fallen and guilty, was driven out of paradise; but Christ come in grace was, as far as man's will was concerned, driven out of the world

which was plunged in the misery to which sin had led, and which He had visited in goodness.

Man's history was morally closed. "Now," says the Lord, when Greeks came up, "is the judgment of this world." Hence it is we have "He appeared once in the *end* of the world." But now comes God's work for the sinner. He who knew no sin, was made sin for us. He drinks graciously and willingly the cup given Him to drink. He lays down the life in which He bore the sin—gives it up; and all is gone with it. The very life our sin was borne in on the cross was given up, His blood was shed. He has put away sin for every believer by the sacrifice of Himself—has perfected them for ever. He that is dead is freed from sin. But Christ died. He then is freed from sin. But whose? Ours who believe in Him. It is all gone, gone with the life to which it was attached, in which He bore it. The death of Christ has closed, for faith, the existence of the old man, the flesh, the first Adam life in which we stood as responsible before God, and whose place Christ took for us in grace. What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His only Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. In that He died, He died unto sin once; in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.

(To be continued, D. V.)

THE NUMBERING AND SERVICE OF THE LEVITES.

NUMBERS, CHAPTERS III. & IV.

The Levites were taken up that the ways of God toward His redeemed firstborn might specially be shown out in them.

The Lord took them from among the children of Israel, instead of all the firstborn. "Therefore," said He, "the Levites shall be mine; because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord." (Num. iii. 11-13.)

They who were the special witnesses of the grace of God, in the day when judgment was poured out, were in a special way to be His own, serving Him in the ways of redemption, as set up in the mercy of God—the ways of His mercy and love to poor sinners lying under judgment. Such, in the shadows of the law, was the service of the Levites; and such, in the good things that have come to us in Christ, is the service of the saints.

There are two numberings of the Levites marked, one in the third chapter, and the other in the fourth chapter of Numbers; but with striking difference between them. In chapter iii. they are reckoned from a month old and upwards; but in chapter iv. they are numbered from thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old; they are reckoned

according to the days of their strength in this chapter, and, accordingly, their several services are here revealed to them ; but they were set in blessing as God's firstborn in the days of their weakness ; for, not what they did for Him, but what He did for them, was the ground of their standing.

Here two things are taught us. First, the question of service does not come in, when we are taken up as the redeemed in Christ. Second, the demand for service begins at once, when we are looked at as strengthened by Christ. In this service, He reveals His mind, and we obey it.

Among the Levites, some had one service to do, and some had another ; but responsibility to God made each do what he did. The sons of Kohath carried the sanctuary ; the sons of Gershon carried the curtains of the tabernacle, and the hangings of the court ; and the sons of Merari bore the boards of the tabernacle, the bars, the pillars, the sockets, and the pins. Such was the choice of the Lord for them, not of them for themselves. Had the sons of Gershon carried the ark, this would have been self-will in them, not service for God, because He said to them, Carry the curtains. Responsibility to God made each do what he did, and kept him from interfering in other things : and so it is now with the brethren in the Lord. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world : but be ye trans-

formed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation." (Rom. xii. 1-8.) The brethren are entreated by the mercies of God, to holy devotedness of themselves to God, and are exhorted against being conformed to the world. Conformity with the world blinds men's perception of the will of God, and sets them doing their own will; but he who is transformed by the renewing of his mind, *proves* what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God: his affections and purposes are after his renewed mind; and the Lord has promised to him who has a single eye, that his whole body shall be full of light. All are called to their labours in subjection to God, as were the families of the sons of Levi. If the mercies of God are not kept before our hearts, then we fail in presenting ourselves aright. If conformity to the world comes

in, and we lose spiritual energy in our renewed minds then we fail in proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. And if we go beyond our measure of faith, then we assume what we are unfit for.

This varied labour in service is all for perfect order. He among the sons of Merari who carried even the pins, bore what was necessary for the perfection of the tabernacle: *better for him to do this for God than to despise His work, and assume another.* Equally would subjection to God keep the sons of Kohath happy in the holy service of bearing on their shoulders the ark, and table of shewbread, and all that belonged to the sanctuary.

We have God to serve as our purpose; we have His word and Spirit to guide and lead us to the way of service; and all as His redeemed, through the blood of Christ.

The burden of a Levite, as he went forward through the dreary wilderness, was a glorious burden: it belonged to the sanctuary of God, and was the witness of His grace and mercy to sinful men; and so with the service of the saints in the world; their service is in what belongs not to the world. "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." (John vi. 33.) "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father." (John xvi. 28.)

In the sanctuary the uncovered ark of pure gold, with the cherubims overshadowing the mercy-seat,

rested in the most holy place: the priest alone could there see and enjoy it. In Levite service,* the ark was covered over; still it was the ark; from the sanctuary it came; and inside that covering lay all the hidden splendour in which, in the sanctuary, it appeared. This made the burden a precious one to a devoted Levite; he knew whence it came, and what it was; and so, if it was *only a pin*, it belonged to the tabernacle, and the Lord told him to carry it.

In all this, the service of the Levite waited on and followed the service of the priest; this was the order established of God; and in all our service of testimony in the world, communion in the holiest with the things of which we testify, should ever go before. Thus it is that in responsibility we shall be led out, but also controlled. In the holiest we have our communion *with* Christ: in our service in the world we have our testimony *about* Christ; but this should ever follow, and be connected with the other.

If the acts of service of the sons of Kohath were made the standard to judge the conduct of the sons of Merari, then they might be despised in their service; but they did unto the Lord what they did, according to His will concerning them; and in His good will the sons of Kohath and the sons of Merari were all fellow labourers in the same tabernacle.

* The communion of the saints, as having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, is according to the service of the priests.

The testimony of the saints, as sent into the world to give glory to Christ's name, is according to the service of the Levites.

So it was, that when Gaius, for the Lord's sake, received the strangers who, for His name's sake, went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles, the apostle adds, "We ought therefore to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth." The poor preacher was a *helper* to the truth when he proclaimed Christ's name. And Gaius was a *fellow-helper* to the truth when he took him into his house, and fed and lodged him.

So again, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward." Here is one who is not a prophet himself; but he loves a prophet, and receives him as such, and thus becomes associated in blessing with a prophet. Did he assume to be a prophet when he was not one, then there would be no such association, and no blessing.

In all this may we learn subjection to God, knowing that if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

Such is the grace of God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTES AND RECOLLECTIONS OF A READING.

There is never any light from God without love. Whenever there is a *real* revelation of God to a soul, you always get the *conscience reached* and the *heart affected*.

I believe we never know anything about God with the mind, save that we cannot know Him. All true knowledge humbles, because it brings something to me of God that I did not know before, and it finds in me something contrary to it; truth perfectly divine and heavenly in its character, yet suited to me,—it brings what is heavenly, and shows me I am not that and humbles me. Take the thief on the cross; light shines in, and see the effect: "Dost not thou fear God seeing thou art in the same condemnation, and we indeed justly." Truth is of no use until it is subjective, i.e., *until it affects me*, otherwise it is only a matter of memory. Thus church truth may be held by one who does not know what it is to be in the Spirit, it is only a matter of memory. The Holy Ghost does not merely say there is a church, but *we* are members of His body, of His flesh, of His bones; it is not a mere dogma.

The tendency with us is to make theology, and not to take what Scripture says. I do not get merely a statement, but *God connects it livingly with my heart and affections*. Another important thing is how far the actual condition of a soul is such, that it is *able to receive truth*. Thus at Corinth the Apostle fed them with milk, they were not able to take strong meat, so also in Hebrews; we need to bear this in mind, if you talk to a person about truth that he is not in a state to receive, you only puff him up. *If a Christian walks unfaithfully he may lose even what he knows*. All living truth becomes *a part of myself like food*; thus it is said "if any man thirst," and then it speaks of coming out of his belly, that is out of the very inmost part of the man himself. I do not believe any one has got the truth unless it has engaged his affections to Christ and moved his conscience.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

The courage, patience, firmness, and zeal of a Christian, are a perfectly distinct order of character from the courage, firmness, patience, and zeal of a natural man—self confidence, self glory, self preservation, self exaltation, are the essential principles of one; confidence in God, self renunciation, subjection to God, glory to God, abasement of self, being essential principles of the other. So that the essential principles that formed the character of Paul as a natural man, were destroyed through the cross, in order that his soul should imbibe the life of Christ, which was the principle that formed his character as a christian, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Though Christ was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which he suffered. *In any instance that we give up our own will, without sacrificing conscience, we are gainers.* If but my dog exercises my patience and makes me yield my will, he is a blessing to me. Christ never willed anything but what was good and holy; yet how often was His will thwarted, how often hindered in designs of good.

FRAGMENTS.

“Search *The Scriptures*.....they are they which testify of ME.” “All *Scripture* is given by inspiration of GOD.” “*The Scriptures*” have a *living* source, and *living* power has pervaded their com-

position: hence their infiniteness of bearing, and the impossibility of separating any one part from its connection with the whole, because *One* GOD is the *living* centre from which all flows; *One* CHRIST, the *living* centre round which all its truth circles, and to which it refers, though in various glory; and *One* SPIRIT, the *divine* sap which carries its power from its source in GOD to the minutest branches of the all-united truth, testifying of the glory, the grace, and the truth of Him whom GOD sets forth as the object and centre and head of all that is in connection with Himself, of HIM who is, withal, God over all, blessed for evermore!

“ALL THINGS ARE OURS.”—Every possible glory indeed is ours. The blessedness that is in God Himself, as far as it can be communicated, for we dwell in God and God in us. Relative blessedness, for we are children. Associated blessedness, in union with the blessed One, for we are the Bride. Official nearness and glory, for we are kings and priests. Human blessedness, for we shall be perfect men, after the image of the Second Adam. Corporate blessedness, for we shall have joy together. Individual, for we shall have a name given which no one knows but he that receives it; and we shall have the fulness of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, unbindered by these poor bodies; yea, clothed upon by a vessel suited to the power of the divine inhabitant, so as to be able in full largeness of heart to enjoy all this.

“THE BELIEVER’S PORTION.”

Jesus, my Saviour! Thou art mine,
 The Father’s gift of love divine;
 All Thou hast done, and all Thou art,
 Are now the portion of my heart.

Poor, feeble, wretched, as I am,
 I now can glory in Thy name;
 Now cleansed in Thy most precious blood
 And made the righteousness of God.

All that Thou hast, Thou hast for me,
 All my fresh springs are hid in Thee;
 In Thee I live; while I confess
 I nothing am, yet all possess.

O Saviour, teach me to abide
 Close sheltered at Thy wounded side,
 Each hour receiving “grace on grace,”
 Until I see Thee face to face.

2ND CORINTHIANS XII.

(Continued from No. 7.)

Faith anticipates the judgment, as regards the old man, the flesh, with all its ways. Upon the grounds of its responsibility we are wholly lost. We may learn it experimentally by passing under the law, becoming hopeless of pleasing God as being *in the flesh*, or we may learn it by finding our opposition and indifference to Christ. But the whole thing is done away with for the believer on the cross. He is crucified with Christ, nevertheless lives, but not he but Christ lives in Him. If the cross has proved that in the flesh there is nothing but sin and hatred against God, it has put away the sin it has proved. All that is gone. The life is gone. If a guilty man die in prison, what can the law do more against him? The life in which he had sinned, and to which his guilt attached itself, is gone. With us too it is gone; for Christ has died, willingly, no doubt, but by the judicial dealing of God with the sin which He bore for us. If we are alive, we are alive now on a new footing before God—alive in Christ. The old things are passed away; there is a new creation; we are created again in Christ Jesus.

Our place and standing before God is no longer in flesh. It is in Christ. Christ as man has taken quite a new place that neither Adam innocent, nor Adam sinner, had *anything to say to*. The best robe formed no part of the prodigal's first inheritance at all; it was in the Father's possession—quite a new

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

When quickened, he is quickened with the life in which Christ lives, the second Adam; and submitting to God's righteousness, knowing that he is totally lost in the first and old man, and having bowed to this solemn truth, as shown and learned in the cross, he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, livingly united to the Lord, One Spirit: he is a man in Christ, not in the flesh or in the first Adam. All *that* is closed for him in the cross, where Christ made Himself responsible for him in respect of it and died unto sin *once*; and he is alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He belongs to a new creation, having the life of the head of it as his life. Where he learnt the utter total condemnation of what he was, he learnt its total and eternal putting away. The cross is for him that impassable Red Sea, that Jordan which he has now gone through, and is his deliverance from Egypt for ever, and now he has realized it, his entrance into Canaan, in Christ. If Jordan and the power of death overflowed all its banks, for him the ark of the covenant passed in. It is just his way into Canaan. That which, if he had himself assayed to go through, as the Egyptians, would have been his destruction, has been a wall on the right hand and the left, and only destroyed all that was against

him. He *was* a man in the flesh, he *is* a man in Christ.

Amazing and total change *from the whole condition and standing* of the 1st Adam, responsible for his own sins, into that of Christ, who, having borne the whole consequences of that responsibility in his place, has given him (in the power of that, to us, new life, in which He rose from the dead) a place in and with Himself, as He now is, as man before God! It is to this position the apostle refers; only that he was given in a very extraordinary manner to enjoy the full fruit and glory of it during the period of his existence here below. His language as to this truth is remarkably plain, and therefore powerful. "When we were in the flesh," he says. Thus it is we speak, when we refer to a bye-gone state of things, in which we are no longer. "When we were in the flesh," (that is we are no longer in that position at all.) "But," he says, "ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." We are now alive in Christ. "If ye be *dead*," says he elsewhere, "to the rudiments of the world, why are ye subject to ordinances?" "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

The reader will forgive me, if I have dwelt so long upon the first expression of our chapter. I have done so because of its vast importance. It is the very heart of all Paul's doctrine, the true and holy way of full divine liberty, and the power of

holiness. And because many Christians have not seized the force of this truth, nor of the expression of the Apostle, they use Christ's death as a remedy for the old man, or at least only learn forgiveness of past sins by it, instead of learning that they have passed out of the old man, as to their place before God, and into the new in the power of that life which is in Christ.

Ask many a true-hearted saint what is the meaning of "when we were in the flesh," and he could give no clear answer—he has no definite idea of what it does mean. Ask him what it is to be "in Christ"—all is equally vague.

A regenerate man may be in the flesh, as to the condition and standing of his own soul, though he be not so in God's sight ; nay this is the very case supposed in Romans vii., because he looks at himself as standing before God on the ground of his own responsibility, on which ground he never can (in virtue of being regenerate) meet the requirements of God, attain to His righteousness. Perhaps, find this out, he has recourse to the blood of Christ to quiet his uneasy conscience, and repeated recurrence to it, as a Jew would to a sacrifice, a superstitious man to absolution. But he has no idea that he has been cleansed and perfected once for all, and that he is taken clean out of that standing, to be placed in Christ before God. But if in Christ, the title and privilege of Christ, is our title and privilege.

Of the full and wondrous fruit of this, Paul, for

God's wise and blessed purposes, was made to enjoy in an extraordinary and special manner. In that, flesh and mortal nature had no part, nor ever can, though *we* (as alive in Christ) have, while in that nature, whatever be the degree of our realization of it. Paul was allowed to know it, so that while enjoying it in the highest degree in the new man, in his life in Christ, ("the life hid with Christ in God," the "not I but Christ living in him,") he had no consciousness of that other mortal part which yet burdens by its very nature (as well as by sin if will works) the new and heavenly man in us. He could not tell if he was in or out of the body; he knew, on re-entering his ordinary state of conscious existence that he had this body; but he could not tell whether he was in or out of it when in the third heaven; he was unconscious of it altogether.

The reader will remark too, how carefully the apostle distinguishes between the man in Christ, and himself as he had the practical experience of himself down here, having indeed the life of Christ and the Spirit which united him to the Head, but having also the flesh in him, though he was not in the flesh. Of this Paul, of which he was practically conscious down here, he would not glory; but he had been given to be in the enjoyment of his place as a man in Christ with entire abstraction, as to his consciousness of it, of anything else—of such a one he would glory. And so can we: though we may never have been in the third heaven to realize fully the glory and privileges of the position we are

brought into, yet we are men in Christ, and we have known enough, the feeblest saint who knows his place in Christ, has known enough of that blessing, to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He glories in the position of the man in Christ, which is his most surely and fully in Christ; and he may realize it, too, so that at the moment he may not sensibly feel the working of sin in him, though he well knows it is there. We may be filled with the Spirit, so that the Spirit may be the only source of actual thought in us. Indeed this is our proper Christian state, not always with the same activity, it is true, of the Spirit giving the sensible apprehension of the glory, and the things of Christ, so as to elevate the soul to that which is above; but so that there is no consciousness of anything inconsistent with it in the mind. This is the state described in the Epistle to the Philippians—the true Christian state.

There may be even then, when there is no conscious evil, the effect of obscure apprehension, an apprehension obscure perhaps even in a way which implies fault, negligence, want of singleness of eye, spiritual laziness, swerving from the path in which a single eye would lead us, (though then uneasiness naturally follows in the soul, because the Spirit does dwell in us and is grieved;) still there may be no present disturbing element in the conscience. The fact, it is important to remark, of sin being in the flesh, does not make the conscience bad. When it becomes the source of thought or action, then the

conscience is bad, and communion by the Holy Ghost is interrupted. But our chapter leads us further into this.

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(To be continued, D.V.)

THE EXERCISES AND END OF GRACE.

JOHN XX.

It is remarkable the instruments God uses to display His grace towards man, and the different exercises of heart persons go through, which prepare them for the service on which they are to be sent. There is a loneliness which may even be occasioned by a man's own folly, in which he finds himself without a single thing to get comfort in, that he may prove that to be in the Lord which he would not know in any other way. .

God cannot associate Himself with evil. There must be death upon nature altogether. The corn of wheat would have remained alone without death. Christ was alone as to Himself; comforters He had none. "I looked for some to take pity, but found none." "They gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." (Psa. lxi. 20 and 11.) These are expressions of this loneliness. He was walking in undeviating devotedness with His Father all the way through; but there was none to enter into it, though, speaking of His disciples, He graciously says, "Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations."

(Luke xxii. 28.) Could He have said more if they had been faithful in sympathy all the time? Our poor hearts have to learn the way the Lord meets the soul that waits on Him.

We see, in the case of Mary Magdalene here, and in the other Mary too who broke the box of ointment on Him, there was something that made them *lonely*. What made Lazarus' sister Mary lonely? She had found something that took her clean out of the world. Martha was careful about the supper; but with Mary it was not the supper but Himself. His object was not to come for earthly refreshment, but to pour into His people's hearts the revelation of the Father. Martha was not wrong in preparing the supper, but in trying to get Mary away from the Lord. If she had been right, she would have been glad to do it all herself. There was not the joy and delight in her heart that there ought to have been. Mary had found one thing that isolated her heart in the most blessed way. Her affections were alive to all the evil that was coming (not as a prophetess, but her spirit was in the thing), and at the right moment she went and spent the ointment on Him. He says of her, "She hath done it for my burial."

In this Mary (the Magdalene) we get yet another thing. Seven devils had been cast out of her, that is to say, the expression of complete diabolical possession, indicating the extreme of wickedness. *That* isolates a person, who is separated from nature, as it were, by the extent of wretchedness.

When the spirit is touched, she is separated from the evil. The effect of finding *Christ* in *such* circumstances is that He becomes everything to her. (There is not the same intelligence in her as in the other Mary; we do not find *her*, as the Magdalene, at the tomb.) She could not leave in the same way. When she lost Christ after the flesh, she had nothing. She was terribly broken to pieces by evil, and Christ was gone. There was something human connected with her affection; there was also culpable ignorance in what she did; but the Lord had compassion on her; and more, He manifested Himself first to her.

The disciples ~~saw~~, and believed. They perceived He was gone, but understood not the Scriptures. Mary had no home, and when she found not the body of Christ, what had she? The disciples were not isolated in the same way; they go away to their homes. She, in her ignorance, but withal in her love, says, "I will come and take him away." (John xx. 15.) This last is very precious. It is a great thing, when Christ has such a place with us as to be everything. In one sense this is the door by which all must pass through; at death, if not before, nature must decay and vanish. What is more nothing than death? All here is gone. We may learn this spiritually, or by circumstances, or at the moment of death itself; but learn it we must. We must find everything but Christ *nothing*.

Christ calls her by name. When He comes and calls His sheep by name, it is all right. She had

got Him back after death. Nature had, as it were, passed through death, as Isaac. Nature *had* mixed itself up with her affections, but now she has got beyond that; all is given up to God. The promises made to Abraham were all surrendered up by him when Isaac was to be taken. Mary Magdalene thought she had Christ back when she had not. She thought of Him corporeally, but she must have Him in another way. It will be so with the remnant of Israel by-and-by. They will have Him corporeally then, but now He says, "Touch me not," &c. I am going to another place. I am taking your hopes or your promises in another way, and not in flesh. If He was to take it, it would be when the just shine in the kingdom of the Father. He says, "Go tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and my God and your God." (John xx. 17.) I am giving you something entirely new—not My presence yet—not power yet; but where He was going Himself He would take us.

He does isolate us; He does pass through different circumstances; but whether gradually or suddenly, His object is to break down everything of nature, and this in grace to us. Here for the first time He says, "my brethren." He had never called them "brethren" *definitely* until now. He had been heard from the horns of the unicorns. (Psa xxii. 21.) During His life He had declared the Father's name. Now He declares the love wherewith He is loved is that with which we are loved. He could

not say that during His life. During His ministry He was making known the Father, walking with the Father, speaking to the Father. Now he takes them into the same relationship. . Why? Because the redemption was accomplished.

Christ never addressed His Father as *God*—never less than as *Father*. During His life as given in the Gospels, all His life through, it was always, "Father." When on the cross it was, "My God; my God," until all was finished, when He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke xxiii. 46.) In making the atonement, what was not against Him? There was one thing that could not be against any, and that was *love*; but there could be none as to the feeling and manifestation of it then. He was forsaken; and the more the love was known, the more terrible it was. He was dealt with according to the majesty of God, the righteousness of God, the truth of God, the holiness of God. All that God is was made good against Him. God was thus putting away sin, and Christ was glorifying God about sin.

But now, being dead and risen, He comes up to put His disciples into the place of full blessing. The work is done, and there is no sin left. Everything that God is is now brought out in blessing, and all the sin is put out of the way. He is declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. He goes up to God, and takes us too. I am

going to my God, and He is your God too. He is going into all that is blessed. I am not going to be present with you corporeally, so that you can "touch" me; but I am going to My God, and your God, My Father, and your Father. Such is the word to this poor desolate woman. She was a fit messenger, by her very nothingness, to witness of Christ and His work and His fulness.

"I go," and faith goes too, entering into that within the veil. It enters into all that which God is. Where we live is within the veil. Sense may come in and hide God's presence; but the atonement has brought us into it, and into the very same relationship which Christ has as risen. We sometimes enjoy peace, we enjoy scripture, a hymn, or prayer, without realizing the presence of God; and then there is not the same power, or the same exercise of heart in it. I can own the blessing, and rejoice in the blessing, without having my heart searched out; but if in these I have the sense of Him, my state is very different. It is very important, not only to have a right thought, *but to have it with Him*. If you search your own heart, you will find that you may sing without realizing Jesus Himself. Then the heart is never probed, the evil is not detected, and the power of grace is not the same. By the atonement sin is put out, and God is brought in. God exercises our hearts about good and evil by first giving us the good. There must be the possession of perfect good and then there is holiness, and not merely the exercise of dread and

fear. Our hearts must follow Him where He is gone. We cannot "touch" Him.

May the Lord give us to live a life in which He is everything!

" I WILL CONSIDER THY TESTI- MONIES."

How varied and precious are the "considerations" set before us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, striking chord after chord in our hearts, and producing note after note of praise! In the first chapter the personal and official dignities and glories of the Lord Jesus Christ crowd themselves together and unfold themselves before our souls; while in the second chapter, we have the grace of Him, by whom God spake in these last days, in associating others with Himself, when passing through death to the Headship of all things, crowned with glory and honour; it is as thus set before us, we are told, as holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, to "*con-*sider" Him, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession; to gaze on Him, and have our souls enlarged in contemplating Him, "who was faithful to Him that appointed him." .

But how can such as we sit down and feast ourselves with such considerations, with consciences unpurged and not at rest? In view of this need, and before the next "consideration" is presented to us, we are led, in chapters ix. and x., to see the altar of sin-offering receiving a victim, once and for

ever, that has satisfied all its cravings, and which has fully answered all the demands of the glory of God as to sin and uncleanness; satisfies the need of the convicted conscience, and silenced every accusing foe. And with consciences thus at rest, we are set down to another consideration for our souls. We are told in chapter x. 24, to "*consider* one another to provoke unto love and to good works." With the holy peace and calm of purged consciences we are thus, as it were, told that we have leisure to turn round and look one upon another with such an end in view, and so much the more as we see the "day" approaching.

But, you will say, there are the trials and difficulties of the way to contend with, and there are the weights and hindrances that would hamper and clog us in our journeying onwards to the glory. And, in view of these things, we are told to turn our eyes toward Him again, and we are exhorted in chapter xii., to "*consider*" Him who endured as One who has been in the way Himself, and understands the grace needed for every step, and who has learned "how to speak a word in season to him that is weary," (Isaiah 1) at every stage of the journey to the place where He has Himself sat down, "lest we should be weary and faint in our minds."

And, lastly, as those who are in the midst of the things that are about to be shaken, and who are dwelling in spirit, and by faith amongst those things which, when all things are shaken, will remain, we are exhorted to "*consider*" the end of the

conversation of those who have ministered among us, . . . "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Varied and precious are the "considerations" thus laid before us, and to which we are set down to contemplate, in their order and suitability, as every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of our God.

ONE RIGHT PATH.

There is only one right way with everything of God; while the shades of right (which in reality are paths of error) are countless. Now the errant soul, or *bad* guide, is sure always to engage my soul with an inquiry about some one of the shades of right; asking me, "Where is the wrong there?" "Are there not exemplary men there?" he does not say to me, "Are you seeking the only one narrow path in this evil day (more and more narrow, as the day becomes more evil); are you seeking Christ pre-eminently? Another Mary Magdalene, only with more intelligence, and *not less love*. It was a dark hour of true regard for Him on the earth, when He Himself, and He alone could satisfy her. It was not companions, or good men, or anything but that true, deep, *personal* interest, which love alone understands, and confers; and this is what we want in this day. If we have true personal interest for the Lord, we shall assuredly care for all that are His on the earth; but we must *begin* with Him.

It is about Himself He speaks to the angels of the seven churches. The moment I love Him, He says to me, "Feed my sheep." (John xxi. 16.) All interest for others must spring from this, as well as all instruction for myself. If I am seeking the Lord with a pure heart, I am sure to find myself

(because it is the one Spirit which is leading us) in company "with them who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Tim. ii. 23) If it be the meeting, or the ministry, or the brethron, I am on a poor foundation.

The more evil the time, the more pointed, though less open, is the attempt to set aside the plan and rule of Christ. It has been done openly in Christendom, and now the malice of Satan would have it done among them who profess to stand apart from the growing apostasy in the world. If I am seeking a place to worship in, I am sure to go wrong; for I am looking for what suits my taste, and I am not guided by principle; but if I am seeking to worship my Lord (then it is a Person, not a place, that is before my soul), I am sure to be led rightly, for the Spirit of light which is in the blind man (John ix.) always leads the soul that is morally outside the place of worship (as this man was, on account of his new light,) to worship the Lord of light. One faithful one, like this selfsame man, confounds the most learned theologian.

Let us be like Mary Magdalene in true devotion of heart to our Lord; and like the once blind man, maintaining our light, its reality, and its source, against all comers, and *in the way*. We shall surely be rewarded as they were, with the assured presence of our Lord.

Gracious God, thy children keep,
Jesus guide thy silly sheep,
Fix, O fix, our fickle souls,
Lord, direct us, we are fools.

Bid us in thy care confide;
Keep us near thy wounded side,
From thee never let us stir,
For thou know'st how soon we err

Lay us low before thy feet,
Safe from pride and self-conceit,
Be the language of our souls,
Lord, direct us, we are fools

Dang'rous doctrines from without,
Lies and errors round about,

From within a treach'rous heart,
Prone to take the tempter's part

By thy word we fain would steer,
Fain thy Spirit's dictates hear,
Save us from the rocks and shelves,
Save us chiefly from ourselves

Never, never may we dare,
What we are not, say we are,
Make us well our vileness know,
Keep us very, very low.

May we all our wills resign,
Quite absorb'd and lost in thine,
Let us walk by thy right rules,
Lord, direct us, we are fools.

2nd CORINTHIANS XII.

(Continued from page 127)

The being, as men speak, in the third heaven, is not always our place and portion. It is a mistake to think it would puff us up. A creature is never puffed up in the presence of God and with Him before the mind. It is when the eye is off Him, when we *have been* in the third heaven, but are no longer there, that the danger begins. We are in danger of being puffed up about having been there when we have lost the present sense of the excellency of what is there, and in which we lose the sense of self. This is what we find in Paul's case. The man in Christ has Christ for his title, and is entitled thus to all that Christ enjoys, to joys and glories which mortal apprehensions cannot receive—the language formed by mortal thoughts and ways cannot express, that are not meet to be communicated in this scene of human capacities. They belong to another sphere of things.

But, wonderful as that is into which we are brought, the question of good and evil, the knowledge of which we have by the fall, and cannot get rid of, nor is it desirable or meant we should, must be thoroughly and experimentally gone through by us. It has been as to acceptance. In respect of that it is finally and for ever settled before God by the death and resurrection of Christ. But we have to learn to judge the evil and to delight in the good. The law, as we have seen, makes us

learn the evil as looking to be judged for it. In grace we are first put into the position of perfect blessing in Christ, and then we judge what is contrary to it. This is the difference of bondage and liberty. Still we have to judge it, and grow in our apprehension of good. In the instruction of our chapter this (as in all God's ways with the apostle, who was to be both quickly and fully taught in order constantly and deeply to teach others) was done in the strongest and fullest contrast of the extremes. The third heaven, if it did not set aside the flesh in fact for ever, must show what a hopeless, unchangeable thing it is. And so it did. Paul had entered into the third heaven with no consciousness of the hindrance of the body, still less with any working of the flesh in any way. But he must return into the practical state of existence in which he had to serve Christ with the *consciousness of what he was as Paul*. And here the only working of the flesh, the only way it took cognizance of Paul's having been in the third heaven, would have been, if it had been allowed to do so, to have puffed him up at having such wondrous revelations. It was unchanged in evil. Paul must learn this practically, even by a visit to the third heavens, instead of this amazing privilege taking away or changing it. It was not allowed to act, but he must learn truly to judge it for himself.

Note this difference. It is not necessary, when we are in Christ, that flesh should act in order to

judge it in ourselves. Alas ! it is often in that way we do learn it, but it is not necessary that it should act even in thought. By God's ways, and through communion with Him, we can learn to judge evil in the root in us without its bearing fruit. If we do not learn to judge it in communion with God, where there may be very real exercise about it (and a very great conflict of will against God if it has acquired any head), we learn it in its fruits through the giving way to the temptation of Satan. When it is not judged, we learn, no doubt, the evil—not yet indeed the root, but Christ is dishonoured, the spirit grieved, and but for the coming in of grace, sin will in such case have acquired deceiving power in our hearts.

In what has preceded, we have found three important points brought before us in this chapter : First, the man in Christ ; secondly, the gross evil of the flesh if our members be not mortified ; thirdly, that this same flesh is not at all corrected in its tendencies even by a man's being in the third heaven, nor by anything else. Paul needed a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be puffed up. There is another collateral point, indeed, which I would here briefly notice ; the difference between our abstract position as men in Christ (and we are entitled to consider ourselves as such ; it is our true position as Christians according to grace), and our actual condition with the consciousness of the existence of the flesh and all our bodily circumstances and infirmities down

here. Into this actual condition we have now to follow Paul in our chapter, and to learn where power is to be found to walk rightly in it. The flesh exists unchangeable in its nature, a pure hindrance.

First, we may remark that no extent of knowledge, even where given of God, is in itself spiritual power in our souls. We cannot doubt that such revelations as Paul received in the third heaven strengthened his own faith, made him understand that it was well worth sacrificing a miserable life, such as this world's life is, for it, and gave him a consciousness of what he was contending for, a sense of the divine things he had to do with, which must have exercised an immense influence upon his career in this world. But it was not immediate power in conflict in the mixed state in which he found himself when he had to speak of "myself Paul." He had, and so have we, to walk by faith, and not by sight. The wickedest man would not sin while his mind had the glory of God before his eyes; but that would no way prove the state of his heart and affections when it was removed. Like Balaam he would turn to his vomit again. So in point of fact the Christian (however strengthened and refreshed by times on the road by what is almost like sight to him, and by communications of divine love to his soul) has to walk by faith, and not always in these sensible apprehensions of divine results in glory. Not that he is to walk in the

flesh or lose communion, but he is not always under the power of especial communications of the glory conferred on him, and divine love to his soul. Paul knew a man *fourteen years ago*—not every day in that state. He could rejoice *in the Lord always*. Some Christians are apt to confound these two things—special joy and abiding communion, and to suppose, because the first is not always the case, the discontinuance of the latter is to be taken for granted and acquiesced in. This is a great mistake. Special visitations of joy may be afforded. Constant fellowship with God and with the Lord Jesus is the only right state, the only one recognized in scripture. We are to rejoice in the Lord always. This the flesh would seek to hinder, and Satan by the flesh.

Here we find first the privilege of having the title to hold ourselves dead. We are *not debtors to the flesh*. It has no kind of title over us. We are not in the flesh. We may reckon ourselves dead and alive unto God, and sin shall not have dominion over us. It is all-important to hold this fact. The flesh is unchanged, but there is no necessity of walking in it—not more as to our thoughts than as to our outward conduct. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death; sin in the flesh is condemned by the death of Christ; the power it had over us, when under law (if not lawless), it has no longer. *When we were in the flesh the motions of sin which were by the law*

wrought in us all manner of concupiscence. But we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us. We are delivered from the law, having died in that in which we were held. Our whole condition is changed. What the law could not do just because it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh.

But if the flesh be not changed, how is this realized in practice? It is this which is taught us here. It is first the giving conscious nothingness and weakness in the flesh. This is not power, but it is the practical way to it. We are entitled, as to our standing before God, to reckon ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and in practice to hold ourselves, as in this condition, not debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh; and sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under law, but under grace. But our chapter goes farther than this: it shows us power so to walk. The flesh is then practically put down. The measure, as stated by the apostle, is this—"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body." His object was not to gain this life. Alive in Christ we have it. But he held every movement, thought, and will of the flesh under the judgment of the cross, and so the life of Christ was left free.

Such is our path. Admitted into the very presence of God, into the holiest, by the blood of Christ, we judge in its roots, in communion with Him according to His infinite grace, everything that is not of Christ in us, and the grace we meet and are made partakers of in this communion carries us along our road in lowliness and grace. Our fleshly tendencies are thus only the occasion of receiving the grace which keeps us safe from their power. I may be humbler than ordinary men if I have dealt with God about my pride, and so of every danger. The present power of Christ keeps the evil out of our thoughts. We have brought God into our life in this respect. It is not merely the absence, comparatively speaking, of a particular character of evil. The flesh—evil—is judged according to God, and I am lowly in spirit, and walk softly and safely. But where there are real dangers, God helps us in this. Not only do I bear about the dying, but we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake. God works; some messenger of Satan is sent (not sin—far from it: God cannot send that; but some humbling process which *prevents* sin and pride working), unpleasant to the human heart, but needed for it. All self-activity of the flesh is sin. The body is dead because of sin if Christ be in me; that is, if alive, it is only sin; and if Christ is my life, the Spirit is life. My body is not counted as alive, or to be so in its will. What is of me in will and nature—me as a conscious living man, a child of

Adam in this world—is annulled, or is a hindrance ; it has no connection with God : a man in it cannot please God. “ I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

(*To be continued, D. V.*)



CHRISTIAN LIFE : AND JESUS' THE PATTERN OF IT.

CHRISTIAN life, is a common life of *service in contact with human passions, faults, weaknesses,—* in a word, in contact with flesh, but *in order to act in the midst of it, to INTRODUCE GOD there.*

And this is what Christ was. We must be really in communion with Him, by partaking thus of that nature which nothing can injure, and which shines with its own perfection in the midst of all, above everything we meet with.

Jesus was the most isolated of men, and at the same time the most accessible. The most isolated, because He was living in absolute communion with His Father, and there was neither echo nor sympathy with the perfect love which was found there ; the most accessible, because He was that love for others. And in speaking of that ineffable work which opened a way to that love, through all men's sin, He says, “ I have a baptism to be baptized with ; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished ! ” That baptism of bitterness and

death, which, by making an end of sin—even in its last stronghold, and its last claims of ruin, by the righteousness of God against us—left that love free to act in its infinite purposes of grace. For love is infinitely inventive for the blessedness of that which is loved, and the love of God purposes that which goes infinitely beyond all our thoughts. It is the spring of the thoughts of God, who is infinite. And again, towards the end of His career, when the unbelief of *His own* led Him to say, “How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?” (for not even in His own was there faith,—the capacity necessary for using the resources of grace and power which were in Him,—for that is what He expects from us in this poor world) then, without a moment’s interval, He adds, “Bring thy son hither.” The consciousness of standing alone in His love, so that others did not even understand *how they could and ought to avail themselves of it, does not for a moment hinder His energy and activity*; the same phrase which contains the words, “How long?” adds this also, “Bring thy son hither.”

And what was the life of that Jesus? “A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief!” A life of activity in obscurity, but which caused the love of God to penetrate into the most remote corners of society, even where there was the most need; in the midst of persons who were repelled by the pride of man, that it might maintain its ground, but which the love of God sought after. Because

He had no need to make himself a character and to keep it, He was always the same; and the more apparently He committed Himself, the more He displayed Himself in a perfection that never belied itself. The love of God had no need of protecting itself, as human society must, from that which might lay it too bare. He was always the same. The toiling life of Jesus was passed in seeking souls in all circumstances, and went through that which could put it to the test. But we see therein, on one hand, a divine reality which never failed, and from time to time—in face of self-righteousness, pride, and tyrannical boldness, and the contradiction of sinners, or in favour of some poor broken-down souls, or to justify the ways of God in their favour—a divine ground-work, the most exquisite and touching thoughts, a depth of truth which betrayed its perfection by its simplicity! All this manifesting a soul whose food was in the most intimate communion with infinite love and perfect holiness,—a soul which could say, “We speak that which we do know, and testify that we have seen;” which weighed evil by the perfection of good which was in Him; *and found*, in the awful discoveries of evil—if we can speak of discoveries, where everything was laid bare—which the holiness of his soul made, *the opportunities of the manifestation of infinite love.*

It was the love of a holy Being, rather, which made this discovery; a love which took the form of that grace which, by its own humiliation, placed

itself within the reach of all the wants of the heart, and at the same time, in presence of the pride of man, showed itself at the height of the dignity and majesty of God. How beautiful to see this divine Person, these divine qualities piercing through the humiliation, place Himself within the reach of those whom the world despised, and find—"being wearied with His journey," and becoming a debtor for a cup of cold water to a woman who hardly dared show herself with others—meat to eat, of which neither His disciples nor the world knew anything; and that in the deliverance of a poor heart, for which he had set free the spirit of life and joy, and had restored it,—or rather had given to a heart crushed under the weight of a bad conscience, and by the contempt of her fellow-creatures.

What a perspective of blessing for poor sinners this opened to His heart! For he did not despise such consolation in the midst of a world which rejected Him from its bosom. Love comforts itself thus. The heart that loves sinners needs such consolation in such a world. And where is it to be found? *In obscurity*; in the labours of a life which had to do with the ordinary need of souls, but which thus ripens in the truth; a life, which did not shelter itself from the misery of the world to walk "in a vain show," but introduced there the love of God! Precious grace! He was what others could write about. (Matt. xxiv. 24; Luke xxiv. 44; John i. 45; etc.)

How many hidden wants, even in the most de-

graded souls, would be confessed, and would manifest themselves, if such love and such goodness; which could win their confidence, were presented to them! But that it may be so, we must be content to find ourselves in the midst of the degradation, *sheltered from it ONLY by that which is inward.* Now, such was the life of the Lord.

How many souls drown their thoughts in pleasure to stifle the moral sorrows which torment them! Divine love not only meets the wants, but brings them to express themselves. How delicious to see a soul open itself, and at the same time to see spiritual life entering it! One does not exactly seek for such degradation; but one finds the world, knowing that is the truth as to what is found there; and its outward forms do not redeem the soul. But this is a life of pain, patience, and blessedness, which has no equal. Christ could say, "That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." No doubt there is a difference of gifts; but even if God, in His grace, opens this way to us, *how slow we are to walk in the steps of Him who shows us!*

But take courage, His grace is there, on the road He has opened for us. We find it day by day as we go onward. And what grace it is, when all the principles which have been formed in the heart through faith, come to blow fully in heaven and shew themselves in all the fulness of their results according to the heart of God. *We must wait,—walking BY FAITH.*

WAITING FOR CHRIST.

That which should characterize the saints is, not merely holding the doctrine of the Lord's coming as that which they believe, but their souls should be in the daily attitude of waiting, expecting, and desiring His coming. But why? That they may see Himself, and be with Him and like Him for ever! Not because the world which has been so hostile to them is going to be judged, though God will smite the wicked. It is true there will be mercy to those who are spared. But we have obtained mercy now, and are therefore waiting for Himself—for what He is in Himself to us, and not because of judgment. That would not be joy to me, though it will be to some on the earth; for "in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which Jehovah shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps," etc. (Isa. xxx. 32). This is not our hope, but simply waiting for Himself. The whole walk and character of a saint depends upon this—on his waiting for the Lord. Every one should be able to read us by this, as having nothing to do in this world but to get through it, and not as having any portion in it—"Turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven." 1 Thes. i. 9, 10.

What I desire to press upon you all, and myself too, is the individual waiting for the Lord; not as a doctrine merely, but as a daily waiting for Him-

self. Whatever the Lord's will may be, I should like Him to find me doing it when He comes. But that is not the question; but, Am I waiting for Himself day by day? In 1 Thes. ii. the hope is connected with ministry: "What is our hope or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" Then Paul would get the reward of his service to the saints. Then in the third chapter the hope is connected with our walk, as a motive for holiness: "Unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." Then in the fourth chapter the doctrine of the hope is unfolded, the manner of it comes out: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Thus we see what a present expectation the coming of the Lord was; therefore Paul says, "WE which are alive and remain." But why does he say "WE"? Because he expected it then. This was Paul's character then, that of waiting for the Lord. And does he lose that character because he died before He came? No, not at all. Though Peter had a revelation that he should put off the tabernacle of his body, yet did he daily wait for the Lord's coming then. And this will be

Peter's character when the Lord does come ; he will lose nothing by his death. " Be ye like unto men that wait for their Lord."

The character of their waiting was to be like servants at the hall-door, that, when the Master knocked, they were ready to open to Him immediately. It is a figure, of course, here ; but it is the present power of the expectation that is alluded to. And the ruin of the church has come in by practically saying : " My Lord delayeth His coming." " Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching."

" Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning"—" your loins girt about with truth" for service. You must not let your garments flow loose ; that is, you must not let your thoughts and affections spread abroad, but be ready with your garments well girt up, and your lights burning. This is not rest, for it is an exceedingly tiring thing to have to sit up and watch through a long dark night. But in the spirit of service the heart, affections, thoughts, feelings and desires must all be girt up. And this requires real painstaking not to let the flesh go its own way ; for it is a great comfort sometimes to do this, if but for a moment ; but if we do we shall surely fall asleep like the virgins. For as the virgins went to sleep with their oil in their lamps, so we may go to sleep with the Holy Ghost in our hearts. But blessed are those servants who are found watching. The Lord says this is the time.

for you to be girded, to take your turn in love to serve and watch; but when I come again, and have things my own way, then I will take my turn in love; ungird you and gird myself, and come forth and serve you. You must be well girt up and watchful in the midst of evil; but when the evil is done with, then you may take your rest. When in the Father's house you may lie down and be at ease; and then your robes may flow down without any fear of their being soiled. In that blessed place of holiness and purity, you may let your affections, thoughts and desires flow out without the fear of their being defiled.

Jesus, we wait for Thee,
 With Thee to have our part;
 What can full joy and blessing be
 But being where Thou art?

FRAGMENT.

If we have Christ, we have all—without Christ we have nothing. You can be happy without money, without liberty, without parents, without friends, if Christ is-yours. If you have not Christ, neither money, nor liberty, nor parents, nor friends, can make you lastingly happy. Christ, with a chain, is liberty; liberty, without Christ, is a chain. Christ, without anything, is riches; all things without Christ, is poverty indeed.

2nd CORINTHIANS XII.

(Concluded from page 144.)

We find in Philippians this confidence in the flesh (not lusts of corruption) judged by the apostle. All that made Paul of undue importance to himself, or to others and so reflectively to himself, was rejected. It would have been confidence in self. Our part is to be in the presence of God, that all which is of self may be judged. But God, as I have said, helps us. Here God had, by the abundance of the revelations given to Paul, given an occasion which the flesh could use. In His mercy He meets the danger for Paul, which *he* might not, surely would not, have rightly met; for God does not afflict willingly. He lets loose this messenger of Satan at him, but to do His own work, as with Job. And Paul has some infirmity which tends to make him despicable in preaching. "My temptation, which was in my flesh, ye despised not," says he to the Galatians—a natural counterpoise to the abundance of revelations.

What can the flesh do with this then? Well, it would be spared what seemed a hindrance. To whom? Why, to Paul. Just right. Paul had to be kept down—terrible truth for us! Must we be made weak and inefficient in order to be blessed and used? Yes, if, wretched worms as we are, we are in danger of leaning as man on the flesh's efficiency and strength. The works that are done upon the earth, God doeth them Himself, and above all spiritual work. *He* gives the increase.

If He puts the poor vessel in a certain sense in danger, and in many a case where it puts itself, He meets the danger by striking at its root in self. He makes nothing of self, renders the incapacity of nature to anything not only apparent, but apparent to *ourselves*, and this is what we want.

That self should feel self nothing, or a hindrance, is a most divine work (though it be a shame to a man who has been in the third heaven to think *himself* something in respect of it: but flesh is incorrigible), but as to the instrumentality used, a mean and miserable process, such as becomes making nothing of flesh. If death is our deliverance from all sin, we must taste it for our deliverance practically. The bitter water of Marah must be tasted when the salt waters of the Red Sea have delivered us from Egypt for ever and ever. Put the wood of the tree, the cross of Christ, into our cross, and all will be sweet. "Crucified" is terrible work—crucified with Christ, joy and deliverance; reproach is cruel—the reproach of Christ is greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. But there are cases where the will and natural reluctance of the flesh to suffer are in question; there are also those which are characterized by the danger of positive evil working, as pride or vanity in the case of Paul. As to all, death must be tasted. The nothingness and incompetency of all flesh must be felt where it would be disposed to think itself competent. It must

find its pretensions arrested and set aside when it has, or would be disposed to have, such ; it must find itself consciously weak where it might hope to be strong or capable of something.

As to what self would lean on, it must find itself a hindering flesh where it would pretend to be a helping one. It is really nothing in the work and path of God ; but when it would be positively something, it must be made to feel itself a positive hindrance. This is not the end, but it is the way. We must be humbled when we are not humble, or even in danger of not being so. This work may come in preventively. But the flesh must be nothing if we are to have blessing ; and in order that the new man, which is content that God should be all, and knows its power is in Christ only, may be free and happy, and God, as it desires, may be glorified. The power of Satan and the power of death concur in ministering to our usefulness in Christ, because Satan wields this power to kill practically the flesh, and we have another life which lives in Christ, and lives for Him. This question is first settled as regards righteousness, as we have seen ; we are dead and risen again ; but it has to be practically settled as regards life and power of walk also. So that we may say, whatever our little measure may be, "To me to live is Christ."

But the fact that the flesh is thus practically mortified is not in itself power ; we must be positively dependent on another—glad to be so, if our

heart is in Christ's service, and that we find His help only can make us to serve Him. To have Him is joy in every way. This is what follows: "I will glory in my infirmities"—not sin, but what broke down the flesh in its will and hindered sin, "that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Here is positive power capable of everything, or rendering us capable of everything in the path of obedience, giving no power at all out of it, but fulfilling in power all the energy of love in obedience. For the Christian path is not mere legal obedience which submits to a will which arrests and stops our will, but an obedience which serves with delight in love, and in which love is positively and energetically active in doing good. This path is regulated by the Lord's will and fulfilled by the Lord's power, but that power can have no adventitious aid. It must be the strength in us of a dependent nature. In this is the right condition of the creature, obedience and conscious dependence (and both delighted in) on One who has title, and alone has title, to all the praise; who loves us, and on whose love we lean.

In the path of service, the energy of Christ's love impels us, Christ's power sustains and enables us: flesh, only a hindrance to that, must be put down, and practically annulled, that Christ may work freely in us according to the blessing of that love. We then say, the love of Christ constrains us. I can do all things through Him which strengtheneth me, the only true abiding

state of the Christian, be he babe or father in Christ; only the thing he may have to do may be different, and his temptations too. God in all cases is faithful not to suffer him to be tempted above what he is able. When a man is in Christ, then, redeemed, quickened, and united to the Head, accepted in the Beloved, the work of God in order to power is to break down and bring the flesh to conscious nothingness wherever it is needed; not by mending, using, ameliorating, but, if needed because of its will to be something, breaking it down, yea, making it for man's capabilities of acting a sensible hindrance. That is all that God makes of man as to his flesh and competency; but there is a deep lesson of blessing in it besides being the path of power in source. We are emptied of self, and Christ (that is, purity, and love, and blessing—God known to us in grace) becomes everything to us, the more unhindered joy of the soul, made practically like Him.

But we become now sensibly dependent, and Christ our power, I do not say sensibly power; for though there may be a consciousness of His strength, the service and work is done indeed, but done without any conscious strength. It may be done with joy, done in communion with Christ, and thus with joy in the service itself. It may be done with fear and trembling, and hence with no joy, though with confidence. That depends much upon how far we have to meet the sensible power of the enemy, always in weakness as to self, al-

ways in confidence as to Christ, that it is His work, and He the doer of it, though He may use us as instruments. And this operation is not merely an effect in us, though there be one; it is the positive power of Christ, a real acting and working of His power, for which the sensible putting down of flesh is only preparatory, that it might be evidently not the power of flesh, and that there might be no mixture of the two in our minds. Hence the flesh is turned into positive, sensible weakness. But the power of Christ rests upon us, so that it is joy to the soul because He uses us—connects Himself, so to speak, with us—deigns to make us the instruments and servants, willing and rejoicing servants, of this power. It is His power, but it rests on us. This is not the man in Christ, but *Christ with the man*—His power resting on him, emptied of self.

The path of strength, then, is the being made sensible of our own weakness, so that divine strength, which will never be a supplement to flesh's strength, may come in. Thus there is entire dependence, and the positive coming in of Christ's power to work by us. If Paul's bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible, and there was something which tended to make him despised, by whose power was it that such wondrous blessing for the whole world flowed forth on all sides, from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum?

One or two remarks more, and I will close my

imperfect suggestions on this chapter. First, remark, that the humbling process with Paul was no depriving of the abundance of the revelations, or weakening the consciousness that he was a man in Christ. This would have been positive loss. These were fully maintained and gloried in. The use the flesh would make of them when consciously down here in the body, in the world, was met by an accessory humbling process carried on in the flesh itself. Next, remark, that it is not merely power which is gained by this process. The discernment of good and evil, in its more subtle characters, is greatly increased; the judgment and knowledge of flesh is greatly strengthened and deepened. Hence the liberty of the new man with God, confidence in Him, the sense of the careful and gracious interest He takes in us, and intercourse founded on this confidence, are greatly increased.

Further, remark, that dealing with self, our own spiritual condition, is the secret of *power*, not the quantity of divine revelations we have to communicate, valuable as this may be in its place. For power Paul was dealt with in his own soul, its own dangers and state, and then Christ's power rested on him. Lastly, as to our glorying in our position in Christ; it is all right. "Of such an one will I glory; yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." When I think of my place in Christ, of the "man in Christ," of such a one we ought to glory. This is no presumption.

It cannot be otherwise, whenever we know ourselves in Christ. Do you think I can do anything but glory in being in Christ, and like Christ in glory? Of such a one I will. Let no pretended humility deprive us of this. It is legalism. Of myself, of that of which I have the living consciousness as a man down here, I cannot glory, unless it be in those sufferings for Christ and infirmities of whatever kind they may be, connected with them, which are used to put the flesh down, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

I would add to these, one collateral observation. The Lord can unite discipline with positive suffering for Christ, though the two things are quite distinct. When Paul was subjected to contempt in his preaching, it was for Christ's sake he suffered, yet the form of it was, we have seen, a discipline to prevent his being puffed up. This may be seen doctrinally stated in *Hebrews xii. 2-11*. In verses 2-4, we suffer with Christ, striving against sin, even to martyrdom and death. In verses 5-11, the same process is the discipline of the Lord, that we may be partakers of His holiness. How wise and most gracious of the Lord's ways to turn our needed discipline into the privilege of suffering for Christ's sake, so that we can glory in our infirmities! There is chastening which has not this character, being for positive evil. In this, doubtless, we have to thank God, but it is another thing.

In fine, before God we have the "man in Christ"

—blessed position—and which is perfection where we want it; and as to our place before men, besides Christ in us as life, the power of Christ (where we practically want it—in weakness and imperfection down here) resting on the man for walk and service before men. The first is the basis of all our walk, but it does not suffice for power. This is had in daily dependence in which we walk, as humbled in ourselves, that Christ may be glorified, and the flesh practically annulled.



A REMARKABLE STATEMENT OF AN OLD WRITER.

The following extract, on Rev. xi., which gives such a marked and striking picture of the spirit that is working at the present time, is worthy of a place in our pages. It was written over two hundred and fifty years ago, by one whose powers are above question, while those better instructed in the ways of God, could not accept to the full, the interpretation of the Scriptures treated of, celebrated though the writer was.

The direct interpretation of the book of Revelation (chaps. iv.-xxii) is strictly future, although affording, doubtless, certain large features in outline, of the protracted history of the events of the last eighteen centuries or more. Still, when details are examined, the futurist view alone will stand, *i. e.*, when the true state of the professing church seen in chaps. ii. and iii. is past, the saints

are seen in heaven from chap. iv. and onwards, during the short period of judgment which ushers in the millennial kingdom. All that part of the book is strictly future in direct application :

“The church of God on earth will be greatly reduced, as we may well imagine, in its apparent numbers in the times of Antichrist, by the open desertion of the powers of the world. The desertion will begin in a professed indifference to any particular form of Christianity, under pretence of universal toleration ; which toleration will proceed from no true spirit of Christian charity and forbearance, but from a desire to undermine Christianity by multiplying and encouraging sectaries. The intended toleration will go far beyond a just toleration, even as it regards the different sects of Christianity ; for governments will pretend an indifference to all, and will give protection in preference to none. All establishments will be laid aside. From the toleration of the most pestilent heresies, they will proceed to Mohammedanism, Atheism, and at last to a positive persecution of the truths of Christianity.

“In these times the temple of God will be reduced to the holy place, viz., to the small number of real Christians who worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, and who regulate their doctrine and worship, and their whole conduct by the word of God alone.

“The mere nominal professors will all desert their profession of the truth when the powers of the world forsake them ; and this tragical event I take to be typified by the order of St John to measure the temple and the altar, and to leave the outer court (National-Church) to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles ! The property of the clergy

will be pillaged; the public worship insulted and vilified by the deserters of the faith they once professed, who are not called apostate, because they were never earnest in their profession; there was nothing more than a compliance with fashion and public authority; in principle they were always what they now appear to be—Gentiles.

“When this general desertion of the faith takes place, there will commence the sackcloth ministry of the witnesses. There will be nothing of splendour in the external support from government, no honours, no emoluments, no immunities, no authority but such as no earthly power can take away, which they desire from Him who commissioned them to be His witnesses.”



BABYLON.—On her forehead her name was written. A drunken world does not see it; but a saint ought not to mistake it. We should judge from the *outside* of it; and if we are in our place, in the Spirit in the wilderness, we shall not mistake. But if we tamper with it, we have lost the sense of it: we have drunk some of the wine, if we do not discern it.



GOD IS GOD.

Yes, be the world ever so godless—GOD is GOD still;
Be the professing church ever so ungodly, GOD is GOD still;
Be the people of GOD ever so little godly, still GOD is GOD.

This *mere* truism, then, that “GOD is GOD,”

Is a very practical truth for us where we are.

And it has a whole volume of truth in it,

Not only as to man's walk in the wilderness,

But as being at the very root, and forming the very core,
Of the *Gospel* itself.

GODLY SENSIBILITIES, WITHOUT GODLY ENERGY.

GENESIS XXVII.

What moral illustrations that beautiful book of Genesis does afford us ; what a variety of character is exhibited for our warning and instruction ! Isaac takes his place in the midst of these characters thus produced and presented—and for a saint we get in him but a poor sample. He had godly *sensibilities*, as well as human, amiable, virtues ; but he had not godly *energy*. He reminds us of Jehoshaphat in other days. Jehoshaphat had godly *sensibilities*, but he failed in godly *energy*. Through vanity he failed : he joined affinity with Ahab, and had not strength to refuse to go to the battle with him. *But still he had sensibilities* in his soul that were spiritual and of divine workmanship—for in the midst of the prophets of Baal he was not satisfied. He had a witness within that this would not do, and he asked, “ Were there not beside a prophet of the Lord ? ” But, strange and humbling to tell it, he would still go to the battle in company with the very Ahab who had thus wounded the spiritual *sensibilities* that stirred in his soul, and who had thus, in infidel revolt from the God of Israel, consulted the prophets of Baal (2 Chron. xviii). This was terrible ; but this was that king Jehoshaphat.

Isaac, so, on this occasion, had his *sensibilities*, but not his corresponding *energies*. It was not

through vanity, as did Jehoshaphat, that he failed : it was rather through a general relaxed moral tone of soul, that sought ease and indulgence ; but while Isaac, with a godly mind, could grieve over Esau's marriage with a daughter of Heth, one of the people of the land, yet, that very Esau is Isaac's object, and keeps and holds the dearest affections of his heart, so that Isaac cannot give himself back for God. He is answered by an earlier Ahab, though the witness within tells him that it is an Ahab that is doing it. He would fain help the profane Esau to a blessing, as Jehoshaphat would help the idolatrous Ahab to the victory.

What sights are these, and what lessons and warnings to our souls !

It is practically important to remark that worldliness or any allowance of what is not of God, by a godly man, gives the weight of his godliness to the evil he allows.

GOD'S OBJECT IN OUR TRIALS.

Ah ! has Christ ever touched the quick of your soul in solitude ? Do you know the exquisite tenderness of His touch ? He does not tear and lacerate. The necessities and trials of saints down here are created by God in order to show them what Christ is for them. If I have taken Him as Lord, I do not expect an easy way. God

never meant us to have it as disciples. He takes us into a rough path to show what Christ is, and that in it His grace may be able to vent itself. There is a yearning in His heart up there to let this grace be displayed in the poor, needy people down here—a longing that His strength should be made perfect in their weakness. Do you know for yourself the grace of that living Christ? Do you know what Christ has to do with you, and you with him? Do you know yourself as one of a flock that belongs to Him, that He is tending and guarding through the wilderness, and carrying on to glory to be for ever with Himself?

“But the God of all grace who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, when ye have suffered for a little while, Himself shall make perfect, stablish, strengthen, ground; to Him be the glory and the might for the ages of the ages, Amen.” 1 Pet. v. 10, 11. (New Trans.)



WALKING WORTHY.

My attention has been drawn to the use of “Walking worthy.” In Ephesians we see clearly its connection with the noticed force and character of the Epistle. This treats of the Christian and then of the Church’s privileges, and the saint is to “walk worthy of his vocation” here, especially in Church place, and the worthiness to be of that.

In Colossians, where the glory of the Person of Christ is brought out, as they were slipping away from the Head—I do not say His headship, but the glory of Him who is Head—they are to “walk worthy of the Lord.” It is in this part that God and Father, the Lord and the Spirit are brought out.

In the Thessalonians, who, from being heathens, had been brought to know the one true God, the Father—“The Assembly of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father,” having not intermediate and indeed demon powers, but being in direct, immediate relationship with the one true God, they are called to “walk worthy of God who has called us to His own kingdom and glory”—so they were “turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God.”

Philippians, in which we have the experimental condition of the Christian, and the Gospel is spoken of as in conflict in the world (Paul being in the bonds of it), they were to walk worthy of the Gospel (ch. i. 27). So Paul was “set for the confirmation and defence of the Gospel”—he speaks of the “beginning of the Gospel”—Timothy had “served with him in the Gospel”—the women had “contended with him in the Gospel”—Paul was set “for the defence of the Gospel”—they had fellowship “in the furtherance of the Gospel.” So it will be seen that when they were called to walk worthy of it, conflict is spoken of, for which a right walk was needed, but they were not to be.

terrified by their adversaries. The true Gospel was as a cause, as a person, in conflict in the world—they who stood by it as one they contended along with, were to walk worthy of it. They were “striving together with the faith of the Gospel,” contending along with the faith of the Gospel in the world—not “for” the faith, but “with” it, as an associate with it in its conflicts.

There is thus in the three “walkings worthy,” I think, a practical difference, though essentially the same. In Thessalonians it is the essential measure and its nature—“Walk worthy of God,” imitators of God as dear children, “Who has called us to His own kingdom and glory.” Then the manifestation of what this is in a Divinely perfect expression of it in Christ, “Worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” In Ephesians iv. we have more our own present place in it by the Holy Ghost—“the vocation wherewith we are called”—all our privileges and place being known to us through the Holy Ghost sent down when Christ was glorified—the place we are in in connection with Him glorified now.



THE lie of the serpent estranged man from God, and made him at home in the world. The work of the serpent's bruiser (Christ) makes the believer at home in the presence of God, but a stranger in the world.

FLESH AND FAITH: AND THEIR ENERGIES FROM THE FIRST.

(GEN. III, IV, V.)

These are very important chapters. They shew us the production of the two great energies which, to this day, animate the whole moral scene around us; and also shew us these two energies doing their several businesses then, as they are doing still.

They are remarkable chapters; wonderful in exhibiting so much various moral action so distinctly and yet so concisely, leaving, I may say, nothing unnoticed, and yet in so short a space.

I would notice the production of these two great energies and their workings, the energy of flesh and the energy of faith, i. e., of the old nature and of the renewed mind.

The lie of the Serpent prevails to produce the first of these.

The Serpent gains the attention of the woman to words in which there was some suggestion injurious to her Lord and Creator. It was a lie, though subtly conveyed; the only instrument by which he could reach and tempt her. She listens and answers—and her faculties thus enlisted are soon in action in the cause of her seducer, and she falls.

The principle which is called the "flesh," or "old man," is produced at once, and at once begins to work. Confidence in one another is im-

mediately lost. Innocence had needed nothing ; but guilt is necessarily shame, and must get some kind of covering. Every man to this hour carries in him what he cannot comfortably and confidently let out ; even to his fellow creature. Restraint has taken the place of freedom, and artifices come to the relief of guilt and shame. So it is now ; and so was it in that hour when the flesh was generated.

More deeply still does it retire from God. Men can bear each other's presence under the dressing of form and ceremony, and the common understanding of the common guilty nature ; but they cannot bear God's presence. Though he had the apron of fig-leaves, when His voice is heard, Adam retreats under the trees of the garden. This is 'the flesh, or the old guilty nature, to this day. God is intolerable. The thought of being alone, or immediately with Him, is more than the conscience can possibly stand. All its contrivances are vain. God is too much for the flesh. It secretly whispers and lays all the mischief on God Himself, but it cannot come forth and tell Him so. Out of its own mouth it is judged.

These are its simplest, earliest, energies : we are hateful and hating, and we are at enmity against God.

But the working of this same principle (thus produced in Adam through the lie of the Serpent) is manifested in other ways afterwards in Cain. "Cain was of that wicked one." He becomes a

tiller of the ground. But he tills, not as subject to the penalty, but as one that would get something desirable out of the ground, though the Lord had cursed it ; something for himself, independent of God.

This is a great difference. Nothing is more godly, more according to the divine mind, concerning us, than to eat our bread by the sweat of our face, to get food and raiment by hard and honest toil. It is a beautiful accepting of the punishment of our sin, and a bowing to the righteous thoughts of God. But to get out of the materials of the cursed ground what is to minister to our delight, our honour, and our wealth, in forgetfulness of sin and of the judgment of God, is but perpetuating our apostacy and rebellion.

Such was Cain's tillage. And accordingly it ended in his building a city, and furnishing it with all that promised him pleasure, or advanced him in the world. This he seeks after—and seeks after with greediness, though he must find it all in the land of Nod, in the regions of one who had left the presence of God.

He had his religion withal. He brings of the fruit of the earth that he was tilling, to God. That is, he would fain have his enjoyment of the world sanctioned of God. If he could command it, he would keep God on terms with him, though he was making the very ground which He had cursed the occasion of his enjoyments. This is very natural, and practised by our hearts to this

hour. Cain desired to link the Lord to himself in his worldliness and love of present things, that he may keep conscience quiet. But the Lord refuses, as He does to this day ; though, as we have said, the heart to this day would fain make the same efforts, and get its worldliness and love of present things sanctioned and shared by Jesus, that conscience may not interfere with the pursuits of lust.

What ways of the flesh or of "the old man" are here ! All this is the very thing that is abroad in the world to this hour. It is the working of that apostate principle which was generated by the lie of the Serpent in the soul of Adam. And being of the wicked one Cain "slew his brother." He had religion, as we have seen ; but he hated and persecuted the truth ; just as to this day. Look at the same thing in Saul of Tarsus, as he gives you the account of it himself in Acts xxvi. Look at it in the person of the Pharisees set against the Lord. Look at it in the history of Christendom all down its generations to the present hour.

This is the enmity of the seed of the Serpent to the Seed of the woman. "Cain was of that wicked one and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him ? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." This was the cause. It was the enmity of sin to godliness, the enmity of the carnal mind against God, the lusting of the old man, the lusting of flesh against S_{pir}it ;

it was the hatred of the world to Christ, because He testified of it, that "the works thereof are evil." It does not always wear such garments stained with blood; but it is always in the heart; "The carnal mind is enmity against God."

Such is the flesh, the old nature, in the history of its production, and in the course and character of its workings. It is exactly now what it was then. It rules "the course of this world" under Satan, but it is found also in each of us, if provision be made for it. But we are to know it—to know whence it came, and how it works, and to mortify it in its principle and in its acts, in all its proper native energies which so continually beset the soul.

But we now turn to the other activities which we find produced and at work in these wonderful chapters—the activity or energy of faith produced by the word of God through the hidden but effectual power of the Spirit.

While Adam was in the condition to which sin had reduced him, while he was still the guilty and culprit man under the trees of the garden, the tidings of the Conqueror slain, of Him who bore the penalty, and yet reached the point of glorious victory, the woman's Seed, reached his ear; and he is born again of the incorruptible seed, the word of the truth of the gospel.

He comes forth just as he was. But he comes forth in the full sense of salvation and of the victory which the grace of God had counselled and

wrought for him. Accordingly he speaks of life. There is something very fine in that. He calls his wife "the mother of all living." There is something truly marvellous as well as excellent in that. Dead as he was himself in trespasses and sins, he talks of life—but he talks of it in connection with Christ, and with Him only. He gives himself no living memorial at all. He does not link himself with the thought or mention of life, but only the Seed of the woman, according to the word which he had just heard. Nay, he rather implies that he knew full well he had lost all title and power of life, and that it was entirely in another—but that it was in that other for him. That the life found in another, was for his use, he had no manner of doubt; the proof of which is this—that he at once comes forth from the place of shame and guilt into the place of liberty and confidence and the presence of God.

He regains God. He had lost Him and been estranged from Him. He had lost Him as his Creator, but he had now regained Him as his Saviour, in the gospel, in the woman's Seed, in Christ his righteousness.

But we may add, to our great comfort as sinners, this simplicity and boldness of faith is exactly after the mind of God. Nothing could have been so grateful to Him as this—and consequently, in pledge of this, He first makes a coat of skins for Adam, and then with His own hands He covers his naked body.

Very blessed this is. This is the faith which at the day of the well of Sychar, and to this day, gives the Lord a feast—meat, to eat which even the loving careful sympathies of His dearest saints know not of.

Christ is now every thing to this pardoned sinner. In like manner, through faith, Eve exults in the promise. It is the joy and expectation of her heart; and Abel's religion is entirely formed by it. The penalties of sweat of face and sorrow of heart seem to be forgotten. And what is deeply to be considered—the earth is lightly held, when Jesus was firmly grasped. Adam has regained the Lord Himself, and he seems never to count on being a citizen of the earth again, but a mere tiller of the ground according to divine appointment for a season; and then to leave it to share the full fruit of the grace and redemption he had now trusted, in other worlds. He dies—that is all. He seeks for no memorial here. He builds no city. He aims not to improve a cursed world. He toils in it and eats his bread out of it. But he never forgets that judgment is upon it. The family of Seth call on the name of the Lord, and look, in God's way and time, for comfort and blessing in the place of present toil and curse. But that is the thing of hope and of prophecy, while strangership in the judged world, is the present path of faith and godliness. This is a wondrous Scripture indeed and it speaks to us of this very hour through which we are passing.

The energy of the flesh or of the old nature is produced and set at all its proper work; the energy of faith is also brought forth in the souls of the redeemed, and displays its power very blessedly. We learn our lessons here. We carry the two energies in us. By nature we are citizens of the city Enoch, and through grace our souls have got connection with Christ, like Adam or Abel or Seth. And we wait for the translation of Enoch (Gen. v. 24).

These are contrary the one to the other. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."



NOTE OF AN ADDRESS TO CONVERTS.

ACTS XI.

It is worthy of remark, that in this chapter we have the first account of Gentile converts:—of the receiving, in sovereign goodness and grace, poor sinners who had not even the promises to boast of which God had given to the Jews. To such it is, too, that Barnabas comes with the earnest exhortation contained in verse 23: "That with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord." What Peter was taught here as to the Gentiles we all have to learn as to ourselves. When the blessed news of grace and pardon first reaches a sinner's ears and heart, he rejoices in the thought of pardon and forgiveness. He does right. Jesus, the

blessed Son of God, has met him in mercy with His precious blood. But with this the light enters into his soul. When there have been deep discoveries of sin before the soul has become happy, the peace of the soul is more settled. The sin to which grace is applied is in a measure already known. But when, through the proclamation of divine pardon, without previous convictions, the soul has suddenly received joy, though there is always the discovery that we are sinners, the knowledge of the depth of sin in the heart, and what has to be forgiven and cleansed, is very small. The consequence is, that after God has called us, and the divine light has broken into our souls, we feel disturbed and uncertain, and even begin sometimes to doubt the fact of our being-cleansed. This is wrong. The deeper discovery of sin and the knowledge of our own heart is useful. If we walk humbly and near to God, this knowledge will be made, comparatively speaking, peacefully ; if not, in humiliation and failure. But you may not call unclean what God has cleansed. God has brought cleansing and pardon to us down here. We have not to wait for it until we go up there. God has cleansed you. You are clean *now*. But I desire to lead you to some further exercise of heart upon it, and clearer apprehension of God's ways ; a fuller exercise of conscience, that your peace may be as solid as your joy was genuine when you first heard of grace and forgiveness. In Luke xv. the great principle set forth is, that it is God's happiness

when we are brought back to Him. Of course the joy of the restored one comes in, but is not the primary thing. The object of all three parables is not to show our joy, but the joy of God in our conversion. The three parables all teach the same grace, but we get, I believe, the joy of the Son, of the Spirit, and of the Father. But remark that in the two first we find a grace which finds and brings back what was lost, without any further question of the state of the soul. In the third we have man's departure even into the lowest degradation of sin, and what passes in his soul on his return, till he is clothed in divine righteousness, with Christ, in his Father's house. God has foreseen and provided for the whole case of the sinner. The younger son was as really a sinner when he left his father's house as when he was eating husks with the swine. He had abandoned God to do his own will. But the Lord pursues the case to the full degradation of sin, for sin degrades man. The young man comes to himself, turns back towards God, is converted; but he has not yet met God, nor has he the best robe on him. He did not know in his conscience Divine righteousness. When he really meets his father, not only is he in tender love—only the more shown because he had been lost—received when in his rags into his father's arms, but he is made righteously fit for the house, clothed with Christ. His father was on his neck when he was in his rags; but he was not received into the house in that state. He

could not have been. But God has provided for the sinner what Adam in his innocence had not. He has provided Christ. Grace reigns through righteousness. The best robe, no part of the son's portion before he left, is now put on him, and he is fit for the house to which that robe belonged. All the extent of the soul's departure from God has been weighed. The soul may be exercised about it, and will till self is wholly given up as a ground on which we can stand with God. No going in legally as a hired servant—before God it is rags and exclusion, or the best robe and joyful admission. All true experiences lead to that emptying of self, and Christ all, and we in Him before God. Then, as I have said, our peace is as solid as the joy of the thought of forgiveness was blessed, and the joy itself deeper, if not more genuine. Another truth is connected with this. God having perfectly cleansed us by the blood of Christ, the Spirit dwells in the cleansed heart. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The Spirit gives us the consciousness of our relationship as dear children. "Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." What manner of persons ought we to be, who are the temples of the Holy Ghost? we may well continually ask ourselves. But do not let failures make us doubt that we have it. Low and wretched as was the state the Galatians had fallen into, they never doubted they had the Spirit of God; but

they were getting wrong as to the ground of their standing, as to how they received it; so that the apostle had to ask them, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. iii. 2.) "We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." We have life as truly as Christ is alive; but we are not yet in heaven. The thief, indeed, was privileged to be taken directly home, believing only to-day, but to-day the first companion Christ had in Paradise. We do not look for such immediate departure, but our ground is the same: we are as truly saved, but not so soon to be in heaven. Rather have we to go through this evil world; to go through it as crucified with Christ, dead indeed, but risen—to go through it with His Spirit dwelling in us. Be careful lest you grieve that Spirit. You have to go through the world bearing the name of Christ upon you. See that you bring no reproach upon that blessed name by being *inconsistent*. The world will be sharp to exclaim, There are your Christians! You will have to go through the world with God dwelling in you. To carry this treasure in an earthen vessel. Entrusted with this treasure, an habitation of God through the Spirit. Of course it is only through His grace that you can carry such a treasure through an evil world; but there is power in Christ, there is sufficiency in Christ, for all He would have you to do or be. He exhorted them that they should cleave to the Lord. De-

pend on Him ! Some are allowed to have a long season of joy on first believing ; but God knows our hearts, and how soon we should be depending on our joy, and not on Christ. He is our object ! joy is not our object. Do not let your joy lead you to forget the source of it, and then it need never wane. This joy is right and beautiful in its place ; I am not saying a word against it—God forbid. But I warn you against resting in it. Do not let your joy be your dependence. Do not lean on it for strength. There is danger of joy, however genuine, making you forget how dependent you are every moment. Depend upon Him—cleave to Him with purpose of heart. Do not be content with being happy (may you continue so) ; but with Paul, forgetting the things which are behind, press on, etc. (Phil. iii.) I have seen many Christians so full of joy that they thought there was no such thing as sin left. It is true, sin no longer remains on you ; but the flesh is *in* you to the end. The old stock is there, and you will find that, if you are not watchful, if divine life is not cherished and cultivated in your hearts by looking at Christ and feeding on Him, it will be putting forth its buds ; if it does, they must be nipped off as they appear. No good fruit comes of the old stock. It is the *new* that bears fruit unto God. But though the flesh is in you, do not be thinking of this, but think of Christ—cleave to Him ; and may your souls be maintained in this truth, that Christ is your life ! ay, that Christ

is so your life that Christ must die (the thought of which is blasphemy) before you can perish. And as He is your life, so is He the object of that life. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.) As you grow in this knowledge of Him, a joy grows deeper than that of first conversion. I have known Christ more or less between thirty and forty years, and I can say that I have ten thousand times more joy *now* than I had at first. It is a deeper, calmer joy. The water rushing down from a hill is beautiful to look at, and makes most noise; but you will find the water that runs in the plain is deeper, calmer, more fructifying.

Observe: they are exhorted with purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord. A distracted heart is the bane of a Christian. When my heart is filled with Christ, I have no heart or eye for the trash of the world. If Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, it will not be the question, What harm is there in this, or that? rather, Am I doing this for Christ? Can Christ go along with me in this? If you are in communion with Him, you will readily detect what is not of Him. Do not let the world come in and distract your thoughts. I speak especially to you young ones; we, who are older, have had more experience of what the world is; we know more what it is worth; but it all lies shining before you, endeavouring to attract

you. (What does it fill its shop windows for else?) Its smiles are all deceitful; still it is smiling upon you. It makes many promises it cannot fulfil; still it *promises*. The fact is, your hearts are too big for the world, it cannot fill them; they are too little for Christ, for He fills heaven: yet He will fill you to overflowing.

Observe again: it is. Cleave unto the Lord. Not cleave to duty, or law, or ordinances (though these are good in their places), but to the *Lord*. He knew how treacherous the heart was, and how soon it would put anything in *His* place. You will have to learn what is in your heart. Abide with God and you will learn your heart with Him, and under His grace; else you will have to learn it with the devil through his successful temptations. But God is faithful; and if you have been getting away from Him, and other things have been coming in and forming a crust round your heart, and you want to get back again, God says, What is this crust? I must have you deal with it, and get rid of it! Remember, Christ bought you with His own blood, that you should be His, and not the world's. The denial of this fact is an artifice of the devil. Do not let the devil come in between you and God's grace. However careless you may have been, however far you may have got away from Him, return to Him; doubt not His joy in having you back,—count upon His love,—look at the sin which led you away with horror, but do not wrong Him by distrusting His

love, any more than you would an affectionate husband or wife, by throwing a doubt on their love if you had been for a moment ungracious. Hate yourself, but remember how he has loved you, and will love you until the end! Mistrust not His work—mistrust not His love. “It was granted unto the Gentiles to have repentance unto life.” All is of God!

I would have you carry away in your minds three things which by grace are given you. 1st, cleaving to the Lord; 2nd, perfect forgiveness; 3rd, a purged conscience. To illustrate this last, take the case of Peter. He denied his Lord—denied Him to a serving-maid; but the Lord had turned and looked at him, and he had gone out and wept bitterly. A few weeks after this (Acts iii.) he could say that they were a lost and ruined people, because “they denied the Holy One and the Just;” the very thing he had done himself, in a worse way too, for he had been with Him as his friend for three years. But his conscience was purged; he knew he was forgiven; and now he could turn round, and fearlessly charge others with the very thing he had done himself.

One word more. Talk with Him. Never be content without being able to walk and talk with Christ as with a dear friend. Be not satisfied with anything short of near intercourse with Him who has loved you with such manner of love!

REMARKS ON THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE CHRISTIAN.

I desire to make a few remarks of a practical tendency and of deep interest, on the effects of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Christian.

The Spirit of God, as dwelling in us, may be considered in two aspects : for He unites us to the Lord Jesus, so that His presence is intimately connected with *life*, that life which is in Jesus. (John xiv. 19, 20 ; Gal. ii. 20.) “ He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit ;” and further, His presence is that of God in the soul. The scripture, speaking of Him in the first of these characters (which is sometimes linked to the second), says (Rom. viii. 2, 9, 10), that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus frees us from the law of sin ; so that the Spirit is *life* because of righteousness. It is, however, also said (ver. 9), “ if so be that the *Spirit of God* dwell in you ;” and then His indwelling and action are blended, since (inasmuch as both are manifested by the formation of the character of Christ in the soul) “ the Spirit of God ” becomes “ the Spirit of Christ.” The “ Christ in you ” of verse 10, expresses the idea more clearly, especially as the apostle adds, “ if Christ be in you, the Spirit is *life*.” But in verse 16 the Holy Ghost is carefully distinguished from the Christian, for “ He beareth witness *with* our spirit.” In verses 26 and 27 the two characters of the presence of the Spirit are there remarkably

shewn out in their mutual connections: for "the mind of the Spirit," known to God, who searches the heart, is the life of the Spirit in the saint. But, on the other hand, "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities," and "maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God." The reason of all this is simple. On the one hand, the Spirit is there and acts with power according to the mind of Christ; on the other hand, and in consequence of this operation, the affections, thoughts, and works, are produced, which are those of the Spirit; but yet they are also ours, because we are partakers of them with Christ, "our life" (Col. iii. 2, 3), for "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life."

But the effect of the second aspect of the presence of the Holy Ghost is yet more important. The Spirit is the Spirit of God; He is God, and is, therefore, the revelation of the presence and power of God in the soul—a revelation known *through* and *in* a new nature which is of Him. Consequently, that which is in the nature and character of God is developed where God dwells, i. e., in the soul of the saint; not only is it produced in the new man, the creation of God, but it fills the soul, because God is there, and there is communion with Him. For instance, the new nature loves, and this love is a proof that one is "born of God," and knows God. But this is not all; there is, moreover, the in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost—that

is to say, the presence of God who communicates this new nature to us. Therefore we read (Rom. v. 5) "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." We are loved—we know it, and have the proof of it in the gift of the precious Saviour, and in His death for us (ver. 6-8). But there is something more; the perfect and infinite love shed abroad in our hearts (poor vessels as they are), and the Holy Spirit, who is God, is there (and is free to be there, because we are purified by the blood of Christ)—He is there to fill these vessels with that which is divine—the love of God. It is also added (ver. 11) that we joy in God. Therefore, looking at the presence of the Spirit as demonstration of power in the soul, the apostle John affirms that "hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." (1 John iii. 24.) But, as this might be applied merely to the varied energy of the Spirit in the soul, it is stated, further on, that "love is made perfect in us," namely, the love of God to us. Here it is no longer a question of us, of our affections, of our thoughts; but the soul is filled with the fulness of God, which leaves no room for anything else; there is no discord in the heart, to spoil the essential character of divine love. God, complete in Himself, excludes all that is contrary to Himself, otherwise He would be no longer Himself.

To avoid *mysticism* (the enemy's corruption of these truths) the Holy Ghost adds by the same

pen, "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (1 John iv. 10); and the proof of this is based on that which is above all human thought and knowledge, namely, on the acts of God Himself in Christ. On the other hand, the presence of the Spirit is not given him as the proof of God's dwelling in us, two things which are identical, but it is written, "hereby know we that *we dwell in Him*, and He in us, because He hath given us *of His Spirit*." This presence of God in love not only fills our narrow souls, but places us *in Him* who is infinite in love. United to Christ by the Holy Ghost, one in life with Him, and the Spirit acting in us, "we dwell in God, and God in us." Therefore it is said that "God has given us of His Spirit;" that is to say, God, in virtue of His presence and of His power, makes us morally partakers of His nature and character, by the Holy Ghost in us, whilst giving us the enjoyment of communion with Himself, and at the same time introducing us into His fulness.

I would here just point out the distinctive characters of the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and John. Paul was raised up in an extraordinary manner for the especial purpose of communicating to the Church the order, method, and sovereignty of the divine operations; and to reveal the place which the Church holds in the midst of this, inasmuch as she is united to Christ, and is the marvellous object of the counsels of God in grace; as the apostle says (Eph. ii. 7), "that in the ages to come He

might shew the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus," or by His dealings with regard to the Church : the wisdom of God, the righteousness of His ways, and the counsels of His grace on this subject, are largely and (as all revelation) perfectly set forth in the writings of Paul. John takes up another point, that of the communication of the divine nature, what that nature is, and, consequently, what God is, whether in His living manifestations in Christ, or in the life which He communicates to others. Without this community of nature communion were impossible; for darkness can have no fellowship with light. But, as we have already seen, the apostle goes still further : we dwell in God, and God in us, by the Holy Ghost ; and thus, as far as we are capable of it, we enjoy what God is in Himself, and become the manifestation of Him (the limit to this manifestation being only in the vessel in which God has taken up His abode). How great are the varied riches of the goodness of God ! This communion with Him, which raises us as far as possible towards the fulness of Him who reveals Himself in us, is certainly something very sweet and precious ; but the tenderness of God toward us, poor pilgrims on the earth, and His faithful love, so needed in our weakness to carry us onward to the goal, are not less so.

The testimony of Peter, in his first epistle, treats of that which God is for the pilgrim, and of what the latter should be for God. The resurrec-

tion of the Messiah has set the pilgrim on his road, and thereon are presented the faithfulness of God, and the encouragement which His power gives to our hope by this resurrection of Christ, the son of the living God, though rejected of men ; and lastly, the apostle speaks of the walk, the worship and the service that flows from it.

John presents to us that which is most exalted in communion, or rather in the nature of communion ; consequently, he does not touch on the subject of the Church, as an object of divine counsels, but of the divine nature.

Paul treats of that which is perfect, not in respect of communion, but of counsel. In his writings God is glorified more especially as the object of faith, though he speaks of communion too. (Romans v. 5.) Where, in the same chapter (ver. 11), he speaks of God as the one in whom the Christian is to glory, he places Him before and not as in us—as the object for faith to lay hold of, and not as dwelling in the heart.

This divine and infinite blessing—this love perfected in us, communicated by the presence of the Holy Ghost, and realized by our dwelling in God and He in us—has led some to think that, when this point is attained, the flesh can exist in us no longer ; but this is to confound the vessel with the Treasure placed in it, and of which it has the enjoyment. We are in the body which still awaits its redemption ; only, God can dwell in it, because of the sprinkling of the blood by faith. This sprink-

ling does not correct the flesh, but only renders testimony both to the perfection of the expected redemption and to the love to which we owe it.

When in real enjoyment of God, we may for a moment lose sight of the existence of the flesh, because then the soul (which is finite) is filled with that which is infinite. But even in these moments of blessedness one cannot doubt but that the flesh is an obstacle to the larger and more intelligent action of love. Paul, caught up into the third heaven (a privilege which the flesh would have used to puff him up with, and which made a thorn needful), is a proof to us that grace does not change the flesh. Alas! even the joy of which we are speaking, without watchful dependence upon Christ, gives dangerous occasions of action to the flesh, because there is so much littleness in us, that, forgetting who gives the joy, we lean on the feeling of the joy, instead of dwelling in Christ, the Fountain-head of it. Nevertheless, it is certain that the love of God, made perfect in us, is a reality, and the Christian is called to know God, and to enjoy Him as dwelling in Him.

I have but one more remark to make.

When we are full of the love of God, we enjoy it with a power that hinders our seeing anything, especially the objects of the goodness of God, save with the eye of divine love. But where there is a real knowledge of the existence and nature of this love of God, the walk will also be characterized by

faith in that love, even though the heart may not realize the whole power of it ; and, thus, we shall dwell in God and He in us. But since this fullness of joy can only be realized by the action of the Spirit, it is easy to understand that, if grieved, He will become a Spirit of reproof, judging the ingratitude with which such love, 'as the love of God, is requited, instead of filling the heart with that love ; though it is impossible for Him to cast a doubt upon it. It is evident that the love made perfect in us is the work of God ; and this it is which forms the joy—the whole of the state. That which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in our hearts is the love of God ; and this love, powerful in our hearts, cannot but show itself externally.

May God bless these few remarks to the reader ! May it please Him to realize in us the things of which I speak on the subject of revelation, and may He so bless as that the truth may have its full weight on the soul ; so that we may know, with all the beloved Church of Christ, what it is to have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us according to the power of the love of God !



FAITH'S IVORY PALACES.

By-and-by all the Lord's garments will smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, by reason of the greetings of His people. God will have anointed Him to the throne "with the oil of gladness ;" and

they will welcome Him out of their "ivory palaces." (See Psalm xlv.)

That dear woman, whose memorial is in the gospel all the world over, began this greeting while Jesus was still in humiliation (faith in her overlooking the flesh, the disallowance of men, and even the cross itself, in the sight of the resurrection and the kingdom).

Beautiful and precious faith! a faith that could talk of life in the midst of death, of glories and crowns in the face of degradation and scorn, and which thus raised and gladdened the heart of Jesus when full of approaching paschal sorrows.

Against the day of His burying she had kept that ointment. She knew Him as appointed to death, but she knew Him as appointed to resurrection also. And she comes in the faith of "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that were to follow," to make Him glad out of her ivory palace. (Matt. xxvi.)

Love did an acceptable service afterwards. It came to bury the dead. It brought its spices to the tomb. It wept with them that wept. It died with Jesus. "Let us also go," it said, "that we may die with Him." But this was not faith. Faith looked beyond the grave; love looked into it.

Different measures of light will separate disciples from each other, but not from their common Master. This woman, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was not at the tomb afterwards. Her richer knowledge of Christ kept her apart from such a

journey and such a task. She could not have been there. Faith, or light and knowledge, forbade her. But Magdalene and others are there, and the angels and the Lord of angels will meet them there, though Mary cannot.*

Oh the sweet and sure truth which all this illustrates in days of distraction like these! Disciples are now separated, through divers measures of light and knowledge, like these women of faith and love; but those who, though in the place where faith would not have them, are yet where love had sent them, shall know something of heaven and of the presence of Jesus.

Well to know the meltings of pity over sorrow according to love, and well to know the gladdening of hope over sorrow according to faith. But the spices of the women at the tomb were but as grave-clothes; the box of spikenard of the woman of Bethany was an ivory palace. Faith used it in anticipation. The humbled Jesus was then to faith the anointed King, and faith was saying, "while the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." (Cant. i. 12.)

I may add, the wise men of the east had ivory palaces for the Babe at Bethlehem, their faith treating Him as the King of the Jews, the enthroned God of Psalm xlv. Beautiful faith that was indeed, and somewhat kindred with hers who

* I am aware that some distinguish this woman from the Mary of John xii 1-8. It may be so but it makes no difference as to my purpose in referring to it here. If different, neither the one nor the other, we may be sure, was at the sepulchre.

anointed the despised Galilean at Bethany. They greeted the Babe, she the Lamb appointed for the slaughter, out of her ivory palace. (Matt. ii.)

It will be an easy thing to greet Jesus in the day of glory. All will do it then. (Psalm xlv. 8.) But to have done it thus at the opening and close of His humiliation, at Bethlehem and at Bethany, was excellent faith indeed.

THE ENDLESS SONG.

Oh ! the joy of the salvation
 We possess around the throne !
 Countless thoughts of admiration
 Mingling, leave that joy but one.

Hark ! Ten thousand voices, crying,
 "Lamb of God !" with one accord :
 Thousand thousand saints replying,
 Bursts, at once, the echoing chord !

Long, with free and glad devotion,
 Universal praise prevails,
 Till, blest fruit of deep emotion,
 Voice by voice in silence fails.

Now, in wondrous adoration—
 Dwelling on His matchless love,
 Sway'd with power of that salvation,
 Silence fills the courts above.

Then, their richest thoughts unfolding,
 Each to each, with joy divine,
 Heavenly converse blissful holding,
 Tells, how bright His glories shine.

Some, on God's high glories dwelling,
 Brightly beaming in His face ;
 Some, His first-born greatness telling,
 Ord' ring all things in their place :

These, of Godhead's counsels deep
 Him th' Accomplisher proclaim ;
 These, how Jesu's self could weep—
 Of Godhead's love the Witness came !

All, on love surpassing rest,
That clothed in flesh the great I AM :—
Till, from a heart divinely prest,
Bursts forth at length the loud exclaim,

“Praise the Lamb !” At once awaking,
The gather’d hosts their voices throng ;
Loud and wide—each tongue partaking—
Rolls renew’d the endless song !

Grateful incense—this, ascending,
Rises to the Father’s throne ;
Every knee to Christ is bending—
All the mind in heaven is one.

All the Father’s counsels, claiming
Equal honours to the Son,
All the Son’s effulgence beaming—
Glory of His Father’s throne.

By the Spirit all-pervading,
Radiant hosts unnumber’d round,
Breathing glory never-fading,
Echo back the blissful sound !

Joyful now the wide creation
Rests, in undisturb’d repose ;
Blest in Jesu’s full salvation,
Sorrow now, nor thraldon knows !

Rich the streams of bounty flowing,
Common blessings from above,
Life, and holy joy bestowing,
Tell of God’s unwearied love.

Hark ! the heavenly notes again !
Loudly swells the air-borne praise :
Throughout creation’s vault, “Amen,
Amen !” responsive joy doth raise !



UNTO HIM THAT LOVED US, AND WASHED US FROM OUR
SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD, AND HATH MADE US KINGS
AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD AND HIS FATHER ; TO
HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION FOR
EVER AND EVER.

AMEN !

Rev. i. 5, 6.