

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.

VOLUME XI.

TORONTO

CANADA

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TORONTO,
CANADA.

NOTICE.

Where no instructions to the contrary are received, "The Remembrancer" will (D.V.) be continued in 1902 to present subscribers as in 1901.

"The Remembrancer" for May, 1901, containing the important article: "Why did God permit the entrance of evil?" can be obtained (direct from office of publication) at one cent (one halfpenny) each. Postage extra. Six copies will go for one rate of postage in Canada, three copies outside of Canada.

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The Remembrancer.

THE WATCHERS.

(*Rev. xxii. 16, 17.*)

Through the slow-rolling hours of the desolate night,
There are watchers still watching to see
The Star of the morning discover its light.
What a moment its dawning will be !

For their hopes are all centred in that single Star ;
And whenever its light shall appear,
They'll be caught, they'll be wrapt, in a moment, far, far,
From the face of this sin-furrowed sphere.

'Tis Jesus their Saviour, who's coming ere dawn,
From the darkness to catch them away :
To their eyes He'll appear as the Herald of morn,
The golden Forerunner of day.

With what hearts have they watched for His coming again !
Through whole ages of darkness they've waited for Him.
They have known what it is to have trouble and pain,
Heavy hearts, and tired eyes growing dim.

But their Star will arise : not a doubt but it will.
When the night's at the darkest their Star will appear
Through the world-folding clouds it will issue, to fi
Their souls with its radiance clear.

With these watchers I'll join, for their hopes are my own ;
I've been washed in the Saviour's blood.
Of His Church I'm a part—of the fold I am one :
I'm the child of His Father and God.

In the prayer of these watchers I'll heartily join,
When the Spirit and bride whisper, Come.
"Lord Jesus, come quickly" 's a cry that is mine
When that's uttered, how could I be dumb ?

WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

Isaiah xxi. 11, 12.

Here and there in Scripture we find different minds brought into contact with the same moral perplexity. For instance, *the prosperity of the wicked*; and we see the different way in which this perplexity was dealt with.

Jeremiah took it at once to God, as a thing too hard for himself. This was dealing rightly and religiously with it. (See Jer. xii.)

David was overwhelmed by it, and spoke impatiently under it. His soul, however, was sweetly restored at the last. (See Psalm lxxiii.)

Ecclesiastes contemplates the wicked taking advantage of God's long suffering, or delay, in judging the works of iniquity, leaving man still to prosper in his wickedness. (See viii. 11.)

Malachi speaks of a generation who exceed even this, challenging the God of judgment because of this same thing, the prosperity of the wicked. (See ii. 17; iii. 14, 15.)

These are instances of what I mean; the same moral perplexity differently dealt with by different minds. But this last case from *Malachi* shows exceeding wickedness. Judgment is scoffed at; the thought of it, as it were, ridiculed, because evil doers were still prospering—and this naturally introduces us to a meditation on *Isaiah xxi. 11, 12.*

Dumah or Idumœa, the land of Esau, was the land of the profane one, the man of the world, the infidel. The voice of the scorner is heard in that land. It challenges one of God's watchmen, asking, "What of the night?"

This tells us, that that watchman had been already talking of the night. And this evidences his faithfulness to his commission; for a part of our testimony, under the Spirit, is to "the night"—the present night-time of man's world, or the coming solemn, dark, night-time of God's judgments. The very challenge of the profane Edomite, I say, evidences that the watchman had been faithful, that he both understood and discharged his ministry. Prophets and apostles largely tell us of "the night." They speak abundantly of judgment preceding and introducing the kingdom or the age of glory: and the watchman here challenged had been in their company, in "the goodly fellowship of the prophets." And he is not one who has to recall his words. Having already spoken of the night, he still speaks of it; for in answer to the challenge he says, "the morning cometh and also the night." He can talk of "the morning," it is true, but he will not refusé to tell of "the night" also, however the thought of it may be scorned. Glory in the time of the Lord's presence, or in the morning of His appearing, will come; but the dark, solemn season of judgment must go before it, as all the prophets witness. This is the watchman's *faithfulness*. He maintains his testimony to

“the night,” though telling of “the morning” likewise. He declares that judgment is coming, as well as the kingdom in its glory. But there must be *grace* as well as faithfulness in the watchman’s ministry ; he therefore has a word for the scorner’s conscience. It could not satisfy him to tell of the terrors of judgment without some seasonable word of warning, some “seeking to persuade men,” as the apostle says (2 Cor. v. 11). Accordingly he adds here, in answer to the Edomite’s challenge, “If ye will enquire, enquire ye ; return, come.” He warns the scoffer to be of another mind ; and if he enquire at all, to enquire in a due spirit, a spirit of repentance ; to “return” from his mocking of God’s servant and his testimony, and to “come” in a believing, worshipping mind to lay his question before the Lord.

All this constitutes something beautiful. This combination of faithfulness and grace gives us a fine sample, though so short and small, of the ministry of all watchmen under the spirit of God. He insists on the truth of God, and will not qualify it, but seeks likewise to press it on the acceptance of the conscience of sinners.

Now, 2 Pet. iii. is called to mind by this short, impressive oracle on Dumah in Isaiah xxi. For in that chapter we listen to the voice of a scoffer again, and again get the answer of the Spirit of God.

The scoffer challenges the promise of the Lord’s coming. And this evidences that such a promise

had been part of the previous testimony—just, as I was observing, the challenge of the Edomite in Isaiah xxi. evidenced that the watchman had been already talking of the night. And the scoffer here would make good his challenge by a fair piece of reasoning, as it is judged to be: “Where is the promise of His coming?” he tauntingly asks; and then he says, “For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” They dispute with the mystery of the Lord’s coming on the authority of the general course of nature, and of natural events; and all this is in the spirit of “Watchman, what of the night?”

The apostle answers. He lets this scorner know, that things from the beginning of the creation (as the scorner himself had spoken) had taken their course, not by mere force of cause and effect, and established laws and analogies, but that all, in successive ages, had depended on divine good pleasure or the word of God; that by that word, the heavens were of old and the earth also; that by the same word the flood had come; and that by the same we have now another heaven and earth which waits its doom by fire at the pleasure of the same word of God.

This is a fine answer from this New Testament Watchman to the Edomite of this day. And having done this, he turns to give exhortations to the saints, on the ground of coming judgment and coming glory; that is, on the ground of “the

night" and "the morning" of the prophet. And he would fain have them "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour," and hold to their steadfastness of faith and hope in the midst of the reasonings of the scoffers. And, further, he would have them able to interpret the delay of this coming which the scoffers were rebuking, and resolve it into the most blessed and gracious of all purposes, "the salvation of God."

I do indeed read this chapter from Peter as a fine New Testament Scripture in connection with the oracle of Isaiah over the land of Edom. The scoffer of the last days of Christendom is found in company with the profane Edomite in the days of the kings of Israel. And I ask, is not the present, among other characters which it bears, a day of Edomite profaneness and scorning, and a day when the Lord's watchmen, like Isaiah and like Peter, should know what to do and how to answer? Surely this is so. Who can mistake it? Present times are full of meaning. Political revolutions and Christian activities are giving them a character which is far out of the common.

In the Lord's dealings with the earth, it has always been "the night" and "the morning"—the morning of glory or the day of the kingdom, and the night of judgment clearing the way and cleansing the scene.

In Noah's time this was so—the judgment by the deluge went forth and did its work, and then the new world shone out. The sword of Joshua

judged the nations of Canaan, and then the land was divided among the tribes, and the glory seated itself there. David's victories cleared the way for the throne of Solomon. And so with the world or the earth now. Night is in the prospect, the Apocalyptic night—the judgments, whether under seals, trumpets, or vials, which the Apocalypse discloses. And morning is likewise in the prospect, the Apocalyptic morning—the kingdom where the saints shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years; and the bride in her beauty shall descend, having the glory in her. So that if any enquire, "What of the night?" as far as the future of *the earth* is concerned, the answer still is, "The morning cometh and also the night."*



THE ARMOUR OF LIGHT.

"But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet the hope of salvation."—I Thess. v. 8.

In the outset of this epistle, the three cardinal principles of Christianity, "faith, hope and charity (or 'love')," are presented as formative of the divine life of a believer here on earth, of which the epistle itself affords us so striking an example. It was, in all likelihood, the first inspired writing of the apostle, and it exhibits the ardent glow of his

*I speak not of the future or the prospect of the Church. The Morning Star shines therein.

affection toward those who, in so powerful a way, had received the testimony of the gospel through him ; and at the same time exhibits the bright and lovely freshness of that morning of Christianity, to which its testimony specially belongs. With delighted heart he says of these Thessalonians, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." And he adds, "Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost : so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia."

It is comforting to find, in a subsequent epistle, the apostle declaring that, amidst much that would pass away that distinguished the history of the early church, the three great principles, that figure so prominently here, would remain as long as Christianity should remain, as its characteristic power and force. "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love." "Faith," that lays hold of God's past and present revelations of Himself and of His ways, that brings to the soul "the evidence of things not seen," *abides* ; for, without it, His salvation is unrealized and Himself unknown. "Hope," too, *abides*, and is the power of patience to the soul. As the apostle says, "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." So essential is it to the Christian life, that he says, if the future, which is hope's province, were once with-

drawn, the most absolute misery would be his lot. "If in this world only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." And, blessed be God, "charity," or love, *abides*. For when faith shall have gone with us until we pass the veil that hides the world unseen; and hope shall have no further aspirations, because all that was once longed for has become the scene of present and eternal enjoyment; love will still abide. Faith may drop its glass, and hope may quench its torch—they were our needed companions and instruments in a world of darkness and of sorrow—but for love to depart would "unheaven heaven." For "God is love," and heaven is the place where love eternal and universal reigns.

"The Lamb is there, my soul—
There God Himself doth rest,
In love divine diffused through all,
With Him supremely blest."

And where is the heart that has not known enough of strife and sorrow to make it long for a world of perfect peace and goodness—a world of perfect love? This I know, that I would gladly pillow my aching heart on the bosom of eternal love. Well, the day will come, and till then I wait.

But the order of these three principles is different in the epistle on which we for the moment rest. Here their energetic and appropriate action is presented as forming the life of the believer in this world. "Remembering," says the apostle, "your

work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."

Each aspect of Christian life is here seen taking its spring from its own true and legitimate source, and linked with its appropriate heavenly object. They were distinguished not only by work and labour and patience; these might exist in the Church's life, and yet leave room for reprehension. "I know thy work, and thy labour, and thy patience." But then is it added, "nevertheless, I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first love." But here it was work in which faith was the direct and immediately inspiring power. It was labour that was undertaken and continued at the bidding of heavenly love. It was patience that sustained itself by a constant gaze toward the object of Christian hope. This is seen where the apostle describes the utter revolution which the reception of the gospel wrought in their hearts and lives, their habits and their aims. He says, "They themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead." Here, without naming them, the apostle presents faith's work, and love's labour, and hope's patience; and how needful is it in a day like this to watch that they be not in their action divorced from their divine and essential spring!

But I pass from this to notice how these three principles, in altered aspect, reappear in the close of the epistle. Having given us the bright picture of Christian life, as exhibited in these converts to its power in the early dawn of that day of which we have nearly reached the troubled close, the apostle turns to present by prophetic ken what would be the condition of the world, and the thoughts of men in the midst of which Christianity had run its course. He says, "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you; for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him."

Christianity does not alter the circumstances of

the world, nor change its course ; but, by its own intrinsic power, it raises the Christian above the world, by the impartation of a life which is divine, and whose whole energy results, as we have seen, from its connection with God and Christ, and the things which are eternal and unseen. It was of force in early days to detach the heart from earth, and from all things that are seen, and to set the soul to battle its way to immortality and a crown ; moreover, it furnished him with armour to contend against principalities and powers, who would fain prevent his enjoyment of the portion to which he is brought by the travail and victory of his Lord. And in that sphere where fighting is not his work, but the quiet expectancy of deliverance by the coming of his Lord, it holds forth to him "the armour of light"—the attire of those who are "the children of light, and the children of the day." For it must be remembered, when the world is in question, separation from it, by the energy of grace, is that which is enforced, and not conflict with it in its own arena. When the surroundings of evil and the false security of men, whom the clarion of judgment will alone awake to listen to the claims of God, are contemplated, what is the rightful position of the Christian's soul ? It is not to evolve some new truth or power in Christianity that he has not known before, but simply to take its cardinal principles, and to bind them the more earnestly to his heart : "Putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope

of salvation," and thus to stand forth a child of light—a child of day.

God grant that it may be so more and more with us all !



THE CAPTIVES IN BABYLON.

The Babylonish Captivity, considered as an era in the progress of divine dispensations, was most important and significant. We may well treat it as a very principal station in our journey along that path of light and wisdom which is cast up in Scripture for God's wayfaring men to tread, and tarry there for a little and look around us.

We may speak of it, generally, as the great conclusive judgment upon the people of Israel in Old Testament times ; but it was preceded by a long series of other judgments of an inferior or less weighty character. And it is well to trace them shortly, that we may be moved and humbled by such a sight as they afford us of the incompetency and unfaithfulness of man under every condition of stewardship and responsibility.

These judgments began, I may say, by the retirement of Moses for forty years in the land of Midian. Israel, then in Egypt, lost their deliverer, because they knew not that by his hand God would redeem them, as we read in Acts vii. 25.

After they left Egypt, and got into the wilderness on their way to Canaan, they were doomed or judged for another forty years to wander there,

because they did not receive the report of the Spies, but disesteemed the promised land.

When they have reached Canaan and are settled as a nation there, they are for renewed iniquity chastised again and again by the hand of their neighbours, but at length are more signally judged by being put under the tyranny of King Saul (see Hos. xiii. 11).

In process of time they flourish into a kingdom: God gives them the choicest of His people, the man after His own heart, to reign over them. This was one of God's gifts; Saul had been one of His judgments. The reigns of David and Solomon were the exhibition of strength and honour in Israel. But, the house of David becoming reprobate, judgment visits it by the revolt of the Ten Tribes.

The Kingdom of the Ten Tribes is thus erected—erected as a judgment upon the house of David, as the Kingdom of Saul had afore been raised in judgment on the nation of Israel. But that Kingdom of the Ten Tribes proving reprobate in that day, judgment visits them (carrying Israel captive) by the King of Assyria.

The house of David, during this time, was borne with. As a dismantled thing, having but two tribes instead of twelve as its inheritance, it still provokes the anger of the Lord; and then judgment visits Judah by the hand of the Chaldean, as before judgment had visited Israel by the hand of the Assyrian. Judah is a captive in Babylon. So this, as I said, was the great conclusive judgment upon

the people of God during the times of the Old Testament. The Lord God of Israel had linked His name and His glory with the house of David, and with the city of Jerusalem; and when that house had fallen and that city was spoiled, judgment in that measure and at that time had completed its work.

Our business from henceforth is with the captives of Judah in Babylon: Israel in Assyria are lost sight of. They are not kept in view by the Spirit of God. They are called "backsliding Israel," as a people whose distinctness, for the present, is lost and gone; but the prophets of God anticipate their future, and we can foresee that they will be manifested, and brought home, and set in their place again in honour and beauty.

Ere looking at the captives of Judah in Babylon, I would consider the new conditions in which all things are set by the captivity itself. The *Glory* (the symbol of the divine presence), the *Gentile*, and the *Jew*, are all affected by it, and at once enter into new conditions.

The Glory leaves the earth, and goes to heaven. It had been with Israel from the days of Egypt until now. It had seated itself in the chariot-cloud, and led Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness; and then it seated itself in the sanctuary between the Cherubim. Israel was the place or people of its dwelling upon the earth. But now, as was seen by Ezekiel, it takes its leave of the earth for heaven, or for the mountain. (Ezek. i.-xi).

The Gentiles become supreme in the time of Judah's captivity. The sword is formally and

solemnly put into the hand of the Chaldean by God Himself, and subjection to him, as ordained to be chief in political or imperial authority in the world, is demanded by God for him. But the *Glory* does not accompany the sword. Chaldea is not the seat of a theocracy ; divine worship is not established there.

The people of Israel become strangers on the earth. "Ichabod," the glory is departed, in a more fearful sense than ever, becomes true of them. They are ruined for the present, as a nation once set in glory, honour, strength and independency. Judah is a captive and stranger.

Such are the new conditions into which all have now entered—the *Glory*, the Gentiles and the people of Israel.

But here I must notice—for it is a subject full of interest and value to our souls—that there is *character* unfolded in each of these, by reason of their new conditions.

The Glory shows itself most graciously reluctant to leave its ancient dwelling-place. We learn this from the early chapters of *Ezekiel* ; the glory is there seen in uneasy, restless action, as I may say. The time had come for its leaving Jerusalem, and it feels the sorrow of such a moment. It passes and repasses between the threshold of the house, which still connected it with the temple, and the wings of the Cherubim, which were waiting to bear it away, and this is a sight of deep, mysterious consolation. What a secret does it carry to our hearts ! The holiness, which must depart, could not cool the love which would fain, if it could, remain ; and what a shadow of the Jesus of the Evangelists this is ! Israel could not be the rest of either the glory or Jesus. They were polluted ; but the glory will linger on the threshold, and

Jesus will weep, as He turns His back on the city. Nor will the glory seek any other place on the earth. It had chosen Zion for its rest ; and if its rest there be disturbed, it will leave the earth ; it will be faithful to Israel, though Israel grieve it and send it away. These are the perfections that give character to the glory, as I may speak, in this the day of its departure from Jerusalem—the day of Judah's captivity in Babylon.

The Gentiles in this same day, betray a far different sight. No moral beauty distinguishes them—altogether otherwise. They become proud. Elevation under God's hand lifts them up in their own esteem. They have no care for the sorrows of God's people, but avail themselves of their depression, and rise all they can upon their ruins. Ezekiel shows us, as we have already seen, the moral or the character of the departing glory, as Daniel shows us the profane haughtiness of the Gentiles in this same day. It becomes intolerable, as we know, and ends in judgment. (See Zech. i. 15, 20, 21).

The people of Israel, now humbled, are exercised. Ps. cxxxvii is a breathing which speaks a very gracious state of soul, in the midst of the captives at the waters of Babylon; and such men as Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, among the returned, and such as Esther and Mordecai, among the dispersion, tell us of a generation or a remnant in character beyond what may have been commonly known in Israel; and thus, as is common with men, prosperity did moral mischief to the Gentiles at this time, while depression and trial worked healthfully for the Jew.

This interval of a captivity must, however, come to a close. The rod of the tribe of Judah could not be broken till Shiloh came (Gen. xlix.) To fulfil

this promise, rehearsed in various ways, as it was, again and again, by the prophets, Judah must return out of captivity, and be at home, to receive, if they will, the promised Messiah—the One, who as we see in Ezekiel, had left them, with such reserve and reluctance.

A return is therefore accomplished; and it is marked by much of the fruit of that healthful exercise, which I have already observed as giving character to the captives. There was nothing of the same glory as that which marked their earlier return from the land of Pharaoh. In that respect the exodus from Babylon was a thing very inferior to the exodus from Egypt. There was no rod of power to do its marvels; no mystic cloud-conductor; no mediator standing in intimacy with the Lord for the people; no supplies from the granaries in heaven. But there was the energy of faith on the journey; and spirits awake to the presence of God, *His mind, His will, His glory and His sufficiency* for them.

This return, however, was not universal; nor, even as far as it is extended, was it simultaneous. There was still the dispersion, as well as the returned captives. The books of the captives—Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, give us something of the story of each. Mordecai was of the dispersion; and of those who returned, some came at an earlier moment, like Zerubbabel; others afterwards, like Ezra at one time, and Nehemiah at another.

But I would inquire, under what warrant or authority were the captives in Babylon enabled to make a return? It will be said, and justly, that God had so purposed and promised it by the mouth of His servant Jeremiah. He had declared that, when the captivity had numbered seventy

years, it should end ; and, according to this, Daniel, who lived through the whole age of the captivity, but never returned to Jerusalem, made his supplication for this promised mercy, just as the seventy years were drawing near to their close. The return, we therefore fully own, is to be dated, so to speak, from the sovereignty and counsels of God. The great source of it lies there. But there was a secondary and more immediate warrant for it, the *occasion* of it, as we speak ; and this is, as clearly, seen in the decree of Cyrus, the King of Persia: a decree which he passed in the very first year of his reign, or as soon as God had transferred the sword from the hand of the Chaldean into his hand.

Babylon, which had been the captor, was not given the honour of being the deliverer of Israel. This honour was reserved for another, and such another as was as distinctly named by the prophets of God, as the period of seventy years had been named.

Cyrus is mentioned in Isa. xlv. and xlv. ; his own very name appears there, and had been there two or three hundred years ere he was born. And he is mentioned as the one who was to be the builder of the Temple at Jerusalem. We cannot say that it was so, but we may suggest that he heard of this amazing fact from some of the captives ; and if he did, was it not the instrument by which the Lord stirred up his spirit ? And enough, and more than enough, it was to put him upon that great and generous action which he accomplished and the record of which closes the books of Chronicles, and opens the book of Ezra.

We may rather wonder at his not doing more, if he ever had a sight of those divine oracles, than at his doing so much. We might expect that he

would himself have become a proselyte ; for Isaiah there lets him know, that it was none other than the God of that people (who were then his subjects, and, as I may say, his captives) who had gone before him to clear his way to conquest and dominion.

But be this so or not, his decree, as we know, was the *immediate* cause, and the full authority for their return.

Further, however, as to this great event and era, the times of the Gentiles, as the Lord Himself speaks, began with the Babylonish captivity ; the Gentiles then became supreme, as we have already said, one kingdom succeeding another. And these times of the Gentiles continue still. The return from Babylon has made no difference as to this ; for that event left Gentile supremacy unaffected. But these times will end in the judgment of the Apocalyptic beast, and his confederates (Rev. xix.), when the Stone cut out without hands smites the image.

And we may further say, as to Israel, that this captivity worked a reformation among them. From that time to the present, "the unclean spirit," as the Lord Himself also speaks, has been "*out.*" Idolatry has not been practised since then ; but though the Jewish house be thus emptied and swept, it is not furnished with its true wealth and ornament.* Messiah has not been accepted ; and, in principle, Israel has returned to Babylon, where they will remain, till the day of redemption and the kingdom under the grace and power and presence of the Lord Jesus.

* By and by, the unclean spirit is to return ; and, bringing other unclean spirits with him more wicked than himself, perfect the apostasy of the Jew, and lead him to judgment again.

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

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

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JAMES I. 5.

THE REMEMBRANCER

“ 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.”—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

TORONTO,
CANADA.

NOTICE.

Correspondents in the United Kingdom will please remember that the postage to Canada is one penny on a post card as well as on a letter.

Where no instructions to the contrary are received, "The Remembrancer" will (D.V.) be continued in 1902 to present subscribers as in 1901.

"The Remembrancer" for May, 1901, containing the important article: "Why did God permit the entrance of evil?" can be obtained (direct from office of publication) at one cent (one halfpenny) each. Postage extra. Six copies will go for one rate of postage in Canada, three copies outside of Canada.

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The volumes for 1894, 1895, bound separately, each 30 cents (net). Postage, 2c in Canada; 4c. to U. S. and countries in Postal Union.

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The Volumes for 1891, 1892 and 1893 are out of print.

HIS VOICE.

Thou hast spoken—let me hear,
 Speak again and draw me near,
 While Thy hand is on my head
 Slowly let each word be said,
 Lest my dull heart might not know
 How to commune with Thee so ;
 How to catch, amid the strife,
 All Thy tones, my Lord, my Life !

I have heard Thee—speak again,
 Earthly lights are on the wane ;
 Earthly sounds fade from my ear,
 Earthly scenes are no more near.
 Sweep the storm across the sky,
 Pass the summer sunshine by,
 Life's vicissitudes befall,
Safe—Thy hand is over all !

He hath spoken in my ear
 Music strange, yet sweet and clear ;
 Commune asks He with my heart,
 Teaches me to walk apart.
 Draws me on the path *He* trod,
 Speaks of fellowship with God ;
 I have heard His voice, and now
 All my soul to Him must bow !

'Tis a story scarce begun,
 'Tis a never setting sun,
 'Tis a song of music sweet
 While I listen at His feet.
 All the toil, the grief, the pain,
 Writes He on my heart again,
 Of the lonely way He trod
 While He communed *here* with God !

Higher now than heaven above
 He who walked the world in love ;
 All His path of toil is o'er,
 Sorrow falls on Him no more.
 He has left this weary land,
 Thronéd now at God's right hand ;
 Made that light of heaven my place,
 Looking up with unveiled face !

But the love that leads me on
 All my inmost heart hath won,
 Love made known in wondrous grace,
 Graven on His blessed face,
 Stamped upon His piercéd hands,
 Written on the desert sands—
 Love which language cannot teach,
 Love my thought can never reach !

'Tis His voice that chains my heart,
 'Tis His hand that draws apart,
 'Tis the music that I hear
 Rivets, presses me more near ;
 Every other sound has gone,
 Float I down the stream alone,
 All the universe above
 Like a mirror for His love !

Oh ! to reach those heights of grace
 Shining in His blessed face :
 Oh ! to walk with Him in white
 In those scenes of cloudless light .
 Oh ! to walk till then with God
 Journeying in the path *He* trod,
List'ning silent at His feet—
 Following with footsteps fleet !



LEAVES FROM THE LIVES OF THE LORD'S CHASTENED ONES.

NO. I.

(*Written just before departing to be with Christ.*)

. I have been struck how calmly and with what dignity the Lord can appropriate all He needs to use, down here : the upper room for the Passover ; and the colt for the triumphant ride into Jerusalem ; there was no questioning, if the Master had need. I love to think of that dignity and the lordship of that dignity of His, as He walked down here ; yet withal so condescending and pitiful ; and to think, "this same Jesus" is *ours* now, but risen and seated at God's right hand, exalted high "above all that is named," both in heaven and on earth.

What a wonderful, soothing effect His blessed presence has upon us ; like a troubled child, laying its head upon its parent's bosom. When I feel nervous and breathless, at times, I shut my eyes, get close to Him, as it were, and what *felt relief* it gives me ; there is reality in it. Oh, if poor worldlings only knew the power of faith, its soul-comfort, they would not have so much to say about sight !

.
My poor body has felt very weak lately, but He has kept my spirits cheered by the sense of His sustaining love. I got all ready to go to meeting,

yesterday morning, but felt I could not trust my strength, so had to give it up. Well, He was enjoyed at home, in a feeble measure, over His dear, precious word.

“ Helpless ! Yes, so helpless, but I am leaning hard,
Upon the arm of JESUS, and He is keeping guard.”

Our weakness and feebleness draw us closer to the side of the strong One, where we know we cannot weary, or overdraw on “ His riches in glory.”

Well, we are hastening home to the Father's house to see His face, and enjoy the fulness of His grace.

With much love to you both, affectionately,
Your sister in Christ,

NO. II.

*(Written just after the departure to be with the
Lord of the writer of No. 1.)*

My dear brother

I have already written you, as to the near approach of our beloved one's departure. I have now to tell you, that she peacefully fell asleep in Jesus, at midnight of Wednesday.

Truly, brother, this was a triumphant death-bed ; a name, in fact, she refused to give it, saying, it was no death-bed to her, as she was just beginning to live ; longing to go, not merely to be delivered from a pain-racked body, but to be in His presence ;

One she had learned to love, to know so deeply and in such a personal, loving way.

I cannot tell you, in the compass of a letter, of all the fulness of spiritual power, which went to fill up the last few days of her sojourn amongst us all. Those who partook of that fulness can testify of that peculiar power, making the things unseen so real and living, as if she were already in full possession of them. Never will these days be forgotten by any who stood by her bedside, and heard the breathing of a soul in deepest communion with what was all heavenly, the love of the Father, the glory and preciousness of the Lord Jesus, the infinite gain of being "with Him," and yet withal, at times, giving a personal word of exhortation, which seemed to pierce through the heart, so much to the point and appropriate was it. A tear never dimmed her eyes, or tremor of emotion shook her voice. "Tears," she said, "are for the valley, not for the lambs feeding on the mountain tops. I am not in the valley."

All the tears, which came from a heart breaking from things here, had been shed long ago, in the deep and solitary exercises of a soul, struggling with its Lord, but gaining the victory, and receiving in compensation abundantly and richly of His grace, so that the heart overflowed in its fulness.

All this was told, for the first time, as she lay now on her bed, about to go home, but having a testimony to deliver, concerning the goodness of the Lord and the necessity for all to deal faithfully

with Him. Her tears had all been dried. She had shed many. Who knows what that dear soul had passed through, in moments of solitary dealings with God: with things here, on the one hand, which were of necessity being taken from her; and, on the other, things dependent on her state, her powers with God to obtain them being taken away.

To my heart there is something touching in this. It was a character of suffering, which was beyond my power to alleviate. Yet I could never bear the thought of her suffering in any way. But it was *God* she had to do with, not a weak husband, however much he may have loved her; and it was God in the fulness of His power and resources, who was to meet that troubled, suffering heart.

This is my comfort now, though it adds to the sorrow of my heart. In her presence, we were made to feel that our tears were for ourselves, and out of place if for her. It was a strange kind of experience: there was a vessel, the very expression of weakness, of suffering; an object that worked on our sympathies, in the deepest way; and yet one who, we felt, was master of the situation and above our sympathies. She was the ministering spirit; we were the silent participators in what poured forth from those lips in words clearly and distinctly uttered; pointed, precise and perfectly chosen. Yet the manner of her speaking was peculiar: the words were uttered in the exhalations of her breath, and never seemed to

weary her in the least. All who came, she insisted on seeing, and we felt it to be wrong to keep any out. Then for a time came the *dreadful cough*, which shook the wasted form, and seemed to draw the last remnant of vital force remaining ; and then the prostration and reviving ; but in all there was exhibited the most wonderful patience, and the prayer was often uttered, "O Lord, more grace, that I may not dishonour Thy precious name." The words of Scripture seemed to live on her lips.

O, dear brother, I cannot write all, it is too much ; but I wished to give *you* a little idea of how glorious and blessed was the death, if we can call it such, of this dear saint. And in this I feel that it is not as of a wife I speak, but as of one, the Lord Himself had loved ; one, too, to whom He had made His love known in a peculiar manner.

.
Your afflicted brother in Christ

. ———— ❄ ———— .
A GOOD LESSON.

One of the leading effects of sorrow and bereavement is to cast a veil over things present, and to bring us into the presence of God and eternal things in heaven. The result of this is that we are astonished to find how strange we are to the things of God and of heaven. To know what faith in Christ secures to us, and to be practically in the familiar use of it, are two very distinguish-

able things. I know that faith in Christ makes me His for eternity, and makes His Father to be my Father, and the Spirit to be Comforter to me. It gives me eternity and heaven, and cuts me off from earth. But, alas! the being so blessed, and knowing it too—and the real enjoyment of it and being able to act upon it, are very different things, more so than having learnt a language theoretically and thoroughly, and being able to speak it.

Now when sorrow and bereavement come, things present for a time fade, and things heavenly and eternal assume more substance to our minds. The object of your love gone to heaven and God and Christ. There is a void down here. The place that was ever full of refreshing water is dried up. *You are left*, and your mind in grace follows the one you love upward. But, then, perhaps you find how little you know of the God he has gone to, of the Saviour who is there, of his present state, of the connection of the pool down here, and the grace that gave it to you, and the present bereavement of his presence in the pure light above, and of the restoration in the end to God's glory and his own profit.

How often have I learnt in such a season that I had not been living to the glory of God; that Lo, I come to do Thy will, to suffer Thy will, had not been my principle of conduct; and God in such hours has seemed a strange God, a God I had neglected, and practically been living without. *Self-ignorance*, too, giving Satan power against us

mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

The man who trusted in the Lord, the more trouble he was in, the more he proved that all was right. Paul says, "I know Him free, and I know Him in prison." He was sufficient when He was in want, and sufficient when he abounded. So he says, "Rejoice in the Lord always."

What could they do with such a man? If they kill him, they only send him to heaven; if they let him live, he is all devoted to lead people to the Christ they would destroy.

It is more difficult to rejoice in the Lord in prosperity than in trials; for trials cast us on the Lord. There is more danger for us when there are no trials. But delight in the Lord delivers us altogether from the power of present things. We are not aware, until they are taken away, how much the most spiritual of us lean on props. I mean, we lean on things around us. But if we are rejoicing in the Lord always, that strength can never be taken away, nor can we lose the joy of it.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men." Do you think people will think your conversation is in heaven if you are eager about things of earth? They will only think us so if there is the testimony that the heart does not stick up for itself. "The Lord is at hand." All will be set right soon. If you pass on in meekness, and subduedness, and unresistingness, how it acts in keeping the heart and affections right! and the world can see when

the mind and spirit are not set on it. So he says, "Let it be known unto all men."

Be careful for nothing." I have found that word so often a thorough comfort. Even if it be a great trial, still "be careful for nothing." "Oh," you say, "it is not my petty circumstances; it is a question of saints going wrong." Well, "be careful for nothing." It is not that you should be careless, but not trying to carry the burden, and so racking your heart with it. How often a burden possesses a person's mind, and when he tries in vain to cast it off, it comes back and worries him. But "be careful for nothing" is a command; and it is blessed to have such a command.

What shall I do then? Go to God "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Then in the midst of all the care you can give thanks; and we see the exceeding grace of God in this. It is not that you are to wait till you find out if what you want is the will of God. No. "Let your requests be made known." Have you a burden on your heart? Now go with your request to God. He does not say that you will get it (Paul, when he prayed, had for answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee"), but the peace of God will keep your heart and mind, not you will keep this peace. Is He ever troubled by the little things that trouble us? Do they shake His throne? He thinks of us, we know, but He is not troubled; and the peace that is in God's heart is to keep ours.

I go and carry it all to Him, and I find Him all quiet about it. It is all settled. He knows quite well what He is going to do. I have laid the burden on the throne that never shakes, with the perfect certainty that God takes an interest in me, and the peace He is in keeps my heart, and I can thank Him even before the trouble has passed. I can say, Thank God, He takes an interest in me. It is a pleasant thing that I can have this peace, and thus go and make my request—perhaps a very foolish one—and, instead of brooding over trials, that I can be with God about them.

It is sweet to me to see that, while He carries us up to heaven, He comes down and occupies Himself with everything of ours here. While our affections are occupied with heavenly things, we can trust God for earthly things. He comes down to everything. As Paul says, "Without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us." It was worth being cast down to get that kind of comfort. Is He a God afar off, and not a God nigh at hand? He does not give us to see before us, for then the heart would not be exercised; but though we see not Him, He sees us, and comes down to give us all kind of comfort in the trouble.



“So He fed them according to the integrity of His heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of His hands.”—*Ps. lxxviii. 72.*

“FAINT, YET PURSUING.”

(*Judges viii. 4.*)

Though “faint, yet pursuing,”
 We go on our way,
 The Lord is our Leader,
 His word is our stay;
 Though suffering and sorrow
 And trial be near,
 The Lord is our Refuge,
 And whom can we fear.

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

And to His green pastures
 Our footsteps He leads;
 His flock in the desert
 How kindly He feeds.
 The lambs in His bosom
 He tenderly bears,
 And brings back the wanderers
 Safe from the snares.

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

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



THE CAPTIVES RETURNED TO JERUSALEM.

EZRA I.—IV.

(*Sequel to "Captives in Babylon."*)

When we enter the book of Ezra, we begin the story of the returned captives ; we see them in their circumstances, and in their behaviour ; and from both one and the other we gather instruction.

In much of their condition we read much of our own : and from their behaviour, we are either taught, or encouraged, or warned. As we trace their story, we may well be struck by the resemblance it has to our own ; so that, from moral kindredness in their condition and ours, we may call them our brethren in something of a special sense.

Having accomplished their journey from Babylon to Jerusalem, we find them at once in much moral beauty ; they use what they have, they do what they can, but they do not assume or affect what they have not and what they cannot. They have the word, and they use it. They do their best with the genealogies, so as to preserve the purity

of the priesthood and the sanctuary ; but they do not affect to do what the Urim and the Thummim would enable them to do, for they have it not.

This is beautiful : they do not refuse to do what they can, because they cannot do all that they would. Their measure they will use, and not quarrel with it because it is small. And yet they stretch not themselves beyond it, but wait till another comes with a further and more perfect measure.

They are quick to raise an altar to the God of Israel. They need not build their Temple first. An altar will do for burnt-offerings and for the Feast of Tabernacles, and, as a revived people, as a people consciously standing on holy ground again, on the mystic day, the first day of the seventh month, they raise their altar and begin their worship.

This was very fine : it was as the instinct that prompted Noah, as soon as he got out of the ark, to offer his sacrifices ; or as that of David, as soon as he reached the throne, to look after the ark of God.

Israel raised no altar in Egypt—they must go into the wilderness, ere they could offer a sacrifice, or keep a feast, to the Lord. Egypt was the place of the flesh, and of judgment ; and deliverance out of it must be accomplished, ere God could duly receive worship at their hand. And so in Babylon : Israel raised no altar there. One might open his window, and pray towards Jerusalem ; three or four might make common prayer for mercy and

wisdom, in a day of perplexity; they may all together hang their harps upon willows, refusing to sing the songs of Zion there; but they raised no altar in that land of the uncircumcised. But now again in Jerusalem the altar is built, and sacrifices rendered; worship is restored, as Israel is revived. The two things which God has joined together, the glory of His name and the blessing of His people, are at once seen in the returned captives.

But, further, as soon as the foundation of the Temple is laid, a strange thing is heard—that which could not but be a discord of harsh sounds in the ear of nature, a harmony of hallowed voices in the ear of God and of faith. There are weepings and cries for sorrow, there are shoutings for joy. But, weighed in the balances, all this was harmony; for all was *real*, all was “to the Lord.”

As some observed a day, and some might once refuse to observe it; and this may appear to be disorder; but each doing what they did “to the Lord,” the highest order was maintained (see Rom. xiv.) the Spirit so esteems it.

There is, however, more than this. There is real confusion, and that in abundance, as well as this apparent occasional discord. The condition of things is incurably intricate and confused. What a godly Jew must have felt, when he found himself again in the land where David had conquered, where Solomon had reigned, where the glory had dwelt, and the priesthood unto Jehovah had waited on its service!

Such an one may, at that moment, have given the first look at himself ; and he would have had to recognise in himself a strange sight in the land where he then found himself, *a subject of a Gentile power*. Next, looking at his brethren, he would have to say, that some of them were with him, but some still far away among the uncircumcised ; and then, taking a wider gaze at the people of the land, he would have to see a seed of corruption, half Jew, half heathen, in the place which had once been shared among the seed of Abraham, and them only !

What sights were these ! What needed light and energy to deal with and act upon this strange mass of difficulties and contradictions ! But that light and energy are beautifully found amongst them. They who had maintained their Nazariteship in Babylon would keep it, if need be, in Judea ; they who would not eat the king's meat there, will not have Samaritan alliance in the building of the Temple here. And they distinguish things that differ : they know the Persian, and they know the Samaritan : bowing to the sword and authority of the one, as set over them by ordination of God ; and refusing the proffered aid of the other, as being themselves untrue to the God of their fathers.

This is like an anticipation of the Lord's own judgment to returned captives in His day, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." And it

reminds me of their fathers in the wilderness, where they knew the Edomite and the Amorite in their different relations to them; as here, their children know the Samaritan and the Persian. They do nothing in a spirit of rebellion. They will be subject to the "powers that be," as knowing them "ordained of God." But religious impurity they repudiate. It is full of instruction, all this, and very pertinent to present conditions among ourselves. These things, or the principles which are found and involved in them, re-appear among the saints of this day.

Faith still recognises that "salvation" is the ground of "worship" (John iv.). That is, that while we are in the flesh, God gets nothing from us; that the place of discipline, such as Babylon was to Israel, is to witness only the service and the rendering of harps hung on willow trees.

Faith still uses the written word in all things; affects nothing beyond its measure, while it does what it can according to its measure. It does not cast away what it has, because it has not more. It does not say, "There is no hope," and sit idle, because power in certain forms of glory does not belong to us; but it will not imitate power, or fashion the image of what is now departed. And it waits for the day when all will be set in eternal order and beauty, by the presence of Him who is the true light and perfection, and who will settle all things in the kingdom according to God.

Faith, likewise, still listens with a different ear

from that of nature. As I have already alluded to it, so here again, I may say, that Rom. xiv., like Ezra iii., tells us that that which is discordance in the ear of flesh and blood is harmony in the ear of God.

And surely, I may add, faith still recognises confusion. If we see it in Israel in the day of Ezra, we see it among the saints and churches in the day of 2 Tim.; and the day of 2 Tim. was but the beginning of the present long day of Christendom, or of "the great house." Strangely inconsistent elements surround us, as they did the returned captives. Gentile supremacy in the land; the offered aid, and then the bitter enmity of Samaritans; some of God's Israel still in Babylon, while others have returned to Jerusalem. All this did not afford them stranger, more singular or anomalous material, to distinguish and act upon, than the present great house of Christendom, with its clean and unclean vessels, some to honour, and some to dishonour, affords to us.

We may, however, be encouraged as well as instructed by these captives. For while ancient glory and strength are not seen among them, Urim and Thummim lost, ark of covenant gone, the mystic rod and the cloudy pillar no more known and seen; yet was there more energy and light, and a deeper exercise of spirit, in the returned from Babylon, than in the redeemed from Egypt.

(To be continued, D. V.)

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YET A LITTLE WHILE, AND HE THAT SHALL COME
WILL COME, AND WILL NOT TARRY.—HEB. X. 37.

WHOLE
NO. 123.

THE REMEMBRANCER

“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.”—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

TORONTO,
CANADA.

SURELY I COME QUICKLY. AMEN. EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS —REV XXII. 20

NOTICE.

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CHRISTIAN DEVOTEDNESS.

If there be one thing of importance now, it is Christian devotedness. I do not separate this from Christian doctrine, but found it on it. I do not surely separate it from the presence and power of the Spirit (one of the most important of these doctrines), for it is produced by it. But Christian devotedness founded on the truth, and produced by the power of the Spirit, I believe to be of the utmost importance for the saints themselves and for the testimony of God. I believe surely that doctrine is of deep importance now, clearness as to redemption, and the peace that belongs to the Christian through divine righteousness, the presence and living power of the Comforter sent down from heaven, the sure and blessed hope of Christ's coming again to receive us to Himself that where He is we shall be also, that we shall be like Himself seeing Him as He is, and that if we die we shall be present with Him, the knowledge that risen with Him we shall be blessed not only *through but with Christ, the deep practical identification with Him through our being united with Him by the Holy Ghost.* All these things, and many truths connected with them, held in the power of the Holy Ghost, separate us from the world, shelter the soul, by the spiritual possession of Christ glorified (the conscious possession of Christ) from the cavils of current infidelity, and give a living spring to the joy and hope of the

whole christian life. But the expression of the power of them in the heart will manifest itself in devotedness.

Christianity has exercised a mighty influence over the world, even where it is openly rejected, as well as where it is professedly received. Care of the poor and the supply of temporal wants have become recognized duties of society. And where the truth is not known and Christianity is corrupted, diligent devotedness to this, on the false ground of merit, is largely used to propagate that corruption. And even where infidelity prevails, the habits of feeling produced by Christianity prevail, and man becomes the object of diligent, though often of perverted, care. The testimony of the true saint surely should not be wanting where falsehood has imitated the good effects of truth. But there are higher motives than these; and it is of the true character of devotedness that I would speak.

I accept as the general rule that, any special call of God apart, Christians should abide in the calling wherein they are called. This is only the *place* of their walk, its *motives* and *character* are behind. These are summed up in one word—CHRIST. He is at once the life and the object or motive of life in us, giving thus its character to our walk. "To me," says the apostle, "to live is Christ." There are two great parts of divine life of which devotedness is one. Both are infinite and unspeakable privileges for us and both per-

fectured by, manifested in, Christ. The one, God Himself ; the other, the actings and display of His nature, as love, the divine witness of His nature which is love. This was seen in Christ. His communion with His father was perfect, as was His desire to glorify Him. Life to Him here below was life "*dia ton patera*" (John vi. 57). But He, was the display, at all cost to Himself, of divine love to men. These could not be separated in His soul. His Father was His continual delight and object ; His exercise of love and display of His Father, of the divine nature by it, constant and perfect. But this was His devotedness.

Another principle must be added to this to complete those which governed His walk : undivided obedience to His Father's will, His having that will for His constant motive. Love to the Father and obedience to Him gave form and character to His love to us. And so it is with us, only that He Himself comes in as the more immediate object, but this in no way hindering, the display of the divine nature in love. "*Be ye imitators of God as dear children, and walk in love even as Christ hath loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.*" Note here the fulness of motive and character which is shown, and how high and blessed that motive and character is. We are followers and imitators of God. We walk in love as Christ loved us. It is the exercise of divine love as displayed in Christ. There is no stint in

it. He gave Himself, nothing short of Himself, wholly ; a principle often repeated as to Christ, His love to us, for He gave Himself *for us*. Yet God was the object and motive constituting its perfection : “ an offering and a sacrifice *to God* for a sweet-smelling savour.” It is thus we are called to walk, to imitate God, to follow Him as He displayed Himself in Christ.

If it be blessed to joy in God, who is love, it is blessed to follow Him in the love He has exercised. Yet as displayed in Christ as a man, it has God Himself for its object : and so with us. The love that descends from God working in man rises up always towards and to God as its just and necessary object. It can have nothing lower as its spring, towards whomsoever it is exercised. All the incense of the meat-offering was burnt on the altar, however sweet the savour to others. This constitutes, as I have said, its essential character and excellence ; nor do its just actings in us come short of its actings in Christ. “ Hereby,” says John, “ know we love, because He laid down His life for us ; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” There is no question of any cup of wrath for us. Here Christ stood, of course, alone ; but all self-sacrifice displayed in Him we are called upon to display, as having His life, Himself, in us.

But I will consider this a little more methodically before I press it hortatively on my brethren.

As to reward, *as motive* or merit, it is clear that

any such thought destroys the whole truth of devotedness, because there is no love in it. It is self looking, like "James and John," for a good place in the kingdom. Reward there is in Scripture, but it is used to encourage us in the difficulties and dangers which higher and truer motives bring us into. So Christ Himself, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame." Yet we well know that His motive was love. So Moses: "He endured as seeing Him who is invisible, for he had respect to the recompense of reward." His motive was caring for his brethren. So reward is ever used, and it is a great mercy in this way. And every man receives his reward according to his own labour.

The spring and source of all true devotedness is divine love filling and operating in our hearts: as Paul says, "the love of Christ constraineth us." Its form and character must be drawn from Christ's actings. Hence grace must first be known for oneself, for thus it is I know love. Thus it is that this love is shed abroad in the heart. We learn divine love in divine redemption. This redemption sets us too, remark, in divine righteousness before God. Thus all question of merit, of self-righteousness, is shut out, and self-seeking in our labour set aside. "Grace," we have learnt, "reigns through righteousness into eternal life by Jesus Christ." The infinite perfect love of God towards us has wrought; has done so when we were mere sinners; has thought of our need; given us eter-

nal life in Christ when we were dead in sins—forgiveness and divine righteousness when we were guilty ; gives us now to enjoy divine love, to enjoy God by His Spirit dwelling in us, and boldness in the day of judgment ; because as Christ, the judge, is, so are we in this world. I speak of all this now in view of the love shown in it. True, that could not have been divinely without righteousness. That is gloriously made good through Christ, and the heart is free to enjoy God's unhindered love : a love shewn to men in man. For the very angels learn "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." This knits the heart to Christ, bringing it to God in Him, God in Him to us. We say nothing separates us from this love.

The first effect is to lead the heart up, thus sanctifying it : we bless God, adore God, thus known ; our delight, adoring delight, is in Jesus.

But thus near to God and in communion with Him, thus not only united, but consciously united, to Christ by the Holy Ghost, divine love flows into and through our hearts. We become animated by it through our enjoyment of it. It is really "God dwelling in us," as John expresses it ; "His love shed abroad in our hearts," as Paul does. It flows thus forth as it did in Christ. Its objects and motives are as in Him, save that He Himself comes in as revealing it. It is the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord ; not the less God, but God revealed in Christ, for there we have

learnt love. Thus, in all true devotedness, Christ is the first and governing object ; next, " His own which are in the world ;" and then our fellow-men. First their souls, then their bodies, and every want they are in. His life of good to man governs ours, but His death governs the heart. " Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us." " The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead : and that He died for all, that they which live should not live unto themselves, but to Him, who died for them, and rose again."

We must note, too, that as redemption and divine righteousness are that through which grace reigns and love is known, all idea of merit and self-righteousness is utterly excluded, so it is a new life in us which both enjoys God and to which His love is precious ; which alone is capable of delighting, as a like nature, in the blessedness that is in Him, and in which His divine love operates towards others. It is not the benevolence of nature, but the activity of divine love in the new man. Its genuineness is thus tested, because Christ has necessarily the first place with this nature, and its working is in that estimate of right and wrong which the new man alone has, and of which Christ is the measure and motive. " Not as we hoped," says Paul (it was more than he hoped), speaking of active charity, " but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God."

But it is more than a new nature. Our bodies

are the temples of the Holy Ghost ; and God's love is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given to us. And as it springs up like a well in us unto eternal life, so also living waters flow out from us by the Holy Ghost which we have received. All true devotedness, then, is the action of divine love in the redeemed, through the Holy Ghost given to them.

There may be a zeal which compasses sea and land, but it is in the interest of a prejudice, or the work of Satan. There may be natural benevolence clothed with a fairer name, and irritated if it be not accepted for its own sake. There may be the sense of obligation and legal activity, which, through grace, may lead farther, though it be the pressure of conscience, not the activity of love. The activity of love does not destroy the sense of obligation in the saint, but alters the whole character of his work. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." In God love is active, but sovereign ; in the saint it is active, but a duty, because of grace. It must be free to have the divine character—to be love. Yet we owe it to all, and more than all, to Him who loved us. The Spirit of God that dwells in us is a Spirit of adoption, and so of liberty with God, but it fixes the heart on God's love in a constraining way. Every right feeling in a creature must have an object, and, to be right, that object must be God, and God revealed in Christ as the Father ; for in that way God possesses our souls.

Hence Paul, speaking of himself, says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." His life was a divine life. Christ lived in him, but it was a life of faith, a life living wholly by an object, and that object Christ; and known as the Son of God loving and giving Himself for him. Here we get the practical character and motive of Christian devotedness—living to Christ. We live on account of Christ: He is the object and reason of our life (all outside is the sphere of death); but this in the constraining power of the sense of His giving Himself for us. So, in a passage already referred to, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, if one died for all, then were all dead; and He died for all, that they which live should not live to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again." They live to and for that, and nothing else. It may be a motive for various duties, but it is the motive and end of life. "We are not our own, but bought with a price," and have to "glorify God in our bodies."

What is supposed here is (not a law contending or arresting a will seeking its own pleasure, but) the blessed and thankful sense of our owing ourselves to the love of the blessed Son of God, and a heart entering into that love and its object by a life which flows from Christ and the power of the

Holy Ghost. Hence it is a law of liberty. Hence, too, it can only have objects of service which that life can have, and the Holy Ghost can fix the heart on ; and that service will be the free service of delight. Flesh may seek to hinder, but its objects cannot be those the new man and the Holy Ghost seek. The heart ranges in the sphere in which Christ does. It loves the brethren, for Christ does ; and all the saints, for He does. It seeks the all for whom Christ died, yet knowing that only grace can bring any of them ; and endures "all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." It seeks "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus ;" to see the saints grow up to Him who is the Head in all things, and walk worthy of the Lord. It seeks to see the church presented as a chaste virgin unto Christ. It continues in its love, though the more abundantly it loves, the less it be loved. It is ready to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

The governing motive characterizes all our walk ; all is judged by it. A man of pleasure flings away money ; so does an ambitious man. They judge of the value of things by pleasure and power. The covetous man thinks their path folly, judges of everything by its tendency to enrich. The Christian judges of everything by Christ. If it hinders His glory in oneself or another, it is cast away. It is judged of not as sacrifice, but cast away as a hindrance. All is dross and dung for

the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. To cast away *dross* is no great sacrifice. How blessedly self is gone here! "*Gain to me*" has disappeared. What a deliverance that is! Unspeakably precious for ourselves and morally elevating! Christ gave Himself. We have the privilege of forgetting self and living to Christ. It will be rewarded, our service in grace; but love has its own joys in serving in love. Self likes to be served. Love delights to serve. So we see, in Christ, on earth, now; when we are in glory, He girds Himself and serves us. And shall not we, if we have the privilege, imitate, serve, give ourselves to Him, who so loves us? Living to God inwardly is the only possible means of living to Him outwardly. All outward activity not moved and governed by this is fleshly and even a danger to the soul—tends to make us do without Christ and brings in self. It is not devotedness, for devotedness is devotedness to Christ, and this must be in looking to being with Him. I dread great activity without great communion; but I believe that, when the heart is with Christ, it will live to Him.

The form of devotedness, of external activity, will be governed by God's will and the competency to serve; for devotedness is a humble, holy thing, doing its Master's will; but the spirit of undivided service to Christ is the true part of every Christian. We want wisdom: God gives it liberally. Christ is our true wisdom. We want power: we

learn it in dependence through Him who strengthens us. Devotedness is a dependent, as it is a humble, spirit. So it was in Christ. It waits on its Lord. It has courage and confidence in the path of God's will, because it leans on divine strength in Christ. *He* can do all things. Hence it is patient and does what it has to do according to His will and word: for then He can work; and He does all that is done which is good.

There is another side of this which we have to look at. The simple fact of undivided service in love is only joy and blessing. But we are in a world where it will be opposed and rejected, and the heart would naturally save itself. This Peter presented to Christ, and Christ treated it as Satan. We shall find the flesh shrink instinctively from the fact and from the effect of devotedness to Christ, because it is giving up self, and brings reproach, neglect and opposition on us. We have to take up our cross to follow Christ; not to return to bid adieu to them that are at home in the house. It is our home still, if we say so, and we shall at best be "John Marks" in the work. And it will be found it is ever then "suffer me *first*." If there be anything but Christ, it will be *before* Christ, not devotedness to Him with a single eye. But this is difficult to the heart, that there should be no self-seeking, no self-sparing, no self-indulgence! Yet none of these things are devotedness to Christ, and to others, but the very opposite. Hence, if we are to live to Christ, we must hold ourselves dead, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And in point of fact, if the flesh be practically allowed, it is a continual hindrance; and reproach and opposition are then a burden, not a glory.

We have with Paul to "bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies," and to have the sentence of death made good in ourselves. Here the Lord's help, through trials and difficulties, comes in. But we are "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Nothing separates us from that love. But if we come to the management of our own heart, we shall find that this "always bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus" is the great difficulty and tests the inward state of the soul. Yet there is no liberty of service nor power but in the measure of it; only, remark, we have this power in the sense of grace. It is the power of the sense we have of His dying and giving Himself for us, which by grace makes us hold ourselves as dead to all but Him. Outwardly it may be comparatively easy, and so is outward labour when self and Satan's power are not felt in opposition. But to have Christ's dying always made good against self, detected by the cross, supposes Christ to be all in the affections. The true power and quality of work is measured by it—the operation of God's Spirit by us. This is the one way of devotedness in God's sight, and God's power and the having the mind of Christ in the service we do render. This only is life. All the rest of our life, not to speak of loss or judgment, *perishes* when our breath goes forth. It belongs to the first Adam and to the scene he moves in, not to the Second. It is only the life which we live by Christ which remains as life.

Its motives and character are two-fold: the cross and Christ in glory. The love of Christ constrains us in the cross to give ourselves wholly up to Him who has so loved us, given *Himself*

wholly up for us. The winning Christ and being like Him in glory gives energy, and the spring and power of hope to our path. But how constraining and mighty is the first motive, if we have really felt it! Yet how lowly! It makes us of little esteem to ourselves in the presence of such love. We see we are not our own, but bought with a price. Nor is that all. The sense of the love of Christ takes possession of the heart and constrains us. We desire to live too to Him who gave Himself for us. The perfection of the offering and the absoluteness and perfectness with which it was offered, like His love to us in it, has power over our souls. "Through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God." The sense that we are not our own deepens the claim in our hearts, yet takes away all merit in the devotedness. So wise and sanctifying are God's ways! How does the thought, too, of winning Him make all around us but dross and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Him! What is all compared with pleasing Him, possessing Him, being with Him and like Him for ever! It puts the value of Christ, as the motive, on everything we do. It leads to true largeness of heart, for all dear to Him becomes precious to us, yet keeps from all looseness of natural feelings, for we are shut up to Christ. What is not His glory is impossible. It puts sin practically out of the heart by the power of divine affections, by having the heart filled with Him. Practically the new nature only lives with Christ for its object.

It applies too, remark, to everything, because we have to please Christ in everything. Dress, worldly manners, worldliness in every shape, disappears; they cannot be like, or agreeable to, Him whom the world rejected, because He testified to

it that its works were evil. The tone of the mind is unworldly, does not refer to it save to do good to it when it can. The place of the Christian is to be the epistle of Christ. Christ thus possessing the heart, has a circumscribing power. The motives, thoughts, relationships of the world, do not enter into the heart. But, Christ moving all within, and all being referred in the heart to Him, it carries out its own character in Him out into the world. Kept from the evil, it is the active exercise of good that is in Him, the love of God; the heart shut up to God, but all the blessedness of God going out in the measure in which the vessel contains it.

The love is thus active (Christ has "purified to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" Christ's love was active), but it is guided by the mind of Christ. It loves the brethren as Christ did; that is, has its spring in itself, not in the object; but feels all their sorrows and infirmities, yet is above them all so as to bear and forbear, and find in them the occasion of its holy exercises. It is alike tender in spirit and firm in consistency with the divine path, for such was Christ's love.

It has another character (whatever its devotedness and activity), it is obedience. There cannot be a righteous will in a creature, for righteousness in a creature is obedience. Adam fell, having a will independent of God. Christ came to do the will of Him that sent Him, and in His highest devotedness His path was that of obedience. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me, but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so I do." This both guides in devotedness and keeps us quiet and humble.

Our conclusion, then, is simple: undivided de-

votedness to Christ ; Christ the only object, whatever duties that motive may lead to faithfulness in ; nonconformity to the world which rejected Him ; a bright, heavenly hope connecting itself with Christ in glory, who will come and receive us to Himself and make us like Him, so that we should be as men that wait for their Lord ; His love constraining us, in all things caring for what He cares for ; Christ crucified, and Christ before us as our hope, the centres round which our whole life turns.

There is another point one may do well to notice, which makes the plain difference between devotedness and natural kindness. " Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The Lord does not tell them to let their good works shine before men ; elsewhere he says the contrary. But their profession of Christ is to be so distinct that men may know to what to attribute their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven. What is wanted among Christians, is that through grace they should be Christians devoted, plainly devoted, in all their ways, devoted in heart and soul to Him who loved them and gave Himself for them.



THE CAPTIVES RETURNED TO JERUSALEM.

(Continued from page 40)

. *Ezra v , vi.*

This is so, indeed, as we have seen.

We soon find, however, that we have more to say ; that if we be *instructed* and *encouraged* by the returned captives, so surely may we be *warned*

by them. They need a revival, though now returned to Jerusalem, as they needed it when they were still in Babylon.

The decree of Artaxerxes had stopped the building of the Temple. Nature, or the flesh, takes advantage of this : and the captives begin to adorn their own houses, as soon as they get leisure, and are free of their labour in building the Lord's house.

What a warning this is ! It has been said, that it is easier to gain a victory than to use it. We may conquer in the fight, but be defeated by the victory. The returned Jews had gained a victory when they refused the offers and the alliance of the Samaritans. They were right to resent any help which would have compromised their holiness. But they now abuse the victory. The Samaritans had got a decree from the Persian king to stop the building of the Temple ; and the leisure thus generated becomes a snare to the remnant. They use it in ceiling and adorning their own houses : very natural, but very humbling to think of it. Abraham had done far better than this. With his trained servants he gains the day in his encounter with the confederated kings ; but then one victory only leads to another, for he refuses the offers of the king of Sodom immediately afterwards. But here *leisure* conquers those who had but lately conquered the *Samaritans*. This was more like David, if unlike Abraham. David fought his way nobly from the day of the lion and

the bear to the day of the throne ; but he betrays relaxation, carelessness of heart, on the very first occasion which occupies him as king. David puts the ark of God on a new cart drawn by oxen !

“ It is time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste !” says the convicting, rebuking Spirit by the prophet Haggai.

This is humbling and yet a healthful warning. Our hearts well understand this—how nature takes quick and earnest advantage of these its opportunities. But though the captives be left under Persian rule, yet the Spirit of God is unbound, and can revive His ancient grace in sending His prophets to them. *For this was His ancient grace.* This had been His well-known way all along, from before the day of King Saul, till after the day of King Zedekiah, *i. e.*, from the first of the kings of Israel to the last ; from 1 Sam. i. to 2 Chron. xxxvi. All along that course of time, generation after generation, prophets had been sent again and again to rebuke, to instruct, or to encourage kings and their people. Samuel, Nathan and Gad, Shemaiah, Jahaziah and Azariah, Elijah and Elisha, with others, had thus ministered while Israel was a nation ; and now Haggai and Zechariah are sent, as kindred prophets with them, to the returned captives : the sweet witness that the old form of the grace of God towards His people was still to be in use, that they might know, in every age, and in all conditions, that they were not straitened in Him.

God did not come forward to establish them on the original footing. "To do so would not have been morally suitable, either with respect to the position in which the people stood with God, or with regard to a power which He had established among the Gentiles, or with a view to the instruction of His own people in all ages, as to the government of God." This is very just. Things are left, as the hand of God in government had put them. The Gentile is still supreme in the earth; nor does the glory return to Israel. The throne of David is not raised up from the dust, nor is Urim and Thummim given again, nor the ark of the covenant; but the Spirit is not gone from His place of service. He raises up prophets, as in other days, when the throne of David was in Jerusalem, and the temple and its priesthood in their glory and beauty.

It would be profitable to mark the way in which these prophets conducted their ministry in reviving the returned captives; but this I do not here. The house, however, is again attended to under their word; the zeal of the people revives; their faith and service live again; and in about four years, from the second year of Darius, when Haggai and Zechariah began to prophesy, to the sixth, when the house was finished, they work with renewed earnestness.

The dedication of the house then takes place. And this is a beautiful witness of the moral state of the remnant. It is but little they can do—little

indeed—but they do it. Solomon had slain 22,000 oxen and 124,000 sheep at the dedication of the first house, while the returned captives can only render a few hundred bullocks and rams and lambs. But they do what they can ; and who will say that the mite of that earlier widow was not more than all the offerings of their richer forefathers ? They did what they could, without blushing for their poverty. “Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee.” There is preciousness in such feebleness, something specially acceptable in such sacrifices, when “in a time of affliction, the abundance of joy and deep poverty abound unto riches of liberality.”

And then they keep their passover. They can do this, and they will do it. The house they can dedicate, and the feast they can keep, and they will ; and priests and Levites are *alike* purified now, as they had not been in the royal time of Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxix. 34 ; and Ezra vi. 20). So that indeed we may say, though the want of all manifested glory, such as shone in the days of Solomon, may be marked here, yet is there more attractive moral grace and power ; just as the exodus from Babylon some twenty years before had been marked in contrast with the exodus from Egypt. There are features in the second exodus and in the dedication, features of personal beauty, which had not so appeared in the brighter, far brighter days of Egypt and of Solomon.

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

NOTICE FOR 1902. (D. V.)

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**GOD
IS
LIGHT.**

1 John, I. 5.

GIVE ATTENDANCE [ATTENTION] TO READING . . .
MEDITATE UPON THESE THINGS.—1 TIM. IV. 13, 15.

**GOD
IS
LOVE.**

1 John, IV. 8.

TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR [or READ]—MARK IV. 24

“Intelligence in divine things comes by conscience, not by the intellect.”

—

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

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

TAKE HEED THEREFORE HOW YE HEAR [or READ]—LUKE VIII. 18.

THE SOUL OF THE DILIGENT SHALL BE MADE FAT.—
PROV. XIII. 4.

PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.—
1 THESS. V. 21.

IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD.—
JAMES I. 5.

THE REMEMBRANCER

“ 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.”—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

TORONTO,
CANADA.

NOTICE.

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THE FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD.

There is a character of truth in the Epistle to the Galatians, very seasonable at this present time, and very strengthening to the soul at all times.

It gives us to know that the essential principle of Christianity is *faith*, and teaches *immediate personal confidence in Christ*. A truth which is, again I say, seasonable in a day like the present; when the provisions and claims of certain earthly church forms, and a system of ordinances, suggested by the religious, carnal mind, are abundant and fascinating. To learn, at all times, that our souls are to have their immediate business with Christ is comforting and assuring. To be told this afresh, at such a time as the present, is needful.

The apostle is very fervent in this epistle—naturally and properly so—as we all should be, as we all ought to be, when some justly prized possession is invaded; when some precious portion of truth (the dearest of all possessions) is tampered with.

In the first instance, at the beginning, the apostle lets us know, with great force and plainness, that he had received his apostleship *immediately* from God; not only his commission or his office, but his instructions also; that which he had to minister and testify, as well as his appointment and ministry itself. He was an apostle immediately from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ;

and what he knew and taught he had by direct, immediate revelation.

And, in connection with this, he tells us, that as God had thus dealt immediately with him, so had he, in answering confidence, dealt immediately with God. For, having received the revelation, having had the Son revealed in him, he at once withdrew from conversing with flesh and blood. He did not go up to Jerusalem, to those who were Apostles before him, but down to Arabia, carrying as it were, his treasure with him ; not seeking to improve it, but as one that was satisfied with it just as it was ; that is, with the Christ who had now been given to him.

And here, let me say, this brings to mind the Gospel by John : for that gives us, before the time of Paul, sample after sample of the soul finding its satisfaction in Christ. Every quickened one there illustrates it. Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Nathanael, in the first chapter ; afterwards the Samaritans and her companions at Sychar ; and then the convicted adulteress and the excommunicated beggar,—all of them tell us, in language which cannot be misunderstood, that they had found satisfaction in Christ ; that having been alone with Him in their sins, they were now *independent*—having had a personal *immediate* dealing with Him as the Saviour, they looked not elsewhere. Arabia will do for them as well as Jerusalem, just as in the experience of the Paul of the Galatians. They never appear to converse with

flesh and blood. Ordinances are in no measure their confidence. Their souls are proving that faith is that principle which puts sinners into *immediate* contact with Christ, and makes them independent of all that man can do for them.

How unspeakably blessed to see such a state of soul illustrated in any fellow-sinner, in men "of like passions with ourselves," like corruptions, like state of guilt and condemnation. Such things are surely written for our learning, that by comfort of such Scriptures we may have assurance and liberty.

And what is thus, in living samples, *illustrated*, for our comfort, in John's Gospel, is *taught and pressed upon us* in this fervent Epistle of Paul to the Galatians. Having shown the churches in Galatia the character of his apostleship, how he got both his commission and his instructions immediately from God, and was not debtor to flesh and blood, to Jerusalem the city of solemnities, or to those who were apostles before him, for anything; and having discovered, as it were, his very spirit to them, telling them that the life he was now living was by the faith of the Son of God, he begins to *challenge* them; for they were not in this state of soul.

He calls them "foolish," and tells them that they had been "bewitched." For how could he do less than detect the working of Satan in the fact, that they had been withdrawn from the place where the Spirit and the truth, the cross of Christ

and faith, had once put them. But then he *reasons* with them, argues the matter, and calls forth his witnesses. He makes themselves their judges, appealing to their first estate. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith!" He cites Abraham in proof that a sinner had *immediate* personal business with God, and through faith found justification. And he rehearses the character of the gospel which had been preached to Abraham, how it told of *Christ* and of *the sinner* and *blessing* being put together and alone. "In thee (Abraham's seed, which is Christ, see chap. iii. 16) shall all nations be blessed." Precious gospel! *Christ and the sinner and blessing bound up together in one bundle.* And he goes on to confirm and establish this, by teaching them how Christ bore the curse, and, therefore, surely was entitled to dispense the blessing.

Surely these are witnesses which may well be received, as proving the divine character of the religion of faith, which is the sinner's immediate confidence in Christ.

But then, he does further and other service in this same cause. He goes on to tell us the glorious things faith works and accomplishes in us and for us. "After faith is come," he tells us in chap. iii. 25, 26, "we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Here are precious deeds of faith! It dismisses the schoolmaster; it brings the soul

to God as to a father, and then it clothes the believer with the value of Christ in the eye and acceptance of God. And "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (iv. 6). And "we are redeemed from under the law" (iv. 5). Can any more full and perfect sense of an *immediate* dealing between Christ and the soul be conceived, than is expressed and declared by such statements? We are brought from under the law—the schoolmaster, and, with him, tutors and governors are gone; we are children at home in the Father's house, and have the rights and the mind of the First-born Himself put on us, and imparted to us! Can any condition of soul more blessedly set forth our independence of the resources of a religion of ordinances, and the poor sinner's personal and immediate connection with Christ Himself?

But Paul finds the churches in Galatia in a back-sliding state. They had turned again "to weak and beggarly elements." They were "observing days, and months, and times, and years." It was all but returning to their former idolatry, as he solemnly hints to them, "doing service to them which by nature are no gods," as they had been doing in the days of their heathen ignorance of the true God (iv. 8). What a connection does he here put the Christianity that is merely formal and observant of imposed ordinances into! Is it not solemn? Was it not enough to alarm him? And does it not do so? "I am afraid of you," says he

to the Galatians in this state, "lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

But, man of God as he was, gracious, patient, and toiling, according to the working of Him who was working in him mightily, he consents to labour afresh—yea, more painfully than ever—to *travail in birth again* of them. But all this was only to this end, that *Christ* might be formed in them; nothing less, or more, or other, than this. He longed for restoration of soul in them, and that was, that they and Christ might be put *immediately* together again; that faith might be revived in them—the simple hearty blessedness of personal and direct confidence in God in Christ Jesus; that, as in himself, the Son might be revealed in them; that, regaining Christ in their souls, they might prove they needed nothing more.

How edifying it is to mark the path of such a spirit under the conduct of the Holy Ghost! How comforting to see the purpose of God, by such a ministry, with the souls of poor sinners! How it lets us learn what Christianity is in the judgment of God Himself! The going over to the observance of days and times, the returning to ordinances, is destructive of true Christianity; it is the world. "Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" as the Holy Spirit by the same apostle says in Colossians. Confidence in ordinances is not faith in Christ. It is the religion of nature, of flesh and blood; it is of man, and not of God.

And surely it carries in its train the passions of man. Man's religion leaves man as it found him—rather, indeed, cherishes and cultivates man's corruptions. This showed itself in Ishmael in earliest days—nay, in Cain before him—but in Ishmael, as the apostle in this same epistle goes on to show. And he declares that it was then, in his day, the same ; and generations of formal corrupt Christianity in the story of Christendom, the prisons of Italy some few years since, and the prisons of Spain still later, declare the same. “As then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.” Man's religion, again I say, does not cure him ; he is left by it a prey to the subtleties and violence of his nature, the captive still of the old serpent, who has been a liar and a murderer from the beginning.

The decree, however, has been pronounced. It was delivered in the days of Isaac and Ishmael, of Abraham and Sarah ; it is rehearsed and re-sealed by the Spirit Himself in the day of the apostle Paul ; and we are to receive it as established for ever. “It is this : “Cast out the bondwoman and her son ” (iv. 30)..

What consolation to have this mighty question between God and man settled ! And, according to this consolation, we listen to this further word : “Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage ” (v. 1).

All, surely, is of one and the same character. The Holy Ghost, by the apostle, is preparing the principle, the great leading commanding principle, of what is divine ; of true Christianity. It is faith ; it is the sinner's personal and *immediate* confidence in Christ ; it is the soul finding satisfaction in Him, and in what He has done for it ; and thus, the sinner in possession of this faith is set, as I may express it, next door to glory. The apostle quickly tells us this, after commanding us to stand fast in the liberty of the gospel, for he adds, " We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith " (v. 5). This hope is the glory that is to be revealed—"the glory of God," as a kindred passage has it (Rom. v. 2). We do not wait for any improvement of our character, for any *advance in our souls*. Should we still live in the flesh, only fitting will it be to " grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." But such things are not needed in the way of title. Being Christ's by faith, we are next door to glory : " Whom He justified, them He also glorified " (Rom. viii.). Being in the kingdom of God's dear Son, we are " meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light " (Col. i. 12). As here, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, we wait only for glory ; glory is the *immediate object of our hope*, as Christ is the *immediate confidence of our souls*.

It is all magnificent in its simplicity, because it is all of God. No wonder that Scripture so abund-

antly discourses to us about faith, and so zealously warns us against religiousness. The "persuasion," as the apostle speaks, under which the Galatians had fallen, had not come of God who had called them ; and the apostle sounds the alarm, blows the blast of war on the silver trumpet of the sanctuary, uttering these voices in their ears—"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump ;" again, " If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under [the] law" (v. 8, 9, 18).

And in the happy structure of this epistle, as I may also speak of it, the apostle ends with himself as he begins with himself. We have seen how he told them, at the first, of the peculiarities of his apostleship, how he had received both his commission and his instructions *immediately* from God, and how he had then, with a faith that was an answer to such grace, at once conducted himself in full personal confidence in Christ, and independently of flesh and blood. And now, at the close, he tells them that, as for himself, he knew no glorying but in the cross of the Lord Jesus, by whom the world was crucified to him, and he to the world ; and he tells them further, that no one need meddle with him or trouble him, neither fret him nor worry him, with their thoughts about circumcision and the law, or the doings of a carnal religiousness, the rudiments of a world to which he was now crucified, for that he bore in his body the marks (" brands ") of the Lord. He belonged to Jesus by personal individual tokens, immediately

impressed on him as by the appropriating hand of Christ Himself ; and no one had any right to touch the Lord's treasure.

Precious secret of the grace of God ! Precious simplicity in the faith of a heaven-taught sinner ! It is not, beloved, knowledge of Scripture, or ability to talk of it, or even teach it, from Genesis to Revelation—it is not the orderly services of religion—it is not devout feelings—but, oh ! it is that guileless action of the soul that attaches our very selves to Jesus, in the calm and certainty of *a believing mind*.



“THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD IS WISER THAN MEN; AND THE WEAKNESS OF GOD IS STRONGER THAN MEN.”

(*Read Luke ii. 1-20.*)

When God is pleased to occupy Himself with the world, and to take a part in what passes therein, it is marvellous to see how He acts, and the instruction He gives. There is no agreement, but a total opposition between His ways and those of men. The emperor and his decree are but insignificant instruments. Cæsar Augustus acts in view of his subjects ; yet he is, without knowing it, the means of accomplishing the prophecy that Jesus should be born in Bethlehem. *The entire course of the world is outside the current of God's thoughts.* The capital fact for Him and for His kingdom here is the Babe's birth at Bethlehem ;

but the emperor has no thought about it. The decree puts the world in motion, and God makes good His thoughts here below. How wondrous! All the world is in movement to bring about this event, needed to fulfil prophecy, that the poor carpenter, with Mary, his espoused wife, should be in the city of David, and David's Heir should be born there and then. And this is the more striking, for the census itself was first made some years afterwards, when Cyrenius was governor of Syria: God is accomplishing His purpose of love. But man was blind to it. Who cared to notice the poor Jew, though he might be of the house and lineage of David? The tidings that are perfectly indifferent to man fill the heart and eye of God.

Still we are in Jewish atmosphere. Promises are being accomplished; the Babe must be born in Bethlehem. "The city of David" is nothing to the Christian as such, save as showing prophecy fulfilled: to us, the Son comes from heaven. On earth the Babe is the object of God's counsels; angels and all heaven are occupied with His birth; but there is no place in the world for Him! Go where the great world registers every individual, go to the little world of an inn, where each is measured by the servants' knowing eye, and place is accordingly awarded from the garret to the first floor; but there is *no room for Jesus!* And the manger led, in due time, to the lowest place—to the cross.

What a lesson for us as to this world! What a difference, too, between giving up the world and the world giving us up! We may do the one with comparative ease; but when we feel the world despises us as Christ was despised, we shall discover, unless He fills and satisfies the heart, that we had a value for its esteem that we were not aware of.

When obedience is as important to us in our measure, as obeying was to Christ, we shall go right on whatever be before us, without regarding the world : not that we shall be insensible, but when Christ is the object, we shall only be occupied with Him.

All intelligence of the things of God comes from His revelation, and not from the reasonings of men. Hence, the simple go farther in spiritual understanding than the wise and prudent of the earth. God acts here so as to set aside all appearance of human wisdom. Happy he who has so seized the intention of God as to be identified with it, and to want none but God ! This was the case with the shepherds. They little entered into the great intent of the registration ; but it was to them, and not to the prudent, that God revealed Himself. Our true wisdom is through what God reveals. But we never get God's fullest blessings till we are where the flesh is brought down and destroyed—I speak as regards walk. We cannot get into the simple joy and power of God till we accept the place of lowliness and humiliation—till the heart is emptied of what is contrary to the lowliness of Christ. These shepherds were in the quiet fulfilment of their humble duty ; and that is the place of blessing. Whoever is keeping on terms with the world is not walking with God ; for God is not walking with you there. From the manger to the cross all in Christ was simple obedience. How unlike a Theudas, who boasted himself to be somebody ! Christ did all in God's way ; and not only so, but we must come so too.

The glory of the Lord shines round about the shepherds, the angel speaks to them, the sign is given ; and what a sign ! “Ye shall find a babe wrapped up in swaddling clothes, lying in a man-

ger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God"—and for what? "The mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh." The hope of Israel is revealed to them—glad tidings of great joy to all the people. For JESUS is the pivot of all God's counsels in grace. Adam himself was but a type of Him who was to come. Christ was ever in the mind of God. Such displays of glory are not shown to mortal eyes every day; but God sets them before us in His word, and we must every day follow the sign given—follow Jesus the Babe in the manger. If He filled the eye, the ear, the heart, how we should see the effects in person, spirit, conversation, dress, house, money, etc.

Such, then, is the sign of God's accomplishment of promise and of His presence in the world—"a babe in a manger"—the least and lowest thing. But God is found there, though these things are beyond man, who cannot walk with God, nor understand His moral glory. But God's sign is within the reach of faith. It is the token of perfect weakness; a little infant who can only weep! Such, born into this world is Christ the Lord. Such is the place God chose—the low degree. God's intervention is recognized by a sign like this. Man would not have sought that. The heavenly host praise God and say, "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward [in] men." Nothing higher nor more astonishing (save the cross) for those who have the mind of heaven. The choir above see God in it—God manifested in flesh, and praise God in the highest. They rejoice that His delights are with the sons of men. Of old God had displayed Himself to Moses in a flame of fire, without consuming the bush, and here, still more marvellously, in the feeblest thing on earth;

infinite thought morally, though despicable in the eye of the world ! How hard it is to receive, that the work of God and of His Christ is always in weakness ! The rulers of the people saw in Peter and John unlearned and ignorant men. Paul's weakness at Corinth was the trial of his friends, the taunt of his enemies, the boast of himself. The Lord's strength is made perfect in weakness. The thorn in the flesh made Paul despised, and he conceived it would be better if that were gone. He had need of the lesson, " My grace is sufficient for thee." It is God's rule of action, if we may so say, to choose the weak things. Everything must rest on God's power, otherwise God's work cannot be done according to His mind. One can hardly believe that one must be feeble to do the work of God : but Christ was crucified in weakness, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For the work of God we must be weak, that the strength may be of God ; and that work will last when all the earth shall be moved away.



THE CAPTIVES RETURNED TO JERUSALEM.

(Continued from page 60)

Ezra vii.-x.

As we enter these chapters, we have passed an interval of about sixty years, and are in company with a new generation of captives, and are about to witness a second exodus from Babylon.

This portion of the book gives us the story of Ezra himself. It consists of two parts : his journey from Babylon (vii., viii.) ; his work at Jerusalem ix., x.).

We find him, in each of these, eminently a man of God. He is in ordinary circumstances: no miracle distinguishes the action; no display of glory or of power accompanies it, nor have we the inspiration which filled the prophets Haggai and Zechariah on the last revival, as we saw in chaps. v., vi. All is ordinary: his resources are only what ours in this day are, the *word* and the *presence* of God. But he used them, and used them well and faithfully throughout. Ere he began to act, he prepared his heart to seek the Lord; he had meditated on His statutes, till his profiting, as we may surely say, appears to all of us. And as soon as he begins to act, and all through to the very end, we see him in much communion and in secret with the Lord. And he will carry the word of God through every difficulty and hindrance.

He leads home from Babylon to Jerusalem a comparatively small remnant; but he exercises a spirit of faith and obedience in no common measure.

In starting on the journey, he is careful to preserve the sanctity of holy things. In such a spirit had Jehoiada the priest acted, as he was bringing back Joash to the kingdom. He would not sacrifice the purity of the house of God to any necessity of the times (2 Chron. xxiii.). And so now, in leading his remnant back to Jerusalem, Ezra will not sacrifice the sanctity of the vessels of the house to any hindrance or difficulty of his day. He will look out for the Levites to bear them home,

though this may delay him on the banks of the Ahava for twelve days. He is far above King David in all this. David, in an hour when he might have commanded the resources of a kingdom, did not keep the Book of God open before him, but hastily set the Ark of God on a new cart. But Ezra is as one who has the word of God ever before him ; and, though in the zeal of David, takes care against the haste and heedlessness of David (1 Chron. xiii.).

It is very sweet to see a saint thus in weakness of circumstances, with nothing but ordinary resources, so carrying himself before God, and through his services and duties.

And further, as we next see him, he is one that will not take a backward step. He had boasted of the God of Israel to the King of Persia, and he will not now (beginning a perilous journey), ask help of him, gainsaying in act the confession of his lips. He will get strength from God by fasting, rather than from the king by asking.

There are beautiful combinations in all that we have now traced in this dear man. He used God's word and God's presence ; richly instructed as a scribe, he was much in secret with the Lord. He was a diligent, meditative student at home, but he was energetic and practical and self-devoting abroad. He would not go behind his conscience or sacrifice the word of God to any difficulty or hindrance ; and, if his confession did for a moment go beyond his faith and he found himself not

quite up to the place he had been put in, he will wait on God to have his heart strengthened and not timidly or idly let his confession be reproached.

And yet all his circumstances were as ordinary as ours of this day. He had God's word and God's presence, as I have said ; and so have we. But that was all : he had not even the inspiration of a Haggai or a Zechariah to encourage him. It was simply the grace of God in the power of the Spirit, awakening a saint to fresh service by the word.

If other portions of the story of the returned captives have *instructed* and *encouraged* and *warned* us, surely, we may now say, this may well *humble* us. In Ezra's condition, how coldly and how feebly are our souls exercised in his spirit of secret communion and earnest service !

The journey was accomplished, the second exodus from Babylon is performed, and Jerusalem is reached by Ezra and his companions without any mischief or loss by the way. The good hand of their God was with them, and proved itself enough without help from the king. The treasures were all delivered in the Temple, as they had been weighed and numbered at the Ahava. All that, in the days of Noah, had gone into the ark came out safe and sound. Not a grain falls to the ground of such treasures at any time ; and here, all arrive at Jerusalem that had left Chaldea.

In due time Ezra has to look around him in Jerusalem. He meets what he was but little pre-

pared for, and the sight is overwhelming. Decline among the returned captives had set in rapidly, and corruption had worked wonderfully. What a sight for the spirit of such a man ! Ezra blessedly illustrates "the godliness of weeping for other men's sins"—a Christ-like affection, indeed ; and the sample of it in this man of God may well further humble some of us.

Israel had again married the daughter of a strange god. The holy seed had mingled themselves with the peoples of the lands. The Jew had joined affinity with the Gentile.

To maintain anything of purity in the progress of a dispensation, reviving power has to be put forth again and again ; and a fresh separation to God and His truth has to take place under that reviving virtue. So is it now with Ezra at Jerusalem. But we here pause for a moment to consider some divine principles. When sin entered, and the creature and the creation became defiled, the Lord God had to set up a witness to Himself, that there was now a breach between Himself and that which had been the work of His hands and the representative of His glories. The ordinance of clean and unclean did this service at the beginning (Gen. viii. 20).

In the progress of His ways we find two other operations of His of like character : I mean, His *judgments* and His *call*. He separated defilement from Himself and His creation by *judgment* in the day of the Flood, being about to make the earth the

scene of His presence and government in the new or post-diluvian world. But when that world defiled itself like the old world, He distinguished between clean and unclean by *calling* Abraham to Himself, to the knowledge of Him and a walk with Him apart from the world. And these are samples of what He has ever since been doing, and is doing now, and will do still.

Separation from evil is, in a great sense, necessary to communion with Him. The truth (the knowledge of God, life in Christ) is the positive principle or secret of communion surely ; but separation from evil must accompany that. For if we meet the Blessed One Himself, we must meet Him in conditions suited to His presence.

Ezra soon finds that the returned captives had practically forgotten all this. They had mingled themselves with the peoples of the lands. They were involved again in that evil from which the call of God had separated them. They were defiled. For sanctification is by "the truth ;" the washing of water is by "the word" ; and, if holiness be not according to God's word, and God's word as He applies it at the time, or dispensationally, it has no divine quality. There is no Nazaritim in it, no separation to God. The children of the captivity had been marrying, and giving in marriage, with the Gentiles. Ezra set himself to the work of reformation, and does so, in the same spirit in which he had set himself to be for God before his journey, and on his journey. And this is

what we have very specially to mark in Ezra. He was, personally, so much the saint of God, as well as a vessel gifted and filled. This shows itself in Ezra more than in any one who had served among the captives before him. He was a vessel that had, indeed, purged itself for the Master's use; for the reformation in Jerusalem is accomplished in the like zeal as the journey from Babylon; and the blessing of God waits upon it. There is no miracle; no displayed glory; no mighty energy bespeaking extraordinary divine presence: nothing is seen out of the common measure, or beyond ordinary resources. Service is, if done and rendered according to the written word, for the glory of the God of Israel, and in the spirit of worship and communion. It is but a sample of what service with us at this day might be, and, as we may add, ought to be. Ezra, throughout, does not listen to expediency, or yield to a difficulty, or refuse diligence and toil; he maintains principles, and carries the word of God through every hindrance.

Deeply do I believe, that the saints of God in this our day may read the story of the returned captives, as very good for the use of edifying; and, find plenty to instruct, to encourage, to warn, and to humble them.

“How precious is the book divine
 By inspiration given!
 Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine
 To guide us on to heaven.”
(To be continued, D. V.)

NOTICE FOR 1902. (D. V.)

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**GOD
IS
LIGHT.**

1 John, I. 5.

GIVE ATTENDANCE [ATTENTION] TO READING . . .
MEDITATE UPON THESE THINGS.—1 TIM. IV. 13, 15.

**GOD
IS
LOVE.**

1 John, IV. 8.

TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR [or READ]—MARK IV. 24

“Intelligence in divine things comes by conscience, not by the intellect.”

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

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

TAKE HEED THEREFORE HOW YE HEAR [or READ]—LUKE VIII. 18.

THE SOUL OF THE DILIGENT SHALL BE MADE FAT.—
PROV. XIII. 4.

PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.—
1 THESS. V. 21.

IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD.—
JAMES I. 5.

THE REMEMBRANCER

“ 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.”—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

TORONTO,
CANADA.

NOTICE.

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"The Remembrancer" for May, 1901, containing the important article: "Why did God permit the entrance of evil?" can be obtained (direct from office of publication) at one cent (one halfpenny) each. Postage extra. Six copies will go for one rate of postage in Canada, three copies outside of Canada.

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WHO IS THE LORD ?

“ Who is the Lord, that I should obey His Voice ? ”

(*Exodus v. 2.*)

Who is the LORD ? His power pervades
 From earth to heaven's remotest sky—
 Seen in the light, that bids the shades
 Of midnight's thickest darkness fly ;
 The planets that majestic roll,
 The sun that shines from pole to pole,
 Declare His glorious majesty.

Who is JEHOVAH ? Hear His name
 In whirlwinds and in thunder pealed ;
 Behold it in the dreadful flame
 Of forkèd lightnings bright revealed :
 Famine, sickness, earthquakes, fire,
 Are His ministers of ire ;
 His,—who is our Rock and Shield.

In the vale of emerald green ;
 In the stream, the tree, the flower ;
 In the azure vault serene,
 And the twilight's peaceful bour ;
 Listen to fair nature's voice,
 Hear her constant song, “ Rejoice
 In God's goodness, skill and power.”

Who is the LORD ? A starry gem
 To yon low shed directs our eyes ;
 The angels sing, “ At Bethlehem
 The King of grace and glory lies : ”
 See Him in a manger laid,
 Him, in swaddling-clothes arrayed,
 Who outspread the boundless skies.

Who is the LORD ? Yon lonely One
 Whom all reject, whom all deride !
 The birds have nests ; but He hath none
 From cold or heat His head to hide :

Hungering, thirsting, fainting, lo !

See "the Man of Sorrows" go ;

My soul, for thee He all did hide.

Who is the LORD ? Yon prostrate One,
In that dark vale, Gethsemane ;

Oh, mark that bitter cry and groan ,

Those tears, and sweat, and agony !

O'er Him the sins of ages roll,

Sorrows of death o'erwhelm His soul :

Sinner, all this He bore for thee.

Who is the LORD ? A prisoner led !

See how they bend the mocking knee ;

A crown of thorns is on HIS head ;

"BEHOLD THE MAN !" Can this be HE ?

He at whose beck the angels fly ?

Who wields Heaven's loud artillery ?

Yes, even this He bore for thee.

Who is the LORD ? Behold that tree—

Hell's power, man's hate, sin's doom meet there ;

Such crushing loads of agony

Who, but JEHOVAH's self, could bear ?

'Tis night at noon ; earth groans and shakes,

While God His only Son forsakes—

His *Only* Son He did not spare !

Who is the LORD ? Can this be He,

Who utters that heart-broken cry,

"Why hast Thou, God, forsaken Me ?"

"*Eli, lama sabachthani.*"

Is this the well-belovèd Son,

With the eternal Father one ?

My soul, thy sin's the answer WHY.

Who is the LORD ? His corse they lay,

With its five wounds, in yon new cave,—

The Lord of life, death's willing prey ;

They seal the stone, they guard the grave :

Well may we weep around His tomb ;
 Love's deepest depth ! Sin's deadliest doom !
 For us Himself He would not save.

What epitaph could we indite
 His name, His deeds, His worth to tell ?
 " Here lies the Lord of Life, and Light,
 Jesus, the Christ, Emmanuel."
 O sinner, look within, and see
 All that thy Lord has borne for thee ;—
 O Love divine, unsearchable !

Who is the LORD ? Behold on high,
 A Man sits on the Father's throne ;
 The Man, that did for sinners die,
 " As Lord of lords," heaven's myriads own :
 " Worthy the Lamb ! " all angels cry,
 " Worthy the Lamb ! " our songs reply,
 HE IS THE LORD, AND HE ALONE.



JESUS THE WILLING CAPTIVE.

(John xviii. 1-10.)

Two points attract and fill our hearts in this passage. First, the perfect willingness with which Christ gives Himself up, the unhesitating way in which He presents Himself to the armed band come out to seek Him, fully knowing what was to befall Him. " Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said unto them, I have told you that I am He. If therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way," proving to us, while He offers Himself, there is a full and perfect deliverance for us. " Of them which Thou gavest Me, I have lost none." The

Lord presents Himself, that none of us might even be touched with the power of the enemy. It was the same self-devotion on the cross, though here it was the power of Satan, but He had gone through it. When led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, He bound the strong man, and introduced present blessing into the world; but we as men were unable to profit by this, because of a moral inward incapacity to receive the blessing that came. Outwardly, it was received in healing diseases, etc., but men had no heart to receive *Him*. If He turned out the legion of devils from him that was possessed, they turned Him out. The hearts of men in such a condition were glad to get rid of Him, and this shows another and a deeper evil to be remedied—that man morally has departed from God, and that he is himself irremediable—that nothing will do, but a new creation, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.” Thus, here the Lord has not only to conquer Satan, but to underlay man in his moral departure from God. “This is your hour”—“My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” Satan brings all this darkness and death to bear on the soul of the Lord, his object being to get between His soul and God. So, the more pressed by Satan, the nearer to God. Therefore, it is said, “being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly;” and in consequence He receives nothing at the hand of Satan, but of His Father: “The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” Before He left

Gethsemane, the whole power of Satan was *morally* destroyed. He had gone through the hour with His Father, and now takes the cup at the hand of His Father, as an act of obedience. He is now as calm as when doing any other miracle (healing the servant's ear), as if nothing had happened. It was their hour, and the power of darkness was upon them, not on Him. "Whom seek ye?"—"I am He." "As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground;" but He presents Himself again (as He says in John xiv. 31, "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise let us go hence,") saying, "Whom seek ye? If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way," and they were not touched, as a token of the complete deliverance of us all.

At the cross He cries out; "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He went through the hour in Gethsemane, and here drinks the terrible cup. His soul had drunk the cup of wrath, and only one thing remained. He said, "I thirst," this He said that the Scripture might be fulfilled; and crying, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit, he gave up the ghost." Here we learn the perfect deliverance that has been obtained for us, and that all is perfect light and joy for us. If I look at Satan, I see his power annihilated and destroyed. If I look at wrath, He has drunk it to the dregs. He entered into all the darkness and the

wrath of God, but before He went out of the world He had passed through it all, and went out in perfect quiet. The work is so perfectly done that death is nothing. "His hour being come that he should depart out of the world unto the Father," He passes out of Satan's reach and beyond all wrath to the Father. No believer is under the power of Satan. Thus Israel of old, though once under Pharoah in Egypt, but when delivered was never under the power of the Canaanite, except when he failed, as we know in the case of Ai ; so we may fail too, but we are in that new creation that has passed all the power of Satan and the wrath of God. Do your souls realize the truth that Christ has "abolished [annulled] death, and brought life and immortality [incorruptibility] to light," so that our souls are brought into the light as He is in the light? It was not true when He was down here ; but *now* we are brought into the light where there is no darkness at all. May our souls know and enjoy the true and perfect deliverance that is our portion in Him !



I would notice a beautiful thing as to those words, "made of a woman, made under the law." It shows how completely Christ met the whole case. The *woman* brought in *sin*, and the *law* brought in *transgression*, and Christ meets both : come of a woman, and made under the law.

“ CONSIDER HIM.”

“ Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased.”—Luke iii. 22.

Now my eye rests on JESUS: I find the Lord from heaven A MAN. Do I look at myself? At all around? What do I see? Enough to break my heart, if there is a heart to be broken. But a rest is here!—a Man who satisfied God. This blessed Man on earth, in the presence of God, looking to God, and an object to God! Not Messiah purging His floor, but Him in whom God's thoughts and purposes are all folded up—not man perishing before the moth, but JESUS, the Son of Man, not merely coming down from Abraham and David, but traced up, “which was the son of Adam, which was the Son of God.” The second Man—the last Adam—the quickening Spirit. What a relief: for what is man? What one's self when the heart's sin is known—giving up God for an apple from the beginning hitherto! But now a Man, a blessed Man, appears, “and praying.” . . . The *dependent* Man: for dependence is the essence of a perfect man. Truly we see GOD shining all through, but yet in Jesus the dependent Man, in the place and condition of perfectness as man. The root of sin in us is self-will, independence. Here my heart has rest! A dependent Man in the midst of sorrow, but perfectly with God in all, in humiliation, or in glory, it makes no difference as

to this: that perfect is ever the dependent One. And when the blessed heart thus expressed its dependence, did He get no answer? "The heaven was opened." Does heaven open thus on me? It is open *to me* indeed, no doubt, but I pray because it is open; it opened because HE prayed. I come and look up because the heavens were opened ON HIM.

It is indeed a lovely picture of grace, and we may be bold to say that the Father loved to look down, in the midst of all sin, on His beloved Son. Nothing but what was Divine could thus awaken God's heart; and yet it was the lowly, perfect Man. He takes not the place of His eternal glory as the Creator, the Son of God—He stoops and is baptised. He says, "In Thee do I put my trust, Thou art my Lord" (Psalm xvi.)—and the Holy Ghost descends like a dove on Him—fit emblem of that spotless Man!—fit resting-place for the Spirit in the deluge of this world. And how sweet, too, that Jesus is pointed out to us as God's object. I know the way the Father feels about Him. I am made His intimate, and admitted to hear Him expressing His affection for His Son, to see the links reformed between God and man.

Thus I get rest, and my heart finds communion with God in His beloved Son. It is only the believer who enjoys it, but the link is there. And if I find that in and about me which distresses the soul, I have that in Him which is unfailing joy and comfort. . . . With Him let heaven and earth be turned upside down, and still I have a rest. What blessedness for the heart to have the Object God Himself is occupied with!

THE ASSIMILATING POWER OF CHRIST.

(*1 John iii. 2.*)

There is one very precious feature that is found in John's Epistle and indeed elsewhere, in his writings, that we cannot see Christ really, as He was and is, without being wrought upon and formed according to Him. There is such an assimilating power in Christ, that it is impossible to have to do with Him without feeling His constraining influence and becoming like Him. The apostle even traces this through the main particulars of His life and glory. Thus, knowing Him as the life, we have life ourselves. Again, He is the Son, and knowing Him thus, we too become sons of God. So in Revelation i, if He is the King, if He is the Priest, as none other ever was or can be but Himself, He has made us kings, He has made us priests, and given us to be kings and priests as none can be, save those that are made so by Him.

But this is also true morally, because as He is our life, and we have life, even eternal life in Him, so also He is our righteousness and we are righteous in Him and by Him, yea, made the righteousness of God in Him. And this is not only true as to the present, but as to the future. We have seen Him now by faith, and all the blessing comes by faith. But we shall see Him soon face to face, and then as we see Him outwardly face to face, as well as now inwardly by the Holy Spirit, we shall be both outwardly and inwardly conformed to

Him. Thus does the apostle preserve this most precious thought everywhere, bringing it out and applying it to us in the most unexpectedly full manner.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.” It never was so displayed before. It was predicted that it was to be, but it never was so brought out, till Himself, the Son of God really and properly came : and we then become not only sons in title, but children (for such is the true force of it), as being really born of God. To be sons, glorious as it is, is not so intimate a thing as to be children, born of God. A person might have the title of a son without being of the family. But, while we are and shall be owned as sons of God, we are children. “Therefore,” he says, “behold the world knoweth us not.” But why? “Because it knew Him not.” There we have the very same thought again. If it is nearness to God, there never was any one so near to God as He was ; but now we are brought into the very same nearness, as he says, “Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.” Thus what is His becomes ours. But now, looking at the other side, the world does not know us. How comes this? For the most precious reason—because it knew Him not. Whatever was his portion is our portion. If the world cast Him out, should we wonder if it cast us out also? If the world called

Him every bad name, we should expect no better. Only let us take care that we do not deserve it. The Lord give us grace to be more faithful that we may know what it is to be outcast for His sake ! It was His portion from the manger to the cross.

Having given us these two portions, he distinguishes what is from what shall be. "Beloved, now are we the children of God." As he had before simply said "that we should be *called* the children of God," there might have been a question whether it was really so or not. But now he adds, "Now *are* we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." It does not appear to the world ; it does perfectly appear to us. He is not speaking of what we know, but of what is to be manifested to the world. For we ought to know it now as perfectly as we shall in the glory. It rests upon God's word, as it flows from His grace ; and God's word will not be plainer in heaven than it is upon earth. Nothing can make the word of God plainer or surer. There may be the putting down of opposing influences, but "the word of God liveth and abideth forever." And this is the strength of our Christian health and well-being, the very spring that gives us power of separation unto God that we wait for no signs, that we accept His word and rejoice in it, and take it as our sure portion, not because we deserve such grace, but because Christ does ; and Christ deserves it now as much as ever He will. And as it

is nothing but the fruit of the grace of Christ, he says, "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him" But why? Because it is guaranteed by His infinite power? Nay, true as this may be, it is not the reason. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." We see Him now as He was, and this constrains and conforms us into the likeness of what He was; surely then we shall see Him as He is, and we shall be like Him as He is. Yea, in spirit we see Him as He is now, and are even now changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The Lord grant that having such a hope, grounded upon Him and upon nothing in ourselves, we may be found seeking that our ways and conversation should practically testify that we purify ourselves according to this measure and this standard, although it be an infinite one.



CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, AND THE HOLY GHOST DOWN HERE.

I know why Christ is at God's right hand, and I know why the Holy Ghost is down here. The Holy Ghost here is the witness of the judgment of the world, and the power for me. What is He saying to the world? He says: Christ has come

down here, and what have you done with Him? What account have you to give of that blessed One who went about here in thorough weakness, and walked as none else ever did? What have you done with Him?—And the world has to answer; we crowned Him with thorns; and we sent Him back up there, because we would not have Him.

And what is the Holy Ghost to me? He is power for me to walk down here in the name of that blessed One who has gone up there. God has never told us that the world is changed with regard to Christ. It may now be religionized, but, as to the question of receiving Christ, it is unaltered in its spirit. But God is manifesting Christ by gathering out of it, by the power of the Holy Ghost, a people to His name, and leading them, in union with Him, through the midst of this unaltered world.

What a wondrous place I have then with reference to Christ! And what a solemn place with reference to the world! The weakest thing here, but united to Christ! An earthen vessel, and yet down here in His name! The Holy Ghost dwelling in me uniting me to the One who has been cast out, and leading me through the very scene that the shadow of the cross still rests on.



If we stop short of the full acceptance of death and resurrection with Christ, though we may have peace of conscience, we shall never have our hearts at rest, and, at the same time, we shall have no protection against the temptations of the world.

THE CAPTIVES RETURNED TO JERUSALEM.

(Continued from page 80)

Nehemiah i-iv.

It is after an interval of twelve years from the time of Ezra's action that Nehemiah appears. He was a captive still in Babylon (or Persia, the same thing in principle), while Ezra was doing good service to the Lord at Jerusalem. But, connected as he was with the palace of the Persian king, he may not have been free to take part with the movement or revival in Ezra's day—or, it may be, he was not then quickened by the Spirit, so as to do so.

He represents a fresh revival ; and all is in increased weakness. He was not a prince of the house of David, like Zerubbabel ; nor a priest of the family of Aaron, like Ezra. He is, as we speak, a layman : cup-bearer to the king

There is something, however, in all this, that magnifies the grace that was in him. The burdens of his brethren have power to detach him from the Persian palace, as they had once separated Moses from the Egyptian. No miracle distinguishes these days of returned captives, but there are many witnesses of fine moral energy among them.

Ezra had been a scribe, as well as a priest. He was a meditative, worshipping student of God's word ; for he found the springs and the guide of his energy in that word. Nehemiah was not that.

He was a practical man, a man in the business of everyday life, amid the circumstances and relations which make up human history. But he was of an earnest spirit, like Ezra, and he took what he *heard*, as Ezra had taken what he *read*, and dealt with it in the presence of God.

He had heard of the *desolations* of Jerusalem, and he weeps over them before God ; as Ezra had seen the sins of Jerusalem, and wept over them before God. But here, we may ask, how was it that these desolations had not moved Ezra ? He was all this time at Jerusalem, while Nehemiah was in the Persian palace, and could only hear of them by occasional reports. Was it that the energy had declined in Ezra ? and that he himself now needed to be revived, though some years since he had been the instrument for reviving others ? Such things are, and have been. Peter led his brethren on, in Acts i. 15 ; but he had need himself to be pulled up, corrected, and led on, in Gal. ii. A younger Paul reanimates his elder brother Peter who had been serving the Lord for years, while he was blaspheming Him. And here, it would seem, a younger Nehemiah, a layman too, has to revive the venerable scribe who had crossed over to Jerusalem to serve God there, years and years before him.

If it were not this, it may show us, that the Lord has one business for one servant, another for another ; one purpose by this revival, another by that. Zerubbabel had looked to the Temple, Ezra

to the reformation of the religion ; and Nehemiah is now raised up to look to the city-walls, and the civil condition of Jerusalem. It may have been thus, for such things, again I say, are and have been. Of old, there was the Gershonite, the Merarite, and the Kohathite service. And it has been surely thus, in a series of revivals, century after century, in the course of Christendom, since the Reformation, which was a kind of return from Babylon.

I say not in which of these ways we are to account for Ezra apparently remaining unmoved, though the ruined walls of the city were before his eyes day after day for years. However, he is honourable, highly so, in the recollections of the people of God, as Nehemiah is.

Nehemiah was a simple man of very earnest affections. His book gives us, I may say, the only piece of autobiography which we get in Scripture. It is this dear man of God writing his own history, in the simple style that suits truth-telling. He lets us learn, how he turned to God again and again, in the spirit of a trustful, confiding child, as he went on with his work. His style reminds me of a word which I met, I believe, in some old writer, "let Christ be second to every thought." That is, let the soul quickly turn to the Lord in the midst of occupations, be *habitually* before Him ; not however by effort, or watching, but by an easy, happy, natural, exercise of soul.

And, together with this exercise of his spirit to-

wards God, Nehemiah's heart was alive to his brethren. In deep affection, and in that eloquence that comes fresh from the heart and its suggestions, he calls Jerusalem, "the city of his fathers' sepulchres." And all this presents to us a very attractive person. We love him, and do not grudge him his virtues, or envy him because of his excellences. We trace him with affectionate admiration.

The exercise of his spirit, ere he got his royal master's leave to visit Jerusalem, is very beautiful. From the month Chisleu to the month Nisan, that is, from the third to the seventh month, he was mourning before God on account of the city. At length he comes before the king, and leave is given him, and a given time is set him, to take his journey and pay his visit—a captain and horsemen are also appointed to guide and guard him on the road. He had been much along in all this: revivals commonly begin with some individual; and when he reaches Jerusalem, he is still, at first, alone. By night he inspects the city walls, acquainting himself with the nature of the work that now lay before him. He *proves* what he is about to *publish*. Very right—it is the way of Spirit-led servants, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." Nor is he a *patron* but *yokefellow*, a fellow-labourer, like Paul, or like Paul's divine Master, Who, while He was Lord of the harvest, served in the harvest-field also.

And, indeed, these are always the forms after

which the Spirit prepares the servants of Christ. They prove what they teach, and they labour in the principle of service and not of patronage. They are not lords of the heritage, but ensamples of the flock ; they affect no dominion over the faith, but they are helpers of the joy.

Then, as we go on to chapter iii., and look at his companions in the work, we see much to instruct us, and much that tells us of our own day and our own circumstances.

All are working people together—the nobles and the common folk. The service of God's city had put them all on a level. The rich are made low, the poor are exalted : a beautiful sight in its time and place. Then, some are distinguished : Baruch, the son of Zabbai, works " earnestly," ver. 20 ; the " daughters " of Shallum work with their father, ver. 12 ; some of the priests " sanctified " their work in their part of the city-walls, while others of them worked after a common manner, vs. 1, 22, 28. And painful to have to add to all this, the nobles of the Tekoites " put not their necks to the work of their Lord," ver. 5.

There have always been such distinctions as these, and there are the same abundantly in this our day. In raising the Tabernacle in the wilderness, in fighting the battles of Canaan, in accompanying David in the days of his exile, as here in the building of the wall of Jerusalem, and afterwards among the yoke-fellows of Paul, we see these distinctions. And surely, like the daughters

of Shallum, or like the wife of Aquila, females in this our day, are doing good work in the gospel, and in the service of Jerusalem. But we may remember, and it has its profit to do so, every man shall receive his own reward according to his own work (1 Cor. iii.); though we have also to remember, that the Lord weighs the *quality* as well as the *quantity* of what is rendered to Him (Matt. xx. 1-16.).

Thus we may surely be instructed in the details of this sweet story. As we pass through chap. iv. we find the builders have become *fighters* as well as *builders*. Their work is continued in the face of enemies, and in spite of "cruel mockings," as chap. xi. of Hebrews speaks. And in this combination of the sword and the trowel, we see the symbols of our own calling. There is that which we have to *withstand*, and there is that which we have to *cultivate*. We are to cherish and advance, like builders, what is of the Spirit in us; we are to resist and mortify what is of the flesh. We are builders and fighters.

As to the enemies, they are the same Samaritans as at the first. The Zerubbabel generation of them was represented in Rehum and Shimshai, or in Tatnai, and Shethar-boznai; and now the generation of them in this day of Nehemiah is represented in Sanballat and Tobiah. They were not heathen men, but a seed of corruption, who might appear to be the circumcision in the eyes of flesh and blood. And by this time they seem to have become more corrupt, for Edomites, Arab-

ians, Philistines and Ammonites appear to be joined with them, or to have become one with them.

And still more serious, and more for our personal, immediate warning, we see a company of Jews dwelling near these Samaritans. And they *were in the secrets of the Samaritans* (ver. 12.)—a bad symptom. They were *borderers*. They may remind us of Lot in Sodom, and of Obadiah in the house of Ahab. Surely they were not Samaritans; they were Jews, and had some love and care for their serving, toiling brethren in Jerusalem. But they dwelt near the Samaritans, and were in their secrets: again, I say, a bad moral symptom. They were, I presume, some of the old stock, left behind in the land, in the day when Judah was taken captive. They had never shared in the revival virtues of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Their scent was in them, they had not been emptied from vessel to vessel, as Jeremiah speaks of Moab (Jer. xlviii.).

Different from such, widely different, was the trumpeter, whom Nehemiah here sets close to his own person; for if these Jews were in the secret of the Samaritans, this trumpeter was in the secret of God. That is what the holders and blowers of trumpets always represent: whether we see them as priests, doing their occasional and varied work in Numb. x.; or their annual work on the first day of the seventh month, as in Lev. xxiii.; or as gifted ministers in God's assembly, teaching and exhorting, according to i. Cor. xii. 8, 9.

Humbling to some of us to trace these beauties in the servants of Christ, in the Nehemiahs, and in the trumpeters on the walls of the city!

(To be continued, D.V.)

NOTICE FOR 1902. (D. V.)

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**GOD
IS
LIGHT.**

1 John, I. 5.

GIVE ATTENDANCE [ATTENTION] TO READING . . .
MEDITATE UPON THESE THINGS.—1 TIM. IV. 13, 15.

**GOD
IS
LOVE.**

1 John, IV. 8.

TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR [or READ]—MARK IV. 24

“Intelligence in divine things comes by conscience, not by the intellect.”

—

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

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

TAKE HEED THEREFORE HOW YE HEAR [or READ]—LUKE VIII. 18.

THE SOUL OF THE DILIGENT SHALL BE MADE FAT.—
PROV. XIII. 4.

PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.—
1 THESS. V. 21.

IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD.—
JAMES I. 5.

THE REMEMBRANCER

CORONATION NUMBER

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."—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

TORONTO,
CANADA.

NOTICE.

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THE FOUR CORONATIONS.

*John xix. 1-7 ; Hebrews ii. 9; Rev. xix. 11-16 ; Cant
iii. 7-11.*

I.

“ Behold the Man !” wearing the crown of thorns,
 He cometh forth, robed with the purple robe,
 To meet the priests’ and people’s angry gaze.
 And is this all men have to offer Him ?
 Alas ! His vineyard is o’ergrown with thorns,
 Proof of man’s sad neglect—Jehovah’s curse ;
 They should have crowned Him with the royal
 crown,
 Then had His kingdom come, then far and wide
 His sceptre reached in blessing o’er the land—
 But deeper counsels lead Him to the cross,
 His Father’s will, which He is come to do,
 Taking away the sin of this poor world.

II.

Faith sees Him now. crowned with the Victor’s
 wreath,
 Won by the suffering it was meet to prove,
 Passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.
 Who placed that radiant crown upon His brow,
 “ Glory and honour ” ? ’Twas the hand of God,
 Setting a crown of gold upon His head,
 Which erst had borne from men the thorny wreath,
 Placing the Son of Man upon His throne,
 And all things as a footstool for His feet,
 In time to come, save God ; His glory shines
 Into the heart, shewing the Father’s will,
 To head up all in Him, the Christ Who died.

III

Again He comes, with many diadems
 Upon His head, wielding the sword of power,
 "The King of Kings" is written on His robe,
 Seen on His thigh, when bared for mastery ;
 All might is His, and though the kings of earth
 Gather to fight, the Lamb shall overcome,
 With His own chosen, called, and faithful ones,
 In righteousness, the Faithful and the True,
 The Word of God, to carry out His mind,
 And bear the rod of strength, till rebel man
 Shall lift no more his hand against His God,
 And every enemy shall be subdued.

IV.

Behold Him thence, crowned with the nuptial
 crown,
 His mother Israel's gift, in bridegroom joy,
 King Solomon, in gladness of His heart,
 Resting in love, and in His kingdom come
 Riding throughout His willing subjects' realm ;
 Defence is on the glory, for the night
 Is shielded by the swords of mighty men
 Expert in war, and glorious is His rest ;
 The Bridegroom hath the bride, and he who stands
 Before Him is rejoicing in His house,
 While in the midst* rises the gladsome voice
 Of Him who praises on His priestly throne.

* 2 Chron. vi 13. Psalm xxii 25.

THE THREE CROWNS.

“Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?”—Luke xxiv. 26.

Such was the order of the divine counsels. If the Son of God humbled Himself to take the form of a servant, and to be found in fashion as a man, and to become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross—and all this for the wondrous end of displaying the grace of God—His name of humiliation becomes His name of exaltation; and throughout the range of heaven and earth, and even that which is beneath it, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. “For the suffering of death, Jesus is crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God might taste death for every one.” It is thus that the worth of the humiliation of Jesus is not only to be estimated as that by which God is glorified; but the worth of His obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross, is also manifested in the royal and priestly dignity, into which those are brought who make confession unto the Crucified One, as Saviour and Lord. It is by the blood of Jesus that they are made kings and priests unto God and His Father. They enter into glory upon the sole ground of His precious blood-shedding. To Him as the Lamb they ascribe exclusively their redemption. “Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.”

But besides the common regal and priestly dignity so graciously secured to the believer, we find mention made in the New Testament of specific crowns—"the crown of righteousness," "the crown of life," "the crown of glory." These are held out as encouragements to the saint under special circumstances of trial which meet him in his path; and it will be interesting to trace the connection between the circumstances, and the particular crown held out as an encouragement under them. To be curious where God has been silent, or to attempt to shape divine revelation to human thought, is at all times prejudicial to the soul, but not to weigh the connection of Scripture, or to rest in vague generalities where the word of God is definite and precise, is to deprive ourselves of much comfort, as well as of profitable instruction.

At the close of his active and eventful ministry, the apostle Paul thus expresses himself: "I have fought a [the] good fight, I have finished my [the] course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a [the] crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Whatever were the hardships and sufferings of his ministry, and the humiliating position in which he was placed by it in the eyes of men, the apostle felt its true dignity. He was "set for the defence of the Gospel," the noblest service in which it was

possible for a man to be engaged ; for it was no less than vindicating the honour of Christ. His deep anxiety of soul for the preservation of the faith, as that in which the welfare of the church was involved, was in his estimation more than all the pressure from without—"besides that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." He had no respite from warfare. "The faith" was assailed on every side, and from the most opposite quarters. It was equally endangered by Jewish ordinances and Gentile philosophy, slothful ignorance and prying curiosity. The saints, for the most part, were not alive to the importance of contending for "the faith." They did not perceive that by so doing they were favouring the "righteous cause" of Christ (see Psalm xxxv. 27). Such a principle is needed in order to contend heart and soul for the faith once delivered to the saints. But the saints themselves are often impatient of either being roused to activity, or of being disturbed from their ease. Hence the facility with which "the faith" has been corrupted. Some have passively listened to teachers, "whose word will eat as doth a canker." Some would follow in the more liberal school of such teachers as Hymenæus and Alexander, and "putting away a good conscience, make shipwreck concerning the faith." Some, instead of receiving by faith that which it had pleased God to reveal, were always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Others again openly contro-

verted, and even with bitter animosity, the teaching of the apostle, as Alexander the copper-smith. The apostle was as it were the teacher of one single idea—yet how high, how vast, how comprehensive an idea, “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” He would not allow this grand idea to be either overlaid or undermined.” On the eve of his departure, he was able to say, “I have fought a good fight ; *I have kept the faith.*” He had allowed no inroad on the faith from any quarter. He dealt with its depravers indeed very differently ; but he never allowed the thought of charity to interfere with his most uncompromising defence of “the faith,” whether it was endangered by the vacillating conduct of an apostle, or the avowed opposition of a copper-smith. “The faith,” in the estimation of the apostle, involved something far beyond the question of individual salvation ; an invasion on its integrity was an attack on the rights of Christ. It is this which gives its value to “the faith.” In human estimate, the welfare of man is the point ; but in the estimate of God, and of those born of Him, the first and last point is the glory of Christ. “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son ; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.”

What is “the faith” but the present assertion of the dignity of the person of the Son, and all the titles, styles, honours, and offices which belong to

him as "the Christ of God?" The church is set here as a witness to Him in that which He essentially is, as well as all His given glory. All this will be manifested in due time, and there will be no room for gainsaying them. But the rejection of Christ by the world has raised the question, on the ground of *righteousness*, whether Christ or the world is right. It is on this ground that we find "**the crown of righteousness**" connected with keeping the faith. Christ has been unrighteously deprived of His honour by the world, and His honour has not yet been publicly vindicated by judgment. In the meanwhile, those who are taught of God to know Him, live only for one end as their highest object, and that end is to assert His rights. It may be but in very feeble testimony—it necessarily must be with personal humiliation and real denying of self; but they only who are living for such an object will be found in the right when Christ is publicly manifested. Such have renounced all that men esteem valuable for Christ, and have asserted His honour when the assertion of His honour brings no present advantage; and this, in God's estimate, is *righteousness*. Hence the encouragement to fighting the good fight of faith. When Jesus appears, He will own those who have stood up for His honour as having been on the side of *righteousness*. The question has been raised by the Lord Jesus Himself, as to whether He or the world is right. It is a question of *righteousness*. "O righteous Father, the world

hath not known Thee : but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me." The Father hath vindicated the righteous cause of His Son, by raising Him from the dead, and giving Him glory—leaving the world (in righteous retribution) under the wicked one, until the rights of the Son are publicly vindicated by judgment on the world. If we take part with Christ, while His rights are actually unvindicated by judgment on the world, we are on the side of righteousness ; and the crown of righteousness, when Christ's title shall be fully vindicated, is held out as our encouragement in the confession of Him before men. 'If we side with the world, then are we classed with those who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. The crown of righteousness is held out to all that "love the appearing" of Jesus ; for His appearing makes manifest to all, that which the Holy Ghost has manifested to His disciples now, and which they have confessed unto before men.

There is an interesting connection between this passage of the apostle in his Epistle to Timothy, and the address of the Lord Himself to the church of Philadelphia : "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept *My word*, and *hast not denied My name*." In all its feebleness, this church had stood up for the honour and dignity of Christ. They did not measure the value of the name of Jesus by their own conscious weakness. This they maintained ; and the exhortation to them is, still to maintain it :

“Behold, I come quickly ; hold that fast which thou hast ; that no man take thy crown.” The Lord regarded them as already crowned. They were on the side of righteousness : and the danger was lest the crown should be taken from them by their ceasing to confess the name of Jesus. “Behold, I come quickly ;” and then the crown with which He saw them already invested, would be publicly seen by others—the Crown of Righteousness. So the Apostle, “Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, *the righteous* Judge, will give me ; and not to me only, but to all who love His appearing.” Those who keep His word, and deny not His name, may well love His appearing ; even as it is said of the faithful remnant of Israel in a future day : “Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word : Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for My name sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified ; but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed” (Is. lxvi. 5).

“**The Crown of Life.**” “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him” (Jas. i. 12). This crown is held out as an encouragement, under the peculiar and characteristic temptation to which the saint is exposed by “loving his life in this world.” The Lord presents Himself, as knowing His own worth, as *the one absorbing Object of our affections* ; on the other hand, the god of this world,

either directly or indirectly, presents some present object of advantage or interest. Hence the temptation. Is the present object of Christ most precious to us? It is as though the Lord Himself addressed us individually in the person of Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" whatever the object may be. The crown of life is given to those "who *love Him*," even as the crown of righteousness is given to those who "*love His appearing*." This line of doctrine of the value of the Lord Jesus Himself as a PARAMOUNT OBJECT, is thus presented to us by the Lord Himself: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me; for whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? for the Son of Man shall come in the glory of the Father, with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to his works." The Lord alone is a worthy exchange for the soul; everything else is worthless to give the soul for. How wise, how rich, how blessed is that man who has exchanged himself for Christ! Man can give nothing in exchange for his soul; but Christ presents Himself to be received, in the conscious knowledge of His own value.

The life which Christ gives to them who receive Him, is a life only nourished by faith in Him, feed-

ing on Him who gave it. It finds no aliment from anything in this world ; all here is contrary to it, and it has to struggle its way all the time we are here through opposing obstacles. It is endurance unto the end ; and this endurance is characteristic. It is alike in contrast with Israel in the land under David and Solomon, and with Israel restored in the millenium under David's Son. In both these instances there is no "patience of hope," but actual possession. But now the life communicated from the risen and glorified Head in heaven, to the individual members on earth, necessitates trial. The life thus communicated does not, as it were, breathe its native air : for this it longs. What freedom, what expansiveness, will it have, when Christ who is our life shall appear, and we also appear with Him in glory ! But so long as the life so communicated is here, it is characterized by endurance. "To them who by *patient continuance* in well-doing." "Tribulation worketh *patience*." "They bring forth fruit *with patience*." Patience or endurance is, practically, the key-word to us. We have to do with the "God of *patience* ;" and we are "strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, unto all *patience* and long-suffering with joyfulness." There are indeed special temptations to which as individuals we are liable, but present circumstances of themselves become a trial to the saint, because he is a saint. We are in the world, and the world is under the wicked one ; and we *know* very experimentally the difference between quietly floating down the stream, and being set against its course. All of the world which once we thought to be for us, is now felt to be against us. The world, and all

in it—whether conventionally bad or good, moral or immoral, religious or irreligious—was set against Jesus, because *He* was not of it; and this, His living testimony against it that its deeds were evil, was acutely felt by it. His gracious word to His disciples is, “Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” “Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed Me.” It is with respect to temptations of this kind that we are exhorted to “run with *patience* the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, who for the joy set before Him, *endured* the Cross, despising the shame.” All the temptations of the blessed Lord arose from the contrariety of that which was around Him, to that which He was in Himself. “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.” “He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” All the pressure of circumstances was let loose against Him, and He suffered under the pressure; but nothing ever turned Him aside from dependence on God, or made Him swerve from His purpose of doing the will of God. He carried His obedience to death, even the death of the Cross; He endured the Cross, “and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” In Him we see what life crowned really is, and He holds out to us the crown of life to cheer us in running with patience the race set before us.

“Without sin”—one difference; but an amazing one. “In Him was no sin”—no lust to correspond with the cunningly-devised temptation. Pressure of all circumstances from without must necessarily cause the saint suffering. Such a character of temptation is acutely felt, because of

its contrariety to that which a saint is as born of God ; but, alas ! they know painfully the amazing difference between themselves and Jesus, in this very respect—they cannot say “without sin.” They know to their sorrow that there is that in them which is ever ready to correspond with the temptation, from whatever quarter it comes. “Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” The life communicated by the Spirit is thus subject to constant pressure, and exposed to constant hindrances ; but even then it turns to us for a testimony that the life is there, by reason of the temptation being so sorely felt. We naturally desire the removal of the temptation, but it pleases the Lord to allow it, in order to show the sufficiency of His own grace. The temptation may increase upon us, so as almost to shut us up in hopelessness, but it only tends to prove the faithfulness of God. “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” In every temptation the turning point will be, whether the Lord or ourselves is the object nearest to our hearts. This is the point which the Lord regards. “Blessed is the man that *endureth* temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive” etc. “When he is tried” surely means after having endured the temptation, without yielding to it. What a blessed difference between suffering and struggling for its very existence, and life crowned, and in that sphere where its energies have unhindered scope, and where there is nothing to distract its affections from the one Object which at once draws them forth and satisfies them.

We find the like connection between the crown of life and present trial in the message of the

Lord Himself to the church in Smyrna: "I know thy *tribulation*.... Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be *tried*; and ye shall have *tribulation* ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a [the] crown of life."

"**The Crown of Glory.**" "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a [the] crown of glory that fadeth not away." There is something exceedingly touching in this, coming as it does through one now matured in the school of Christ. God has *His* heritage here, and it is exposed to waste. God has *His* flock here, and it is exposed to present danger. It is very difficult indeed for us to get our thoughts into the channel of God's thoughts, so as to become interested in that which belongs to Him, *because it belongs to Him*. It is a thought too large for selfish man to entertain, to be interested in the flock of God, so that the elders themselves were in danger of falling back on the littleness of their own hearts, so as to care for the sheep, not because they belonged to God, but as though they belonged to themselves. Hence the danger of lording it over God's heritage. The actual state of the church painfully proves the total disregard of the apostolic admonition. There is a present reward in taking the oversight, or feeding the sheep of Christ *as a congregation*. It tends to produce much reciprocity of kindness

and sympathy. But the human element so predominates, justified as it is supposed by necessity, and unquestioned from its generality, that *the accidents* of locality and of congregations have become *the essentials* of pastoral care ; so that even the thought of caring for *the flock of God* is scarcely entertained. We are all great losers by this. The attempt to care for Christians *as the flock of God* appears almost hopeless and chimerical ; so much so, that if a servant of the Lord is led of the Spirit to act simply for the flock of God, he is regarded either as a suspected person or as a disturber of peace and order.

The flock of God has ever been " a little flock." It is of little consequence in the estimation of men, and has its *only claim* to be cared for, *that it belongs to God*. But what a claim this is ! and how happy, as well as honourable, any service rendered to " the poor of the flock " *on such a claim*. It is the thought of the value and preciousness of the flock to the chief Shepherd which gives such an interest to any present care of them. Who can estimate the sheep as He does, who says, they are " My sheep " ; " I lay down My life for the sheep " — " My Father gave them Me ? " He is responsible for bringing every sheep safe to the Father ; and among His many crowns, His Shepherd crown will not be the least, when He shall say — " Of those which Thou gavest Me, I have lost none." It will be His crown of joy and glory too, that not one of the feeblest of the flock—not one of the most erring, has, through His vigilant care, been plucked out of His hand. True pastoral care may perhaps appear more rare than it actually is, because its exercise is often most unobtrusive. There are, however, occasions when the watchful Shepherd sees the wolf coming, when the sheep

are unsuspecting, and even dislike to be alarmed. Nothing short of the deep persuasion that the sheep of Christ are to be cared for *because they are His, and because His affections and interests are occupied with them*, can lead either to efficient oversight or diligent feeding. It is the lack of this essential element—namely, responsibility to Christ, in caring for that which belongs to Christ—which so enfeebles pastoral ministry in our day. The true genius of such ministry is that the flock of God is of more consequence than the individual who tends it. The present glory of the Christian shepherd is thus expressed: "Your servant for Jesus' sake." To watch over the flock, to warn of coming danger, and if the wolf is coming boldly to meet him, is not to lord it over God's heritage, but to act in duty to Christ. The glory of Christ personally, and care for the sheep as being His, are inseparably connected; but when the thought of man having propriety in the sheep is introduced, so that they are regarded as "his flock" or "his people," the glory of Christ becomes secondary to the desire of keeping the flock together, and Christ's own sheep frequently suffer. When the Shepherd of Israel Himself visited His people, "He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." The shepherds of that day "fed themselves, and not the flock." "They had trodden down the pastures and fouled the waters." When one sheep heard the voice of the chief Shepherd and followed Jesus, the accredited shepherds "cast him out" (John ix.). It is a mournful spectacle when the honour of Christ is sacrificed professedly for the care of the flock; for true care of the flock of God cannot exist without a paramount regard to the honour of Christ

Himself. Jesus was forced to lead out "His own sheep" from that fold which was maintained against His own honour. In heaven He is now known, as "the great Shepherd of the sheep brought again from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant;" and His own sheep on earth own Him in the same blessed title. He not only exercises His Shepherdly care, and oversight, as risen and glorified, but as having laid down His life for the sheep: the sheep being thus His own by purchase, as well as by distinct gift of the Father. What deep interest, what loving care must He necessarily take in the sheep; and now, as "seen of angels," what glory must be His, in not losing sight of the feeblest saint, and in counteracting all the power and wiles of the adversary. Faith *now* owns Him as "the good" and "the great Shepherd," and will He not be manifested as the crowned Shepherd? And Israel will then know their rejected Shepherd, whose heart yearned with compassion over the multitudes, as the only true Shepherd-King. "Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

How perfect is the order of divine teaching! It is Peter the Elder who speaks to the elders. He had been a witness of the sufferings of Christ, when He laid down His life for the sheep. He highly estimated the value of those sufferings, and could speak with divine certainty on such a ground, as about himself to partake of the glory to be revealed. But he knew how closely connected that

glory was with the flock of God. It was after he had witnessed the sufferings of Christ, and had seen the Lord alive from the dead, that he had learned how dear to the heart of Christ were His sheep. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? he saith unto Him; Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My lambs. He saith to him again, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed [shepherd] My sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, feed My sheep." Peter thus learned the value and preciousness of the sheep of Christ to Christ Himself. He could very feelingly associate the flock with the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow; and how suitable for him who had received the thrice repeated commission to feed the flock, to say to the elders, with his own eye on the glory, "Feed the flock of God." How suitable, also, for him, in the deep knowledge of the value of the sheep to Christ Himself, to connect the humble service of tending the flock with the crown of glory! It was the shepherd lad, whom his father thought not of bringing before the prophet, on whom the Lord had set His eye! "He chose David, also, his servant, and took him from the sheepfold; from following the ewes great with young, He brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands." The humble

office of tending the flock was the suited preparation for the crown of royalty. David, the shepherd, becomes the Lord's anointed king—type of the great and good Shepherd-King! And where can the varied grace of Christ be so deeply learned as in tending the sheep of Christ? No trial, no sorrow, no temptation, no feebleness, has escaped His forethought; and tending the flock is the application of the manifold grace of God in Christ, to the manifold need of His sheep. Such ministry may be very unobtrusive, and one which brings no present honour; its proper sphere is by no means necessarily one of publicity. Public ministry has its honoured place; but tending the flock will lead a great deal more into private and individual ministry. An elder physically disabled for the active ministry of public testimony, may still find an honourable retirement in watching over the flock of God; warning of coming danger, comforting the feeble-minded, restraining the impatience of youth, rectifying disproportioned teaching. If an elder be indeed "a father," he knows Him that was from the beginning; having learned, by long experience, his own need of all that Christ is, he will be jealously alive to His glory, and will often see a danger unperceived by others, of some passing subject of interest displacing Christ. How many once-absorbing objects, even in the church of God, have passed away; how many fond expectations have been disappointed. The interest in Christ's sheep, in that which they were to the elder himself, has been superseded by the more healthful interest in them *as belonging to Christ*; and the crown of glory which fadeth not away is held out as an encouragement. A pet-lamb often grows to be mischievous, whilst the flock, which has had the common care of the shepherd, are gentle and

docile. Christians have been injured almost as much by being petted, as by neglect. They often think of their pastor, to the practical neglect of Christ Himself being the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, and that His under-shepherds are responsible to Him for the care of His sheep. For the most part, pastoral care has too much in it of the human element; personal regard for the man himself is more prominent than esteem *for his works' sake*. Hence pastoral care has often much present reward—so as not to render needful the encouragement of the crown of glory. If pastoral care is bestowed on Christ's sheep, *because they belong to Christ*, it will feel and value such a blessed encouragement.

It is interesting to notice how inseparably these crowns are associated with the appearing of the Lord Jesus Himself. He is the Giver of the crown; and what would any crown be if it was not His gift, that we might wear it or cast it down in His own immediate presence? Does the apostle speak of the Crown of Righteousness? he says, "which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will *give* me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his *appearing*." It is said, "he shall *receive* the Crown of Life, which the Lord has promised to them *that love Him*." "When Christ, who is our life, *shall appear*, then shall we also *appear* with Him in glory." And, lastly, it is written, "When the Chief Shepherd shall *appear*, ye shall *receive* the Crown of Glory that fadeth not away." The thought of personal or official glory can never displace in the soul the more blessed thought of seeing Jesus as He is, being like Him and enjoying His immediate presence for ever. "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

CONTENTS OF "REMEMBRANCER" FOR JANUARY.—The Watchers (Poetry); Watchman! What of the Night? The Armour of Light; The Captives in Babylon.

CONTENTS FOR FEBRUARY.—His Voice (Poetry); Leaves from the Lives of the Lord's Chastened Ones; A Good Lesson; Three Exhortations; Faint Yet Pursuing; (Poetry); Captives Returned to Jerusalem, Ezra i.-iv. (Sequel to Captives in Babylon).

CONTENTS FOR MARCH.—Christian Devotedness; Captives Returned to Jerusalem, Ezra v. vi.

CONTENTS FOR APRIL.—The Faith of the Son of God; "The Foolishness of God is Wiser than Men; and the Weakness of God is Stronger than Men"; Captives Returned to Jerusalem, Ezra vii.-x.

CONTENTS FOR MAY.—Who is the Lord? (Poetry); Jesus the Willing Captive; "Consider Him"; The Assimilating Power of Christ; Christ at the Right Hand of God, and the Holy Ghost Down Here; Captives Returned to Jerusalem, Nehemiah i.-iv.; Fragments.



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ALFRED TRIGGE,

115 MAITLAND ST.,

(After 1st July - D. V. — 28 WALKER AVENUE),

TORONTO, CANADA.

GOD
IS
LIGHT.

1 John, I. 5.

GIVE ATTENDANCE [ATTENTION] TO READING . . .
MEDITATE UPON THESE THINGS.—1 TIM. IV. 13, 15.

GOD
IS
LOVE.

1 John, IV. 1

TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR [or READ]—MARK IV. 24

“Intelligence in divine things comes by conscience, not by the intellect.”

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

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

TAKE HEED THEREFORE HOW YE HEAR [or READ]—LUKE VIII. 18.

THE SOUL OF THE DILIGENT SHALL BE MADE FAT.—
PROV. XIII. 4.

PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.—
1 THESS. V. 21.

IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD.—
JAMES I. 5.

THE REMEMBRANCER

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.”—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

TORONTO,
CANADA.

NOTICE.

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SATISFIED WITH THEE.

Satisfied with Thee, Lord Jesus,
 I am blest ;
 Peace which passeth understanding,
 On Thy breast :
 No more doubting,
 No more trembling,
 Oh, what rest !

Occupied with me, Lord Jesus,
 In Thy grace ;
 All Thy ways and thoughts about me,
 Only trace
 Deeper stories
 Of the glories
 Of Thy grace.

Taken up with Thee, Lord Jesus,
 I would be ;
 Finding joy and satisfaction,
 All in Thee :
 Thou the nearest,
 And the dearest,
 Unto me.

Listening for Thy shout, Lord Jesus,
 In the air ;
 When Thy saints shall rise with joy, to
 Meet Thee there,
 Oh, what gladness !
 No more sadness,
 Sin, nor care !

Longing for the bride, Lord Jesus,
 Of Thy heart ;
 To be with Thee in the glory,
 Where Thou art.
 Love *so* groundless,
 Grace *so* boundless,
 Wins my heart.

When Thy blood-bought church, Lord Jesus,
 Is complete ;
 When each soul is safely landed
 At Thy feet ;
 What a story
 In the glory
 She'll repeat !

Oh, to praise Thee there, Lord Jesus,
 Evermore !
 Oh, to grieve and wander from Thee,
 Nevermore !
 Earth's sad story
 Closed in glory,
 On yon shore !

Then Thy church will be, Lord Jesus,
 The display
 Of Thy richest grace and kindness,
 In that day :
 Marking pages,
 Wondrous stages,
 O'er earth's way.

THE SEA OF GALILEE.

Mark iv. 35-41 ; vi. 30-52.

What a moment it must have been, when the Lord stilled the wind and the sea on the lake of Galilee ! What an expression of ready obedience there was in those angry elements ! It must have been wondrous and beautiful to have witnessed it, as it is in its measure, now to think of it. People may talk of the necessary force of principles, the laws of nature, or the course of things ; but it is surely the law of nature to obey its Lord in the midst of even its wildest ways. As here, in the twinkling of an eye, the sea of Galilee felt the presence of One who transfigures at His pleasure the course of nature, or by a touch unhinges it all.

When the same Jesus (Psalm civ.) by and by roars over His prey like a lion, the thunder, though it was asleep the moment before, utters its voice (Rev. x.). For all the forces of nature are equally, either still or alive, at His various pleasure. And so at the end, from His presence, when enthroned in white or for judgment, the heavens and the earth in like instinctive readiness will pass away (Rev. xx.)

I observe a difference in the style of the action in Joshua, when the sun and the moon stood still in the midst of heaven. It was the Lord who listened to the voice of man there. Joshua prayed and got the power of God on his side, and the occasion was full of wonder, no day being like it.

But Jesus acts at once and from Himself, and no wonder is expressed by the inspired evangelist. All the wonder which waits on the occasion comes from the unprepared hearts of men or the disciples.

Many a wind, I may say, has blown over the same water since the day of Mark iv., and the heart of many an alarmed disciple has again cried out : but there has been no answer. Many and many a trying and terrible storm of affliction still sweeps across the path of the people of God, and there is no command to it from Him who has right and power still. But this we may learn that, though there be "need of patience," and Jesus appears still to sleep, yet is He as truly with us now as He was for the disciples in the face of the danger then.

And this same mystic water was not always disturbed. Often it witnessed the successful fishing of the disciples of Jesus. At the command of the same power which now quieted the waters, they again and again yielded their treasures, and nets full were given to them without any toil of theirs. As now, in the changeful scenery of life, it may be peace and abundance ; and again danger, disturbance and fear. But oh the comfort, could we but embrace it ! It is the presence of the same Jesus which faith is entitled to know, whether in smooth waters, in allayed waters, or in waters which still rage and swell without a voice to command them. He may be active in the one case and seem as if

asleep in the other ; but He is equally in the ship, in either case.

And I have thought that the communion which the disciples had with their Lord after they had waked Him was not equal to that they would have had if their faith had left Him still asleep. They were, it is true, at the end of their fears from the wind and enjoyed the fruit of His power , but they had fears from Himself, and were not at ease in His presence, for He had rebuked them, and they could not but remember that they had disturbed Him. Had they let Him sleep on, they might have sat and gazed at Him on His pillow, and through that gaze have learnt the intimacy of His interest with theirs, and seen themselves as bound up into one bundle of life with Him. But all this was now lost to them : losers spiritually, gainers providentially. So with us oftentimes. The Lord comes down to our level, to the place our fears have brought Him, in the delivering operations of His hand, but it is with the loss of the light of that elevation where He was—the place up to which faith would have taken us. Has not my soul known something of this ?

Fear or unbelief at times hinder communion with the Lord, and separates the soul from the enjoyment of what He is to us. It is a worse thing still, when selfishness is the hindrance.

We know these things ourselves, and we hear of them in the recorded experiences of others. In

a previous scene on the sea of Galilee, the disciples, through fear, lost what their Lord would have been to them; here, on the same sea, they lost Him through selfishness.

They had returned to Him after a day's toil, and He had retired with them, that they might rest and be refreshed. But their privacy was soon disturbed by the multitude.

In the perfection of His ways, He at once turned from them to wait on the deeper need of the people. They were as sheep without a shepherd, and He begins to teach them.

This was perfect, and therefore the only path the Son of God could take. He turns from the less to the greater necessity, from the fatigue of the disciples to the spiritual wants of the multitude.

In taking this direction, the disciples suffer. But this is not the fault of their Master, but the result of the perfection of His way.

This is so continually with us. And we are offended. Our selfishness makes us intent on our own part in the great scene around us, and we are not, with Him, in wisdom and love, surveying and weighing it in all its relationships.

So it was here with the disciples: they are offended by the multitude being thus waited on, and they propose to their Master, after some little space, that He would send them away.

Hence there was a moral breach between Him and them. Their selfishness, their narrowness of heart, had wrought it. He cannot take the course

they prescribe. He feeds, instead of dismissing, the multitude.

The discipline, then, comes in due season. After feeding the people, the Lord tells the disciples to go aboard and cross the sea of Galilee. As their selfishness would fain have separated Him from the people, His discipline must now separate them from the joy and strength of His presence. They launch on the sea, and He pursues His perfect path, taking leave of the poor shepherdless flock, retiring to the mountain for prayer, and then descending to walk on the sea, which all this time by reason of contrary winds had cost them toil in rowing.

This was separation indeed. They see, but they do not share the triumph of their Lord. In principle, this carries with it all the difference between judgment and salvation. For a moment their souls have to taste somewhat of this. They do not discern Him. They cry out. They are sore amazed above measure and wonder. They see their Lord in the place of strength and victory, but they are not with Him there. This is real separation. They behold Him, and with fear, walking over all that mighty maze and tempest, which was giving them such toil and distress.

This carries all the difference between judgment and salvation. For what is salvation but a share in the victory of the Son of God? and what will judgment be, but a seeing of that victory in its glorious fruit, without a share in it, and rather

driven from its presence with confusion and amazement?

The sea of Galilee may picture the Christian's life to us. The surface was smooth at times, rough at times, asking for toil in rowing at times, affording propitious sailing and successful fishing at times, and at times awakening fear. But change as it may, Jesus was there with His people. His way may vary, but He is always with them there or joins them there. He may at times be prospering their nets, directing their labours, asleep as though He heeded them not, the companion of their gentle passage across, or walking in strength over what was too much for them. But still He is with them: whether sailing, fishing, rowing, or buffeting the wind in fear, He is ever with them.



NO SIDE WINDOWS.



I have lately very much enjoyed the thought that Noah had only one window to the ark, and that was at the top. This was a great mercy for him. For had there been any windows at the sides, Noah would most likely have been tempted to look out, to see what was going on around; and then he would have beheld things which would have filled him with sorrow and alarm. The Lord knew this, and, in His love, kept Him from doing so, and so provided that he could only look

up. This kept Noah in a sweet spirit of dependence, and therefore calm and happy.

What a beautiful picture this is for the believer now, while passing through this scene of sin and death; because his happy position is to be like Noah, always looking up. For if he gets occupied with the things around, that which is going on in the world, or among God's people, then sorrow and weakness will be sure to follow; and he will be filled with despondency. God has given us His Son to be the joy of our souls, and the Object of our hearts; telling us that we shall soon see Him, and be with Him for ever. He is, as it were, saying to us, "Behold my Servant whom I uphold; mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth." God would have us find our joy, where He is finding His, even in that Precious One at His own right hand. God says to us, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice."

May we know the power and blessedness of this joy at all times: so shall we glorify Him as we pass through this world. Happy ourselves, we shall help others to be happy. Therefore let us be careful that we have *no side windows*.



COMPARE the faith of the Shunammite in 2 Kings iv., with that of her of Zarephath in 1 Kings xvii. The latter put her dead into her bosom, the former on the prophet's bed. Death reminded one of her own sin; it reminded the other of God's resources.

THE CAPTIVES RETURNED TO JERUSALEM.

(Continued from page 100.)

Nehemiah v.-x.

There are combinations in Nehemiah which distinguish themselves very strikingly. In chap. v. we see him in his *private virtues*; as in preceding chapters, we have seen him in *public energies*. He surrenders his personal rights as governor, that he may be simple and fully the servant of God and His people. This may remind us of Paul, in 1 Cor. ix., for there, the apostle will not act upon his rights and privileges as an apostle, as here Nehemiah is doing the same as the Tirshatha, or governor of Judæa, under the Persian throne.

This is beautiful. How it shows the kindred operations of the Spirit of God in the elect, though separated so far from each other as Nehemiah and Paul!

We have, however, a *warning*, as well as an *example*, in this chapter.

The Jews, who had now been long in Jerusalem, were oppressing one another. Nehemiah tells them that their brethren, still away among the Gentiles, were doing far better than this. They were redeeming one another, while here, in the very heart of the land, their own land, they were selling one another.

This is solemn; and we may listen to this, and be warned. It tells us, that those who had taken a right position, were behaving worse than those

who were still in a wrong one. The Jews at Jerusalem were in a better *ecclesiastical* condition ; while their brethren, still in Babylon, were in a purer *moral* condition. .

Is not this a warning ? It is another illustration of what we often see ourselves, but it is a solemn and humbling warning.

Not that we are to go back to Babylon, leaving Jerusalem ; but we are surely to learn, that the mere occupation of a right position will not be a security. We may be beguiled into moral relaxation through satisfaction in our ecclesiastical accuracies. This is a very natural deceit : "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these," may be the language of a people on the very eve of God's judgment. There may be the tithing of mint, and rue, and anise, and withal the forgetting of the weightier matters of righteousness, goodness and truth.

But this chapter also gives us another of those combinations which shine in the character of Nehemiah. It enables us to say that, while there was beautiful *simplicity* in him, there was likewise decided *independency*. His simplicity was such, that, like a child, he turns back and home to God, while treading one path of service after another ; and yet there was that independency and absoluteness about him, that led him to begin always as from himself, in the fear and presence of God. As here, he tells us that upon hearing of those oppressions of brethren by brethren, he took counsel with him-

self, ere he acted (ver. 7). And, indeed, all his previous actions bespeak the like independency. He was Christ's freedman, and not the servant of man; simple in God's presence; independent before his fellow-creatures.

These are fine combinations, greatly setting off the character of this dear, honoured man of God.

In chap. vi., we see him again in conflict, but it is in personal, single-handed fight; not, as in chap. iv., marshalling others, putting the sword in one of their hands and the trowel in the other, but fighting himself, single-handed and alone, face to face with the wiles of his enemies. In the progress of this chapter he is put through different temptations. Generally we see him a single-hearted man, whose body, therefore, is "full of light." He detects the enemy, and is safe. But, besides this, there are certain *special* securities, which it is very profitable to consider for a moment.

1. He pleads *the importance of the work he was about* (ver. 3).

2. He pleads *the dignity of his own person* (ver. 11).

These are fine arguments for any saint of God to use in the face of the tempter. I think I see the Lord Himself using them, and teaching us to use them also.

In Mark iii. His mother and His brethren came to Him, and they seem to have a design to withdraw Him from what He is doing to themselves; just as Nehemiah's enemies are seeking to do with

him in this chapter. But the Lord pleads the importance of what He was then about, in the face of this attempt, or in answer to the claims which flesh and blood had upon Him. He was teaching His disciples and the multitude, getting the light and word and truth of God into them. And the fruit of such a work as this He solemnly lets us know was far beyond the value of all connections with Him in the flesh ; and the claims of God's word, which He was then ministering, far more weighty than those of nature.

And, in like manner, He teaches His servants to know the dignity of their work. He tells them, while at it, "not to salute any man by the way," nor to stop to bid farewell to them that are at home ; nor to tarry even for the burial of a father (Luke ix., x.).

But again, in Luke xiii., the Pharisees try to bring Him into the fear of man, as Shemaiah seeks to do with Nehemiah in this same chapter (ver. 10). But the Lord at once rises into the sense of His dignity, the dignity of His person, and lets the Pharisees know that He was at His own disposal, could walk as long as He pleased, and end His journey when He pleased ; that the purposes of Herod were vain, save as He allowed them to take their way. And so, in John xi., when His disciples would have kept Him from going into Judæa, where so lately His life had been in danger, He again rises, in like manner, in the sense of the One that He was, in the con-

sciousness of personal dignity, and answers them as from this elevation (see verses 9-11).

And the Holy Ghost, by the apostle in 1 Cor. vi., would impart courage and strength to the saints, from a like sense of the elevation and honours that belonged to them. "Know ye not," says Paul to the Corinthians, "that ye shall judge angels?" and again, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"

There is something very fine in all this. These are weapons of war indeed, weapons of divine heavenly metal. To gain victories with such, is Christian conquest indeed; when temptations can be met and withstood by the soul carrying the sense of the importance of the work to which God has set us, and the dignity of the person which God has made us. Would that we could take down and use those weapons, as well as admire them as they just hang up before us in the armoury of God. It is easy, however, to inspect and justify the fitness of an instrument to do its appointed work, and all the time be feeble and unskilful in using it, and in doing such appointed work by it.*

In chap. vii. we read, "Now the city was large

* Let me add, in further commendation of this servant of God, what another once suggested to me; that, though the Book that bears his name was written by himself, and is a piece of autobiography, yet he does not acquaint us with himself beyond what necessarily comes out from his connection with the people of God and his service of them. We see nothing of him as at home, or what the circum-

and great ; but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded" (ver. 4). Having therefore built the walls, Nehemiah takes in hand to people the city. For the walls would be nothing, save as the defence of a peopled place within them.

This purpose, therefore, we find in his heart, at the opening of chap. vii.—and accordingly he acquaints himself with the returned captives, and reads the catalogue and the account of them, as they had been in the days of Zerubbabël, which would be a guide to his present object.

However, ere he pursue this purpose, and take on him to people the city, he turns aside for a while to consider the people themselves. And this gives us his action in chapters viii.-x, which may be called a parenthetical action—for in chap. xi., he resumes the purpose which he had conceived in chap. vii., that is, the purpose of peopling the city.

This gives a peculiar character and a special interest to these three chapters, where we find the people put through a *moral* process of a very striking kind indeed. Nehemiah looks at them personally, looks at their souls, at their moral condition, and would fain quicken or sanctify them, ere he settles them in their places.

stances of that home were. We learn not his age or place of birth. We may say, he did not know himself after the flesh. He presents a simple-hearted, single-eyed, sample of that indeed.

This action begins on the first day of the seventh month—a distinguished day in the calendar of Israel—the Feast of Trumpets, a day of revival after a long season of interruption when all was barren or dead in the land. And this action, thus begun, is continued in successive stages, down to the close of chapter x. ; thus, as I observed already, giving chaps. viii-x. a distinct place in the book of Nehemiah, and the character of a parenthesis.

We must, therefore, look at these chapters a little particularly.

This distinguished day, the first of the seventh month, demanded, according to the ordinance touching it, a holy convocation and a blowing of trumpets—for it was the symbol, as I have said, of a time of revival after a long season of death and barrenness (see Lev. xxiii. 22-25). This ordinance was observed here in Neh. viii. There was a convocation of the people. But there was something additional. The Book of the Law was read in the audience of the people, and explained to them. And at this the people wept—properly so, for this is the business of the application of the law to a sinner, to convict him, and make him cry out, “O wretched man that I am !” But their teachers on this occasion, at once restrain their tears, because that day was “holy to the Lord.” It was a time of joy, such as the blowing of trumpets, and the new moon then beginning again to walk in the light of the sun, would signify. The people

were, therefore, told to let the joy of the Lord be their strength, to be merry themselves and to send portions to others.

All this was beautifully in concert with the day, in the ordinances touching it. The thing that was additional, or unprescribed by Lev. xxiii., that is, the reading of the law, was by all this made to give a richer, fuller tone to the day itself in its proper, prescribed character. The added thing was in no collision whatever with the ordained thing—that which was voluntary was no violation of that which was prescribed.

And here I would say, this is just what we might expect in a day of revival. At such a time, the word of God must be thoroughly honoured. It must be the standard. But there will be, necessarily I would say, such new or added things as the character of the time, under the Spirit of God, would suggest. But these new things, whatever they be, will not offend against the word of God. And such is the scene here.

But the word of God being opened, is kept open. It was a day, as we speak, of “an open Bible.” Precious mercy! And this open Book, having yielded one piece of instruction, telling them of the rights of the first day of the seventh month, now yields them further instruction, telling them about eight other days of that same month, or about the “Feast of Tabernacles.” And the people, already in the spirit of obedient listeners to the word of God, are still kept in it. They learn

about that eighth day feast, and they keep it ; in such sort, too, as had not been witnessed for centuries.

This was, in like manner, beautiful. But again, we notice something additional.

In chap. ix., we see the congregation of the children of Israel in humiliation, going through a solemn service of confession ; and then, in chap. x., entering into a covenant of obedience to God, and of the observance of His ordinances. But nothing of all this had been prescribed. We find no mention of such a thing in the law of Moses. Lev. xxiii. had not required this to wait upon or follow the Feast of Tabernacles.

Here, however, again, we have to notice something. This solemnity did not take place till the *twenty-fourth* day of this month ; and then the time of the Feast of Tabernacles had ended—for that ended on the *twenty-third*. And this, again I say, was very beautiful. The congregation would not, by their act of humiliation and confession, soil the Feast or prevent its purpose. That Feast was the most joyous time in the Jewish year. It celebrated the ingathering, or “ harvest-home,” as we speak. It was the foreshadowing of the days of glory or of the kingdom. It shall have all its demands answered in full tale and measure. The *twenty-third* day, the last day, that great day of the Feast, shall pass, ere the language of humiliation and the voice of penitential sorrow be heard. But then, the ordinance of God admitting it, the

people may hold, as we again speak, "a prayer meeting."

This was likewise voluntary or additional, as I have said—not appointed by Scripture, but suggested under the Spirit of God, by the time and the circumstances which marked the present revival under Nehemiah. Confession was the due language of a people who stood at that moment, the representative of a long-revolted, disobedient and guilty nation.

"Ceasing to do evil," however, is to be followed by "learning to do well." It is very right, if we have been doing wrong, to begin with confession of the wrong, ere we set ourselves to do the right. But to do the right thing is a due attendant on the confession of the wrong thing. And all this moral comeliness we see here, as we pass from the ninth to the tenth chapter.

The nobles, and all the people together, meet as "brethren," in separation from the people of the land (see x. 28), and seal a covenant to keep the laws of God. It is pleasant to see here, as also when they were building the wall in chap. iii., how rank and station lost itself in common brotherhood. "Let the rich rejoice in that he is made low, and the poor in that he is exalted," "for the fashion of this world passeth away." And what they now covenant and seek to do, has still something additional or unprescribed in it. They pledge themselves to observe all the commandments of the Lord, His statutes and His judgments; not to

make marriage with other people ; not to profane the Sabbath ; to bring in their first fruits, their first-born, and their firstlings, and the tithes of their ground ; and all this is according to the word of the Lord. But they also make ordinances for themselves, to be chargeable yearly in the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of God ; and they cast lots to bring wood for the altar of God at appointed seasons.

All this is still in sweet and wondrous harmony with the whole of their actions in this day of happy revival. The word of God is, again and again, and throughout, honoured in all its demands ; but added things are seen in their services and activities ; and such as the fresh energy and grace of a Revival-Season would suggest, and the Spirit would warrant.

Here this parenthetic action, as I have called it, ends. It is beautiful from first to last. The people are conducted through a gracious process. They are exercised according to truth, by the Spirit. They are convicted and then relieved. Then they have a lesson about coming joys in days of glory. And thus instructed as to their rich interest in the grace of God, they can look at themselves, not as in fear and a spirit of bondage, but for due brokenness of heart and with a purpose to serve God for the future. And all this may call to mind that utterance or experience provided by the Holy Ghost for repentant Israel in the last days : " Surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh ; I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth" (Jer. xxxi.).

(To be continued, D.V.)

CONTENTS OF "REMEMBRANCER" FOR JANUARY.—The Watchers (Poetry); Watchman! What of the Night? The Armour of Light; The Captives in Babylon.

CONTENTS FOR FEBRUARY.—His Voice (Poetry); Leaves from the Lives of the Lord's Chastened Ones; A Good Lesson; Three Exhortations; Faint Yet Pursuing; (Poetry); Captives Returned to Jerusalem, Ezra i.-iv. (Sequel to Captives in Babylon).

CONTENTS FOR MARCH.—Christian Devotedness; Captives Returned to Jerusalem, Ezra v. vi.

CONTENTS FOR APRIL.—The Faith of the Son of God; "The Foolishness of God is Wiser than Men; and the Weakness of God is Stronger than Men"; Captives Returned to Jerusalem, Ezra vii.-x.

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CONTENTS FOR JUNE ("Coronation Number").—The Four Coronations; The Three Crowns.

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LOVE.**

1 John, IV. 8.

“Intelligence in divine things comes by conscience, not by the intellect.”

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

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

TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR [or READ]—MARK IV. 24.

TAKE HEED THEREFORE HOW YE HEAR [or READ]—LUKE VIII. 18.

THE SOUL OF THE DILIGENT SHALL BE MADE FAT.—
PROV. XIII. 4.

PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.—
1 THESS. V. 21.

IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD.—
JAMES 1. 5.

THE REMEMBRANCER

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.”—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

TORONTO,
CANADA.

NOTICE.

Attention is called to reduction in price of bound Volumes at foot of page; and also to change of address (D.V.) on third page of cover.

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(To be followed (D.V.) by the sequel, " <i>The Dispersed Among the Gentiles</i> " Esther.)	

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CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL.

“Christ is all, and in all.” Who can be this except God? “All” excludes everything else. In getting Christ we get eternal blessedness, and life, and knowledge of the Father—all that will make heaven blessed. The object on which we look gives perfect rest to the conscience and heart. The One in whom the Father delights I know has given Himself for me, and has satisfied, not only the Father’s love, but God’s righteousness. I start with the consciousness of being perfectly loved and perfectly cleansed. My relationship and standing with God are not founded on anything that I am, but on what Christ has done. The law put life at the end of the course; Christianity puts it at the beginning. The Christian has redemption behind him; and he is walking through the wilderness, waiting and watching for Him who is the Object of his heart; for Him who gave not merely *something* for Him, but *Himself*; who kept back nothing.

The distinct character of the Christian is that of one in a state of expectation. “Like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding; that, when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately.”

The *state* of the soul is the first thing; it must precede service. It is, “Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning.” Before we can serve our own state is in question; not the *service*

but the *quality* of the service depends on it. Christ, the revelation of Christ, must be applied to everything : it is a dirty world, and you must have your heart rightly tucked up as you go through it—"your loins girded." There must be these two things : the heart in order (kept so by the word of God), and no will of our own. The instant we are not in the consciousness of God's presence self comes up—will is there ; but, if we are in earnest, running to attain, we are glad of the removal of every hindrance to our running. Try your heart by this. Do you think a man running a race which he cared to win would weight himself by keeping even gold upon him ? I judge everything by one object ; Christ being my Object I judge all by Him, and I say, if this hinder me in running after—in apprehending—Christ, let it go.

Then, when you have got your heart in order comes the full unqualified confession of Christ before men : "Your lights burning." If the heart be not first right within of course profession is useless, but when it is true let us have it out. There is always a shrinking from confession when there is not power within.

A Christian is one whose affections are fixed upon Christ and who is waiting for Him. If He has bought us with a price it is that we may be as men that wait for their Lord. Every one should be able to see that you are a man waiting for Christ. If we were so, it would cut up by the roots ninety-nine out of a hundred of the things people so live

for down here. Can the world say of all of us as of the Thessalonians of old : These are a people who have given up every idol to wait for God's Son from heaven ? The world ought to think so. It is, blessed are those servants whom He finds, not only waiting, but *watching* for Him.

There was not one act for self in all Christ's life ; He was always at the service of every one. It is difficult for us to believe in the love of Christ, we are so selfish. Love likes to serve, selfishness to be served. Christ was *love* ; He delighted to serve ; He took upon Him the form of a servant ; He took it as a man, and He *never* gives it up : even in that day " He will come forth and serve them." He says, You shall never make me give up this delight of myself—to serve you. •

First we have, " Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find *watching* ;" and then we get, " Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so *doing*"—serving in the place where his Lord has set him. Where their affections are watching, they get Christ's affections in return serving them in heaven ; where they are doing they get the ruling all that He has. Where we serve we rule ; where we watch we sit at the table and He serves us.

Christ shows His perfect love. If I love a person a little I give him a little—a small thing ; if I love him much I give him more ; but if I love him perfectly—which of course I cannot do—I give

him everything I have. But more, when the world gives anything it has to part with what it gives; but He says: "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you" He brings us into the enjoyment of everything that He has.

But at the same time He came "to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled?" The cross brought in what man will never accept: he will not have the reproach of it; and they despised and rejected Him even *before* the cross; the fire was "already kindled." But that thing which tests the heart of man and exposes it, sets free the heart of God. When He was baptized with that baptism it opened the flood-gates of God's love.

Verse 53 is a quotation from the prophet, describing the most horrible state of things. And this the cross will do; take care that your own *will* does not do it. But the state of man is such that when God gives His Son, this is the effect of it.



SALVATION IS OF THE LORD.

Psalm iii.

The first Psalm is the position of the Lord Jesus Christ as the godly-separated Man here in this world. The second Psalm is the Lord exalted, risen, and glorified. At the beginning of it God sets before us the secret of all that is going on here in this world, and what subsists before Him

in the midst of it all, and what is the cause of it. "Why do the heathen rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing?" The root, so to speak, the spirit of all that is going on, is the determined effort and intention on the part of man to set God aside. Thus if we find disappointment in this world, it is because we look for something that God does not mean us to find, for something that God is not bringing about. "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." God has raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly glory; and what the world is seeking for is the entire breaking away from God. "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." But "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision."

The third Psalm gives us another thing. Passing over the second, and going back to the first Psalm, it seems to give us the position in this world of the blessed Lord Himself, and also our position. It shows Him surrounded by enemies. It is the description of the path, and of the infinitely-blessed resources, for Him who was for God in this world. There is nothing more important or more necessary for us. We may speak of sorrows, distresses, and failures; what we have lost, and what we have fallen from: but what remains? What is the remedy? What we have here. It is nearness to Himself. The spirit of the world is just opposed to this. "There is no help for him in God." That

is the way the world points at the separated One (Matt. xxvii. 43); and the world does so still towards those that are of Him and for Him in it.

In the third Psalm we have the enemies, the surroundings; and the One who is here for God is the blessed Lord Himself. So it is written, "I cried, and He heard." That is the great point with us. It is not merely crying because of sorrows and difficulties here, but it is having the sense in our soul that *He hears*.

You will find two things invariably go together—*rest* and *power*—just as faith and obedience go together. If the soul has real rest in God Himself, it will also have the power. There is no power but it comes from rest. It comes through the soul's known approach to God, and the soul, by the grace of God, availing itself of that approach.

"*I cried and He heard*;" and the consequence immediately is, "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me." There is the blessed sense and apprehension of being in His hand, and of knowing and availing ourselves of what He has brought us into; for we are saved here in this world as individuals (I do not speak of the body of Christ now), as those who have been brought to God, to know, to understand, to delight ourselves in this, that the way of approach to Him is open, and we, by the grace of God, can *always* go there, *always* lay all bare before Him, and *always* have the sense, the knowledge, that He has *heard*.

Now let me ask if you know what prayer is? What is the use of prayer if you have not the sense that you have been heard? Look at the priests of Baal. Elijah said to them, "Cry aloud;" cry louder still, until he does hear. "Either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." He said it mockingly. He himself knew what it was to be *heard*, to be associated in his own soul with a God who *always* hears. So it is with us now. It is not that we are at a distance, and have to be occupied with the sorrows and trials and difficulties, but to go to God with them. Do you not think He knows a great deal more about them than we do? He knows the purpose He is working out through them all. He would have us know it; and why? He would have us nearer Him in heart and spirit and soul in the sense and the enjoyment of knowing that He has heard. The blessed sense in the soul that He has heard is the answer. As to the Lord Himself, that is what He was here upon earth; but there was a day when He cried and was *not* heard of God; but He has put us on the ground where we can *always* be heard.

Beloved brethren, have we the sense in our souls of what it is to be *always* heard? We come to God as children, owning Him as our Father and our God; we bring our distresses and our sorrows to Him. When we have the thing given that we pray for, the outward answer, then perhaps for

the first time we have the sense that we have been heard. But here we have come to God in the reality in our souls of speaking to One who *hears*. We cannot express the thing perhaps, but He hears the groans in the heart ; He hears the soul that comes to Him with groanings that cannot be uttered. It is not the speaking in length of prayer, but just the " five words " to a Person whom he sees, whom he knows ; and he knows He hears. The rest that comes from that, through the grace of God, is what enables us to take up the interests of Christ and of God in the world, and consider them relatively to Him. To do that, we must be really in our own souls at rest before God.

Do we know what that rest is ? Have we apprehended what it is to have the One before us who is the delight of God's heart, and whom He has presented to us to be the delight of our hearts, and to be wholly set aside as to ourselves ? We may say we know something of it doctrinally, perhaps we may say we know something of it in our hearts, but we find we know it very little. To be wholly set aside, thankfully set aside, to have the blessed One taking our place, do we know what that is ? That in all its fulness and blessedness is what heaven will be. The Father's house is before us, and by the grace of God we are in spirit there now. What fills the Father's house ? What is the great joy of the Father's house ? The glory of the beloved Son. Glory will be there surely ; you and I will be there ; but the glory of the

blessed Son Himself *fills* the house. Every heart and soul there will delight to overflowing in the glory of the Son. He has revealed it to us *now*, and by His grace brought us to it *now*, and *that* is the place of rest. You will find no disappointment there. There will always be disappointment at looking for anything else. Just look for this, and only this, that Christ should be glorified, and you will never be disappointed. He will always be glorified, but it will be by our being set aside and made nothing of, and the more we are made nothing of the more He will be glorified. Does that content us? We shall soon be put to the test as to whether it does. God is real with us, and He would have us as real with Him as He is with us. The only object he has put before us is His beloved Son, His glory.

Verse 6 : " I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about." Verse 4 : " I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and He heard me." Where does He hear me from? " Out of His holy hill." He is there, and we with all our pettinesses here, our disappointments, our stumblings, our failures, we find that He is *there*, at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high—God's anointed King on His holy hill of Zion ; and He says, in the Psalm, *that* is where He hears from—from His holy hill. It is the knowledge of being heard out of His holy hill that gives practical rest, that gives ability not to be afraid of ten thousands of

people, that have set themselves in array round about, but to go on looking at Him, occupied with the present glory of Him who is there, and seeking *afresh* that He may be glorified.

Now look at the end of the Psalm : a wonderful verse is the eighth. He says, "Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah : thy blessing is upon thy people." We find in two places in Scripture this expression—"Salvation is of the Lord." Here in this Psalm iii., and in the book of Jonah. Jonah sought to evade God, to run away from the commandment of God. Obedience was not there, and he is brought at last to utter helplessness ; but he says, "Yet will I look again unto thy holy temple." He was brought to that point to say, "Salvation is of the Lord." The moment he does say it God orders salvation, and Jonah is saved, and brought up again from the depths to the dry ground.

In this third Psalm you have it in another way : "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord : thy blessing is upon thy people." Here is One who takes His place in this world in grace and in goodness, in love and mercy, among men who are in the spirit of disobedience and rebellion against God. He comes and takes His place now, having set us up in this world as dependent beings ; it is present dependence upon God. Have you studied His life ? Have you learnt that that is the truly dependent Man ? The blessed Lord was the perfect expression and manifestation of God's heart,

and of dependence upon God. I can understand Satan trying to break that, presenting even His Godhead power and glory to shake Him from that place; but He stood there, in dependence upon God, a blessed thing to gaze upon and delight in. He has set us there in the place of dependence upon God in this world for His glory. That is the way the Lord Jesus Christ can be glorified through us. There is no other way for it. Hanging upon Him, waiting upon Him, guided and led by Him, in order that God may express *Him* in us and through us—that will bring glory to Christ.

It is no theory—the glory of Christ. There is no theory in it, but power that will disclose to your heart and soul things you never thought of before. It will search you thoroughly. If by the grace of God we can really get into it, it will leave no part dark. And He sets us up in this world as having found salvation, having, as it were, “the helmet of salvation on our head.” On this blessed ground salvation is sure. “Salvation is of the Lord,” and I have got it now.

Now look at the last part of that blessed verse—“Thy blessing is upon Thy people.” Do you think we really understand in our souls that in everything He puts us through He has only one object as regards us, and only one object as regards Christ? As to us it is blessing, as to Christ it is glory. Let us go back to the starting-point of it all. The blessed Lord glorified God in this world, and God has glorified Him in heavenly glory.

Thus He has all the glory, and we have all the blessing. His glory is the measure of our blessing. Do you think we know what it is? The blessing we are set in here answers to the glory He is in at God's right hand. The glory of Christ is the measure of our blessing. So He draws us near to Himself. He loves to nourish us and turn us aside from everything, that we should have only Christ before us, the cause and reason of our being here.

Beloved brethren, why is the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, in this world but that Christ may be glorified, and that He may fill our hearts with the knowledge of what He is? His blessing is upon His people, and it comes from Himself; and if we have only eyes to see it, and hearts to receive it, there is no end to what we might enter into, and the brightness of the testimony that might go forth for Himself, not by occupation with the testimony, but by occupation with Himself. "Thy blessing is upon thy people." In the face of all that is going on in this world, and of the spirit of the world, His mind is to bless His people. Things in us and our ways may come in to hinder the enjoyment and realization of this; but He has apprehended us for blessing for Himself. May He give us to enter into this, so as to have this truth in power in our souls, that we may live and walk down here in the midst of all that is against Him, in blessed nearness to Himself, and confidence in

Him and His mind ; and thus instead of being cast down and disheartened by the sorrows and difficulties and trials by the way, find in them occasion for getting nearer to Himself in heart and spirit, and becoming thus more truly and simply dependent upon Him.



THE CAPTIVES RETURNED TO JERUSALEM.

(Concluded from page 140.)

Nehemiah xi.-xiii.

These chapters witness the people still earnest and obedient. The day of revival continues. The freshness of its morning has, in no measure, faded, though we here reach a later hour of the day.

The 11th chapter opens with a grievous mark of Jerusalem's degradation. She is a witness against herself, that she is not as the Lord will have her in the days of coming glory. She is not "desired," rather indeed "forsaken." People are not flocking to her. She cannot look around her, as she will in the days of the Kingdom, and wonder at the multitude of her children. It is not, as yet, the boast of others, that they have been born in her. She has not as yet to say, that the place is too strait for her, for the multitude of those who fill her. These surely are not her condition here in this chapter. She is debtor to any one who will consent or condescend to dwell in her.

What a witness of degradation ! What a sign indeed, that *restoration* was not *glory* ! Jerusalem is still trodden down ; the times of the Gentiles are still unfulfilled. Surely the daughter of Zion has not arisen, and shaken herself from the dust, and put on her strength and her beautiful garments.*

Still, she must be inhabited ; she must have her citizens within her. The land must have its people, for Messiah is soon to walk among them ; the city must have its inhabitants, for her King is soon to be offered to her. Therefore is the return from Babylon, and therefore is the peopling of Jerusalem.

And again, as we see in chap xii , she has her wall. Right, that, having a wall, that wall should be dedicated. Public festivity had often been celebrated on such like occasions ; at the carriage of the ark in the days of David ; at the dedication of the Temple in the days of Solomon ; at the foundation of the second house in the time of Zerubbabel ; and again, when that second house was finished, this was so. And now, in this day, this day of Nehemiah, the people again rejoice at the dedication of the wall which was now finished, and was *encompassing the city*.

But while this is so, and all is right so far and after this manner, yet what, I ask, is this wall ? What, I further ask, but another witness of Jeru-

* And what a witness does Christendom yield, that *reformation* is not *glory* !

salem's degradation? In her coming days of strength and beauty, when she is the city of the Kingdom, the metropolis of the world, the sanctuary and the palace of the great divine King of Israel and of the earth, "salvation" shall be her wall. God will then appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks. The Lord Himself, like her mountains, shall stand round about her. Her walls shall be called Salvation, and her gates Praise. The voice of the Spirit in Zechariah, the echo of which could scarcely at this time have died away, had uttered this fine oracle: "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein—for I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her (Zech. ii. 4, 5).

How infinite the difference! Jerusalem under the eye of Nehemiah bearing the mark of her shame; Jerusalem, as we read of her in the prophets, the witness of the highest destiny in honour and excellency in the earth! How must such a man have felt, because of all this! And yet he serves earnestly, undauntedly, patiently! Great moral dignity in this—a fine spirit of self-devotement expresses itself. He works, and works nobly, though beset with *foreign enmities*, and encompassed with *domestic degradation*! Such a servant of Christ, Paul appears to be in 2 Timothy; and such Nehemiah in this book of his.

And this we ought to be ourselves. The Chris-

tendom that we see around us is as far from the church that we read of in the Epistles, as the Jerusalem which Nehemiah looked on was unlike the Jerusalem which we read of in the Prophets. But he served in the midst of her—and so should we in the face and in the heart of Christendom. For the spirit of service measures not the scene of the service, but the will of the Master.

All this, however, tells the character of the moment. Israel is restored, her land peopled, her city inhabited again ; but this is not the Kingdom. The children of Israel are to be put to the proving and the clearing of themselves still ; and the day of grace, of salvation, and of glory, the promised day of the Kingdom, is still distant. But faith has to be exercised, and obedience has to learn and practise its lessons.

Accordingly, on entering chap. xiii., we find the Book of God still open among the people. For surely a day of revival is the day of “an open Bible,” as we speak. But it is a *new* lesson they have now to learn. They are growing in knowledge, in acquaintance with divine principles. It is quite another page of the Book which they have now turned over. Scripture, as yet, had its “comfort” for them—now it is to have its “patience.” As yet it had “piped” to them, now it is about to “mourn” to them. The joy of the Feast of Trumpets, and the still richer joy of the Feast of Tabernacles, had been made known to them, and they had obediently responded. They had

“danced” to that piping. But now they were to be exercised painfully by the Book. They read “that the Moabite and the Ammonite were not to come into the congregation of God for ever.”

This was terrible. All, as yet, had been eminently social. Not only in their joy as on the Feast-days, but in their act of confession, they had been together. “Strangers” had been removed, but the “mixed multitude” do not seem to have been looked after and detected. But now, at the bidding of the word found in Deut. xxiii., this severe cutting off must be performed; as at the bidding of Lev. xxiii., the joy of the Tabernacles had been celebrated.

But this was the more fitted to test the spirit of obedience in this good day of revival. And the congregation do stand it, and answer the demand of the word of God very blessedly. For we read, “it came to pass, when they heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.” This was obedience, indeed, doing what Scripture prescribed—doing the lessons of the word, teach they what service or duty they may, or call to what sacrifices they may. Iniquity, however, is now found to be in high places, higher, it would seem, than the people could reach. But it must be reached even there; for a day of awakening, and of fresh power from God, must be a day of obedience. All this time an Ammonite had been in the house of the Lord. This exceeded. Not merely was he, like the mixed multitude, in the *congregation*, but in the *house*; and that, too, by the practices of the high priest himself.

Nehemiah was not at Jerusalem just at this time. But on his return, he acts on this abomination thus found in high places, as the people themselves had already acted, in their measure, upon the mixed multitude. For Deuteronomy xxiii. shall be heard, though the highest functionary in the church will have to be rebuked. Eliashib is nobody to Nehemiah, when Moses speaks—for the one has God's authority *with* him, the other is to have it *over* him. A word of admonition to Christendom, if Christendom had ears to hear—that Christendom which has set its own Eliashib above Moses, its own officers above the Scripture. But such an one was not this faithful man. With him, "Moses' seat" was supreme. Scripture judges every man, while it itself is to be judged of no man. Neither high priest in Israel, nor assumption of antiquity and succession, nor of any other kind in Christendom, however attractive, are to set aside one jot or tittle of it. The Book, speaking from God, as it does, at all times, and addressing itself to all conditions, must be supreme. "The Scripture cannot be *broken*,"—therefore it is not to be *gain-sayed*. God will fulfil it; we are to observe it.

All this which we thus find in Nehemiah, and the congregation in this closing day of the Old Testament, may well arrest the thoughts of the Lord's people in this day of ours.

We have seen marks of degradation in Jerusalem in the 11th and 12th chapters—we see them still in the 13th. The Sabbath was profaned there, and alliances with the daughters of the uncircumcised were still found there. This is more than degradation in circumstances: it is moral degradation; it is abomination. The restoration from captivity, and the re-peopling of the city, have not entitled it to be saluted, as it is to be in com-

ing kingdom days, with that voice which the Spirit has prepared from the lips of an admiring, gazing world, "the Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness" (Jer. xxxi. 23).

But in spite of all this, again I say, we see Nehemiah serving. And this is a very fine sight. I need not say, how to perfection, the divine Master of all servants was a pattern of this in His day of service. But there is a great moral dignity in this, let us find samples of it in whom we may.

The congregation, too, keeping the Book still open, is an edifying sight, a sight for us very specially to look at. They were not "partial in the law." They exhibit a people who would fain have no "neglected texts," nor "unturned pages," in the Book of God. Not a sound of it was to be lost upon the ear, as though it was heard in the distance. But who of us, I ask, is up to them, in this? How prone we are to *choose* our lesson, rather than "to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God!" Is it not so? I may love the page which reads me a word on the Feast of Tabernacles in its joy, and delight myself in the sound of the trumpets in the day of the new moon of the seventh month. But the word that would wash me for purification, and separate me from unwarranted alliances, has another relationship to me, and addresses me in other accents. I do not choose that lesson: it is a page in the Book I am not disposed to open. I am tempted to say with the Roman governor, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." The house may be too social, the heart may be too much at ease, to discipline itself by such ordinances as Deut. xxiii. 3.

Indeed, indeed, we may say, all this Scripture, these books of the returned captives, this Ezra,

and this Nehemiah, are worthy of the deep attention and full admiration of our souls. How did the Spirit of God work in the Lord's people in those days, how does He, by what He has recorded of them, instruct us in these days !

And besides, as we have also seen, those times of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, were times of revival. Such times had been known before in Israel, as with Samuel, David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Isaiah. And such have been known, again and again, in the progress of Christendom. And a re-quickening season may take a shape but little expected by us, and perhaps without a perfect precedent. It is the property of life, to put on at times, some exuberant features, to work outside and beyond its ordinary rules and measures. It is more like itself when it acts thus. For life is a thing of freedom, and has inbred force in it. But, at the same time, we are to judge every expression of it by the word of God. "To the law and to the testimony:" if a thing stand not this test, it is not the overflowing of life, however ecstatic or exuberant it may be ; it is to be disclaimed with all its fascinations.

"To him that hath shall more be given." Obedience to one lesson is the sure and safe road to the discovery of another. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." There is a temptation to hold back, lest the lessons we have yet to learn shall prove distasteful. "He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." There is, therefore, in some of us, a great disposedness or temptation to stop short. But this is disobedience, as well as the breaking of a word read and understood. To shut the book, through fear of what it might teach us, is plainly and surely disobedience.

CONTENTS OF "REMEMBRANCER" FOR JANUARY.—The Watchers (Poetry) ; Watchman ! What of the Night ? The Armour of Light ; The Captives in Babylon.

CONTENTS FOR FEBRUARY.—His Voice (Poetry) ; Leaves from the Lives of the Lord's Chastened Ones ; A Good Lesson ; Three Exhortations ; Faint Yet Pursuing ; (Poetry) ; Captives Returned to Jerusalem, Ezra i.-iv. (Sequel to Captives in Babylon).

CONTENTS FOR MARCH.—Christian Devotedness ; Captives Returned to Jerusalem, Ezra v. vi.

CONTENTS FOR APRIL.—The Faith of the Son of God ; "The Foolishness of God is Wiser than Men ; and the Weakness of God is Stronger than Men" ; Captives Returned to Jerusalem, Ezra vii.-x.

CONTENTS FOR MAY.—Who is the Lord ? (Poetry) ; Jesus the Willing Captive ; "Consider Him" ; The Assimilating Power of Christ ; Christ at the Right Hand of God, and the Holy Ghost Down Here ; Captives Returned to Jerusalem, Nehemiah i.-iv. ; Fragments.

CONTENTS FOR JUNE ("Coronation Number").—The Four Coronations ; The Three Crowns.

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ALFRED TRIGGE,

28 WALKER AVENUE,

TORONTO, CANADA.

GOD
IS
LIGHT.

1 John, I. 5.

GIVE ATTENDANCE [ATTENTION] TO READING . . .
MEDITATE UPON THESE THINGS.—1 TIM. IV. 13, 15.

GOD
IS
LOVE.

1 John, IV. 8.

TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR [or READ]—MARK IV. 24.

“Intelligence in divine things comes
by conscience, not by the intellect.”

—

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

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

TAKE HEED THEREFORE HOW YE HEAR [or READ]—LUKE VIII. 18.

THE SOUL OF THE DILIGENT SHALL BE MADE FAT.—
PROV. XIII. 4.

PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.—
1 THESS. V. 21.

IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD.—
JAMES I. 5.

THE REMEMBRANCER

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.”—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

TORONTO,
CANADA.

NOTICE.

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Extra copies of June ("Coronation") number, 2c. (one penny) each, postage extra. Three copies, and over, post free.

"The Remembrancer" for May, 1901, containing the important article: "Why did God permit the entrance of evil?" can be obtained (direct from office of publication) at one cent (one halfpenny) each. Postage extra. Six copies will go for one rate of postage in Canada, three copies outside of Canada.

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The volumes for 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1899, 1900 and 1901, bound, 30 cents each (net). Postage, 2c in Canada; 4c. to U. S. and countries in Postal Union. The Volumes for 1894 and 1895 can be had bound together, 55c. (net). Postage, 4c. and 7c. respectively.

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The Volumes for 1891, 1892 and 1893 are out of print,

"WHO LOVED ME."

(Gal. ii. 20.)

Three little sunbeams, gilding all I see ;
 Three little chords, each full of melody ;
 Three little leaves, balm for my agony.

"WHO"

He loved me, the Father's only Son ;
 He gave Himself, the precious, spotless One ;
 He shed His blood, and thus the work was done.

"LOVED"

He *loved*—not merely pitied. Here I rest.
 Sorrow may come—I to His heart am pressed.
 What should I fear while sheltered in His breast ?

"ME."

Wonder of wonders, Jesus loved *me* ;
 A wretch—lost—ruined—sunk in misery.
 He sought me, found me, raised me, set me free.

My soul, the order of the words approve :
Christ first, me last, nothing between but LOVE.
 Lord, keep *me* always *down*, *Thyself* *above*.

Trusting to Thee, not struggling restlessly,
 So shall I gain the victory—
 "I—yet not *I*"—but Christ—"Who loved me."



FRAGMENT.—The blood, that justified God in pardoning me, has shut my mouth from saying a word for myself, and opened it to say much for God.

**“HE [JESUS] MARKED HOW THEY CHOSE
OUT THE CHIEF ROOMS.”**

(Luke xiv. 7-11.)

Choosing out the chief rooms is just the place that nature likes. The world, which has no relations with God, delights in exalting self and shutting Him out. Self gets for self what it likes, and forgets God. Man is always setting up self, pushing for self, against God. He does not think so; for he says he is only using his faculties. But so Adam did to hide himself from God. Do not we, use our faculties to please ourselves rather than for God? While the Master is away the servants go on in their own way, and do their own will. A man is naturally hurt when he is put down in a corner and despised. Flesh does not relish being thrust aside: but this seeking for a place is to seek for it where Christ had none. Therefore He says, “When thou art bidden to a wedding . . . sit down in the lowest room.”

The point of this parable is seen in verses 8-11. It refers the heart to the Master, to “Him that bade thee.” If I am conscious of being a sinner, and therefore deserving no place, I shall take none, but wait till God bestows one on me. I shall have honour indeed, when God gives me a place. The point is, What does he bestow upon me? Having the eye upon God, and referring to Him, seek for the lowest place. It will not do to say, “I will not have a place in the world.” The great thing

is, the heart resting on God's place in the world." When the eye is thus upon God, self is forgotten ; if not, I am thinking of the slights I receive, and neither faith nor grace are in exercise. If I could think nothing of myself, I should be perfect. The one who bade the guests has the right estimate of each, and the honour due to them. The evangelist's place, the pastor's, the apostle's, etc., will be appointed by God. When God gives me a place, it is one of power and nearness to Himself ; but when a man takes a place for himself, it is one of weakness and alienation from God, because self is the object.

Then, again, we must guard against the mere refusing to take a place in the world because we know it is wrong, as followers of Him who has been rejected. A mere legal estimate of what is right can never last. A thing may be very right ; but there is no stability in pursuing it, because there is no power to subdue the flesh in merely doing what one knows to be right. There was the sense of obligation with the law : but the law did not set an object before me to attract my heart ; it did not bring God to me nor me to God. That lasts which feels we are nothing, and that God is everything. Many have begun very energetically, and taken a certain place, right in itself ; but if legality be the source of it, there will be no power of persevering, for that which is taken up under law will be sure to be lost in the flesh. When God is the object, the low place here is sufficient. He

Himself carries me on ; and whatever it be, if the mind and affections are upon Him, what was hard at first is no effort as I proceed. His love, which attracted and gave me power at first to take such a position, becomes brighter and brighter when better and longer known ; and what was done at first tremblingly, is easy with increasing courage. The only thing which can enable me thus to go on is to have CHRIST the object before me ; and just in proportion as it is so, I can be happy. There may be a thousand and one things to vex me if self is of importance ; they will not vex me at all if self is not there to be vexed. The passions of the flesh will not harass us if we are walking with God. What rubs we get when not walking with God, and thinking only of self ! There is no such deliverance as that of having no importance in one's own eyes. Then one may be happy indeed before God.

If we look at Christ, we learn two principles ; first, that He humbled Himself because of the sin all around Him ; second, the world did all they could to humble Him, for the more He went down, so much the more they sought to pull Him down.

No one cares for another ; so that if a man does not care for himself, he will be sure to be pushed down low enough. Then, again, so deceitful are our hearts, that it is possible we should be willing to humble ourselves, if we could get anything by it, even the approbation of men. On the other hand, if we, in the usual sense of men, merely seek

to imitate Christ in this, it will be but legal effort. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." He humbled Himself. First, "He made Himself of no reputation," that is, He emptied Himself of His glory to become a man. In doing this, He left the Father's glory to become a man. This was a great descent (though we think a great deal of ourselves). But was that all? No; "He humbled Himself, . . . to death, even the death of the cross." It is the same principle which is put before us in this fourteenth chapter of Luke: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (ver. 11). Real lowliness is being ready to serve any and everybody: and though it may to the eye of man look low, it is in reality very high; being the fruit of divine love working in our hearts. God, operating in our hearts, makes us unselfish. The only thing worth doing in the world is this service, except it be enjoying God. We should be ready to serve one's enemies. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." This is not only being humbled, but humbling one's self, and not doing it before those who would honour us all the more for being humble. Paul could say of himself and others, "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." He felt that they had a title to serve in grace; and in proportion as he took the humble place, he will be exalted in the day that is coming.



THE MOTIVE FOR CHRISTIAN WALK.

Before we are in the glory we are never on a level with the position we hold, while we have only this position to sustain us. We must look *above* our path to be able to walk *in* it. A Jew, who had the secret of the Lord, and who waited for the Messiah, was pious and faithful according to the law. A Jew who had only the law assuredly did not keep it. A Christian who has heaven before him, and a Saviour in glory as the Object of his affections, will walk well upon the earth. He who has only the earthly path for his rule will fail in the intelligence and motives needed to walk in it; he will become a prey to worldliness, and his Christian walk in the world will be more or less on a level with the world in which he walks. The eyes upwards on Jesus will keep the heart and the steps in a path conformable to Jesus, and which, consequently, will glorify Him and make Him known in the world. Seeing what we are, we must have a motive above our path to be able to walk in it. This does not prevent our needing also for our path the fear of the Lord to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, knowing that we are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.



FRAGMENT.—One ray of the glory of Christ will at once wither up all the defiled glory of this world like an autumn leaf.

THE DISPERSED AMONG THE GENTILES.

ESTHER,

(*Sequel to "The Captives Returned to Jerusalem."*)

In the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, on which I have already meditated, we saw the captives brought back to Jerusalem, there to await the coming of the Messiah, that it might be known whether Israel would accept the Messenger and Saviour whom God would send to them. In this book of Esther, we are in a different scene. The Jews are among the Gentiles still.

We will look at it in its succession of ten chapters ; and, in the action recorded, we shall find—

The Lord God working wondrously, but secretly.

The Jews themselves.

The Gentile, or the Power.

The great Adversary.

i., ii.

The book opens by presenting to us a sight of the Gentile now in power. It is, however, the Persian and not the Chaldean ; "the breast of silver," not "the head of gold," in the great image which Nebuchadnezzar saw. We are here reading rather the second than the first chapter in the history of the Gentile in supremacy in the earth. We see him in the progress rather than at the commencement of his career ; but, morally, he is the same. Moab-like, his taste remains in him, his scent is not changed. All the haughtiness that

declared itself in Nebuchadnezzar· reappears in Ahasuerus. No spirit or fruit of repentance—no learning of himself—or of what becomes him as a creature, is seen in this man of the earth. The lie of the serpent, which formed man at the beginning, is working as earnestly as ever. The old desire to be as God utters itself in the Persian now, as it had afore in the Chaldean. The one had built his royal city, and looked at it in pride, and said, “Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” The other now makes a feast, and for one hundred and eighty days shows to the princes and nobles the whole power of his realm, “the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty.”

Nay more; for the Persian exceedeth. There is a bold affecting to be as God in Persia, which we did not see in Babylon. We notice this in three distinguished Persian ordinances.

1. No one was to appear in the royal presence unbidden. In such a case, had this ordinance of the realm been violated, life and death would hang on the pleasure of the king. 2. No one was to be sad before the king; his face or presence was to be accepted of all his people as the spring and power of joy and gladness. 3. No decree of his realm could be cancelled: it stood for ever.

These are assumptions indeed. This exceeds, in the way of man showing himself to be as God;

and know we not, that this spirit will work till the Gentile has perfected his iniquity? But the hand of God begins to work its wonders now, in the midst of all the festivity and pride which opens the book. The joy of the royal banquet was interrupted; a stain defaces the fair form of all this magnificence. The Gentile queen refuses to serve the occasion, or to be a tributary to this day of public rejoicing; and this leads to the manifesting of the Jew, and of ultimately making that people principal in the action, and eminent in the earth, beyond all thought or calculation.

It was a small beginning, poor and mean in its character and material. Vashti's temper, which goaded her to a course of conduct which jeopardized her life, was the "little fire" which kindled this "how great a matter." It is a miserable, despicable circumstance. What can be meaner? The temper, we may say, of an imperious woman! And yet God, by it, works results, then known to Himself in counsel, but the accomplishment of which shall be seen in the coming day of Jewish glory.

" Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will."

Vashti is deposed. She is disclaimed as the wife of the Persian; and others more worthy are to be sought for to take her place.

Divine counsels shall be accomplished, and the fruits of grace shall be gathered.

iii.

The Jew, strange to say it, as we have seen, becomes important to the power—that is, the Persian. But more so than I have as yet noticed—important to his *safety* as well as to his *enjoyments*. For Mordecai becomes his protector, as Esther had become his wife. This we see at the close of chap. ii. The king is debtor to both. In spite of all his greatness, and all the resources for happiness and strength which attached to his greatness, he is debtor to the dispersed of Judah. They are important to him. Both his heart and his head, as I may say, have to own this.

But, if the Jew be thus strangely brought into personal favour and acceptance, equally strangely is the Jew's enemy brought into high and honourable elevation, and seated in the very position which capacitated him to gratify all his enmity. An Amalekite sits next in dignity and rule to the king. Above all the princes of the nation, Haman, the Agagite, is preferred; why we are not told. No public virtue or service is recorded of him. It is, apparently, simply the royal pleasure that has done it. A stranger to the nation he was—a distant stranger; one, too, of a race now all but forgotten, we might say, once distinguished, in the infancy of nations, but now all but blotted out from the page of history, superseded by others far

loftier in their bearing than ever he had been ; the Assyrian first, then the Chaldean, and now the Persian. And yet, there he now is before us, an Amalekite seated next to Ahasuerus the Persian ; in dignity, office, and power, only second to him.

This is strange, indeed, we may say. The great enemy of Israel, when Israel was in the wilderness, re-appears here, in the same character, in this day of Israel in the dispersion (see Ex. xvii.). It is strange : an Amalekite found nearest to the throne of Persia ! The heart of the great monarch of that day turned towards him, to put him into a condition to act the old Amalekite part of defiance of God, and enmity against His people. We could not have looked for such a thing. This name, the name of Amalek, was to be put out from under heaven ; and, from the days of David till now, I may say, this people had not been seen. But now they reappear, we scarcely know how ; and that, too, in bloom and strength, as in a palmy hour.

This, again, I say, is strange indeed. It is of one in quasi-resurrection ; of one whose deadly wound was healed ; of one " who was, and is not, and yet is."

The Agagite now stands forth as the representative of the great enemy, the proud apostate that withstands God, and His people, and His purposes. There has been such an one in every age ; and he is the foreshadowing of that mighty apostate who is to fall in the day of the Lord. Nimrod, in the

days of Genesis, represents him ; Pharaoh, in Egypt ; Amalek, in the wilderness ; Abimelech, in the time of the Judges ; and Absalom, in the time of the Kings ; Haman, here in the day of the Dispersion ; and Herod, in the New Testament. Exaltation of self, infidel pride, and the defiance of the fear of God, with rooted enmity to His people, are, some or all, the marks on each of them ; as in a full form of daring, awful apostasy, such will be displayed in the person of the Beast who, with his confederates, fall in the presence of the Rider on the white horse, in the day of the Lord, or the judgment of the quick. Prophets have told of such as “ the king that is to do according to his own will ; ” as “ Lucifer, son of the morning ; ” as “ the Prince of Tyrus,” we may say ; as “ the fool that says in his heart there is no God ; ” and variously beside. And the Apocalypse of the apostle shows him to us in the figure of a Beast, who had his image set up for the worship and wonder of the whole world, and his mark as a brand in the forehead of every man ; whose deadly wound was healed, who was, and is not, and yet is to be.

And further, we may notice, that the *purpose*, as well as the *person*, of the great adversary, stands forth in this great Haman. He must have the blood of all the Jews ; his heart will not be satisfied by the life of the one who had refused to do him reverence. He must have the lives of the whole nation. He breathes the spirit of the enemy of

Israel, who by and bye is to say, "Come and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (Ps. lxxxiii.). The Amalekite and his company cast the lot, the *Pur*, only to determine the day on which this deed of extermination was to be perpetrated. But, as we know, the lot may be "cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 33). And so it was here. Eleven long months, from the thirteenth day of the first month to the thirteenth day of the twelfth month—that is, from the day when the lot was cast, to the day on which the lot decided that the slaughter of the nation should take place—are given, so that God would ripen His purposes both toward His people and their adversaries.

This has a clear, loud voice in our ears. There is no speech or language, but the voice is heard. God is not even named; but it is the work of His hand, and the counsel of His bosom.

Haman finds no hindrance from the king his master. He tells the king that there is a people scattered through his dominions whom it is not his profit to let live, for their customs are diverse from all people—the secret of the world's enmity then and still (see Acts xvi. 20, 21). The decree, according to the desire of Haman, goes forth from Shushan the palace; and it spreads its way in all haste to all parts of the world, the domain of the great Persian "breast of silver." The whole nation, as the consequence of this, takes the

sentence of death into themselves. The decree would have reached the returned captives, as well as the dispersion. Judea was but a province of the Persian power in that day. But they are to learn to trust in Him who quickens the dead, Who calls those things that be not, as though they were, Who acts in this world, in resurrection strength. The remnant of Israel must learn to walk in the steps of the faith of their father Abraham. It is *faith* that must be exercised—for the Lord will not for a while reveal Himself, though He thinks of them, and shelters them without displaying Himself.

Mordecai now appears, as the representative of this Remnant, the possessor of this Abraham-like faith, in this awful hour.

The godliness of this dear and honoured man begins to show itself in his refusal to reverence the Amalekite. The common duty of worshipping only the true God, the God of Israel, would have forbidden this. And shall a Jew bow to one of that race with whom the God of the Jews had already said, that He would have war for ever and ever?—bow to one who, instead of bowing himself to the Lord of heaven and earth, had even come forth to insult His presence and His majesty, yea, and to cut off His people even before His face? Mordecai will jeopard his life by his refusal. But be it so. He is in the mind of his brethren, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who can say to an earlier Haman, “We are not careful to an-

swer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

This is fine in its generation truly: but finer still from its connections. For combination constitutes excellency of character. We are "to quit ourselves like men"—and yet, "let all our things be done in charity." In Him, who was all moral glory, as we have heard from others, there was "nothing salient"—all so perfectly combined. And in Mordecai we see "goodness," and with that, "righteousness." He was gracious, and tender-hearted, bringing up his orphan cousin, as though she had been his own daughter. But now, he is faithful and unbending. He will quit himself like *a man* now, if then he did all his things *in charity*. He will not bow and do reverence, at the command of the king, though his life may be the penalty.

iv., v.

The various exercises of the soul in these chapters, as we see in Esther and Mordecai, are a matter of great interest. The Hand and the Spirit of God work together so wondrously in the story of Israel, as we get it in the Psalms and in the Prophets—the *Hand* forming their circumstances; the *Spirit*, their mind. And these two

things occupy a very large portion of the prophetic word. And we get living personal illustrations of this here, in the exercises of heart through which these two distinguished saints of God are seen to pass, and the marvellous circumstances through which they are brought.

On the issue of the fatal decree, Mordecai fasts and mourns in sackcloth. But all the while, he counts upon deliverance. Such a combination is full of moral glory. Elijah gave a sample of it in his day, for he knew the rain was at hand ; but he casts himself down on the earth, and puts his face between his knees, as one in "effectual fervent prayer" (1 Kings xviii.; James v. 16-18). The Lord Himself gives another sample of this. He knows and testifies that He is about to raise Lazarus from sleep, the sleep of death ; but he weeps as He approaches the grave. So, here, with Mordecai : he will not put off his mourning ; he refuses to be comforted, while the decree is out against his people, though he reckons, surely reckons, upon their deliverance some way or another. This is another of those combinations which are necessary to character or moral glory : a sample of which I have already noticed in this true Israelite, this "Israelite indeed."

And Esther is as beautiful in her generation, as a weaker vessel. She may have to be *strengthened* by Mordecai, but she is *tenderly, deeply, in sympathy* with the burdens of her nation. She sees difficulty, and feels danger ; and she speaks, for a

time, from her circumstances. Nothing wrong in this. She tells Mordecai of the hazard she would run if she went into the royal presence unbidden. Nothing wrong, again I say, in thus speaking as from her circumstances, though there may be weakness. But Mordecai counsels her, as a stronger vessel; and he appears as one above both circumstances and affections, in the cause of God and His people. He sends a peremptory message to Esther, though he so loved her; and he is calm and of a firm heart in the midst of these dangers. He sits above water-floods in his way, in the dear might of Him who has trod all waves for us. There is neither leaven nor honey, as I may say, in the offering he is making; he confers not with flesh and blood, nor does he look at the waters swelling. His faith is in victory; and the weaker vessel is strengthened through him. Esther decides on going in unto the king. If she perish, she perishes—but she is edified to hazard all for her people. And yet, while she does not “faint” under the trial, neither will she “despise” it: for she will have Mordecai and her brethren wait in an humbled, dependent spirit, so that she may receive mercy, and her way to the king’s presence be prospered.

Accordingly, at the end of the fast, which they agreed on for three days, she takes her life in her hand, and stands in the inner court of the king’s house, while the king was sitting on his royal throne. But kings’ hearts are in the hand of the

Lord ; and so it proves to be here. Esther obtains favour in the sight of Ahasuerus, and he holds out the golden sceptre to her.

This was every thing. This told of the issue of the whole matter. All hung upon the motion of the golden sceptre. It was the Spirit of God, the counsel and good-pleasurè, the sovereignty and grace of God, that ordered all this. The nation was already as good as saved. The sceptre had decided every thing in favour of the Jews and to the confusion of their adversaries, be they as high and mighty, as many and as subtle, as they may. God had taken the matter into His own hand.— and if He be for us, who shall be against us? “Thou shalt be far from oppression,” the Lord was now saying to His Israel, “for thou shalt not fear ; and from terror, for it shall not come nigh thee. Rehold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me ; whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work ; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper ; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.” (Is. liv.).

Esther drew near and touched the sceptre. She used the grace that had visited her ; but used it reverently ; and the sceptre was true to itself. It awakened no hope that it was not now ready to realize. It had already spoken peace to her ; and

peace, and far more than peace, shall be made good to her. "What wilt thou, queen Esther," says Ahasuerus to her, "and what is thy request? it shall be given to thee, even to the half of the kingdom."

Very blessed is this. The sceptre, again let us say, was true to itself. What a truth is conveyed in this! The promise of God, the work of the Lord Jesus, is as this sceptre. These have gone before—pledges under the hand and from the mouth of our God, and eternity shall be true to them; and endless ages of glory, witnessing salvation, shall make them good. Nothing is too great for the redeeming of such pledges—as here, the half of the king's dominions are laid at the feet and disposal of Esther.

But her dealing with the opportunity thus put into her possession, is one of the most excellent and wondrous fruits of the light and energy of the Spirit, that we see in the midst of the many wonders of this book in all this workmanship of God's great hand.

Instead of asking for the half of the kingdom—instead of desiring at once the head of the great Amalekite, she requests that the king and Haman may come to a banquet of wine which she had prepared for them. Strange, indeed! Who could have counted on such an acceptance of such an unlimited pledge and promise? It brings to mind the answer of the divine Master, of Him who is "the wisdom of God," to the Samaritan woman. She asked for the living water, and He told her to go call her husband! Strange, it would appear, beyond all explanation. But as we know, it was

a ray of the purest light breaking forth from the Fountain of light. And so here. This answer of Esther was strange, indeed. But it will be found to have been nothing less than the witness of perfect wisdom of the Spirit that was now illuminating and leading her. It was the way of conducting the great adversary onward to the full ripening of his apostasy, to his attaining that mighty elevation in pride and self-satisfaction, from which the hand of God had prepared from the beginning to cast him down. Esther, under the Spirit, was dealing with Haman, as the hand of God had once dealt with Pharaoh in Egypt. The vessel of wrath had again fitted itself for judgment; and he must fall from a pinnacle up to which his own lusts and the god of this world are urging his steps. Esther is the instrument in God's hand for giving him occasion thus to fill out the full form of his apostasy. Esther shows herself wonderfully in the secret of all this. She bids Haman and the king, the second day as well as the first,—only these two together; and when this was done, the giddy height was reached from which the apostate is destined to fall.

He cannot stand all this. It is too much for him. His heart is overcharged; gratified pride has satiated it. He cannot contain himself—but *corruption* drives him in the way of *nature*; a sad verdict against nature. But so it is. It was natural, that he should expose all his glories to his wife and his friends. Flesh and blood can appreciate it; and pride must have as many courtiers and votaries as it can. And it must have its victims likewise. Mordecai still refuses to bow; and a gallows, fifty cubits high, is raised that he may be hanged thereon.

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

NOTICE FOR 1902. (D.V.)

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ALFRED TRIGGE,

28 WALKER AVENUE,

TORONTO, CANADA.

GOD
IS
LIGHT.

1 John, I. 5.

GIVE ATTENDANCE [ATTENTION] TO READING . . .
MEDITATE UPON THESE THINGS.—1 TIM. IV. 13, 15.

GOD
IS
LOVE.

1 John, IV. 1

TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR [OF READ]—MARK IV. 24

“Intelligence in divine things comes by conscience, not by the intellect.”

—

“The soul is the dwelling¹ place of the truth of God. The ear and the mind are but the gate and avenue; the soul is its home or dwelling place.

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

TAKE HEED THEREFORE HOW YE HEAR [OF READ]—LUKE VIII. 18.

THE SOUL OF THE DILIGENT SHALL BE MADE FAT.—
PROV. XIII. 4.

PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.—
1 THESS. V. 21.

IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD.—
JAMES I. 5.

THE
REMEMBRANCER

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.”—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

TORONTO,
CANADA.

NOTICE.

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**“THE MAN WHOM THE KING DELIGHTETH
TO HONOUR.”**

REV. XIX.; PS. XLV.; I TI. VI.; ESTHER VI. 7-11.

Bring forth the royal vestments
The King doth use to wear,
For Him His soul delights to own
Of heaven and earth the Heir ;
And fairer than the comeliest
Of all the sons of men,
For meekness and for righteousness,
He'll ride in triumph then.

The King of kings and Lord of lords
Proclaims His glorious worth,
Sending Him forth in victory,
To rule His ransomed earth ;
A name He hath of hidden depth,
That none can know but He,
A token of the Father's love,
That name of secrecy.

Hear ye the proclamation
That rings upon the air ?
“ The King of kings and Lord of lords,”
It blazons everywhere ;
For thus shall it be done to Him
The King delights to own
With honour and with majesty,
Crowned with His royal crown.

The glory of the risen Man
The universe doth fill,
For He alone, the Lord from heaven
Has done the Father's will ;

Anointed high above the rest,
 With gladness and with joy,
 The praises of ten thousand tongues
 His beauty shall employ.

Pale not, ye kingdom glories !
 Until the blissful day,
 When all into subjection brought,
 Beneath Messiah's sway,
 The glories of the subject Son
 The bride of Christ shall tell,
 And God with man upon the earth
 For evermore shall dwell.



THE DISPERSED AMONG THE GENTILES.

(Continued from page 180.)

ESTHER.—*vi.*, *vii.*

Every secret thing must reach its day of manifestation. The word which Mordecai told the king about Teresh and Bigthana, the chamberlains, though hitherto forgotten or neglected, must now be remembered. The tears and the kisses, and the spikenard of the loving sinner in Luke vii., and the corresponding slights of the Pharisee, are passed in silence *for a moment*; but they are all brought to light ere the scene closes. For there is nothing hid that shall not come abroad. *God lets nothing pass.* Mordecai's act shall not always be forgotten. It shall be recognized, and that too in the very face of his great adversary—as the loving sinner's acts were all rehearsed in the hearing of her accuser (Luke vii. 36-50).

The night after Queen Esther's first banquet was a sleepless one to Ahasuerus. For, as God gives His beloved sleep, so does He at times hold the eyes waking to them, by thoughts of the head upon the bed. By sending instruction through meditations in the night season, He deals with the hearts of the children of men. So, here, with the Persian. The sleepless king calls for the records of the kingdom, the depository of the act of Mordecai, and there reads about that act which had now happened some years before. And as it is true of man, that all that he hath he will give for his life, so now the king, on the sudden unexpected discovery of the act of Mordecai, by which his life had been preserved, deems nothing too high or honourable to be done for him.

Here, however, we may pause for a moment, and consider the wonderful interweaving of circumstances which we get in this history. There is plot and underplot, wheel within wheel, as the expression is, circumstance hanging upon circumstance ; and each and all formed together to work out the wonderful works of God.

There is, in this story, the marvellous reappearance of both the *Jew* and the *Amalekite*. Strange phenomena indeed ! Who would have thought it, as I have said before ? The Jew and the Amalekite reproduced in the distant realms of Persia, and in divers places of favour and authority round the throne there ! Then there is Vashti's temper and Esther's beauty meeting at the same moment

There is the fact of Mordecai being the one to overhear the plot against the life of the king. There is the lot deciding on a day for the slaughter of Israel, eleven months distant, so that there may be time for counsels to ripen, and changes to take place. There is the heart of the king moved to hold out the golden sceptre to Esther. And now we see the king's sleeplessness, and his thoughts guided to the records of the chronicles. And now, again, we see Haman entering the court of the palace at this particular juncture.

What threading together of warp and woof in all this! What intertwining of circumstances, and the production of a curious texture of many colours! And yet, as we have seen and said already, God all the while unseen, unnamed!

Very blessed! Pleased with the work of His own hand, and in the counsels of His own mind, the Lord can be hid for a time, unpublished, uncelebrated. And we are called, in our way, to that which is like this. We are to prove our own work, to have rejoicing in ourselves alone, and not in another, without uttering our secrets, or gathering the regards of our fellows. And truly great this is, to work unseen, to serve unnoticed. Deep counsels of that wisdom which knows the end from the beginning, and wondrous working of that hand which can turn even the hearts of kings as it pleases.

Haman falls. What a day may bring forth, we commonly say, who can tell? We see it to be so

in his history. Zeresh and his friends have to receive, ere the second day's banquet begins, a different Haman from him whom they had greeted after the close of the first. Haman falls, and falls indeed. But over this we must tarry for a little, that we may take knowledge of the character of this great fact, so important is it in setting forth the judgment of God.

1. Haman's greatness was allowed so to flourish and ripen, that he might fall in the hour of highest pride and daring.

This is very instructive, for this has been God's way, and is so still. The builders of the tower of Babel were allowed to go on with their work, till they made it a wonder. Nebuchadnezzar was given time to finish his great city. The beast of the Apocalypse will prosper till the whole world wonder after him. So here, Haman is borne with till he sits on the pinnacle. Then, in the moment of proudest elevation, the judgment of God visits all these. Herod, as another such, was smitten of God, and died, as the people were listening to him, and saying, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." (See Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36.)

2. He is caught in his own trap. The honour is given to Mordecai which he had prepared for himself; and the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, he hangs thereon himself.

This still instructs us; for this has been God's way, and will be so still. Daniel's accusers are cast into the den which they had prepared for him;

and the flame of the fire slew those men who took up the children of the captivity to cast them into the furnace. And so is it foretold of the adversaries and apostates of the last days in this world's history. "Their own iniquity shall be brought upon them" (Pss. vii., ix., x., xxxv., lvii., cxli., etc.). Satan himself, who has the power of death, is destroyed through death.

3. He falls suddenly.

So with the last great enemy. The judgment of God is to be like a thief in the night, like the lightning that cometh out of the east and shineth to the west. "In one hour," it is said of the Apocalyptic Babylon, "is she made desolate." The judgments on the world before the flood, and on the cities of the plain, were such also; "like figures," with this fall of the Agagite, of a judgment still to be executed.

4. He falls completely, utterly destroyed.

So with the great enemy, and the course of this present world with him.

The children of Judas cut off (Ps. cix.), the little ones of Edom dashed against the stones (Ps. cxxxvii.), Haman's sons, all hanged after himself,—these illustrate for our learning the utter downfall and annihilation of all that now offends; the clearing out of all by the besom of divine judgment. The "millstone" of Rev. xviii. tells us this, and prophecy upon prophecy has long ago announced it.

Full of typical significance, in all the features

that signalise it, is this fall of the great Amalekite. We live in such an hour of the world's history, as renders it specially significant and instructive to us. We are, day by day, seeing the Lord allowing the purposes of the world to ripen themselves, gradually to unfold their marvellous and varied attractions, and its whole system to make progress, till it again, like the tower of Babel of old, draw down the penal visitation of heaven; and that, too, in a moment, suddenly, to do its work of judgment completely, when (blessed to tell it!) not a trace of man's world shall remain, his pride and wantonness, with all their fruit, shall be withered and gone, and such a world as is fit for the presence of the Lord of Glory shall shine.

viii.-x.

We close this Book with the deliverance of the Jews in the very moment when destruction was awaiting them, and with their exaltation in the kingdom, and the celebration of their joy.

Mysterious workmanship of the hand of God! The Amalekite, the great adversary, cast down in the moment of his proudest elevation, and utterly cut off; the Jew, his purposed and expected victim, when there was but a step between him and death, delivered, then favoured and honoured, and seated next to the throne in rank and authority!

What a history! True in every circumstance of it, typical in every circumstance of it also; significant of those last days in the history of the Jew

and of the earth, of which prophets have spoken again and again, the downfall of the man of the earth, and the exaltation of God's people in His own kingdom !

Mordecai, instead of any longer being at the king's gate, now comes before the king and takes his ring, the seal of office and of authority, from his finger. Thus is the Jew translated at the end. All Scripture prepares us for this ; and here it is illustrated. Here the historic Scriptures of the Old Testament end, and here, as in a type, the history of the earth ends.

I may say, that the leading, principal characteristics in the story of Israel are these, as we read it in the prophets :—

1. The present casting off of that nation, and the hiding of the divine countenance from them ; and yet, their providential preservation in the midst of the Gentiles.

2. The present election of a *remnant* among them, and that repentance at the last, which leads them, *nationally*, to the kingdom.

3. The judgment of their adversaries and oppressors, with the especial downfall of their great infidel enemy.

4. Their deliverance, exaltation, and blessing in kingdom-days, with their headship of the nations.

These are among the great things of the prophets ; and these things are found in this little Book of Esther. So that, again, I may say, this

last Old Testament historic notice of the people of Israel pledges and typifies their present preservation all through this age of Gentile supremacy, and their glory in the last days, when the judgment of their enemies shall be accomplished.

Certain detached features of the coming millennial kingdom are likewise exhibited here. The fear of the Jews falls on their enemies, on those that were round about them; and they are restrained from all attempts to do them harm. Such had been seen in the palmy days of the nation, and such is promised by the prophets to be their portion again. Shushan, the capital of the Gentile world in that day, rejoices in the exaltation of the Jew; as all Scripture tells us, the whole world will rejoice under the shadow of the throne of Israel in the time of the coming kingdom. Many of the people of the land became Jews; as we read the like thing in the prophets again and again; as, for instance, "Many people shall go, and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The throne that had exalted the Jew, and put down his oppressor, exercises universal dominion, laying a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea; as we know that, by and bye, the king in Zion "shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

And here, let me add, that Ahasuerus represents *power*, royal authority, in the earth. He then filled the throne that was supreme among the nations. He was "the power," and represents, mystically or in a shadow, the power that will be in a divine head in the day of the kingdom.

It is so, I grant, that power in the hand of this Persian is first exercised in evil; serving, as he did, the wicked designs of Haman, though now he is exalting the righteous. Still he represents *power*, royal authority, in the earth. Just like Solomon in Jerusalem, he did evil personally. He may have repented; but still his personal ways were evil as well as good. Nevertheless, in a generally typical way, he represented power, and was the shadow of Christ on the throne of glory, that throne that is to rule the world in righteousness.

Full of mysterious beauty and meaning all this is. Those days of Ahasuerus and of Mordecai were days of Solomon and of prophecy, coming millennial days, days of the kingdom of God in the earth, and among the nations. They were as the days of Joseph in Egypt. Mordecai in Persia was as Joseph in Egypt,—the first historic book; and the last, in the Old Testament, giving us these varied but kindred notices of the kingdom that will come in upon the close and judgment of the kingdoms of the Gentiles.

The days of Purim celebrate all this. They constitute the triumph after the victory, the *joy*

of the kingdom upon the *establishment* of the kingdom. The Jews took on them, according to the word of Mordecai and Esther, to make the 14th and the 15th days of the 12th month, the month Adar, days of feasting and joy, because therein they rested from their enemies, and their mourning was turned to gladness, and light and honour. They were a kind of Passover, celebrating deliverance from the land of Persia, as that feast did from the land of Egypt; or, if we would rather have it so, Purim was another song on the Red Sea, or another song of Deborah and Barak on the fall of the Canaanite. And it rehearses the song yet to be sung on the sea of glass in Rev. xv. ; or again, I say, if we would rather have it so, the joy of Israel in coming kingdom-days, when they shall draw water out of the wells of salvation (Is. xii.). Indeed, the cxxiv, Psalm, and cxxvi. Psalm, prepared as they are for future days of Israel's glory and joy, breathe the very spirit that must have animated the Jews in this present day of Mordecai and Esther. It is beautiful to trace all this, to see these rehearsals again and again, as we go on the way, waiting for the full chorus of eternal harmonies in the presence of glory, by and bye. The infant church in Acts iv., in this spirit, breathes and utters the 2nd Psalm, prepared, as that Psalm is, for the day when God's King sits upon the hill of Zion, after the enemy has perished, and the kings of the earth have learned to bow before Him. The blessed God is pleased with His

own works : " For thy pleasure they are and were created." He, therefore, preserves the works of His hands as their Creator. He is pleased with the counsels of His grace and wisdom. He has, therefore, preserved to this day the nation or people of the Jews, and will preserve them till the fruit of His counsels displays itself in His kingdom. And His kingdom thus will rise on the ruins and judgment of the nations ; and Christ's world, " the world to come," shine in brightness, and purity, and blessing, after the folding up and passing away of " this present evil world."

This coming kingdom, this millennial world, is spoken of in all forms of speech by the prophets ; but it has also been set forth in all forms of samples, and parcels, and specimens of it, in broken pieces of history from the beginning ; as here we have seen it showing itself at the end of the book of Esther. Ordinances, prophecies, and histories, in their several ways, have been doing this service.

Ere the antediluvian saints pass away, the spirit of prophecy speaks through Lamech, and addresses, as to them, a word of promise touching the earth ; that therein, in due season, there should be *comfort* instead of *curse*. (Gen. v.)

In Noah as in the new world, we see an *illustration* of this prophecy of Lamech's ; for after the judgment of the deluge, the earth rises again as in new or resurrection-form ; and a pledge, a foreshadowing, of millennial days, is before us

The land of Egypt, under the government of

Joseph, is a "like figure." Under the law we have a shadow of the same millennial rest in the weekly Sabbath—in the annual feast of tabernacles—in the jubilee every 50th year.

For a moment, in the day of Joshua, when the tribes of Israel had entered the land, kept the Passover as a circumcised people, and then ate unleavened cakes of the corn of the land, we see, in another form, the same happy mystery witnessed to us (Josh. v.)

After this, the palmy reign of Solomon in a more extended form, in a full and rich manner, tells us the like secret.

As, indeed, I might have noticed the meeting of Jethro with the ransomed Israel on the mount of God, in wilderness-days, was (though in a different form) the foreshadowing of the same coming day of glory (Ex. xviii.).

And so now, in dispersion-days, as I may speak, we have the same; as we see at the close of this Book of Esther.

Prophecies upon prophecies accompany these ordinances and these histories; so that in the mouth not only of many, but of various witnesses, the kingdom that is still to be set up, and the glory that is still to be revealed, is verified to us. These are rehearsals of the great, the magnificent issue of the counsels of God, of that purpose which shall be manifested in "the dispensation of the fulness of times."

The New Testament gives us like illustrations

and promises. The Transfiguration tells us of it. The Regeneration or Palingenesia tells us of it. The action in the Apocalypse first makes way for it ; and then, at the end, it shines in our sight, when the holy city descends from heaven bearing the glory of God with it, and when the nations that are saved walk in the light of it.

Thus, the close of Esther finds itself in company with things from the very beginning to the very end, and all through the volume, all through the actings and sayings of God in the progress of this world's history. It is wonderful ! What a witness of the writings that are to be found in Scripture ! What a proof of the breathing of the same Spirit in all the parts of it ! How it tells us, that " known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world ! " We fill our own place, and occupy our own moment, in this great plan.

(To be continued, D. V.)



"FOR ME AND THEE."

(Matthew xvii. 24-27.)

This chapter, when the connection is clearly seen, is of profound and touching interest. The transfiguration, spoken of in the earlier part of the chapter, was a turning-point in the life and ministry of the blessed Lord.

After the character of those who were suited to the kingdom had been unfolded, the divinity of

His Person and character of His ministry are brought before us. His disciples are then sent out with the ministry of the kingdom to the Jews, at least the poor of His flock, in His lifetime, and then till He came as Son of man. Then we have the record of the rejection of John the Baptist's ministry, and that of His own, as come in grace : and standing on the edge, so to speak, of the world, He is witness that no dealings of God could reach where His grace found, like Noah's dove, no place there for the sole of her foot ; and declares that the world has been tried, and He could find no entrance for divine goodness, and they must come to Him if they would know the Father, and have rest (for the Son revealed Him in grace), and learn of Him as the Man meek and lowly of heart, and find rest to their souls in a world where evil ruled, and no rest could be found, as He knew.

In chapter xii., the Jews, as a nation, are finally rejected, under Satan's power as a people in the last days, and the Lord disowns association with them according to the flesh ; relationship with Him was by the word He preached. He leaves the house, goes to the seaside, not any longer seeking fruit in His vineyard, which bore none but bad—sowing that from which fruit was to come. The kingdom of heaven in its mystery, with an absent king, takes the place of Messiah upon earth.

In chapter xiv., we have the whole scene ripening historically. John the Baptist is actually put to

death, and the sovereign grace of Christ continues while the coming scene is opened. He satisfies, according to Psalm cxxxii., the "poor with bread," but there, I believe, according to the Messiah order. Then he dismisses the mass of Israel, and sends His disciples off, and goes up on high (a priest on high), and the disciples are tossed on the sea. Peter goes on the sea to meet Him : as soon as He is entered into the ship the wind ceases, and He is gladly received where once He had been rejected.

In chapter xv., the hollow and false religion of the Pharisees' is rejected, while fully owning Israel's privileges ; and sovereign grace goes out to awaken and meet faith in the rejected race of the Gentiles—according to Jewish standing, the accursed race. He was a Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, but God would not be Himself if only the God of the Jews ; and the Gentiles were to glorify God for His mercy. We have then the five thousand fed, the same general principle ; only now, I believe, the sovereign patience of God.

In chapter xvi., the church, as built by Himself, takes the place of Jewish Messiahship, and chapter xvii., the kingdom in glory. Thus we have the kingdom, as it is at present ; the church, as built by Christ ; and the heavenly glory of the kingdom, taking the place of the earthly Messiah. This is the point I desired to reach, which, indeed, characterises all that follows—the revelation

of the heavenly glory on earth, what will be in the world to come, and was now revealed to establish the faith of the disciples; though the Father's house is yet a better portion. It is found in the description of this scene in Luke ix., where they* enter into the cloud from which the Father's voice came. For the scene itself see 2 Peter i. 16-19 (reading "the word of prophecy confirmed"). I have gone through the previous chapters because they lead up to the rejection of the Jews, and the new character in which Christ's Person and work were to be displayed. Here (chap. xvi. 20), they are forbidden to say to any one that He was the Christ. We find the same injunction in Luke ix. 21: that ministry was over. Here He tells them the *Son of man* must suffer and rise again. The Son of man was about to come in the glory of His Father with His angels. So Luke ix. 22-27.

In a word, the suffering Son of man and the glory that should follow, take the place of Messiah on earth, now disowned there, and even forbidden to be any more preached. Thus the beginning of Psalm ii., was now before him, bringing about in another way the purposes there spoken of, and Psalm viii., in part accomplished as spoken of in Hebrews ii. But the old things of Messiah on earth were over, redemption was about to be accomplished, and the new things of a glorified man

*I suppose Moses and Elias, but the truth expressed remains the same. The cloud was the dwelling-place of God in Israel.

introduced. In Matthew xvii. 22, 23, this rejection is pressed on the disciples, and then comes the blessed and touching way in which He shows them their association with Himself, as Son of God, in the *new* place into which He is introducing His people.

The tribute here spoken of is not tribute to the civil power, but the didrachma which every grown-up Jew paid for the temple service, and which they had voluntarily imposed upon themselves in Ezra's time—a tribute to Jehovah. The question which the collectors put to Peter was really whether his Master was a good Jew according to the earthly system now passing away: Peter, with the zeal so often there, yet in ignorance, at once answers "Yes." The Lord then shows divine knowledge of what had been passing by anticipating Peter, to introduce in touching grace the new place He was giving to Peter and those with him. "Of whom," says the Lord, "do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute, of their own children, or of strangers?" Peter replies "of strangers." "Then," says the Lord, "are the children free." We are the children, I and you, of the great King of the temple, and as such, free from the tribute. "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them"—bringing in Peter, as one of the children of the great King with Himself free, but not willing to offend; and then shows, not divine knowledge but, divine power over creation. "Go thou to the sea, and cast an

hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up ; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a stater [two didrachmas] ; that take, and give unto them for Me and thee ; ” showing now His divine power over creation, making the fish bring just what was wanted. And then again He puts Peter with Himself in the place of sonship by the overwhelming, but unspeakably gracious words, “ Give unto them for Me and thee.”

Do our hearts echo these words, moved to their foundations ? If Christ said “ Me and thee ” to us, how should we feel it ? Yet He does say it. It is when a rejected Messiah, His Person and the effect of His work too (but the expression of His boundless grace in it) come forth to give us our place in the purposes of God, but as His heart delights to see it and make us see it too. Oh ! for the Son of God to say to such an one as me, “ Me and thee.” I know it is the effect of redemption, but of a redemption He has accomplished, and a redemption which gives us a place where He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied—in seeing us in a blessing which only His heart, which answers to the Father’s counsels, could have thought of for us. But what a comment of Christ’s heart on the ways of God unfolded in the foregoing chapter ! Thinking *first* of us to apply it.



“TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST.”

(*Philippians i. 21.*)

It is a wonderful thing that we should be let into the thoughts of the apostle he innocently tells us about himself. He was taken up with Christ, and could say, “To me to live is Christ.” He thought of nothing but Christ; if it was a question of himself, to him “to die was *gain*.” But he did not think of himself at all; he left everything to the Lord. If we think of ourselves, and take ourselves in hand, we take upon ourselves the responsibility which God keeps Himself if we leave all to *Him*. The vantage ground of the Christian is, that he has not to think of himself. The apostle could say, “To me to live is Christ, to die is *gain*.” Some have tried to say that on a death-bed, but they left out the first part altogether. He was in a strait, he was sorry he had to stay, though he was willing to stop a little longer for their sakes: to die was positive gain to him. Nor did he speak of going to a place; it was a *Person* he was going to. Nor was it a *relief*, as some say, when the body is racked with pain (even a worldly man can say that); it was no relief to him, but positive gain, to be with that *Person*, though, even then, *not* yet in the state of *perfection*, for that would not be till he had his glorified body.

Which of us could say that? We have not only an example to follow in Christ, but to follow a man with like passions as ourselves. “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”

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IS
LIGHT.**

1 John, I. 5.

GIVE ATTENDANCE [ATTENTION] TO READING . . .
MEDITATE UPON THESE THINGS.—1 TIM. IV. 13, 15.

**GOD
IS
LOVE.**

1 John, IV. 8.

TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR [or READ]—MARK IV. 24

“Intelligence in divine things comes by conscience, not by the intellect.”

—

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

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

TAKE HEED THEREFORE HOW YE HEAR [or READ]—LUKE VIII. 18.

THE SOUL OF THE DILIGENT SHALL BE MADE FAT.—
PROV. XIII. 4.

PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.—
1 THESS. V. 21.

IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD.—
JAMES I. 5.

THE REMEMBRANCER


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.”—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

TORONTO,
CANADA.

NOTICE FOR 1903.

Beginning with January, 1903, "The Remembrancer" will (D V.) be printed with new type (same size), and so will be more distinct.

Where no instructions to the contrary are received, "The Remembrancer" will (D.V.) be continued in 1903 to subscribers for 1902.

 Please notice slight alteration in address after 1st Dec. (D.V.), on third page of cover.

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The volumes for 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1899, 1900 and 1901, bound, 30 cents each (net) Postage, 2c in Canada; 4c. to U. S. and countries in Postal Union. The Volumes for 1894 and 1895 can be had bound together, 55c. (net). Postage, 4c. and 7c. respectively.

Unbound sets for any of the above years can be had for 25c. each. Post free.

The Volumes for 1891, 1892 and 1893 are out of print.

“THE LORD IS MY PORTION.”

Thou art *Thyself*, my *portion*, Lord,
 Whatever may betide—.
 My *joy* all through the desert way ;
 My *hope* until that coming day ;
 My meat, my drink, my strength, and stay ;
 My sure, unfailing Guide.

Thou art *Thyself* my *treasure*, Lord,
 My “riches” evermore ;
 All through the changing scenes of time
 All blessings in *Thyself* are mine,
 And in Thy glory I shall shine
 When time shall be no more.

Thou art the precious “Lamb of God,”
 Who once for me wast slain ;
 God’s judgment Thou didst bear for me,
 That I, the *guilty*, might go free,
 And share the “Father’s house” with Thee
 When Thou shalt come again.

Thou art my risen, living *Lord* ;
 Henceforth Thy claims I’d own.
 I want to follow day by day
 Where Thine own hand has marked the way,
 List’ning to hear, and then obey
Thy voice, and Thine alone.

CHRIST IS EVERYTHING.

GOD in His grace has centred for us every blessing in Christ. Without Christ we have nothing, nothing but our sins ; with Christ we have all things, and therefore need nothing besides Christ.

As the apostle says, "All things are yours ; for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Hence the saying of an old writer, "If thou knowest not Christ, it matters not if thou knowest everything besides ; but if thou knowest Christ, it matters not if thou knowest nothing besides."

Now it is not every believer that knows Christ. All believers—those, that is, that have peace with God—know Christ as their Saviour. They know Him in this character or relationship ; but it is another thing to know Him in Himself : to have such a knowledge of Him as to be intimately acquainted with His mind, character and ways. Those who thus know Him find their daily delight in feasting on His beauties and perfections. They value Him for what He is, if possible, more than for what He has done ; albeit these two things can never be separated. The apostle John indeed teaches, that to know Him that is from the beginning is the last and highest attainment the believer makes. This knowledge is the characteristic of the fathers of the family of God (1 John ii.).

Do any then inquire, "Where can I meet Christ—be in companionship, so to speak, with Him, so as ever to learn more of Him?" The answer to this question brings out the special thought lying on my mind. *The only place where we can come into contact with Christ is in the written word of God.* The Lord said to the Pharisees, "You search the Scriptures ; for in them you think you have eternal life : *and they are they which testify of Me*"

(John v. 39). We find Christ—Christ in every aspect, position, character and office in the Scriptures: Christ in humiliation and rejection, and Christ in exaltation and glory. The more, therefore, I read and meditate on God's word, the more I shall learn of Christ.

Be it, however, remembered that Christ though revealed in the Scriptures, cannot be apprehended by any efforts of the mind. We might read the Scriptures from morning to night without one single ray of the glory of Christ falling upon our souls. It is the Holy Spirit alone who takes of Christ, and shows it unto us. Much therefore—may we not say everything?—depends upon our state of soul. If I read carelessly or hurriedly; if I have unjudged sin within my heart, and consequently a grieved Spirit, how is it possible for me to discern Christ? Like Mary, I must be at the feet of Christ, occupied with Himself, the eye up to Him, and the ear opened to His voice, if the Holy Spirit is to reveal Him to my soul. Leisure of heart and quietness of mind are essential. But do you say, "How is it possible to have that, absorbed as we are in our daily occupations?" It is the Lord who giveth His beloved sleep. Yea, He can give our souls quietness and rest in His own presence when surrounded even by the storm and the tempest. And then, through some Scripture hidden away in our hearts, He can so irradiate it with His own glory as to make it the means of an enlarged revelation of Himself to our souls.

Permit the question, "Do you desire to know more, to have more, of Christ?" There are few who would hesitate to reply, "Indeed we do." And yet it is quite true, as often said, that every one possesses as much of Christ as he desires. Of the Israelites in the wilderness we read, that "they gathered it *every morning*, every man according to *his eating*." The appetite determined the amount collected. So it really is with ourselves. Christ never withholds Himself from those who truly seek Him; nay, He responds to us far beyond our desires. The fact is, we want more of Christ and something else besides. This cannot be. It must be Christ alone; Christ our only object, and then He will satisfy even beyond our utmost expectations. Philippians iii. will teach us the true method of pursuing after the knowledge of Christ while waiting to possess, and to be fully conformed to, Him in the glory. Everything is counted but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. For Him the apostle willingly suffers the loss of all things, in order to have Christ *only* as his gain. Then two things mark him—concentration and purpose of heart. One thing only is before his soul, and that he resolutely pursues. The glorified Christ, who had been revealed to him, acts upon his soul like a powerful magnet, draws him away from everything else to Himself, and begets in him the intense desire to know Him ever more fully, to have fellowship in His sufferings, and even to be made

conformable to His death, in view of the glorious prospect of being raised from among the dead, when he would be with, possess, and be like, Him for ever. May the Lord grant to each one of us to be like-minded in this respect to His servant Paul.



GOD'S PROVISION FOR THE WILDERNESS.

1 Peter ii.

We find blessedly brought out in this epistle God's provision for the little flock passing through the wilderness. In Ephesians all is found in heaven; but, as passers through the wilderness, our feet really treading this earth, there is a goodly portion provided for us—all God's stores from everlasting to everlasting found to be what gives strength as we go on—a rich portion for the heart by the way. It is important in this day to know *God's* thoughts for His people *in their hours of weakness*.

The end of chapter i. brings out the thought of "all flesh is grass." So a Jew, Paul, looking at his lineage, privileges, etc.; could say, "Flowers of grass." But there is something eternal—the word of the Lord—of eternal moment. Your position is *now* according to this Gospel; not what "I think"—but what has the Lord spoken? Tidings of good news, beginning with the "seed of the woman." For whom? Not Satan, surely?

His head is to be crushed. Well, God wished His glory to be known, His enemies to be put down, and He found out the "the seed of the woman" to do it. Don't you talk of yourself, "I am so bad; my faith is so weak." Don't you see another Person on the scene—*God's Christ?* Of course you will be proved weak; and didn't Christ show out *all flesh* was bad save His *own*—the holy, harmless, undefiled One? When a believer in the sense of his *weakness* gets talking about THAT, he is forgetting *the glory of the blessed Lord*. In the light I say, "Let God be true, and every man a liar." I remember Christ, and say, "I'll sanction no evil. I want to be just what I am before Him; for there is the Lamb on the throne for me, and *what* a sinner I must have been to need *that* blood!"

"As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word." But they were *not* as new-born, not as young believers; they had gone through a great deal, were as martyrs; but they and you are to *desire* as babes. I suppose one of the greatest mistakes in many minds is that mercy will do very well for any *outside*; "But for me who have passed out of babyhood, it's not mercy I want." That there are steps I do not deny—babes, young men, etc.; but the young man, IF overcoming, does not forget what he had in the nursery, and the father in Christ never *could* forget mercy; no, never!

"Washed from my sins," you say, "I must overcome the world." Very true. But when you

have overcome, there is always something that still hinders ; and when I get *old* saints I find them *turning back with such sweetness to the blood*, and they don't know why, making so much more of *Christ in humiliation*. Very natural. In the epistles I get the work of Christ bearing on my difficulties ; in the gospels His word, beauties and perfection, the *riches* of His *person*, and the soul *feeds* there. For my part I do not *ever* expect to *taste* mercy as I shall taste it in heaven. Shan't I join the song, "Worthy," etc. I shall not *want* mercy there, but I shall never TASTE it as I shall before the throne.

Another remark in connection with the taste of weakness and pilgrimage. Romans viii. is the roll-call of a believer's privileges ; but you don't find such a taste of *mercy* as in Romans v. Four things (vs. 1, 2, etc.)—glory in tribulation, rejoice in hope, love shed abroad, not ashamed. The little band must drink of the brook by the way, mercy from first to last. Because the *love of God* is shed abroad, *that* is where the running of the stream is. The "brook" for the pilgrim is not in the mercies of the way, but in the love, in THE HEART OF HIM *who humbled* Himself, and *there* the pilgrim turns back and drinks.

"Oh, but I want that love ! I lift my eye, but I don't get the taste of that love." All very right ; but *where*, I ask, is the stream the apostle presents ? *In Christ*. He recalls to your mind what He did : He died for us "ungodly," and "without

strength," and the soul going through the wilderness has *the very same Christ up there who first met it in the extremity of its helplessness, and shut out forever from God—getting back there to that love*; that is, *drinking of the brook by the way*; not saying, "My leanness, my faith, etc." I am here in the wilderness, brought to my wit's end; but *here is Christ*. If Christ's death did something, His life does much more. People are always wanting to find a stream *running along before them*. He says, "No; go up to the source, and then you'll drink of 'the brook by the way.'"

If you talk of your deserts, you are not fully matured in *grace*; you forget *how* He took you up, and that love is the *same love* that you *still have* to do with as you go on through the wilderness. What are you individually occupied with? Is it your leanness? Is it the *providential* dealings of God with you? Say even, is it *disciplinarian* dealings? Well, do they, as they should, drive you out of your circumstances? And where? Do they drive you to *despair* or to GOD? Look out of yourselves, that will give you lower ideas of self than looking at your low attainments. People say, "I find no love in my heart." If you only *went a musing on what you were* when Christ took you up, you'd find *the love flowing in*. Here Peter refers to it practically—"growing there by milk of the word"—"gospel."

What do I live upon, energy of my own? No. Has Christ spoken *one word* to me, and has He

got no *second* word? Nothing more. Has the Lord looked once into my soul, and is it not natural for me to expect it again? How natural for any one who *tasted* mercy—that He is gracious—to taste again that he “may grow thereby!” When unconverted I only knew God as a Judge, *not* as gracious; but I have found Him a Giver—“gave His Son” and “the Holy Ghost.” I’ve known Him forty-seven years *as a Giver*. I say, *Why* does He give? *Because it is like Himself*—the whole place where Christ is answers the question. He is a Giver, and ought not God to bestow? Who is to be an open fountain if not *God*? In Eden man proved it; but now God has recast heaven, and put a *Man* there to be the Giver.

Verse 4. “As a living stone” you can say to the world—that which *characterises* me before God puts me into direct contrast with you. I know Christ as “chosen of God, and precious.” I know who this Person is—the elect corner-stone; and because I have *acted* on that, and owned Him as such, I see the *peculiar* place a soul gets into who does this; before whom? *God*. Christ precious to God, commands all the *range* of *His* affections; next precious to those who believe. The poor feeble believer in the presence of God finds he has a thought—the *counterpart* of *God’s* thought (not as to volume—His is infinite—but as a tiny brook is to a large one)—God saying, “He is precious,” and I looking at Christ, and saying, “Oh, He *is* precious!”

Precious, I say ; do you say He is not ? Not *all God says He is ?* If Christ is not Son of God, yea, God Himself, then not only *I am lost*, but my life is lost also. Why for forty-seven years I have tried to string everything I have done on to Christ, as beads are strung on a string, and you will tell me He is *only man*. Then where is my acceptance and my life ? Where should I be, passing through the wilderness, in all the deep needs, the little perplexities, even without knowing that preciousness as something one wants to stay oneself upon ? Looking at the cross I say, "He bore that for me," though the Father only knows the Son—knows the *full* worthiness of the Son *there*. Still we say He is precious, and what a place that puts us in ! Is any poor thing groaning here as as to themselves or their circumstances ? What do you think of that, that you have got God's thoughts about Christ ? What strength that gives the heart to say, "Come what may, God and I have the same thoughts about Christ ; it puts me at once into the place of blessing—"Ye are a *chosen* generation, a peculiar people."

ORDER OF CREATION.

Angels were created before any of the progressive creation, "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The highest of creatures were first created and *abide* (as unfallen) in their estate ; then the progressive creation as a general rule from inanimate

to reptiles, beasts and man, when moral responsibility now comes in and failure, and then the great truth of redemption, but this by the incarnation of the Son of God, God Himself coming into sorrow, both in Christ and by His Spirit, so as that man should have chords of divine harmony, which no angel could, and death—the power over the creature not created for death—being entered into, man in Christ is raised far above all principality and power, and we sit in heavenly places in Him. See Psalm viii., and use of it in the New Testament. And this angels have been contemplating from the beginning.

This beautiful, divine order (*i.e.*, first, the highest creatures, angels, then (beginning from the lowest, yet Lamarckian or Darwinian development formally disproved both by the placoid early fishes and the superior Saurian class coming before existing Saurians) the *classes* continuing in order up to man—invertebrate, vertebrate, mammalia, “a little lower than the angels”) shows also very distinctly the difference between eternal existence and eternal life. The angels have eternal existence as creatures, not eternal life through having Christ for their life; whereas Christ being the eternal life which was with the Father (an eternal life given us in Him before the world was), the incarnation, redemption, and resurrection set us in this life in risen glory far above principalities and powers. It is not creation order, but purpose, redemption, power of resurrection. An additional truth comes in by Christ's death. Not only He becomes life to us, but God has quickened us “together with” Him. This detail gives the special character of the Church or assembly. But the order of the divine ways is in all this exceedingly beautiful.

THE DISPERSED AMONG THE GENTILES.

(Continued from page 194.)

CONCLUSION.

Having read the books of Ezra and Nehemiah by themselves, as the story of the returned captives, and the book of Esther by itself as the story of the dispersed captives, we would now meditate on them together for a few moments. They give us, as we see, two distinct companies of captives, or two sections of the Jews. They illustrate different parts of the divine counsel and wisdom touching that people; and teach us lessons very important for our souls thoroughly to learn.

In each of these scenes, in the midst of each of these sections of the people of God, we have, so to speak, a separate platform erected for the exhibition of several or separate portions of God's ways and dealing with them.

The returned captives are brought home and left in the land, in order that they may be *tested* again—for to *test* His people, though in different ways, had been God's way from the beginning. Israel had already been tested by the gift of *power*. They had received a fat and good land, and been led on as from strength to strength, till they had flourished into a kingdom; a kingdom which had drawn the eyes of the kings of the earth, and was the admiration of the world.

But they had been untrue to this stewardship. They had abused the power entrusted to them,

and been rebellious against the supreme rights of Him who had thus set them up, and ordained them as chief and metropolitan in the earth. And accordingly, or consequently, power, supremacy in the earth, or principal authority among the nations, was taken from them and given to the Gentiles.

Now, however, they are at home again. The captivity to which their unfaithfulness had led is over, and there is a section of the people at home in the land of their fathers again. For it is the divine purpose to test them by another test. God is about to send Messiah to them. His mission and ministry is to be in healing mercy, a proposal of the grace that brings salvation, that it may be known, whether they have an answer to the *appeals of love*, since they have already proved that they had no fidelity to Him who had *entrusted them with power*.

This is what we read in the fact of Israel's (or Judah's) return from Babylon. They are Jews again in their own land. Accordingly, as soon as they get home again, they behave themselves as Jews. They keep the ordinances—they raise the national altar—they rebuild the temple—they keep themselves apart from the heathens—they read the Scriptures—they observe the way of the God of Israel, as far as subjection to power in the hand of the Gentile will admit it. And the God of Israel owns them. He blesses them. He shelters them. He may exercise them in faith and patience, but

still He is with them. As of old, He gives them leaders and deliverers and teachers; sends to them His prophets; and grants them days of revival, days of the new moon in the seventh month.

We know all this, indeed. This was, it is true, a kind of Reformation in their religious history. No idolatry is practised by them after this; but other corruptions rapidly set in and worked—as not only the books of Ezra and Nehemiah themselves show us, but more particularly the prophecy of Malachi. And the opening of the New Testament Scriptures confirms this—for the Gospel by Matthew lets us see clearly and fully, that the returned captives were deeply unbelieving; as untrue to the doctrines and proposals of goodness, as their fathers had been to the stewardship of power. “He came to His own, and His own received Him not.”*

This is so, indeed. And as, when they had been untrue to *power*, power was given over to the Gentiles; so now, since they are untrue to *grace*, grace is gone over to the whole world—for the Gospel is preached and the salvation of God is held up in the eyes of the ends of the earth.

And strikingly consistent and beautiful this

*Here let me suggest, what I believe to be so, but would not teach it with authority, that among the witnesses of goodness which God left among the returned captives, and which were so many harbingers or pledges of a Messiah coming in grace, the pool of Bethesda takes its place. It was, indeed, an extraordinary witness of “God the Healer.”

progress in the ways of divine wisdom, or of God's dispensations. All testing ends in failure, and God must act *for* us, and not *with* us. This fresh trial, by the ministry of Messiah, only proves as by the mouth of another witness, that man is incorrigible and incurable. Every effort to make something of him, or to do something with him, leads him out to another exposure of himself; till he is left naked to his shame. The kingdom is not entered by a tested creature, even though grace test him. Judgment as of "reprobate silver" is the result of the process. "The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain."

Yes, indeed, he must be *saved* by grace, and not merely *tested* by it. The first advent of Messiah, or the proposal of salvation, did not lead Israel into the kingdom; it has left them a judged people, scattered and peeled, unsaved and unblest, only condemned upon a fuller conviction than ever.

We turn, however, to another scene. We are to consider another section of the people, the dispersed and not the returned. For in them is erected another platform, as I may still speak, for the illustration of God's way. We shall see them as the pledges and witnesses, not of a tested, but of a saved people, saved through sovereign grace, and led into the kingdom.

The people had not availed themselves of the opportunity they had of returning home. This is

a standing witness against them. They remained among the uncircumcised. They acted the part of raven in Noah's ark. They seemed to take up with the unclean world. They are as Gentiles, we may say : we see no feasts or ordinances or word of God among them. But I grant they are Jews still. And grace abounds towards them. In the midst of the Gentiles they are still kept alive—another unconsumed burning bush. Jehovah is not seen to be acknowledging them, as He was acknowledging their brethren who had returned to Jerusalem. Still He had His eye upon them, and they are kept alive ; and that, too, till the due time comes for His rising up to deal with them in a way of which all His prophets have spoken.

All this we see in Esther, that wondrous book which closes the historic volume of the Old Testament.

A remnant is seen there. God deals with them marvellously both by His hand and His Spirit ; but He is unmanifested. We have seen this, when meditating on Esther. And we further traced God's way with Israel in all those eras of their history, when they were in an informal anomalous state : as instanced in the marriage of Joseph with an Egyptian, of Moses with a daughter of Midian, and the like, and of Esther's marriage with Ahasuerus the Persian. For this was as the way of God Himself with them : when they were untrue to Him, He went over to others. Power first, as we have seen, and now grace and salvation, have

gone over to others, since Israel was disobedient and unwilling. How consistent all this is ! What constancy and perfection and unity in the ways of His holy wisdom ! His brethren were untrue to Joseph, and cast him out ; he married and became important in Egypt. His brethren were untrue to Moses, and forced him away ; he married and became happy in Midian. His people were untrue to Jehovah ; and He gave power to the Gentiles. His own were untrue to Messiah, rejecting, not receiving Him ; and He now dispenses grace and salvation to the whole world.

Surely the Lord knows the end from the beginning. Surely His way is before Him.

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

O for grace to say this and to do it ! And to walk with Him, too, along the path of His wisdom, and the way of His dispensations, as from glory to glory, to “ walk in the light of the Lord.” (Is. ii. 5.)

And fresh wonders still show themselves to us on these two platforms, or in the story of the *Returned*, and the story of the *Dispersed*.

As I have already observed, Malachi begins to intimate what will be the end of the returned or tested captives. All will fail, as all has failed. The New Testament Scriptures affirm the intimation of Malachi. The Evangelists make good the

hints and notices of the Prophets. But Esther gives us to know what will become of the dispersion, or of that portion which remained among the Gentiles. They will finally be taken up in sovereign grace, carried through "the great tribulation," and by that road into the kingdom. In that story, or on that platform, we see the nation of the Jews, brought to the eve and on the brink of utter destruction, rescued by the wonder-working hand of God, and then seated in the high places of honour, of influence, and of authority, by the Power that rules the earth, all their enemies either judged and taken out of the way, or seeking their favour and blessing.*

These are the secrets we are instructed in, in these books, or in these two scenes of various action. Man is tested and fails ; the sinner is taken up in grace and saved.

And these are the secrets we have been set down to learn from the beginning ; and we are destined, blessedly destined, to celebrate them for ever. Man is exposed, God is displayed. Man is thoroughly made naked to his shame ; God is exalted in the highest order of exaltation, and displayed in the brightest light of glory.

It was thus in the story of Adam at the very beginning. He was tested, and under the testing he

* The great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, of which the prophets speak, will find Jews at home in their own land, though now they are dispersed as in the day of Esther. But that is no matter : as a nation they are to pass into the kingdom through the tribulation.

failed, and destroyed himself. He was then taken up in grace, and saved through the death and resurrection of Christ—by faith in the bruised and bruising Seed of the woman.

It was thus again in Israel. Israel was set under law ; but the shadows of good things to come accompanied the law. Under their own covenant, under the law, Israel, like Adam, was ruined. But God acts in the midst of the self-destroyed people, the self-wrought ruin, and by ordinances and prophecies and pledges of many kinds He has ever been telling them of final grace and salvation.

And now, in like manner, the Gospel thoroughly exposes us, but fully, presently, perfectly, eternally, saves us. And through the ages of glory, it will be told out that we are a *washed* people, a *ransomed* people who owe everything to *grace* and *redemption* though glorified for ever.

So that these two platforms, the scene in the midst of the returned captives, and the scene in the midst of the dispersed captives, are in company with all the divine way from the beginning, and with that which is to be had in remembrance and celebrated for ever. Only we marvel afresh at this new witness of the way of God, His necessary, perfect way, in a world like this.

How complete all this makes the divine historic volume of the Old Testament ! That volume ends here ; and we are well satisfied to have it so.

The way of the Lord Himself in this book is specially wonderful. Apparently, He is neglectful

of His people. He is "silent" towards them. He does not show Himself. There is no miracle. His name, as we have all remarked, is not once named in the whole book. His people, even in all the exercises of their hearts under the most pressing circumstances, never mention Him. Surely this is wonderful. But it is admirable as well as wonderful. It is perfect in its place and season. For during this present Gentile age God is apart from Israel, like Joseph in Egypt, or Moses in Midian, apart from their brethren—as I have already noticed; yea, and as many voices of the prophets have anticipated (see Ps. lxxiv.; Is. viii. 17; xviii. 4; xlv. 15; Hos. v. 15, etc.). And the Lord Jesus, speaking as the God of Israel, at the close of His ministry, says to them, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate; for I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" (Matt. xxiii. 38, 39).

But He cares for them. Their names are in the palm of His hand. He revokes not the judgment; but He will, in due time, awake for their deliverance. It is Jesus asleep in the boat, winds and waves tossing it. But in the needed time He awoke, and rose for the quieting of all that, which, swelling in its anguish, was raging against them.

"Hail to the Lord's anointed!
 Great David's greater Son!
 When to the time appointed
 The rolling years have run,
 He comes to break oppression,
 To set the captive free,
 To take away transgression,
 And rule in equity."

NOTICE FOR 1903. (D.V.)

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GOD
IS
LIGHT.

1 John, I. 5.

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THE REMEMBRANCER


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.”—2 PET. i. 12, 13.

TORONTO,
CANADA.

NOTICE FOR 1903.

Beginning with January, 1903, "The Remembrancer" will (D V.) be printed with new type (same size), and so will be more distinct.

Where no instructions to the contrary are received, "The Remembrancer" will (D.V.) be continued in 1903 to subscribers for 1902.

 Please notice slight alteration in address on third page of cover.

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The volumes for 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1899, 1900, 1901 and 1902, bound, 30 cents each (net). Postage, 4c. The Volumes for 1894 and 1895 can be had bound together, 55c. (net). Postage, 7c.

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The Volumes for 1891, 1892 and 1893 are out of print.

The number for May, 1901 (in which is the article, "Why did God permit the entrance of evil?"); and the number for June, 1902 ("Coronation number"), 1c. each; 3 copies post free.

THE MIDNIGHT CRY.

“ Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,”
 Oh ! hear the midnight cry,
 Awake ! awake ! why slumber ?
 The coming Lord is nigh.
 Go forth *again* to meet Him,
 And trim your lamps anew ;
 Oh ! let your lights be burning,
 He comes to call for you.

“ Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,”
 The *midnight* watch is past,
 In grace, He long has tarried,
 But now He comes at last ;
 Awake ! awake ! behold Him !
 “ The bright and morning Star ; ”
 He comes His saints to gather
 From east, and west, afar.

“ Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,”
 And *darkest* hours give place
 To one long day of glory—
There to behold His face ;
 The songs which through the *midnight*
 Your hearts did often raise,
 Shall find their full expression
 In ceaseless bursts of praise.

“ Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,”
 Oh, watch for His return ;
 Kept in *His* love and patience,
 Each heart for Him doth burn ;
 “ Behold, I’m coming’ quickly,”
 Finds thus an echoing chord,
 (With longing, deep desire)
 “ E’en so, come Jesus, Lord.”

“ Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,”
 The morning streaks the sky,
 Oh, haste thee to be ready,
 The “ *shout* ” and “ *trump* ” are nigh ;
 Oh, trim your lamps, ye virgins,
 Your joys shall soon begin :
 “ Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,”
 The “ *wise* ” shall enter in.



“ WATCH THEREFORE ; ” “ BE
 YE ALSO READY . ”

(*Read Matt. xxiv. 42—xxv. 30.*)

In this portion we have exhortations to the disciples, and the responsibility of Christians during the absence of the Lord. The general result for Christianity is developed at the end of chapter xxiv. All depended on the living expectation of the Lord. If these should fail, the servant would take the mastery over his companions in service, and would tyrannise over them ; he would join himself to the world, in order to enjoy its fleshly delights : the consequence would be, that he would be cut off, counted among the hypocrites, and cast outside. This gives occasion to more precise details as to the condition and the responsibility in which Christians are placed during His absence, and which we will examine.

CHAPTER XXV. The coming of the Saviour gives occasion to look at Christians as ten virgins gone forth to meet the Bridegroom. The true

force of the word is that the kingdom of the heavens will then* have become like to ten virgins thus gone out. Nothing more solemn and more instructive than this parable as to the state of Christians. It is a question of the return of the Saviour and of that which will happen to Christians, to the members of the kingdom, at that epoch. If the servant said, "My Master delayeth His coming," it would be his ruin, the demonstration of the state of his heart. But in fact the Bridegroom would delay; and this is what has happened.

It is of moment to remark the mutual relationships in which the personages of the parable are found. It is not a question here of the church as bride. If one would absolutely think of a bride, it is Jerusalem on earth. Christians are regarded as virgins gone out to meet Him who was the Bridegroom. The Jewish remnant does not go out. When Jesus shall come again, it will be found there on earth in the relationships in which it will have remained here below. The Bridegroom tarried, and the virgins, the wise like the foolish, went asleep, no longer expecting the Bridegroom. Furthermore they go in somewhere in order to sleep more conveniently. Nevertheless there are of them such as have oil in their vessels with their

*"Then" in chap. xxiv. 45, and "Then" in xxv. 1, are different words in the original. The former (*ara*) = *accordingly*; the latter (*tote*) = *then*, i. e. when what is mentioned in xxiv. 48, &c., takes place.

lamps : it is divine grace which sustains the lamp of the Christian profession. They are not surprised. It is a question of those who make profession.

The moral state of the kingdom consists in this, that all are gone asleep : the coming of the Lord is forgotten by all. At an unforeseen moment the cry makes itself heard, "Behold the Bridegroom !" God re-awakens souls that they may think of it ; but what a testimony rendered to the state of Christians ! That which should have characterised them, the thing for which, as a living state of the soul of the Christian here below, one had been converted (according as it is written, "How ye turned to God to wait for His Son from heaven"), has been entirely forgotten. They were no longer waiting for the Lord ; and though there was oil in the vessels of some, the lamps were not trimmed. It is the soul that awaits the Lord which watches to be ready to receive Him. Their lamps shone no longer suitably. There might be smoke and ashes ; the fire was perhaps not extinct ; but there was little light, enough however just to manifest negligence and slumbering. Where was then the love for the Saviour, when all forgot Him, no more occupied with His return ? Fidelity and love to the Saviour were equally at fault.

One is asked sometimes how it has happened that those so excellent men of past times had no knowledge of this truth—were not animated by

this. The answer is easy : the wise virgins slept like the foolish. Waiting for the Saviour was lost in the church. And, mark it well, it is the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom !" which awakens from their sleep slumbering Christians. One must not fall under illusions : the proper state of Christians depends on this expectation : "Ye yourselves [it is said], like unto men that wait for their lord." Without doubt the new nature that the Christian receives produces essentially the same fruits, whatever be the circumstances in which it is found; but also the character is formed by the object that governs the heart ; and there is nothing which detaches from the world like waiting for the Lord, nothing which searches the heart like this expectation, in order that there be nothing that suits not His presence. Nothing consequently introduces like it the feelings of Jesus in the judgment that it conveys on good and on evil ; nothing like it for cherishing affection for Jesus in the motives which govern our conduct. Remark also that in reality it is the same waiting for the Saviour, the fact of watching in waiting for Him, which is in question here ; not at all the service that we have to accomplish during His absence. Service and the responsibility that attaches to it are found in the following parable (chap. xxv. 14-30).

The same distinctions are found in Luke xii. In verse 37 it is said, "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watch-

ing;" then the recompense is that they will enjoy the blessings of heaven and that Jesus will gird Himself to make them happy. Afterwards (ver. 43) it is a question of the service to render during His absence; and then the reward is the inheritance.

Returning to Matthew xxv. 1-13, I think the fact that the other virgins had to go away to buy oil means only that it was too late to have part with the Bridegroom, and that the faithful virgins could not then communicate grace. One must have it in time for the service itself. I will add that I do not think the foolish virgins were saved souls. The Bridegroom says to them, "I know you not"—what Jesus could hardly say to those who were His own.

In the parable of the talents (vs. 14-30) it is a question of service. The Lord goes away and confides to His servants a part of His goods to trade with them. They are the spiritual gifts that the Lord Jesus has imparted to those that followed Him when He went away. It is no question of that which providence has given us, nor of all men, but of the servants of Jesus, and of that which He has given them at the moment of His going away. There is a certain difference between this parable and what is found in Luke xix. In this latter passage the same amount is given to each of the servants; human responsibility enters into it far more in the thoughts of the Spirit of God; also the reward is proportioned to what love

gained. Here the amount is according to divine wisdom, in reference to the vessel to which it is confided; and each faithful workman is equally called to enter into the joy of his Lord; he is set over many things, but he enters into the joy of his Lord. Faithful to Jesus according to what was confided to him, Jesus makes him enjoy His own joy. The principle of work is the confidence that the workman has in the Master, and the spiritual intelligence which that confidence gives him.

The talents had not been entrusted to them for doing nothing with: in that case the Master might have kept them to Himself. They understood well that they had been put into their hands in order that they might traffic with them for the Master during His absence, and they employed those talents, those spiritual gifts, for the Master's service. Their heart knew that Master, desired His profit and honour, sought no other authority or warrant for work than the fact that He had confided those gifts to them, and the zeal of a heart made confident through the knowledge that they had of Him. What the third servant lacked was exactly this true knowledge of the Master. In his eyes He was an austere man. And, mark well, when there is not the true knowledge of God as He is revealed in Christ, one has always an entirely false idea of Him. The heart ever betrays itself by the idea that one forms of God, and unbelief always makes of the true God a picture from which the heart revolts. Knowledge of the rights

of God as well as of His love, is lacking. If God were such as unbelief imagines and His authority were recognized, one would have acted accordingly; but when His love is unknown, His authority is despised. God only reveals Himself in Christ, in Christ alone can He be really known.

The case of the unfaithful servant marks also distinctly the difference between gifts and grace, and the effect of grace in the heart. We have no practical example as to this in the New Testament, yet the principle is clearly established in 1 Corinthians xiii. In the Old Testament we have examples of the Spirit's power without conversion taking place—far from it indeed. This is what also explains Hebrews vi. Here sloth and unfaithfulness flow from the ignorance in which the servant is concerning his Master's character, as well as from the false and guilty idea that he had formed of Him.

Let us remark in our two parables an important fact which we shall find again elsewhere. The Lord, in the teachings which relate to His coming, says nothing which can give one occasion to think that it must necessarily be delayed beyond the life of those whom He addresses. Thus the virgins who slept are the same who awoke; the servants who received the talents are the same as those whose work is taken account of at the end. We know that many generations have appeared and disappeared since the departure of the Saviour, but He did not wish that they should be ex-

pecting beforehand any delay. In the same way when He wishes to give the history of the church to the close, the Spirit of God takes up seven churches which existed at that moment in order to describe in seven epochs the great features of that history ; so that, although we may recognize now these features and these periods, there was nothing when the Apocalypse was written which announced in a formal manner any continuance of the church on earth.

There is another remark I have to make. What is said in verse 28 seems to me to state a great principle. Those who possess Christian privileges without any living enjoyment of them, without truly knowing the Lord Jesus Himself, lose all that they have (this answers to Hebrews vi.) ; whilst those who are faithful to the light they possess acquire more. This, too, is the explanation given in verse 29. The judgment upon the wicked servant is executed in verse 30.



EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

. . . . The truth spreads ; but it is another thing to take up one's cross. And I observe that when one does not act according to the truth, there is no solidity : religious views are trifled with. When we follow the truth, difficulties are there and the opposition of the world ; that renders us serious. We must know how to give an account of our convictions ; then this does not

suit the flesh, and the truth must reign in the heart, in order for the victory to be won. Grace does not lend itself to levity and license in the doctrine itself. It is not bursts of steam : the engine must move onwards, and move on with a good deal to be drawn. There is responsibility with respect to oneself, to the Lord's name and His work.

We must take into account this tendency in the present day. We find not a few who like to hear new truth, but who have no idea of walking in the truth in a practical way. We must have patience, we must have a large heart, but a heart which acknowledges nothing but Christ for its end, and follows Him, or, at least, seeks to do so. We lose our time with amateurs. There is real dignity in the truth, which demands from one to respect it in a practical way. But you know it

In these last days, we need firmness, and a large heart which knows how to "take forth the precious from the vile" (see Jer. xv. 16-21). Obedience is firm and humble ; grace, meekness, love, ought to be there. But the truth needs not man : man needs the truth. Love feels the need of [seeking souls ; but souls should submit to Christ and acknowledge His grace.

How strikingly the Lord, in John, always places Himself in a position where He receives everything from the Father. "He made Himself of no reputation," or "emptied Himself" (Philip. ii. 7). We see Deity piercing through the veil, so to

speak, in every word. We see that He and the Father are one ; but He who is one with the Father now received everything from His hands. It is the voice of One who can speak with the Father as a divine person ; but He does not say, I will glorify myself ; but, on the contrary, "Glorify thou me." "In three days I will raise it up ;" but it is as separating, so to speak, His body from Himself, and speaking of it as of a temple in which He dwelt. His person has come before me of late in a very living way in reading that gospel. Moreover, the gospels have afforded me much food in these times. But how puny we are in comparison with all His grace and all that will reveal itself to us when we shall be with Him in glory !

May God teach us to take up our cross and follow Him who alone is worthy of it. Some would let go the truth, because it is difficult to reconcile it with charity. Hold it fast : we are sanctified by the truth. Christ Himself is the truth. I admit the difficulty, but grace is sufficient for us.



HAGGAI, CHAPTER II.

I have regarded this second, and indeed first, chapter of Haggai, as deeply instructive, mainly as showing God's blessing and power towards a remnant. The work of building the house of the Lord was now begun. The word of the Lord had

come to them before, reproving them, that though they could find time to dwell in *their ceiled* houses (chap. i. 4), and did not suffer any trifle or difficulty to interfere in the way of erecting *them*, yet if they met with any *difficulty* in endeavouring to raise the Lord's house, they immediately gave that up,—“The time is not *come*, the time that the Lord's house should 'be built.” Happily this reproof of the prophet had stirred up the minds of the people, they *did* begin to build ; and immediately the word of the Lord came to them to encourage them :—“I am with you, saith the Lord.” The building proceeds ; and now, in this second chapter, the word of the Lord comes to speak with them concerning this building. It tells them the LORD had not despised “the day of small things.” (Zech. iv. 10.) Man might, but God did not. “Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory ? and how do you see it now ? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing ?” But what then ? “Yet now be *strong*, O Zerubabel, saith the Lord And be strong, all ye people of the Lord, and *work* ; for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.” For He adds, “The word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, and *my Spirit* remain among you : fear ye not.” (New Trans.) And if the *Spirit* remained among them, was not that all they needed ? Is He not the Author of all power, of all wisdom, of all grace ? Moving on the face of the waters at the beginning for creation ; the Author

of all power in judges or in prophets. And if it was true in its sense (for the Spirit *indwelling* was not yet given, John vii. 39) to the remnant in an earthly dispensation at its close, shall it be less true in a heavenly, spiritual one, when "the Spirit *abiding* (John xiv. 16) is one of the great glories of the dispensation? Shall God be more faithful to the covenant of Moses than of Christ? respect more the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob than those "Yea and Amen" in Him? The Spirit, therefore, remaineth with the faithful remnant of God's people, to guide them, to lead on, to give them wisdom and strength amidst difficulties and enemies. "Yea," says the Lord, "I will shake all nations." For when the Lord takes up the cause of His people, He lets nothing stand in the way. "Since thou was precious in my sight thou hast been *honourable*, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life" (Isaiah xliii. 4).

"When He His people's cause defends,
Who then can do them harm?"

"And *the desire* of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory."

Remark, how beautiful the hope of God's people in apostasy, and the close of their dispensation is, not in their temple becoming equal to the *former* temple (though seeking *themselves* to stand in *all* God's will), but in the blessed better hope of the coming of Him, who is Himself the temple and glory. Then shall all be put straight.

“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord. The glory of this latter house (or, as it should be, ‘the latter glory of this house’) shall be greater than of the former.” If inclined to murmur now about small things, I would say it shows we are out of communion with the Lord’s mind. It is out of the *small things* that He brings His greater glory. Is not this the principle enunciated by Christ in 2 Cor. xii. 9.—“My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is *made perfect* in weakness ;” and so blessedly accepted by Paul in the same verse : “Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory,” &c. If therefore, we despise small things, we are judging after the flesh, the outward appearance, not in communion with the Lord’s mind about it.

The word of the Lord comes further upon the matter in ver. 10, &c. It seems to speak of man’s inability by himself to good, and of his ability only to evil ; they could not sanctify anything indifferent in itself by their touch according to the law, but could only defile it ; showing that man defileth, by his own corruption, even the work of the Lord that is in his hands :—“So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the Lord ; and so is every work of their hands : and that which they offer there is unclean.” But why is this said ? Is it to degrade ? Oh no, it is only to humble ; it is only in the deep consciousness of our own insufficiency, of our own defilement of such holy work, we may carry on the Lord’s *ser-*

vice. Yet, *thus* carried on, God can and will accept it. It is that, like Paul, we may *serve* the Lord in all *humility of mind*, with many tears, &c. (Acts xx. 19). And *this*, I fear, we much *fail* in. Yet, as was said, grace *can* accept the sincere, though *feeble* desire of *obedience*. There had been nothing but leanness before—leanness, because they had departed from the living God, with whom alone is the riches and fatness of the olive tree ;—and the harvest was not *yet* brought into the barn : the vine, the fig-tree, and the pomegranate had not *yet* brought forth their fruit : Yet, *from this day* will I bless you, saith the Lord. *Peace* and *blessing* are both here recorded for them (vs. 9 to 19).

Yet again the Lord has another word for them ; for as I said—and the great point that I think is brought out in this prophet is that—God's *almighty* strength is connected even with the weakness of His people : “ Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying,” etc. The Lord said He would overthrow even “ the throne of kingdoms ” for their sake, to deliver them : He would “ destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations : ” He would “ overthrow the chariots, and those that rode in them ; and the horses and riders would come down, every one by the sword of his brother ” (see what was noticed on verse 6).

Let this thought therefore dwell on our hearts, dear brethren, that the least remnant of God's people, as more especially standing in the communion of His mind, is connected with all His power ; in the day of their greatest weakness they stand as a connecting link with all His mighty purposes

which are soon to be manifested : God could not, so to speak, do without that link : He could not *in His grace* do without a remnant according to the *election of grace*. And they have only to know His mind in faithfulness, in order to stand connected with that power soon to be revealed. It may be said, perhaps, that all this dispensation has been a *connecting link*, a final dispensation as to the consummation of all things—"Upon us the ends of the ages (ta tele ton aionon) *have come*" (1 Cor. x. 11). How much more upon us who stand even in the *end* of such an age ; upon us, to whom more especially the cry has gone forth, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh ; go ye forth to meet Him !"

May we indeed, dear brethren, stand "having our loins girded about, and our *lamps burning*." The much entering into that truth, will indeed, under the Lord's blessing, give power to our souls : it will connect us with all the *power* and *blessing* of that day (Malachi iii. 10, etc.) ; will tell us, whether the Lord, even in the last closing days of a dispensation, when failure, and nothing but failure, has been proved to the uttermost, will be deficient, or less than ever He was (*cf.* Malachi iii. 6) in *real blessing* to His people : "I will give you a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." The next verse (23) of this chapter of Haggai, tells us, I think, of blessed *nearness* to the faithful—nearness in that day : "I will make thee as a *signet*" (*cf.* Cant. viii. 6) ; even as Rev. iii. 20, tells us of the same even in *Laodicea*.

Can apostasy, then, rob us of nearness to Christ, that chiefest of all things ? Oh, no ; it should only drive us nearer. The Lord give us hearts to value such blessings : grace, and faithfulness to seek them in His appointed way (Mal iii. 7).

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