

THE REMEMBRANCER

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

FOR

THE LORD'S PEOPLE.

“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them. Yea, . . . I think it meet, . . . to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.”

2nd Peter i. 12, 13.

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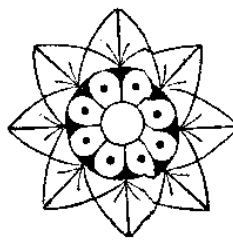
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The Remembrancer.

THE WATCHMAN'S CRY.

“Watchman, what of the night? The morning
cometh, and also the night.”—Isaiah xxi. 11, 12.

“Watchman, what of the night?”

“It is gloomy, and thick, and dark ;
Alas ! wherever I turn my sight,
And seek for a faithful watcher's light,
I can scarcely discern a spark.
I hear the drunken reveller's cry,
The mocker's taunt, and the sceptic's lie ;
But few believe that the Lord is nigh :
All is gloomy, and sad, and dark.”

“Watchman, what of the night?”

“It is murky, and chill, and drear :
The lamps erst burning so clear and bright ;
The hearts once glowing with warm delight,
At the hope that the Lord was near :
Many are quenched to burn no more ;
Few are trimmed, and their lustre pour ;
Alas ! in so many first-love is o'er ;
All is murky, and chill, and drear.”

“Watchman, what of the night?”

“Oh list !—'t is the midnight cry !
It fills the sleepers with joy or fright ;
These cheeks grow pale, and those grow bright !
The Bridegroom, He draweth nigh !
The slumbering virgins from sleep awake ;
The wise their lamps fresh-trimmed all take ;
The knees of the foolish with terror quake,
At the sound of the midnight cry.”

“Watchman, what of the night?”

“The night is fast passing away ;

The Morning-Star, with effulgence bright,
 Shall shortly burst on our raptured sight,
 And usher the longed-for day.
 He cometh ! He cometh ! awake ! arise !
 Behold ! the Day-Star illumines the skies ;
 Ye slumbering virgins unveil your eyes,
 The night is just passing away."

" Watchman, what of the night ?"
 The work of the watchman is o'er :
 " The morning 's come and also the night,"
 Eternity's darkness—eternity's light.
 ' Inquire ye, . . . inquire ye no more.'
 His word is ended, and work is done ;
 The marriage-supper is e'en begun ;
 The conflict over, the victory won :
 The work of the watchman is o'er.



THE CLOSING DAYS OF CHRISTENDOM.

I have just been thinking how the great apostate systems, whether civil or ecclesiastical, are destined to advance in strength and magnificence, as their day of doom and judgment approaches. Witness the condition of the *Woman* in Rev. xviii., and that of the *Beast* in Rev. xiii. and xix.

And I ask, is not this present moment, through which we are passing, giving pledges of this ? Do we not see the great apostate ecclesiastical system advancing to occupy itself of the world, with something of giant strides ? And is not the world, as a civil or secular thing, spreading itself out in improvements and attainments, and cultivation of all desirable and proud things, beyond all precedent ? Are not these things so, beyond the question of even the very least observant ? And are they not pledges that all is now on the high road to the full display of the *Woman* and of the *Beast*, in their several forms of greatness and

grandeur, which are, thus, according to God's word, destined to precede their judgment? These things, I own, are very plain and simple to me.

But again I ask—is there any notice in God's word, that the *saints* or the *church* are to rise to any condition of beauty or of strength befitting them, ere the hour of their translation come? The *apostate things*, as we have seen, are to be great and magnificent just before their judgment—but I ask, is the *true thing* to be eminent in its way, strong and beautiful in that strength and beauty that belong to it, ere its removal to glory? This is an affecting inquiry. What answer do the oracles of God give us?

Paul, in 2nd Timothy, contemplates “the last days,” in their perilous character, and the ruin of the church, which we have seen, and do see at this day, all around us. But what condition of things among the saints does he anticipate as following that ruin? I may say with all assurance, he does not contemplate the restoration of the church's order as a whole, any rebuilding of God's house, so to speak, any recovery of corporate beauty or strength worthy of this dispensation; but he exhorts those who find themselves in what has become as a “great house,” if they would be vessels unto honour sanctified and meet for the Master's use and prepared for every good work, to purge themselves from the vessels unto dishonour, and follow the virtues and cherish the graces which become them, calling on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Peter, in his 2nd epistle, contemplates “the last days” also, and very unclean abominations among professors, and very daring infidel scorning of divine promises in the world. But he gives no hint that there will be restored order and strength

in the church, or in corporate spiritual action as a whole ; but enjoins the saints to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, and to be assured that the promise of His coming and majesty is no cunningly devised fable. He speaks to them of an entrance into the everlasting kingdom, but not of a return to a restored order of things in the church on earth.

Jude, also, in like manner, anticipates "the last time," and many terrible corruptions, such as "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." But what then? He promises nothing in the way of restored beauty and consistency as in earlier days, but encourages the "beloved" to build themselves up on their most holy faith, to pray in the Holy Ghost and to keep themselves in God's love ; but he is so far from encouraging any hope of recovered order and strength in the church on earth, that he tells them to be looking out for another object—"the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ into eternal life."

John, in his way, gives us the judgment of the seven churches in Asia, in Rev. ii. and iii. It is a very solemn scene. There is some good and much evil found in the midst of them. The voices of the Spirit, heard there, have healthful admonitions for us, both in our individual and gathered condition. But there is no promise that the judgment will work correction and recovery. The churches are judged, and they are left under the judgment ; and we know no more of them *on earth* ; the next sight we get of the elect is in *heaven*. (See chap. iv.)

All this is serious and yet happy ; and all this is strikingly verified by the great moral phenomena around us, under our eye, or within our hearing, at this moment. For we know that the great

apostate things, the things of the world, whether civil or ecclesiastical, are in the advance, ripening to full bloom of vigour and of beauty, while we see the *true* thing broken, enfeebled, and wasted, in no wise promising to regain what once it had in days of corporate order and power.

But it is well. It is gracious in the Lord, thus to cast up before us, 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 a regained condition of dispensational order and strength; for, according to present appearances, we might have to wait long enough ere that could be. But mark, further, on this same truth.

At times, when the Lord Jesus was about to deliver the poor captive of Satan, the enemy at the very moment would put forth some fresh energy of evil, and his captive apparently be in its most grievous estate.

This was another form of the same thing that we notice throughout God's word—that the apostate thing is in peculiar strength and magnificence just at the time when its doom or judgment is at the door, and that Christ's thing is in weakness and brokenness, just as the deliverance He brings with Him is at hand.

Joseph, Moses and David, are samples of this also. One was taken from a prison, to feed and rule a nation; another was drawn forth from an unnoticed distant solitude, where he had the care of flocks and herds, to deliver a nation; another was raised up and manifested from under the neglect and contempt of his own kindred, to sustain, by his own single hand, a whole people and kingdom. And what may really amaze us in the midst of such things is this—that some of these

were in the place of degradation and loss, through their own sin, and the judgment of God.

Thus it was with both Moses and David. Joseph was a martyr, I grant, and went from the sorrows of *righteousness* to the greatness of the rewards of grace. So was David in the days of Saul, when David at last reached the kingdom. But David in later times was not a martyr, but a penitent. He had brought on himself all the loss and sorrow and degradation of the rebellion of Absalom—and the sin that produced it all had this heavier judgment of righteousness resting upon it, “the sword shall never depart from thine house.” Nor did it. And thus he was under judgment; he was in the ruins which his own iniquity brought on him; he was the witness of God’s visitation in holiness, when suddenly his house, in the person of Solomon, broke forth in full lustre and strength. And so Moses before him. Moses was a martyr, I grant, in his earlier days, in Midian, and comes forth from the place where his *faith* had cast him, into the honour and joy of being Israel’s deliverer. But, like David, in later days, Moses was under judgment, judgment of God for his unbelief and sin. He trespassed, as we know, at the water of Meribah, and so trespassed as at once to forfeit all title to enter the land of promise. And nothing to the end could ever change that divine purpose. In that sense, the sword never departed from Moses’ house, as it did not from David’s. He besought the Lord again and again, but it was in vain. He never entered the land—and thus he was judged, and still under the judgment, when grace abounds; for he is (in principle) translated, borne to the top of the hill, and not to the fields of Canaan; to the heights of Pisgah, and not to the plains of Jericho and Jordan.

These things were so. But it is better to be judged of the Lord, than to be condemned with the world; for the poor, weak, and judged thing is drawn forth in the light and redemption of God, while the proud and the strong bow under Him.

So, I say, there is no New Testament promise, that the church shall recover her consistency and beauty, ere her translation comes. She passes from her ruins to her glory, while the world goes from its magnificence to its judgment—ruins, too, I add, which witness the judgment of God. The sword has never departed from the house.

May I not say, beloved, in the light of these truths, comfort yourselves as you look abroad, and see what it is that is *strong* now-a-days, and what it is that is *weak*. But let me add—let not the weakness of which I speak, the corporate or church weakness of the saints, be the least occasion for personal moral relaxation. This would be a sad and terrible use to make of the truths we are speaking of, and gathering from Scripture. We are, most surely, to be separate from evil as distinctly as ever, and to cherish all the thoughts and ways of holiness as carefully as ever.

But further.—We may find some hesitation in knowing exactly how to speak of Israel's history, whether it be that of a *martyr* or a *penitent*. It has something of each in it—more, however, I judge of the latter. But whether or not, their recoveries and redemptions illustrate the mystery which we have now before us, that the apostate thing goes to judgment in the hour of its chiefest strength and greatness, and the true thing rises from amid its infirmities and ruins to its glory and blessedness.

They were in a low condition in Egypt, as brick-

kilns and taskmasters tell us, and the exacted tale of bricks without the accustomed straw, just as the Lord was sending Moses and his rod for their deliverance. So again in Babylon. The enemy was insulting their bonds, making merry in infidel despite of the captivity of Jerusalem and her Temple, when, that very night, the deliverer of Israel entered Babylon. So again in Persia. The decree had fixed a day for their destruction, and that decree would not, *could* not be changed. Their Amalekite persecutor was in power, and all, as far as the eye could reach, was utter destruction—but Haman fell, and the Jews were delivered. And so will it be again with the same people (Deut. xxxii. 36 and Is. lix. 16). “At evening time it shall be light.” The city will be taken; all the peoples of the earth will be round it in its day of siege and straitness; half of it will go into captivity; the houses shall be rifled, and all will be waste and degradation—but the Lord from heaven shall, in that instant, plead their cause. “At evening time it shall be light.” The shadow of death shall be turned into the morning (Is. xxix. 1-8; Zech. xiv.). And again, Cæsar Augustus was in strength and majesty. His proconsuls were in far distant provinces, his decree had gone to the ends of the earth, and the whole Roman world was set in beauty and order, just as Jesus was born (Luke ii.) But the remnant were feeble. The family of David lived at Nazareth, and not in Jerusalem. The Hope of the nation lay in a manger at Bethlehem. A devout, solitary, expectant saint or two frequented the temple, and it was shepherds during their nightly watches who had glories revealed to them Israel had thus fallen, together with the house of David; and fallen, each of them, by their iniquit

and the judgment of God. The sovereignty of the Romans could command the chief of Israel's sons from Galilee to Judæa, to be taxed and estimated like the rest of Roman property. But the Lord was at hand. The Child, who was to be for the fall and the rise of things and people, was just born.

Let us be emboldened according to God, and judge not according to flesh and blood, but by the light of the Lord. And again, I say, as the apostle teaches, it is better to be judged of the Lord, than to be condemned with the world. Judgment has begun at the house of God. He abaseth the proud and exalteth them that are cast down. The candlesticks are visited in the keen and searching power of Him whose "eyes were as a flame of fire"—and as far as we know them here on earth, there they are left—but the place of judgment proves itself to be next door to the place of glory (Rev. i.-iv.)

It is all right and comforting to faith ; strange to the reasoning and religion of nature. The church will go from her ruins up to glory—the world will pass from its proudest moment of greatness to the judgment. God taketh the beggar from the dunghill to set him among princes.

Would that the saints of God were apart from the purposes and expectations of the world. "Come out of her, my people."

"The feeble saint shall win the day,
Though hell and death obstruct his way."

The Lord will vindicate His own principles, and establish His own thoughts for ever and ever, though the voices that witness them be feeble, and well nigh lost in the din of the world's exultation.

May the heart of the humbled, broken saint be comforted in Him !

THE MORNING STAR.

REV. 11. 28.

“I will give him the morning star.” And who is it that sees the morning star? He who watches while it is night. All see the sun in its brightness: but those only who are not of the night, yet knowing that morally that it is night, and are looking for the morning star—those, those only, see the morning star, and get it as their portion. They are children, not of the night, but of the day, and therefore look they for the day. When the star rose that hailed Jesus, who was born King of the Jews, there were Annas and Simeons waiting for the consolation of Israel. And who were Anna’s friends in that day of darkness? Simply those who were looking for redemption in Israel, and to them she spake of Him. In them was made good that word in Malachi, “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another.” We see they knew each other, and they enjoyed the comfort in spirit by the truth of Jesus of what follows in the prophet: “To you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.” These were a poor despised few, who were but little known, and less cared for; but they were “waiting” for redemption in Israel, sensible of the ruin and of the evil, because alive to God’s glory and to the privilege of

II

being His people. In them, feeble as they were, we find a much brighter mark of faith than we do in Elijah when he was calling down fire from heaven. They were not setting the temple right, but were speaking together of God's thoughts. Elijah was setting outward things to rights, but had not faith for inside things.* In God's unfailing grace to the remnant he had no just confidence. Law was the measure of his apprehension; but the Annas and Simeons had the secret of God in their souls ("The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will shew them His covenant"), and were walking in the narrow and silent path of faith; not setting the temple right, but speaking to all that were waiting for consolation in Israel. But were they content with the state of things? No; but in separation from evil they waited for the consolation of Israel, which alone could set the evil right. And just so it is in our day, the Christian cannot change Jezebel, nor can he be mixed up with the mere temple-worshippers, the so-called religious systems of the day. He walks,

* Note the character of Christ here. Perfect under the law Himself, He, by the unfailing patience of His grace, bearing all things, makes good the bringing of the voice of the Shepherd to every sheep in the fold. Poor Elijah, devoted as he was, brings down fire on the disobedient, but does not reach the seven thousand that God knew. Christ refuses to bring down fire. He bears the judgment while He kept the law, and at all cost made Jehovah's voice reach the poorest, most guilty, most hidden of the flock. The consequence is, as indeed the cause, the sheep of the flock are His, and all power of judgment is given to Him over all.

while leaving them to the judgment of the Lord, far from violent attacks upon them, in quiet separation from all the evil, patiently waiting and watching during the long dark night of sorrow for the Morning Star of the day of glory. "To him that overcometh . . . will I give the Morning Star," and this Morning Star is Christ Himself. And He is in this way known to those who, though in the night, yet are not of the night, being children of the day. The morning star is gone before the world sees the sun, before the sun rises, before the day appears. But before the sun rises, there is the morning star for those who are watching in the night. The world will see the sun ; but the morning star is gone, so far as the world is concerned, before the sun rises. So we shall be gone to be with the Morning Star before the day of Christ appears to the world ; and when Christ shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.

There are three passages which refer to this morning star, to which it is important to refer you. In 2 Peter i. he says : "We have also a more sure" (that is, "confirmed") "word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." Israel's prophets had prophesied the full day of blessing on the earth, saying, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come." "A king shall reign in righteousness." And their testimony was confirmed to the disciples by the vision on the holy mount. They prophesied,

too, of events coming on the world which marked out its judgment in all its forms of rebellious will and power, of Nineveh and Babylon, and the beasts which should arise upon the earth—of Jerusalem and its portion as departed from God ; and judgment was thus pointed out, so that there was a warning light which, in the midst of the darkness of this world itself, gave a light which recalled him that gave heed to it to avoid the crime of human will which led on to divine judgment. And this they did well to take heed to, until the day-star arose in their hearts, because it was the light in a dark place. But the day-star itself was something yet more excellent.

The prophecies, indeed, are plain ; their warning clear. They guard me from being mixed up with the spirit of the world, whose judgment is announced. In Revelation I read of unclean spirits like frogs going forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. If I do not even exactly understand who and what the frogs mean, still the grand import of the prophecy is evident ; they are not the power of good ; they lead the kings of the earth to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. It is thus a light shining in a dark place, the night of this world's history in the absence of Christ. But the morning star is Christ Himself, as we see in Rev. xxii. He is the bright and Morning Star. He will be the Sun of righteousness to the world when he ap-

pears; but then there will be judgment. The wicked shall be as ashes under the soles of the feet, as stubble, and the *day* of the Lord as fire. But the star appears to them that watch before the sun appears to the world; for as I can understand by the prophetic warning, that this dark place is going to be judged; that "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand;" yet so it is night now, whatever people may think. And I want the Morning Star in my heart (the hope of Christ coming, before the day, to receive the church to Himself; for the Morning Star is given to them that overcome) to cheer my soul through the long and dreary night, which is yet darker now than it was then, but still far spent, as the darkness of the night always thickens till again the dawn of another day rise beyond on the other side of heaven, and the morning star appear to fix the eye of the watchful and waiting soul, and cheer the heart with a sure and certain hope. And what, then, do we want of the things of this dark place, which is now under judgment for having nailed God's Son on the cross? Do not you, therefore, be seeking the riches, the honours, the power of this world on which Christ is coming to execute judgment. One ray of the glory of Christ will at once wither up all the glory of this defiled world like an autumn leaf. Do not you, therefore, go on mixing yourself up with the world, heaping up riches. What will you do with them when Christ comes? Remember the Lord is at hand. But do I keep separate from this

world merely because it is going to be judged? Certainly not. My whole portion for time and eternity is in Christ ; the day-star has arisen in my heart. I am separated from the world by affection, and not by fear.

We have the coming of Christ as the morning star, as a distinct thing from the sunrise ; for when the sun rises upon the world, it will be judgment. (See Isa. ii. ; Mal. iv. 1-3.) But beside and before all this we have our portion in Christ ; we are not of this world, we are redeemed out of it, and belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall join Him on high before He is manifested for the judgment of this world ; and, therefore, the thunders of judgment cannot touch us, because we are seated with Him in heaven, from whence the judgments come. In Rev. iv., we have a most blessed and comforting picture of the position of the church. There are the twenty-four elders sitting on their thrones, round about the throne from whence the thunders, the lightnings, and the voices come ; and they continue perfectly unmoved. But was this insensibility? Certainly not ; for when God Himself in His holy character is mentioned, immediately they fall down and cast their crowns before Him. Neither is this holiness the cause of any fear, when the living creatures proclaim the threefold holiness of Him who sits upon the throne ; it is their worship breaks forth, and they fall down and cast their crowns before Him in the full sense of the blessedness of Him who sits upon the throne. Christ,

then, is this Morning Star ; and if the day has dawned, and the day-star has arisen in our hearts, we know our association with Christ Himself, as within that place from which the judgment proceeds.

At the end of the Revelation we have the place of the star again (xxii: 16). The Lord brings us back from the prophetic testimony to Himself—"I Jesus have sent Mine angel"—"I am the Root and the Offspring of David" (this is in connection with His being Source of promise, and Heir of it, as King in Zion, 'Rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies'), "and the bright and Morning Star." But the moment He presents Himself as the bright and Morning Star "the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come;' the Holy Ghost in the Church says, 'Come.'" This response is what is connected with Himself ; the mention of Himself attracts and awakens the answer of the Spirit. This is the character in which the church herself has to say to His coming. God, in the love of His own heart, has associated the church with Jesus, and the very mention of His name awakens the cry, "Come !" for it touches a chord which gives an immediate response ; and therefore He does not say here, "Behold I come quickly !" The question here is not *when* He will come, but that it is *Himself* that is coming. He does not speak of His *coming*—blessed though that thought is—but He reveals *Himself* ; and this it is that awakens the response of the heart by the

power of the Holy Ghost. We are *for Himself*, and shall be *with Himself*. It cannot be anything short of this, for He calls us "His body." What a glorious place this is! Not merely *wonderful*, but glorious identification with the Christ of God! No explanation of prophetic Scripture, however nice and true it may be, however useful as a solemn warning as regards this world, can ever take the place in the soul that is taught of God, of knowing its living union with a coming Jesus, of the present waiting for Himself. No mere explanation of His coming as a doctrine is the proper hope of the saint. That hope is not prophecy; it is the real, and blessed, and sanctifying expectancy of a soul that knows Jesus, and waits to see and be with Himself.

The bride hears the voice of the Bridegroom, which at once calls out the expression of her desire of His coming. To this He responds, assuring her of it, and then the revelation closes, leaving this as her own expectation, whatever He may have previously communicated to her concerning the judgment, to which she does not belong. The Lord Jesus is represented as departing Himself, and coming and taking His bride to be with Him. Then, when the world is saying, "Peace and safety," sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape.

Paul closes (1 Thes. iv.) with these words, "So shall we ever be with the Lord." And is that all? Yes, that is all; for to the heart that has learnt

to love Him He can say no more. Then he adds, **"Of the times and seasons ye have no need that I write unto you."* Ye are the children of the day, you wait for that. No explanation of this as a doctrine can ever reach the heart. You cannot make a person understand a relationship; to understand it he must himself be in it. An unquickened soul may understand, in a manner, what prophecy means; but nothing short of the sense and taste of being connected with Christ Himself can give the desire of His own personal coming. And why? Because for this the relationship must be known. In Revelation xxii. 16, 17, the relationship is known, affection is awakened, and there is the immediate response. Take a case: A woman is expecting her husband; he knocks at the door; not a word is uttered out of his mouth, but his wife knows already who is at the door; for it is he whom she loves that is there; and thus the natural feelings proper for a wife are awakened, when the chord is touched by that which acts on them. But then the link must be in the heart, the affection must be there to produce the response; the chord which vibrates with this blessed truth must be there to be awakened by it. There is such a consciousness of union with Jesus, through the power of God's Spirit, that the very moment

* I have no doubt that the direct connection of chapter v. is with verse 14 of chapter iv.; verse 15 to the end of chapter iv. is a parenthesis.

He is spoken of in this character the chord is touched, and the instinctive cry is, "Come!" No amount of intelligence merely will produce this. And what a difference between expecting the Lord Jesus, because He has made me and His saints a part of Himself and His bride, and looking for His coming to judge poor sinners. Now mark the practical effect of this looking for Jesus. It takes the heart clean out of the world up to heaven. If my heart is right in its affections for Him, I am looking too straight up on high to take notice of the things around me. Plenty of things there are around in the world, plenty of bustle and turmoil; but it does not disturb the blessed calm of my soul, because nothing can alter our indissoluble relationship with a coming Jesus, as nothing should divide us in hope.

To see this coming of the Lord Jesus for the church changes the character of a thousand Scriptures. Take the Psalms, for instance, those which speak about judgment on the ungodly, such as "the righteous washing their feet in the blood of the wicked." We are not the persons who say this; it is the language of Jews, and of godly Jews too, who will be delivered through the rod of power smiting their enemies when all the tribes of the earth will wail because of Him. But do I want my enemies destroyed to get to Christ? Certainly not. I shall leave them to be with Him. (It is a sorrowful thought, indeed, though we recognize the just

judgment of God, that such judgment will be accomplished upon those who despise Him and His grace.) But as for me, I am going straight up to Christ in heaven. My place is in Him while He is hid in God in the nearest and most intimate union. I belong to the bride, a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. When we have hold of this blessed centre, Christ, and with Him, therefore, of God Himself, then every Scripture falls into its proper place, and we get a spiritual understanding by the Holy Ghost of things in heaven, and our connection with them, and things on earth and our separateness from them ; and above all, our hearts get into their proper place ; for, being set on Jesus Himself, we are waiting for Him. When He shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory ; but we shall be forever with the Lord.

May the Lord give us such an apprehension of redemption, and of our position in Him, as may so fix our hearts on Himself, that we may be daily walking down here like unto men that wait for their Lord, who has promised to come and take us to Himself, watching in the midst of a night of darkness, aware that it is the night, although we are not of the night ; but watching and waiting for the day, having the Morning Star arisen in our hearts. May the Lord keep us from idols ; and, above all, from aught that savours of Jezebel, that we may be in dread for fear of grieving Him in any of those things which have come in to spoil and corrupt that which He planted so beautiful, to be for the manifestation of His glory in this dark and evil world.

JESUS, THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF FAITH.

All the path the saints are treading,
Trodden by the Son of God :
All the sorrows they are feeling,
Felt by Him upon the road :
All the darkness and the sorrow,
All that here could test the heart ;
All the joy and all the triumph,
He passed through, yet sin apart.

Now come forth in resurrection,
Passing onward to the throne ;
Having suffered all the judgment,
Borne the storm of wrath alone :
He is able thus to succour
Those who tread the desert sand,
Pressing on to resurrection,
Where He sits at God's right hand.

Now He praises, in th' assembly ;
Now the sorrow all is passed ;
His, the earnest of our portion,
We must reach the goal at last ;
Yes, He praises ! grace recounting
All the path already trod,—
We associated with Him—
God, our Father and our God.

Join the singing that He leadeth,
Loud to God our voices raise ;
Every step that we have trodden,
Is a triumph of His grace :
Whether joy, or whether trial,
All can only work for good,
For He healeth all—who loves us,
And hath bought us with His blood,

It is finished ! It is finished !
 Who can tell redemption's worth !
 He who knows it leads the singing,—
 Full the joy, as fierce the wrath.
 Taken up in resurrection,
 Desert ways rehearsed above,
 Tell the power of God's salvation,
 And His never-failing love.



SOME CONSIDERATIONS AS TO OUR PART WITH CHRIST NOW, AND IN GLORY.

There is not a believer who will not rejoice in having his part with Christ when He appears in His glory ; but in order to rejoice in our part with Him now, involving as it does suffering and loss as the world estimates such, we need to know *God's riches* in Him. Only thus can we gladly refuse the temptations of Satan in the world, which appeal to our lusts by the promise of satisfaction and gain ; and whose power we only escape by giving ear to the many and precious promises of God, which tell of His coming glory. The way of peace and joy to the believer, then, is simple. We know God's treasures in His son ; and there is not a believer who would not own that if they were fully known by him, the world with all its wealth, glory and pleasure would have no attraction at all. Well, the day is quickly coming when the brightness of the glory of God will fill every saved soul with worship and praise, while the heart will be kept by knowing that He, of whose worthiness

every ray will speak, is JESUS, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. This is what we *wait* for—it is a hope, and we do not yet see anything of this glory ; what we see is a world filled with every attraction that six thousand years have developed, in answer to the demands of the lusts of the flesh ; but, thank God, this is not all that we now have with us in the world : we have the precious word of God, which comes to us as His own voice, to declare the excellence of His Son, for we need a divine record as well as a divine estimate of His glory. We listen and are delighted, for we hear what was never from our hearts, but is from Himself. And the weapon of the Spirit is the word of God, even as His ministry is according to it. God, since the gift of His Son to man and his ignorance of Him has been fully manifested, has always sought “listeners” rather than “doers” : “he that hath an ear” is the one who is blessed.

Thus and thus only does the joy of the truly rich man desire to testify to his wealth, by refusing all *fellowship* with the principles of lawlessness towards God and of association with man, which govern the world, straining every nerve to appear rich without God.

Let us consider but for a moment the blessed free result to us of the grace that led to the Lord's suffering when He took upon Himself the terrible consequences of what we had done, and our hearts must be stirred within us at the greatness, richness and fulness of all that God has wrought for

us and in all that He has laid up for us in Heaven, where Christ is.

We are no longer poor, but rich, for God's own treasure-house has been opened to show what *He* had for the wretched and undone sinner. In Christ every need has been met and God's own glory revealed. We may judge of the poverty of the world when we see that all its riches together cannot supply the soul's need of even one man; while every man in it shows himself in a state of beggary by his appeal to the world for satisfaction. Such is the world around us; and what, we may ask, is the state of the Christian who is in it? Ah! he knows the grace of the Lord Jesus—that though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. Let him consider the past, and he knows that his history of sins and misdeeds have for ever been blotted out at God's own cost; or the present, and he can declare that Jesus Himself sits at God's right hand in glory, whom God has made unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; and as to his future, it is fraught only with the brightest hope, in striking contrast to the dark and awful doom that surely awaits every unbeliever. Yet, it is in this hollow and worthless world, that *God's riches* have been displayed in His Son, that His love which gave His Son has found expression, and that His own glory and fulness have had their completest triumph. Let the world boast of itself until its end—everlasting shame; but let

the Christian boast in his God and Saviour Jesus Christ and wait for His appearing.

Thus, the riches of God in Christ have become the portion of every believer, but never can he forget that the cost was the poverty of the Lord Jesus. He was rich (words which cannot be said of the world or of any creature in itself), yet He suffered Himself to be stripped of every right that was His due, or glory that He could claim as His title, and at last for our sake He laid down even His life as a ransom for us and was numbered with the dead. But His joy was to make known the riches of God in a world which knew nothing of them, and, having redeemed us by His blood, to bring us, too, to share His joy.

Our hearts are kept rejoicing as we ponder what God has made Him to us, and as we go on to learn the wealth that is ours through Him, and are kept steady and close to the Lord Jesus, remembering we owe it all to His poverty.

Thus the apostle could say, "My God shall abundantly supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus;" and again, as to the purpose of our salvation, that "He might display in the coming ages the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus."

Would that all we who are Christians, being rich, refused to live as poor men, allowing the selfish motives which alone actuate the world to govern us also. Are we not, if so doing, denying before the world the riches of Christ? For the

Scripture says : " All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." And the principle which prompts the forming of every company and organisation in the world is lust or desire. Man desires because he has not, and strenuously seeks to become the possessor of riches ; and hence the rapid and marvellous development of civilisation. At the root of all lies the wretched poverty of man, and so he is ever desiring greater things *for himself*. But God *loves*, and thus gave His only begotten Son to a thankless world. For love seeks not its own, but only the perfect good of its happy objects upon which it expends itself. This love is our present portion, and the full fruit of it will be seen when we are with Jesus in His glory.

And we, as *beloved* children, are called to walk in love and be imitators of God, so that we should be known as rich in Christ, not poor like the world, as giving (blessed privilege) rather than seeking to acquire ; for " the love of money is the root of all evil."

Of course, it is no sin to be rich, but it is sin to seek to be, and it will bring upon such many temptations and snares. I Tim. vi. 6-21, is a solemn but precious word to guide us as to this. Those to whom *God has given* riches can use them so as to lay up for themselves joy at the coming of the Lord. But by joining in the schemes of this world to become rich ; or, what is worse, originating

such and seeking its help and co-operation, we not only appear to the world to be in the same condition of poverty, dissatisfaction and self-interest as it itself is in, but also express *fellowship with* the world rather than with Christ.

For not only has God made us rich *in Christ*, He has also blessed us *with Him*.

The Lord Jesus has given us to know the desire of His own heart. He prayed that we might be where He is, and God has called us into the fellowship of His Son. Jesus ever had a title to glory: to reign over the earth was His due, but neither glory nor wealth nor power could satisfy His love—He must Himself become our title to the same place and position as He had. So in order that we might reign with Him, He accepts the crown of thorns as His diadem and the cross as His place of exaltation. When here in this world He was alone in His glory; and that glory, from the manger to the cross, which shone in all its varied and divine perfections, was the glory of His Person, the Only-begotten of the Father. In this glory He is alone and ever will be, and the manifestation of it fills our souls with worship before Him.

He could, moreover, at any time have received the kingdom and reigned, but He would have been alone also in that glory, and man, as His enemy, would have perished. Of the world there was not one who desired to be with Him, and the disciples whom He chose from it showed themselves unable

to be. Man thus, by his will or his weakness, left Him; so He took that place where He would alone, by Himself, establish, for eternity, God's glory in the face of the full power of evil, and solve for ever the issue between good and evil brought into the world by the entrance of sin. Then not only must He be lifted up from the earth, but drink the awful cup of God's anger against sin, and, in the hour of need and agony, be denied that joy and strength of communion with God which had been His portion while walking in the world. His suffering, if man is to be saved by God's grace and power, must not only be infinitely precious (that they ever were), but of atoning value, the answer to God's rod when dealing with Him, in our place as sin and about the question of our sins. On the cross Jesus is seen in all the moral *glory* and essential *power* of His Blessed Person. He sustains all the glory of God alone, unaided, in the darkness of God's face hidden from Him because of sin, and when the power of evil had reached its climax for this final issue. Nowhere can the glory of Jesus appear vaster or grander than at the cross; and it is this which gives it for ever a special place in the remembrance of every believer. The glory of God in which He will appear before the world does but declare the glory God received from Him on the cross, where His name was revealed and upheld by His Son when, as our substitute, God's judgment of sin was upon Him. For it was on the cross that God's

character of perfect light and love was revealed to and for the sinner, yea, even for His very enemies ; His righteousness sustained and manifested so that the simplest believer, though the recipient of *undeserved* grace, becomes the righteousness of God in Him ; His power shown—not only to gain complete and eternal triumph over sin, but—to accomplish, in spite of all, that work whereby God could bless (the joy of His heart) in the place where sin had prevailed over all ; and His glory, as the living and true God, to whom alone belongs goodness with power manifested where the power of evil was unrestrained.

The glory found at the cross is that in which He is *alone*, and hence, as I have said, is peculiarly precious to every saint ; but the glory to be seen when He appears, He shares with us. And thus is His love satisfied, which desired for its object no less than blessing with Himself.

“ Yet it must be : Thy love had not its rest,
 Were Thy redeem'd not with Thee fully blest ;
 That love that gives not as the world, but shares
 All it possesses with its loved co-heirs ! ”

And at that time at least will every saint know, that fellowship with Him is the fruit of sovereign grace and is unalloyed blessing, though purchased at the cost of His deep sufferings of unmingled woe. But we have not to wait till then to be in fellowship with Him. Every saint of God is as truly united to Christ now as he ever will be, though the character and sphere in which this

blessed union finds expression differ. Then shall we be seen with Him in His power and glory ; but now we testify, in patience and suffering, that our portion is not with the world, but with Him.

The world seeks its glory now, and is now eager in its pursuit after wealth. The worldling's possessions are only in and of this world, whose end is to be burnt up with all its works, while he cannot, dare not, look into the future, for he knows he has nothing for that. He is without hope, without Christ, and without God in the world.

But the saint of God can wait and endure, for he *knows* that the glory of God is to be revealed and God's riches in Christ will be displayed ; and he rejoices (or rather, as it should be, boasts)—not like the world, in an ephemeral gain, but—in the hope of the glory of *God* ; and thus he can also boast in tribulations, having the privilege now of refusing the glory and wealth of the world, whose pride God will soon bring down, and display it in its true state of poverty and nakedness (*see* Is. xxiv.) because of being without God. This is a privilege of the Christian which belongs only to this day of faith ; for there will be no desire with any saint to be associated with it in the day of its ruin : his joy and triumph will be that he is associated with Christ. Temptation will not then be known, but now the saint is beset by the wiles of Satan, who ever seeks to dishonour the precious name of Christ (with which he is called) through him. May the

Lord stir up our hearts to remember His love, which desired to have us associated with Himself, so that by our words and walk our delight may be to own our lot is now with Him, and not to link ourselves in any way whatever *with the world*, as if we had a common portion with unbelievers (II Cor. vi.).

This brings me to my last consideration as to fellowship with the world in any of its various associations. The object of man's unions is to derive strength to carry out *his* will independently of God; and in the present day, seeing that we are in a world where a project to its advantage is no sooner mooted than a society is formed to carry it out, we may almost ask whether it is possible to walk in this world in separation from evil. Certainly not, if left to ourselves or our resources even an instant; the world will love its own, its schemes are for its own, and its own can live happily by them for the passing day. The worldling finds no difficulty in living in the world; but divine intervention alone can maintain the Christian in the path for God in this world, otherwise he would be devoured instantly, as a sheep amongst wolves. Yet God does keep His people, as long as He wills, against all His enemies: they are kept by the power of God through faith. If we saw clearly the power of evil in the world, and the strengthlessness of the saint against it, would not our faith know more simple confidence in God and find Him open a path for us through the

trackless waste, in which relentless enemies oppose and subtle snares abound ?

The history of man is simple and consistent. He refused God's will at the beginning, in order to try whether he could not find greater happiness and glory for himself in some other way ; and thus, becoming alienated from God, he comes face to face with all the various needs which belong to a creature, together with those deeper and more extensive ones of a sinner ; but instead of owning his inability to escape the ruin he has brought upon himself, and giving God His place as God—One whose resources of grace are infinite,— he sets about to mend his own case as best he can.

But here, again, individually, he perceives his own insufficiency and weakness, and therefore seeks the co-operation of his fellow-man, in order the more successfully, as he thinks, to do without God and ignore His will.

“ Sin is lawlessness,” or independence, Scripture says (I John iii. 4, see Rev. Vers. and New Trans.), and every organisation in the world is formed for the purpose of self-aggrandisement, or of supplying some want of which it has been made conscious.

The co-operation of man takes the place which God should have in the confidence of His heart. His trust is in man and not in God. It is hardly necessary to remark here that business carried on in the world in responsibility to the Lord is not the same thing as fellowship with the world in its

schemes for the acquisition of wealth, without the least regard to the dues of Christ. Moreover, relationships existing because of God's order in creation are all honoured by the word of God. All authority is of God, as well as every tie of nature as ordered by Him: the king and subject, the ruler and people, the father and child, the master and servant are all enumerated amongst those recognised by God. The Lord over all is God, and each is responsible to Him in his place as that which has been assigned to him by God. The one in authority may be unfaithful and abuse the power and position given to him to be a terror to evil doers, but man has no right to seek to correct him. The matter of injustice must be left in the hands of God and is a test to faith (I Peter ii. 19-25). God has given such their position and will call each to give an account of himself to Him, and the Christian is assured that nothing passes unnoticed by Him, and while waiting for the day in which God's righteous judgment will be made manifest, is not troubled, for he knows that the lawlessness of man cannot proceed further than God permits; but to "despise dominion and speak evil of dignities" is the sign of a rapidly approaching apostate state, as being "without natural affection" is a sign of the last days. The effort of man to gain his fellow-man's strength, in order to carry out *his* will, has always called down God's final judgment, from the time of Babel, and will continue to do so till the last moment of the

world's existence, when the nations as the sand of the sea shall be gathered by Satan to fight against the beloved city (Rev. xx. 7-10).

Moreover, the many unions in this world not only declare the attempts of man to meet his own needs without reference to God, but also his total ignorance of Him. The Lord said to the reasoners of His day, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." And vainly may we look throughout this world for that confidence in God which can leave matters of vital importance to us quietly in His hands and await his action. Profession, pious phrases, religious expressions, and the like, there may be in abundance ; but faith, which, when *all* is at stake, can wait upon God, there is not. Man, like Saul, unable to await the coming of God's prophet, will quickly betray that his confidence is in man, and turn back to resources that are apparently at hand. The reason is simple—the aid of man is a tangible object to him ; but God is unknown, and, therefore, *cannot* be trusted.

Let us turn for a little from the scene of dark dishonour to God's name which this world presents by its ignorance and independence of Him, and consider Jesus, the object of His delight.

He was the author and finisher of faith. In Him we see the path of faith initiated, as it was also completed ; while from the word we know that Jesus sits crowned with glory and honour in the heavens, and we see in Him the sure and blessed re-

sult of trust in God and not man ; for faith is the “ substantiating of things hoped for and the conviction of things unseen,” and hence does not *seek* one or the other. Man is ever looking about for some argument upon which he may build his hopes and satisfy the many questions which must arise as to the unseen. Faith has no need of such, for the word of God, which is believed, gives the assurance. The believer, as the word signifies, is one who believes God and the testimony He gives, while the unbeliever on the contrary will not. The assurance the believer has is gained from the certainty that what God says is true ; but that of the unbeliever, from his own estimate and judgment of what he sees, and from which he makes deductions as to what he cannot see. He may be sure enough in his deductions ; but what if the phenomena change ? Assurance is from the word of God. Faith, it is evident, does not exist in man : credulity does, with which we must not confound it. With faith is connected the desire for foundation (*hupostasis*) as to the things hoped for, and also conviction (*elegchos*) of the truth. With credulity, which blindly accepts whatever tradition may teach, there is neither. But when there is faith, both are possessed, and therefore, as I have said, are not sought after.

The coming of the Son of God into the world brought the perfect test as to what was in man, and proved that not only was there no good thing for God, but also no faith in Him. His words

bring the test, when Jesus says (Mark xi. 22),
 “Have faith in God (*pistin Theou*). Verily I say to you that whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou taken away and cast into the sea, and *shall not doubt in his heart*, but believe that what he says takes place, whatever he shall say shall come to pass for him.” God requires faith before He can bless, because faith gives to Him His due ; for how can God bless when He Himself is dishonoured, by His divine attribute of grace and power being the object of *doubt*? Thus the Lord Jesus lays down the conditions on which God will act. But they are fulfilled only in Himself. The more man tries not to doubt, the stronger his doubts become, until he is dragged by them into distraction and darkness that completely overpower him. Faith is not in man, and his inability to give God His true place becomes the plainest evidence of his total ruin. For could any *doubt* God who know Him? No difficulty is found in trusting one whose grace and power are well known ; and this gives the special character to the path of faith in God in which the Lord Jesus walked. He knew God, and came to reveal Him ; but, precious grace, took the place of a servant to do so. He trusted God at all times to supply what was needed as He passed through the scene of His creation, though with Him there was no need of an object to produce and uphold His faith, as there is with us. With Him the words of prophecy are fulfilled : “Thou didst make me

hope when I was upon my mother's breast : I was cast upon Thee from the womb : Thou art my God, from my mother's belly." With us it is the *gift* of God, because we have it not by nature ; and it is produced by the word of God (Eph. ii. 8 ; Rom. x. 17). But the Son of God having become the Dependent One, and turning to God with the prayer, " Preserve me, O God," the word becomes His delight, accepting it as that which was sufficient to guide man in the path that God would have him walk in. Well may we ponder in our soul the import of those words in Phil. ii., " He emptied Himself." He who personally was without need takes the place where he is dependent upon God for all, and receives all from His hand, and in that path never once uses aught that was His or that He could at any time have rightfully claimed to supply the needs which He found in His path, but His delight was that He learnt God to be sufficient for Him in *this* world. It was this that made *His* faith and dependence upon God of infinite worth ; He in it was the Object of heaven's wonder and of God's delight, while through it He has Himself become the Object which sustains us in our path. But not only do we see His confidence in God exercised in life, it was also in death. Not only did He know and prove in the face of this unbelieving and self-trusting world that we need God, and nothing else, to make our path blessed, but He also showed that God's power and resources sufficed for the one who trusted Him in

the place where the consequences of alienation from God render a testimony to man's strengthlessness and resourcelessness in himself.

In the world we see an existing state of things in which man is apparently self-sufficient, or nearly so. True, it is only through the utilization of what *exists*, but the result is that the world takes its course without God. In death there is a testimony to the consequences of it that man cannot alter, and so he vainly seeks to hide them under a marble tomb. And as man has never once believed God's power to act for him in his lifetime, so does he go into death without a hope of God ever keeping his body from seeing corruption. Again we turn to the Lord Jesus, and just listen to the simple, clear, and repeated testimony of the disciples that His flesh never saw corruption, and they were witnesses of it (Acts, ii. 30-33; iv. 33; xiii. 35-37); and then turn to the precious prophetic words of David, which speak of this intervention of God's power in a manner *contrary to every law that was ever known in creation, now defiled by sin*, as an answer to faith in God. Thus we cannot find a revelation of God in the laws of nature, neither can we see an adequate display of His government and justice in the course of the world. A full revelation of God has been brought to us in the person of His Son, accredited by *divine* power, even in the place of death. The very words of Scripture express to us clearer than can anything else the confidence of the Lord

Jesus in God and God's righteous answer to His faith :

I have set Jehovah always before me,
 Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth ;
 My flesh also shall rest in hope.
For THOU wilt not leave my soul in Hades,
 Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.
 Thou wilt show me the path of life,
 In Thy presence is fulness of joy,
 At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.
 (Ps. xvi.)

The blessed testimony of the twelve disciples, who had been in the company of Jesus "from the baptism of John until the day in which He was taken up from them," and who had, moreover, been told that He was in like manner coming again, was completed by that of the apostle Paul, who found a MAN in glory now—the *Man* Christ Jesus,—he, too, receiving a special revelation that He was coming to take up His people to be for ever with Himself (I Thes. iv.), when death will be swallowed up in victory, and the triumph of *God* over sin and its consequences—death and *corruption*,—which are now brought to light through the Gospel, will then be manifest in glory.

In this boastful and arrogant age may each saint of God find a joy in owning, in his words and ways, that his faith is in God, who alone is his strength, even though the persistent and rapid development of the attempts of man at independence may render his path increasingly difficult—though this will but lead him to know that it is

God Himself who maintains his lot in the world, and keeps him from the evil which fills it, and that the Lord Jesus, at the right hand of God, is an Object sufficient to sustain his faith in any circumstances. For it has only been through Him who gave Himself a ransom for us, who has been manifested at the end of the times, that we now believe in God, who has raised Him from among the dead and given Him glory, that our faith and hope should be *in God*.

N.B.—In the above there has been reference mainly to fellowship with the unions and companies in the world; but the references are also applicable, in most respects, to membership of a Church or any religious society or league; though by the latter the truths that “there is one body” on earth, and that the Holy Ghost personally is in the Church, are practically denied.



FRAGMENTS.

“The more CHRIST is *objectively* our portion and occupation, the more shall we resemble Him *subjectively*.”

“The eye on CHRIST always affords evidence of our position, and is the only true means of deliverance from every false way.”

“Trying to right circumstances is waste of time. Christ did not seek it. Let faith be in exercise in the circumstances, and that will right yourself.”

“TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE.”

WHAT wouldst thou do? His praises sing,
To Him in gladsome worship bring
Earth's purest lays—earth's sweetest songs
To Whom all harmony belongs.

What wouldst thou do? Go, speak His name,
His wondrous love and grace proclaim;
Till hundreds, thousands, prostrate fall,
And own Him Saviour, Lord of all.

What wouldst thou do? Go, work for Him
In fevered haunt, or alley dim;
Succour the poor, support the faint,
And cheer each sick and suffering saint.

What wouldst thou do? Go forth and fight,
Strong in His strength, His power my might;
Victorious then, my trophies lay
Down at His feet at close of day.

What wouldst thou do? Die for His sake
Who died for me; Oh! let Him take
My life, my all, and let me be,
My Saviour, always, all for Thee.

* * * * *

He asks not these. He saith, “Obey
My voice and sit at home to-day;
I have a task for thee to learn,
If thou a meed of praise wouldst earn.”

* * * * *

“Stay here, sit still, do nought for Thee,
My heart, that bounded forth so free,
Is now like some poor caged bird,
Since I Thy grave command have heard.”

Obedience is a harder thing
Than anthems on the air to fling,
Than eloquence more arduous far,
Harder than labour or than war.

Thou canst not do one deed aright,
Not one act pleasing in His sight,
Except thou have His sure command,
Take all thy orders from His hand.

If He says, "Fight My battles here,"
Thou mayest go forth without a fear ;
If He bid sing, or speak, or do,
No matter what, He'll bring thee through.

But wouldst thou run, untaught, unsent,
Thy life itself were vainly spent ;
Rather thy soul with patience nerve,
Until He saith, "Arise and serve."

Better than sacrifice is this,
Herein and here alone is bliss,
To catch His smile, to hear Him say,
"Thou hast fulfilled My will to-day."



TO BE DOING AND NOT TO BE DOING.

—
"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."—Rom. xiv. 23.
—

All the teachers who merit the name of Christians, are agreed upon the point that there is nothing of greater practical worth than *Christian diligence* in those who are redeemed.

The shades of difference found among them chiefly consist in the manner of stimulating the

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children of God thereto, and in the nature and motive power of the action in question.

We know that there are in the redeemed, here below, two principles of action which are opposed one to the other ; that of the flesh and that of the spirit of adoption. The flesh never willingly keeps quiet, even if the body itself is at rest. And yet there is such a thing as rest according to the Spirit. It is never without danger that the Christian follows the thoughts of the flesh, either in getting into action or in keeping still ; but the danger is infinitely enhanced when he does either the one or the other, induced thereto by thoughts which have the sanction of religion. It is always well for the energy of the Spirit of God to subject the flesh, and to oblige it to keep still. Then only is it that faith acts in love and according to the will of God, that is, according to Scripture.

The heart of the wise discerns the times, and knows what is right. The spirit of adoption seeks the will of God in retirement, by prayer and in the study of the word. He is sure to find and to recognize what the will of God is, who has the sincere desire to do it, and desires nothing but it. But in seeking that will, we often find that faith and spirituality are more largely taxed by the study *to be quiet*, than by having somewhat *to do*.

For them that are spiritual, there is a time to be doing and a time of cessation from doing—of rest and hope. But the flesh cannot bear the latter, for it has neither the will nor the ability to subject

itself to the will of God. There is a time to act and a time to think—"a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together" (Eccles. iii. 5). The Holy Spirit leads us as well to rest, to prayer, and to meditation, as to action. The Christian is a stranger and pilgrim, who, passing through the world, stays not, save at the resting-places which the Lord has prepared for him. And herein he only accomplishes the will of the good Shepherd who conducts him and guides, nourishes, refreshes, and tenderly cares for him. "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety" (Ps. iv. 8).

The only real happiness of the children of God consists in doing the will of the Father. If, at least, the heart is under the control of the spirit of adoption, Jesus incessantly provides them with occasions, means and strength to do that will, even as by the Spirit. He inspires them with the desire to do it. But if the Christian is deficient in intelligence, he will hourly run the risk, whether he is in action or at rest, of only following his own notions. That which we, above all things, need is a filial and spiritual apprehension of grace.

If it is said to me, "We must do, do, do," no principle of action connected with faith or love in me is awakened. It is but a law which stimulates the flesh, and thus encourages me to sow to the flesh. The reaping will, naturally, be of corruption.

But if, contrariwise, the love of God and my Father, or the grace and privileges of my heavenly

calling in Christ Jesus be recalled to my soul—liberty is given to me to desire, to think, to love, and to act according to God, or if it be so, to be still according to God. It is the love of God toward us which is the sole spring of faith and the circumstance which gives to faith its activity. Touch this spring, originate a movement there, if you desire to awaken in the Lord's people divine or truly spiritual action. It is thus that we find exhortation set forth in the word by the Lord, and we have but to follow it, if we desire to be indeed His disciples. All the exhortations of the New Testament flow from the love of God, who has loved us and given us redemption, adoption and glory. How could we live, progress, and run toward the goal of our heavenly calling, if we were not nourished, abundantly and incessantly, with the grace of God, in Jesus Christ which is to us-ward.

The Lord Jesus Himself has said, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you : for Him hath God the Father sealed" (John vi. 27). Here the chief point in question is His flesh, given for the life of the world. That is, faith in the love of God is the sole true source, the only point to set out from, and alone the circle in which Christian activity unfolds itself. The work of faith, and labour of love consist, at bottom, in believing in the Son and in abiding in Him. In believing, I

work for the nourishment which is unto eternal life. Whether I eat or whether I drink, whether I am in active service, or whether I am in repose—from the moment that I am in communion with the Author and Finisher of faith, I labour for the nourishment which is unto eternal life. Without Him *we can do nothing, however laudable, in appearance, our activity may be.* It is the Spirit which quickens; the flesh profits nothing. Moreover, constant mention is made of the fruit of the Spirit, and of the reaping of the Spirit, because, by our union with the Lord Jesus, “we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom. vi.).

Now I will suppose that the father of a Christian family, thinking to act according to the Lord, devotes himself to the teaching of his children the best means of gaining gold and silver, or that he instructs them in the works of art, of the sciences, and of the fantasies of man’s imagination. Such a father may, perhaps, do much, and acts through a lengthened period, with intentions most praiseworthy according to the world. But what fruit will be thence gathered, by himself and his children, in this life or in the life to come? We have no need to make the essay. Solomon, the wisest and the most successful of men, made the trial, and, after possessing all that a heart in nature could desire, he tells us :

“And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept
“not from them, I withheld not my heart

“from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all
 “my labour; and this was my portion of all
 “my labour. Then I looked on all the works that
 “my hands had wrought, and on the labour that
 “I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity
 “and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit
 “under the sun” (Ecc. ii. 10, 11). What a sad
 admission for an old man, who yet knew the Lord.
 “The words of the Preacher, the Son of David,
 “King in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith
 “the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.
 “What profit hath a man of all his labour which
 “he taketh under the sun? One generation pass-
 “eth away, and another generation cometh: but
 “the earth abideth forever. The sun also ariseth,
 “and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his
 “place where he arose. The wind goeth toward
 “the south, and turneth about unto the north; it
 “whirleth about continually, and the wind return-
 “eth again according to his circuits. All the
 “rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full;
 “unto the place from whence the rivers come,
 “thither they return again. All things are full of
 “labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not
 “satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with
 “hearing. The thing that hath been, it is that
 “which shall be; and that which is done is that
 “which shall be done: and there is no new thing
 “under the sun. Is there anything whereof it
 “may be said, See, this is new? it hath been
 “already of old time, which was before us. There
 “is no remembrance of former things; neither
 “shall there be any remembrance of things that
 “are to come with those that shall come after. I
 “the Preacher was King over Israel in Jerusalem.
 “And I gave my heart to seek and search out by
 “wisdom concerning all things that are done under

“heaven : this sore travail hath God given to the
 “sons of man to be exercised therewith. I have
 “seen all the works that are done under the sun,
 “and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.
 “That which is crooked cannot be made straight,
 “and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.
 “I communed with mine own heart, saying, ‘Lo,
 “I am come to great estate, and have gotten
 “more wisdom than all they that have been before
 “me in Jerusalem :’ yea, my heart had great ex-
 “perience of wisdom and knowledge. And I
 “gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know
 “madness and folly : I perceived that this also is
 “vexation of spirit.” (Ecc. i. 1-17.)

Let us reckon carefully. Put aside from among
 all the fruits of our activity here below such as are
 really fruits of the Spirit, that is to say, those only
 which will abide unto eternal life and which will
 be reckoned to us before the judgment-seat of
 Christ. How many a loss shall we not then sus-
 tain ? Our best intentions, our strongest resolves,
 our most boasted enterprises, our greatest efforts
 to attain these will be all mowed down as stubble.
 If these fruits grew not in the garden of faith, they
 will not endure the trial by fire ; it will consume
 them. Yet, shall we see in that day, some souls
 who were, perchance, simple and of no repute
 here below, crowned there-on high, with the abid-
 ing fruits of the Spirit. Many a thousand fine
 sermons will be burnt up ; and poor, pitiful
 prayers, by tens, will then glitter like the stars for-
 ever. God recognizes and rewards only blessings
 apprehended and realised by faith in Christ Jesus.

All this is a matter of spiritual intelligence and of communion with God.

The word speaks to us of “*fruit* of the Spirit,” contrasting such with “*works* of the flesh” (Gal. v.). Provided that he who sows and he who reaps does so only in the Spirit, he shall receive a reward, and shall gather fruit unto eternal life. All else will be burned up.

Christ has chosen us, even us also, as I judge, that we may bring forth fruit, and that our fruit may *abide*. But Jesus is not the vine whence grow our speculations, our resolutions, or our plans for campaigns here below. These thoughts of the natural man have no relationship with the branches of the true Vine, which draw from Christ alone their sap, their leaves, buds, flowers and fruit.

Lastly, “the day” which draweth near will make known what the work of each is. It is therefore well and suitable, that we should mutually exhort one another unto love and good works, but only to those “which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. ii.) Nothing can enable me to discern those works, save intimate communion, by the Spirit, with Him who has prepared them. If I see before me works which have not been prepared by God, faith will not give me any impulse thereto. If they have been prepared of God, *BUT not for me*, faith and the Spirit will both engage me to remain still. And He who is my Judge in all these things is the Lord, to whose

glory I desire to live and to die, to be occupied and to be still while I wait upon Him and await His return. I count continually upon the High priesthood of Jesus as to all my faults and failings in this precious service. For if I see that good works are those only which are *wrought in God*, I see also that the flesh is wily enough to make me miss my opportunities, either by acting after my own thoughts, or by abstaining from entering upon the path which God has prepared for me to walk in.

The last chapter of John's gospel gives us, briefly, various kinds of Christian activity, which were seen in the presence of the Risen Head of the church. John and Peter especially strike me in this point of view. The former remained quietly in the bosom of Jesus, when Peter would lay down his life for Him, *who was* to die for him. The crucifixion of the flesh is in practise a thing hard to find. Before the crucifixion, Peter had come *towards* Jesus in the flesh, and then had followed Him. But this Peter, with the best intention in the world, denied Jesus thrice. A flesh weak in itself without strength as to that which is good, and a natural mind, that is to say, one which is always ready to undertake the will of the flesh—was all that law itself could set in movement in man. And therefore also the law condemns the man who is subject to its rule.

But on the other side of the cross, and on the border of the Land of Promise, the calm, yet ener-

getic spirituality of John, recognized at a distance the Lord. Would Peter have cast himself into the sea, if he had not *heard* John say, "*It is the Lord*"? John continues at work all the while he is going to meet Jesus. His spirituality is indeed the cause, or at least, the occasion, of Peter's activity, and yet (while everything here is exactly in its right place), John acts as much as Peter, and in a sense, he acts even more usefully. Yet the moment the Lord bids bring of the produce of the fishing, it is Simon Peter who, already refreshed and restored by the contemplation of the risen Jesus, boards the boat and puts the finishing stroke to the work of power.

Before the crucifixion, Peter was not able to follow Jesus, although, with his whole soul he was willing to pledge himself thereto. But the knowledge of the cross has, *now*, given to Peter the power of following Jesus with joy, even whither Peter had no will to go. The power to mortify their members which are upon the earth, and the spirit of child-like obedience are now, in grace, given to the redeemed, such being set apart to the obedience of Jesus Christ as well as to the sprinkling of His blood.

John followed Jesus without needing an order to do so. His happiness was to keep close to his Master. The Lord on His part, knowing how this faithful disciple counted upon His love, manifests His confidence in him in this very thing, that He gives not to him, as to Peter, an order to fol-

low Him. Peter, on the contrary, just barely recovered from his fall, had need of all the visible proofs of the tender vigilance of Jesus ; and the good Shepherd withholds them not from him.

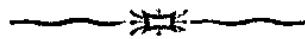
In John we see the confidence and the simplicity of love. Though he makes little noise, he always follows Jesus. He incessantly expects Him, and thus he recognizes Him even before the most zealous disciple : it is only his intimate acquaintance with Jesus which gives him this advantage. Love is calm, and finds its enjoyment in its object. John passes through few painful experiences like those of Peter. The perfect love of Jesus banishes all fear from His disciple ; it restrains also the activity of the flesh.

John is neither jealous of Peter nor restless about his brother, who is on his way to death. Peter, on the contrary, disquiets himself about John, who, the meanwhile, is occupied solely about Jesus, and remains perfectly calm and at rest, even while following the Master, whom it was his habit to listen to and gaze upon.

We are never adequately filled with the conviction that *we* are nothing, and that *Jesus* is all. And hence we commonly resemble scholars who display an immense diligence in tracing a quantity of lines, among which the master's eye will, with difficulty, accept two or three passably good uprights. Thus the beginning of the end is always in casting all the copy books aside, whereas *by more attentively considering* the model we should undertake

fewer lines and fewer pages, but we should do more honour to the copy and to the teacher.

“When thou saidst, ‘Seek ye my face;’ my heart said unto thee, ‘Thy face, Lord, will I seek’’ (Ps. xxvii. 8). “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee” (Ps. lxxiii. 25).



“LUST.”

“Lust” is the stretching forth the hand to take something for *self*. If God say, “Take,” it is no lust to take. But, if the very crown prepared by God for you were there, and you took it unbidden by Him, it would be lust. God has sheltered us in Christ; “Walk in the Spirit,” then, “and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Lust is the very essence of the world. “Lo, I come to do *Thy* will, O God,” was Christ’s way. Wherever there is a “Thus saith the Lord,” though it be even going to the stake, you will find a joy, a calmness, which you will never find in stolen waters taken for yourself. A path utterly unblameable may be pursued, and yet God may say, *I* did not put you there; and this comes in to interfere with the sustainment of quiet peace in the heart. Is it with me, “Lord, what wouldest *Thou* have me to do?” “Lo I come to do *Thy* will?” recognizing obedience to God as the *one great thing?*

USEFULNESS.

A question often arises about usefulness. Satan often beguiles by it. He may have suggested to John that he would be more useful if he were to compromise a little, and keep out of trouble for the sake of being free for his service to saints. Useful to whom? To God or to men? God may be able to show out more of His glory by laying men aside. The eyes of God rested on Paul a prisoner, seemingly useless (not even always allowed to write), as the field for the display of some of the greatest privileges of truth. The very point when your weakness seems to make you useless is often the very way in which God shows forth His glory. People think it strange that old Christians, useless ones, etc., etc., should be left, and young, active ones taken. Do not you be trying to settle God's house for Him; do not say, "What a pity for John to get to Patmos." The Lord wanted him there to communicate something that might serve His people to the end of time. A person may be in difficult circumstances, and you may have it in your power to get him out of them in the power of human nature. And you may do it, and find out that God would have had him in them, because then he could have borne testimony; and you ought not to have measured things by your love for him and your comfort, but by the light of God. We often act on a set of thoughts of which the cord is bound to our own humanity instead of God's glory.

WEAKNESS AND STRENGTH.

2 COR. XII. 1-10.

Immediately upon redemption weakness comes in—"He was crucified through weakness." "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He could have gone up to heaven as the Son of David, but then He would have had no one with Him.

If the Spirit were given where atonement was not known it could only produce fearful conflict in the soul. There was no such thing as redemption, bringing back, except by the humiliation of His Son. If He had not become Man, He could not have gone to death, He could not have been the Head of the Gentiles, He could not have been the One amongst men meeting every need. He came down to measure out everything in His own personal presence in grace. He did not stay in heaven and do the work ; He said (as it were), "I choose to recognize Satan's power, but I will go down and worst him on his own ground." But He was not only crucified through weakness ; the great point is, He was raised from the dead—Himself the Resurrection and the Life ; and we can look into the grave and say, "I know Him as the resurrection and the life." How does this power work ? It is resurrection from the dead ; when known it brings in the taste of death into everything connected with ourselves. Look at

Saul of Tarsus ; he had everything planned in his own mind for his service, and the Lord Jesus speaks to him from heaven. His first word, "Who art *Thou*, Lord?" shows that he was conscious of the entire end of everything connected with self. Then the next thing was, "What wilt *Thou* have me to do?" You will not find until Christ really looks into you that you will look at Him as the revelation of the glory of God. Then you say, "There is a Man up there in heaven raised from the dead, the One in whose face all the glory of God shines. If I want to know anything connected with God, I must learn it from that Man; the answer to every question, above, around, within, is found in the face of that One. God centralizes all in that Person!"

We often think of this passage as the experience of the apostle. True, it was so ; but in it we get the principle of Christ's dealing with a soul. God shows me the Man in the glory, but after that I look up and see that One bearing me on His heart before God, and that He never forgets me. We get here the principle of God's dealing with a man down here. There is more than one principle on which the apostle was quite willing to have the fare of a pilgrim down here ; but this is one, "My grace is sufficient for thee." If it be a question of service, of suffering, of any power at all, where do I get it? In Christ.

We get another ground in Philippians iii. There his heart was so entranced with Christ, that he

wanted in everything to be like Him ; because Christ suffered, he wants to bear the marks of suffering too ; to be like Him in every possible way, in moral character, in suffering, even in " being made conformable unto His death." Christ was down here as a pilgrim and a stranger, and so he wanted to have the marks of one of His disciples, in being conformed to His sufferings ; and why ? Because, " the love of Christ constraineth."

But here it is another thing, " My grace is sufficient for thee," etc. I mean to conform you as My disciple to that principle of death and resurrection that was made good in Me before you got any blessing from it, that in everyday life you may have My strength. Look at the bearing of this on a person down here, the light it casts on his face. It was not only a question of the danger Christ saw, but He used Satan. People lose much when they forget that Christ uses Satan to guard them from sin ; he is one of the powers by which He works. Satan gave Paul the thorn in the flesh. Christ's purpose is to perfect His strength in His servant's weakness. The whole scene down here is under His hand ; and not only are the difficulties here for us to get through, but they are arranged by Christ that He may glorify Himself by taking you through them. Who made the wilderness ? God. And had He any special purpose in making it as it was ? Why did He not make it like Canaan ? Because He wanted a place for His people where He would have to supply their need

every day. The secret of quietness and peace of heart is not to look at things and say, I have got to face them ; but Christ has prepared all things as they are that I may not be able to get along a single day without Himself. Have I no bread ? no work ? Am I sick ? Where is Christ ? All the things are not only overruled, but *used* by Him that we may learn His strength of love that cripples *us* that He may be able to say, "My grace is sufficient for thee ; for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

As I go along and see in my path a large rock, what do I think ? How can *I* ever get over it ? No ; Christ has allowed it. He has put it in my path to try my faith, and somehow or other He will get me over it. You cannot say in ease and prosperity, "There is Christ" ; but directly the storm begins, the weakness is felt, the sickness comes, we can certainly count on Christ. An extremity never takes Him by surprise, though often it may be an extremity entirely opposed to His moral character. If He leaves a person to himself, it is not that He gives him up, but to prove his heart. If He see a man full of himself, even though his face may be beaming with the glory, He must leave him to himself a little. If the heart will not bow to Christ it must be left to itself. If we do not learn in the quiet of the sanctuary, we shall find ourselves outside to learn what poor things we are. Christ would rather let His name be dishonoured and Peter brought low, than have him "making a fair show in the flesh."

Look at John in Rev. i. There, an exile in Patmos, he might have thought his apostleship ended ; but Christ comes and gives him a book to write, unfolding things of deep moment to the church in all ages. What should we do without the Revelation ? We get another instance in Rom. viii. I know not what to ask, but the Spirit makes intercession with groanings, and He that searcheth the heart knoweth it. Do I know what I want ? No ; but we present our desires before Him, often unable to form them into sentences, but Christ is up there, He knows what the Spirit wants for us. It is only an instance of redemption, working through Almighty power, connecting God, Christ in heaven, with *me*, a little insignificant individual down here. That God is so occupied with me that He brings me into desires after spiritual things connected with the glory of Christ. I present the desire, Christ understands (take the figure in Psalm cvii ; the sailors at their wits' end, then they learn the poverty of nature). I am brought to a sense of weakness by this character of communion, by His "strength made perfect in weakness." A great deal of the defective Christianity nowadays is owing to the Lord's people coming short in seeing that. Do we understand that the whole wilderness is to be a book of death and resurrection to us ? Very often sorrow is taken up from love to Christ ; but *here* it is my lifetime all developed by Christ, and He acting upon all to develope the principle of death

and resurrection, and that to let me know "My grace is sufficient." If you look at *Satan* as one of the powers by which God works, at *the wilderness* as the place prepared by Christ, where the tokens of His love are shown out, and at *yourselves*, crippled by Christ in order that you may have no strength but His to act on, you will find sweetness and refreshing of soul.



THE RIVERS OF LIVING WATER.

JOHN VII. 37-39.

When the water revives the wilderness itself, when the Son of man actually takes the world as His inheritance, and the Spirit is poured out, shall it not then be glad, and rejoice, and blossom? Well, it fills the heart of God's people, of him that believeth in Jesus, now, and does so *because he is in the wilderness*: and shall he not rejoice and blossom? Yea, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; and though often the heartless sand may drink it in and give no return, but be parched, and arid, and fruitless as before, yet wherever the earth of God's hand and the seeds of God's planting are, there shall they also be refreshed and spring up through it. I feel it very important to remark here the individual character noticed before, because it is the saving principle in the midst of desolations and evil, whatever common good it may produce. It is not, *They* shall drink of the river from the rock, or drink of some common river, but, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;" it is the personal possession and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. (*Extract.*)

GRACE.

*“ And if by grace, then is it no more works ;
otherwise grace is no more grace.”—Rom. xi. 6.*

He tells me WORDS whereby I'm saved,
He points to something *done*,
Accomplished on Mount Calvary,
By His belovèd Son ;
In which no works of mine have place ;
Otherwise grace were no more grace.

Believing this, how can I wait,
And ask what shall I *do*
To make His gift more sure to me,
His loving words more true ?
Since works of mine have here no place,
Otherwise grace is no more grace.

Ah, no, it is His *finished* work
On which my soul relies ;
And if my unbelieving heart
Its preciousness denies,
That works of mine might have a place,
Then grace *with works* were no more grace.

But in that *He* is raised on high,
Who came our sins to bear ;
I know that I am seen of God,
In oneness with Him there ;
Where not a spot His eye can trace,
Or aught that mars His work of grace.

Oh, wondrous WORDS ! Oh, precious work,
By which the soul is saved !

And Thou who didst it, blessed Lord,
 Hast in my heart engraved
 A Name which must all names displace,
 With me a lost one, saved by grace.



“**RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT WORKS.**”

I believe it will be found that the first and simplest truths of the Gospel become of growing value to our souls as we advance onward along the narrow road which leadeth unto life. Truths which are at first received authoritatively, because of the evidence of Scripture for them, become commended to us by their own beauty. And what we received at first, as it were by force of our own necessity, becomes in our progress that which manifests the glory of Christ ; so that we are able in a measure to contemplate it apart from selfishness, and to see it in the light in which God Himself sees it. I think I discern this feature in apostolical teachings ; while they unfold mysteries, or develop practical truth, they also designedly connect all with the primary truths of the Gospel—thus bringing them into constant prominence. And this marks the teaching of the Holy Ghost. It is human to handle a particular truth as a subject ; but the object of the Holy Ghost is to hold up prominently to view the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The soul becomes unsettled from its steadfastness when the *mind* takes the

lead in learning even the truth of God. The Spirit who leads into all truth, connects everything in His teaching with those great primary truths, the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The mind may get hold of something new, and be interested in it, as if it were more wonderful than the truth already received. I do not wonder at the apostle saying, "so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God"—there he saw the deepest truth; or, in after-times, saying to Timothy, "Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry; for I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." It is an unhealthy symptom, when the simple gospel is not relished. It shews that the mind is rather at work than the conscience exercised before God, or the affections engaged with Christ. There are indeed wonderful discoveries made to us of the grace and purpose of God, and this too as that in which we are specially interested; yet when all is manifested and enjoyed without hindrance, then the primary truths of the gospel will be seen in all their brilliancy, even the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, the Object of adoration, admiration and praise throughout eternity. It is with these thoughts I now turn to the great fundamental truth of the gospel—"righteousness without works"—a doctrine we know which has not only been controverted by Christians, and sneered

at by the wise and the moralist—but which many who hold it, have only become settled in, after much bitter experience of themselves. It is indeed needful for all to learn it in this school of experience. But we may also learn its beauty by looking forward to that day, when the righteousness of the one Man, as the Fountain of all blessedness to the redeemed, shall be as illustriously displayed in heaven and in earth, as the sin of the one man as the source of all misery has been sorrowfully displayed in the history of this world. But there is another light in which the doctrine of “righteousness without works” may be regarded, namely, as leading us into present intercourse with God, and enabling us to walk in His presence. It is the bearing of this great truth as a present influential principle, which the Spirit of God Himself has carried out in the Thirty-second Psalm. And the blessedness predicated of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works is a blessedness, not confined to the wondrous truths of “transgression forgiven, sin covered, and iniquity not imputed ;” but this blessedness is carried on into the exercises of soul, which result from being freely and fully justified. I would now turn to the Psalm itself.

First, the great oracular declaration—“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven ; whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.” On this statement the Holy Ghost Himself, by the

apostle Paul, has thus commented : “ Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works ” (Rom. iv. 6). “ The blessedness ”—we almost need to have this English word translated to us ; so slow of heart are we to believe His goodness, when God Himself proclaims it to us. Happiness, “ our being’s end and aim,” is proclaimed by this oracle ; and yet men are deaf to it. “ Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven ! ” This is happiness—the alone happiness of which man as a sinner is capable ; because nothing but this can bring a sinner to God, in whose presence there is fulness of joy. There is indeed a happiness proclaimed in the first Psalm, “ Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful.” But where is such a man to be found ? This blessedness only attached to the righteous One, the Holy One of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was what He did ; because He is what He is. But as for us, it is not anything that we can do which can make us happy, but that which God does for us. It is man’s impossibility to make himself happy ; it is God’s possibility to make a sinner happy. And this oracle is the declaration of a sinner’s happiness by means of the work of God Himself.

The distinction between transgression and sin is made sufficiently clear by the statements of the apostle in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the

Romans : “ Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not *sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.*” Adam sinned by transgressing a positive commandment of God ; and thereby incurred the penalty of death. Others were liable to the same penalty who had never sinned by transgressing a positive commandment of God ; therefore, there may be sin where there is not such transgression. And the Holy Ghost announces this oracle, according to the usual order of the awakening of conscience. In most cases, it is awakened to a sense of positive acts of sin against the known commandments of God. And so the apostle, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, adduces proof of the practical ungodliness and immorality of both Gentile and Jew, before he opens the source from whence it all proceeds : original and indwelling sin. Man may draw out a theory of christian doctrine ; but the divine way is, not to teach a theory, but to grapple with the conscience, and to make man sensible of his wretched condition as in the presence of God, and that nothing short of God’s own provision of Christ can meet his necessity. “ Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh to Me,” says Christ. The oracle before us regards man as he is, “ an enemy to God in his mind by wicked works.” Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in the name of Christ among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. “ Beginning at Jerusalem ” shews

the character of transgression which the Divine remedy can reach. There was acted out "the great transgression." The testimony against them was, that they had denied the Holy and the Just One, and had killed the Prince of Life. Yet, in the name of Jesus, whom they had crucified, whom God had raised up, there was forgiveness even for this great transgression. Who need despair of finding forgiveness in the same name, in which alone there is salvation? If we turn to a different and more frequent character of transgression, we find it written, "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And *such were* some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." It is to man, therefore, as a proved and convicted transgressor before God, as already condemned by the righteous judgment of God, and when awakened by the quickening power of God condemned in his own conscience, that forgiveness of transgression in the name of Jesus is proclaimed by God Himself. And blessed, by God's own testimony, is the man who has an ear to hear it.

I much question if the bare idea of forgiveness of transgression, apart from the solid groundwork on which it rests, viz., the infinite atonement of Christ—"forgiveness in His name"—would ever satisfy the conscience. The grovelling thought of

escape is, indeed, the careless thought of the unbelieving mass ; without one just thought, either of the character of God, or of the evil of sin. But if such a manner of forgiveness were possible, it would leave the recipient of it in that state of uneasiness which a man feels who finds himself in the presence of one whom he had injured, yet who had forgiven him. He would be under the conscious sense of degradation. Such a condition would be the very opposite of being "blessed." It is the mode of the forgiveness, bringing the person forgiven to stand at ease in the presence of God, declared to be just, while He is the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, which constitutes the blessedness. The atonement of Christ is indeed the remedy, the only remedy, the divine remedy for the forgiveness of transgression ; but it is more, it is the great medium of the display of the moral glory of God. "Angels look into these things," and learn the glory of their God by means of His dealings with sinners. And it is a wondrous thought, that man's necessity as a sinner and the manifestation of the divine glory, find their one and only meeting point in the cross of Christ. Yea, blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven ; and so forgiven as that God is glorified. Oh, what riddance of anxiety to the soul, when its salvation is thus taken from off its own responsibility, and it is no longer the question, Shall I be saved ? but, Shall God be glorified ? Blessed peace, indeed, surpassing all understanding,

when God and the conscience are all alike satisfied !

“ Blessed is the man whose sin is covered.” It is not the manner of the Holy Ghost to use redundant expressions. *We* often use many words where few would suffice. But “ the words of *the Lord* are pure words : as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times.” And man “ liveth by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Now, I believe as the conscience becomes alive to God, and exercised before God, it necessarily draws the distinction between transgression and sin. Outward reformation is seen by others, but the soul itself cannot rest on this. There is a very wide difference between reformation of character and conversion to God. Reformation of character will necessarily follow conversion to God ; but for a soul “ to believe and turn to the Lord ” is something far more deep than outward reformation of character : it brings us to Him with whom we have to do, before whom all is open and naked. And there it is that we learn the difference between transgression and sin. In human thought sin is an act ; in divine judgment it is a principal. And this discovery is so appalling that transgressions appear thrown into the shade by the discovery of what sin really is—viz., a settled principle of insubjection to God ; a desire to do what God has forbidden, because He has forbidden it, even when there is no positive act of disobedience ; a reluct-

ance to do what God has commanded, because He has commanded it. Yes—we have a will contrary to the good, perfect and acceptable will of God; and this is very experimentally known after we are made willing, by the grace of God, to come to Christ; so that to do the will of God is more or less connected with denying self. “Whose sin is covered.” Who would not faint under the struggle, if it were not so? God Himself has covered sin up, out of His own sight. This is what we need. How man tries to cover the evil of his heart from his fellow-man; yet, even human sagacity can often pierce through the hollow covering. And man himself is ill satisfied with it; witness his round of religious duties to try to cover it, and his natural proneness to superstition. But it is the atonement of Christ which covers sin before God. It is God Himself who has set forth Christ as a propitiation through faith in His blood. Here, when we discover sin, we can yet meet God, not in anger, but in mercy; for the sin which we have discovered is covered up before Him. I do not believe that there can be settled peace on the soul, till, taught of the Spirit, it finds the emphatic meaning of such texts as these: “Our old man has been crucified with Him”—“God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh”—God “hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” The mighty moral necessity of the Son of God be-

coming the substitute for a sinner alone meets the case of the conscience alive to what sin is. And I have admired the wisdom of divine teaching, as well as the infinite grace, that it is after shewing sin in the shape of transgression, sin in connection with death, sin as dwelling in us, the announcement follows—"There is therefore *now no* condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Let the conscience be ever so alive to what sin is in its various phases, the moment Christ is regarded as the object held out by God Himself to faith—"No condemnation," is the answer.

This distinction between transgression and sin helps to solve a phenomenon not unfrequently brought under the notice of those who are watching for souls. The deepest sense of sin is by no means always found where there has been the greatest amount of transgression. The transition from a state almost of remorse on account of transgression, to peace with God through faith in Christ, may well lead the soul to put its Amen to the apostolic declaration—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Now, when such are led on in exercise of conscience before God, to know sin as a principle, they find that the outward conduct has but too faithfully represented the inward principle. They find, too, the need of not trusting in the outward reformation; and that the heart, from whence all evil proceeds, has to be diligently watched. But

when persons who have been happily kept free from gross vice, gentle, kind and amiable, are awakened by the Spirit of God to a sense of sin, the judgment they form of sin is not so much by its injuriousness to themselves and others—which may, even apart from the quickening power of the Spirit of God, affect the conscience—but they measure sin by its contrariety to God ; and instead of being able to rest complacently in the blamelessness of their lives, or in the praise bestowed on them by others, their very lives appear to them as one act of hypocrisy ; the motives of action and conduct being now judged in the light of God's presence. And the result often is such self-loathing as betokens deep and steadfast conviction of sin, and needs the fullest application of all that Christ is to the conscience. There may be a measure of loathing oneself on account of transgressions committed, even from a generous impulse of nature ; but to loath self because we have discovered what it is before God, marks the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, and will be found a deepening work as we go on.

“ Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.” How needed is this clause for the peace of an awakened soul. There is the consciousness of iniquity ; and the announcement is, that although the Lord knows iniquity to be there, He does not impute it. And wherefore ? Surely, because God hath imputed it to Jesus : “ He hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” He hath seen

it there, and judged it there. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him (Jesus), and by His stripes we are healed." It is the greater wonder that God should have imputed iniquity where He only saw righteousness, than that He should not impute iniquity where He sees it to be. And I repeat again, that nothing short of the truth of the actual substitution of Christ for the sinner, gives full relief to an awakened conscience. The cross of Christ is to us the marked expression of the love of God towards sinners. "God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 8-10).

The Cross, further, is the declaration to us of the righteousness of God. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness" (Rom. iii. 25).

Again, it shows the infinite hatefulness of sin in the judgment of God. The cup could not pass away from Jesus. He bowed His head and drank it. And God hid His face from Him, and made Him to know on the cross, in bitterest experience, what sin was—"God made Him to be sin for us" (2 Cor. v. 21).

The Cross is both the way for God to come nigh to man as a sinner without destroying him by His presence,—“And having made peace by the

blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself" (Col. i. 20)—and the Cross is also the way for man as a sinner to come near to God—"Ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. ii. 13).

All these several aspects of the Cross, deeply important and interesting as they are, would fail of giving settled peace to the soul ; if the truth of the actual substitution of Christ for the sinner were kept out of sight. "He loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). Here we find such solid ground on which to rest our souls—the wonder of the Holy One of God being made sin on the Cross, is far greater, than the wonder that any measure of guilt should be answered by it to God.

(To be continued, D. V.)

LIBERTY.

"Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

"Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty ; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."—Gal. v. 1, 13.

The Christian was called to liberty, the holy liberty of the new nature, but yet liberty. It is no longer a law which constrains, or rather vainly seeks to constrain, a nature whose will is contrary to it, to satisfy the obligations which accompany the relationships, in which, by the will of God, we find

ourselves—a law imposed, forbidding evil to a nature that loves evil, and commanding the love for God and for one's neighbour, to a nature whose spring is selfishness.

Had it been possible to take away Christ's moral liberty—which was not possible—it would have been by preventing Him from obeying the will of the Father. It was His food to do so (John iv). As a perfect Man, He lived by every word which came forth out of the mouth of God. He chose to die, to drink the bitter cup which the Father had given Him, rather than not obey Him, and glorify Him in drinking it. Christianity is the liberty of a new nature that loves to obey and to do the will of God. It is true that the flesh, if not kept in subjection, can use this liberty to satisfy its own desires, just as it used the law, which had been given to convict of sin, to try and work out righteousness. But the true liberty of the new man—Christ our life—is the liberty of a holy will, acquired through the deliverance of the heart from the power of sin—liberty to serve others in love. All the law is fulfilled in one word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self." The Christian can do still more—he can give himself for others ; or, at the least, following the direction of the Spirit, he fulfils the law in love. But if they devoured one another in selfishness, contending about circumcision and the law, "take heed," says the apostle, "that ye be not consumed one of another."

The apostle here establishes the principles of

holiness, of the christian walk, and brings in the Holy Ghost in place of the law. In the preceding part of the epistle he had set forth christian justification by faith, in contrast with works of law. He here shows that God produces holiness, instead of exacting it, as did the law with regard to human righteousness, from the nature which loves sin; He produces it in the human heart, as wrought by the Spirit. When Christ had ascended up on high, and was set down on the right hand of God, having accomplished a perfect redemption for those who should believe on Him, He sent down the Holy Spirit to dwell in all such. They were already children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and, because they were such, God gave them the Spirit of His Son. Born of God, cleansed by the blood of Christ, God seals them as His own by the gift of the Spirit until the day of redemption, that is, of glory. Having the new life, Christ as their life, they are to walk as Christ walked, and to manifest the life of Jesus down here in their mortal flesh.

This life, produced in us by the operation of the Holy Ghost through the word, is led by the Spirit which is given to believers; its rule is also in the word. Its fruits are the fruits of the Spirit. The christian walk is the manifestation of this new life, of Christ our life, in the midst of the world. If we follow this path—Christ Himself—if we walk in His steps, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. It is thus sin

is avoided, not by taking the law to compel man to do what he does not like ; the law has no power to compel the flesh to obey, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom. viii.). The new life loves to obey, loves holiness, and Christ is its strength and wisdom by the Holy Ghost. The flesh is indeed there ; it lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusts against the flesh, to prevent the man walking as he would. But if we be led of the Spirit, we are not under the law ; we are not as the man in Rom. vii., where, impelled by the new nature, the will desires to do good, but, a captive to sin, not yet knowing deliverance, he finds no way of doing what he desires ; for the law gives neither strength nor life. Under law, even if life is there, there is no strength : man is the captive of sin (ver. 14).

But sealed by the Holy Spirit, the believer is free, he can perform the good he loves. If Christ is thus in him, the body is dead, the old man is crucified with Christ. The Spirit is life, and that Spirit, as a divine and mighty Person, works in him to bring forth good fruits. The flesh and the Spirit are in their nature opposed the one to the other ; but if we are faithful in seeking grace, the power of the Spirit, Christ, by His Spirit in us, enables us to hold the flesh for dead, and to walk in the footsteps of Christ, bringing forth the fruits that suit Him.

There is not really any difficulty in distinguishing the fruits of the Spirit from the works of the flesh :

the apostle names them, those at least which are characteristic of their respective actions. Of the sad works of the flesh, he positively declares that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God ; but the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, etc. Against such there is no law : God cannot condemn the fruit of His own Spirit. Remark, that the first of these fruits are love, joy, peace. The Spirit will surely produce those practical fruits which manifest the life of Christ in the sight of men, but the inward fruits, the fruits Godward, come first, the condition of the soul needful for producing the others. Many converted persons seek for the practical fruits in order to assure themselves that they are born of the Spirit and accepted of God. But peace, love, joy are the first fruits of the presence of the Spirit ; the others follow. In order to know what is in the heart of God, we need to see the fruit of His heart, the gift of Jesus.

If I believe in Him, and through Him in the love of God, sealed of God by the Spirit, I have the sense of His love—love shewn in the death of Jesus is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit, which is given to those who are washed from their sins through faith in His blood. By that Spirit we have the consciousness of our position before God, and love, joy, peace are in the soul. The fruits which follow are, moreover, the proof to others that my certainty and assurance are not false, that I am not deceived. But for myself

it is what God has done which is the proof of what is in the heart of God, and through faith I set to my seal that God is true. Then, sealed by the gift of the Spirit, I rejoice in His goodness, and the fruits of the new life manifest to others that this life is there.

Moreover, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." They have not got to die: Christ died for us, and He who died being our life, we hold ourselves for dead, crucified with Him, as though we ourselves had died upon the cross, since it was for us He suffered. Possessing another life, I do not own the flesh as "I," but as sin which dwelleth in me, which I hold to be crucified. The faithful Christian realizes this continually. God declares us to be dead with Christ: He looks upon us thus (Col. iii. 3). Faith, accepting God's declaration with thankfulness, holds the flesh, the old man, to be dead (Rom. vi.), and through the Spirit, if he is faithful, he applies the cross in a practical way to the flesh, so that it may not act (2 Cor. iv.); besides this, God in His government sends that which is needful to test the Christian, and to effect this.

The apostle adds the exhortation, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." The law nourishes rather than destroys vain glory, for the law makes us think of self. When rightly applied, it is most

useful for convincing of sin, not for producing righteousness.

Thus the operation of the law with regard to justification and holiness has been fully examined and set in a clear light. It does not produce righteousness, but exacts it. It cannot be linked with Christ as a means of justification : " If righteousness is by the law, Christ is dead in vain." Man ought surely to have kept the commandments of God, but that is not the real question. Man has not kept them, therefore upon that ground he is lost ; Christ, on the other hand, brings salvation because we are guilty.

Then, as to holiness : it is not God's way to seek to produce holiness in the flesh through the law, for the flesh is not subject to the law; neither indeed can be. God gives a new life in Christ, and the Holy Spirit, to produce fruits which are acceptable to Him ; and against these fruits there is certainly no divine law. God cannot condemn the fruits of His own Spirit. It is the new creature, the new life, with its fruits by the Spirit, which are acceptable to God ; it is this new creature which seeks to please Him.

Strengthened by the Spirit, and instructed by Him according to the wisdom of God set forth in the word, let us seek to walk in the footsteps of Christ, that perfect example of the life of God in a Man which has been given to us.

JESUS ON THE CROSS AND ON THE THRONE.

“If a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree ; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day (for he that is hanged is accursed of God), that thy land be not defiled.”—Deut. xxi., 22, 23.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”—Gal. iii., 13.

Worthy, O Lord, of death am I,
 The just award of sin ;
 Unfit to live beneath Thy sky :
 'Tis right that I should hang, and die,
 Guilty, condemned, unclean :
 That cross of shame, that curséd tree,
 Is the just doom of one like me.

Thy sun might justly seek to hide
 His beams from eyes like mine,
 Who in my God-renouncing pride,
 His Maker day by day defied ;
 Thy stars refuse to shine :
 Yea, all good creatures might complain
 Of one, like me, a loathsome stain,—

Unfit to live on Thy fair earth,
 Unfit to breathe its air ;
 A tainted traitor from my birth,
 A discord to all holy mirth,
 A blight on all things fair ;
 Worthy alone of death must be
 One that has sinned, O God, like me.

A hiding-place beneath its sod,
 For one too vile to live ;
 That died beneath the curse of God,
 Smitten by law's most righteous rod,
 Is all that earth could give,
 Till that tremendous judgment-day,
 When earth itself shall pass away.

Thy angels, who delight to praise
 And serve their glorious King,
 Whose will at once Thy will obeys,
 Look down with horror and amaze,
 On such a guilty thing ;
 And ready stand with flaming sword,
 To crush the scorers of their Lord.

Oh, wretched man ! where can I go ?
 What arm can help, or save ?
 I look behind, around, below—
 Naught see, or hear, but deep'ning woe :
 Before me yawns the grave ;
 Beyond the darkness of the tomb,
 The horrors of eternal doom !

“ Look unto Me,” the Saviour cries.
 Behold ! upon the tree,
 Between two thieves, Emmanuel dies,
 The Lamb of God, a sacrifice,
 He bears the curse for me ;
 Oh, love unsearchable, divine,
 His life He gives to ransom mine !

Oh, hour most solemn ! Hour alone,
 In solitary might,
 When God the Father's only Son,
 As man, for sinners to atone,
 Expires—amazing sight !
 The Lord of glory crucified !
 The Lord of life has bled and died.

Oh, mystery of mysteries !
 Of life and death the tree ;
 Centre of two eternities,
 Which look with rapt, adoring eyes,
 Onward and back to Thee !
 Oh, Cross of Christ, where all His pain
 And death—is my eternal gain !

Oh, how my inmost heart doth move,
 While gazing on that tree ;
 The death of the Incarnate Love !
 What shame, what grief, what joy I prove,
 That He should die for me !
 My heart is broken by that cry,
 “ Eli, lama sabachthani ? ”

Worthy of death, O Lord, I am ;
 That vengeance was my due :
 Thy grace upon Thy spotless Lamb,
 Laid all my sins, and guilt and shame ;
 Justice my Surety slew ;
With Him my Surety I have died,
With Him I there was crucified.

When Thou didst make Him “ sin ” for me,
 Thy Son Thou didst not spare ;
 Oh, what exceeding agony,
 All needed, Lord, to set me free,
 Blest Jesus, Thou didst bear !
 Now peace and righteousness can meet,
 And kiss Thy wounded hands and feet.

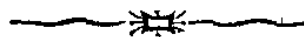
They bury, ere the setting sun,
 In the new rock-hewn cave,
 The body of Thy Holy One ;
 They set the watch ; they seal the stone,
 To keep Him in the grave :
Buried with Him myself I see,
 So low He chose to lie for me.

But lo ! His grave is empty now,
 He sits at Thy right hand :
 Honour and glory crown His brow,
 Before Him all the angels bow,
 And wait His high command :
 The Lamb of God for sinners slain,
 Lives as the Lord of all to reign.

Thy righteousness the sentence spoke,
 That sent Thy Son to die :
 Thy righteousness from death awoke,
 And all the powers of darkness broke,
 And raised Him up on high ;
 His spotless righteousness to own,
 Thou hast exalted to Thy throne.

And now Thy mercy finds delight,
 Right royally to prove
 How precious He is in Thy sight ;
 And all the wondrous depth and height
 Of Thy surpassing love :
 With Him, who bore our sins alone,
 Thy grace has made His ransomed *one*.

Quickened with Him with life divine,
 Raised with Him from the dead,
 His own—and all His own are Thine !—
 Shall with Him in His glories shine,
 His Church's living Head :
 We who were worthy but to die,
 Now with Him, " Abba Father," cry.



" 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.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

If we come to the cross, we must come by our wants and sins. No one comes truly unless he comes as a sinner, whose sins brought him there. But when we pass through the rent veil into the presence of God in perfect peace through the efficacy of the work He accomplished, and look back at the cross by which we came, in contemplating it in a divine way, we find that the cross then has in it a glory and excellency all its own, of which everything in God's ways is the result, even the new heavens and the new earth. God was perfectly glorified in it. It was the climax of good and evil. All was met there. We must come to the cross as sinners to find the good of it ; but if we have found peace by it, coming into God's presence reconciled, it is everything we shall see for ever. We never shall forget the Lamb that was slain. But still we can contemplate it in a divine way. I get in the cross the perfectness of man's sins, positive enmity against God present in goodness. Nothing would do for man but to get rid of Him. "Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin," then they would have been justified in rejecting Him ; "but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (Acts ii. 23 ; John xv. 22). There I get the extreme of man's wickedness. When

God was presented in goodness, it only drew out his hatred. The power was present in Christ to meet all the effects of sin by His word. The manifestation of it drew out the enmity of man's heart against Him, and they crucified Him. There you get all that man is brought out in the presence of God. He had broken the law before, and now God had come in in perfect goodness and power (power that could remove all their distresses); but it was God's power, and they would not have it, they crucified Him. On the other hand, we see there all the power of Satan; therefore He says, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 31). They were all led by him against Christ. "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke xxii. 53). He had overcome him in the temptation in the wilderness. It is said in Luke iv. 13, "he departed from Him for a season." Now He says, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me" (John xiv. 30). He who had power over the earth (for Satan was really the prince of this world) had come back, and succeeded in moving up the hatred of man's heart against Him.

But now see the absolute perfectness of the Second Man: "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do" (John xiv. 31). I get in man (more than man) perfect love to the Father, and perfect obedience; and when He had the dreadful cup to drink (mark the absolute need

there was of it) that perfect obedience and love to the Father made good in the very place where He stood as sin. On the other hand, in the cross I find God's infinite love and grace abounding over sin ; perfect love, giving His Son for us ; and then at the same time perfect righteousness judging against sin, and God's majesty vindicated. " It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings " (Heb. ii. 10). I see thus perfect evil in man and Satan ; perfect good in man (but He was God), and perfect love in God, and righteousness in God against sin when it was met as such, all brought out in the cross ; evil and good meeting there. And it is what has laid the immutable foundation in righteousness for all that will come in in goodness and blessing in the new heavens and new earth, resting not upon responsibility, but upon the accomplishment of the work, the value of which never can be known.

The more we think of the cross (we have come as sinners needing it ; but as Christians reconciled to God we can sit down and contemplate it) we see it stands totally alone in the history of eternity. Divine glory, man's sin, man's perfectness, Satan's evil, God's power and love and righteousness, all were brought out and met there. Accordingly it is the immutable foundation of man's blessing, and of everything that is good in heaven and earth. Then, when our souls are reconciled, we look at

Him and learn of Him : " Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart ; and ye shall find rest " (Matt. xi. 29). He sees that the world had given Him up, there was no rest upon earth. He searched with wonderful patience for a place of rest, but there was no such thing to be found. He knew it, and had tried it ; the Son of man had not where to lay (not merely outwardly) His head, but to rest His heart ; no more than Noah's dove found rest for the sole of her foot. " I looked for some to take pity, but there was none " (Ps. lxxix. 20). Yet feeling this, it is just there He says, " Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

I desire then, that while we rest in the blessed efficacy of the sacrifice, our thoughts should be formed by the Blessed One—that is the practical secret of going through this world : " He that eateth Me, he shall live by Me " (John vi. 57). No doubt the taste ought to grow continually in us. There are the two sides of christian life. If it is to give courage, victory over the world, I look at His glory as in Phil. iii. There it is the energy that runs after to win Christ at the end, counting all else loss and dung. In the second chapter it is the other side, not the object, but His lowliness in coming down is set before us.

RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT WORKS.*(Continued from page 74.)*

But there is more than this. The idea of simple pardon is at the best negative—blessed indeed, even in that view, that iniquity, although committed, is not imputed. Speaking humanly, we have the idea of a free pardon emanating from the grace of the Sovereign ; we have the idea also of an amnesty ; but we cannot get the idea of justification. It is the idea which God alone can present, because He alone can justify the ungodly ; and this is the new and blessed idea here presented. David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works, saying, “ Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.” Now in these words we have not the actual statement of the imputation of righteousness. It could not be clearly and fully announced (although it was the only principle on which God had acted from the beginning), because the great groundwork, The Cross, was not an accomplished fact. However it may have been anticipated by faith, still there was all the difference as to perception, between a promise made and a promise accomplished. Everything was suspended on the death and resurrection of Christ. “ We,” says the apostle, speaking to the natural heirs of promise and natural children of the Kingdom, “ declare unto

you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made to the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same to us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus" (Acts xiii.). The proper person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His death and resurrection, is the key by which we are able to unlock all Scripture. The Holy Ghost, Himself the Inditer of all Scripture, the Spirit which moved the prophets, is especially known to us as "the Spirit of truth," and Glorifier of Jesus. His great testimony is to the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. And as soon as the death and resurrection of Jesus became a matter of fact, the Holy Ghost brought it to bear on His own precious Scriptures ; and in this light we clearly discern, that iniquity not imputed, is righteousness imputed. "God 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.). There is nothing simply negative in the Gospel. It is not a prohibitory system. It is a gracious system of conferring positive blessing. To forgive sin may be negative ; but to give righteousness is a positive and inalienable blessing. This marks the genius of the Gospel. "Whosoever believeth in Him [Jesus] shall not perish ;" it stops not here, "but have everlasting life" (John iii.). "That they may receive forgiveness of sins,"—but it goes on, "and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me" (Acts xxvi.). If we are "delivered from the power of darkness," it is by translation into

the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. i.). Alas, our narrow minds and dull hearts deprive the Gospel of its glory. It is "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" (1 Tim. i.): it represents God in the gracious place of the Giver, and sets man in his only place of possible blessing, that of a simple recipient. Receiving Christ, *i. e.*, "believing on His name," we receive from Him "power (authority) to become the sons of God" (John i.). We receive forgiveness of sins, abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness. We receive eternal life. Christian action follows on this reception of Christ. The teaching of the Holy Ghost unfolds to us what we have received in having received Christ. It is well to keep this principle constantly before the soul: it is not that which we *renounce*, any more than that which we *do*, which makes us Christians, but that which we *receive*. And this principle runs through the Christian life: it is a life which has its affections, sensibilities, energies and activities. Our Christian life is not a system of negation any more than is our natural life. This marks it so forcibly from the common notion of religion. It is said, "Abhor that which is evil"—it is added, "Cleave to that which is good." "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace

to the hearers (Rom. xii.; Ephes. v.). Hence arises the danger to Christians from misusing even the good, holy and righteous law of God. It is not for the righteous (1 Tim. i.). Their need is to have the life already received nurtured by the ministry of Christ, the true and living Head; in order that the energies of that life may be called forth in its varied and appropriate activities. We have Christ Himself for our standard, and the righteousness which we have in Him, as our standing before God, presented to us as our highest but certain final attainment. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after; if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Hence it is that the one hope of our calling, which is so certain, because according to the purpose of God, becomes so formative of the Christian character. To be conformed to the image of God's Son, as the First-born among many brethren, is the blessed destiny of those whom God has already justified. It is upon the certainty of this, that the Holy Ghost acts in our conscience and affections, not making what we shall be to depend on what we practically are, I mean as Christians; but, taking the divine certainty of what we *shall be*, as the mighty moral lever, now to elevate our affections; and even now beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

“ Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is ; and every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure ” (1 John iii.).

This hope, grounded on Christ, is the great power of present purification. “ Desiring to be teachers of the law ” (1 Tim. i.), was, in the apostle’s judgment, the result of ignorance in those who undoubtedly thought to promote holiness thereby. And so there is even a way of pressing conduct and service, which, instead of strengthening the life of Christ in the saint, turns him back on the question of his own salvation. Such is not the way in which the Spirit leads. He glorifies Christ, and takes great care to establish the soul in Him, when leading it on into practical holiness. Such is the order of instruction for the most part in the Epistles. And I believe the wondrous truth of “ righteousness without works ” to be the very ground-work of righteousness and true holiness. It is the positive blessing received, recognized and enjoyed—“ God delivered Christ for our sins and raised Him for our justification,” which calls the Christian life into activity.

Secondly, “ And in whose spirit there is no guile.” It is written of Jesus, “ He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth ” (1 Pet. ii.). Of all others the description is but too true—“ With their tongues they have used deceit ” (Rom. iii.). This

is indeed a humbling condition of being—to dissemble what we are, to pretend to be what we are not—to use the tongue, or to put on an outward demeanour, to conceal the thoughts of the heart—and at the same time, on every moment of serious reflection, to be conscious that we are not before God what we seem to be, or profess to be before others. This is a condition which makes the thought of God insupportable. It is too much of restraint for man always to be acting a character, and “the idle” off-hand word betrays the condition of the heart, which perhaps more studied speech had concealed. It was by the idle word—“This man casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils”—that He, “who knew what was in man,” made manifest from His very words what was in their hearts. Whence then the remedy for so evil a condition? Whence the blessedness of having no guile in the spirit? It is alone the result, the first and blessed result, of the great truth of “righteousness without works.” This doctrine at once cuts off all effort at concealment, and all pretensions to be what we are not. The very ground-work of the doctrine is that the very God, before whom all things are naked and open, who knows us thoroughly (Heb. iv. 12, 13; cf. Ps. cxxxix. 1–12), and has taught us to see ourselves in measure as He sees us, is the One who has covered up our sin—yea, He has covered up all the sin which His omniscience knoweth to be in us; for He has not acted toward us on our

estimate of sin, but on His own. None can condemn—since God Himself justifieth (Rom. viii. 33, 34). God has not put us in the place of justifying ourselves; He does that Himself. And He takes our part much more effectually than we could take our own. Hence there is no guile in the spirit. So to speak, it is not needed. All anxiety about making out a case for ourselves is removed, since God Himself declares His righteousness in covering our sin, and making us righteous (Rom. iii. 24–26). If we search ever so deeply (and it is well to do so), as to what sin is, God knows it more deeply, and has dealt with it in judgment on the Cross of Christ according to His own estimate of it. There is no guile in the spirit, where there truly is faith; because the truthfulness of our own character, and the truthfulness of the character of God are alike maintained by the marvellous mode of God's dealing with us in and through Christ.

There is no guile in the spirit of him who at one and the same time takes his place as the chief of sinners, and yet also as perfectly righteous in Christ. There is no guile in the spirit of him whose object is to glorify Christ and not himself. Hence it follows that when self-vindication becomes needful for a saint, which is but rarely, he is placed in the most humiliating position; because he has to speak of himself instead of Christ. The apostle was thus compelled to speak "as a fool" (2 Cor. xi.). But as a general rule confession and not self-vindication is the path of a saint. An over-

sensitiveness about our own character argues a state of soul little occupied with Christ. If our care be His glory, He will in due time vindicate us. And what is not cleared up now will be in that day (1 Cor. iv.). And I do admire the grace of Christ in the apostle, which could make him turn all the aspersions cast on his own character to establish the faithfulness of God (2 Cor. i.); and thus turn the thoughts of the Corinthians away from himself to a better object.

Thirdly, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long ; for day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me ; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer."

Where can a guilty conscience find relief? The very effort at concealment only aggravates the burthen. How many broken hearts are there, and how many heavy spirits, who dare not tell their sorrow to another. How many who have found bitter disappointments in everything, and in themselves also, who are ignorant of the real cause, because they are ignorant of their real condition as lost, and think their own case peculiar. They know not that God has thought upon their case and considered it ; and provided the remedy. They think not of telling their case to God any more than to their fellows. God, they think, would spurn them for their unworthiness, and man ridicule them for their singularity. They keep their case to themselves. They keep silence, although it be only to aggravate the raging fever within, by

being thus thrown on themselves. They know not that they are only realising what the constitution of man as a moral creature is. He is insufficient for his own happiness ; and the creature too is insufficient to make him happy. This may not in the ordinary acceptation be felt as though it were sin ; yet, it is the deepest principle of sin, because it is in fact “ worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever Amen.” How many aching hearts are there, how many sensible of a void which refuses to be filled, where there is no conviction, properly speaking, of sin ; nothing which makes manifest the need of an all-sufficient atonement. They think not of the Gospel as the remedy for them. They know not that Jesus, heart-sick in a weary world and rejected by it, in the conscious possession of everything man needed either as a creature or a sinner, turned to such and said, “ Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” How has the Gospel been degraded in being regarded merely as a remedy for sin, which it assuredly is : but it is far more ; it is the manifestation of God Himself in such a way to man as a sinner, as to make him happy in God, whilst God is glorified in thus making him supremely happy. The state above described is that which knows not God as the blessed One ; and knows not the blessedness announced by the Oracle of God, “ Blessed is he,” etc. And herein is the crying evil of the professed Christianity of

the world—a mere system of ordinances, nullifying the necessity of the Gospel. These broken-hearted ones are hindered from seeing that there is a remedy of God's own providing for their misery. They want the Gospel in its simplest form ; but they hear it not. They attempt to act out Christian duties, or even to assume Christian privileges, without knowing its first principles—free intercourse with God on the ground of the propitiation of Christ.

There is no relief till the soul can tell out its sorrow to God. Even the very hand of God may be felt and acknowledged, and yet God Himself is regarded as inaccessible. The soul goes on bearing its own burden because it dare not cast it upon God. The whole spirit is gone, just as the natural moisture is dried up under a raging fever. In such a case it is sometimes found that the hand of God (acknowledged and felt, because it has touched some idol or other in which the soul was seeking rest or at least diversion from its misery, instead of graciously subduing the soul) produces fretfulness against God. God is regarded as an enemy, as having gone forth against the sufferer, at the very time He may only be removing the obstacles in the way of the desired relief. He “waits that He may be gracious,”—He “will be exalted that He may have mercy” (Is. xxx. 18). Here is much of the controversy between God and man—whether the remedy for man's misery is to be found in man or in God. The first thing under all circumstances

of misery is the acknowledgment of God. Man finds out many ways of accounting for his misery, and applies his various remedies ; but until he acknowledges God, he always accounts for it on wrong ground, and never discovers the real remedy for it.

There are certain principles which apply with equal truth to man as a sinner, and to one born of God. And this is one—"When I kept silence," etc. It is a condition of exquisite misery to the sinner, because he is ignorant of the revealed character of God, and knows not the relief it would be to tell everything to God ; and to the saint, because knowing God in grace, he does not use the truth aright to deepen himself in self knowledge. He has so far forgotten his standing, as to have guile in his spirit, by not being open with God. The statements of the apostle are generally applicable : "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John i.). When God is really known as the One who imputeth righteousness without works, any concealment from Him must necessarily produce heaviness of spirit. We cannot come near Him by reason of the concealment ; and then comes on coldness. And how often in such a state of uneasiness of soul do we find the fault laid anywhere,

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even on God Himself, rather than on ourselves for keeping silence. When we have been restless in spirit, downcast and unhappy, have we not often been unable to solve the difficulty? Frequently it arises from mortified pride. Our self-esteem has been lowered on discovering some unsuspected sin; as if our blessedness consisted in our *character*, instead of our having righteousness imputed to us without works. God will not allow us to have confidence in our character, or in our faithfulness to Him, but in His own revealed character and His faithfulness to us. This tendency in the saint to self-righteousness, accounts in very great measure for the misery found in Christians; when in any degree entertaining it in ever so subtle a form, they have departed from the real and only ground of their blessedness. But if there be sin unconfessed, or made light of in confession, or only generally, and not specially confessed, it must induce misery; if God has told out to us all His grace in forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, it is that in the knowledge of this, we may have no concealments, or rather attempts at concealment, from Him. He would have us look at ourselves as we really are, and justify Him in so dealing with us as He has done in the Gospel of His Son.

(To be continued, D. V.)

THE DIVINE HARP ON WHICH THE PRAISES OF GOD ARE TO BE SOUNDED FOR EVER.

Oh Lord, we adore Thee and bless Thee,
That we in Thy hands of might
Are the chords whereupon Thou makest
The music of Thy delight ;
Whereon Thou wilt sound for ever
In wondrous and glorious tone,
The Name of Thy Son beloved,
His Name alone.

Angels are a witness rendered to the creative power of God. They excel in strength. We see in them creatures kept by God, so that they have not lost their first estate. Angels desire to fathom the wonderful ways of God with regard to man.

It is from the heart of man, descended to the lowest step in the scale of intelligent beings, resembling, alas ! the beasts in his desires, Satan in his pride, a weak slave in his passions ; strong, or at least proud, in his spirit and in his pretensions ; having the knowledge of good and evil, but in a conscience which condemns him ; by reason of sufferings, sighing after something better, but incapable of attaining it ; having the want of some other world than this material one, but fearful of getting to it ; having the feeling that we ought to be in relationship with God, the only Object worthy of an immortal soul, but at an infinite distance from God in his lusts, and animated by such a desire for independence that he is unwilling

to admit God to the only place which becomes Him if He is God, and seeks consequently to prove that there is no God ; it is from the *heart of man*, capable of the highest aspirations, with which his pride feeds itself, and of the most degrading lusts with which however his conscience becomes disgusted ; it is from *the heart of man* that God forms *the divine harp* on which all the harmony of His praises can resound and will resound for evermore !

By the bringing in of grace and the divine power which unfolds itself in a new life communicated to man, and by the manifestation of the Son of God in human nature, fallen man is brought to judge all evil, according to divine affections formed in him by faith, and to enjoy good according to the perfect revelation of good in God Himself manifested in Christ ; while man gives God His place with joy, because He is known as a God of love. Man also takes again the place of dependence—the only one which is suitable for a creature ; but of a dependence which is exercised in the intelligence of all the perfections of God, on which he depends, and depends with joy, as a child on his father, like Christ Himself who has taken this place in order that we may enter into it.

THE GRACE OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

We find that the great aim, all through Scripture, is to connect the soul with God personally. After the fall, it was the voice of the Lord God walking

in the garden that accosted Adam; and it was from the presence of the Lord God that Adam hid himself—and so on;—the personal connection of the soul with God is given in how many instances I need not say, until we reach the culminating point of it in the gospel of glory committed to Paul: “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. iv. 6). Here alone the soul is in true worship. There are other truths and other parts of the testimony for God; dispensational truth; principles, etc., all most important in their place, and valuable as far as they go; but this alone goes the whole way, as it were, and reaches the goal.

I may illustrate what I mean, as to these two lines of truth and testimony, by the prodigal in the Father's house. In order that he might not feel his unsuited condition to the house, the father summoned the servants and directed them to invest him with habiliments indicative and assuring of his high position. Very happy and interesting work for the servants this, and of an order which engages many amongst us now; but, however interesting, it does not reach the *end* of the father's purpose. If the prodigal were only dressed and decorated, and not then conducted into the house of the father, both son and father would have been deprived of the great end of fruition of their reconciliation.

In like manner, in Joshua v., I have all the preparation for possessing the land; and

a skilful servant might educate me earnestly and deeply in one and all of the details, from the circumcision to the corn of the land ; but I should lose the real power and conscious title of *entree*, if I had not seen the Captain of the Lord's Host, and, as an unshod worshipper, known that it is *with Him* that I take possession. In 2 Cor. iv. 6, the apostle has been shewing how the reception of the gospel connects us with Christ in glory, as it had thus connected himself at first, when he was taught this gospel, and was enjoined to be a minister and a witness of *the things that he had seen*. Now it was a glorified Christ that he had *seen* ; therefore, if any one sees not this light which is the ministration of righteousness, it is not salvation merely that he is rejecting,—but the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face [or person] of Jesus Christ.”

I have often felt, that, in preaching or teaching, the Person and presence of the Lord was not the chief point set before the soul. By some the gospel is preached by calling on sinners to present Christ to God as an all-sufficient atonement for their sins ; others, more enlightened, proclaim the love of God declared in His Son giving eternal life to every believer. But both these fall short of the presentation of God establishing righteousness in His own Son, and through Him ; leading the believing prodigal to His own House, and nearness to Himself forever, in full and unbroken joy to *both*. In the two former, though the gain of the

sinner he largely insisted on, *God's* satisfaction—*His* gain, we may say in His joy—is not entered on at all. We little comprehend the gospel of the glory of Christ disclosed to Saul of Tarsus, who from *thence* became the witness of *the things that he had seen*. The glory of God became the starting point of the sinner ; as it was also the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Under the law, there were sacrifices, which, however, never saved the transgressors of the law from legal penalties. The gospel preached, even now-a-days, is more the presentation of the sacrifice, proclaimed, I admit, as all-sufficient and satisfactory, and the call on sinners is to approach it ; but this is not presenting to faith God's salvation, because *to Him* the sacrifice is full and endlessly satisfactory ; *His* satisfaction being the great subject-matter presented to faith. The reception of the Prodigal, great as was his rescue, does not derive its chief excellence from the completeness of his safety and the greatness of his deliverance, but from his happy and welcomed nearness to the Father.

We want a gospel which connects us with the presence of God in His joy ; and we want an education in His word, which would connect us with our Lord personally as the living Transcript of the mind of God.



GOD'S PRECIOUS THINGS.

Our common moral sense of God will tell us that *holiness* and *righteousness* must be precious with Him : " Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever" (Ps. xciii. 5). Purity and truth, and the maintenance of all the cares of order and integrity, must be infinitely according to Him. The conscience will bear this witness.

Faith knows that *His grace* is precious with Him. Faith knows that well. He delighteth in mercy. The gospel provides joy for the Divine mind. Faith understands this about God beyond the thoughts of the conscience or the moral sense that is in us.

The Gospel is the Gospel of the blessed (or happy) God (1 Tim. i. 11). In the eyes of the Lord the feet of the preachers of it on the mountains are beautiful ; and in the eyes of the Lord the garments, the mystic garments of the priests, the ministers of it, in the temple are beautiful—" Glory and beauty" (Rom. x. 15 ; Ex. xxviii. 2 ; Heb. ii. 7)

The Divine mind is thus disclosed to us. We apprehend it, thus far, with certainty. A meek and quiet spirit is, with the Lord, of great price (1 Pet. iii. 4). There is also richest joy before Him in heaven in the grace that welcomes a lost and returned sinner (Luke xv. 7, 10).

But, I ask, are not His *counsels* dear to Him ? Are not the events of his bosom dear to Him ?

The maintenance of righteousness and of godly order is of price to Him. The exercise of grace is joy to Him. Is not the purpose of His wisdom and the secret of His bosom alike dear to Him? Must it not be so? It cannot but be so. In the zeal of enforcing what is right, and in the publishing what is gracious, we may overlook this. Is it so that the Church was a peculiar bosom secret of God before the world was—a mystery kept secret from ages and generations but “hid in God”? (Eph. iii. 4, 5, 9-12; Col. i. 24-26). And can we not give such a thing a place among the things that are precious with Him?

Let us ask the Spirit that so fervently moves the apostle in such a chapter as Eph. i., whether the “hope” and the “calling,” which he there prays that the saints may discover and know, be of great price with God. Would He have the knowledge of it, so important with the saints, were it not high and dear in the thoughts of the mind of Christ?

The Church, as one has observed, opens and clears the volume. We have it shadowed in the man and woman of the Garden of Eden. We have it signalled in the Holy Jerusalem at the very close of the Apocalypse.

It is when the Spirit of Christ in David had for a moment rapidly touched or awakened the mystery, that the worshipper exclaims, “How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God!” (Ps. cxxxix.)

It cannot but be so, though our moral judgment or our conscience, and again our common evangelic faith, do not so quickly reach it. We know, as we have said, that godliness is precious with Him. But again, I ask, are not His own eternal counsels, the secrets of His bosom, precious with Him?

Known unto Him are all His works from the foundation of the world. Redemption was no after-thought with Him. He planned it all. All passed in bright review before Him when as yet there was none of them. And all was precious. And the mystery of the Church that has given a body to Christ, and a partner in glory to the Son of His love, lay there the deepest, because the dearest, in the bosom of sovereign and eternal counsels.



RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT WORKS.

(Continued from page 100.)

Fourthly, "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

What relief is here—full immediate relief; the sense of forgiveness accompanying the very act of confession. Silence was broken by confession—no longer is effort made at concealment. The very One whose hand was felt to be so heavy, is

the One to whom the heart is opened and poured out ; “ I acknowledged my sin unto Thee. I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord.” There is no “ creature that is not manifest in His sight : but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do ” (Heb. iv. 13). It is a solemn thought that we have to do with God ; and when once this truth gets fast hold on the conscience, the effort at concealment from Him produces the exquisite misery described in the two preceding verses. Confession gives relief, because it at once puts us in the actual place of having to do with God. It practically acknowledges that all things are naked and opened unto His eyes, that He is the rightful and truthful Judge, that what His word says of the evil of our hearts is true. Then is God justified by confession. This is true if God were regarded only in the character of a Judge. But how much more is God justified, when confession is made, under the sense of His love as known in the Gospel of His grace. There is it deepest, and fullest, and most truthful ; then the forgiveness of the iniquity of transgression, leads the same heart and lips which have confessed unto sin, to make confession unto salvation. And in this we find the deepest elements of the character of the saint. He had before but one subject of thought and study ; that was himself : he has now another, the Christ of God. Has he to speak of the first, it is the language of confession, ever deepening as he advances in the knowledge of the

Lord Jesus Christ ; but is he in his proper and happier element, has he to speak of Christ—it is to confess Him as all his salvation and all his desire. How happily do confession and praise unite ; happily because truthfully ; no language is sufficient to express the real degradation of a sinner ; no language sufficient to tell out the grace and glories of the Saviour. And when confession and praise are so united, what fervency they give to prayer and intercession.

Now, I doubt not that a great deal of the trial of spirit to which saints are subject arises from their not exercising themselves in self-judgment and confession, under shelter of the blessed truth of “righteousness without works.” It is the right apprehension of this blessed truth which puts us in the place of self-judgment—a place exceedingly high and wonderful. If God, the Judge of all, has become the Justifier of those who believe in Jesus, is it that they shall make light of sin ? Far from it ; it is that they may judge themselves. The blood of Jesus gives us access into the holiest ; there we are in the light ; there we are in the privileged place where Israel’s High Priest could only enter once in the year, but which is ever open to us by Jesus, our great High Priest. Entering into the very presence of God, with unshod feet consciously touching the sand of the desert—there it is we address ourselves to one part of our priestly ministry, self-judgment, separating between the precious and the vile ; judging between things that

III

differ. We are in the light, and the light in which we are detects that which is inconsistent with itself; and we could not stand there, unless under the shelter of that very blood which has introduced us there; and we learn there more and more the value of that precious blood. We have found in it remission of sins—it has washed us, and keeps us clean. Now, I believe “the uprightness of heart” mentioned in the last verse of this Psalm to be very intimately connected with self-judgment; for this eventually turns us back on the blessedness announced in the Psalm, that the very evil which we have only now detected God doth not impute to us—God has covered it. It is thus that the heart is kept humble, and the conscience tender and lively. I believe the uprightness and honesty of confession which may have been manifested at conversion, is frequently impaired from neglect of self-judgment before God. A saint may become too solicitous about his own character in the eyes of his fellow-saints, or of the world, and thus unconsciously be led to act a part, instead of getting his life strengthened from the Spring and Source of life. There was a truthfulness in the exercise of heart which led first to Christ, but this is impaired when the maintenance of our character becomes our object, instead of Christ. Now, by self-judgment truthfulness is maintained, and our need of Christ in new and various ways becomes manifest. Let the exercise of soul be ever so personally humbling, yet if it leads to Christ, it leads to a larger

apprehension of the blessedness declared in this Psalm : we are really strengthened. At times I marvel at the grace of God in permitting us to judge ourselves. He can never give up His title as "Judge of all ;" we have come to Him as such (Heb. xii. 23), but so completely has He, by His grace, justified us through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, that He would have us arraign ourselves before the judgment-seat, and be the judges of our own selves. The right apprehension of standing in complete righteousness before God in Christ can alone qualify us for this. Self-judgment may have been carried on by us in our ignorance on a different principle—viz., seeking to find some ground in ourselves for acceptance with God. But now it is to search and see how just and holy is the way of God in dealing with us, so as to make us debtors alone to grace, and yet this very grace reigns through righteousness by Jesus Christ ; since redemption displays the holiness, justice and truth of God in strict accordance with His mercy.

There are three characters of judgment with which the saint has to do—self-judgment—the judgment of the church—the judgment of the Lord. These are very distinct in their character. Attention to the first necessarily precludes an individual from falling under the judgment of the church, whose province is to judge those within, while those who are without God judgeth (1 Cor. v. 12, 13). The failure of the church to exercise judgment, in

its own proper province, on overt acts of evil—such as occurred at Corinth—brings on the judgment of the Lord in some outward and manifest form. “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (1 Cor. xi. 30). It is equally the province of the church to judge the doctrine of those within. The Lord had it against Thyatira—that Jezebel, which called herself a prophetess, was suffered to teach her seducing doctrine. And the Lord must judge in this case also, if the church tolerates evil doctrine. But the judgment of the Lord is ever supreme, and we are always, individually and collectively, amenable to it. Self-judgment, indeed, would prevent us, as individuals, from falling under the Lord’s judgment in a marked and manifest manner: “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord” (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32). The rod for wilful disobedience need not be applied, because self-judgment would prevent such outbreaks, the principle of which would have been secretly judged. But although the judgment of the Lord, in the shape of present punishment, would thus be avoided, this does not interfere with the general truth, that “whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth” (Heb. xii. 6). The difference of the Lord’s dealing, even where there might be outward sorrow, would be very apprehensible to the conscience of those who came under it. To the soul exercised in self-judgment it would

readily be interpreted as the interference of love, the wisdom of which would be discerned. To the careless saint it would be felt as punishment, and regarded as a warning to bring him to a sense of his actual condition. Nor must we forget how much the needed discipline of the Lord is preventive ; and this, too, is learned in self-judgment, in the holiest of all. The "thorn in the flesh" might have been interpreted by the apostle very differently from what the Lord intended, had his soul been unexercised before God about it : "Lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Cor. xii.). He had not been so exalted ; but there was the unsuspected danger and tendency to be guarded against ; and this the apostle discovered, not by revelation, but by exercise of soul before the Lord. And have we not all had occasion, not only to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God for something positively wrong in our ways, but also to justify His love and wisdom in some special discipline the preventive character of which has been taught to us by Himself in the holiest of all ? I feel increasingly the importance of deep searching self-judgment, under the shelter of the blessed oracle : "Transgression forgiven—sin covered—iniquity not imputed." I say not that we are always able to interpret the Lord's dealings with us, but I believe self-judgment as to the springs of evil, leading to confession before God, to be the means of attaining this interpretation. God is always right—a simple but deeply practical truth. We put

God in the right by confession ; and we not only get relief, but we actually learn that God is right, and understand His ways. O if saints did know the toilsome process of self-vindication, and instead of justifying themselves were to justify God, what sorrow would they avoid. And it betrays so much want of confidence in God to be anxious to vindicate ourselves ; as if, after all, it was our own character, and not His grace, which was the real power of blessing. I think we see the design of the apostle in using the word “ discern,” not simply judge (in the Greek, 1 Cor. xi. 31). If we would “ discern ” ourselves, we should not be judged. Self-discernment, getting a positive insight into the real moving springs of the activity of the flesh. Who can bear to look too closely into it, unless he know the blessed truth that God had judged the flesh in the cross of Christ : “ Our old man has been crucified with Him ” (Rom. vi. 6). The new evil which we discern in it God had seen from the beginning, and allows us now to see, that we may justify Him in His total judgment of it. The flesh cannot discern itself—it cannot stand before God. It is by the power of life, communicated directly from Christ, brought into this exercise by the Holy Ghost Himself, that we thus discern ourselves ; and this in the immediate presence of God Himself. “ The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned.

But he that is spiritual judgeth all things " (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15). It is a human aphorism that " the proper study of mankind is man," but deeply fallacious. Man knows not himself by studying himself, but by studying God : " This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent " (John xvii. 3). It is by this divine science that man really knows himself ; not by measuring himself by himself (cf. 2 Cor. x. 12), but by measuring himself by God—by God as He is revealed in and through Christ. And I have often thought that the annals of history dark as they are, or the record of crime black as it is, would not together present such a picture of the depravity of man, as would the secret confessions of saints to God, if they were laid open to us as they are to Him. Nothing but the consciousness of complete justification could ever embolden the saint to confess before God those secret springs of evil which he detects when judging himself immediately in the presence of God. We wonder not at the most devoted saint speaking of himself as the chief of sinners.

" For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when thou mayest be found : surely, in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding-place ; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble ; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

It is indeed a blessed encouragement to the soul to be assured that there is nothing we may

not tell God. He has done everything to win our confidence, even delivering His "Son for our offences, and raising Him again for our justification." And it is by confession that we practically maintain our confidence in Him. It is because of the connection between confession and forgiveness that every one that is godly can pray unto God in a time when He may be found. If sin fresh discovered in ourselves need not bar access to God—if He does not hide Himself away from us, but is always to be found—what can hinder? And, practically, what does hinder intercourse with God? It is not God Himself. It is not that either a sacrifice or a Priest are to be sought—all is ready. But the unreadiness is in ourselves. There the real hindrance is to be found. We often try anything rather than the right thing. We may become more diligent in outward service—more regular in outward worship—more keen in judging the evil of others—when the one thing needful is confession. It is indeed a bad state of soul, when things most blessed in their place are used by us to interrupt our intercourse with God. God requires truth in the inward parts; and if there be alienation of heart from God, the restoration must be truthful. God must be justified, no blame must be laid on Him, all must be taken on ourselves; and this is just what confession does. He who is godly must regard God as the only Justifier, and must know Him, as ever to be found, even when we have to

go before Him with the confession of iniquity. And is it not in this way that we foil Satan as the accuser? If there be readiness of confession, is there not the consciousness that it is God who justifieth? Who, then, can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? That which the accuser would lay to their charge they have already laid to their own charge before God—and it is forgiven. It is thus, by experience, that the exercised soul knows God Himself as its hiding-place—"Thou art my hiding-place." There may be many ways in which the blessedness of faith in Jesus may be experienced; but I question if any way is more vivid than the difference between hiding ourselves away from God, as Adam did in the garden after he had sinned, and hiding ourselves in God. What a thought it is, that God should present Himself, as He does in the Gospel of His grace, as the only refuge for a sinner; as the alone One who is able to take his part, and can effectually take his part. Is not this one blessed aspect of the glory of God? He makes all His goodness to pass before us, and proclaims His own name as just, yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus—the only God—because He is a just God and a Saviour; and has thus given His challenge that there is no God beside Him; because He is a Saviour God. There is a refuge from the accusations of Satan—from the frowns of the world—from that which is more bitter than either, self-condemnation; and this refuge is in God Himself. He has laid Himself out to us

as the Depository of our every woe, the Sympathiser with our every care, the One who pitieth every infirmity, the patient Listener to every complaint we have to make against ourselves. All this is learned under the knowledge of the blessedness of the truth of "Righteousness without works;" yea, is comprised in that blessedness. It is confidence in this divine way of righteousness which emboldens us to say, "Thou shalt preserve me from trouble." And is any trouble equal to soul trouble? How few are able to take the honourable place of suffering either for Jesus, or for righteousness' sake! such may rightfully rejoice. But spirit-broken, heart-sick, self-weary, whither can we go? God is our hiding-place; He "comforteth those that are cast down;" He is "the Father of mercies (pitifulnesses) and the God of all comforts." (2 Cor. vii. 6; i. 3); He can make us rejoice out of our sorrow. And surely it is not right for the song of redemption to be sung once only on the shore of the Red Sea, and then the notes of praise to die away, and to be succeeded by murmurings. Alas, it is often so practically; the joy of conversion is frequently followed by murmuring and complaining. The beginning of our confidence is not held fast. The truth of the blessedness of God's imputing righteousness without works is let slip, as though we no longer needed it. Saints have to learn to justify the wisdom of God in redemption in all its fulness, by learning, in the progress of their own experience, that nothing short of it would

meet their need. We do not, as we might expect, find saints singing the new song, new and ever varied, yet in substance the same. And wherefore? Because grace alone can be the ground work of our song; and if the heart be not established in grace, we have no heart for song. But when a saint goes on under the shelter of the blessedness of "righteousness without works," learning it as he goes on his way, how frequent the boast of thanksgiving—"Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." There is a "singing and making melody in the heart to the Lord" (Ephes. v. 19); and this not publicly, but privately in the closet. For great, unquestionably, as is the transition from darkness to light, by faith in Christ Jesus, at the outset, yet, what is the experience of the saint afterwards? Is it not constant deliverances? "He that is our God is the God of salvations" (Ps. lxxviii. 20). It is a happy school into which we are brought to learn God in the character in which He has revealed Himself to us. The history of each individual saint will tell out the same truth—that where "sin abounded grace has superabounded;" and the end of each saint individually will show forth the same truth as the church collectively, "*to the praise of the glory of His grace.*" O that we may be honest and upright in heart with God, and then the marking His ways will issue in frequent songs of deliverance.

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

THE LORD JESUS, IN JOHN I. 43—II. 25.

The Lord may be traced in this scripture, as One who ranges, if I may so express it, *through different regions of divine glory*, in the calm and perfect sense of this, that they all belong to Him, and are *fully and properly His own*.

In His intercourse with Nathaniel, the Lord Jesus shews Himself to be the One who touches the deep springs that are in man, conversing in power with the spirits of all flesh, re-making man also, re-creating him after His own mind, and stamping a new character upon him, as for eternity. He lets this Israelite know, that He had been with him under the fig-tree, ere Philip had called him, and that He was there with him, re-modelling his mind and character, giving him, as it were, a new condition of being, making him, according to the divine oracle in Ps. xxxii., “an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.”

It was the Spirit of God that alone could thus converse with Nathaniel’s soul, and form him anew, as was done under the fig-tree. And thus it is, that Jesus here rises on the conscience of that Israelite in the glory of God; and under the weight and sense of that glory he worships Him.

This is a very wondrous moment. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Jesus, the power which Jesus uses in divine sovereign grace. The Lord Jesus is before us here, as the Jehovah of the day of Gideon. Jehovah addressed Gideon according to

His own counsel about him, or as such an one *as His own Spirit was making Him*. “Thou mighty man of valour,” says the Lord to Gideon, though at that time he was but a poor man of Manasseh, threshing wheat in his father’s threshing floor at Ophrah. But, in the counsel of God, and by the energy of the Spirit, Gideon was the leader of the host of Israel against Midian; and the angel spoke in divine intelligence to him, or as the One who knew the purpose of God respecting him. So is it here. Jesus addressed Nathaniel, as Nathaniel was *under the operation of the Holy Ghost*, imparting to him the character of a guileless Israelite. This operation had been going on with Nathaniel in the solitude of the fig-tree, and that operation Jesus was divinely acquainted with.

Jesus was thus visiting the soul as *God* alone can visit it. He was touching the very springs within, and forming man after a new model. And in this most blessed and wondrous way, we track Jesus through one peculiar region of divine glory, and see Him there, in the power of His own Spirit, doing divine work. And He is there, *as at home*, as One who had the title to be there, without wrong or robbery. For what, I may ask, of divine prerogative is not His? What region of divine power may He not survey and measure as His own? Be they deep or high, be they where the *Spirit* of God alone can work, or be they where the *finger* of God alone can work, where the *strength* of God alone can be felt, or the *wisdom* of

God alone can enter, Jesus will occupy them all, as all His own. And thus we find Him, as we pass on through this fine scripture.

There was a marriage in Cana, and Jesus is invited. He goes—and He is there in His despised, rejected form, as among men. Man has objects worthier of his regard, and Jesus is nobody in the presence of the bride-groom, and the guests, and the governor of the feast. But, though the world knew Him not, it was made by Him. And accordingly, He touches *the springs of nature* here, as afore, in the person of Nathaniel, He had touched *the spirits of men*. He re-creates, He reforms, the material found in the kingdom *around*, as He had already done with the materials found in the kingdom *within*. He turns the water into wine, at this marriage feast in Cana.

This was what the finger of *God* that once garnished the heavens, alone could do—the voice of God that once said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” But in this, Jesus is seen in another region. He is God still, but God acting in another place or sphere of power, in the kingdom of nature, and not in the secret place of the spirits of all flesh. But it is the same unspeakably blessed God of glory that we track, whether here or there, and Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the Stranger on earth, Jesus the Guest of the marriage at Cana, is He. ♦

But do we, I ask, delight to see the Lord Jesus thus traversing regions where *God* alone could

find and know His way? Is this sight of His glories grateful to us? With all the grace which the thick veil of His humiliation casts over it, our spirits should have the same communion with the *person of Jesus* as with the *presence of God*. For it is God, though manifest in the flesh, we know in Him—and faith, therefore, worships. Man He was in deepest, fullest verity; of flesh and blood partaker; but He was *the Word* made flesh. And there is no region of the divine glory that He does not tread in the calm, assured power, and conscious right, which alone befit that only One to whom they all belong.

But, again, He purifies the Temple, His Father's house. But He does this as the *God* of the Temple: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." This was building houses as God alone could build them: "Every house is builded of some man, but He that built all things is God." To build by creation, or by resurrection, as here, is *divine* architecture, and Jesus is a *divine* Builder: "He spake of the temple of His body."

He had touched, as we saw, the springs of the *spirit of man*, and of *nature*, and now He touches the very sources or foundations of the *power of death*. And this is another region which belongs to God—part of *His* dominions. And Jesus, after this manner, as we still track Him through this scripture, is still God, God in the mighty strength of God down in the place of death, as before He had been God with the voice or finger of God abroad

in the realm of nature, or with the Spirit of God, in the place of the spirits of all flesh. "In John's Gospel," as one has said, "Jesus is God come down from heaven." Nature is not too wide a region for Him, the spirit of man that is in him is not too secret a region for Him, or death and the grave too deep or profound or mighty a region. He visits each and all of them in divine grace, divine power, or divine triumph, and leaves everywhere the same witness that *God* Himself had been there.

We have, however, another path of the glory of Christ, still to follow in this scripture.

He had been doing miracles ; and it is said, "Many believed on Him when they saw the miracles that He did"—but then it is added, "Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man."

Here is *God* again. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; who can know it ? I the Lord search the heart."

Jesus did not know man, or the springs or energies of corrupt nature, by reason of any fellowship with them, for He had no such fellowship. The prince of this world had nothing in Him. He was "that holy thing"—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." But still, as this passage tells us, "He knew what was in man." He knew it all, and that it was deceitful above all things. He searched the hearts and tried the reins of the

children of men. He knew *all* men, not one more than another, but he tried the reins ; He knew what was in man. He, who by His prophet, had long ago declared that man was deceitful above all things, now (when He stood in the midst of men) “ would not commit Himself unto them.”

This was *divine* acquaintance with man. This was full, radical, perfect understanding of man, after the manner of the divine mind. Jesus was *God* in His knowledge of man. What Jehovah declared Himself to be by His prophet, Jesus is now declared to be by the evangelist. Jesus knew nothing of *revolted* man, or of the heart's corruption by sympathy, but He knew it all as God, who searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men, *to give every man according to his ways* ; as He does here ; for He denies man His confidence, as “ deceitful above all things,” and thus, according to his ways, unworthy of that confidence.

Here again, then, the Lord Jesus takes the way of God, and ranges again through another region that belongs only to God.

We see Him thus, beloved. God He is, wherever God may be known or tracked. God, in the place of the spirits of all flesh ; God, in the kingdom of nature ; God, in victor-strength over death and the grave ; God, as searching the hearts and reins of the children of men.

Jesus is there where God *alone* could be ; there, in all the settled ease and certainty of One who

knew those regions as His own. In grace unutterable He has known the homestead of the human family, and been an inhabitant of the village of Nazareth—the Son of man, He has lived and walked with the children of men, eaten of their bread and drunk of their cup, known their toils and their sorrows in all their reality, and at their hand suffered reproach and rejection and death, but He was equally at home where the Spirit of *God* alone could work, and where the voice of *God* alone could be heard and command, where the strength of *God* alone could prevail, and where the light or knowledge of *God* alone could enter and search.

He ranges all the dominions of God, and is no trespasser. There is no robbery of a glory that is another's ; it is His own. He is the Former of light, the Creator of the ends of the earth ; the One who touches the springs of nature, and they come forth in forms such as His fingers fashion and His voice commands.

This is so ; and we can track it all here in this scripture, without doubt or difficulty. But in the midst of all this, there is a thing betrayed, though incidentally, which, in hope of further profit, I will notice.

The Mother, in a general sense, knew the glory and power of the Lord, but she knew not the season or the moral order of that glory ; and this is, wherever it appears, a great evil. She said to

Him at the feast, "they have no wine," desirous that He should display Himself. She was as one that said, "shew thyself to the world" (chap. vii. 4). But she greatly erred. His time for this had not come. He will, indeed, manifest His power in the souls of His elect now; He will, by His Spirit, visit Nathaniel under the fig-tree; He will re-create a sinner, and give him a new character for eternity; and He will own such chosen ones, and know them, and address them in their new place, and read out to them, as it were, the writing that is written of them in the Book of Life, as here in His earliest welcome of the man of Cana. He will do all this *now*; but He will not as yet shine in a glory that the world can appreciate. "My time," says He, "is not yet come." The Mother, therefore, did greatly err. A common error, and never more common than in this day in which we live. "Shew us a sign from heaven," was the craving of hearts that knew not the Christ, the Son of God, because the god of this world had blinded their eyes. But Jesus gave them another kind of sign altogether, "the sign of Jonas the prophet." He must be known in *humiliation* in such a world as this, if known aright. The Mother took the place and part of the world in this suggestion, "they have no wine," and she is rebuked. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" Her worldly-mindedness is rebuked. Jesus could have no sympathy with it.

Not only, however, is she rebuked, she fails also,

to see the glory that the Lord *will* display ; and this has great meaning in it for us.

He makes the water wine. He supplies the table as the divine Lord, or Creator, of the feast. But the governor of the feast knew nothing of this, the bridegroom knew nothing of it, the guests knew nothing of it, the Mother was not in the secret or the vision of it ; it was only the servants who had this secret in the midst of them, and the disciples who had this manifestation of glory made to them.

All this has great meaning in it for us. The Mother lost, in spirit, what she had, in the mind of the world sought after. And so with us. As far as we are, in spirit, one with the world, so far must we be left without discoveries of the glory of the Son of God, or communion with Him. For He is not of the world ; His time for manifestation is not yet come ; it must be judged and re-fashioned, ere that can be. And according to the *moral* of such a truth as that, the Mother, on this occasion, is rebuked, and is left without the manifestation of that glory in which the Son could shine and did shine. Those, and those only, who were in the due place, the servants and the disciples, are let into the secret and get the vision ; for they filled, morally, the very opposite place of the Mother. She was of the world, but they are nobody in the scene. The governor of the feast had his dignity, the bridegroom his joy, the guests their good cheer, and the Mother a mother's vanity and expectations ;

but the servants and the disciples are nothing, and seek for nothing beyond what service or discipleship called them to, and they learn the secret of His power, and behold the manifestation of His glory.

What a lesson for us in the midst of these discoveries of Him that was "God manifest in the flesh!" We must awake, we that are sleeping with the world, if we would get more of "the light of the Lord."



RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT WORKS.

(*Concluded from page 120.*)

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee."

Under the blessedness of transgression forgiven, sin covered, and iniquity not imputed, comes in a new order of guidance; the guidance of the eye of Him who has justified us freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

When it pleased Jehovah to redeem Israel out of Egypt He Himself became their Guide. Israel needed guidance; and Jehovah went before them in a pillar of a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. He thus went before them to search out a

resting place for them in the wilderness. They pitched or struck their tents at the moving or settling of the Pillar of the cloud. "The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys" (Ex. xl. 38). This surely was blessed guidance—in strict keeping with the character of redemption then manifested—a shadow of a deeper reality—but it was not intelligent guidance. There was no communion of soul with Jehovah needed to apprehend this guidance: "the cloud of the Lord was . . . in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys."

But now the very end of redemption is to bring us into communion with the thoughts and ways of God, and such a guidance would not be suitable to our standing: "The *servant* knoweth not what his master doeth" (John xv. 15). He goes and comes at his bidding, but he knows not the reason of either. Such a character of obedience would not suit those who know the blessedness of transgression forgiven, and are thereby admitted into the very thoughts and counsels of God. "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 16). The obedience now suitable is intelligent obedience: "Understanding what the will of the Lord is"—"Proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Eph. v. 17; Rom. xii. 2). Now just in proportion as the guidance is of a higher order, so is it more difficult; and there is ever a readiness

in us from this very difficulty, to take the lower order of providential guidance, instead of the guidance of the *eye*. The "Directorship" practised in the Romish church, may as readily be accounted for, on the principle of being a relief from the exercise of conscience before God, as on the principle of priestly domination. It is far more congenial to the natural heart to have the conscience kept by another, than to have it exercised before God. And the plea of infallibility has a charm in it, because it saves us the trouble of judging before God, what is truth, and what is error—what is right and what is wrong. If the real power against the fundamental doctrine of Popery is found alone in the doctrine of "righteousness without works," the practical use of this truth in leading our souls into habitual intercourse with God, is the alone preservative from the principle of "directorship." It is not the guidance of the eye of God, when we follow an individual Christian, or a congregation of Christians. The provision of God in the blessed truth of righteousness without works, is that the conscience of each individual should be in direct connection with *Himself*. And is there any instance on record where even Christian legislation for the Church has not trenched on God's prerogative, of having to do with the consciences of individuals. Apostolic authority dare not come in between God and the conscience. I utterly repudiate the idea of each man doing what is right in his own eyes, but I do most strenuously assert

the truth of God's right to have to do with the conscience ; and of the believer's privilege, I say not duty, to have his conscience exercised before God. " Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." " Whatsoever is not of faith is sin " (Rom. xiv. 5, 23). And is it not the necessary fault of every establishment, that it arrogates to itself the right to settle those things which God has left to be settled before Him. And thus the very obedience of saints is regulated not by God, but by the convention of the religious Society to which they belong. We are members of one body, and members one of another ; and our healthful corporate action must be hindered, if we leave out the important truth, that we are members of Christ. How needed is intercourse with God to guide the conduct of a saint. And is it not for neglect of this that we bring much discipline on ourselves ? God will have His way with us. But how often are we as the horse and mule, which have no understanding : not understanding the will of God because we study not the guidance of His eye. We are led by circumstances, and not by the Spirit. We walk in a large place when we walk before the Lord ; but how apt are we to turn each one to his own way, and God has His bit and bridle for us. This He is wont to use for His enemies : " Because thy rage against Me, and thy tumult is come up into Mine ears, therefore will I put My hook in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest " (Is.

xxxvii. 29). And how constantly do we as His saints, to our shame be it spoken, need the bit and bridle to turn us back by the way we have come. Who is there who has not to confess that the right path has been reached by painful and humbling discipline, which would have been readily found had heed been given to the guidance of the eye. Amidst the manifold proofs of present conscious weakness, this appears to me very prominent, the little confidence which the saints have of spiritual guidance in their several paths. They walk not as those consciously led of the Spirit. Among many, indeed, such guidance is not acknowledged even as a principle ; providential guidance, if so it may be called (for providential control over circumstances, or even our own waywardness, can hardly be called guidance), is alone regarded. But where the principle of intelligent spiritual guidance is maintained as the privilege of the saint, how readily do we take hold of providential ordering as our ground of action. Hence we tread uncertainly : or we follow the steps of others ; but this is walking by sight and not by faith. This arises from the habit of only using our blessedness as a shelter, and not as that which introduces us into the presence of God. It is a beautiful description of the Thessalonians, that their “ work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ,” was “ in the sight of God and our Father.”

To Israel God shewed His *acts*, but He made His *ways* known to Moses, the one with whom He

conversed familiarly, as a man talketh with his friend (Ps. ciii. 7 ; Ex. xxxiii. 11). Surely God has by His grace introduced us into intimacy with Himself that we too might know His ways.

“ Many sorrows shall be to the wicked ; but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous ; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.”

Nothing can be more hollow than the mere conventional righteousness of men ; it is based on human convenience or selfishness ; without any regard to the holiness of God at all. It is simply character as man estimates character, the most fatal hindrance to the reception of the truth : “ How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only ” (John v. 44). And so strongly does this regard for character act, that even when the judgment is convinced of the truth of God, man is too cowardly to avow his conviction : “ Nevertheless among the chief rulers also, many believed on Him ; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue : for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God ” (John xii. 42, 43). There is one way in which we find the word of God frequently detecting this hollowness, and that is, by the remarkable contrasts which it draws : “ Everyone that *doeth evil* hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved ; but

he that *doeth truth*, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John iii. 20, 21). Here the human contrast to doing evil, would be doing good; but that would simply be man's estimate of himself, by comparing himself with his fellow men; but God contrasts man with himself, and "he that doeth truth" forms his estimate of himself from God. This is the thing needed. The light lays man open to himself as he is; naked and open before God. So again, God will send strong delusion on many to believe a lie, because they *loved not the truth* but had pleasure in *unrighteousness* (2 Thes. ii. 11, 12). And here in the Psalm before us we find "the wicked" contrasted with him "that trusteth in the Lord." And surely the wicked is he who "hath not submitted himself unto the righteousness of God" (Rom x. 3),—the one who will not submit to be saved as a sinner by the grace of God through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus (Rom. iii. 24), but seeks for righteousness in some other way. To trust in the Lord—how simple, yet how sure—how honouring to God, and yet how happy for ourselves—to give Him credit for having all in Himself which we find not in ourselves—to go out of ourselves for everything, and to find every craving answered in Christ. God knows our need as sinners, and He has provided for that need in Christ. Yes, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in ('by') the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3). Such have obtained mercy—such know their need of it. "God is rich in mercy" (Eph. ii. 4)—He is able not only to add mercy to

mercy, but to multiply mercy ; yea, to surround them with mercy ; or, as it is beautifully expressed in another translation of the Psalms, “ mercy embraceth him on every side.” This is our truthful place. If we look back, it is “ not by works of righteousness which we have done, *but according to His mercy* He saved us (Tit. iii. 5). And it is “ according to His mercy ” that He still deals with us ; there will be discipline and correction by the way, because it is for our profit ; but God’s rule of dealing with us is according to that which is in Himself,—“ His mercy.” And if we look forward, does the thought arise of glory, as connected with our faithfulness or service ?—and the thought does arise sometimes to dispirit, and sometimes to set us on a wrong ground of service—how suitable the word, “ looking for the *mercy* of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life ” (Jude 21). We have earned no title to glory. Glory shall come to us in the shape of mercy. God will “ make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath afore prepared unto glory ” (Rom. ix. 23). When Israel came into possession of houses full of all good things which they filled not, and wells digged which they digged not, vineyards and olive trees which they planted not—then the danger was of their forgetting the Lord (Deut. vi. 10-12), and assuming that as their own right for which they were merely debtors to the grace of God.

This is too true a picture of our own hearts. We take as a right that for which we are debtors to mercy alone. We rejoice in the blessing which we have reached by trusting in the Lord ; and then we trust in the blessing and forget the Lord. We only and always stand in grace, we live by faith, we stand by faith, we are constant debtors to mercy ; and in glory we shall know ourselves

eternal debtors to mercy. And a great part of our most humbling discipline is designed to keep us in our right and no less blessed standing. "He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about."

It is interesting to follow the line of thought of the Spirit of God—if the expression may be allowed—to see the connection between one part of His utterance and another. It is of great advantage to have a solid substratum of Christian doctrine, such as we frequently find in the Protestant confessions of faith. But this, however valuable to detect error and to prevent headiness and high-mindedness, does not meet the need of the soul. The soul is not satisfied with an accurate theory; it needs the truth to be applied in its wondrous variety. In this Psalm the Spirit of God is not treating a subject, but rather carrying out into its blessed results the oracle with which the Psalm commences. The "righteous" are not previously mentioned in the Psalm; and if we were to take our own thought of righteous, instead of the thought of the Spirit, we should sadly mistake. But the comment of the Holy Ghost Himself, by the mouth of His apostle in Rom. iv., immediately leads us to connect the last verse of the Psalm with the first verse, and to identify the righteous here spoken of with those whose blessedness is declared in the oracle with which this Psalm commences. And thus, too, we see that the Holy Ghost, throughout the Psalm, is describing the blessedness of those to whom God imputes "righteousness without works;" and closes all, with calling on such to "be glad in the Lord and rejoice." Just as, by the apostle, He says, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. iv. 4). There is a time coming

when "all the earth" will be called upon to "rejoice before the Lord," even after He shall have made known His salvation, and after His righteousness shall have been openly shewn to the heathen (Ps. xcvi). But *we* wait not for circumstances. Knowing the Lord, we can and ought to rejoice. And wherefore is it that others judge, through us, of the Gospel, as though it were a system of privation and renunciation, instead of one of the richest acquirements? Is it not that we try to be glad in ourselves, or in circumstances, instead of in the Lord?—and thus we are subject to much variableness, instead of living by faith in the Son of God: learning what He is of God made unto us: and what we are, and what we have, in Him. In the most truthful confession before God of what we are, we can still "rejoice in the Lord." Before He shews Himself publicly—before He manifests in glory to the eyes of all what the sons of God really are (Rom. viii. 19)—believing, we can rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. And wherefore our deplorable lack of such joy? Is it not that we fail in discerning and carrying out the blessedness of "righteousness without works?" We do not know it experimentally; we do not see its moral beauty; it does not shine with increasing lustre on our souls;—because they are not exercised as they should be before God. We are, somehow or other, more occupied with that which displays us before men, than that which displays God to us. Hence, we drink not at the Spring Head of joy. O that we could practically tell out to others that God Himself had made us happy, that we "joy in God" (Rom. v. 11).

And again, the upright in heart are connected with the blessedness declared in the first verses of this Psalm. We read of one whose "heart was

not right in the sight of God " (Acts viii. 21). He had the base thought—"that the gift of God might be purchased with money." Now, no real Christian can entertain the thought that such a gift as Simon coveted is purchasable by money. But the base thought is in our hearts, to earn something from God, and this hinders uprightness of heart. Surely, uprightness of heart is to maintain our character before God as sinners saved by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and to carry with us that character before men. If we forget what we are in ourselves, or what grace has made us to be in Christ, we are not upright in heart. It is blessed, indeed, not to have a part to act before God (for such is human religion), but to go before Him in the character which He has given to us, in the righteousness with which He Himself hath clothed us. To be upright in heart is not to draw a line between religions and other duties, but to come to the light to learn ourselves, and learn the glory of God in His grace. Where there is human sincerity and human uprightness and conscientiousness, it cannot perhaps, well be said that there is hypocrisy ; but, such natural uprightness is apart from God, and may exist, and has existed, where God has not been known or revealed. But now light has come into the world. Men may know their real character in the estimate of God. And the condemnation is, that he "cometh not to the light" (John iii. 20). And before God all will be found hypocrites—that is, acting a character—save those who, coming to the light, and learning what they are in God's judgment, have sheltered themselves under the blessedness of "righteousness without works." Such are upright in heart ; in their spirit is no guile. They may "shout for joy."

APPROACH TO, AND DELIGHT IN, GOD. SINS AND SIN.

I am not sure that I have sufficiently distinguished in the following article between the atonement and the sprinkling on the altar of incense. The blood of the bullock was sprinkled on the mercy seat for Aaron and his sons—the heavenly saints ; the blood of the goat also. This made an atonement for himself and for the holy place, and for the tabernacle of the congregation. He was alone within in doing it ; the congregation of Israel being in view also, for God must have been glorified in order to bless them. Then he went out and sprinkled the altar of incense with the blood both of the bullock and of the goat. After all this was complete, he confessed the sins of Israel on the scape-goat, and it was sent away.

Controversy, where there is research after truth, has this advantage attending it, that it urges the spirit to more attention and diligent research, and, where the subjects are scriptural, to search the Scriptures ; and these ever afford to the humble and enquiring soul, fresh and blessed inlets into the mind of God. Two points have been before me in consequence of recent controversy on the law and the righteousness of God. I would now bring them before the reader.

If we examine the order of the ceremonies of the great day of atonement, we shall perhaps find a

more definite character in them than the reader has previously noticed. The blood was sprinkled *on* the mercy seat, and *before* the mercy seat, and *on* the altar of incense, but on nothing else, according to the directions of Leviticus xvi. ; we may specially remark, not on the altar of burnt offering. But atonement is made for the holy place ; I presume it is meant, by the sprinkling that did take place, but there was none on the candlestick or the shew bread. These aspersions of blood at once lead to the thought, that what was in view was approach to God in the sanctuary. There was clearly the great general fact, that the blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, so that God's nature and character were glorified in Christ's shedding His blood ; so that, His blood being thus presented to God, the gospel founded on that could be preached to every creature. It was the Lord's lot. But this I have spoken of elsewhere, as of the other aspect of Christ's sacrifice typified by the scapegoat, that is, bearing the sins of His people. I only note now the specific character of the offering.

The blood was sprinkled on the place connected with the drawing near of the priests in the sanctuary, and that as representing the whole people approaching God, coming into God's presence in the highest way, or a daily approaching in the same character. For us there is no veil ; but the altar of incense, though without the veil, specially referred to what was within. God in the holy places

was seen in His divine righteousness. It is such as He *is* that He must be approached. It is not merely how He deals with responsible man as such, but His own nature. If we approach Him, we must approach Him as He is in Himself. This is evidently the character of approaching Him in the sanctuary. This connects itself, I have no doubt, with the gold. All was gold in the sanctuary. In the court of the tabernacle the vessels were of brass, specially the laver and the brazen altar. This refers, as the place also shows, to God's dealing with sin in this world. Not that the court represented this world; but it was not the sanctuary. It referred to God's dealings with sinners in this world. Men came there as unclean, whether for sacrifice for their sins when in them, or for cleansing; that is, to Christ as a sacrifice, or to have the washing of water by the word, which, without the sacrifice, they could not have had. Hence it was priests who washed; but it was washing.

The idea in all these cases was drawing near, whether as a sinner or a saint: only one, a drawing near about sin; the other, drawing near to God as cleansed, the laver being a washing to consecrate at the first, or cleanse for present service. But on the great day of atonement it was only in the holy places that the blood was sprinkled. But this gives it a very full character. A blessed thought it is for us that we draw nigh to God in His own nature and character, what He is

in Himself. He is there in His own nature, in righteousness and holiness ; and we, absolutely cleansed for that, and, in the new man, created therein after God (Ephes. iv. 24), draw near to Himself without having any question as to sin, now put away. Our delight is in holiness and righteousness, in God as He is ; and we draw near *according to the intrinsic value* IN GOD'S SIGHT *of the blood of Jesus*. It is the enjoyment of what God is, in righteousness and true holiness ; but Christ in His offering has been the glorifying of what He so is. This is very blessed. We approach God, and joy in God. This is divine righteousness as it is in itself, as it is in God, enjoyed by us as admitted through Christ. And, note here, it is in this way *we* specially *know* atonement, for peace and drawing near to God. Hence for the atonement for Aaron and his sons this only was done. The bullock was slain, and the blood sprinkled upon the mercy seat and the altar of incense. There was no confession of sins, no scape-bullock. Christ, raised from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant, enters in according to the glory of the Father, according to the display of all His perfections brought out in the resurrection of Christ (for He was raised through the blood of the everlasting covenant, and by the glory of the Father,—Heb. xiii. 20 ; Rom. vi. 4) ; so we, as associated with Him, draw nigh in the full acceptance which that blood has in the necessary righteousness of God as regards it. It is not merely

that sins can be forgiven, and therefore I can have to say to God as a moral governor (which is also true—"There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mightest be feared"); but I draw near in the positive and perfect acceptance in which God in His own nature receives, in righteousness, that which has glorified it absolutely; that is, according to His own nature. God is active in owning Christ thus in righteousness, in raising Him from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand; and thus we enter.

But there is another thing needed. The sacrifice of Christ is available for transgressions. There is not only its intrinsic value as the Lord's lot, but Christ is the bearer of the sins of His people as the scapegoat. God, as a governor that has to do with sins, has to do with us as responsible men, the Jews as a responsible nation, both in flesh. Christ has borne them in His own body on the tree, and they are gone. It is not and cannot be, of course, another sacrifice. The sacrifice must be suited to God, but it is another aspect of it than the one we have previously spoken of. It is the removing of sins that men may be received judicially in righteousness, not the entering into God's presence according to the intrinsic excellence of His nature, and Christ's acceptableness in it, and the enjoying that nature. (In the new nature we enter in. The transgressions belong to the old.) This is our proper and only *present* place, because we are risen, and in Christ, in the place of priests.

The bullock fully represents the character of Christ's sacrifice in this aspect for us. Then our sins, when we were alive in the flesh, have been put away, and we are reckoned dead, and he that has died is justified from sin (Rom. vi. 7, 11.) The whole nature of the flesh and its deeds are viewed as a past existence, the moment Christ rose, which is actually realized when we put off the old man and put on the new.

As all my sins were future when He died for them, so, when once I am not in the flesh, all that belongs to it faith looks on as past, as to atonement and righteousness, when He died. For so, and so only, could they be put away. But, as risen, I come into the holiest, not only because I am cleared from sins (a process which, in itself, went no farther than judicial acknowledgement of me where I was responsible), but according to all the value of that in which Christ is entered in. This, I repeat, is our only proper present position ; because the old man, who was the responsible man in this world, is viewed as dead and buried, so that we are not in the flesh (Rom. viii. 9). Hence, though we were responsible, and the sins were borne and atoned for, we are not at all now in the place, and condition, or nature, in which that government and dealing took place ; it is over for us. The bullock, the fullest and highest value of Christ's sacrifice, is ours, and represents our present standing. The two goats clearly shew that the same one sacrifice, of course, applies to

both parts of His work ; our being presented to God according to His nature, and the putting away of sin, which was inconsistent with our duty as children of Adam.

But the application is, in a measure, different when Israel comes in question : because they do not enter into the holiest through the rent veil, the new and living way. They know the value of Christ's sacrifice *when He comes out*, and they look on Him whom they have pierced. They are under the weight of multiplied transgressions as a nation, and stand on that ground, and in flesh—have not to do with Christ within the veil, but when He has come out. I need not say, it is no new sacrifice. Isaiah liii. presents to us their recognition of the One we already own. They are not in heavenly places in Him ; but He appears to and is with them, to bless them in the earth. They are accepted according to the righteousness of God as a moral governor. I do not say individuals, and all of them, as spared, are not viewed *of God* in His sight according to Christ's blood in heavenly places—I cannot doubt indeed they are ; but it is not their dispensed place to stand there in their own souls before God. That moral government indeed continues as that under which they are as men in flesh on the earth.

Hence it was, after all the blood sprinkling was done—"When he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place and the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, he shall bring the live goat,

&c"—that the live goat was sent off into the wilderness with the sins of Israel on its head. I dare say the godly Israelite, thus at peace with God, may be learning the intrinsic value of the great sacrifice which has cleansed Him, so as to get in growing nearness into the knowledge of God ; but his dispensational place is, according to sin-bearing, ours according to Christ's presence in heaven, our old man, in which we were connected with earth, having died in that by which our sins were put away.

It is this point I feel important—the character of the blood-sprinkling, as confined to the holy place and tabernacle itself. Israel's ordinary sacrifices were on the altar of burnt offering ; the blood was sprinkled there ; they came as from without there. It was all right ; every sinner must do so. It is as blessed as it is needed that we can. The sins must be put away if we are to draw near to God. But it does not take into the sanctuary. And here multitudes of Christians rest, if indeed they know this : they rest in the putting away, or hoped for putting away of their sins. It must be the first approach, but they stay on Jewish ground ; and indeed in every way ; for they look for a new sprinkling with blood (a new sacrifice they dare not, and nothing else would do, for, as the apostle says, Christ must often have suffered from the foundation of the world—Heb. ix. 26) every time they fail. It is not the value of the sacrifice in itself which is different. There is, we know, but

one—never to be repeated, which has its own intrinsic, necessary value ; but the sacrifice and sprinkling of blood on the brazen altar has a different character from sprinkling it on the mercy seat and on the altar of incense. This, the brazen altar, was judicial righteousness, as dealing with man as responsible to God, and in the exercise of moral government. Here the Israelites came to God. Christ met this claim on the cross, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, dying for the nation of Israel also. This bearing of sins was shewn in the scape goat, but in a way which not only met our case in principle, but had, in its form, special reference to Israel in the last days after the church's time was over. But the sprinkling of blood on the day of atonement went further. It entered into that within the veil. It carries us up to God, where Christ is gone. It may be remarked that the offerings of the day of atonement, which gave it its special character, did not include burnt offerings. The bullock and the goat were both sin offerings. The burnt offering for himself and for the people were not offered till the last special service of the day—the letting loose the live goat into the wilderness—was concluded. All was properly sin offering. It placed Christ, and those associated with Him, in the sanctuary, and, as far as this world went, outside the camp. A religion of the world in flesh was not recognized in it, but the cross (i. e., Christ rejected on the earth, and His place in heaven). It is available for Israel but

as bearing their sins and making a sacrifice of Himself, by which they could be blessed on earth. The burnt offerings were offered on the brazen altar. These prefigure Christ presenting Himself to God as a sacrifice here on earth, through the eternal Spirit. This was the perfection of Christ here on earth, and that indeed in which, consequent on our admission into the holy place, we have to follow Him here below. These things are presented as subjects for meditation, and will be found, if soberly followed out, for profit according to Scripture, and full of rich edification.

I turn to the second subject of which I spoke, introducing it by begging the reader to refer to the well known chapter John iii., as shewing the way the Lord connects His life and death with the heavenly place, which He contemplates, but does not then speak of. A man must be born again, He assures Nicodemus, even to have a share in the earthly part of the kingdom of God, as taught by Ezekiel ; but it was sovereign grace, and so went out, as the wind, whither it listed. But Christ spoke from His own knowledge, who came from heaven, yea, was in heaven, and it was a nature intrinsically capable—immense blessing !—of enjoying God ; and the rejected Messiah was the Son of man lifted up, that whosoever believed in Him should have eternal life ; not blessing, as life on earth. He died to all that was here, yea, even to His own Messiahship, as born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and opened the door

by His death to those heavenly things of which He was able to speak. The life of the Spirit and the death of Christ, in their proper value, when known as death to this world, as seen in Christ, and glorifying God in His nature, are the entrance, as possessing life in Him risen, into the heavenly sanctuary. Compare Colossians iii. (where life aspiring after those heavenly things is the subject) and Ephesians (where the power of the Holy Ghost, uniting us to Christ, gives us the sitting of the saints in heavenly places in Him). In John iii. it is only opened out to us in vista. Thus, in the resurrection of Christ, as risen with Him, we pass up into the heavenly places, while Christ has died to the whole world, and sin, to everything which is in the world and connected with sin. It is passed and gone as non-existent. Christ is risen, and is the first fruits and beginning of a new state of things, of a new creation. Old things being passed away, God has quickened us together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses. Christ died to sin and for sins. The new covenant does not go beyond forgiveness, remembering sins and iniquities no more. But it never deals with any entrance into the presence of God in the sanctuary. This, as we have seen, is our place by redemption. This leads me to the second point I would refer to—the difference of sins and sin. It is not new, but I do not think that Christians have sufficiently remarked the force of Paul's reasonings on the subject.

Sins of course are fully recognized, wholly con-

demned, and atonement made for them. Nay, it is by them that the conscience is first acted on and brought to repentance. The blood of Jesus, the cross, is the blessed answer to them. Not only so, but even where all are brought under the sin of Adam, the actual sins which affect the conscience, are introduced as that which is the added occasion of death (Rom. v. 12). Of course, where the law is alluded to, positive transgression is recognised. But we shall find, besides all this, and where this has been recognized, the great question treated, of a state of sin, and being in the flesh. Up to the end of Rom. iii. sins are dealt with, but the conclusion drawn that we are all under sin, in that state or condition, before God, as in Psalm xxxii.: "Blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord doth not impute sin." This question Rom. v. treats. But it goes farther; it shews sin entering into the world—a principle of evil in which man was alienated from God. It has reigned. It is not merely that I have committed sins; but sin has reigned, death being the proof of it. Chapter vi. carries out this thought distinctly, and introduces death as that which closes the evil; that, our state being one of sin, as alive as children of Adam, death closes that state. We are crucified with Christ, do not any longer exist as before God, as alive in the flesh. But what was this death in Christ? Here we have no dying *for sins* but *to sin*.

We are all aware that there was in Christ no sin, but ever living in the midst of this scene of sinners, His obedience tried to the utmost, even unto death, and drinking the cup, tempted in all points, like as we are, He died to that scene, died rather than fail in perfect and absolute obedience, in glorifying God. And He did so glorify Him, and, perfect in all things, closed all connection with this world, and with man as in a state of sin. He died to sin once, closed all connection of man with God, as on the ground of living in the flesh.

There was not a movement of His life which was not the perfection of the divine nature in man, in the midst of the temptations through which we pass, and having completed and finished that obedience, He died to the whole sphere and scene of existence—really died to it, and in resurrection entered on another, which did not belong to that order or state of things, but which had its starting point, its womb of existence, in death to it. Always morally separate from sinners, His life proved that that divine display could not win man to association with it, or to come to Him to have life, and He died so as to make a final and judicial separation of divine life from the whole first Adam condition, because there was nothing but sin there in will, and transfers, so to speak, the divine life which was in Him to a new and heavenly sphere, where flesh or sin could not come—that resurrection state.

In this life of Christ as risen with Him, our sins are all atoned for, we live, He Himself being our righteousness, according to His acceptance in the value of His work. Romans vi. therefore speaks no more of sins, save as past fruits of another state, from which we are freed. Christ has died unto sin once ; we are to reckon ourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Him. He that is dead is justified from sin ; no state of sin can be charged on him, for as to that he is dead. He cannot be accused of being in that state, for he has died. Sin will not have dominion over us.

So, in chapter vii., we have died ; when we were in the flesh, there were motions of sins, and the law only provoked them. Hence when by a new nature, as taught of God, we see the spirituality of the law, I discover this active principle of sin, and look to be delivered, and so I am in Christ. I die in the state I was in, and am now alive in Christ arisen. The law is seen here—not as working a course, but—as the means, when we are under it, of detecting the hopelessness of flesh, its sin being only detected, and made exceeding sinful by it. It is the body of death. We are delivered from it (not pardoned its fruits) through Jesus Christ our Lord. Sin in the flesh is condemned, but in that in which Christ was for sin—a sacrifice for sin (chap. viii. 3). And then the contrast of flesh and Spirit in their nature is dwelt upon and insisted on.

And where is the groundwork of deliverance?

Resurrection. I have passed, as dead with Christ, out of the flesh ("Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" chap. viii. 9) into a new scene by resurrection, not as to our bodies (for the redemption of which we wait—chap. viii. 23), but as to our state before God and our souls. It is the Spirit, because this is the power of life; but it is Christ risen, our life, and we alive in Him, and by the Holy Ghost united to Him, as sitting in the heavenly places, and so sitting there in Him. If I speak of being at the foot of the cross, I simply say that I have not died with Christ; I have not passed through the rent veil into the holiest of all. I am then before the cross in my old nature, with my sins upon me; for if I am dead with Christ and risen with Him, I have passed on through the cross, as the door of faith, without any sins into God's presence in light.

So, in Galatians, though not with the same development.

I would draw some practical conclusions from this. I get a double character of divine righteousness, typified by the gold and the brass. One, His own divine nature and delight; the other, judicial requirement from the creature, according to its place. The gold is divine righteousness as in the nature of God. According to this, Christ, having glorified God in all that He is, is received within as man, and sits at God's right hand; we, partakers of the divine nature, being of God in Christ Jesus, created after God in righteousness and true holiness, and renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created us, united to Him whom God has set on high, have our place (not personally of course) at God's right hand—that could not be but in Him—in that heavenly place,

according to the delight of God's nature, for that is in Christ. It is fellowship with this, or restoration to it, which is the character of our approach to God, as simply enjoying it in the new nature; it is not in contrast with evil, it is not forgiveness of what is past, sweet as that is in its place. I have, for faith—and shall have, in fact—entirely done with the nature which sinned, and the whole state of existence in which flesh moved. I exist only in the new creation. Hence the apostle says he did not even know Christ after the flesh any more. It is the joy of the new man in the presence and blessedness and glory of God.

The brazen altar is righteousness too, and divine righteousness, but in its claims on man's nature, not in the revelation of its own. Here the blood was sprinkled by which the sinner approaches God, and this will be the standing of Israel. How many of God's children remain here in fact! How little have they boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus! They remain outside, and hope, when the time comes, they will pass in judgment, and have a share in glory. They are in Egypt, looking to the blood to keep the holy Judge out; not in the wilderness redeemed out of the bondage they were in and passed the Red Sea. They do look to the blood as that which is the ground of their hope against judgment, but they have no thought of having been crucified with Christ, and risen. They hope in Christ, as in fear of the righteousness of God, instead of in a new nature and life as risen with Christ, enjoying God as in the Spirit, and not in the flesh. One thing we must remember: that even there, where we enter into the full blessedness of God's presence, the Lamb that was slain will be the Object in whose perfection we have learnt that blessedness.

ROMANS V. AND VI.

The lively and energetic style of the apostle in these chapters is very striking. He treats sin as a person—as a king. He shows that he entered this world through the door of man's disobedience, and as soon as he entered, he took the seat of government, and death became the power of his kingdom, as well as its character. For man's departure from God let sin, the very opposite of God, who is the *holy* God, in; and sin brought death with it, being also the opposite of God, who is the *living* God. And this is the character of this present evil world. It is the place, or scene, of the reign of sin and death; and nothing in it is left untouched by the influence of it—it pervades all.

But there is another scene, of which the grace of God is the source, as the disobedience of man has been the source of this; and this grace has prepared the way for Christ—as disobedience prepared the way for sin—and Christ brings with Him righteousness and life, as Adam, through disobedience, opened the door to sin and death. Thus, Adam is the figure of Christ, of “Him who was to come” after. But righteousness enters the scene with a “much more,” because grace is the source of it—and it was due to God's glory to bear this witness to that which had its source in Him. And having entered, it accordingly does “more” than merely measure the power of sin; for sin came in

upon one offence or disobedience of Adam, but righteousness comes in and sweeps away from the scene thousands of offences which followed the train of that one. And righteousness, accordingly, has now its kingdom here, as well as sin—life has its scene as well as death. But it is not visible as yet, like the other. The reign of sin is felt; the power of death is seen, all abroad; the reign of righteousness, which brings life with it, is only known to faith now.

And how has the *law* entered, and what has it done in this scene of these contending kingdoms? It has only magnified the offence of the disobedience of man, which let sin and death in. For it was holy, just and good, and served to expose the entire departure of man from God, the Author of the law. But still grace was triumphant. It had brought in a gift—a righteousness which could, through Jesus, assert itself, and be supreme over all this aggravated power of sin and death. But how was this? How could grace take it away? How could love enter to operate in a scene where sin was reigning unto death, and had *title* thus to reign?

By PROVIDING A VICTIM. Sin reigned unto death. Sin had title to exercise its power even to death—for death was the wages it paid—the result of any man of the mere tribe of Adam entering its territory. And Jesus, the Son of the *living* God, entered its territory and received its wages; but having life in Himself—life untouched by

Adam's disobedience—He survived the stroke ; and thus really destroyed him that had the power of death and asserted a kingdom of righteousness and life, in which not only He reigns, but all those reign with Him who believe in Him—who rejoice with Him in His victory, and have no confidence in anything else.

Thus sin, as a tyrant, is overthrown. The Son of the living God has asserted His supremacy in the very region of the power of sin. Sin has paid its wages ; sin reigned, it is true, unto death, even the death of Jesus on the cross ; but sin was entitled to do no more. "He died unto sin." All that sin could demand—that is, death—it got ; it exacted death ; it rewarded its servants, its subjects, with death, and Jesus "died *unto* sin." His death owned the title of sin ; but then He carried a life with Him that remained untouched by all this ; and in that life, and the righteousness of God, in which it has its source, He and His saints for ever reign together,

But if the Son of God thus "died unto sin"—that is, owned the demands or rights of sin by His death—it was God that He owned in His resurrection. For if He "died unto sin," it is equally true that "He liveth unto God ;" so that His saints cannot continue in sin, for they have union with Him. If in death, so in resurrection ; and as this union with Him in the one has delivered them from the tyranny and supremacy of sin, so their union with Him in the other has made them alive unto God. And however sin may still have to do

with them, as it still dwells in their flesh, yet they should assert their place in the risen Son of God, and know that they have nothing to do with sin ; they should count themselves dead to it ; the connection between them and it is gone by the death and resurrection of Jesus, who has taken them rather into connection with Himself. *Grace* is the source of that kingdom in which they now move—it is not the other kingdom where law has aggravated, as we saw, the power of sin (vi. 14).

We have to see sin as an unclean creature now, that has sunk in its own element, the flesh, there to perish, while we ourselves are risen with Christ. It was once a king, but is now bound in the dungeon of the flesh. The judgment unto condemnation came upon one offence, but the justification unto life came upon, or after, many offences. Death entered on the eating of the fruit of the tree ; life is secured after sin, trespass, transgression, and offences have been multiplied, by the application of the law, again and again,

Sin has reigned *unto death*—that is, death is the final stroke of the power of sin, the last exercise of his dominion over us (the judgment that follows being God's, not sin's, or Satan's action), so grace has reigned unto eternal life, *i. e.*, eternal life will be the ever fresh, unfading witness of grace, the budding rods of its kingly power. Sin has exercised the final stroke of his power by putting Jesus to death, so that if, by faith, we plead the death of Jesus, or are united in His death, we are freed from sin, or discharged from his service or bondage, and consequently from his wages. For “he that is dead is freed from sin.” This is glorious triumph for the sinner. God said to Adam, “If thou doest sin, thou shalt die.” Adam did sin, but **CHRIST HAS DIED !**

THE SINNER RECEIVED AND BLEST.

LUKE VII. 37-50.

"I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."—*Matt. ix. 13.*

In search of Jesus, lo ! *she* came
Who only had the sinner's claim
Upon the Saviour's heart ;
And well she knew that He whose grace
Was opening wide a hiding-place,
Would never say, " Depart."

'Twas *hers* the mercy-seat to touch ;
'Twas *hers* to weep and love Him much,
And all His words to store ;
'Twas *His* to bid her go in peace,
To give her sin-bound soul release,
And life for evermore,

Oh, what a heavenly note is here,
But only falling on the ear
Of *sinners* such as she,
And none but such in truth are found
Giving their welcome to the sound
Of life and liberty !

The virtue of His grace, denied
And scorned by Pharisaic pride,
Is sweetly known to some ;
For when its fragrancy invites,
And presses souls to its delights,
The broken-hearted come.

These know His blessed person theirs ;
For love unscrupulously dares
To take the nearest place :

E'en on His bosom they have lain,
Who once were fouled with deepest stain,
And plunged in sin's disgrace.

While others frigidly perform
The cold servilities of form,
'Tis theirs in heart to serve ;
To pour the ointment on His head,
And all the sweets of love to shed
With grateful unreserve.

Such precious fruits we're brought to bear,
The more we know how vile we were
When strangers to His love ;
And by-and-by the happy boast,
That we have been forgiven most,
Shall swell our songs above.



THE MANNER OF THE GRACE OF JESUS.

MATT. IX. ; MARK II. ; LUKE V.

God was shewing His rich and various mercy in the old times ; but this was done after a peculiar manner. He forgave sin, He healed disease, He fed His people. But all this was done after a peculiar manner. There was a certain distance and reserve, as it were, a remaining still in His own sanctuary—still in the heavens, though He was thus gracious. He met the need of a sinner ; but He was in the temple, withdrawn to the holiest place, and the sinner had to come through a consecrated path to get the virtue of the mercy-seat.

He met the need of His camp in the desert ; but it was by remaining still in heaven, and sending from thence the angels' food, the mighty's meat, and giving them water, after His mystic rod had opened the rock. He met the disease of a poor leper ; but it was after such a leper had been separated outside the camp, every eye and hand—all interference and inspection of man—withdrawn and removed. There He was God, acting in His own due love and power ; but there was a style in the action that bespoke distance from the object of His love and goodness. Whether He pardoned, fed, or healed, this manner was preserved.

The Lord Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, is seen doing the same works of divine love and power. He pardons, feeds, and heals ; and He does so in full assertion of His divine right or glory, thinking it no robbery to be equal with God. But there is altogether another style in those same actions when in His hand. The reserve, the distance is gone. It is God we see, not withdrawn into the holiest, but abroad in the prisons, the hospitals, and the poorhouses, of this ruined world. He pardons ; but He stands beside the sinner to do this, saying, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," or "Neither do I condemn thee." He feeds ; but He is at the very table with the fed. He heals ; but He puts forth His hand in the crowd on as many as were diseased, or stands at their sick beds. He thus comes down to the needy ones—with pardon, food and healing. He

goes among them, letting them know and see that He is supplied with various virtue to be used by them without reserve. And there is in this a glory that excelleth ; so that the former has no glory by reason of it.

How should we bless Him for this display of Himself ! It is the same God of love and power in both ; but He has increased in the brightness of His manifestations.

The religious rulers found this way of Jesus to interfere with them. Their interest was to keep God and the people separate ; for then they had hopes of being used themselves. Thus they were angry when the Lord said to the man, “ Thy sins be forgiven thee.” It was a great interference with them. It trespassed on their places. “ Who can forgive sins but God only ? ”—and God was in heaven. The Son of man forgiving sins *on earth* was a sad disturbance of that by which they lived in credit and plenty in the world. But whether they received it or not, this was the way of the Son on earth. He dealt with our necessities in such wise as encouraged the happy, near and confident approach of all needy ones to Him. He did all to shew that He was a cheerful giver—nay more—that He gave Himself with His gift. For with His own hand, as we have seen, He brought the blessing home to every man’s door.

It was therefore only the happy confidence of faith which fully met and refreshed His spirit—that faith which knew the title of a needy one to

come right up to Him, the faith of a Bartimæus which was not to be silenced by the mistaken scrupulousness even of disciples. And little children are to be in His arms, though the same mistake would forbid them.

This was His mind : He came into the world to be used by sick and needy sinners ; and the faith that understood and used Him accordingly was its due answer. Such answers we see recorded by the Evangelists here in the action of the faithful little band, who, breaking up the roof, let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay “into the midst before Jesus.” There was no ceremoniousness in this, nothing of the ancient reserve of the temple, no waiting for introduction. This little company felt their necessity, knew the virtues of the Son of God, and believed that these suited each other—nay, that the Lord carried the one, because necessitous sinners were bearing the other. It was a strong expression of faith, and I believe the strength of it was according to the mind of Jesus ; so that, on seeing their faith, as we read, without further to do or more words, His heart and the grace that it carried uttered itself in an expression as full and strong : “ Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.”

Here was sympathy. Jesus was rending all veils between God and sinners ; and so was the faith of this happy little company. His blood was soon to rend from top to bottom the veil of the temple, which kept God from poor sinners ; and

now their faith was rending that which kept them from Jesus. This surely was meeting and entertaining the Son of God in character; and His spirit deeply owns it: "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

Happy faith which can thus break down partition walls! O this faith which takes knowledge of Jesus, the Saviour of the world, as the mighty render of all veils! "Join thou, my soul, for thou canst tell," etc. In the lively happy impression of this truth through the Spirit, the soul tastes something of heaven. What blessedness to know that this is the way of God our Saviour! Grace and glory are both brought to us: we have not to ascend to heaven to seek them there, nor to descend to the depths to search after them there. "Behold I come: and my reward is with me," will Jesus say when He brings the glory; as we have already seen Him with His grace standing at the door, or by the bedside, or in the crowd of needy sinners.

This is of God indeed. It is only divine love that can account for it. But the rulers did not like it. Their interest and credit in the world would keep the forgiveness of sins still in the hand of Him who was in heaven; for then, as the consecrated path, they hoped and judged that they themselves would still be used.

And so it is to this day. Forgiveness is brought near and sure to the soul—the word of faith to the heart and to the mouth. This shortens the path;

but it does not suit those who transact (as themselves and others judge) the interests of the soul.

Nothing appears more simple than all this on the principles of nature. The Pharisees, in the Lord's time, represented it. They were the religious rulers ; and the more God was kept in the distance, reserve being thus maintained between Him and the people, the more they were likely to be venerated, used, and enriched. Jesus, God in flesh, the Son of man forgiving sins *on the earth*, was a sad trespasser on their place and plan of action. How, alas ! is this principle still alive, still dominant, and the "people love to have it so ;" it suits the religiousness of man's nature too well to be lightly refused. The simplicity that is in Christ is sadly thus "corrupted ;" and our souls, beloved, should be grieved, deeply grieved, because of it.

But we may also say that much occasion, in our day, has been given for this principle to live and act as vigorously as it seems to be doing. For there has not been the meeting of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, this pardoning, feeding, healing, love and power of Him who has come down to walk amid our ruins, in the spirit which alone was due to it. There has been the assertion of grace, and the denial that God in this dispensation is to be sought for as at a distance, under the hiding of ceremonies or within the cloisters of temples. There has been the producing of the blessed Saviour, and giving Him to walk abroad among our necessities

according to the place He has Himself taken in the Gospels. There has been the presenting of the marvellous condescending grace of the dispensation ; but those who have asserted it have not carried themselves towards it, and in the presence of it, with that reverence, that holiness of confidence, which alone became them. And this has given man's religiousness (which would keep God still in heaven) occasion to revive and be listened to, and learnt again.

But is this religiousness the due corrective of abused grace? Is this the divine remedy?—is this God's way of rectifying evil?—or is it not simple human reaction? Many are doing what they can do to withdraw the Lord to that place which He has most advisedly and for ever abandoned. They are making Him appear to build again the things which He had destroyed. They are putting Him back into the holiest place, there to be sought unto by the old aisles and vistas of the “worldly sanctuary”—to cover Him with veils and cast up the long consecrated path by which of old the sinner came to Him. It were well to be righteously angry at Jesus and His grace being treated with so indelicate and untender a hand ; but these correct the error by a worse. While they would protect the holiness of Christ, they obscure His grace. They are seeking to do a service for Him that grieves Him the most deeply. They are teaching man that He is an austere Master ; they withdraw Him to the place

where it is felt to be a fearful thing to plant one's foot.

Indeed this is a service He did not ask for. "Who hath required this at your hands," is, I am assured in my soul, the voice of the Son of God to those who would withdraw Him from the nearest and most assured approach of the poor sinner. They have been doing what they could to change HIS place and attitudes, instead of MAN'S. Correction was needed surely. It is ever needed. Man will be spoiling and abusing everything. There has been an intellectual arrogance and carnal freedom with Christ and His truth, which may well have grieved the righteous. But it was man that ought to have been challenged to change his place and bearing, not the Lord. He has not repented of having come on earth to forgive sins, of having visited the poor Samaritan at the well, or Levi or Zacchæus in their houses, or Peter's wife's mother on her bed of sickness. He is still the same Lord, and He purposes to be so. He has not retired within the veil again, nor bound up that which was rent from top to bottom. He has not built again that which He had destroyed. It is not a worldly sanctuary that He fills and furnishes again, nor ceremonies and observances, and rites and practices, under which He is again concealing Himself. He has descended from heaven to earth; He is abroad among men, in the ministry of His precious gospel and by His Spirit, beseeching sinners to be reconciled.

What then, alas ! is the character of that effort that would force Him back to the thick darkness ? (2 Chron. vi. 43). It is an attempt made in the strength and with the subtlety of the devil upon the Son of God, as of old. It is a taking Him, as it were, to the pinnacle of the temple, to some withdrawn and proud elevation, where the multitude may gaze at Him. But His purpose is, blessed be His name, to stand in the midst of them, that they may use Him.

We should change our place ; that is equally true. We should learn to pass and repass with the unshod foot before this gracious, blessed, Son of man. It is for us to change our attitude, and not to seek to make Him change His.

We have still to see Him in all the grace of this dispensation ; we have to read “ the gospel of the blessed God ” (1 Tim. i.), as they read it of old who knew and felt that the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins. But we have to read all this more in their spirit also. We are to wonder at the strange sight, as they did—to tell Jesus, with the centurion, that we are not worthy that He should come under our roof, while we still use His immediate presence and grace—to stand before Him like Zacchæus, and call Him “ Lord,” though, like him, receiving Him to our house ; and to follow Him in the way with adoring thankful gaze, though having refused, as Bartimæus, to be put at a distance by the vain religious scruples of even His own disciples.

Ah ! this is what should have been done. This would have been the divine corrective of the mischief that has come in. But this was not so easy ; for this would have been spiritual ; the thing that has been done is carnal. Elements of the world are revived and multiplied. Jesus has been forced back at a distance from the sinner. He has been put into "the thick darkness," under cover of fleshly observances and rites, and at the end of a long path through the aisles of a sanctuary, where He waits to receive the homage of a fearing and a bondaged people. This is the place and attitude which many teachers (who are daily rising in the esteem of the people) make the blessed Saviour to fill and take.

The Lord Jesus is kept at a distance ; religious observances are brought near ; and the people (for they have ever been so minded) like the feelings that come from all that which is acted before them. Their eye and ear are engaged, a certain sacred sense of God is awakened ; but the precious immediate confidence of the heart and conscience is refused. Ah ! shall any one who loves the Lord thus sink down again into man, when the Spirit would have him up with Christ ?

"O, foolish Galatians ; who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth, crucified among you ? . . . Are ye so foolish ? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh ? . . . Ye observe days, and

months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." (Gal. iii. iv.)

Thus speaks the aggrieved Spirit in the apostle over those who once had been eminently his joy but were now his sorrow, because they were turning again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto they were desiring again to be in bondage. Indeed they were deserting faith for religiousness, "the simplicity that is in Christ" and in which the "virgin" or "uncorrupted" mind ever walks, for the ceremonies and observances of "a worldly sanctuary."

But religiousness is neither faith nor righteousness. With the Pharisees it was adopted as a relief for a bad conscience, or a cover for evil; in them it was, therefore, opposed to faith. The Galatians cannot properly be said to have been Pharisees, it is true; but the Spirit of God had a serious question with both.

And I may just further observe, that in our passages) Matt. ix. 6; Mark ii. 10, 11; Luke v. 24) the Lord seeks to lead man away from his own reasonings and calculations to Himself and His works. He perceived that the Scribes were "reasoning among themselves," and then proposed to them what He was doing—"that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy couch, and go into thine house."

How simple, how precious ! And on this hangs the grand distinction between faith and religiousness of which I have just been speaking. Religiousness, or man's religion, gives the soul many a serious thought about itself, and many a devout thought about God. But faith, or God's religion, gives the soul Jesus, and the works and words of Jesus.

And yet it is faith, and faith only, secures the end which is valued of God. Faith "worketh by love"; faith "overcometh the world;" faith "purifieth the heart." By faith "the elders obtained a good report." Religiousness does not this. It ever "works" by fear, not by love. It does not "overcome the world," but oftentimes takes it within to some recess or hiding-place. It does not "purify the heart," by giving it an object to detach it from self, but keeps self in a religious attire ever before it, and leaves the conscience unpurged. And in God's record it gets no "good report." From the beginning to the end of that record, it is the people of religion, the devout observers of carnal ceremonies, those who would not "defile themselves" with a judgment-hall, that have stood most cruel in the resistance of the truth. But it is the men of faith, the lovers of the truth, the poor broken-hearted believers who have found their relief in Jesus "forgiving sins," who have stood and laboured and conquered ; and they have their happy memorial with Him and in the records of Him whom they trusted, in whom by faith they found eternal life and their sure and full salvation.

**“HE THAT LOVETH HIS LIFE SHALL
LOSE IT.”**

Bessie W. was a young girl in a fashionable millinery establishment in D., and was, with others, invited to attend a Bible class specially intended for young persons engaged in business. She was gay and thoughtless, fond of dress and worldly amusement. She came at times to the class, but was more frequently absent. Having gone to the house where she was employed, to inquire for her, after a longer absence than usual, the visitor heard that she was ill, and called at her mother's house to see her. Poor Bessie was not pleased, and asked if she was supposed to be worse than other young people that it was thought necessary to visit and speak seriously to her. However, a few kind words, and an assurance that the visit was not from any idea that she was worse than others soothed her, and she listened quietly while a few verses were read from the word of God.

She recovered so far as to be able to return to business for a time, but did not come to the class, as she was not well enough to be out late. She was visited from time to time, and though she no longer objected, it was evidently more from civility than enjoyment. Her health again gave way, and soon it became evident that consumption was rapidly doing its fatal work. Still there was no evidence that her conscience had been reached by

the word, and those who watched for her soul became doubly anxious.

The first evidence of interest she showed was one day when Romans iv. was being read to her, and the reader paused at verse 3, and repeated slowly: "Abraham *believed* God, and it was *counted unto him* for *righteousness*." With startling earnestness Bessie suddenly asked, "Where is that?" She said nothing more, but her visitor felt assured that a ray of light from God had reached her, and this assurance was confirmed when, at the next visit, the same subject being before them, it was remarked that Abraham had nothing but God's word to rest on, he was shut up to faith; apart from that, all was hopeless impossibility. The speaker glanced up at the girl's face, as she lay back with closed eyes, and as she looked, two great tears forced themselves from beneath the tightly-compressed lids and rolled silently down the wasted cheeks, while a deep, though silent, thanksgiving went up to God from the visitor's heart. After this, the reserve which Bessie had hitherto maintained gradually gave way, and she gladly welcomed any who came to speak to her of the Lord. She was always ready for the word of God, and soon was rejoicing in Jesus as her Saviour. Never afterwards, with one exception, did her joy seem to be interrupted for a moment.

That exception, and her countenance and manner at the time, after-years could never efface

from the heart of the young Christian who witnessed the exercise through which her soul was passing. Going into her room one day, the contrast to the usually happy, peaceful face and bright greeting was too apparent not to be noticed, and her visitor asked, "What is the matter, Bessie, has Satan been tempting you to doubt the Lord?" "No, no," she replied, "I have neither doubt nor fear; it is not that." "And what is it, then? Something is wrong." She had not hitherto raised her eyes, but now lifting them, she said, with a never-to-be-forgotten look, and a tone of the deepest sadness, "O, Miss ——, I have lost my life!"

At once her friend understood what she meant; it was not that she was dying, it was not that she was being cut down in her youth; no, it was that the brief life with which she had been entrusted had been spent for her own pleasure, and now it was over, it was *a lost life*. There was silence; no word was spoken between those two—one with the wilderness path stretched out before her still to be trodden, the other about to be called away just as she had entered it. It was a solemn moment. God was exercising each heart, and she who seemed likely to have many years still before her, thought—If one only just converted feels like this when dying, how must it be with those who have long known the Lord as their Saviour, and have lived for themselves and not for Him who laid down His life to save them. The cloud

passed away ; not so the impression it had made ; and it may be that “ the God of all grace ” permitted that cloud for the accomplishing of His own will, and that dear Bessie’s has not been altogether a lost life.

As the disease progressed, her sufferings increased, and were at times intense : her mother said she had lost other children in consumption, but their sufferings were as nothing compared with Bessie’s. But she bore all with quiet patience, seldom spoke of what she suffered, and her peace was undisturbed.

One day, when her friend entered the room she was almost startled by the radiancy of her face, and asking how she was, the answer came slowly and with difficulty, for she was hardly able to speak : “ Oh, Miss ———, I can hardly feel the pain, I’m so happy ! ” A few days more and the pain was over for ever, and she was “ present with the Lord.” Bessie’s one deep anxiety from the time she had peace herself was for the conversion of her mother, and her own happy death-bed was, it is believed, the means of her mother’s conversion.

Dear reader remember (if you are the Lord’s) “ Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body.”

“ And He died for all, that *they which live* should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again ” (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20 ; 2 Cor. v. 15).

GOD'S REST.

HEB. IV.

The heart of man naturally seeks rest, and seeks it here. Now there is no rest to be found here for the saint ; but it is written, " There *remaineth* therefore a rest to the people of God " (v. 9). To know this is both full of blessing and full of sorrow—sorrow to the flesh, because, as it is always seeking its rest here, it has always to be disappointed—blessing to the spirit, because the spirit being born of God, can only rest in God's own rest, as it is said, " If they shall enter into my rest " (vs. 3, 5).

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

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

Whenever the soul loses practically the knowledge that its rest is in God's rest, the moment the

eye is off that which "remaineth," we begin to seek a rest here, and consequently get uneasy, restless and dissatisfied. Every time we find something on which we attempt to settle, that very thing proves but a new source of trouble and conflict to us—a new source of exercise and weariness of heart. *God loves us too well to let us rest here.*

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

What is the secret of the unhappiness and restlessness of many a saint? A hankering after rest here. God is therefore obliged to discipline and exercise that soul; to allow, it may be, some circumstance to detect the real state of the heart by touching that about which the will is concerned. Circumstances would not trouble if they did not find something in us contrary to God; they would rustle by as the wind. God deals with that in us which hinders communion, and prevents our seeking rest in Him alone. His discipline is the continual and unwearied exercise of love, which rests not now in order that we may enter into His rest. If He destroys our rest here—if He turns our meat into poison—it is only that He may bring us into His own rest, that we may have that which satisfies His desires, not ours. "He will rest in His love."

"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his works, as God did from His

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

The point is one which concerns those who are justified, whom God has brought into His family, God is training such, and bringing them up into the full enjoyment of His own blessedness and rest. If I, being a parent, enjoy anything, it is impossible, if I really love my child, not to wish him to enjoy it with me. And if we, who are evil, do this, how much more our heavenly Father! What God desires for us, as we have seen, and He delights to do it, is to bring us into the enjoyment of all that which He Himself enjoys. He has made us partakers of the divine nature that we may enjoy it. The Hebrews were continually liable to sink into the seeking a rest here; in short, not to live a life of faith. The great point on which the apostle insists is, that God has not His rest here—that while there was that which hindered the comfort of His love He could not rest.

* Such is the true force.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES.

EPHES. I. 10.

The good pleasure of God is to unite all that is created under Christ's hand. This is His purpose for the administration of the times in which the result of all His ways shall be manifested. It will be a grand spectacle, as the result of God's ways, to see all things united in perfect peace and union, under the authority of man, the Second Man and Son of God ; we, as being redeemed, associated with Him in the same glory as Himself, His companions in heavenly glory, as the objects of God's eternal counsels. Ephes. i. directs our attention to the communication of God's counsels respecting it, and not to the scene itself. The eternal state, in which God is all in all, is quite another thing. The administration of the fulness of times is the result of God's ways in government ; the eternal state is the result of the perfection of His nature. In Christ we inherit our part, heirs of God, as it is said in Rom. viii., and joint-heirs with Christ. Here, however, the Spirit sets before us the position, in virtue of which the inheritance has fallen to us, rather than the inheritance itself. He ascribes it also to the sovereign will of God, as He did before with regard to the special relationship of sons unto God. In the inheritance we shall be to the praise of His glory ; as in our relationship to Him we are to the praise of the glory of His grace.

DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH.

In the course of God's dealing with men, we may observe that He is again and again *testing* them ; and yet always providing for the failure in which He knew this testing would end.

He began thus with Adam in the Garden. He put him to proof, setting him as under law. But in the mystery of the sleeping man, and the woman taken out of him, He would have us learn, that from the very beginning He knew where this would end, and provided another and a better thing.

So with Israel afterwards. He tested them by the law ; but He revealed to them " the shadows of good things to come " (Heb. x. 1), the pledges of grace and salvation ; knowing that man would again destroy himself, and be ruined under the law of Mount Sinai, as he had already been under the law or command delivered to him in the Garden of Eden.

Then, by the ministry of the prophets, the Lord was leading the people back to obedience, if so be they would be led that way. But by the same prophets, He was anticipating the grace in which a self-ruined, helpless and incorrigible people must finally stand, if blest at all.

John the Baptist then came, according to the prophecies which went before upon him, as the Voice, the Messenger, the Elijah, of Messiah. But he was also, in another aspect of his ministry, the *Witness of the Lamb of God*, and the *Harbinger of the Light of the world* ; characters in which the prophecies had not foreshewn him, but which put him in company with the Messiah, or the Christ, as dispensing grace and salvation to Israel and to man, on the clear assumption that all would fail under the ministry that was then about to test them.

By the Lord's own personal ministry in the cities and villages of Israel, the same process is conducted. He is testing His people by a proposal of Himself to them again and again ; but He is likewise witnessing sovereign grace and redemption, knowing, as He did, that they would but again destroy themselves under the trial that was then being made of them. By His commission to the twelve and to the seventy, He was doing the same—for such ministries were but a reflection of His.

And it is thus to the end. The apostleship at Jerusalem under the Holy Ghost upon the ascension of Christ was still testing the Jew ; and the Jew failed under it again. But "times of restitution" and of "refreshing" (Acts iii.) were looked at in the distance. And then in the last commission instituted by Him, that is, in the apostleship of Paul, the good news of God's salvation was sent to the ends of the earth, to gather the elect that they might act and shine as the Body of Christ ; but in that same apostleship He anticipates what the end of that ministry would be, and makes provision accordingly. This is seen in the second epistle to Timothy ; confirmed as that is by the challenge of the candlesticks in Rev. i.-iii. ; and further, by the judgment of Christendom in Rev. iv.-xix. These thoughts may naturally introduce me to my subject—"Dispensational Truth."

It has been said, "that the study of it has a withering effect upon the soul." Let us try this by the light of the wisdom of God, as we get that light (where alone we can get it) in the word of God.

In the epistle to the Romans, the saints of God are largely instructed in this character of truth. Chapters ix.-xi. are a very full writing on divine dispensations. But I grant this is *after* they have

been settled and established in *personal* truth—truth, I mean, that concerns themselves in their relation to God, as chapters i.-viii. shew us.

Now this would let us know, that there is a condition of soul, in which it would be unhealthy or unseasonable for it to make the ways or dispensations of God its study. And, therefore, if the person who has thus spoken be intellectually inquiring into such matters, divine and precious as they are, before the question of his own relation to God is settled, I can suppose that he has found this study to be a withering of the soul.

And again, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, I see an apostle refusing to feed those saints of God with such knowledge as we are now speaking of. In the stores given him of the Spirit, he had “hidden wisdom,” or “the wisdom of God in a mystery,” and he would bring it out to the “perfect.” But the Corinthians were in a bad condition; and he would, therefore, attend to them personally, rather than feed or entertain them with knowledge of God and His ways. And very much in this same way, I may say, the Lord Himself had already dealt with Nicodemus, the Rabbi, as we see in John iii.

So that again, I grant, there is a condition of soul, in which it would be unhealthy for it, nay, unwarranted of the Spirit of God, to make dispensational truth its study. And, therefore, if the person who has thus spoken be walking carelessly, I do not wonder at the soul withering if it be thus occupied.

But further, not only is the condition of the soul to be thus considered, as we make these things our study, there is also a *mode* of studying them which the word of God suggests, and which is to be considered also. I would instance what I mean. The

apostle, in tracing the dispensations of God, as I have already observed he does in Rom. ix.-xi., interrupts his progress through that great subject, and takes up for a time something that is strongly *personal* in its character, or in its bearing upon us individually. I mean in chapter x. of that wonderful Scripture. For there we listen, each one for himself, sinners as we are, to the voice of law and to the voice of faith, with suited admonitions, and encouragements, and teachings.

Just, I may say, as in 1 Cor. xii.-xiv., where the same apostle is unfolding *ecclesiastical* truth, as he is here unfolding *dispensational* truth ; for there in like manner he interrupts himself by something deeply and solemnly personal and practical, as we see in chap. xiii. of that Scripture.

So that I fully grant that the condition of the soul, and the mode of pursuing this study, have to be considered, while we are engaged in it. But, with these and kindred admonitions and jealousies, I find the wisdom of God does set us down carefully and continually to the meditations of His counsels and ways in His different dispensations ; and that He has been doing so from the beginning.

Have we not proof of this ? Surely the very earliest divine records, the patriarchal stories of the book of Genesis, teem with notices of God's counselled ways. In them He is issuing and telling out the end at the beginning. They are all of them true narrations—surely they are—and we are to acquaint ourselves with them as such. But is that all ? Is it merely to tell me what happened so many thousand years ago, that they are written for me ? Or, do I expect to find in them, disclosures of divine secrets, good for the use of edifying one in the knowledge of God and His ways ? I have no doubt how I am to answer this. Sarah and

Hagar are not merely a domestic tale, but "an allegory." And I am full sure, the same book of Genesis, where I read that allegory, teems with kindred ones—some more, some less, rich and profound in communications of the Divine Mind in eternal counsels.

And then, Mosaic ordinances take up the same wondrous tale. The Jewish year, as Leviticus xxiii. would tell us, measures, as in a miniature and in a mystery, the way of God from the day of the Exodus out of Egypt, to the day of entering and dwelling in the kingdom, the millennial glory of Christ and the creation.

Afterwards, the Prophets were instructed in those ways of God, and ordained to be the witnesses of them to all generations. I admit, there was another purpose of God in calling them out; and that was, to bring back Israel to their allegiance to Jehovah, if so be they would turn and repent. But the grander, and still more characteristic purpose of their ministry was this—to declare the ways of God, according to His counselled wisdom in dealing with this world of ours.

And when we come to the New Testament writings, we find the same. Not only do certain parts of those writings make such truth their subject (such as Rom. ix.-xi., as we have already said), but such truth will be seen through parts and passages, which are more immediately dealing with other things. Dispensational truth is there called, by the high titles of "wisdom" and "mystery;" and well it surely may bear such dignities. And the apostle prays that we may have spiritual understandings, to entertain and reach such themes. He tells us, that he speaks of such among the "perfect;" and he intimates that it was the shame and loss of the Corinthians, that they were not

prepared for truth of that high quality. And in all this, great honour is surely put on such truth itself, and encouragement of a peculiar kind given to the study of it. And if we are in company with that Spirit, who wrote the whole volume, we cannot but be acquainting ourselves with it, as we go from Genesis to Revelation, throughout Scripture from first to last.

But further.

Godliness is connected with *the truth* (1 Tim. iii. 15, 16). Our character is to be formed by it, and our service defined and directed by it. The truth is the instrument and the standard. It is that by which the Spirit works in us and with us; and it is that by which we try everything. It is an *instrument* in the Spirit's hand, and a *standard* in ours—and the truth that is this, is connected with the dispensations of God.

This is seen at once. Morals and the duties which attach to human relationships get a peculiar character from their connection with such truth—as, among other scriptures, Eph. iv., v., vi., would, in many particulars, illustrate for us. We are now in this dispensation to learn “Christ,” and be taught “as the truth is in Jesus.” What was holiness and service under one dispensation, ceases to be so under another. Actions change their character with the changing time. In order to *do* right, or to *be* right, according to God, we must “know the time,” as the apostle speaks. The day was, when it was holy to call down fire from heaven to consume adversaries. But the day came, when the offer to do such a thing had to suffer rebuke—and that too, under the same supreme divine authority which had warranted, nay, inspired it, before. “Everything is beautiful in its season”—and dispensational truth is the great arbiter of

seasons, telling us the times and what the Israel of God and the church of God ought severally to do.

At one time, the Lord put the sword into the hand of His servant, at another, He took it out of such a hand. Joshua and Peter tell me this. "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," was a divine decree in the day of the Evangelists—but, in earlier days, every trace of Gentile rule in the land of the fathers was required to be clean blotted out by the zeal and strength of the children. It was not to be "God" and "Cæsar" then, but Jehovah's name was to be written on the land of the Twelve Tribes, and every stick and stone on it be claimed in the name of Jehovah of Israel, without a rival.

Places and ordinances, in like manner, change their character with dispensations. But this is more easily admitted or apprehended than the other. Mount Sinai where God came down, and which awful, consecrated spot, none were to touch but Himself, is now simply "Sinai in Arabia"—and institutions, which were once divine, and the dishonouring of which was death, are now but "beggarly elements," "rudiments of the world." Nay, more—they are even put in company with idols (Gal. iv.). Thus, what was sacred at one time, becomes common at another; while, what was unclean once, is afterwards given for the communion of the saints. The serpent of brass becomes Nehustan—a company of those who had been repudiated as "uncircumcised," becomes "a habitation of God through the Spirit."

Thus it is indeed so, that the character, the value with God, of actions, places, ordinances and the like, will change with changing dispensations. We are to decide on their godliness, their sacred-

ness, their holiness, by "the truth." And not only is it thus with changing dispensations, but with the changing phases and conditions of the same dispensation.

The harps of Israel, for instance, were struck in the days of Solomon, and songs were sung when Heman, Asaph and Jeduthun were in the land. But in the days of Babylon, the harps were to be hung on the willows, and the songs of Zion to be silent.

So, David, according to the mind of God, when his hunger and wanderings bespoke a ruined condition of things among the people, would ask for the shew bread of the Sanctuary for himself and his followers, though in the day of the integrity of Israel and their dispensation, it was lawful only for the priests to eat of it.

So again, this same David could not go on with a purpose that was right in his heart, as the Lord Himself said of it, because it was not right, or in season, *dispensationally considered* (2 Chron. vi. 8, 9).

And thus we see, from a few samples out of many, that different stages or eras, or conditions of things, in one and the same dispensation, have their several and peculiar truth on which to ground their own peculiar claims, just as surely and simply as if they were different dispensations. The children of Israel under Joshua, and under the Judges, the Jews at home, the Jews in Babylon, the Jews returned, though all of them alike under the same covenant had very differently the claims and service of Jehovah to answer and do. "Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them," I may call to mind, in connection with this. When He is taken away, then indeed they may fast (Luke v.), and ought to fast.

Surely, I may say, everything helps to shew us, that dispensational truth is the great, I say not the only, rule and manner of holiness according to God. We must "know the time," for nothing is right out of season. "The children of Issachar were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chron. xii. 32). Scripture is full of instruction upon this principle, and leaves us at no liberty to judge the holy and the unholy, independently of "the truth." Our godliness, our piety, in order to have a divine character, depends on our knowledge of the truth, of times and seasons as they are with God, or according to His mind in His perfect and beautiful, though changing, dispensations.

Here, however, let me say, lest I should be misunderstood, that I surely know that there are rules of right and wrong, which are essentially so, by moral necessity so; and we are not to question their authority. Conscience is ever to be respected, though it must consent to be instructed. Nature itself, has a voice at times, which we are to listen to. Surely I grant all this, though I speak of dispensational truth, as I do. For I again say, it is not the *only* rule and measure of holiness. And I will say more. I grant that all dispensations have certain *common* qualities, certain features which mark each and all of them. Let me dwell on this for a little.

In this world, which has departed from God through pride, and desire of self-exaltation, where man would have been as God, if God appear and act at all, surely He will come in a way to stain the pride of all flesh, and bring back His revolted creature to glory only in Him.

And we see, accordingly, that it is thus, or on such a principle as this, that He has *always* acted

in the midst of us, ever choosing the weak things to confound the strong, that no flesh might glory in His presence, but that he who gloried, might glory only in Him. Let dispensations change as they may, or the scene shift as it may, this is always seen.

The Patriarchs were few, very few, in the land, and strangers there. They had not so much as to set their foot on, going from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people ; yet did He suffer no man to do them wrong, reproving even kings for their sakes, and saying, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (Ps. cv.).

When His elect became a nation, they were the fewest of all people, not worthy of a memorial or place in the records of the world ; but they multiplied in spite of Egyptian task-masters, and then flourished into a kingdom, and became the centre of the earth and its nations, in spite of all the enmity that surrounded them. Their victories were gained by instruments of the most perfect weakness : lamps and pitchers, ox-goads, jaw bones, and slings, doing the work of the army and the war-horse, the sword and the shield ; while two would put ten thousand to flight, and trumpets of rams' horns pull down the walls of hostile cities.

And so, when times change altogether, when the nation is broken up because of its sin, and a ministry of grace and salvation goes forth, it is fishermen of Galilee, with their divine Lord, the son of a carpenter, at their head, that bear it abroad to the cities and villages of the land.

And so again, when the apostle of the Gentiles comes to speak of ministry in his day, he tells us of the weakness and foolishness of God proving stronger and wiser than man, and points to the church at Corinth as the witness of this same prin-

ciple which we have traced from the beginning ; that God was humbling the flesh or man, and making Himself our glory and boast (1. Cor. i.-iii). And he then lets us know, that he was acting on this same principle himself, as in company with God—for he was among the Corinthians in weakness and in fear, as a minister of Christ, not using excellency of speech or of wisdom ; but that, in the midst of this his weakness, he carried a secret with him, a glorious, wondrous secret, beyond the reach of the eye or the ear or the heart of the princes of this world. Gideon and Samson and David knew the victory that was before them in their day, though they went forth to the battle with lamps and pitchers, with the jaw-bone of an ass, or with a sling and a stone ; and such an one was Paul with his treasures of light in the Spirit, though he was in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

But this, rather by the way, I will now come again nearer to ourselves and to my subject.

In the New Testament, we have the present dispensation presented to us in three successive conditions. *First*—the churches, as such, are seen under the pastoral care of the Spirit in Paul—as is witnessed by his epistles to them. *Secondly*—they are challenged as candlesticks, or as churches under responsibility ; and they are called to give an account of themselves, by the Son of man who appears before them in bright, burning, judicial glory—as we see in Rev. i.-iii. *Thirdly*—they are, as it were, lost in Christendom, no longer nourished and disciplined as churches, or challenged as candlesticks, but meeting as Christendom (the corrupted wordly thing in the earth which calls itself by the name of Christ), the judgement of the Lord—as we see in Rev. iv.-xix. (*cf.* 1 Pet. iv. 17).

These are three eras in the story or progress of the dispensation, three phases which it bears successively.

I ask—Do not many things connected with Christian place and service and duty change with these changing aspects of our age, as they did in like changing eras in the story of Israel? From the simplest analogy, yea, from moral necessity, I might answer, surely. But a meditation on the two epistles to Timothy will determine this for us, and give us to know, that this is the divine good-pleasure concerning us.

The first of these two epistles contemplates the churches in the *first* of the conditions I have noticed above; that is, as under the pastoral care of the Spirit through the apostle. The second of them contemplates, I believe, the saints in the interval between the *second* and *third*; that is, between the challenge of the candlesticks and the judgment of Christendom—this assuming that the challenge has ended in conviction and dismissal or removal.

It may, however, be asked, is such an assumption warranted? Yes, I say, fully—because the challenge of His steward by the Lord, in each and every dispensation, at all times, and under all circumstances, has ever so ended; that is, in conviction and dismissal. Man in a responsible relation to God has never had an answer for his Lord. None, entrusted of Him with any deposit, have ever been found faithful, but He of whom it is written, “all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen” (2 Cor. i. 20). “Give an account of thy stewardship” has always ended in the stewardship being taken away (Luke xvi). If “God stand in the congregation of the mighty,” if “He judge among the gods,” the conviction will

surely be pronounced, "they know not neither will they understand, they walk on in darkness, all the foundations of the earth are out of course;" and the sentence will be delivered, "ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes" (Ps.lxxxii).

So that the challenge of the candlesticks in Rev. i.-iii. must be assumed to have ended in conviction and dismissal. And to establish this as a fact, I may refer to John himself in those chapters. He is a kind of representative of the churches or candlesticks, and he is set before the Lord Jesus, the Son of man, as One that was walking among them as a Judge, shining before John in bright, burning judicial glory. Had He appeared to John as a Judge of *the world* John would have stood; for he had already learnt and taught that "we have boldness in the day of judgment" (1. John iv. 17). But He was standing among *the candlesticks*, and before John as representing them; and this was overwhelming. As one dead, he falls at the feet of such a Judge, such a glory. He came short of it—he had no answer for it—the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, would do for him as a sinner but not as a steward—he is overwhelmed and falls at His feet as one dead. Just like Isaiah in like conditions; for when the Throne of Jehovah set itself before him in judicial glory for the challenge of Israel, the prophet cries out, "Woe is me, for I am undone!"

All join in telling us what the end of this challenge must be. The steward is called to give an account of his stewardship, and it comes to pass again, as it had ever done before, that he is no longer steward. The stewardship is taken away—the dispensation is in ruins—and upon this, the long and dreary age of Christendom, of a corrupt and ruined dispensation, begins to take its course,

as it is still doing in this our day, and, as it will do, in growing corruption of every form, and multiplied confusion in every place, till it end in the judgement of Christendom as the specially guilty thing on the earth, under the eye of God.

Now, the second epistle to Timothy anticipates, as I believe, and as I have already said, this interval—the era between the challenge of the candlesticks (and their consequent removal) and the judgment of Christendom.*

And let me here turn aside for a moment just to say, that we ought to acquaint ourselves with the mysteries of this dispensation, as the Lord Jesus told His disciples in His day, that they ought to know “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. xiii. 11). We ought to know the course, and the changes, and the successive phases through which it was to pass, for otherwise we cannot be dully instructed scribes to bring out of our treasures the old things and the new things of God, according to “His manifold wisdom.”

To return, however, to the two epistles to Timothy, of which I was speaking, and to give them a little closer inspection. We know not what time intervened between the writing of these two epistles, but it is likely that it was considerable; for Paul was at large, abroad in active ministry, when he wrote the first of them; but he was a prisoner at Rome, having already appeared before

* From the epistle of James to that of Jude (and this includes all which are not Paul's), the churches have receded from the eye of the Spirit; inasmuch as it is not churches, but saints personally or individually considered, that He is then and there addressing. It was otherwise in Paul's epistles. And this further prepares us for the challenge of the characters in Rev. i.-iii., and their consequent disappearing.

Caesar, to answer for himself, when he wrote the second. And Timothy was at Ephesus when the first of these was addressed and sent to him ; but we cannot say, with any certainty, where he was when he received the second.

But then, when we further look at the two, and compare them still for a little longer, we find in the first of them that the house is called "the house of God, the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth—while, in the second, the house is compared to "a great house" in which "are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earth ; some to honour and some to dishonour" and that one must needs purge oneself from these vessels to dishonour, if one would be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

And further still, in the progress of this same epistle, he speaks of Jannes and Jambres, likening the day which that epistle contemplates to the day of those adversaries. For Satan was then, in Christendom, purposing to neutralize the truth, by putting it into strange company or with evil admixtures, as he was doing with those magicians in the day of Moses, and thus blinding the conscience whether of the king of Egypt, or of the world.

What a premonition of that which has come to pass ! What is Christendom but the scene of such admixtures as have neutralized the power of the truth ! These and kindred marks shew us, that the dispensation was contemplated as under different conditions, as the apostle was writing these two epistles. In the first of them, the light in the candlestick is fed and trimmed—in the second, the candlestick has been removed.

But is this to be a surprise to us? Are we to think that the steward of God in this age would have proved faithful, since every other steward of His, from the beginning hitherto, as we have already seen, had been judged and set aside? The church was to have been under her Lord, and in the Spirit, the light of the world, the pillar and ground of the truth. But she has become worse than darkness—a false beacon on the hill that has betrayed the traveller. But Adam the steward of Eden, at the beginning; then Noah, lord of the world that now is; and then Israel the husbandman of the vineyard in Judea, had already been found wanting. The king had failed ere this, the priest, the prophet—and now the candlestick. It is a tale told again and again: the unfaithfulness of man as responsible to God, the steward called to give in his account, and that ending in the stewardship being taken away from him. The house of prayer, so to speak, has always become a den of thieves.

But further, as to the course of dispensations. In each of them, while each was still subsisting, there has been separation after separation. See this in Israël,—Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, were, each of them, returned captives, a separated remnant who, with their companions, left Babylon. But the day came, the day of the prophet Malachi, when “they that feared the Lord” had to separate from the returned captives, and “speak often one to another,” as though they had been *another* remnant (Mal. iii).

So in Christendom. The Reformation, for instance, was a time of separation. But from the persistive, growing, and accredited corruption which still or again prevailed, further withdrawing or separation has again and again had to take

place. The return from Babylon did not secure purity in Israel—the Reformation has not recovered it and kept it in Christendom. The emptied, swept and garnished house has not done for the Lord Jesus. He has found no habitation for His glory there. The unclean spirit, the spirit of idolatry, may have gone out from Israel, for there were no idols or high places in the land after the return from Babylon; but Israel was not healed: for infidel insolence, the challenges of the proud and scornful, were heard there fearfully. And what else, I ask, if not this again, in the Reformation-times of Christendom? Read the prophet Malachi, and look around at the moral condition of things under the eye, and mark the wondrous analogies that there are in the stories of corruption and confusion in man's world, whether there or here, whether then or now, whether in Israel or in Christendom, whether in our day, or 2,000 years ago. Is it not so?

When we come into the book of the Apocalypse, after *contemplating* the different aspects of the dispensation in the two epistles to Timothy, we find, as I have anticipated already, the Lord *challenging* and *judging*; challenging the candlesticks and judging the world—in other words, judging the candlesticks by setting them aside, judging the world by the avenging destructions of His own day.

In the first three chapters, we get the first of these actions. The churches, as candlesticks, or as in their responsible place and character, are *summoned to give an account of themselves*. The Son of man walks among them in judicial glory. They had been previously fed and disciplined by the Spirit in the apostles, as churches of saints, elect bodies; but here they are, as candlesticks,

such as were responsible to shine as lights in the world, being set of God for that end, challenged and arraigned—according to which, the Son of man begins His address to each of them with these words, “I know thy works.” And as we have already seen, that no steward has ever had an answer for God, when challenged to give an account of his stewardship, this challenge of the candlesticks must be assumed to have ended in conviction and dismissal.

And now, dear reader, may we not, in view of what has been before us, ask ourselves, what influence and authority the truth has over us ; and seek grace from Him who is “The God of all grace,” and who “giveth more grace” that there may not be on our part the mere assent of the intellect, but that we may be found holding the truth in communion with the Lord, mindful of the fact that the exclusive or disproportionate study of dispensational truth may engender the knowledge which puffeth up to the weakening of the love that buildeth up ; and likewise remembering what another has said that “the *dispensational* aspect of truth must be secondary to that which is *eternal*.”



THE POWER OF A LITTLE TRUTH.

“I desire to know the *power* of a little truth, rather, far rather, than to increase the *stock* of truths.”

This, beloved, is surely a “desire” which it would be profitable for us all to have, and to know the accomplishment of in our experience.

There is a great danger in these days, of abundant information, of gathering mere *geological* specimens of truth, if I may so express it, and having

a fine *stock* of them in our heads, instead of having them in our hearts, in the power of the unction from the Holy One, teaching us in such a way, as to humble us, and fill us with real knowledge of our blessed Lord Jesus.

Oh my soul ! dost thou really know in the grace and power of the Holy Ghost, the truths which thou hast learned ? *Extract.*



FRAGMENT.

If ever there was a day when it is important for every true follower of Christ to stand fast and to be true to his profession, I believe it is the present day. There is no answer to infidelity like the life of Christ displayed by the Christian. Nothing puts the madness of the infidel, and the folly of the superstitious more to shame and silence than the humble, quiet, devoted walk of a thorough-going, heavenly-minded, and divinely-taught Christian. It may be in the unlearned, and poor, and despised ; but like the scent of the lowly violet, it gives its fragrance abroad, and both God and man take notice of it. Works, if only hypocritical doings, go for nothing ; but works that are the genuine expression of living and walking with God in Christ, are of the same value as the hands of a good clock. A good clock without hands is, for practical purposes, of no value ; but the hands on the face tell the measure of the value of the works within, and record the lapse of time. " We are His (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them " (Ephes. ii. 10). Now is the time for works, and for overcoming, to him that has an ear to hear.

THE MAN WITH A MEASURING LINE.

EZEKIEL XLVII. 1-10, 11.

I call attention to this Scripture for two purposes. It will only take a few moments to explain the first, the second will occupy the remainder of this paper. Of these verses I want to form a scriptural platform upon which to erect a pyramid of Scripture taken from the New Testament. This chapter speaks of mysterious waters which issue forth from the temple, and flow through the Dead Sea, healing the waters. This will not be fulfilled until the millennium, when the Jews are restored to their land. It is of this time alone that the chapter treats. Scripture has only one interpretation, but it has many applications.

Now, as I said before, this Scripture applies to the millennium, when all Israel shall be restored ; for they shall be brought back again to the land of their fathers. If you turn to chapter xxxvii. 21, 22, you will find this very plainly stated : “ Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel ; and one king shall be king to them all : and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.” When the Lord brings them back, the kingdoms of Judah and Israel shall be united, and they shall

have *one* king. It is the Lord Jesus who shall be King in that day. And then these mysterious waters shall flow through the Dead Sea, healing its waters, so that there shall be a very great multitude of fishes where now there are none, and there shall be fertility where now there is sterility. Wherever these fertilizing waters flow, they shall bring life and blessing with them.

Now I turn from what this Scripture teaches to what it does not teach, but suggests. These mysterious waters are, to me, a beautiful type, or rather figure, of the love of God. They flow from the throne of God. (Rev. xxii. 1.) Verse 3: "And when *the man* who had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he *measured* a thousand cubits," etc. Here we get "*the man*" who can measure the love of God. Who is He? There is only *one* man who is able to measure the love of God, and I turn you to the New Testament in order to introduce you to Him. Perhaps you think it strange to hear me call the Lord Jesus a *man*, but Scripture calls Him so. He, who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6), "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father" (John i. 18), became man in order to make the love of God known unto us, as well as to make atonement. Turn to 1 Tim. ii. 5, and allow me to introduce you to "*the Man*" whose prerogative it is to measure the love of God. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, *the man* Christ Jesus." Job said,

“Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that *he might lay his hand upon us both.*” Well, here He is in 1 Tim. ii. 5. Here is the One for whom Job longed to go between him and God, and to bring them together; and He has measured the distance that was between God and man by (if I might so express it) laying His right hand of divinity upon the throne of God, and His left hand of humanity upon man. The Man Christ Jesus is the *only* Mediator between God and man. It is He alone who can measure the love of God, and it is He alone who can conduct us into the love of God, as the man in Ezekiel brought the prophet into the river.

Turn to 2 Thess. iii. 5, “*And the Lord direct your hearts [not your heads] into the love of God.*” Not into our love to God, but into His love to us. Surely if we love Him, it is because He *first* loved us; and it is on His love to us that we should dwell, not on our poor love to Him. We must be brought into the love of God by Christ. Oh, beloved reader, will you let the Lord Jesus *bring* you into the fathomless, shoreless river of God’s love? Mark, it does not say that the prophet followed the man. Oh, no; the man brought him through! Now put your poor, tiny, feeble hands into the great, mighty, loving hand of the Lord Jesus, and let Him bring you into the fathomless, shoreless ocean of God’s love.

Verse 3: “And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a

thousand cubits, and he *brought* me through the waters ; the waters were to the ancles." Now what does this teach ? Turn to John iii. 16 : " God so loved the *world*, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Do you know God's love to you a lost sinner ? Have you believed in the One whom He has sent in His wondrous love to save you ? If so, you have been brought through the waters to your ancles ; but you should not stop there. It is indeed a blessed thing to be to the ancles in the waters ; for it means that you have left the shore on which judgment rested, and that you are *now* in the fathomless, shoreless river of God's love, *never* to return to the shore again, never again to be in the place of judgment. But is there nothing better, or, I should say, in advance of this ? Surely it is a blessed thing to know the love of God to the world, but we should not stop there. I know that there are many of God's dear children who never get past their ancles, as it were, in His love. I was speaking lately to a man who told me that he was forty years converted. I asked him what was the best thing he knew ? He said, " God so loved the world," etc. Now he had known the Lord for forty years, yet he had never got past his ancles. I feel very much grieved to find that ninety-five out of every hundred of God's children that I meet have not got past the love of God to the world : and why is it so ? Because they do not

leave their hands in the Lord's, and let Him conduct them through the waters.

Now having got to your ancles in the waters, let Him bring you through the second thousand cubits—"Again He measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters ; the waters were to the knees." Now surely this is in advance of the first thousand cubits. Turn to John xvi. 26, 27 : "At that day ye shall ask in my name : and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you : FOR THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVETH YOU . . . because ye have believed that I came out from God." Is not this better than John iii. 16? Here we get the love of the Father, which brings in relationship. God loves the world ; but His love to His children is something deeper, something in advance of it—"At that day, etc.," when the Holy Ghost would be given. We know that ten days after the ascension of Christ the Holy Ghost was given to dwell in every child of God. It is the Spirit who has taught us to cry, "Abba, Father." "And *because* ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Oh, do you know that you have a Father in heaven who loves you Himself, and who cares for you as you go through the world? People have a notion that they must go to Jesus, and get Him to go to the Father for them ; but this is not the case. The Lord says, "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you : *for the Father Himself loveth you.*" You can go

straight with boldness to the Father, and say, "Father," that sweet name that the Spirit has taught us to call Him by. Jehovah, the Lord God Almighty, is *our* Father. Is not this in advance of His love to the world? But there is something better still. Now if you have got up to your knees in His love do not stop there. Let the Man bring you through the third thousand cubits—"Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins." Here the waters are to the loins. Now what is this? Turn to John xvii. 22, 23: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and HAST LOVED THEM, AS THOU HAST LOVED ME." Is not this in advance of the second thousand cubits? There we learn that the Father Himself loves us; but here we get the measure of the love.

People speak of the Jewish disciple's prayer as if it were the Lord's Prayer; in fact they call it the Lord's Prayer, but it is not. This 17th chapter of John is the Lord's Prayer, and He allows us to stand by, as it were, and hear Him speak to His Father. Is not this wonderful? John the Baptist taught his disciples to pray. This was in advance of all that went before, and it expressed dependence on, and confidence in, God. Jesus' disciples asked Him to give them a prayer, as John gave his disciples. Jesus did give them a form o'

prayer, which was much in advance of John's, and which suited their condition at the time it was given. It was a prayer to be used by them during the transitional state before the coming of the Holy Ghost. That this prayer was not to continue we know ; for prayer now is to be in the name of Jesus, and this one is not. John xvi. 24 plainly tells us so—" *Hitherto* have ye asked *nothing in my name* : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." If the prayer which He had given to them had been in the name of Jesus, He would not have said, " *Hitherto* have ye asked *nothing in my name*." The Holy Ghost is now in us to give us the knowledge of our relationship, and to teach us how to pray to our Father (Rom. viii. 16, 26).

Now what is the measure of the Father's love to us ? " That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and *hast loved them, as thou hast loved me*." How does the Father love the Son ? Well, such is His love to us—

" So dear, so very dear to God,
More dear I cannot be ;
 The love wherewith *He loves the Son,*
Such is His Love for me."

Can the Father *ever love* the Son *more* ? or *will* He *ever love Him less* ? Never. Well, His love to us is so great that He *can never* love us more, and He will *never* love us less.

And now, having been brought through the three thousand cubits, let us go through the

fourth—"Afterward he measured a thousand ; and it was a river that I could not pass over : for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed." Turn to 1 John iv. 16 : "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love ; and *he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him.*" Surely this is in advance of all that went before. "He that dwelleth *in love*"—God's love to us, not our love to Him—"dwelleth in God, and God *in him.*" Is not this water to swim in ? It takes us completely off our feet, and puts us on our faces before Him in praise and worship. We are ashamed to think of our poor feeble love. It is only by dwelling on His love that we can love Him. The love is there, but it comes from Him, just as if you were to dip a bucket in the ocean, and having filled it cast it back again ; the bucket-ful is there, but it is not to be seen ; it is lost in the ocean. So with our hearts full of love—it is lost in the fathomless, shoreless ocean of His love.

The Lord keep us, beloved, ever dwelling in that love which we cannot fathom or understand, but can enjoy. Then our praises shall rise unhindered to God, as the bird on the wing soars up with its breast full of song.

"And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this ? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the

other." Having been in the deep waters, we find them going back again towards the shore.

Now I have taken it for granted that you have put your hands into the large loving hand of the Lord Jesus, and that you have let Him conduct you through the waters of God's love, until you have been completely taken off your feet and put upon your face to praise and adore Him, and enjoy the fulness of His love.

Now we shall go back towards the shore again. "And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi, even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many." Here we read of *fishers* and of *fish*. What do these mean? Turn to Matt. iv. 19, which will explain the passage, "And He" (Jesus) "said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you *fishers of men*." This is service for the Lord. The Lord has sent some of us to fish for Him—to gather in souls. But he does not send us until first we have been in the full enjoyment of God's love, until we have been taken off our feet and put upon our faces in worship, then, free from ourselves, we are in the condition to tell others of that love.

It is for the Master we are to fish, and at the close of each day we should have some fish for Him in our baskets, as it were. When I go to my Master after the day with no fish for Him in my basket, I feel quite ashamed before Him, and

say, "Master, I have not a single fish for Thee in my basket. There is something wrong with me, or I should have fish for Thee." Why is it that there are so few fish caught for the Master now? I believe it is because we often put ourselves in the front, instead of Christ. There is a story of a little boy who was fishing in one of the rivers of Scotland with a rod and line of the rudest construction. A gentleman from London was also there, whose fishing tackle was of the most perfect kind. Though he tried hard all day, his basket lay there empty, for he did not succeed in catching a single trout. He came up to the boy; and when he saw how quickly he was catching the most beautiful trout, he said, "How is this? I have been trying all day, and I have not had a single bite." "I ken ye don't hide yer sel'," said the boy. "Your shadow is on the water, and it frightens the fish. I hide behind the trees." Yes, that is the secret. We often forget the Lord's way of making us fishers. He says, "*Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" We should follow, not go before Him; then He will be in front, and we shall be hid. We should preach Christ, and not ourselves; we should seek to win souls for Christ, and not for ourselves (see 2 Cor. iv. 5 & 7).

Verse 12: "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring

forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary : and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof shall be for medicine." Here we get fruit-bearing. Now we are not all called to be fishers, but we are all called to bear fruit for the glory of God. Turn to John xv. 16—"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and *ordained you*, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." My brother, my sister, in Christ, you are each ordained to bring forth fruit for God, not for yourselves. Trees bear fruit noiselessly, and the fruit is not for themselves, but for the owner. Now some child of God may say, "I do not know what fruit I can bear for God ; for I have no gift for preaching or teaching." You do not require gift. The smallest act done *for Him* God accepts as fruit. Another may say, "I am not rich, and cannot minister to God's work." "Stop, did you ask anyone to come to the gospel meeting?" "Yes, I asked one poor woman, but she has seven children, and she could not leave them." "Did you offer to take charge of the children for her, so that she might get out to hear the gospel?" "No, I never thought of that." Well, you lost an opportunity of bearing fruit for God. Oh, what a selfish heart, not to give up a meeting in order that a poor perishing soul might hear the gospel ! If you are on the watch, you will find many opportunities of bearing fruit ; for love is inventive, and, as one has said,

“ Love delights to serve, selfishness to be served.”
 “ Neither shall the *fruit thereof* be *consumed*.” “ I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that *your fruit should remain*.” The fruit will not decay through eternity. I believe that the Lord takes notice of the least bit of fruit borne for Him, and He will reward it. There are many hidden acts known only to God ; it may be some child of God sitting by the death-bed of a poor obscure saint to-night, moistening the parched lips or wiping the death-dew from the brow, that the Lord will count as far higher service than preaching the gospel. It is well to remember that (as another has said) “ faithfulness in trial and temptation shows the power of the Spirit, as much as the energy of action.”



THE TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS.

2 CORINTHIANS IV.

SCRIPTURE speaks of man in his natural state in *two* ways. *Alive* in sins, as in Romans ; and *dead* in sins, as in Ephesians. As to sins, and as having sinful lusts, man is alive enough. Plenty of activity and energy for self-pleasing, and for sin, but nothing for God. Every vanity, amusement, dress, or what not, preferred to God. For sin, he is *alive* ; for God, *dead* : “ Dead in trespasses and sins.” It is the same condition, only looked at in different aspects ; and in order to

deliverance from this condition two things are needed. As *dead* in sins, he must be quickened : it is a " new creation " that is necessary. As *alive* in sins, death must come in : he must die. There is no other remedy or way of deliverance before God, but death. This side of the truth we get in Romans, where the death of Christ is presented as meeting man's *guilt* ; and death *with* Christ, as the deliverance from our state.

Romans vi. 2-11. When a man is dead you cannot say he has evil lusts and passions, or a will of his own. " Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," etc. There is no remedy for being alive in sins but death. Ephesians gives us the other side of the truth : there we are seen as "*dead* in trespasses and sins," and God quickens, and raises us up together with Christ (Chap. ii.). It is an entirely new creation. Colossians gives both aspects. (Chap. ii. 11-13.) As *alive* in sins we have died with Christ, and are buried with Him, as in Romans ; thus getting clear of the *state* we were in, for we have died out of it, and are brought into a new place in righteousness, by virtue of Christ's resurrection. As *dead* in sins we are quickened together with Him, as also taught in Ephesians. Thus the Epistle to the Colossians goes, as it were, between the two. We are taken farther than in Romans ; because in chapter iii. we are spoken of as being *raised* with Him, which Romans does not teach. But it does not present us as *seated* in Christ in

the heavenly places, as Ephesians does. It directs us to Christ as there, and tells us to seek those things which are above, "where *Christ* sitteth."

Now all this, and more, was revealed to Paul, and declared by him in the gospel he preached. There was no veil on the glory of God, as in Moses' case: if hid, it was in the minds of unbelievers; the effort and work of Satan to blind men's minds to it. In verse 4, "Blinded the minds of them that believe not." This is the action of the "god of this world," and he does it by means of man's evil lusts, etc. The gospel is "the gospel of the glory of Christ," (not the "glorious gospel of Christ," but) the revelation of *His glory*, who had been on the cross bearing sins, but is now glorified at God's right hand. The glory of God shines in His face, and there is no veil on this. All about God has come out: He no longer hides Himself as formerly He did; dwelling in "the thick darkness." So that if God is not seen and known, the veil is on man's heart, not on God's face. The blinding of Satan is not exactly *because* of the rejection of the gospel, but rather in leading man *to* reject it. The point is, that there is no veil now, except on the human heart, and it is in contrast with Moses, who put a veil over his face. When he came out to the people from the presence of God he put it on, because they could not bear the "glory of his countenance;" not even that little reflection of the glory of God which shone in his face. Man "came short of the

glory of God ;” and when only its reflection was brought before him, he could not endure it connected as it was with the law, or God’s claim on him. But now the glory shines “in the face of Jesus Christ,” and there is no veil upon it. Moreover there is not, nor do we need, a veil upon our face, but are like Moses, in Exodus xxxiv. 34, who had no veil on when he went in before the Lord. He turned to the Lord, and took the veil away. When Israel’s heart shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away from them. (2 Cor. iii. 16.) But we do not wait for that day, but even now, “with open (or unveiled) face behold the glory of the Lord.” And not only are we free to do this, but we love to do it, for it shines in the face of Him who died for us, and put away all our sins ! Every ray of it tells how completely the work was done, for, though He was once on the cross, and our sins “were laid on Him,” He is now in the glory, and certainly has not got our sins there. In Moses the glory connected itself with the law, requirement from man, and therefore man could not bear it ; but in the gospel it shines in the face of Him who died for us. Christ has been “made sin” for us. He is now in the glory ; and we, beholding with affection and intelligence the glory in Him, and taking delight in it, are “changed into the same image, from glory to glory.” We see this in Stephen, when being stoned. He was steadfastly looking up into heaven, and saw “the glory of

God, and Jesus standing." Christ filled his vision, and see how like he is to his Lord. He is not thinking of the stones, but calmly prays the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit, as Jesus committed His spirit to His Father, and prays for his murderers, as Jesus did.

Israel "could not look to the end of that which is abolished." (Chap. iii. 13.) They could not understand even the glory which was in the ordinances, as a figure of that which was better and permanent. The whole system ordained by the hand of Moses was veiled to their eyes, and the people fell under the letter that "killeth," even in that part which was a testimony of things to be spoken afterwards. Occupied with "the letter" of the covenant under which they were, they did not see that all the types and shadows—the legal ordinances—pointed to One yet to come. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. (Ver. 6.) "Now the Lord is that spirit" (not Spirit, ver. 17), and this they did not apprehend. The institutions under the law looked on to Christ, though even in the *grace* part of them there was the veil, a standing witness that God had not revealed *Himself*, and there was no way for *man* to approach His immediate presence. Under the law God did not come out, and man could not go in. The law came out, and the prophets came out; but God Himself was hidden behind the veil. In Christ, of course, God *had* come out, as He says in John xii. 46, "I am come a light into the

world.” There God had come out, but man could not yet go in. Faith could say, “We beheld His glory,” but redemption must be accomplished in order to enable man to go in before God. This having now been done, we see a *Man* in the glory, “crowned with glory,” and God’s glory in His face. Now all is out: God is fully revealed, and man enters the glory. The veil is rent “from the top to the bottom.” God has come out; and man is gone, and can go, in.

Chapter iv. 2. Paul gave *out* the things of the gospel as pure as he received them *in*. He did not corrupt the doctrine, but manifested it in all the purity and brightness in which he had received it. Not only was the glory of God fully revealed with open face in Christ, but it was also manifested without a veil in the pure preaching of the apostle. This ministry, which was the power of the Spirit of God acting in the chosen instrument, made man responsible for submission to this glorious Christ; and when Christ was thus proclaimed, there was either submission of heart, or the blinding of Satan. *We* cannot take this ground as to the *power* of our preaching—as to the *subject* of it, we ought to be able to do so. I may preach the gospel in a place without effect, and another may come and present it with greater power, and the people be saved. Still I might, in a general way, say, If you do not receive the gospel I preach, you will be lost for ever.

In 1. Corinthians ii. we see (ver. 12) the apostle

received these things *in* by the Spirit ; verse 13, he told them *out* by the Spirit, so that we get them as pure as he received them, both being by the Spirit. “ *Comparing* spiritual things” is not the thought : it should be “ *communicating* spiritual things by spiritual means.” And then (ver. 14) it is also by means of the Spirit that the things are received by those to whom they are addressed.

God has shined *into* our hearts, in order to the “ shining out ” of the knowledge of His glory. This is the meaning of “ give the light,” in verse 6 of the chapter before us (2 Cor. iv.) It is something like lighting a candle *in* a lantern, that the light of it may shine *out* through the glass ; and what Paul could say was, that the light shone out as clear and pure as God had caused it to shine in. The treasure was in an earthen vessel, and the only way for the light of the lamp to be seen, was by the pitcher being broken, and Paul did not mind the vessel being knocked about, and hardly pressed, so that the light shone out all the more. In chapter i. 8, he had been “ pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life,” but what of that ? He had the sentence of death already in himself. It was realised already in his mind, and its coming outwardly only gave the consciousness of it greater vividness. He could fully say, as in this chapter, “ Death worketh in us.” Hence Paul as a mere man had ceased to exist in his service. *He was a vessel.* For the Corinthians it was only the power

of life in Christ which worked in him. Their gain was in all his trouble, as he says, "but life in you."

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." (Ver. 10). This is practically reckoning myself dead continually in order that the body may be simply a vessel through which the life of Jesus manifests itself. *If the body is anything but a vessel, it is sin.* When I walk as one dead with Christ, the flesh is not allowed a place. A person may even *cultivate* the flesh, making a provision for it (Rom. xiii. 14), but that is bad indeed! He is a bad gardener that cultivates the weeds!

He says (ver. 11), "always delivered unto death." (See also chap. i. 8-10). Here the circumstances Paul was in helped him the more completely to realise himself as dead with Christ. God makes Paul realise these things by the very circumstances he has to pass through, in order that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal body. Thus death wrought in the apostle: what was merely of man and natural life disappeared, in order that life in Christ, developing itself in him on the part of God, and by the power of God, should work in the Corinthians by his means. *The flesh must be kept down, and not allowed to move or act,* and when one is in earnest the Lord passes him through circumstances which help him in it. Paul learns in an honourable way, for if the circumstances were trying, they came upon him for Christ's sake. With us the Lord has often to send discipline, because we have been *allowing* the flesh.

"All things are for your sakes." (Ver. 15). What a wonderful thing for Paul to say! How

much like his Master here, as also in what he says in 2 Timothy ii. 10, and other places.

Christ in glory is my righteousness : Paul had no better, and no one had any other ; and it is Him I am following after, to be with Him, and like Him. My life ought to be like a man in a long passage, going towards a bright lamp at the other end of it. I do not get the lamp till the *end*, but I have the light of it all the way, and the nearer I get to it, the more brightly it shines upon me, and in that sense I get more of the lamp every step I take. The nearer I get in my spirit to the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," the more I can afford to regard the trouble on every side as "light affliction," and "but for a moment." *All present things become less to me, the more really I am looking at eternal things.* Positive persecution I find to be less hard to bear when it actually comes, than it seems in looking forward to it. When it is before me I look *at it*—when I am in it, I look *out of it* at Christ, and find relief in God. And thus we do not faint.



FRAGMENT.—If by the law God tested fallen man as to ability and willingness *to do* His will ; by the Gospel, He has tested him as to his ability and willingness *to suffer* His will. Under the law, man was *to give* to God ; under the Gospel, man was *to receive from* God. But man, fallen, has neither heart, nor mind, nor will to have anything to do with God. He will not have Him as *the end* of his being, nor will he have Him as *its source*. When Grace prevails to save a soul, it soon becomes evident that *the source* precedes *the end*, and that "All my springs are in Thee" must precede "Lo, I come to do Thy will, oh God !"

CHRIST ON THE THRONE OF GOD.

HEBREWS i. 3 ; viii. 1, 2 ; x. 12 ; xii. 2.

There is no point perhaps which the Spirit of God takes more pains to press in writing to the Hebrew Christians than the connection of the throne of God with the Lord Jesus. And the immense weight of such a relationship must be evident on the least reflection to one who knows what God is and what man is. There are two things that the Jew as a Jew never acknowledges. It was their great difficulty when unbelief began to overspread the nation, and it is the great lie of Judaism up to the present day.

The one is that God came down to man—God really and truly came down to man and not that He merely made a revelation of Himself. This they could easily believe. All their old polity was founded upon a manifestation of the divine presence ; but a real personal presence of God upon earth, to have God becoming a man, truly a man, is foreign to Judaism as such. The system of its Rabbis cannot abide it, utterly refuses it, and perishes in its war against it.

But there is another grand truth also to which Judaism is equally opposed : not that God came down merely, but that man was to go up and be with God. Judaism as such finds all its place upon the earth. It is essentially for the world ; and

even in its best shape it is earthly, not heavenly. According to God's intentions about it and the glorious counsels that He has yet in store for Israel, it is the blessing of Israel upon the earth, though I do not deny that after all the dealings with the earth are over, they, as all other believers, will have their portion according to a changed condition in the new heavens and earth. But still, speaking of the course of dispensations on the earth, Judaism finds its place not in the heavens, but here below. Therefore there was an immense barrier in their minds against the thought of a man being in heaven. Accordingly, in writing to the Hebrews, the Holy Ghost sets Himself to give the strongest possible expression to these truths, and that, too, founded on the ancient divine records which the Jews possessed. Psalm cx. has a very important connection with the whole doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as it was used on a most critical occasion by our Lord with the Jews in Matthew xxii.

The Lord Jesus is viewed in various lights as seated on the throne of God. In chapter i, it is connected with the glory of His person. The Messiah was divine. It was not merely that He was raised there, that God exalted Him above His fellows, though this was true ; but He was God. He who was a man was God ; He who was God deigned to become man. And now that He is

gone up to heaven, He is not gone up as God only, but as man. In Him, therefore, God had come down and man had gone up. He had not ceased to be God ; He could not cease to be what He is, but He had carried humanity on high, now bound up with His own person for ever, humanity itself in His person being on the throne of God. It is this, too, which is shown here to be bound up with the work that He has done. For it is evident that the value of the work in the sight of God depends on the glory of the person that did it. It is so even among men. The man who supposes that an action depends merely on itself, and not also on the person who does it, knows nothing as he ought to know. The same words from persons of a totally different character, and of different measures of dignity, would have and ought to have altogether another effect. Now this shows what an immense source of strength and blessing, for the Christian, is the holding fast the eternal glory of the person of Jesus. So it is said here, He is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His substance.

Observe by the way, it is not the express image of His "person," because each person was Himself ; the Father was Himself, the Son Himself, and the Holy Ghost Himself. Christ is never said to be the express image of the person of Father ; He is the image of the invisible God. The word is "substance" or "subsistence."

"And upholding all things by the word of His

power, when He had by Himself purged our sins." Creature could not mix in it: that divine and glorious Person undertook the whole work alone, and He would not take His seat otherwise than as having perfectly accomplished it. He would only sit down there "when He had by Himself purged our sins." Then and not before—not until purification of sins had been perfectly made—did He sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Thus our sins are gone according to the perfectness of the place of glory in which He is now seated. The Lord Jesus has not merely taken His seat on the throne of God as a divine person. He was and is evermore a divine person; and had He not been so, He could not have taken His seat there as He did; but He is glorified on that throne because He had, and when He had, by Himself purged our sins. What a perfect witness to the absolute putting away of sins for the believer! Thus it is that God graciously, but with perfect wisdom, binds together our faith in His personal glory, our perception of His present place as man, and the joy of the perfect abolition of our sins before God. You cannot separate them. If one of these truths is shut out, there is weakness about all the rest. If one lets go the glory of Christ, how can he henceforth realize the efficacy of His redemption in the remission of sins? If you hold fast His personal glory, you are entitled to know forgiveness according to the glory of His seat on the throne. If He was glori-

fied on that throne after He had taken your sins on Himself, it must have been because they were all absolutely borne away.

But the throne is used in quite another way in chapter viii. We were once enslaved by sin and we have still to deal with it, though entitled by Christ's death and resurrection to count ourselves dead to it. For believing in the Lord Jesus, and in the forgiveness of our sins by Him, we are in living relationship with God, our sins blotted out and our sin judged in the cross. Consequently sin is regarded as foreign to us, because in the nature in which we are in relationship with God, there is no sin, and the other nature is a constant encumbrance which we learn to look upon with hatred. But as we have the old nature still as a matter of fact, though delivered from it by faith, so we are liable to Satan's using the world to act on our flesh. Consequently we need a priest, and we have a Priest—the best Priest that God can give, the only Priest that ought to be confided in. “We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” There we find the glory of our Priest; the very same glory is bound up with His priesthood as with His atonement and His person. And we find that as a priest He could not be on a less place than the throne of God. God has seated Him there. Such is the witness to the glory of Him

who intercedes for us and is engaged to bring us through the wilderness.

But in chapter x. we have the combination of the sacrifice with the priesthood. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." It was not a temporary seat, because the sacrifice was absolute in its consequences, and in virtue of this He takes His seat permanently, or in continuity, on the right hand of God, to prove that there was nothing else that needed to be done as far as the blotting out of our sins was concerned. No doubt He will descend from heaven to receive His bride to Himself, as also to judge the world. But as to the question of purging our sins, He will never rise from that throne. His being there is the pledge of sin being put away. As I look up at the throne and know that the Son of God is seated there, I ought not to have any question about my sins being gone. There are those who think that this would diminish our present abhorrence of sin ; but it is an objection of unbelief, not of holiness. It may have an appearance of jealousy for what is good ; but it really flows from ignorance of God, and unbelief of the power of the sacrifice of Christ. For the believer—the ground of hatred of sin and of guarding against it lies not merely in our having a nature to which sin is an aversion, but in the certainty that the victory is won before we start on our course as

Christians. Therefore our business is to walk consistently with the truth that our sins are gone. If we trifle with sin after that, we lose sight of the deliverance which Christ has wrought for us ; we are shewing human nature far from God, and so far walking in unbelief of the blessed place into which Christ has brought us by His blood.

But there is a fourth place in which the throne is introduced. In chapter xii. 2, Jesus is set down at the right hand of the throne as the witness that God is against the world and for Him whom the world cast out, the Captain of faith ; not merely the sacrifice or the Priest, but the perfect pattern of faith as a man here below. Now as such He was a sufferer. The more faith, the greater the suffering. The Lord Jesus was not only the object of faith for others, but He deigned to become a man (and a man of faith) Himself ; and, as a man, He had all the suffering as well as the joy of faith, as it is said here, " Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." It was not what He was going to receive, but His own grace that brought the Lord here. He had all things and needed nothing that could be given Him. Nor is it even true of the Christian that reward is the motive before him. The Christian does not start upon his career on earth because of the glory he is going to have in heaven. It is always the effect of divine

grace made known to the heart, and this alone, which separates from the world and delivers a man from himself. It is the absolute work of redemption. He knows he is starting with God's favour, and he has the encouragement of the glory at the end of the course. It was the fulness of love that brought the Lord down. But when here in the midst of sinners and of rejection and failure all around, this was what sustained Him in His errand of love ; " for the joy that was set before Him (He) endured the cross, despising the shame." And here we have the answer to it on God's part : He " is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," and this just when everything appeared to be ruined ; for the very last thing the world saw of Jesus was His cross. Apparently, as far as man could discern, a total victory was gained over the Son of God. God's purposes appeared to collapse in the cross of Jesus. He was the only righteous man, the only righteous judge, the appointed governor of the world ; yet He had not the throne, but the cross. He was the Messiah of Israel, yet the despised and rejected of men. He was the object of faith to the disciples, yet they all forsook Him and fled. All appeared to be one mass of ruin and failure. But faith looks not to the earth, nor to man, but to God ; and it sees that the Man who was rejected and crucified by the world is set down on the throne of the glory of God. And when the moment comes for God to display Him in glory, how He will reverse every thought of

man, and prove that faith alone was always right !
And faith is only right because it is the answer in
man's heart to the revelation of God.

The Lord grant that, rejoicing in such a Saviour
and in such a portion as we shall have now in
hope if not in present possession, and actually
glorified with Him by and by, we may look
through all present shame and sorrow with joy to
that throne whence He will come to receive us to
Himself in the Father's house.

THE MEETING.

ROM. VIII. 35.

To Thee, Lord, my heart unfoldeth,
As the rose to the golden sun—
To Thee, Lord, mine arms are clinging,
The eternal joy begun.
For ever, through endless ages,
Thy cross and Thy sorrow shall be
The glory, the song, and the sweetness
That makes heaven heaven to me.

Let one in his innocence glory,
Another in works he has done—
Thy Blood is my claim and my title,
Beside it, O Lord, I have none.
The Scorned, The Despised, The Rejected,
Thou hast won Thee this heart of mine ;
In Thy robes of eternal glory
Thou welcomest me to Thine.

JOTTINGS ON JUDE.

There is something about the Epistle of Jude which attracts me increasingly the more I read it, and it seems to have a special application to the present day. Short though it be, what remarkable contrasts are presented to us and what vivid pictures come before us ! Although the most solemn judgments are spoken of as impending, nowhere in Scripture are the love of God the Father and the untiring watchful care of the Lord Jesus more sweetly referred to.

Before taking up the epistle itself, it might be profitable to look at the antecedents of the penman employed by the Holy Spirit to indite it. If we turn to Luke vi., we find the Lord selecting the twelve apostles, and we know He was in the habit of sending them out two and two. In vs. 14-16, we get the names with an "and" between 1st and 2nd, and again between 3rd and 4th, and so on. May we not gather therefrom that we get the pairs that were usually together. It would seem then from ver. 16, that Jude (the writer of this epistle) was thrown very much into the company of Judas Iscariot. How much he must have seen, that was painful to him, in the one who afterwards came out fully in his true colours ! Who so fitting to write about apostasy (as Jude does) as the one who was so much in the company of the great apostate ? One cannot but feel in reading it that

he has Judas Iscariot constantly before him : attention may be called to vs. 4 and 12 as especially, though not exclusively, illustrating what I allude to. And, dear fellow believer, is there no practical lesson in this for you and me? Does the Lord not sometimes permit us to be thrown into company far from congenial, or allow us to pass through circumstances that are, in themselves, very trying? May He not be just preparing us for some little service which He has for us to do? May we (by His grace) be found so—

“In heavenly love abiding,”

that we may be able truthfully to say,

“His wisdom ever waketh,
His sight is never dim,—
He knows the way He taketh,
And I will walk with Him.”

In turning to the epistle itself, I must call attention to an important, but well authenticated, alteration in the 1st verse, viz., “sanctified” should be “beloved.” It should read, “Jude, to them that are called, beloved by God the Father and preserved by Jesus Christ,” etc. Strongly, too, is the change corroborated by internal evidence : for, while the evil referred to is of a terrible character and the coming judgment announced most solemn, the Holy Spirit presses repeatedly the fact that those who are the Lord’s are “beloved”—see vs. 3, 17, 20. Then in ver. 21, let appearances be

what they may, the saints are enjoined to "keep themselves in the love of God." For what can we not bear or go through if the sense of that love is in power in the heart. On the other hand, let the heart lose the sense of it for a moment, and what advantage does the enemy at once obtain! How precious to know that we are "preserved by Jesus Christ" likewise. The word not only signifies "preserved" (translated "keep" in ver. 21), but carries with it the thought of diligent watchfulness—surely sweetly suitable in connection with the care of Him who, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end."

After the appropriate salutation of "mercy unto you and peace be multiplied," he lets us know that the path before us is not a quiet, smooth one, but that we must "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," and that the enemy we have to fight against is not only an outside one, but also, through lack of watchfulness on the part of those holding the fort, certain who had got inside surreptitiously. In Israel of old, the most persistent and implacable foes were those inside the borders of Israel, the Philistines. Well, having got in unnoticed, they gradually undermine the truth. The danger may be scarcely noticeable at first—they are like "sunken" or "hidden rocks (rather than "spots") in the feasts of love." However, sooner or later, they come out in their true character. They may talk about love and the

grace of God ; but really ignorant of it in their souls they turn it into lasciviousness, going on till the very rights of Christ are denied. Have we not this in a marked way in our day ? The open infidel there is—but he is not the most dangerous enemy. What is it that makes the conduct of Judas Iscariot especially repugnant ? Not only did he betray the blessed Lord, but actually used that which is the expression of affection in doing so. Have we not the same, in principle, reproduced in the present day ? Take the one who is pleased to style himself a higher (?) critic. Does he not act towards *the written word* in a similar way that the traitor did to *The Word made flesh* ? Judas pretended affection for Christ at the very moment he was betraying that blessed One into the hands of His enemies. The “higher critic” pretends to be the friend of the Bible at the very moment that he is betraying it into the hands of its enemies. Is not such an one far more dangerous than an open infidel ? Ah, fellow-believer, “God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. i. 7), and may we be found good soldiers of Jesus Christ, earnestly contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints ! The enemy has ever attacked the word of God, sometimes openly, sometimes insidiously. An incident, I once heard of, comes to my mind, which may be profitable to relate. There was a certain congregation that had a new minister appointed who was one of these

men who pretend to "higher" ability. In his ministry he was constantly telling his hearers that such a part was not to be believed as it was, and that such another was not the word of God, etc. There was a dear godly old man in the congregation who was much grieved at all this, but who said nothing for a time. After some months he invited the minister to tea. The invitation was accepted. After tea the old man asked the minister if he would read the word of God, and he consented. The old man handed him what appeared to be a Bible. What was the minister's surprise to find very little besides the cover. It appears that the old man on going home after hearing the minister say that such a portion wasn't the word of God, etc., had cut out the part referred to, till the most of it was gone. When, therefore, the minister opened what had been given him and found little else than the binding, he exclaimed indignantly, "What do you give me this for? Are you making a fool of me?" "O," replied the old man, "this is all you have left us." The lesson was so practical and so striking, that it was used of the Lord to exercise the minister's conscience as to the folly of what he was doing, and was blessed to him.

How solemn is the summing up in ver. 11 of the three forms of evil. 1st. "The way of Cain." Natural evil. The opposition of the flesh to God's testimony and to those that are really His. Ignoring man's state before God since sin has come in,

and coming to God on the ground of what he could himself do, instead of owning (as Abel did) the ruined condition he was in and that he could only approach God on the ground of blood-shedding, the death of the Lamb.

2nd. Ecclesiastical evil: not only teaching error, but reducing it to a mere money basis.

3rd. Open opposition and rebellion against the authority of God as displayed in His true King and Priest.

The reference to Enoch is both solemn and blessed.

Solemn as indicating the terribleness of the evil and the grave judgment that followed.

Blessed as showing that, terrible though the evil was, God's grace was sufficient to enable a man of like passions as we are (in whom faith was) to walk with God and have the present sense of His favour. Likewise leading the heart on to the coming of the Lord Himself.

We are called upon to be builders as well as fighters (ver. 20), reminding us of those with Nehemiah in his day—see Neh. iv. 17, 18. The importance of prayer is also pressed upon us here, as in so many other places in Scripture.

What is spoken of in ver. 21 has already been alluded to. May the Lord graciously enable us to be diligent as to what is enjoined.

How important to remember what vs. 22, 23 teach. It recalls the instructions given Jeremiah,

“to separate the precious from the vile” (chap. xv. 19, 20).

How precious does ver. 24 lead us back to what we had at the commencement, viz., that we are “preserved by Jesus Christ ;” for it speaks of Him as the One who is able to keep us from (not only “falling,” but, as it should be, from even) stumbling, and to present us “faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” Whose joy? In all things He hath the pre-eminence. “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. viii. 10).

Surely, beloved, we can heartily join—as another year closes—in the ascription,

TO
THE
ONLY WISE
GOD OUR SAVIOUR
BE GLORY AND MAJESTY,
DOMINION AND POWER,
BOTH NOW AND
EVER.
AMEN.

ERRATUM.—Page 201, line 2, for “Ezekiel xlvii. 1-10, 11,” read “Ezekiel xlvii. 1-10, 12.”