

Truth for the Last Days:

A BIBLICAL MAGAZINE.

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“WATCH YE, STAND FAST IN THE FAITH, QUIT YOU LIKE MEN, BE STRONG.”
—1 Cor. xvi. 13.

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EDITORIAL NOTE.

IN drawing this service to a close, we beg to thank writers, correspondents, and readers for their kind co-operation. It has been a service of love on the part of all concerned. The Magazine has been used of God in blessing. Having served its purpose, it is now discontinued.

WALTER SCOTT.

Oct. 1905.

TRUTH FOR THE LAST DAYS.

THE LORD'S DEITY AND HIS DEATH: A REVIEW.

The twofoldness of Scripture is one of the marks of its Divine authority. Even whilst aiming at breadth, Man is ever prone to take lob-sided views. One sees this so much at the present day, whether it be in "Higher Criticism" or "Humanitarianism" and the like. With these is associated extravagance, as also the tendency to regard much as new which is only something old in a fresh guise. The perspective of the Bible transcends our minds large or small. Men are but thinking now what has passed through the minds of others long ago.

This comes out in Biblical interpretation, in which difference of human judgment arises very much from misapprehension of antithesis. Simple-hearted prophets and apostles were themselves proof against the vicious effect of speculation, of endeavour to harmonize or reconcile what at first sight may be regarded as paradox,—and that running through the Bible in all its parts. God's thoughts are no more like those of the highly-trained metaphysician than of the uncultured peasant. The very idea we form of Himself, if it is to profit us, must ever be infinitely more moral than metaphysical. Need we be concerned if unbelievers make merry over the statement in Gen. xviii., that the Judge of all the earth partook of Abraham's hospitality, or lose our composure over Ps. xlv. 7, 8, 12, John xx. 27, 28, or Phil. iii. 13, 14, compared with ii. 5-10? No uninspired writer, we know, could have composed these. And so with John x. 18, which tells us that no one took our Lord's life away from Him, whilst 1 Pet. iii. 18 speaks of His having been put to death. Matt. x. 28 should restore our equilibrium if it has been disturbed.

With such feelings we may take up some papers in "The Christian's Helper" bearing on the death of the Lord Jesus: the first appearing in 1901, but first seen by the present

writer quite lately ; the other to be found in the June number of 1904 ; and also a separate pamphlet under the title, *What does Scripture teach regarding the Lord Jesus ?* In all of these we are invited to embrace the notion of the Lord's humanity—what others call “the historical Christ”—alone being engaged in His work on the Cross. That His atonement derives its value from the ineffable glory of His Person* is roundly denied. The adorable “mystery” that lurks in a “premise” we are now told affords “no true conclusion,”—whatever simple souls, to say nothing of logicians, may make of such language. One trusts, however, that the majority of plain people who read these magazines have “sense enough through grace to believe,” † with honest John Bunyan, that the blood through which we have been redeemed “is the blood of God (Acts xx. 28), and He may restrain its merits or apply it as He sees good.” Bunyan's contemporary, the pious Archbishop Leighton, whose devotional commentary on 1 Peter, like the famous Allegory, after the lapse of 250 years retains all its unction, says : “The blood must be the blood of the eternal Lord of life dying to free us from the sentence of death,” to which may be added words of the much esteemed Dr. Chalmers : “I may behold in the Deity of Christ the completeness of that redemption, the efficacy of that atonement.” All this is now declared to be “a myth,” discovered to be such by an English, without the help of any German, writer. Let us beware of being found to fight against God : by our words we shall be justified, as by them condemned.

The Incarnation and Death of the Son of God are interdependent : “What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.” In the Gospel of John the laying down of our Lord's life is rooted in His Deity : if any reader of it fail to see that, he must indeed begin again. Matthew's record of

* The same consideration affects our estimate of future punishment of the unsaved.

† A happy expression of the late Mr. J. N. Darby.

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the crucifixion scene, compared with John's account of the incidents immediately preceding it, shews that "the centurion and they that were with him," when they said, "Truly this was the Son of God," were but using the Lord's own term, which must have been canvassed outside as well as inside the judgment hall. Matthew could scarcely have related the expressed conviction of those candid bystanders because of any superstitious idea that may have resided in their words. As "all things are possible with God," the fact that the One who said so (Mk. x. 27), Himself I AM (John x. 28), by birth in this world became MAN, carried with it the possibility of His death here in a complex nature : such became an evident proposition for all acknowledging the Incarnation in its integrity.

Reference is made to 1 Tim. vi. 16 (cp. i. 17), "Who only hath immortality." This, as may be seen from the context following, applies to the Father, whose immortality is that of an eternally self-existent Being, the controller of all Life, who imparted to the Son "authority" to lay down His life, according to the same order of ideas as His giving to the Son to have Life in Himself (John v. 26). We are carried back to the picture afforded in Ps. xl. 6, 7, of the Lord Jesus. The Apostle has already in iii. 16 said that, after being manifested in the flesh, HE was . . . received up into glory (cp. Ps. xxiv. 7-10), in which there is no transition from the Divine to the merely human ! *

By reason of what the Apostles affirmed in their ministry, notably that of Paul at Philippi and Corinth, put in permanent form in his letters, we find this purely heavenly truth (John iii. 12, 13), counted "foolishness" by the Greeks, as to the Jews it proved a "stumbling block," and the Rabbinical *Talmud*, speaking of the Christians' "gibbeted God," which Celsus early echoed, to whom Origen replied. That the

* It is really a matter of indifference whether "God" or "He Who" be followed in the MS. readings, save of course that *theos* would only emphasize what is present in the passage without the actual word.

Lord of Glory (cp. 1 Cor. ii. 8 with Acts vii. 2) was crucified served for the bitterest gibe ever cast at Paul, making part of the constant trial borne by him who was "not ashamed of the Gospel."

The term "God Man" * is one of those now impugned. It was first used in the age of the four great Councils, and is to be met with in Leighton's much-prized book. † Such a description of the Lord is no more foreign to Scripture than "God and Man," together with "Trinity" and "Person" ‡ used in these unhappy papers, and derived from the so-called Athanasian Creed: they are none the less developed from the deeper teaching of Scripture itself, so that it may be said they will stand or fall together.

This symbol bids one believe that "our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man . . . who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ"; § and further: "One . . . by taking the Manhood into God . . . so God and Man is one Christ, Who suffered for our salvation." It clearly insists that there are not two Christ's one Divine, the other human. The idea of any detachment of the Divine from the human in our Lord's person for the purposes of the Cross is altogether inadmissible: it would involve subsequent re-knitting of the two,—the fond conceit of some early Gnostics.

The following words of Leighton on 1 Pet. ii. 24, are written in gold:—"God's just hatred of sin did out of doubt appear more in punishing His only begotten Son for it, than if the whole race of mankind had suffered for it eternally . . . God's own co-eternal Son is given for us . . . It is

* *Theanthropos*.

† "Nothing in this world so strange and sweet as that conjuncture God-Man"

‡ Although the term "hypostatic union" is derived from Heb. i. 3, the Revisers there have wisely used "substance"; cp. Ps. i. 39: 15 in the lxx.

§ Words always admired by J. N. Darby.

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emphatically expressed in the words, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son'" (John iii. 16). This spiritual writer then quotes Rom. v. 8, as "affording the richest and strongest evidence of it." Again: "His being the *Son of God* made Him acceptable to God; His being the *Son of Man* made him suitable to man." After referring to Gal. iii. 13, he concludes with "He offered Himself, His *whole self*" (Isa. liii. 10; Heb. ix. 11, 12).

Part of the onslaught now made attaches to the words italicized in the quotation just made. The writer of—*What does Scripture teach, etc.?* lays down that the saints of God are to conceive only of a suspension of the Lord's human nature, whilst he imagines that he does not thereby trespass against the unity of the Person—a metaphysical achievement which is no more credited in the twentieth than it was in the fourth century; and he impeaches the *conjoint* use of the titles, "Son of God" and "Son of Man," in connection with the Cross. Let us then examine these two points in turn, with reference to Scripture, for it is to God's own Word that appeal is made.

"No one," it is alleged, "can as regards his entire person die." What, then, may we gather from the Scriptures as to the meaning of Death? It is there presented under three aspects, all, more or less, expressive of *change* (Job xiv. 14).

(a) Physical decease, attaching characteristically to the *body*. "Adam died," Gen. v. 5, Rev. i. 18. "I became dead (a corpse)." The soul, however, is concerned: 1 John iii. 16, "We ought to lay down our lives (souls) for the brethren," as already of the Lord: John x. 17.

(b) Moral change, for *loss*: Gen. ii. 17, "in that day thou shalt die." So 1 Tim. vi. 6, "is dead, while she liveth;" * Jas. ii. 17. "faith is dead in itself;" † v. 20, "shall save a

* Theophylact, commenting in Greek on this passage, remarked that the spirit is in question.

† Has become essentially unproductive.—Jas. ii. 26, combines *a* and *b*

soul out of death ;" * Heb. vi. 16, "dead works ;" Rom. vi. 16, "sin unto death ;" vii. 9, "I died ;" viii. 6, "the mind of the flesh is death ;" Eph. ii. 2, "dead in trespasses and sins ;" ii. 18, "alienated from the life of God."

(c) Moral change for *gain*, Rom. vi. 2, "we who died," and like passages. We have in the first set of passages the effect of death—dissolution, taking to pieces—upon the *body*, from which the spirit and soul are detached, so that they participate with it in the change ; and in the second and third groups the *soul* and *spirit* undergoing change while still resident in the body.

Usually, when one of the three is singled out in Scripture whereby to describe "man," it is the *soul*: Gen. xii. 5 ; Ezek. xviii. 4 ; 1 Pet. iii. 20 ; but in John xx. 2, Mary Magdalene, with beautiful propriety, gives voice to natural instinct by her identification of His "body" with the Lord Himself. The soul may be committed to God's keeping for continued life on the earth : 1 Pet. iv. 19. Moreover, Biblical prose and poetry alike attribute it to God, as well as Man : Lev. xxvi. 11 ; Ps. xi. 5. † We may call it the *seat* of life.

Spirit, especially as being used of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, expresses energy. That of man, which needs saving (1 Cor. v. 5), is closely annexed to his soul (Heb. iv. 12), to which it imparts vitality (Gen. ii. 7) : it is the *organ* of life. In the Gospel of the Immanuel it is recorded that the Lord on the Cross discharged, or dismissed, His spirit ; that is, initiated His own death (Matt. xxvii. 50). ‡ His spirit at death He commended to the Father's safe keeping (Luke xxiii. 46) ; and so Stephen his own spirit to the Lord Jesus (Acts vii. 59).

Paul said to the Athenians : "In Him we (*a*) live, and

* Shall deliver him from that condition.

† In Exod. xxxi. 17, a cognate Heb. verb is used for God's being "refreshed."

‡ How He could do so, "as man" is inexplicable, if man was to be held accountable for His death : see above.

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(*b*) move, and (*c*) have our being" (Acts xvii. 28), corresponding respectively to the soul (Gen. ii. 7), the spirit (Gen. i. 2 ; 2 Pet. i. 21), and the body.

The difference between spiritual and material framework as regards Death is that only the material portion, after having parted with its sensibility, is subject to corruption ; but all three elements "pass away," are subject to change of condition. When the *soul* is severed from the body, it parts with scope any further for having its responsibility met through repentance and faith. When the *spirit* has done with this present world, its function of animating, energising the body being at an end,—it parts with that : the spirit is detached, alienated from this earthly life, becomes dead to it, and, for the believer, is alive unto God, who is "God not of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. xxii. 32), in another sphere. The deep solemnity of judgment for the unbeliever will lie in its affecting the whole man, just because death has already done so. There will be a second death parallel to the first (Rev. xx. 14).

We proceed next to examine the second part of Leighton's statement, with which the view taken in these articles is likewise at issue : the statement that our Lord suffered as Son of God no less than as Son of Man. The one expression is that with which John's Gospel is specially connected ; the other is characteristic of Luke's narrative. But each of these evangelists, when occasion calls for it, uses the special designation employed by the other. See examples in Luke ix. 26 ; x. 22 ; xxii. 69, 70 ; and John ii. 50, compared with v. 52. We are told in the Word that "God gave His Son," and that the Son "gave Himself" (Rom. viii. 32 ; Gal. ii. 20) : what "Son" means in the one connection it must mean in the other. We are further told that Christ Jesus, the Son of Man, gave Himself a ransom as mediator between God and Man (Mark x. 45 ; 1 Tim. ii. 6), as to which John iii. 13 presents itself for consideration.

In this last passage we should expect, where the Lord uses

Son of MAN, that it would be in connection with earth (i. 51); the more so as vi. 62 definitely speaks of the Son of Man "ascending where He *was before*," and 1 Cor. xv. 47 of the Second Man as "out of heaven." But if the common text of John iii. 18 be followed, He spoke of Himself on one occasion as "in heaven." * From a private conversation of the present writer with the late Mr. C. E. Stuart, who built on these words for his view of heavenly Propitiation, there would seem to be a close relation between his idea and the theory which isolates the Lord's Deity from His death; only that the inconvenient and ghastly antithesis of man's own making, between the Lord's being in Heaven and on the Cross at the same time, would be too apparent. Nevertheless, by what Leighton calls "Scripture logic," it results from the development which requires that the Lord should die as Son of Man only.

There is, of course, the further development, which comes out in the last published paper, that the "Lamb of God" symbolizes Christ's humanity alone: John i. 29 compared with v. 34 shatters that.

Now, that substitution (the sin offering), and the humanity of the Lord are linked, as Propitiation (the burnt offering) with His Deity, would be a proposition sound and helpful; but to isolate from each other the two factors of Atonement, as done in recent years, only lends itself to the argument of those who are willing enough to aver that the Lord died in our *behalf*, but stoutly deny His "vicarious" work—that He died in our *stead*. The concurrence of Divine and human seems demanded for such a task as that of taking away the sin of the world, in the same way that the full truth of the Triune Godhead is required for our salvation. It also meets the common objection raised, as a question of fundamental morality, to the idea that the consequences of others' guilt

* The Bible Society's text of 1904 relegates these words to the margin, after the Revisers in theirs had already recorded the omission by "many ancient authorities."

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could be reckoned to any "man," personally without blemish and spot as he might be.

According to 1 John iv. 10, the Divine Son, who wrought Propitiation, was *sent into the world* for that purpose. In John i. 14, we have only begotten *from beside* * the Father. In iii. 2, Nicodemus uses only "from," † whilst the Lord to him in v. 13, uses "out of," ‡ which we meet with again in viii. 42. This last is used definitely of generation in i. 13.

There were sufferings of the Lord in which none other could share, and besides, those of which we may be partakers, if we follow His steps (1 Pet. ii. 21; iv. 13). The unfailing accuracy of the letter of Scripture, as we have it first hand, shines out here: "for" is equivalent to "in behalf of," not "instead," as in atoning suffering. We have ever to safeguard truth as to the Christ of God against Rationalist conceptions, whilst maintaining the distinctively human path of suffering from man which the Lord pursued as our example. § May we not, as against rationalizers, discern some dividing line between the two orders of suffering, where His succour begins to operate? Heb. iv. 15 supplies this suffering, which enters into mere trial or testing (ii 18); but the Lord's penal suffering He undertook actively as well as passively. Do we not find in that something more than "such a man," in the sense of these articles, as representative? Heb. i. 3 || tells us. There it seems to be the special

* *para*, as in vi. 46. In the Bible Society's new text, "the only begotten God," already accepted by Westcott and Hort, is noticeable. Cp. 1 Cor. i. 25; 2 Cor. xiii. 4, the weakness of the Manger and the weakness of the Cross.

† *apo*.

‡ *ek*, as in 1 Cor. xv. 47. It is to be regretted that the Revisers have not always distinguished the various prepositions. While at Heb. v. 7, they note the force of *ek*, they are silent at James v. 20, where the Greek is the same.

§ From the word used in 1 Pet. ii. 21, we get the idea of our printed copy, which the scholar follows underneath in its various details.

|| Any translation can but feebly reproduce the power of the original of this verse.

concern of the Holy Ghost that every verse should be redolent of the Saviour's majesty, and that His humanity should recede, instead of being brought forward as in these papers.

The ruthless hand of man was early employed in tampering with the text of Scripture, when that did not agree with his comprehension or his prejudice. In the Old Testament we may take Zech. xii. 10 as a typical example. Jehovah is the speaker ; but see margin of the R.V. The New Testament adds its witness in such passages as Acts xx. 28, where the Revisers have maintained the old, we believe genuine, text : "*God . . . His own blood.*" Whether we take the last words as "His own blood," or as "Blood of His own," can make no difference ; for if Paul had meant "Son" to follow, he could have used the word to prevent misunderstanding, and it does appear in Rom. viii. 32. But the Apostle had learnt Christ yet more deeply (ix. 5). Moreover, the alteration of "God" into "Lord" by some scribe shews what was felt to be the sense of the closing words by those whose vernacular was Greek, and that they were accordingly toned down.

"The blood of Jesus Christ" (or "of Jesus"), "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Jesus is the Greek equivalent of Jehovah (Matt. i. 21) : as applied to the Lord, * it is a Divine name. Christ, we have seen, really marks the Lord's Deity, being as a title quite distinct from Son of MAN : compare 2 Tim. i. 9, "given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal." † Jesus Christ, accordingly, in the New Testament parallels "Jehovah Elohim" in the Old (cp. Gen. iii. 8). Observe, also, the way in which "Jesus Christ" is used in John i. 17, 18, and words of Paul, referred to above, "They would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (not : the one who was the Lord of Glory).

* Unlike the man surnamed Justus (Col. iv. 11).

† What, however, was true for Peter's own soul appears in v. 24 of Acts ii. : "It was not *possible* that He should be holden of it (death)." The Apostle here does not treat the Lord's resurrection as answering the question of merely moral fitness, like His baptism (Matt. iii. 15).

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The Jews, whom Peter addressed at Pentecost, regarded our Lord as a mere man ; so the Apostle took Old Testament ground, such as they could appreciate ; * and it was reserved for Paul, and John independently, to bring out more especially the Lord's Deity, while maintaining His integral humanity (Acts xvii. 24), as in keeping with Paul's audience on that occasion. To have added another divinity to the Pantheon of the Greek capital would have been scarcely likely to profit such seekers after novelty, whose consciences had to be reached in another way.

Of the Jews it may be said that, whatever their modern descendants may say about misapprehension at that time of the Lord's meaning, the Gospel of John (v. 18, xix. 7), supplies lasting evidence of the sense which those unhappy men attached to the title "Son of God" in the Lord's own mouth, and as used by their contemporaries, John and Paul—the disciple whom Jesus loved, and the quondam pupil of Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in honour of all the people. It is truth which we must ever hold fast and confess before an unbelieving, scornful, Christ hating world ; otherwise we shall be as those "ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of" it.

Implication, on which these articles rely, is a fertile source of error in the interpretation of Scripture, and needs boundless caution on our part. Take 1 Sam. xxvi. 19 : are we to suppose that David, by the way in which he expressed himself to Saul on that occasion, really believed in the existence of other Gods than Jehovah ? Or that, "above all gods," in Ps. xcv. 3 (cp. Deut. iv. 7), "implies" that it was, or will be, imagined that there is a Pantheon in heaven ? Some Higher Critics consistently go this length, whilst others consider that the word "gods" means a Court, as in Gen. iii. 22 ; 1 Kings xxii. 19-22 ; Job i. 6. That may be solemn trifling, but it is in harmony with the method of argument pursued

* The words translated 'set up' in Prov. viii. 23 is strictly 'anointed,' as in Ps. ii. 6.

on pp. 3-5, of "*What does Scripture teach, &c.*," by which a Rationalist could readily make out that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph (Luke ii. 43, 48), and not God at all (John xvii. 3; 1 Cor. viii. 6).

We must not foist in "as God" or "as man" where Scripture makes an unqualified statement. That is the way in which human wisdom goes to work. Who amongst us would care to follow the Critics (relying even on Phil. ii. 7) in supposing that when the Lord Jesus quoted as from Moses what they contend is of later growth, He was speaking under human limitations, and not "as God?"

Sometimes the bearing of passages cited in these papers has been missed. So with Scriptures such as Ps. cxxi. 4; Isa. xl. 28; liii. 3, to the neglect of Ps. xlv. 23 ("Why sleepest Thou?" * and Isa. xl. 27 ("My way is hid from the Lord.") The Remnant has begun to think that He has withdrawn His covenant mercies, or protection (cp. Ps. xlii. 10; lxxix. 10), that too much confidence had been put in such; as indeed was done by the ungodly Jews of Jeremiah's day.

Isa. liii. 3, "Why not say, a God of sorrows?" Why, Isa. lxiii. 9 should suffice, "In all their sorrows He was *afflicted*." † The style of reasoning resembles that of the Christadelphian tracts issued from Birmingham: limitations are attached to Deity which make one wonder whether Mark x. 27 and xiv. 36, are regarded as hyperbole. Do not these passages confront man's unbelief?

Even human superstition seems to witness to Divine truth. The late Grant Allen wrote a book entitled, "Evolution of the idea of God," with the object of establishing that this idea, with that of worship, has been connected throughout human history with death; and use was made of Scripture

* Equivalent to "Why tarriest Thou?" "How long?"

† Cp. Heb. of Dan. xi. 1, "tribulation" there, and also see Acts ix. 4 with Matt. viii. 17, which is the heart of Jehovah spoken of by the Evangelical prophet (v. 4).

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itself* in support of that view. The believer, to whom it speaks of life, can but leave the question alone, in humble confession of his own incompetence and nothingness in the presence of an inscrutable mystery. † "Lord, I believe; help *Thou* mine unbelief."

Scripture remains to us in its grand simplicity; and all that we really need, as Christians, is "the simplicity that is toward Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 3). Who could expect, from the point of view of these articles, to meet amid such surroundings as those of the Transfiguration with mention of the Lord's "decease, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem," recorded in the Gospel of the Son of Man.‡ Here was the manifestation of Christ's majesty, the significance of which Peter, when speaking of the incident in his Second Epistle, does not abate in the least. In John xx. 27, 28, Thomas, after the Lord's words to him about the hands and side of the Risen One, confessed Him as God, although, in v. 17, the Lord had already spoken of another as His God. We are not told that the message which He sent by Mary to His brethren failed to reach Thomas. Unbelief in him gave place to the richest faith

The Second Person of the Trinity this theory leaves quiescent, no place being found for Him! Why play into the hands of infidels? We always do so when we lower our flag. They scornfully argue that Jesus, if Divine, must have offered Himself to Himself. How is the adherent of such a theory to cope with them? Our weapons are not carnal (2 Cor. x. 4.)

Heb. ix. 14 has been used for a part taken by the Holy Ghost in the Lord's offering. The exact words of the text are "through an eternal Spirit," the Greek definite article being absent, as in 1 Tim. iii. 16, which refers unmistakably

* In particular as to the Lord's Supper.

† Not to give it a rationalistic explanation, such as many seek in dealing with miracles.

‡ Luke ix. 31,

to the Lord's own personal spirit.* Cp. 1 Pet. iii. 18, on which Leighton says with regard to the verses following, "Not His soul, but His eternal Deity;" and He combats the idea, as the late Mr. J. N. Darby and also Mr. W. Kelly have since done, that the Lord, between His death and resurrection, preached in Hades.

An attempt has been made to dissociate "eternal" from "infinite" in respect of Divine wrath. The word "finite" applies to all that is measured and terminable; "infinite" is the negative of that; and so, endless, as the word is used in Ps. cxlvii. 5 (Heb.) The wrath could not be eternal if it were not infinite. Eternity is one form of infinity, as species of genus.

It seemed sad enough that rationalism should rear its head with so much encouragement outside; but that there should be inside any revivals of gnostic conundrums, faithfully combated and rejected by the early Church, and resisted ever since, is appalling. It is with the views expressed in these papers that we are concerned, not with any of some one else at which their writer may be girding. Mr. K. has described the position taken as "fundamentally unsound, and an anti-christ." "In many things we all stumble," says an apostle; but to err in such a matter, like the late Mr. Newton when answering Irving, is profoundly serious. Luther said that it is a solemn thing at any time to speak, much less write, about the mystery of the Lord's Person; that it were better to sit by the cradle at Bethlehem.

The doctrine of the Atonement is being shorn of the glory that Christ by His death brought to the Father. The faith of Christians in general is now at a low ebb; but let not those who cherish "recovered truth" share in any process which transforms the gospel of our salvation. It behoves all of us to remember the apostle's warning in Gal. i. 6-10.

* Westcott on Heb. ix. 14 remarks: "Through this He had 'the power of an indissoluble life (vii. 16) . . . living through death,'" referring also to 2 Cor. iii. 17: "This Spirit included the limited spirit of the Lord's humanity."

Two Storms on the Galilean Sea.

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The tendency of the papers we have had before us is neologian. Ask Athanasius from the East or Augustine from the West, and in later time, Calvin or Hooper, Wesley or Darby ; their spirits could but rise from Paradise to rebuke that which affords indication of the low spiritual state prevalent. Over this one and all have to grieve.

E. E. W.

TWO STORMS ON THE GALILEAN SEA.

In Matthew viii. 23-27 we have a graphic account of the first storm ; while in chap. xiv. 24-33 the second storm is described. In the first the Lord was in the ship sleeping in the presence of His disciples--the only time He is said to have slept. Satan is permitted to lash the sea into fury. If he could sink the ship containing the Lord and the excellent of the earth (Ps. xvi. 3), his triumph would be complete. What opportunities we miss of gathering round, in adoration and profoundest worship, the Christ of God. Why did not the disciples cast themselves round the pillow on which the wearied Master slept and worship and adore ? He was with them, was that not enough ? The storm that would sink *them* would equally sink *Him*. O believer, Jesus is with thee in the wildest storm. Who is with thee ? The Lord of nature ; He who rules the storm, He " who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." And the best of it all is, that His OMNIPOTENT POWER, His EVERLASTING LOVE, and His INFINITE GRACE are each and all exercised for you, even if you are the weakest of the weak, the feeblest of the feeble. Their cry, " Lord, save us : we perish," broke in upon the slumbers of the Sleeper. Sleeping or waking, the cry of men reaches the heart of the Saviour. Whether on the Cross (Luke xxiii.) or on the lake (Matt. viii.), the cry of distress is heard, for never a broken heart appealed to the Lord in vain. Calmly

the Lord rebuked their fears. He and they were bound to reach the other side (verse 18). We are on our journey to the other side, and reach it we shall, although earth and hell oppose. Hallelujah! Jesus is with us in the *same* boat, and in the *same* storm. *Then*, after rebuking the storm in the breasts of His own, He rose, and looking on the angry scene, stilled the tempest by His word, and there was "great calm." The tempestuous sea sunk to rest like a sleeping child.

In the second storm the disciples were alone. The Lord goes up to a mountain and spends the night in prayer. Is He indifferent to His tempest-tossed disciples? Let these midnight vigils on the mountain top answer. He knew their sore distress. His knowledge and love comprehended all, and so in the fourth watch, the darkest moment before the break of day, He came down from the mountain and walked on the crested waters. O, we love to behold our Jesus, our Saviour, treading on the billows as if they were a sapphire pavement beneath His feet. I see His majestic tread and say, He is the One, the very One, who died for me. What a Saviour!

"He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

Peter stepped out of the ship and found on the Galilean sea a *solid* footing. The Lord's "Come" was his authority, while his moral preservative was his eye on the Master's face. He walked as steadily, as surely as his Lord. But O how brief that blessed moment! The sea sustained the Lord and His disciple. Peter took his gaze off his Master and looked upon His surroundings—the storm and not He who ruled it even then. Beginning to sink, he cried, "Lord, save me!" Did the Lord reproach His failed and failing disciple? No, no. The matchless grace of the Saviour shines forth. The heart and hand of the Lord were at once in instant action, and the sinking disciple was caught by a grasp omnipotent and held by a love tender and infinite. "When they were

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come into the ship, the wind ceased" (Matt. xiv. 32). On the sea of life there is experienced much rough weather, tempestuous seas and contrary winds are our ordinary fare. It is through much tribulation we enter the kingdom. But *above* us is placed the throne of the Eternal, and *before* us lies the great, deep calm of our God. We are going home. The road is rough, but the end is most sure. Christ is *for* us (Matt. xiv.), and Christ is *with* us (viii.), all along the way. Hold on, wearied one ! heaven is almost in sight, then rest everlasting is thine, and thou shalt go out no more for ever.

" Life's mystery—deep, restless as the ocean—
 Hath surged and wailed for ages to and fro ;
 Earth's generations watch its ceaseless motion
 As in and out its hollow moanings flow.
 Shivering and yearning by that unknown sea,
 Let my soul calm itself, O Christ, in Thee."

Said St Augustine, " Let my heart calm itself in Thee. Let the great sea of my heart, that swelleth with waves, calm itself in Thee."

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

God sometimes gives to one of His servants a special place of prominence, and with it comes, of course, special responsibility to God, and the call for greater watchfulness in the occupation of the position. It may be that to a preacher is given the ear of the public, and the man has to face temptations of a peculiar kind. Faithfulness to the truth, to the needs of souls—in a word, to Christ and His Gospel—seems as though it does not always " draw," and for the sake of continuing popular a man may (for example) be led to dull the edge of the truth, or to seek a spurious originality.

In every such case of the prominence of God's servant, there comes to God's people a call, just as real, for their sympathy and their prayers, that the servant, whoever he may be, may be faithful to God and to the truth. From a variety of reasons, it

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is possible to slip into the ungracious office of criticising the actions or the words of others who labour with and for God. "He followeth not with us" is a governing thought, though it be not an avowed principle, with many who bear Christ's name to-day, just as it had its operation in the inner circle of Christ's disciples. And nothing is easier—and shall I say, more pleasant?—than to stand aside and criticise, or to set up our own supposed orthodoxy for admiration by censuring another man's interpretation of Scripture or statement of doctrine. But the ease is the ease of all wrong-doing, and the pleasure is the "pleasure of sin."

It is, I trust, with the full remembrance of these things, that I call attention to a brief paragraph that appeared in *The British Weekly* of September 15th, over the signature "R. J. Campbell." The Rev. R. J. Campbell, M.A., is the minister of The City Temple, in succession to the late Dr. Parker, who nominated the young preacher who has taken his place, and to whom God has given in a remarkable way the ear of the people. Mr. Campbell entered upon his work with the prayers of many of God's people, even of those who were not ecclesiastically associated with him. The circumstances were peculiar: the sphere of service was one that opens to few; a faithful ministry would be a power beyond all appreciation, a false one would be correspondingly harmful. It is a matter for regret that more than once there has been good reason for the voice of protest against views enunciated by the preacher—views that touch the truths of atonement and salvation as learned by Evangelical Christians from the Scriptures, and, still more serious, opinions that, on the most charitable construction, belittle the glory of the Son of God come in the flesh.

The personal aspect of the position does not call for longer comment. I need only add that, in two journals at least, a column is reserved for Mr. Campbell's *Answers to Correspondents*, and these answers reach many thousands of readers from week to week.

This is enough of introduction.

A correspondent submitted a question as to "why [? how] the

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Apostles knew Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration." The answer is brief, and I append the whole of it:—

I do not think Peter, James, and John really saw Elijah or anyone else except Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. The meaning of that great event must be sought deeper. Jesus was praying alone on the mountain: the others slept, but were awakened, probably by the passionate tones of His appeal to His Father for guidance and strength. He had now come to see that He must die, and the resemblance between His impending fate and that of His great predecessors in the spiritual history of Israel was strikingly obvious at the moment. Moses led the children of Israel to the borders of the promised land, which he himself only viewed from Pisgah's top, but died ere he could enter. Elijah in a decadent age strove for God and righteousness against the guilty house of Ahab. As with Moses and Elijah, so now with the Son of God, the way to victory lay through renunciation and death—"they spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." As in His prayer of self-oblation He took these names upon His lips, the Apostles awoke and saw His face transfigured, like that of Moses when he came down from the mountain, and that of Stephen in the hour of his martyrdom. This was the real vision, and, as you see, it had a moral meaning associated with the personalities of Moses and Elijah.

We may almost say that Christendom at large is at issue with Mr. Campbell in this matter. The question is a very clear and simple one. It does not turn upon the interpretation of some deep and mysterious passage of Scripture; or upon some doctrine where a man is speedily out of his depth—such as the Atonement, "the Decrees" (as the purpose of God was called in by-gone days), or the Kenosis; or upon investigations of the knowledge or the "self-consciousness" of the Lord. On such points there will be differences of judgment, as long as men's minds are differently constituted. But in this case, the question is one of *fact*. Was the Lord really "transfigured," and were Moses and Elijah really seen with Him,—yea or nay? Or, put in another form: Are the Synoptic Gospels (all of which relate the incident), apart from any question of divine origin or inspiration, reliable documents? Or has it been reserved for Mr. Campbell to find that they are erroneous, and to tell us what was "the real vision?"

In justice to Mr. Campbell, I hasten to say that he is by no

means the first to cast doubt upon "the historicity of the Gospels," as the modern phrase so infelicitously runs. Unbelievers in all ages have done their best to discredit the narrative, but such men have been avowedly outside the evangelical succession. One looks for them among German Rationalists, or their English imitators. For example: Paulus (whose works on the N.T. made their appearance early in the last century), received "the Gospel narrative as in some sense true; the Evangelists did not intend to deceive; they tell things that really occurred, but through an error of judgment they represent incidents as miraculous which in truth are capable of a natural explanation." Such is Dr. Salmon's brief statement of Paulus' principles* and it applies with hardly a word of alteration to Mr. Campbell's views as shown by the answer quoted. I do not trouble the reader with Paulus' explanations of miraculous events (*e.g.*, the feeding the multitudes; the walking on the water, &c.); in each case the disciples were mistaken. What is called a naturalistic explanation is found for the miraculous. This is precisely Mr. Campbell's view,—the story of the Transfiguration was the blunder of half-awakened men. The explanation of his German predecessor has at least the merit of greater poetry: Paulus believed that two unknown men were mistaken for Moses and Elijah, a mist illuminated by the rising sun furnishing the glory of the vision.

What are some of the facts that go to establish the common faith against Mr. Campbell's reading of the history?

The narrative is recorded by Matt., Mark and Luke. What the original relations between these were,—how far they are dependent one on another,—how far they follow some original tradition, no man can now say. At the least, they are three witnesses to the belief of the early Church as to the reality of the vision. That belief, remember, existed *before* the Gospels. And it depends not on the evidence of one man alone, but of three—Peter, James, and John. Were all mistaken? Peter refers to the incident in his 2nd Epistle (ch. i. 16-18). Even if

* *Hist. Intro. to the N.T.*, 9th Ed. (1899), p. 9.

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this Epistle were not his (as some have said), it must embody what was known to be his teaching on the subject. Indirectly, John (Gospel i. 18), and Paul (2 Cor. 3-18), seem to refer to it, though we cannot press this evidence.

Mr. Campbell might indeed point out that he takes an objection antecedent to the writing of the Gospels, and to the belief of the early Church. In effect, he will not allow that the original witnesses are trustworthy. This narrows the issue to a very simple one. Are we to trust the three Apostles, who were present, or Mr. Campbell—who was not?

How does Mr. Campbell's account of "the real vision"—an account that rests solely upon his imagination—fit the facts? With none too much reverence, he sketches the lines along which the prayer of the Lord moved, even to describing the "passion" in His tones. I entirely fail to see the "strikingly obvious" character of the resemblance between the Lord's "impending fate" and that of "His great predecessors." Mr. Campbell's own statement—defective as a summary of facts—does not exhibit any analogy at all. "Moses led the children of Israel to the borders of the promised land, which he himself only viewed from Pisgah's top, but died ere he could enter." What single point of likeness is there here to the Lord's history? Add to the statement that the sin of Moses shut him out of the land, and that it was God's grace that gave him the Pisgah view, and the "resemblance" becomes a strong dissimilarity. Again: "Elijah in a decadent age stood for God and righteousness against the guilty house of Ahab." True: but where is the "strikingly obvious resemblance" between the "impending fate" of the Lord and the history of Elijah? But Mr. Campbell goes on: "As with Moses and Elijah, so now with the Son of God, the way to victory lay through renunciation and death." Did "victory" for Moses lie through death? And what is the incident in Elijah's history to which Mr. Campbell refers? I confess I have not lately seen anything that so ill stands the test of examination as this attack upon the trustworthiness of the Gospels, and the cherished belief of the people of God.

I do not propose to speak of the spiritual significance of the Transfiguration—of what it meant to the faith of the Apostles, still less of what it must have meant to the Lord—as an evidence for its reality as an historical fact. These are our inferences: we move into the sphere of interpretation. The main question is one of fact. A dozen men, agreeing as to the *fact* of the Transfiguration, will perhaps give it a dozen different meanings; each one may see only a different facet of the same priceless diamond.

The importance of this matter cannot be exaggerated. By what has been named “a happy inconsistency,” some men can still call themselves Christians, though they set aside the very foundations of the faith. But others—and they form the bulk of mankind—without making any claim to a more severe logic, see that if the foundations are destroyed, the superstructure must fall. If I cannot believe the Apostles of the Lord on matters of physical fact—if they showed such an absence of mere intelligence as Mr. Campbell's interpretation indicates, how *can* I trust them on questions of supreme spiritual importance? The Lord Jesus wrote nothing. He entrusted to men chosen for the purpose the work of bearing witness to both what He did and taught; their oral testimony was the means of making Him known to others. All that we know of Christ, His love and grace, His works and His words, His death, resurrection and ascension, we know on the testimony of those men, “eye-witnesses of the Word.” If their evidence has been discredited, if it breaks down on such a momentous incident as the Transfiguration, can we trust it anywhere else? • It has not failed, but Mr. Campbell's appreciation of its value may stumble many souls, or furnish an excuse for unbelief.

What lies behind all this in Mr. Campbell's mind is known—partially, perhaps—to himself; fully, only to his God. Yet I

*That the disciples *misunderstood* the vision is clear from their own evidence, and their recital of their misunderstanding is a note of the genuineness of the history. It is not claimed for them that they were infallible men.

think there is no mystery about it. To another correspondent he writes in the same column :—

I fail to understand why we should try to read into the consciousness of Christ an amount of supernaturalism of which ordinary humanity has no experience.

Is Christ, then, to be measured by the experience of “ordinary humanity?” I think I do not wrong Mr. Campbell when I say that a denial of the supernatural lies behind the views he is enunciating. If that be the case, what does he retain in common with those who hold the Catholic faith? It is a point I do not propose to deal with in this paper. The cleavage between us is as wide as that which separates the East from the West. And we can only trust that God may arrest the working of the mischief, and grant restoration to “the old paths” to one whose power for good or evil is unquestionably great.

“We are a supernatural people,” said Mr. Hudson Taylor, the apostle to China, “born again by a supernatural birth, kept by a supernatural power, sustained on supernatural food, taught by a supernatural Teacher from a supernatural book.” This witness is true. In Christianity the supernatural is met with at every turn, just because it is that God in His grace has interposed to reveal Himself and to meet man’s need. *O altitudo divitiarum!*

W. J.

OUT AND INTO.

“He brought us out, that He might bring us in.”—
Deut. vi. 23.

Out of the distance and darkness so deep,
Out of the settled and perilous sleep,
Out of the region and shadow of death,
Out of its foul and pestilent breath,
Out of the bondage and wearying chains,
Out of defilement for ever, with stains,
Into the light and glory of God,
Into the holiest, made clean by blood,

Out and Into.

Into His arms—the embrace and the kiss,
 Into the sense of ineffable bliss ;
 Into the quiet, the infinite calm,
 Into the place of the song and the psalm !
 Wonderful love that has wrought all for me !
 Wonderful work that has thus set me free !
 Wonderful ground upon which I have come !
 Wonderful tenderness, welcoming home !

Out of disaster and ruin complete,
 Out of the struggle, and dreary defeat,
 Out of my sorrow and burden and shame,
 Out of the evils too fearful to name,
 Out of my guilt and the criminal's doom,
 Out of the dreading and terror and gloom ;

Into the sense of forgiveness and rest,
 Into inheritance with all the blest,
 Into a righteous and permanent peace,
 Into the grandest and fullest release,
 Into the comfort without an alloy,
 Into a perfect and confident joy,
 Wonderful holiness, bringing to light,
 Wonderful grace, putting all out of sight,
 Wonderful wisdom, devising the way,
 Wonderful power that nothing could stay.

Out of the horror of being alone,
 Out, and for ever, of being my own,
 Out of the hardness of heart and of will,
 Out of the longings which nothing could fill,
 Out of the bitterness, madness, and strife,
 Out of myself and of all I called life ;

Into communion with Father and Son,
 Into the sharing of all that Christ won,
 Into the ecstasies full to the brim,
 Into the having of all things with Him ;
 Into Christ Jesus, there ever to dwell,
 Into more blessing than words e'er can tell,

Wonderful lowliness, draining my cup,
 Wonderful purpose that ne'er gave me up,
 Wonderful patience that waited so long,
 Wonderful glory to which I belong.

Out of my poverty into His wealth,
 Out of my sicknesses, into pure health,
 Out of the false, and into the true,
 Out of the old man—into the New,
 Out of what measures the full depth of "Lost,"
 Out of it all, and at infinite cost ;
 Into what must with that cost correspond,
 Into that which there is nothing beyond,
 Into the union which nothing can part,
 Into what satisfies His, and my heart,
 Into the deepest of joys ever had,
 Into the gladness of making God glad ;
 Wonderful Person, whose face I'll behold,
 Wonderful story, then all to be told,
 Wonderful—all the dread way that He trod,
 Wonderful end—He has brought me to God.

"WHAT IS MAN?"

Three times in the Old Testament Scriptures we meet with the query, "What is man?" The very repetition of the words is sufficient to arrest our attention ; we naturally pause to enquire what connection there is between the passages in question, and what are the lessons that the Spirit of God would convey to our souls.

We turn first to Job vii. 17-19, where we read : "What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him, and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him, and that Thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment? How long wilt Thou not look away from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?" (R.V.) This is the language of petulance, wrung from the lips of a deeply tried man. The story is a well-known

one. God, in the beginning of it, raised a question with the enemy concerning His servant ; and was answered with the sneer that he was only pious for gain, and that if all his worldly advantages were taken from him, he would readily renounce his Creator. Job was accordingly tested. The malicious adversary was permitted to strip him of his possessions, family, and even health itself. He then had to retire from the case, completely baffled, for the saint maintained his integrity in spite of all his afflictions. If the matter had been allowed to rest there, the experience would probably have proved harmful to Job, for he might have said with complacency that he had stood true to God both in prosperity and in adversity. The twenty-ninth chapter makes it plain that there was already a weed of self-satisfaction springing up within him, unknown, probably, to himself, but manifest enough to the holy eye of God. God, therefore, went on with the work at the point where the enemy was compelled to abandon it, that He might effectually rid His servant of the noxious weed, and so do him good in his latter end.

How did Job bear the divine hand ? The Spirit truly tells us of his "patience" (James v. 11), but has He not also recorded for our instruction not a little *impatience* ? Let us deal tenderly here. Who among us would have stood the strain of suffering better than Job ? How amazed we have been at times at the amount of perversity and unbelief suffering and trial have discovered within ourselves ! With humble gratitude, therefore, we welcome the portrait of the human heart as given to us in the book of Job ; for it is no small help to our souls even in this most privileged day.

Job saw the hand of God very clearly, and confessed it, but he did not understand it ; nor could his three friends enlighten him upon the subject. The patriarch looked at the almightiness of God, and then at his own weakness and insignificance, and he marvelled that He could occupy Himself so intensely with him. Hence his exclamation : "What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him ? . . . How long wilt Thou not look away from me ?" In his deep distress he wished that God would turn His eyes in some other direction, and give attention to someone else.

Poor Job ! How much he would have missed, how much the whole family of faith would have missed, if God had taken him at his word !

The interest of God in the individual soul, though so inexplicable to Job at that moment, is most precious. What greater proof could we have of its reality than the book of which we are speaking ? Think of one of the largest books of the Bible (for not many exceed forty-two chapters) being entirely occupied with the history of God's dealings with *one soul*, and he not of Abraham's seed ! Such was God's interest in His servant, that He did not "look away" from him, nor "let him alone," spite of his prayer ; but went forward with His gracious work until it was completed, and the full blessing of it had been reaped.

Our second passage is Psalm viii. 3-6 : "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained ; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him ? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him ? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour ; Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands ; Thou hast put all things under his feet." This, as iv., seems to be one of David's night psalms. It was, perhaps, written on one of those nights when he was watching his father's sheep in the fields of Bethlehem. As the pious shepherd looked above, and contemplated the heavens and their glorious host, he was so overwhelmed with the majesty of Him who made them all that he burst out with the words we have just transcribed. Why should One who has such marvellous things before Him as the moon and the stars give such a large place in His mind to man, and the son of man ? It is undeniable, all Scripture being witness, that man has a place in the Divine thoughts that even angels have not, with all their superior glory and might. How is this to be explained ? What is the answer to the Psalmist's query ? The Spirit of God gives us the answer in Hebrews ii. 5-10. There He quotes the words of this psalm, and applies them to Christ. He is the man who fills the mind of God ; He is the ideal Son of man for whom all dominion is purposed. He having become man in His grace explains in the

fullest way God's tender interest in our poor race. Having been made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, in resurrection He has brought man (*i.e.* believers) into a higher place and a nearer relationship to God than angels have ever known, or ever will know.

As Son of man He will shortly have all things placed beneath His feet ; the Church, His body, being associated with Him in His glory (Eph. i. 22). Adam in his extensive dominion was but a figure of Christ (Gen. i. 26-28). The first man failed in his divinely appointed place of rule, and ruined the whole system that God had made dependent upon him ; the Second man, with an even wider dominion, will fill all the earth with the excellence of Jehovah's name, ministering withal fulness of blessing to all His subjects. Then will be creation's jubilee after ages of bondage and groaning, as Romans viii. speaks. John, in a bold figure in Rev. v. 13, 14, represents all created things, including the denizens of the sea, as praising God and the Lamb in the day of their deliverance and blessing.

Our third passage is Psalm cxliv. 3-6 : " Lord, what is man, that Thou takest knowledge of him ? Or the son of man, that Thou makest account of him ? * Man is like to vanity : his days are as a shadow that passeth away. Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down ; touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them : shoot out Thine arrows and destroy them." In these verses David has his enemies before his mind. He was God's Anointed, known and owned as such years before he sat on Israel's throne (1 Sam. xxiii. 17 ; xxiv. 20) ; yet there were never wanting enemies, both before and after his accession, who did their best to frustrate the purposes of God concerning him. He speaks of these in Psalm cxliv. Filled with thoughts of the resistless power of God, he marvels that He should permit man who is like to vanity to so constantly fling himself across His path, and seek to obstruct

* There is an interesting difference between this Psalm and Psalm viii. that should be noticed. Here " man " in the Hebrew is " Adam," and " son of man " is " son of enosh ; " in Psalm viii. the words are used in the reverse order. " Enosh " means " feeble, mortal man."

Him in the accomplishment of His counsels. He follows this up with the fervent appeal: "Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down . . . Cast forth lightning, and scatter them." It is the old problem of God's permission of evil. This has perplexed the godly in every age. The wicked triumph, and the righteous suffer; the plans and purposes of the one are carried through to a successful issue, while those of the other too often meet with disappointment and discomfiture. God could so easily order it all otherwise, yet He does not act! *Heaven is silent*. Who has not felt the strain and trial of this!

Here let us turn to Rev. x. A mighty angel is seen coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud, having a rainbow upon his head, his face as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. Surely this is God's Christ. With one foot upon the sea and the other upon the earth, he lifts up his hand to heaven, and swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there shall be no longer delay, "but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, according to the good tidings which He hath declared to His servants the prophets" (R.V.) "The mystery of God," *i.e.*, the mystery of His non-intervention, of His permission of evil, will then be cleared up. The heavens will no longer be silent, but opened. The rightful Lord of all will come forth, and take His rights; evil shall be dethroned, and righteousness will be exalted in peace. Every riddle will then be explained; every difficult problem will be solved; and we shall see that, spite of all appearances, no purpose of God has really been hindered by the enemy; but that, on the contrary, God has been silently working out to a completion all His counsels of grace, for His own glory, and for the blessing of men. In the midst of wreck and ruin all around us, this thought is full of comfort and hope to the exercised soul.

Let us take heart. Faith will yet be constrained to say with the adoring Apostle: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! . . . For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to Whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Romans xi. 33-36). W. W. FEREDAY.

“THE LORD IS AT HAND.”

This divine statement does not need the use of italics to emphasise its truth nor to force itself in upon the soul. The yearning hearts of disciples in all parts of the world respond to it; while the moral and significant signs of the *near* return are multiplying around us. “The Lord is at hand” is a burning sentence. May it burn itself into the hearts of our readers! Does it not seem a piece of insensate folly to shut our eyes, to wilfully blind ourselves, to the character of the times? We are on the eve of vast and unparalleled changes in the political and religious worlds. At any moment a bomb shell might be thrown into Europe which would rouse a conflagration of unspeakable horror. It is just possible that the present war in the far east may be confined to the two Powers chiefly concerned. We do not assert that the conflict between Russia grasping in her greed for extension of territory, and Japan for national existence, is in the fulfilment of prophetic scripture. Prophecy turns upon the restoration of Judah to Palestine. But if the present war ends without the direct and armed intervention of Europe we shall be surprised. God, however, is very good, and He *may* delay for a little while longer the GREAT CONSUMMATION—Europe and Asia in the throes of a struggle unequalled in magnitude since the downfall of the Empire, under whose sanction the Lord was crucified and by whom the Jews have been dispersed world-wide.

Again, the fierce search-lights of science and of a dishonest criticism are thrown upon the Holy Scriptures. When we assert that in all departments of science *finality* has not been reached, and that succeeding investigators are continually correcting the mistakes of their predecessors, we simply assert what can be proved to a demonstration, and what in fact is admitted on every hand. We ask one pertinent question: mention one scientific *fact* which contradicts any statement in the Bible? Produce it if you can. Is science, which is ever progressing and never complete either in its conclusions as to principles or facts, a reliable judge of Scripture? We trow not. We invite in the certain light of science the keenest research into the Word of God. Creation

and the Bible are from the same source, from the same Author; they are in harmony, not in contradiction. The Bible is a written Revelation of, and from God to man. The Scriptures are inspired, and hence incapable of error and mistake. That they have suffered somewhat in copying is no more than what we might expect. By all means let criticism correct these human blunders. But to deny Prophecy and Miracle, to maintain that the Bible is part fact and fiction, is a direct and public attack upon the veracity of the Living God, Christ, the Holy Ghost, and the sacred writers. The truthfulness of the Divine Records are vouched for in every part of the sacred volume, while Eastern discovery in Egypt, in Palestine, and, above all in Assyria, positively teem in overwhelming evidence to the exact and literal truth of Bible prophecy and history. Better at once face the question: It is the Bible or no Bible, Christianity or Atheism.

“THE LORD IS AT HAND.”

We adduce two considerations in proof of the imminence of the coming. *First*, we are in the Laodicean condition of the Church, a condition out of which there is no corporate recovery. There are seven distinctive church-states (Rev. ii., iii.) The first three are consecutive, and have long since passed away; the moral features, of course, ever remain for every day practical use and profit. In the addresses to these churches, or rather to their representatives (the angels), there is no direct reference to the Lord's coming; in each of the last four there is. Thyatira, *the papacy*, exists but is not the characteristic church state of to-day. Sardis, *protestantism* in death and indifference, exists but is not the distinctive church state of the early years of the 20th century. Philadelphia, *reality and true godliness*, exists but is not the broadly-marked feature of church-life. Laodicea presents the *worst and most loathsome* condition of the church recorded by the Seer of Patmos. This is the last, the final state of the professing body about to be cut off (Rom. xi.), to be spued out of the Lord's mouth (Rev. iii 16). There is not an eighth condition of the church; there is nothing beyond Laodicea, but the guilt and doom of the harlot (xvii., xviii.) We have entered upon the last

and closing stage of church history. Ecclesiastically Laodicea stamps its character upon our age, and we are finding ourselves to-day between the threat of excision and its accomplishment. We refer, of course, to the general professing body, not to true Christians, nor to the mystical body of Christ, which does not come within the domain of judgment, being solely in counsel and work—*God's*. Now let our readers compare the facts open to all with Rev. iii. 15-17, and say is not the correspondence complete. We have already remarked that this, the last state of the church, is one of hopeless recovery. Christ is outside, standing, knocking, and speaking. He asks for admission. But the angel of the church hears not the voice of her grieved Lord. The church is indifferent, but one here and there hears and opens the door for Christ to enter. Recovery is *individual* not *corporate* (verse 20). How near, therefore, the Coming! The last hours of the church on earth are rapidly running out. We see the *end*.

The *second* consideration which distinctly intimates that the Lord is *at hand* is the revival of Jewish national independence. The fig tree is symbolic of Israel as a nation (Luke xxi. 29). Now in Matt. xxi. the Lord blasts the fig tree, the then generation of Israel was utterly rejected. But in xxiv., where Israel again comes within the sphere of prophecy, the fig tree begins to bud and blossom. In the former Israel is rejected—the fig tree is blasted; in the latter scripture God commences dealing afresh with Israel, and hence the fig tree puts forth her leaves. “Summer is *nigh*” and “He is near, even at the doors” (verses 32, 33). Here we are furnished by the Lord Himself with a clear and un mistakeable sign that the glad summer of a thousand years is *nigh*, and He for whom we wait is at hand. Israel is coming to the front. The Jewish question cannot be deferred. It must be taken up. The Zionist movement, which has as its *one* aim the restoration of the nation to Palestine, is probably the most significant sign of the centuries. The Jew is getting ready for Canaan, and the land is getting agriculturally ready for its ancient inhabitants. The fig tree is beginning to bloom and blossom.

Now, reader, weigh carefully those two considerations which

The Philadelphian Crown.

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utter no uncertain sound, which tell no doubtful story, severally and together they proclaim the glad truth, "The Lord is at hand." The silence of God is about to be broken. The voice of our descending Lord is about to fall on our ears. The testimonies in John xiv. 1-3; 1 Thess. iv. 13-17; and the greater part of 1 Cor. xv. are on the eve of fulfilment. The hearts of the redeemed are quivering with eager and holy desire. The Church is waking up and is grasping the reality of her hope—the personal return of the Lord. The conviction is growing and deepening that the Coming is at hand, and may be momentarily expected. The descent of the Lord from heaven to the air to translate all His redeemed then alive on the earth, and to raise and change His sleeping dead is that for which we look, and wait, and hope, and is an event absolutely independent of prophetic circumstances; yea, one prior to the opening of the coming prophetic scheme. However much you may defer prophecy, you cannot, without serious loss to the soul, postpone beyond next moment the coming of the Lord for His Own: "The Lord is at hand."

THE PHILADELPHIAN CROWN.

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 11).

As we survey the deadly conflict raging around—a conflict between light and darkness, good and evil, God and Satan, we are heartily ashamed of the past—of much of it. O the wasted time in controversial trifles, instead of contending for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Vital truths must be maintained at all cost, but is it too much to say that many of our past, and most of our present, contentions are merely to support "our party," our ecclesiastical position, and not that of the broad ground of the Church of God. We are quarreling and contending for a position which we aver our brethren have not. Unless there is fundamental truth at stake, and that unmistakeably so, why not sink these petty and trivial differences, and embrace our brethren in a love which will make manifest to the world that we

are His disciples (John xiii. 34, 35). Does VITAL TRUTH separate us from one another? This is a serious question, and demands an immediate answer from every professed Philadelphian saint, especially in light of the Master's own words: "Behold, I come quickly." What a triumph for God were existing divisions healed, the ranks closed up, and a rally made round the Word of God. *The* question of the hour is not the rightness or wrongness of any party, of any sect, but is the Bible to be preserved to us; in brief, it is the question of Christianity or Infidelity—Christianity with its attendant blessings, or Infidelity with its accompanying lawlessness and wickedness.

Every saint of God should earnestly seek to know, and as earnestly seek to occupy the Philadelphian moral position. What is it? Are we weak enough to have our souls so entranced with Christ that mere ecclesiastism will wither, having no congenial soil nor atmosphere for its growth. Christ is everything in the Spirit's address to Philadelphia, and the love of the brethren next, which Philadelphia means. O for a holy, strong, all-powerful love which will overthrow human barriers, even if erected by leaders of name and renown, and heartily embrace all who love the Lord in sincerity and truth. We are convinced from personal and thorough investigation that the cry of evil which frightens the lambs of the flock, and rests as an incubus on sensitive consciences does not exist to the extent, nor in many places where it is supposed to be. Investigate for yourself, and where vital error cannot be found, cultivate the warmest feelings of love and fellowship. You will be an immense gainer by so doing. One other remark. Do not have argus eyes for evil. Do not spend your time in searching it out. Look at the good, and even where you think you have found evil be free to own every bit of moral excellence. That is God-like.

"Hold fast what thou hast," never let it go. This, it will be observed, is not an ecclesiastical position. It is a positive relation to Christ. The characteristic possessions of Philadelphia are these: (1) Christ's WORD; (2) Christ's NAME; (3) Christ's PATIENCE; (4) Christ's COMING. These, then, constitute in brief, the Philadelphian crown. Struggle on beloved brethren.

The compensations overpower the sufferings. The path we tread ends in strength and brightest glory. Are we contending for these vital truths connected with the Holy Person of our Lord? Struggle on, the victor's rest and reward shall soon be thine. These four: the Word, Name, Patience, and Coming go together. They are inseparable. You cannot have a compromise here. They all go together. It is not the *start*, but the *end* which settles the question of the crown. Never surrender one iota of these truths. Let us test ourselves brethren by this: Is Christ *all* and *everything* to our hearts and in our ways?

THE BURDEN-BEARER.

There is a phrase that frequently recurs in the Gospel of Matthew, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken" It is evident that behind the events he records, St. Matthew saw the purpose and the will of God. In his judgment, things did not *chance* to happen; as surely as this world is not "a fortuitous concourse of atoms," so surely were the moral and spiritual events he speaks of within the control of Him to whose eternity our ages are as nothing. The Evangelist sees, therefore, in the incidents of the life of Jesus the fulfilment of what had been long foretold by the mouth of God's holy prophets as His determinate counsel. The gracious Incarnation, the flight to and return from Egypt, the Ministry, the Betrayal, the Passion, the Death—all are seen by St. Matthew as the fulfilling of the prophetic word.

And so with respect to that feature of Christ's character and work of which I wish to write—Burden-bearing—it is to St. Matthew but a part of what Holy Scripture had aforetime affirmed of the Messiah. "Himself bare our infirmities and carried our sicknesses." He quotes Isaiah liii. 4. And I point out, in passing, that this statement is a strong though indirect testimony to the Divinity of Christ. Under the old Covenant, it was Jehovah, and none other, Who held towards His people this relationship of Burden-Bearer. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted," says Isaiah, "and He bare them and carried them all

the days of old." "Blessed be the Lord," says the Psalmist, "Who daily beareth our burdens, even the God of our salvation" (Psalms lxxviii. 19, R.V.) It was the invitation of God to His troubled saint, as it was the challenge of the scorner to the suffering Messiah, to roll his burden upon the Lord. Neither of Moses nor Elijah, nor of any other devoted servant of God could it be said that he bore the afflictions of the people. None but One who was divine could take up the weight that was upon men's hearts and "bear" them. So that this passage, like others that speak of giving rest and of forgiving sins, is an implied assertion of the truth with which the Gospel opens,—that Jesus was "Immanuel; God with us."

This subject—the bearing of men's sorrows—is full of mystery, and one we need to touch with reverent hands. For what does it mean? In what sense did He "take" and "carry" the infirmities and the sicknesses of men? Of this we may be quite sure, that these acts were not a sort of magic which simply dissipated the burdens. In some way, He "took" them. It was not banishment, but bearing. Why did He "sigh?" (Mark vii. 34). Why did he "weep?" (John xi. 35). In what sense did "virtue go out of Him" as He healed the sore and secret need of the woman who touched Him? (Mark v. 30). Perhaps all that we can say is that it somehow cost Him dear. In the presence of the fact we stand and worship.

But if we have to confess our ignorance as to the "How?" of this burden-bearing, there is a practical side that faces us: What do we know of Christ as Burden-bearer with respect to our own needs? There is a subtle danger that lies before every Christian, and especially before the student of Scripture—(which every Christian should be)—in the possibility of confounding his knowledge about the historical Christ with that "experimental knowledge" concerning which our forefathers wrote and spoke with such insistence. The vivid descriptions of one writer, the exact antiquarian knowledge of another, the historical studies of a third—pen, pencil and camera combine to enable even the stay-at-home Christian to see "those holy fields," to watch the people, and to know the habits and modes of thought, and the

currents and cross-currents of political movement of 1900 years ago, through which moved the august Figure of the Saviour of the world. But imagination is not faith; the grouping of the Gospel incidents into vivid mental tableaux is not trust in the Living Lord. Apart from all historical reconstruction, do we know Christ for our own selves, the Bearer of our burdens?

These burdens are lamentably many, but we may roughly group them as pressing upon the conscience, the mind, the heart. We cannot draw a hard and fast line between them; some grief that strikes the heart may furnish material for mental perplexity; what is at first an intellectual burden in the presence of some of the mysteries of nature and of revelation, may pass into the sin of unbelief, with its defiling of the conscience.

A phrase comes out of the religious conversation of my younger days that is not so often heard now: "conviction of sin." It is not merely "a Bible phrase;" it comes from the lips of the Lord Himself, when He said the Holy Spirit should convince (or convict) the world of sin. It is somewhat out of fashion now. The present learned and respected Bishop of Durham said some years ago that the great need of to-day is a deeper sense of sin. The conscience of even Christian people seems less tender on the subject than it used to be. Men do not write now in the strain of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, or of Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*. In reading lately extracts from the Diary of the saintly McCheyne, I was struck with his deep sense of the reality of sin, and his great self-abasement about it. But now-a-days, as one has said, "The man in the street knows nothing of sin; the word does not enter into the creed of the literary man of the present century." The whole tendency of modern thought is to make light of it; man is treated as the creature of his environment—his manner of life, his appetites, his passions, are determined by heredity and brain-formation. These ideas are in the air; we cannot escape their influence except as we abide near the Cross. He who would know sin, must often repair thither. "Holy Mr. Herbert," in his little poem, *The Agony*, would send us to Gethsemane, with its agony even to blood, to learn that lesson. But Calvary with its Cross, and the cry of

dereliction, touches a deeper depth. *That*, however, is the knowledge of the saint. I speak rather of the conviction that comes to us from our sinnership—a conviction that we too often fight against. We show a wondrous fertility in the invention of excuses.*

But the armour has not yet been forged that can withstand the sword of the Spirit, and man's most self-complaisant theories go down before the Word of God. In a hundred different ways—by goodness, by gentleness, by His holy law, by fear, by disappointment, God speaks to us, and I suppose that most of those who read my words will have passed through some crisis in their spiritual history when they got such a sight of themselves and their sinfulness as humbled them, and made them cry out for One to deliver. It is not the awakened sinner alone who knows this experience, and is conscious of his need of the Burden-Bearer. The sense of sin in the newly-aroused sinner is often slight compared with that the older Christian has, for the latter from a higher level, from the heavenward side of the Cross, from communion with God, or perchance from the sad sense of communion lost, sees more clearly what "the plague of his own heart" is, than the man whose chief thought is, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul the aged, the servant and the saint, had a deeper view of his unworthiness than young Saul of Tarsus. In the earlier days of his apostleship, he was confident that he was not a whit behind the chiefest apostles; in the riper years of his ministry he confessed himself "less than the least of all

* Since this paper was written, a book on John Bunyan and his life and work has been issued. It is written by the author commonly known as, "Mark Rutherford." A reviewer writes as follows:—"Mark Rutherford finds the chief distinction between Bunyan's age and our age, 'the vanishing of a sense of sin.' . . . 'Luther and Bunyan had both known what it was to be prostrate under a conviction of impotence and sin and consequently under the curse of damnation. It is all well-nigh inconceivable and fantastic to us. The over-whelming sense of guilt is dead. If we ever feel guilty, we can pardon ourselves without any ado.'" Mark Rutherford's standpoint is very different from that occupied by the present writer, and his testimony is, therefore, the more strongly confirmatory of what is written above.

saints;" in mellow old age, with the glow of coming glory upon his face, he was "the chief of sinners." And when we are near to the Cross or the Throne, it is then that the burden of sin is most keenly felt, and we are conscious of sins of thoughts and of speech, sins of defect and of transgression, sins of our holy things defiling our work and our worship, as leaven would have defiled the sacrifices of old. And what is the answer to the voice of conscience? "This same Jesus." "Himself took our infirmities." No longer on earth but in heaven, He is a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of His people.

The mind has its own burdens, though I do not propose to write of them at any length. No thoughtful man—least of all, the thoughtful Christian—escapes them. Sooner or later the mysteries of life overwhelm us with something like horror. They cannot have seen much of life who hold this to be "the best of all possible worlds." Dr. Robertson Nicoll was right when he spoke of "the shallow optimism" of Browning's lines:

"God's in His heaven,
All's right with the world!"

Not so did St. Paul view this creation, "which groaneth and travaileth in pain until now." The sickness and sorrow—the inequalities of life—the catastrophes by sea and land that plunge hundreds of homes into mourning—the cruelty in so much of Nature—the ineradicable presence of sin—the failure and corruption of things that came so "good" from the hand of God—these are some of the questions that press upon our minds with a persistent "*Why?*" What is the answer? For the final reading of the riddle we must wait God's time. But the burden of it we may take to our Divine Lord, and leave with Him. There was perhaps never such a mental perplexity as that which fell upon the disciples when all their hopes in, and for Christ, seemed to be brought to a rude end by the Cross. But Easter and Pentecost came, and with the Resurrection of the Lord, and the outpouring of the Spirit, many of the difficulties and questions were more than answered. The night with its weeping passed, and morning came with joy. And He Who hung upon

the Cross is the One Who holds the solution of all mysteries, and our hearts may rest in His wisdom, His power, and His love. God's way is in the sea, His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known. So said the Psalmist when his spirit was overwhelmed, and his soul refused to be comforted. Yet there was the knowledge, too, that God's way is in the Sanctuary, or rather, in holiness. The way may be mysterious, but we know it is right, and, if we know not the way, we know *Him*, and that His Name is Love.

Conscience may not have a very keen tooth with some of us ; burdens of the mind may sit lightly, but Sorrow comes home and sups with us all. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," said Job. Language itself contains a sad and silent record of this. There are between twenty and thirty words in the Hebrew Scriptures that are rendered "sorrow" in our version. None of us can escape the burdens that press upon the heart—bereavement, disappointed hopes and ambitions, the pang of being misjudged, the "freezing sky" of being forgotten, the loss of means, or the burden of knowing that dear ones suffer perpetually, and without hope of relief. Do we know Christ as the Burden-Bearer in these special sorrows? Is there any sense in which we can say He carries our afflictions?—for in some of the circumstances I am supposing, the point is that they are not removable. The answer is that He bears both us and our burdens ; His grace is made perfect in our weakness, and we are able to glory in infirmities, while the power of Christ overshadows us. So wrote St. Paul, and the school in which he learned is the school opened to all God's people. And many a saint of God, though compassed about with infirmities, has in his own way sung such a song of thanksgiving as that of Adelaide Procter's :

I thank Thee more that all our joy
Is touched with pain,
That shadows fall on brightest hours,
That thorns remain ;
So that earth's bliss may be our guide,
And not our chain.

An Exhortation.

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I thank Thee, Lord, that here our souls,
 Though amply blest,
 Can never find, although they seek,
 A perfect rest,
 Nor ever shall, until they lean
 On Jesus' breast.

And so the prophecy of olden times has its fulfilment, not only for those who had personal sight and touch of the Lord in the days of His flesh, but for us also: "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows":—"Himself bare our infirmities and carried our sicknesses."

W. J.

AN EXHORTATION.

Readiness to impute evil is in itself an evil. We find that those who indulge in this unholy habit are not characterised by a scrupulous regard for truth or accuracy of statement. Nor will you find such persons equally ready to discover the good in those they condemn. There is evil, more or less, in every community of Christians; none are free from it. Even those who may be ecclesiastically right, may be morally wrong. A right position should humble one and mellow the character. "With *all* lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love," is an exhortation, which, when witnessed, draws souls, attracts hearts, and makes disciples. The position occupied by such saints becomes ennobled and sanctified. But often in point of fact, Christian character is more beautifully displayed by saints who walk with God, and may yet occupy an unscriptural Church position. Communion with the Lord is of far more value than a *merely* right Church standing. Let us have both.

YOUR FATHER KNOWETH.

“Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him” (Matt. vi. 8). “The Sermon on the Mount” as it is generally termed, occupies chapters 5, 6, and 7 of our Gospel. It is a Sermon addressed to disciples (v. 1, 2) about the Kingdom, not the Church. The first mention of the latter is in chapter xvi. We have here a beautiful delineation of kingdom-character. Herein is unfolded the moral features of the subjects of the heavenly and earthly departments of the coming Kingdom—traits of character witnessed in perfection in Christ, Israel’s rejected Monarch. The King would have His subjects reflect Him in moral likeness. There are some statements in the Sermon which cannot apply at the present time. But every moral truth has an abiding application. Whatever flows from the nature of God as light and love ever remains.

“Your Father knoweth” is a precious and consolatory truth; a statement full of strength to the weak, of comfort to the afflicted, and of priceless value to the poor of the flock. “Your Father knoweth” is faith’s resource at all times and under all circumstances. It is a cure for all anxiety. Is it not balm for the wounded heart? Is it not God’s great calm for the troubled soul? “Your Father knoweth.” He knows your need—your every need. His *love* is boundless, measureless, and O so infinitely tender. His *power* is omnipotent, irresistible in its might and in its exercise on your behalf. His *grace* covers the whole journey from the start to the goal, from the cross to the glory, and provides all seasonable help by the way (Heb. iv. 16). His *care* over you is unceasing. Each believer is a subject of His personal care and attention, while His Angels are sent out from His presence to minister to you. His *omniscience* searches the whole earth; nothing too trivial, nothing too great escapes His all-seeing eye, and this to show Himself strong on your behalf (2 Chron. xvi. 9). His *fore-knowledge* of each member of the blood-purchased flock in which account is taken beforehand of birth, of person, of character, of training, of endowment, of position, and of every detail in life, is a truth which lifts us out of

Your Father Knoweth.

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our littleness and sets us down in God's own presence in eternity—objects of His thoughts and counsels. Every attribute in God, singly and combined, works for your blessing. God is for you. He is on your behalf.

He *knows* your need of food and clothing. He *knows* your poverty. He *knows* about the sickness in the family. He *knows* your daily struggle. He *knows* all about these difficult times and increasing business trials. He *knows* every misunderstanding. He *knows* how cruelly you have been wronged. He *knows* how improper motives are attributed to you. He *knows* you through and through. All your circumstances are minutely and absolutely known to Him. What a God He is. He made worlds, gave His Son to die, and numbers the hairs of your head. He bottles your tears, records your words, and hears the faintest sigh. "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of." Is that not enough? Is His knowledge of our need not better than ours? Do you repose on His knowledge of what is needed? "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." Before ever the heart utters itself in groan or prayer, He knows. You do not surprise Him by the recital of grief or need. He knew it all and perfectly before ever you entered His presence with your burdened heart.

Cast *all* your care upon Him. Do you think He will take the heavy trials and leave you to bear the light ones? No, He asks all your care, the small and great. The weight of the universe and the weight of a feather are the same to Him. There is nothing relatively great or small to God. Cast upon Him, therefore, all your care. Lean your weakness upon Him. He loves to be *wholly* trusted. He is the Mighty One. Cannot you trust Him for each separate trial and cause of anxiety as it arises? Put your confidence in God direct. Put *Him* between you and the dreaded trial. Ask Him to sustain you, to guide you, to feed you, to clothe you, to house you. This is not a bit of sentiment but Christian reality, which the writer and many others have proved. See that the face of God is ever shining in upon your soul. Let there be no reserve between you and Him. There is no difficulty which His gracious hand and help cannot meet.

No known or unknown need or poverty can make demands which would impoverish His resources. His grace is inexhaustible. God is great and a generous giver, and He loves to be regarded as such. Come to Him in great need and strong faith, and make large demands. You will honour Him in so doing.

Come to Him. He is your Father. A father's love and caress; a father's wisdom in giving or withholding; a father's tender care: all this and more are for you—to be practically proved. Come into His presence boldly, whether for worship (Heb. x. 19), or help by the way (iv. 16). Fear not, spread before Him your circumstances. Do it simply, do it earnestly, do it believingly, and do it weepingly if needs be. Keep nothing back. Tell Him *all*. Then in quiet confidence look up for the answer, which may not come in the way nor from the quarter expected, but come it will. Your need is *real*, His *knowledge* is perfect. "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him."

Say not my soul "from whence can God relieve my care?"

Remember, Omnipotence hath servants everywhere,
His method is sublime. His way supremely kind,
God never is before His time, and never is behind.

THE GENERAL STATE.

What is destroying the Church is not attacks from *without*. From these she has ever emerged stronger than before; but her professed friends, wolves in sheeps' clothing, are her destroyers—men who have sold conscience, honour, and truth for a mess of pottage. Professors in our ecclesiastical colleges, and learned doctors of divinity paid for teaching Christianity to the future ministers and religious guides, are yet base enough and mean enough to pocket their salaries, while labouring indefatigably to undermine and overthrow the faith they swore to defend and uphold. The honesty of these men is on a par with their soul-destroying work. We detest dishonourable conduct in all, but loathe it especially

when practiced under lawn-sleeves and the professors' gown. Truth is the pillar of heaven and of the Church. We heartily wish all such men would go over boldly and honestly to the enemy's camp, so that, at least, we would know our friends from our foes. While we heap indignant scorn and withering contempt on the conduct of these men, who in pulpit, press, platform and theological hall are bent on destroying Christianity (as if that were possible), while refusing to relinquish their salaries, stipends, and preferments, yet we sincerely pity them as our eyes rest on those solemn words of Scripture: "If any man defile (or *corrupt*) the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (1 Cor. iii. 17). To do the devil's awful work in the centre of that wherein the Holy Ghost dwells, and to be liberally paid by professing Christians for doing it, is a terrible act.

The line of demarcation between the Church and the world is sharply drawn (2 Cor. vi. 14-18). The holy wall of separation no longer exists, and we are on the eve of that grave consummation prophetically decreed in Rev. xviii., when the horror of horrors shall be reached—the professing Church, *now* the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost, *then* "become the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (ver. 2).

NOTES ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

On *Discipline*. In all that relates to the Church of God our guide and authority must be the New Testament, as it is in the later revelation that the Church in its constitution, ministry, worship, and discipline is unfolded. A new phase of discipline, utterly unknown in the New Testament, is being taught and practised in some assemblies of God's people. Persons under a cloud of suspicion, or where guilt has not been proved, are asked to cease breaking bread for a time till they are cleared, or the sin laid to their charge is established. The request to do so is

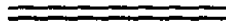
on the part of one or a few leading men, but entirely on their own responsibility. This we deem wholly and utterly unscriptural. The New Testament does not sanction any such procedure. It lacks divine authority, and hence should be repudiated on that ground alone. So long as the Church condemns the sin in question, in no wise sanctioning evil, God is with us. We can count upon His presence. If brethren in these doubtful matters, would get on their knees in united supplication to God, that *He* would come in and clear up the matter, instead of inventing a form of discipline to meet the difficulty, God would most certainly intervene. But we are more ready to act than pray. The Church puts away (1 Cor. v.) for proved acts of a serious character. On no account *suspend* a supposed offender. Wait till guilt is fully established. Do not be in a hurry. Give time for the consciences of *all* to work. No meeting of brothers as such, however aged or influential, can put away. That is the sole prerogative of the Church.

On *Marriage*. In the course of a lengthened ministry, we have repeatedly come across instances of an unequal marriage-yoke. A believer linking himself or herself to an unbeliever, a *lover* of Christ uniting in the nearest and most intimate relation of life with an *enemy* of Christ, is indeed an anomaly. Not only are such unions a direct contravention of the divine command, marry "*only* in the Lord" (1 Cor. vii. 39), but are repugnant to every holy and right thought. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" *Impossible*. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel" or unbeliever (2 Cor. vi. 14, 15). Marriage, business, and ecclesiastical fellowships are all embraced within these far-reaching and sweeping declarations. In the holiest of intimacies, in all that concerns the name and honour of Christ, and also in our eternal interests, there is absolutely no communion of thought with an unbeliever—no matter how amiable, or moral, or upright in life

the person may be. There is a dead wall between them. As a rule such marriages entail *life-long sorrow*. "Whatsoever a man soweth, **THAT** shall he also reap." God never departs from His own principles so clearly laid down in His Word. And what shall we say of the Christian young man or woman who can keep company, and walk out with one not on the Lord's side! The heart of the one who can do so must have grievously departed from the Lord. O the sorrow such persons bring upon themselves! Death under the government of God is not an unfrequent consequence of such unions, besides the loss in eternity. Solemnly do we warn our young friends of these unholy attachments, and equally unholy unions. They are ever fraught with sorrow. Break at once with every attachment and companionship not in the Lord. It may cost you much to do so, especially if the heart is deeply entangled; but better now than wait till a union is formed, which God may break by death under His chastening hand. Marry "*only* in the Lord" involves His authority and sanction. It is a more comprehensive thought than simply marrying a Christian. Marry "*only in the Lord*."

On *Reception*. "Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God" (Rom. xv. 7, R.V.) This is not Church reception to its fellowship, especially expressed at the Lord's Table. That is a prior act to the reception here enjoined. The verse we have quoted in full is the summing up and conclusion of the argument commenced in chap. xiv. Certain weak believers in the Assembly at Rome—Jews in principle, if not in nationality—were attaching undue importance to questions connected with the observance of days, abstinence from meats, &c. They were as yet ignorant of their full Christian liberty. Now these weak and unestablished saints were to be received to free unrestrained Christian intercourse—spite of their Jewish proclivities. Their consciences were to be respected. We are all the Lord's servants, whether weak or strong in the faith. If certain days were regarded as holy, and certain meats avoided, those doing so regarded the Lord in these matters. They did these things, however ignorantly, to please

the Lord. It was not self-will that was at work. But the conscience was still more or less burdened with that ritual which had come to an end in the Cross of Christ (Col. ii. 14). An enlightened conscience, and a fuller knowledge of Christian truth would, in due time, deliver them from legalism and its bondage, but till then, there was to be mutual intercourse amongst the saints—apart from those questions of conscience. “Receive ye one another,” that is mutual Christian intercourse; social Christian fellowship is to be sedulously cultivated. It is not receiving to the Lord’s Table that is in question. This latter is the act of the Church or Assembly—not that of one to another. Strictly speaking, “reception” to Christian fellowship, as expressed at the Lord’s Table, is not accurate thought. God *alone* adds to the number of His people (Acts ii. 47 : v. 14). The Church’s duty is to recognise those added—to find them out, and own them as being already constituent members of the Church, and to accord all such the fullest Christian fellowship equally with ourselves, and on precisely the same ground—redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and indwelt by the same Spirit. The Lord’s Table is for the Lord’s people. The two expressions are of equal breadth. The whole question of Christian fellowship, owing to the confusion in which we find ourselves, is a delicate and difficult one, yet certain principles ever abide for our guidance, which, in their application, greatly simplify an otherwise difficult situation. These principles we hope to consider from time to time.



TRUTH FOR THE LAST DAYS.

NOTES : THE RESULT OF A STUDY OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

THERE is only one commission to baptize (Matt. xxviii.). The commission in Mark xvi. is to preach : baptism is mentioned there incidentally and is not part of the commission. We there learn who shall be saved, *not* who should be baptized. It reads, “ He that believeth and is baptized (not, and is *then* baptized) shall be saved,” and does not say, “ He that believeth and is saved shall be baptized.” The question is thus an open one as to baptism *before* or *after* believing. The passage would embrace both.

The command is addressed to servants to baptize (Matt. xxviii.), not to persons to be baptised. It is therefore not according to Scripture to say to converts, “ Have you obeyed the Lord’s command by being baptized ? ”

In Acts x. 48, we read, “ Then he commanded them to be baptized.” The command was clearly addressed by Peter to the six brethren who had accompanied him. He ordered them, *i.e.*, the six brethren, to baptize Cornelius and those in his house who heard the Word ; just as when Jesus commanded Bartimeus to be called (Mark x. 49), the command was not addressed to Bartimeus but to those standing by. They were commanded to bring Bartimeus. Or again, when Herod commanded the Baptist’s head to be brought, the command was addressed to his servants. They were ordered to bring it, and they obeyed. So, in like manner, it is the servant who baptizes that obeys the Lord’s command, not the person baptized. The command is not addressed to him at all.

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Faith and the forgiveness of sins are not mentioned in the commission given in Matthew. Baptism there is connected with coming under authority to Christ. "All authority (R. v.) is given unto Me in heaven and earth. Go ye, therefore," etc.

The commission with which baptism is connected is one to make disciples. "Disciple" (a verb in Greek) all nations "baptizing them" and "teaching them." The pronoun "them" refers to "nations;" it can refer to nothing else. There is no other noun in the text to which it can apply. Some say the words mean, "make believers and then baptize them;" but *man* cannot make believers; God alone can do this (Matt. xvi. 17; Eph. ii. 8; John vi. 44). Men, however, can and are authorised to make disciples (Matt. xxviii. 19, R. v.).

By a believer we, to-day, understand one who has his sins forgiven (Acts xiii. 37, 38), and who has received the Holy Ghost (Eph. i. 13, R. v.).

A disciple is one who is outwardly or professedly associated with Christ as a learner or follower. To such it is said, "If ye continue in My word then are ye My disciples indeed" (John viii. 31). Judas was a disciple, but not a "disciple indeed." In John vi. 60-66, we read, many who were disciples "went back and walked no more with him," and it is said of some of them that they "believed not" (ver. 64);—disciples but not believers.

The text (Matt. xxviii. 19-20) is literally, "Disciple all nations, baptizing . . . and teaching," etc. Now, our grammars teach us that the two present participles here do not give new ideas but explain the notion in the verb. "Disciple all nations," and how? By baptizing and teaching them. So that if this passage proves anything at all, it proves the very reverse of the "Baptist" contention, since it shows that baptism is an early, or the initiatory step, in discipleship. "The baptizing

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would not, of course, be done apart from instruction or testimony concerning Christ and the meaning of the ordinance; nor would baptizing without the teaching enjoined afterwards be thorough discipling." We have a parallel case in Acts xiii. 45. "The Jews . . . spake against those things . . . contradicting and blaspheming," where again the participles serve as adverbial adjuncts to the predicate, explaining how they spoke against those things. For other examples see Acts iii. 8; xxii. 4. Saul "persecuted," and how? By "binding" and "delivering." (See *Handbook to the Grammar of the Greek Testament*, page 332),

There is nothing to indicate that the twelve Apostles, or for that part of it the one hundred and twenty, were ever baptized with Christian baptism. They constituted the beginning or nucleus of the new movement in process of being established on the earth, consequent on the death of Christ. By baptism others were received from Judaism and Paganism into their ranks; but there was no one to receive the Apostles, and they could not baptize each other, without a command for that purpose. Baptism during the lifetime of our Lord on earth, was not *Christian* baptism, as practised by the Apostles and others in this dispensation. It was not "unto His death," and "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," while Christian baptism *is*. It is worthy of note that many who were baptized as disciples in John iv. 1, were not believers (John vi. 64), and went back and walked no more with Him (ver. 66). "Save us," in 1 Peter iii. 21, should read, "save *you*" (R.V.).

The point of difference between Baptists* and others seems to hinge largely on the answer Scripture gives to the following questions, viz., Is baptism a witness of a certain *inward* state of

* We do not employ the term "Baptist" and "Baptists" in any invidious sense, but simply as denoting those who contend exclusively for what is generally termed "believer's baptism."

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soul, or has it to do with a certain *outward* professed position in the world?

In the second chapter of Acts (the first time the commission to baptize was put into practice) we find that while those whom the Apostles baptized had *repented*, they *had not* received the forgiveness of sins nor the gift of the Holy Ghost. These characteristic blessings of Christianity were bestowed after their baptism; they did not precede it (ver. 38).

Those baptized in Acts viii. and xix. believed, and consequently had the forgiveness of their sins (Simon Magus doubtless excepted, although the inspired Word calls him a baptized person), but they had not received the Holy Ghost.

Those baptized in Acts x. had believed, and received the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Ghost before being baptized.

We have thus three different inward states, yet these persons were all made the subjects of Christian baptism. Of which of these three inward states or moral conditions of soul could it be called a witness?

From these and other instances, I conclude that baptism is not a witness *to* nor a confession *of* a certain *inward* state, past or present, as "Baptists" teach.

Baptism has to do with *place*, not *state*: with *profession* not *possession*. It admits to the place where the authority of the Lord Jesus is owned (Matt. xxviii.), where the general truths of Christianity are professed. Simon the Sorcerer was admitted on his profession of belief; subsequent events proved that his heart was unchanged.

It is more difficult to understand the meaning of baptism in this semi-Christianized country than it was in apostolic times. *Then* there was the distinct camp, or circle, in which Judaism was professed, and on the other hand the larger circle of

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Paganism. Another circle was being formed, through the instrumentality of the Apostles, embracing those who professed Christianity. Baptism was the rite by which a Jew or a Pagan passed from his old position (in an outward way—it effects no change in the soul) *into the new circle*, where Christian truth was held as a profession.

In Romans vi. 2, 8, we learn that believers have died with Christ, and in Col. iii. 3 they are said to be risen with Him. Can it be, as “Baptists” seem to teach, that baptism is a confession by the individual baptized, that these things are true of him? I have a decided difficulty in accepting this view, because I find that the first persons baptized with Christian baptism (Acts ii. 38-41) had not, *before* their baptism, died with Christ and been raised with Him. In their case, the blessing of forgiveness of sins and the reception of the Holy Ghost followed their baptism.

Baptism in the Scriptures is always “into,” “unto,” or in view of something, *i.e.*, it points *forward*. “Baptists” completely reverse the scriptural order by making it point *backward*. They speak of it as a witness to, or a confession of, a *past* work wrought in the soul.

In Romans vi. we learn that baptism signifies burial. Some affirm that the “old man” is ~~dead~~, and in baptism is buried; but Scripture nowhere states that the old man is dead. It has been judicially dealt with—crucified (verse 6). The *person* is buried. The “old man” is distinguished from the person in Ephesians iv. 22. “Put off the old man.” It is that nature, or the character produced by the activities of that nature, which we inherit from Adam. It is a *person* who is baptized: you cannot bury or baptize a nature.

Romans vi. does not teach that it is a dead person, or thing, or nature, that is buried: living persons are buried *unto* (rather

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than INTO) death, *i.e.*, ever and always Christ's death, This is not contrary to nature but in keeping with it. See John xii. 24.

Romans vi. 4 does not say that those who have been walking in newness of life are to be baptized, but it teaches that those who are baptized should walk in newness of life. Walk should be in keeping with profession. It is the responsibility of the baptized that is the question—what they should do.

In Galatians iii. 27 we learn that those who have been baptized into (rather *unto*) Christ, have thereby put *on* (it does not say *in*) Christ. This speaks of what is outward—as a garment, a profession, what men see.

In 1 Peter iii. 21 baptism is said to be a “like figure” to, or a true likeness of (R. v.) the flood. In Genesis vii. 1, we read, “Come thou and all thine house into the ark, for *thee* have I found righteous.” The family of Noah were received on account of *his* righteousness. If a true likeness of baptism, why not act on the same principle to-day? Inward state was not taken into account in the case of Noah's family. Noah was righteous; Ham, at least, was not.

The ark spoke of temporal salvation, not the salvation of the soul. Baptism is said to save (1 Pet. iii. 21), but it is not the soul that it saves. So also in Acts ii. 40, “Save yourselves,” etc., does not mean their *souls* from eternal judgment—men cannot do this. It spoke of salvation from the temporal judgments that overtook the guilty nation shortly afterwards. Was it at all likely that a Jew would himself break connection with Judaism, by baptism, to escape the coming judgments, and leave his children on the old Jewish ground exposed to them?

“It is well known that parents could not have retained possession of even their own children, unless they had been baptized; the heads of the Jewish nation would have claimed them as Jews, as may be ascertained by what is done now

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when a Jew becomes a Christian. It is the same, too, in India to-day. If the head of a family becomes a Christian, and leaves, say, the Hindoo religion, his children would be taken from him *unless* they were baptized" (W. C. J.) It is the same among Romanists to-day—that Church claims all who have been baptized into its faith, even though the parents become Protestants.

Acts ii. 41, I find, is frequently misquoted. Some say, "Received *the* word." This suggests the living, the ingrafted Word, the reception of which gives life; but the passage reads "his (Peter's) word," viz., "Repent and be baptized," etc., "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." On this special occasion it was *after* baptism that soul-blessing was received (verse 38).

The Jews had an important lesson to learn, and they were taught it in Acts ii. The representatives of Judaism had rejected and crucified God's Son, their Messiah, and they had consequently to be taught that Judaism as a system was now discarded and set aside. To make this clear to them, God would not, on this important occasion, meet and bless them, on the old Jewish ground. But the moment they separated from it, by baptism, God met them in grace, granting forgiveness of sins, and bestowing the Holy Ghost. How could God own the system under which His Son had been crucified?

The Samaritans, too, had to be taught a somewhat similar lesson in Acts viii. An end had to be put to their independent religious system. They had to learn that salvation really was "of the *Jews*" (John iv.), and that the former rivalry must cease. To effect this they were made dependent on *Jewish* Apostles coming down from Jerusalem to impart to them the Holy Ghost. Thus the work in Samaria was linked up with the work at Jerusalem, and a rival centre of work and interest not allowed.

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Lydia's heart was opened. She gave heed to the things spoken by Paul, and her household, *i.e.*, those in her house under her authority, were baptized, and the question as to whether they had faith or not is never mentioned in the narrative. Verse 40 in no way contradicts this. Paul and Silas lodged in her house (verse 15), and the brethren evidently gathered there to hear words of comfort and to bid farewell.

Acts viii. 37, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest," is not in the revised version, and was well understood to be a forgery long before that version was heard of. In every critical edition of the Scriptures it is omitted. The phrase, "Believe and be baptized," is not in the Bible, although so often quoted as if it were.

The Apostles baptized believers (Acts xviii. 8) and to those who *were not* believers, in the sense in which we understand the term "believer" to-day, they administered the rite of Christian baptism (Acts ii.). This latter occasion was doubtless unique, but the point is, those persons that day were regarded by the Apostles as *fit subjects* for Christian baptism. The Apostles also baptised the households of believers (Acts xvi. 15, xvi. 33, 1 Cor. i. 16).

"In the case of the jailor at Philippi (Acts xvi.) the language seems also intentionally designed to teach us that though *all* were baptized, the jailor alone believed, being literally, and he 'rejoiced' with all his house, he having believed in God." The verbs "rejoiced" and "believed" in the original are in the singular.

The household of Stephanus mentioned in 1 Corinthians i. 16, was evidently *not* in the assembly at Corinth although baptized. Paul says, "I thank God that I baptized none of *you* (the assembly) but Crispus and Gaius . . . and I baptized also (in addition to those in the assembly) the household of Stephanus." If they all had had faith in Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and

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the Holy Ghost, they surely would have been in the assembly. The word here translated "household" is different from the Greek word translated "house" in chapter xvi. 15.

Some Baptists allude to certain happy feelings they experienced when baptized, as proof that their views must be right; but such happy feelings are not confined to Baptists, as we shall see. Besides, happy emotions sometimes arise from wrong causes—they are not always Spirit-born. The written Word alone, not feelings, must decide this as every other question.

One writer (W. C. J.), who advocates *the baptism of the believer's household*, in addition to the baptism of the believer, says, with reference to a course of lectures which he delivered on this subject:—"We have been blessed. The deep work in . . . giving largeness of heart and a more extensive view of the ways of God . . . is beyond all many of the oldest believers have previously realised. . . . during the time the subject of baptism was taken up in lectures, the worship meetings, and prayer meetings, and the occupation with Christ Himself, surpassed anything they had formerly experienced."

Baptism is not part of the Gospel (1 Cor. xv.). Paul was not sent to baptize, and thanked God that he had baptized so few of the Corinthians (1 Cor. i.). He would not have so spoken if baptism conferred soul-blessing. It was with what was inward and real that Paul had specially to do, the sphere of reality, the Church, the body, formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, rather than the sphere of outward profession with which water-baptism is connected. When this last is seen the subject becomes simpler. Always connect it with outward *place*, not *inward* state.

Ananias said to Paul, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts xxii. 16). Saul of Tarsus could not, nor can any man, wash away the sins of his soul from before the

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eye of God ; but he could, and did, wash away his sins from before the eyes of men. By baptism he broke with the guilty past and entered into a new position. No longer did he appear before men as Saul, the persecuting Pharisee—all that was past, gone, and done with. Having been baptized, he was now, to men, Paul, the disciple or follower of Christ. Had he remained unbaptized he would only have been recognised as a pious Jew.

John iii. 5 has no reference to Christian baptism. Baptism is not named in the whole chapter, but the word “water” is. If literal water were meant, it might with as much reason be contended that, since new birth is an inward change, the water should be *taken inwardly!* as that *immersion* in water is alluded to. Christian baptism was not instituted till after the Lord rose from the dead (Matt. xxviii.). It is unto His death (Rom. vi.), and people were not baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost till after the Holy Ghost came (Acts ii.). For the true meaning of “water” in John iii., compare the passage with Ephesians v. 26, John xv. 3, 1 Peter i. 23, James i. 18.

“Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matt. iii. 15). These were the words of Jesus to John, and have nothing to do with Christian baptism. It is right to submit to every ordinance of God, as He, by His action, shewed. In grace he took a place beside those in Israel in whose hearts God had in some measure been working. Multitudes were baptized, but few of them then, as to their souls, were right with God. *They* had sins to confess: *He* had none. *Their* baptism was unto repentance (Matt. iii. 11); *His* could not be. *Our* baptism is unto death, *i.e.*, Christ’s death, and in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; *His* baptism, of course, was not this, but quite different. It is all wrong, therefore, to refer to this incident, and speak to people about following the Lord in baptism.

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The Greek word "baptizo" (baptize) usually means to dip or immerse, but not always. The Israelites (1 Cor. x. 2) "were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;" but they were not *dipped* in the cloud, nor were they *dipped* in the sea, and yet they were "baptized." Again we read (1 Cor. xii. 13, R. V.), "In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." But they were not *dipped* in the Spirit (in Acts x. 44 the Spirit fell on Gentile believers), nor were they dipped into the body—not *dipped* but yet *baptized*. To say that nothing but dipping is baptism is therefore, I judge, wrong. The Holy Ghost employs the word with a latitude of meaning not accounted for in the Baptist system.

The word "baptize" has a larger meaning than the word "dip." The one is not the full equivalent of the other. The former includes the thought of a *religious rite*. A man might be *dipped*, or dip himself, a hundred times, and not be *baptized* once, in the scriptural sense of the term employed. There is a Greek word, "bapto," which means, in the Scriptures, "dip," and nothing else; but this is not the word selected by the Spirit when speaking of baptism.

Immersion was most likely the Apostolic mode, and is the best figure of burial (Rom. vi.) and should, I judge, be the mode adopted, unless where physically impossible. With some the *mode* seems almost everything. It is doubtless important, but the *religious rite* celebrated in the baptismal act is more important.

If a person has been baptized as a member of a Christian household, or as a believer, and sprinkling the mode employed, I should not re-baptize that one by immersion, because, while the mode may have been wrong, the *religious rite* (the vital factor in baptism) which is more important than any question of mode, was performed. The responsibility for any mistake in the *mode* rests with the one who baptized him. A cheque is

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a cheque, and will be cashed at the bank though written on brown paper; the important thing is the name at the bottom of it—"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Some "Baptists" endeavour to fix the charge of lack of faithfulness on the revisers of the New Testament, for not translating "baptizo" into the English word "dip;" but "dip" is not the full equivalent of "baptizo," as we have seen. Why, however, one might ask with no desire to be unkind, are these "Baptist" friends not consistent? Why do not they call themselves "Dippers," and speak of "The Dippers' Church," "The Dippers' Missionary Society," etc., instead of "The Baptist Church," etc?

The very title, "The Lord's *Supper*," indicates that it was partaken of in the evening, but "Baptists," like the most of us, celebrate the Supper in the early part of the day. On what ground is the *mode* of one institution so much more important than the *time* of another? Why should a change in the *mode* render invalid one ordinance, if a change of *time* in no way affects another? Or again, we read (1 Cor. x. 16), "The bread which we break"—*breaking*, then, is the Scriptural mode. If, however, the bread (or loaf) is cut, as is habitually done by many, does this mistake in *mode* render the celebration worthless?

Baptism is never a *church* ordinance; the Lord's Supper is. Responsible men, as Peter, Ananias, Philip, Paul, baptized, but always in their individual responsibility to the Lord. The sanction of the Church was not sought.

The fifth verse of Ephesians iv., in which baptism is mentioned, embraces a larger circle than verse 4. "One Lord, one faith (*i.e.*, the Christian faith, not the act of believing), one baptism," covers the whole sphere of Christian profession; whereas in the previous verse, "One body," "One Spirit," "One hope," em-

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braces only the sphere of *reality*. It is with the *wider* sphere, professon, that baptism is here connected.

In 1 Corinthians vii. 14, the children of a believing parent are said to be "holy," while the children of two unbelievers are, by implication, called "unclean." This distinction between the position of the offspring of believers and unbelievers I do not find recognised, nor accounted for, in the teaching of our "Baptist" brethren. The explanation cannot be that they are "holy" through the death of Christ meeting their natural condition, and putting away from them "original sin," as has been alleged, because this, if true, would equally apply to all infants—none would be "unclean." A reference to the Old Testament will shew that to be *unclean* meant exclusion from certain privileges, and from the position of nearness to Jehovah which those who were ceremonially *holy* enjoyed. To be *holy*, in this sense, then, implies title to certain privileges, and to an outward position of nearness to God from which the *unclean* are debarred; and we have seen that the children of a believer are called "*holy*." It is not here a question of the state of soul at all.

Nowhere in the Scriptures are we commanded to baptize believers, and we are nowhere told to baptize the households of believers; but I find that the apostles did *both*. Like my "Baptist" friends, I would baptize the believer because the Apostles did so; but I think I see a little more in baptism than "Baptists" appear to do, and I would go further and baptize the believer's household as well, and this *too* because I find that the Apostles did so (Acts xvi. 15-33; 1 Cor. i. 16).

These differences as to the subjects of baptism should not hinder saints from having fellowship together at the Lord's Table. Liberty of conscience should be allowed on this subject. There is nothing vital or fundamental involved, and we should therefore cultivate the grace that would bear with one another.

62 *Notes: The Result of a Study of Christian Baptism.*

“Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing” (Phil. iii. 15, 16).

Baptism has its place—it was instituted by our Lord and must not be ignored. But those who build up a separate assembly around any particular view of baptism, whether sound or unsound, thus causing division in the Church of God, are guilty—it may be unknowingly—of the sin of schism.

Unto that great fact, the death of Christ, the foundation truth of Christianity—not unto Moses, unto Judaism, Moham-medanism, or Paganism—do I get my household baptized. In doing so, I acknowledge that it is to His death alone that I look for blessing for them; and in having brought them in this Scriptural way into outward association with Christ—into that circle where the truths of Christianity are professed and taught—I should endeavour to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Faith would seek to lay hold on promises such as the following:—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved *and thy house* ;” “The promise is to you, and *to your children*,” etc.; “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

It may be contended that the child of Christian parents is born into this circle where the truths of Christianity are professed and taught, apart from being introduced into it by the rite of baptism. But to this I would reply that one may find himself in a certain position although he has not come into that position in a scriptural way. For example, when the Israelites crossed the Jordan they were recognised as a people separated to God, but for forty years the rite of circumcision, by which they would have been *scripturally* separated to God from the nations around (see Gen. xvii. 10-14; Exod. xii. 48), had been ignored by them. Of the whole company, only Joshua and Caleb had been circumcised, and matters had to be put right at Gilgal, where, we read, all the males were circumcised.

Notes: The Result of a Study of Christian Baptism. 63

This was a case of being in a certain position, but not in a scriptural way, just as we find the unbaptized children of Christian parents in a privileged position to-day, into which they have not been brought in a scriptural way. While using this reference to circumcision to illustrate this point, I am aware that circumcision and baptism are in many respects not parallel and that the one cannot be regarded as a development of the other.

The following notes on the historical aspect of the subject, taken from "Biblical Notes and Queries, 1881," page 112, may prove of interest :—

"Justin Martyr, born A.D. 103, died A.D. 167, says in his second apology, 'Many men and women, sixty and seventy years of age, who were *discipled* to Christ from *their childhood*, still continue uncorrupt.' "

"Origen, born A.D. 185, died A.D. 253, says the Church received a custom handed down from the apostles to give baptism even to little ones."

"Cyprian, born A.D. 200, died A.D. 258, being asked by one Fidus, an African bishop, whether baptism, like circumcision, should be always on the eighth day or earlier, assembled (A.D. 252) a council of sixty-six bishops who unanimously declared that there need be no delay."

"Tertullion, born A.D. 150, died A.D. 220, was the first who timidly depreciated infant baptism as '*inexpedient*,' moved no doubt by the growing error of his day, that sin committed *after* baptism was almost if not altogether unpardonable, whence arose the practice of even adult believers, like the Emperor Constantine, delaying their baptism till old age, lest they should commit unpardonable sins."

JNO. S.

TRUST IN GOD AND DO THE RIGHT.

Courage, brother ! do not stumble,
Though thy path is dark as night :
There's a star to guide the humble—
“Trust in God and do the right.”

Let the road be long and dreary,
And its ending out of sight,
Foot it bravely—strong or weary,
“Trust in God and do the right.”

Perish “policy” and cunning,
Perish all that fears the light ;
Whether losing, whether winning,
“Trust in God and do the right.”

Trust no party, church, or faction,
Trust no “leaders” in the fight ;
But in every word and action
“Trust in God and do the right.”

Trust no forms of guilty passion,
Fiends can look like angels bright ;
Trust no custom, school, or fashion,
“Trust in God and do the right.”

Some will hate thee, some will love thee,
Some will flatter, some will slight ;
Cease from man, and look above thee—
“Trust in God and do the right.”

Simple rule and safest guiding,
Inward peace and inward light ;
Star upon our path abiding,
“TRUST IN GOD AND DO THE RIGHT.”

NEW TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS.

THE verbal connection between the New Testament and the Old is a field that has been carefully worked by recent scholars, though we do the average Bible reader no wrong in saying that few who come within that description know how frequently, when reading the pages of the New Testament, they are reading quotations from and allusions to the Old. These quotations and allusions are not always apparent to the reader of the A.V. or the R.V. No method has been adopted in either of those versions of calling attention to such quotations, which, in the majority of cases, are silently made by the writer—that is, they are not introduced by any mention of their origin. Even the man who is in the happy position of being able to read the Old Testament Scriptures in the Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, would not always recognise in the writings of the later “Testament” references to the language of the earlier. A link comes between the two. For the New Testament writers usually quote from and use the language of the Septuagint version, (denoted by the contraction “LXX.”) a Greek translation of the Old Testament made about 300 B.C. for the use of Greek-speaking Jews. In the days of the Lord’s life, Hebrew proper was no longer the language of colloquial speech, and the bulk of the Jews at home (*i.e.*, in Palestine), as well as in the countries of the Dispersion, used the Greek translation, and admitted its authority, just as the ordinary Englishman uses the A.V. and quotes from it as “Scripture.”

The slightest study of the New Testament and its quotations shows how remote at times those quotations are from being a literal translation of the words of the Old Testament. A variety of causes operates. The explanation frequently is that the LXX. is quoted, and that translation is sometimes very free. Indeed, it is occasionally a mere paraphrase, yet the paraphrase is quoted by the New Testament writer as giving the effect of the Old

Testament passage. A well-known case is Hebrews x. 5, where "A body hast Thou prepared me," stands for the Old Testament expression, "Ears hast Thou digged for me" (Ps. xl. 6). Occasionally the New Testament writer does not quote from the LXX., nor does he strictly re-translate from the Hebrew; he gives his own *explanatory* translation, or what the Jews called "a Targum." Such a passage is Matt. viii. 14, where the Evangelist quotes Isaiah as saying, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Both the A.V. and the R.V. translate the Hebrew of Isaiah, "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." The Greek version (the LXX.) runs, "This one carries our sins and is pained for us," neither nouns nor verbs being the same as those used by the Evangelist, who is careful not of words but of the meaning.

I have no intention of writing upon the general subject of New Testament quotation. The Bible student will find it a precious mine in which to work. His labour will be not only interesting, but helpful to his faith in a day when the Old Testament is being thrown into the melting-pot, and he is told by "Christian" teachers that "the patriarchs of Jewish history are not historic persons; that the records connected with Moses and the giving of the Law on Sinai are unhistorical; that the story of the tabernacle in the wilderness is a fabricated history of the time of the exile; that the prophets cannot be relied on in their references to the ancient history of their own people, or their predictions of the future accepted."* These are some of the positions of the modern "higher criticism." Not so do the writers of the New Testament (apart altogether from any

* Such is part of the sad summary given by the Rev. W. H. Griffith Thomas, B.D., in an excellent little pamphlet, *Old Testament Criticism and New Testament Christianity*. (S. W. Partridge & Co., London). Every clause could be developed, not only from the pages of German rationalists, and wild theorists like Cheyne, but also from the work that is said to be sober and conservative, Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* (5 vols.). Mr Griffith Thomas's pamphlet can be highly commended.

question of their divine inspiration) treat the sacred writings of the Old Testament. For my own profit (I trust) I have just made a study of the quotations by Peter in his first Epistle. A detailed statement of results would take far too much space. I only mention that he quotes from the first three books of the Pentateuch, from the so-called "second" or "pseudo"-Isaiah, and from Daniel, all of which are handled so recklessly by the modern critic. For Peter, they are "the word of the Lord." The quotations come from other sources—indeed from all the three sections of the Old Testament, the Law, the Psalms and Prophets. Of great interest is the use he makes of the Book of Proverbs—a book that is not very well known to some of us, though it is the bringing of the law (*i.e.*, "instruction") and the fear of God into practical daily life. St. Peter's mind must have been steeped in Scripture; he does not merely *quote*; many of his most striking sentences are built up of Old Testament material, such as "the reproach of Christ" (from Psalm 89, 50-51), "casting your care [upon Him]" (from Ps. lv. 22), "love covereth [a multitude] of sins," from Proverbs x. 12. But further illustrations must be left.

The work of the present-day student will be lightened by his being able to enter other men's labours. If he can use the Greek Testament, he will find that all recent editors † print quotations from the Old Testament in a heavier type, so that they strike the eye at once. For the English reader, the same information is given by the use of italics or capitals in the following works: *The Twentieth Century New Testament* (a new translation of a modern type by a committee, published by Horace Marshall); *The New Testament in Modern Speech*, by the late Dr. Weymouth; or *The New Testament in Modern English*. These differ among themselves in minor details.

The practice of noting the use of phrases derived from the

† For example, Tischendorf, Westcott-and-Hort, the Stuttgart Gk. Test. (*Nestle*) and that recently published by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Old Testament has been so fully carried out that there is probably little more to be done in that direction. Yet one occasionally comes across a single word that seems so obviously to have come from the Septuagint quarry, and is so directly allusive to Old Testament incident or teaching, that it seems strange it is not awarded the dignity of heavier type. I call attention briefly to a few such passages that are not without spiritual teaching.

(1) In writing his first Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul says (ii. 5), "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, [the] man Christ Jesus." Like all idiomatic phrases, the passage is difficult to *translate* into idiomatic English, though the sense is abundantly clear. It is not that he points out some particular man, "*the Man*," as mediator; what he states is that Christ Jesus, Himself Man, is Mediator. This is noteworthy as occurring just before the famous passage where he speaks of "The mystery of godliness, He who was manifested in flesh," one of the glorious statements of the New Testament of the Divine glory and nature of the Lord.* Mind and heart recall the longing of Job for a "daysman," one who could lay his hand upon God and poor mortal man. The word used by the apostle is *mesites*, mediator, the very word used by the LXX. as the rendering of the expression that in our own version appears as "daysman." Job's longing—and it is one that is re-echoed in every awakened soul—receives its answer in St. Paul's Gospel, that Christ Jesus, both God and man, is the Mediator between God and man, the daysman able to lay His hand upon us both.

* In deference to recent textual criticism, I have here adopted the reading, "He who," instead of "God." Yet I think that Dean Burgon's learned dissertation in defence of the familiar reading (*The Revision Revised*, pp. 424-501) has not yet been answered. In any case, the passage is a witness to the Deity of Christ; there would be no point in speaking of a mere man as being manifested in flesh.

New Testament Quotations.

69

I add that the word occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament. *Mesites* is as peculiar to the passage in the LXX. as “daysman” is to the passage in our A.V.

(2) The sin of Achan and its punishment (Josh. vii.) is one of those incidents in Israel's history that “the modern mind” finds so repugnant. A terrible story indeed it is, and one we are compelled to accept with sobered spirits. It has its counterpart in the early history of the Church, when Ananias “kept back” part of the price of land, the whole of which he and his wife pretended to lay at the Apostles' feet, and to devote to sacred purposes. The writer of the Acts (v. 2, 3) links up his story with that of the book of Joshua by the use of the word *nosphizo*, literally to *embezzle*.† It has this sense in the book of Joshua, where the LXX. runs: “The children of Israel offended with a great offence, and purloined from the thing devoted,” which is Peter's charge against the sinning pair.

(3) A connection of happier import will be found in John xx. 22, “When He had said this, he *breathed* on them, and saith to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” Here we are taken back to the older order, when “God fashioned the man—(I am translating the passage as in the LXX.)—dust from the earth, and *breathed* into his face a breath of life, and the man became a living soul.” This action of breathing (literally *in-breathing*) by the Risen Lord is one of those implied claims to Deity that He makes again and again; it is a Divine, creatorial act. “The same image (says Bishop Westcott) which was used to describe the communication of the natural life, is here used to express the communication of the new spiritual life.”

(4) A word that has given much trouble to commentators is that translated “new” in the phrase, “a new and living way” of Hebrews x. 20. The word originally meant “recently slain,” and some ingenuity has been used to make that meaning fit the

† See Tit. ii. 10, where only it occurs besides Acts v. 2, 3, and where it is translated, *purloining*.

thought of the writer to the Hebrews, with reference to the veil, the flesh of Jesus. The adjective occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; the adverbial form is found in Acts xviii. 2, in reference to Aquila, "*lately* come from Italy." In the LXX. the adjective is used of fresh grapes, and of new and *fresh* gods (Deut. xxxii. 17). There is another passage that (I suggest) supplied the word. In the book of Ecclesiastes the writer declares that "there is no new thing under the sun." Strangely, the Greek translators use the word we are speaking of. Now, the writer to the Hebrews shows a singularly close acquaintance with the LXX. Can it be that he meets the lament of the ancient writer, uses his very expression (as he knew it in the translation), and shows that there *is* something new—a way that had never before existed? "There is no new thing under the sun." So sighed the royal "preacher," and by quoting the central and uncommon word of the sentence, the New Testament writer recalls the sigh, and sets forth what *is* new—a way into the holiest for all who have been sanctified "by the blood of Jesus."

These examples will be sufficient to show how the books of the Old and the New Covenants are linked together. The relation is not one of mere contact. Even to speak in a figure of the New being founded upon the Old does not cover all the facts of the case, though the symbol is a true one. The Bible is *one*; and it is as though living fibres run out from the Old into the New—fibres that cannot be cut away without weakening and impoverishing the life of the New Testament Scriptures, which with the Old, form for us "the Word of the living and abiding God."

W. J.

"For ever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in Heaven."

—*Psalm cxix. 97.*

NOTES ON ECCLESIASTICAL SUBJECTS.

The Lord's Supper.

THE institution of the Supper is recorded in the synoptical Gospels. The Supper of John xiii. refers to the Passover ; chap. vi. to what is vital. In the Lord's Supper we eat bread and drink the fruit of the vine in remembrance of Christ. In John vi. we eat the *flesh* of the Son of Man and drink His *blood* for life. Bread and wine in the former. Flesh and blood in the latter. The Supper was given to the Church by Paul, through express revelation by the Lord in glory (1 Cor. xi. 23). In eating the "one loaf" we give expression to the ever present fact of one body. The breaking of bread is not the witness of a *party* fellowship, but that of the Church of God. This has been lost sight of. We repeat, breaking bread together—for it is a united act—does not speak of the fellowship of a party, but ever of the whole Church. Whether you break bread within your circle or outside of it, the act has the *same* force. It denotes the one mystical body of Christ.

The Unity of the Spirit.

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 3). What this special unity is we are informed in 1 Corinthians xii. 13. The exhortation here enjoined, is not to make, but to *keep* what has been made. Moreover, the exhortation is in the first instance *individual*. There is a good deal in the Epistle *about* the Church, but the inspired communication is addressed to saints, not *to* the Church. Individually, therefore, we are to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit. How is this to be done? If I meet a saint of God—provided doctrine and walk are godly—I recognise him as a member of the one body ; his standing before God, his privileges, blessings, and place at the Lord's table are, in every respect, equal to my own. Receive such an one to your heart and fellowship. Do not discuss minor points, of ecclesiastical

differences which will perish with the grave. But own him as a member of the one body in the bond of peace. There are more in common than perhaps you are aware of, and what you have together enjoy together. In doing so you practically answer to this Pauline exhortation. We are compelled to add that where the truth of the Body has been most talked about and written about, division has been most rife. The correctness of our assertion cannot, we think, be successfully disputed, and it just proves that intelligence in truth may exist while the power of it is lacking. We have heard interminable discussions on the work, and offices, and ministries of the Holy Ghost by clear-headed divines; while others, hazy and misty in their conceptions of the truth as to the Spirit, are yet in the power of it, and greatly used of God. Intelligence, combined with spiritual power, is what we crave.

Discipline.

1. PERSONAL TRESPASS (Matt. xviii. 15-18).
2. DISORDERLY WALK (2 Thess. iii. 6, 11, 14, 15).
3. OVERTAKEN IN A FAULT (Gal. vi. 1).
4. THEM THAT SIN (1 Tim. v. 20).
5. HERETICAL MEN (Titus iii. 10).
6. DIVISIONS AND OFFENCES (Rom. xvi. 17).
7. A WICKED PERSON—*Morals* (1 Cor. v. 13).
8. A WICKED PERSON—*Doctrinal* (2 John ix. 11).

In all the foregoing we have, as Christians, our part, either individually or collectively. It requires a soul in touch with God, and free from party prejudice, to relegate each case of evil under its respective head. The extreme act of discipline—*excommunication*—should only be resorted to when all other means to restore the erring one have failed. When the person “called a brother” (not necessarily one) is proved to be a “wicked person,” then put away, but do it in grief, not in anger (1 Cor. v. 11-13). Such an one is not put away *from* the body, nor *by* the body: that cannot be done. The local assembly

acts. It is their prerogative *alone*, and for this very purpose the Lord has amply empowered them (Matt. xviii. 18, 20). The local assembly is the Lord's administrative authority in the wide sphere of the house of God. But see to it that it is indeed and in truth a *wicked* person that is the subject of your excommunication. A Scriptural discipline is binding on all professing companies of God's people, wherever found. The recognition of the local act in putting away extends—not to the limits of the special party more particularly involved—but to the utmost bounds of the professing Church (i. 2). Assembly action and assembly decisions must be judged by their character. If righteous, and according to Scripture, they must be accepted and maintained, if not so, rejection must follow in due course. We have done both, and so have many who read these pages.

A Church or Assembly may consist of but
The Church. two persons (Matt. xviii. 20), and may meet in a private house (1 Cor. xvi. 19). But all the privileges and administrative authority of the largest church known are equally bestowed on the two or three gathered to His NAME, for all endowment, ministry, and power have their source in Him. Christ's presence is their great blessing. The Word of God is their sole authority. The Holy Ghost is the efficient power for all service, worship, and action.

I. GATHERING TO THE LORD'S NAME (Matt.
Five abiding xviii. 20; Jude 20; Heb. 10. 24-25). The
Truths. great and distinguished blessing, *Christ in the midst* of even two or three, is secured to us throughout the whole of this age (Matt. xxviii. 20).

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PRESENCE AND ACTION (John xiv. 16-26). The presence and ministry of the Spirit abide so long as the Church remains on the earth. His abiding place in the Church is in no wise dependent upon our state. He is with us "for ever."

3. THE SCRIPTURES: OUR AUTHORITY AND SUFFICIENCY (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). The supreme authority of the Word of God must ever be insisted upon, and all things tested by *that*. Not tradition, but Scripture, must be our guide in all things, and our sole authority for all action.

4. THE LORD'S SUPPER (1 Cor. xi. 23-26). In the observance of the Lord's Supper there is combined privilege and responsibility, both of which remain "till He come."

5. A COMPETENT AND EFFECTIVE MINISTRY (Eph. iv. 8-13). We can safely count upon the continuance of a Christ-given ministry till the Church is perfected in glory. Human authority to minister the Word of God and the grace of Christ trenches upon the prerogative of Christ (Eph. iv.), and of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. xii).

May God enlarge our hearts and widen our sympathies towards all the Lord's dear people! May He keep our feet in a path neither broader nor narrower than His Word would warrant! May God in His grace break down our proud spirits and crush and humble us in His presence! May He gather together in spiritual energy His own to know and taste in increasing power and fuller measure the joy and blessing of CHRIST IN THE MIDST.

PSALM XLVI.

THE book of Psalms constitutes an exceedingly precious heritage for saints of all dispensations. In it the experiences of the soul while passing through a stormy world are given with a remarkable degree of fulness; and although the different writers were men under law, and therefore unaccustomed to the full grace of Christianity, the most enlightened believer in the present favoured period will never fail to discover much that exactly corresponds with the exercises of his own heart to-day.

Psalm XLVI.

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Christ has a large place in the book of Psalms, as He Himself told His disciples (Luke xxiv. 20). His birth into the world, His path of dependence and obedience, His faithful testimony, His sufferings, His death, His resurrection, His present session at God's right hand, His future manifestation as king, and His coming glorious kingdom, including not only Israel, but all the ends of the earth, are dealt with fully by the inspiring Spirit.

Israel has also a considerable place in the book, which does not surprise us when we remember that all the writers—David, Asaph, Moses, etc.—belonged to that privileged nation. And because Israel comes so largely before us in the Psalms, the Psalms necessarily contain a vast amount of prophecy as yet unfulfilled. It is of the utmost importance to grasp this fact, else much of the language used will be unintelligible to us. So many glorious statements will be found which have plainly received no accomplishment in the past, that, unless we discern the prophetic character of the book, we shall be in danger of suspecting the inspired writers of using the language of exaggeration.

Psalm xlv., while it furnishes a precious meditation for saints in all ages, most distinctly looks forward to the future. Not until the day of the appearing of the Son of Man will it receive its full accomplishment. The psalm that precedes it (xlv.) tells plainly of the coming forth of the great King to take His throne, and the psalm that follows it (xlvii.) gives us Israel's glad shout of triumph when His throne is established over all the kingdoms of the earth. Must not the intervening psalm therefore have a place in God's prophetic scheme also?

But we must first glance at the inspired heading. "To the chief musician. For the Sons of Korah. A song upon Alamoth." These headings should never be omitted in the reading of the psalms. Unlike the summaries printed in italics in most English Bibles, the headings have been given by the Spirit of God, and should be viewed as part of the psalms to which they are

attached. Frequently there is contained in them much food for the soul. "The chief musician." Who is he? Is it not Christ? When He gets all His heavenly redeemed around Himself in the Father's house above He will be the leader of their everlasting song of praise; and when He surrounds Himself with His earthly redeemed in this lower scene He will also be the leader of their song (cf. *Psa. xxii. 22*; *Heb. ii. 12*). He will enjoy more deeply than any the fruits of His own past toil and woe. "The sons of Korah." Who were they? These were the family of the man who led the disastrous revolt in the wilderness described in *Numbers xvi.* When he and his company were swallowed up, God in His mercy spared his sons, as we read, "Notwithstanding, the sons of Korah died not" (*Numb. xxvi. 11*). These, snatched as it were by sovereign mercy from the very brink of destruction, were afterwards brought into God's sanctuary, and given places of honourable service there (*1 Chron. xxvi*). How remarkably typical of our own case! We were once standing on the brink of a more dreadful destruction than they, but God has saved us in His grace, and brought us into His own presence, and given us the privilege and joy of ministering before Him. Are we not justified therefore in claiming a spiritual interest in every psalm dedicated to the sons of Korah? "Alamoth" means "maiden's voices," and has reference to the custom of publishing victory by means of maidens in the song and dance (*Ex. xv.*; *Psa. lxxviii. 11*). This psalm is therefore one of deliverance and victory. Prophetically, it celebrates just that for Israel by-and-bye; spiritually, it celebrates for us the even greater deliverance that we have experienced at the hands of our God.

Keeping for the moment to the prophetic aspect of things, *Psalm xlv.* seems to find its fulfilment immediately after the appearing of the Son of Man, and before Israel's deliverance from her foes is completed. The beast and his western hosts have been dealt with (*Rev. xix. 11-21*), and this they joyfully pro-

claim; yet the horizon is far from clear, a black cloud threatening from the north (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.); but as to it they are calm and confident, feeling assured that He who has done so much for them already will not fail to complete what He has begun. So they say, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah" (ver. 1-3). Tremendous language this! If "mountains" and "the sea" may be viewed symbolically here, as in other parts of the prophetic word (Rev. viii. 8; Jer. li. 25; Dan. vii. 2-3), general revolution and subversion of authority is referred to. The people of Israel will see much of this *before* the appearing of the Lord Jesus: here they say that if *yet more* of it is to be witnessed they will not fear, because of what God is for His people. Let everything that is stable be overthrown, their hearts will be confident. How different the experience where God is not known—"distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke xxi. 25-26).

Here let us pause, and apply this to our own hearts. We are living in troublous times, when those who seek to be "men of God" have in many things a very painful path to tread. Are our hearts restful and calm simply and solely because we know *what God is* for us? Or do we suffer our hearts to be discouraged by reason of the way? Mark, He is "a very present help"—One always at hand. This cannot always be said of human helpers. In a time of distress and need one's truest friend might chance to be in the Antipodes, and so be inaccessible when most wanted, but this could never be true of our God. Oh, to grasp the fact with a more simple faith, that we have to do with a "*living*" God, and a "*very present*" God! (Read 1 Kings xvii. 1; Heb. xiii. 5, 6).

God our refuge is a sweet thought, but in 1 John iv. 16 we have what is yet sweeter, and transcendently higher. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Dwelling in God! God our home! What do we know of this in our practical experience? To turn to Him in trouble is one thing, but to make Him the very home of our souls both in sunshine and in storm is quite another. It should be as natural to our hearts to turn to God as it is for a labouring man to turn his steps towards the place he calls home when the toil of the day is done. And what home is to such—a haven of rest from all the vexations and trials of the work-a-day world, a centre where his heart finds comfort and peace—just *that* should our God be to us at all times. Would that we all knew more of it.

In verses 4-7—the second section of our Psalm—restored Israel celebrates the blessedness and the security which result from having God in Zion once more. "There is a river, the streams thereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her when the morning appeareth. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." Blessing necessarily flows from God's presence, hence the "river," which will have a literal as well as a spiritual fulfilment in the coming day (Ezek. xlvii. 1). Power is there also—"She shall not be moved." Israel may then say, "If God be for us who can be against us?" (Rom. viii. 31). "When the morning appeareth" (ver. 5, see margin); *i.e.*, when the Sun of Righteousness arises this will be experienced by Israel (Mal. iv. 2). Then "His voice" will be sufficient for the dissipation of all their enemies, however numerous and powerful; no battle need be fought. See Rev. xix. 15-21 for their hosts; and 2 Thess. ii. 8, Isa. xi. 4 for the Antichrist.

Here again we may find an application for ourselves. While Zion is divinely forsaken the Christian assembly is the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. iii. 16). Of her it may be said, as in our Psalm: "God is in the midst of her." What a wonderful fact is here! Yet what unbelief has long prevailed in Christendom as to it! To the practical oversight of this great truth, may be traced most, if not all, of the evils that have afflicted the Church from the days of the apostles until now. But the presence of the Holy Ghost is an abiding fact, however unbelieving we may have been as to it. Where His presence is confessed in faith, blessing is experienced (see ver. 4 of our psalm), and there is power (ver. 5). In 1 Corinthians xiv. 24, 25 the apostle states what ought to be: the fact that it is little more to us to-day than an ideal should humble us unto the dust before God.

To proceed with Psalm xlv. In the concluding section delivered Israel says, "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth: He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire" (v. 8-9). War is not yet at an end, the sorrowful events of the present time being witness. But when the last great crisis has come and gone, with all its unparalleled horrors and bloodshed, men will delight in instruments of destruction no more. Under the beneficent reign of the great King "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. ii. 4). Happy time for this poor distracted scene!

God's voice is now heard. "Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (v. 10). Here we have the object and result of all the discipline through which Israel and the world have passed. God is known by the works that He has wrought, and His uni-

versal supremacy is indisputably established. Then will be fulfilled the words: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. vi. 10).

The psalm closes with a repetition of faith's confidence in God. "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (v. 11). The first clause reminds us of Elisha's words to his terror-stricken servant in Dothan, when the Syrians besieged the city in order to take him prisoner: "'Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.' And Elisha prayed, and said, 'Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see.' And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings vi. 16-17). This guardian care of God is as true for us to-day as for the prophet then: He is always with and about His own, that the enemy may do them no harm.

But why does the psalmist twice say, "God of *Jacob*?" In xlvii. 9 we read, "God of *Abraham*." There is surely instruction in the difference. Think of the contrast between the two patriarchs, and the meaning is plain. Abraham was the pre-eminent man of faith and obedience, leaving himself and his affairs in the hands of God in a way that draws forth our admiration to this hour (though he was not perfect); Jacob, on the other hand, though as truly a saint of God as he, was a poor wayward schemer whom God had to pass through much painful discipline ere his heart could really find its all in Himself. After ages of Jacob-like wandering in the earth, Israel will by-and-by find comfort in the fact that Elohim is Jacob's God as well as Abraham's. Do we hesitate to put ourselves down alongside of Abraham, feeling that we find the reflection of our own history rather in Jacob? Well, be it so. He is the God of Jacob, and will never give up even the feeblest and most unbelieving of His people, though He may chasten them sore for their good and blessing in the end.

W. W. FEREDAY.

IN CANAAN: OR THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF CHRISTIANITY.

Deuteronomy xxvi.

PERSONS who may read over this chapter as supposing it to contain an exposition of God's ways, or unfolding of doctrine or revelation of the Divine counsels respecting Israel or the Church will certainly find themselves disappointed. It is, however, one of the most useful chapters of the Bible. We have here traced the *practical* side of Christian life and character. We are firmly convinced that numbers of real saints of God study numerous portions of the Scriptures to inform themselves as to doctrine, to become "intelligent in the Word" merely. May the Lord preserve our readers from this snare of the enemy!

Here, at least, we have that which is eminently practical, and let no reader say, as the truths of this chapter come before us:—"Ah! how beautifully descriptive of *Jewish* life in Canaan!" Has not the Spirit of God here penned the characteristic features of *our* daily life and ways, as saints on earth—Israel, of course, serving as a background on which the beautiful truths of our chapter are developed for those united to Christ as Man in heavenly glory, but whose walk is on earth, the scene of Christ's rejection?

We will divide the day of the Christian into seven periods—a day which covers the whole life.

1. The *break* of day, which commences with the enjoyment of God, with a known entrance by faith into the sphere of glory where God has set the believer, in virtue of the work of Christ, and hence Worship is the result (verses 1-10).

2. Then comes *morning*, when we pass in company with God into the family circle, cheering and gladdening all (verse 11).

3. The morning at home is followed by the *noon* spent in a needy world, hence practical benevolence (verses 12-14).

4. We return to the family circle in the *afternoon*, and then comes prayer, the expression of dependence on God (verse 15).

5. It is now *evening*, and we are set to the study of God's Word, and to learn the lesson of Christian obedience (verse 16).

6. The day is closing in—a bright and happy one it has been—and then comes *night* with its hours of solitude and whole-hearted consecration to God. His Word, His testimony, and service form the calm resolve of the soul (verse 17).

7. Ere we *slumber*, Jehovah claims us as His own, and pours into our wondering heart, the rich record of His thoughts of grace and glory towards us (verses 18, 19).

As a rule, Christians may be divided into two classes—(1) Those who have their fortune made, and dignity and title with it, and (2) those who, like the world, are striving to be something, and to make their fortunes in it, and without the sense of Christian title or dignity at all. If we know that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, already fit for paradise, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ—that an inheritance, whose grandeur and extent are detailed in Psalm viii., Eph. i. 9-12, etc., is ours *now*—we can readily cease from money-making and self-pleasing, and count “all things” loss for Christ and Christian blessing. We don't want *dung* when we have *gold* (Phil. iii. 8). The world cannot add to or minister to those so richly endowed, for the world itself is part of the Christian's possessions (1 Cor. iii. 21-23), but we can minister to *it*, and, like Abraham of old, hold up clean hands to God “that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet ;” it should never be said by the world, “I have made a Christian rich” (Gen. xiv. 22, 23), as if *that* were possible.

But if the dignities of “son” and “heir” have been through grace conferred upon us—if all that God could give *has* been given—for He has opened His treasures of grace and glory (Rom. viii. 32)—how is our dignity to be displayed *now* and

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hereafter? Now we are to be servants of all, *to* minister, *not* to be ministered to, never expecting, always giving. Are we looking for love and attention *from* the saints? Verily we shall be disappointed. Our vocation is *to* love the saints, and the more so when and where we are *least* loved—a hard lesson truly. Yes, but it has been learnt in this world (2 Cor. xii. 15). Would we walk in the blessed steps of the Son of Man? Then “He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” His was the service of love right on to death; yes, and *death* alone is the measure of our love to the beloved saints of God (1 John iii. 16, 17). Would we display our greatness? Would we practically act on the fact that our fortune is made—not making? then spend it. But how? “He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve. I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke xxii. 26, 27). Here is an object of ambition for the saints of God. How to become great, how to reach the chiefest place is to become “servant of *all*” (Mark x. 43-45). Are we low enough for this? He who was truly great—Lord of all—stooped down to the feet of His poor defiled ones (John xiii.) and rose from their feet to the throne of God, where His love delights to serve them still. But, beloved, do not live to serve the interests of party or denomination. Every blood-bought member of the flock of God has an undoubted claim upon the service even unto death of the servant. “Whosoever of you will be *chiefest* shall be servant of *all*.” He served us sinners on the *cross* (Heb. x. 7-10); He serves us saints on the *throne* (Heb. viii. 1, 2); and He will serve us heirs of glory in the *kingdom* (Luke xii. 37).

Are you insisting upon your rights—exactng your due? Ah! is it so? Oh that the Holy Ghost might write upon our hearts those precious words, “*I am among you as he that serveth.*” And yet what dignities and glories were His! *Hereafter* our greatness will be displayed on the *throne* and in the *kingdom*

(Luke xxii. 29, 30). The golden city with jasper walls, gates of pearl, river and tree of life, street of gold, with harp and crown, and to be endowed with the glory of God, and the Lamb in the midst, will be a wondrous display indeed (Rev. xxi).

In this book (*Deuteronomy*) we have the people resting on the banks of the Jordan. In a few weeks they will cross the river and possess and dwell in the land long since promised to their fathers, hence obedience to the "commandments" of the Lord is insisted upon as the *ground* of their blessing and continuance in the land. Would *you* wish blessing otherwise? This precious book also unfolds the way in which the people were to behave when across the Jordan. Canaan signifies the "heavenly places" *now*, not heaven after death. We will not have warfare then, but rest. In the Epistle to the Ephesians we are set in "heavenly places" *now*. The first chapter of that Epistle, therefore, viewing us as blessed and graced in Christ, does not address itself to the Christian in his responsibilities. There is little said in some parts of Scripture about the Christian *state*, because what regulates your state is your standing. Our standing is divine, therefore perfect. The believer is in Christ risen before God, blessed in the best of all persons—Christ; blessed, too, in the best of all places—the heavenlies.

The difference between Election and Predestination is, that the former has to do with the *person*, the latter with the *blessing*. Ephesians i., verses 4 and 5, manifest the distinction. In Peter, we have the Christian passing through the world. It speaks, therefore, of "an inheritance *reserved in heaven*." But, after all, I may miss it! Is it so? Nay; "it is reserved in heaven for *you* who are kept by the power of God." Thus in Peter we have the *place*, then the *person* (1 Peter i. 4, 5); in Ephesians we have the *person*, then the *place*. In Peter's Epistle the thoughts are God's, but so expressed as to set your heart longing and yearning after heaven and its glories—an inheritance reserved! *In heaven!* If I have something to give to a friend,

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I put it away in the best, the most secure place, till the time comes for him to have it; so God has *reserved* the inheritance, and has put it in the best of all places, under His own eye.

The Epistle to the Ephesians is the book in the New Testament which answers to Joshua in the Old. The book and epistle ought to be read and studied together. Now, look for a few moments at Ephesians i. 3.

Mark, it is "*hath* blessed;" not is blessing, or will bless. He has not given us *out* of His treasures, but He has freely given us the treasury itself (Rom. viii. 32). *Out* of His heart He gave His Son, now both "His love and glory are mine." Beloved reader, troubled and perplexed about your acceptance with God, can you ever again doubt after reading this verse—"Hath blessed *us*"—us! Absolutely nothing is held back; this is not responsibility, but the accomplishment of Divine counselling. Nor is the blessing here according to walk, or to be measured according to the fulfilment of responsibility. No, no, it is as unconditional as it is rich. There is no earnest of love, though there is an earnest of glory. All God's love is already lavished upon you. He has no love reserved for eternity, although He has an inheritance laid aside and glory to give. He had but one Son, and He withheld Him not, thus measuring His love to us. We have an earnest of glory—the Holy Ghost (Eph. i. 13, 14)—none of love. It is interesting to note that Divine love is exhibited in a threefold way in 1 John iv. (1) "*Toward us*" for life and propitiation, 9, 10; (2) "*Perfected in us*" for brotherly love and communion with God, 12; (3) "*Love with us made perfect*" (see margin) for boldness in the Day of Judgment, 17. "Toward us," "in us," and "with us."

"All *spiritual* blessings" are our present portion. We read of only one person in the New Testament to whom the Holy Ghost wished temporal prosperity—*i.e.*, Gaius, one who was using his wealth according to God; and in that case the

temporal was to be in proportion to the spiritual prosperity. "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, *even* as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2).

It is not to be God and fortune-making with the Christian. If you are getting your millennium now, you may lose it afterwards when it will be worth enjoying and possessing with Christ. It must be bearing the cross now—taking up the cross *after* Christ. Heaven's rest will be all the sweeter at the close for the hardness of the times, the roughness of the way. No cross *now*, no crown *then*, no kingdom hereafter! Oh, this dreadful money-making—this special snare of the age! As a Christian, I have to work down here to get as much money as I need for my necessities, seeing that God has (2 Thess. iii.) connected our working and eating; but all beyond absolute need is recognised by God as a gift to be ministered for Him. If I use God's gift on myself or on luxury, it surely becomes the "mammon of unrighteousness." Beware, beloved fellow-believer, *how* you use this gift of God. Redemption has not touched a *tenth* of your substance merely, but yourself, and *all* are to be laid on the altar. "The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. vi. 10). The beloved Mary of Bethany spent her most costly thing on Christ, and there was present on that occasion one who could tell exactly the price of the precious ointment, who could reckon to a farthing that wasted (!) money (John xii. 4, 5). The scene was all too much for his covetous heart. Judas went out and sold his Master for the goodly price of an ox—thirty pieces of silver! Our bodies are, according to Romans xii. 1. to be presented to God a *living*, not a dead sacrifice.

We learn from Luke xvi. 9-12, the *main* cause of the feebleness of Christians in laying hold of their place, portion, and blessings.

Why were those verses written? Because so many saints fail

to apprehend their “spiritual blessings,” which are meant by the Holy Ghost, when He says, “that which is *your own*.” God gives me money by diligent labour, perhaps, and as I use it faithfully, and employ it rightly, He can then commit to my trust the *true* riches. Oh, to be generous, royal givers! to give according to the widow’s giving—her “*all*”—two mites. “Generous woman!” we would have said, to given half her fortune to the Lord and retain for herself the other half; but no. “Worthy is the Lamb!” was, as it were, her motto. The Lord Jesus, who was rich—oh, so rich—made Himself “*poor*,” so freely did He give; and the Macedonian saints, out of their “*deep poverty*” (2 Cor. viii. 9), ministered richly to the need of others. Oh for more whole-hearted, self-sacrificing liberality—a love that will spend upon its object that which costs the giver something!

I.—EARLY MORN. WORSHIP (verses 1-10).

We have first, “*Worship*,” founded upon the inheritance known, possessed, and enjoyed. Do you, beloved friends, hold possessions in heavenly places? Are you consciously there? Lodging *here*, dwelling *there*; alas, how often we reverse the order! Note, when thou *possessest it*, and *dwellest therein*.” Many go to God when they are in trouble, but are content to rest at a distance when all is going on well and smoothly. Now, this ought not to be. True we can always go to God when in trial or need; but when helped and delivered *do* offer the praise, which has its true spring more in what He *is* than in what He *does* on your behalf. How beautifully we have this exemplified in the case of the Psalmist, who says, “Blessed are they that *dwell* in Thy house: they will be *still praising Thee*” (Ps. lxxxiv. 4). Oh for more of the worshipping spirit, that we might more constantly glorify God, for “whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me” (Ps. l. 23).

Oftentimes one hears a Christian rejoicing in prospect of heaven, of home, of glory to come. That is all very fine, all right as far as it goes; but it is not high enough. We have Christ *Himself*, and *all* the love of the Father's heart *now*. It is our present portion, our right, that of which none can rob us. Our heavenly inheritance is already ours by faith—one which cannot be defiled, forfeited, or sinned away. We have at present made good to faith all that *His* love and wisdom devised in eternity. The believer has entered a scene of boundless blessing. The Jordan rolled on between the people and the land of Canaan, but the Ark—Christ surely—had rested in the Jordan, the storm of divine wrath rolled on, the fierce waves dashed upon and over the Rock of Ages, that not one ripple might reach our feet, now planted on Resurrection ground. All saints have crossed the Jordan *positionally*, and all are set down in heavenly places in Christ. Now, are you conscious of having been brought into a region of satisfied desire—where satisfaction is imprinted on every brow? Have you come? Do you possess? Do you dwell in heavenly places? Then, as prefigured by the Israelite of old, take a basket—a large one—fill it full of the first of the fruit of the land, and set it down in the presence of the Lord thy God. All spiritual blessings are possessed in the heavenly places. Soon there in person, then no curse will blight the scene—no serpent's trail will ever cross or mar God's fair and beauteous world. All tells out the love of God's heart, all is a scene of glory, all is planned by the hand and according to the heart of God. Here let us remind you, beloved, what our God has *already* conferred upon us. He has conferred the *dignity* of Sonship (Rom. viii. 14), the *glory* of heirship (Rom. viii. 17) the *love* of relationship (1 John iii. 1), the *authority* of kingship (Rev. i. 6), the *nearness* of priesthood (Rev. i. 6). What matter for praise! But, oh let us be mindful that we spend our joy *on God Himself* in worship. Every morning we wake up let it be with the "new song" on our lips and heart.

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A man's path is greatly determined by his start in life. Prayer is a blessed privilege ; neglect it and you will soon become a moral shipwreck ; but commence the day with worship, as in Deuteronomy xxvi.

The basket of first-fruits was to be taken full, not empty, and set down before the Lord, when in the land which God had blessed. All is fashioned according to the heart of God. Let us, the first thing in the morning, think of God, and render to Him His meed of praise, then step into the household.

II.—MORNING. HOUSEHOLD GLADNESS (verse 11).

Now we reach the second division of our chapter, and we find ourselves in the family circle which we are to fill with gladness and song. It is *first*, God worshipped—the spring, the source of all blessing ; *then* God's gifts enjoyed. If we reverse the Divine order, all will be failure. Take, for instance, a day when you left a meeting of the saints so happy, that it seemed almost heaven already. Well, you talked, you rejoiced, you thought of your joy ; but you feasted upon *it*, instead of the Lord of the feast ; and soon all became changed, the clouds overcast your sky. Why all this ? Because *God* was not the spring of your joy. You ceased to feed on Christ, and turned your eye in upon the *effects* of His presence, instead of Himself, simply and only. “Rejoice *in the Lord* with *all* thine heart.” Never enter the family circle without having first presented your *full* basket of first-fruits to God—a happy, happy heart filled with Christ.

In Psalm xlvii. 1 we are called on to rejoice. “Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.” We hear people say, “Oh ! do not be too happy ;” but we find no such injunction in the Word of God : there we read, “Rejoice in the Lord alway ;” and, in case we forget, it is added, “and *again* I say rejoice.” Let a man tell out the joys of his heart ; let him rejoice in all God's gifts too, and remember that God wakened him in the

morning and made the bright sunshine for him; that it was God's wealthy hand that laid his table, and surrounded him with temporal goodness. Take all from the hand of God, and when you go into the family circle, carry sunshine with you, and let your words, and looks, and actions reflect on all around the rays of light and warmth in which you are basking. God has given to thee and thine a cup of goodness which *runneth* over, yet is never *empty*. Cause the stranger and the Levite to share thy joy. Many a Levite-servant of God gets his heart well broken by the saints. See that thy heart, thy house, thy table, thy purse, are freely opened to the servants of the Lord. But, is this to suffice? Not so; what of the wretchedness abroad and around?

III.—NOON. PRACTICAL BENEVOLENCE (verses 12-14).

We have now spent a morning of delight; first with God, then in the family circle. Now it is noon—we will go forth, leaving gladness within, and with pockets well filled, scatter abroad the bounty of the Father's heart and hand, and leave a track of sunshine where'er we tread. We are passing through the world *once* only. Leave your mark upon it. This is most practical. Let no one say, "I have nothing to give;" nay, look at that truly wonderful inventory of your wealth (1 Cor. iii. 21-23). Now give, and give like God. As we look around, what need, what wretchedness, what sorrow, what touching appeals to our hearts and purses! Who then is to have the first claim as we go along and abroad ministering, *not* to earn a character for benevolence, but having God as the spring of it all? In the exercise of our practical benevolence, the household of faith has the prior claim (Gal. vi. 10), and in it there are preferences too. The Levite,* the servant of the Lord, takes precedence of even the most weak—the fatherless, or the most

*The Levite was God's servant to *needy* Israel; the Priest, the people's representative before God for *worshipping* Israel.

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desolate—the widow ; but while the Levite is to have the first claim upon my purse and board, yet he too is to be a giver, and a generous one too. In Numbers xviii. we find that the Levite was to be liberal and open-hearted, though without inheritance or possession in Israel. Now things are turned upside down, the position of the Levite being exactly reversed. The people were to tithe their increase every third year—a special ordinance in Israel for the use of the Levite, stranger, fatherless, and widow. Then, the Levite was to give a tenth, and the best too, of what he received ; also in 3 John 8—“*We, therefore, ought to receive such ;*”—namely, those labourers who went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles. You, John ? Of course ; the servant of God is never to be *expecting*, always *giving* ; his mission is to give “even as the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Matt. xx. 28). How can this be so ? Easily. None are more *independent* of man, none more *dependent* upon God than the Lord’s servants. Their resources are infinite ; the living God was the assured portion of the Levite, even as now of the servant who goes forth on his mission, “taking nothing of the Gentiles.” Untold wealth is at his disposal.

In verse 13 we read—

“Then thou shalt say *before* the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me. I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead : but I have hearkened unto the voice of the Lord, my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me.”

Can we say as much ? What is meant by the “hallowed things ?” The *best*. Does that mean our cast-off, good-for-nothing clothing ? No ! the best ; not what is worthless. Oh to be generous givers ! royal givers ! Can we say : “I have

given my best, and retained the worst?" We refer to the *character* of our giving. I, each one, must stand practically rebuked before this very searching Word. Oh to be more God-like as to the character and style of our giving. We speak, of course, of the plain teaching of these verses; their application to us individually is a matter for deep heart-searching before the Lord. God gave His *best* for us. He had but *one* Son—only *one*. He "was daily His delight," but He spared Him not. "Yes, all this is very well," some one may say, "but"—Ah! we shall regret it, if this appeal has no power on you, on me, practically. What is the use of hearing God's mind about our ways if the knowledge of it does not affect them? We give as a motto to these verses, Ephesians v. 1, "Be ye imitators (followers) of God as dear children."

IV.—AFTERNOON. PRAYER (verse 15).

We are now past mid-day. Having commenced the day with God as the spring of praise, because dwelling in and worshipping in the land; having filled the house with gladness; then taken a stroll during the day, meeting the need, *first* of the household of faith, then ministering freely on every hand, the next thing is prayer for God's objects and interests on earth. It is a noble thing when a man can lay aside all his own wants, and seek *first* the glory of God, or the good of God's cause and people. "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. vi. 33). God turned the captivity of Job, not when he prayed for himself, but when he prayed for his friends. How often should the character of our very prayers humble us, because of their selfishness! God's people and land formed the subjects of prayer to the Israelites of old. We have the prayer of *importunity* in Luke xviii. 1-7; the prayer of *agreement* in Matthew xviii. 19; the prayer of *confidence* in 1 John v. 14; the prayer of *trust* in Psalm xvi. 1; and the whole heart told out in the presence of the Lord in Phil. iv. 6.

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V.—EARLY EVE. CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE (verse 16).

Next, the statutes and judgments of the Lord are considered. We can now sit down with Bible in hand, with a *good* conscience and an uncondemning heart. Oh what practical power! Has your heart been touched? What then of your pockets, of your hands, of your aims in life, of your leisure moments, of your business, of your life and ways? Have *they* been touched? If we bow to the blessed teaching of this beautiful chapter, business, household duties, everything will be affected by this word to us. What have you to do with this world's morality in the carrying on of your business? Nothing! you have simply to walk according to God's Word, trusting to Him to care for you. You go on working *with* and *for* Him. Does some one say, "But how can I live so?" Well, if you could not, God would take you above—to heaven. But you can, that is why He leaves you here. To live up to God's standard will narrow your path, but it was wide enough for Christ, and surely for you; and oh! no words can express the blessedness of walking simply with Him? Do you know what it is to have fellowship in suffering with Christ? To share His glory will be sweet; but that is not enough to satisfy the heart which, loving Him, longs to be identified with Him in *all* His life down here, save, of course, atonement, in which He was necessarily alone. Before we share the glory we must be down here men and women of *one* purpose—people who can say, "One thing I do," and stick to it! *Keep* and do all His statutes with *all* thy heart and with *all* thy soul. It is not the obedience of the law, but the obedience of Christ to which we are set apart. We are sanctified by the Spirit to obey as Christ obeyed (1 Peter i. 2). The holy character and measure of His obedience measures ours. Are we to lower the standard because we fail?

VI.—EVENING. WHOLE-HEARTED CONSECRATION (verse 17).

Happy people whose God is the Lord—for it is no formal

statement of truth, or piece of doctrine for the saint of God at the close of this happy day to avouch the Lord to be His God "to keep His statutes and hearken unto His voice"—no, it is the hearty, fervent breathing of a soul that has found its all, its centre and rest in God. O beloved reader, is it the deep, solemnly reasoned conviction of thy soul that thou cleavest to Christ and His ways for evermore? The result, too, of Christ's love *constraining*, and the renewed mind *judging* that "henceforth" we should not live unto ourselves but unto Him who died for us and rose again (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). It is life and death consecration to HIM Who lived, and loved, and died, and rose again. Living or dying, we are His.

VII.—NIGHT. JEHOVAH CLAIMS ME FOR HIMSELF (verses 18, 19).

The saint began the day with God. Now *He* will give thee songs in the night. "My beloved is mine" might be accepted as a motto for verse 17. "I am His" would as fittingly motto the closing verses of this chapter. What He is to us is surely the joy of our heart—yea, what we have found *in Him* will engage our souls through all eternity; but what we are *to Him*, ah! that is infinitely higher. What the prodigal found in the Father, and is finding still, is a theme of exhaustless delight. But the keynote of praise in the courts of heaven is what the Father found. "Let us eat and be merry." Oh, it is the voice of God, and He gives the ground of His joy; "*for* this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry." The merry-making *began*, but it never ended—it is eternal. Have we hold of God? then "*hold fast*;" firm and eternal is His hold of us.* Like David's love

*It is of the last importance to distinguish carefully between the *security* and *communion* of the believer; my security rests upon *Him*. We do not believe in the "perseverance of the saints," but do most firmly hold the eternal security of every poor sinner resting only on the finished work of Christ. It is Christ's hold upon me which secures my safety; my hold upon Him keeps unbroken the blessed link of love and communion.

and weeping, which far exceeded Jonathan's, so does our God in His love and thoughts transcendently exceed ours. Match, if you can, for moral beauty and depth of grace, these two closing verses.

May this be a practical chapter to us, each one. May it indeed be the daily life of each beloved child of God. Lord, grant it till *I* see Thy face, and Thy name be imprinted on my then sinless brow !

NOTES ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

DEAD WITH CHRIST, Rom. vi. 8.

The doctrinal knowledge of this truth is one thing ; its practical application day by day is quite another. To what am I dead?—to all that Christ is dead to. What about sin, politics, the world in its moral character (1 John ii. 16), pride, love of money, position, dress? Dead with Christ settles your relation to all these and other things. It is a simple test and one which the youngest believer may apply in every-day life : Is Christ dead to this and that? So am I, as dead with Him.

RISEN WITH CHRIST, Col. iii. 1.

Then the range of things of a heavenly kind and character are to occupy our minds and engross our lives. “ Seek those things which are *above* where Christ sitteth.” What a vast inheritance of wealth and blessing lies up *there*, and all ours ! The things are strewn around in the presence of Christ. He is named as the centre so as to attach our hearts to heaven. Heaven is our home and its magnificent contents of life and glory our things. Hence the holy vigour demanded in the emphatic word “ Seek ! ”

CHOSEN IN CHRIST, Eph. i. 4.

A vast system—moral and material—was set up in divine counsel long ere the world was. One of the grandest features of

the system with its millennial and eternal glories, is the sovereign and eternal choice of persons, gathered out from this wrecked world and united to Him *in* whom they were chosen. Our place is in the heavens and we have a capacity for the place. Heaven suits our nature and our nature is in perfect consonance with heaven.

BOOK NOTICE.

HATH GOD CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE?

By A. C. GAEBELEIN, EDITOR OF *Our Hope*.

WE have been dipping into this book in our leisure moments, and have much pleasure in warmly commending it to our readers on both sides of the ocean. It is really as indicated by the title a work on "The Jewish Question," which is quickly coming to the front as *the* great political question of the day. Jewish eyes are straining toward Palestine, and Jewish feet from every land are treading on to the holy land, dear to Jehovah, dear to exiled Judah, and surely dear to us. An intelligent understanding of the place which Israel occupies in the sacred Word is indispensable to every student of the Scriptures. Now this book is a sure help and guide in this much neglected branch of biblical study. The book bristles with facts bearing upon the state of the Hebrew nation, in and outside of Palestine. In our judgment the title of the book does not give it justice—not sufficiently comprehensive. By all means procure this work, and you will find that a second reading will not exhaust your interest. Who ever tires hearing and reading of the outcast Jew and of his grand future?

GOSPEL PUBLISHING OFFICE, 54 WEST TWENTY-SECOND ST.,
NEW YORK. Price One Dollar or 4s.

TRUTH FOR THE LAST DAYS.

THE GREAT OPEN MEETING OF CHRISTIANITY.

IN order to enjoy and retain spiritual vitality, freshness, fervour, and power, we require to be kept in living contact with CHRIST HIMSELF, and this can be done only as our minds are freshly nourished by the Holy Ghost with the truths of the holy Scriptures.

If we study the Word with prayer, faith, and dependence, and get the knowledge of Christ in His person, life, death, Headship, and glory, we shall have the elements of vitality and freshness within our reach; but in the Lord's supper we are brought very solemnly in contact with Christ in His death, and thereby the desires and affections are drawn forth towards Him in a manner and with an intensity of fervour and spiritual enjoyment that will lead to the happy and spontaneous outflow of thanksgiving, adoration, and praise.

If the open meeting of the Apostolic Church, with the Lord's supper as its centre, were restored, it would be the best means for conserving a revived Christianity, and deepening the fervour and spirituality of the saints. Young Christians would be mightily helped if they found themselves every Lord's day in the midst of an assembly of believers, where the one object before them was Christ Himself in His dying love.

In order to give those who are young in the divine life an inkling of the worship-meeting of primitive times, we have drawn the following plain principles from the Word of God, and we believe they are such as they will never need to unlearn,

for they are things which are undoubtedly according to the Scriptures:—

I. That the coming together of believers every Lord's day, for partaking of the Lord's supper, and for praising, thanking, and worshipping God, should hold a prominent place in the assembly. The full, proper worship of the Church of God is found in Scripture connected with remembering the Lord's death (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 17-34; Heb. x. 25).

II. That faith in the Lord Jesus forms the only ground for being at the Lord's table; and while all believers should be there, due precaution should be taken to keep back the unconverted—and even Christians who are not walking in holiness, as Christians ought (1 Cor. v).

III. That, as the Lord's supper is a disciples' feast, and not a sacrifice, there is no place for any one acting as priest, either as to offering sacrifice or mediating for others. Christ Himself presided at the institution of the supper, and there is not a line in Scripture informing us that He has given up that place, or to warrant any one to presume to occupy it. When assembled "*to His name*" as His saints are now, while in *bodily* presence He is absent, faith hears His voice saying, "*There am I in the midst of them;*" "take it and divide it amongst yourselves;" "I am your master, all ye are brethren." "Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. xiv. 26).

IV. That, as we read of the Pentecostal saints, that they (1) continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and (2) fellowship, and (3) in breaking of bread, and (4) in prayers (Acts ii. 42)—Christians who are not abiding in all these four elements of Christian profession lay themselves open to the charge of not walking in truth, and hence to the action of brotherly admonition; and they should be dealt with lovingly and faithfully, for the glory of Christ and their own good; and none but believers,

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and believers assembling regularly at the Lord's table, are fit persons to take any part in the worship of God in the assemblies of His saints.

V. That the gathering at the Lord's table is not an assembling of Christians for the sake of one another, but for the Lord Jesus, to confess Christ, show forth His death, have their hearts filled with Him, and "worship the Father in spirit and in truth." It is to Christ only, and not to Christians, we are gathered, and where He is in the true holiest, and not to any earthly Zion ; and our great aim should be to have Christ uppermost in all our hearts, and not to be thinking of ourselves or of one another ; far less judging whether this one or that one ought to be present at the table. (That should be done and settled beforehand).

VI. That, although there should be freedom of action for the Holy Ghost using whom He will in doing anything at the Lord's table, yet the table is not a place for confession of sins, supplication for mercies, or for preaching or teaching ; but for worship, thanksgiving, adoration, and praise, and all the teaching that would seem proper on such an occasion, is that which would unfold simply to the eye of faith the person and work of Christ, the graces and glories, the death and dying love of our adorable Lord Jesus. Man should be hidden ; Christ alone appear. We want to be occupied with Him alone at His table, and not with our own edification ; and all that would lead on our hearts to praise Him more would be in place ; all else, even though precious truth, would generally be found to be an intrusion at the Lord's table. Christ is our exclusive Centre of gathering—Christ our one object when at His table. We come together to meet with Him who says, "Where two or three are gathered together in *my name*, there am I in the midst of them." The worship of God, presented by a "holy priesthood, who offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter ii. 5), is the great thing there, though, as result, nourishment is

granted to the saints for growing up into Christ in all things. (Eph. iv. 11-14).

VII. In coming to the Lord's table, and there breaking with others that "*one loaf*," we manifest our membership in "*the body of Christ*," we by no means witness to our own special association (as if the Lord's table were the table of a party with some distinctive name), but to the general truth of the oneness of the body of Christ; and our association in the breaking of bread is the outward expression of this blessed reality. Meeting thus, saints assemble on ground that admits of all believers, gathered to Christ alone, being there; and if they are not, they could not then say that any human barriers had been erected to prevent them.

There is no membership but of Christ, for "we are members of his body" (Eph. v. 30.)—"members of Christ" (1 Cor. vi. 15; and the holy scriptures speak of no other membership, unless it be that which springs out of this—"members one of another" (Eph. iv. 25); and therefore, there can be no human membership of anything on earth as a term of communion at the Lord's table; but saints assemble simply on the ground of being constituents of a unity already formed, and existing—"the unity of the Spirit"—(Eph. iv. 3)—and all Christ's members are free to come together for the breaking of bread; only they must satisfy the assembly that they are Christ's; for although grace gathers us to Christ, holiness must be preserved; for the church is an "habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 22); and to admit of evil were a denial of Christ in His person, and of the whole work accomplished in His death, as well as of the presence of the Holy Ghost. The Lord Jesus is the "Holy One"! and "let him that nameth the name of the *Lord depart from iniquity*." (2 Tim. ii. 19).

It will, therefore, appear clear that the unsaved, however religious, and obviously those who are frequenting theatres, races,

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circuses, operas, dancings, public-houses or making companions of the ungodly, or who are living loosely in any way, are excluded by the Holy Ghost in the holy scriptures from the fellowship of the church of God. (2 Cor. vi. 14-18).

All God's children in any given place, if walking in holiness, ought to be present together at the Lord's table every Lord's day, and none but children of God should be at the table, although unsaved persons may be present in the place of meeting as spectators and hearers. (1 Cor. xiv. 14-18).

The present object of Christ's death is not fully attained, unless we COME TOGETHER "*on the first day of the week to break bread*" (Acts xx. 7), for He died "that he should gather together in one the children of God." (John xi. 52). *Coming together* for breaking of bread, worship, and mutual edification, is mentioned seven times in 1 Corinthians xi. 17, 18, 20, 33, 34; xiv. 23, 26.

Reading the Bible at home, or hearing a lecture or sermon, as a substitute for the worship of the church, is unscriptural. "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." (Heb. x. 25).

The revival of God's work is carried forward to its proper goal only when it leads us to worship Him in accordance with His own principles (as we have indicated them in the foregoing propositions); for His provisions of grace are surely not intended to terminate with the blessing of the creature, but to lead to the glory of the Creator and the exaltation of the all-glorious name of our Saviour-God. The great awakening at Pentecost resulted in an incorporative unity, for "*all that believed were together,*" "and they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42-44); and an awakening that is really of the Lord,

and that will continue, will always lead, if not interfered with, to a similar issue.

In the apostles' time the young converts were not sent back either to the heathen temples or the Jewish synagogues, to be exposed to the idolatrous teaching and influence of the priests of heathenism, or to the Judaising teaching and influence of the scribes and rabbis of Judaism ; but, as divinely called out saints, they were diligently gathered together in an assembly by themselves as soon as they were converted ; and—being all live coals—when collected into one, they made a bright warm fire, which gave spiritual light and heat to one another and to the world around them ; and from this holy divine society of the one “church of the living God,” as their centre and home, they went out, in the power of the Holy Ghost, to spread the knowledge of the saving name of Jesus ; and they were marvellously blessed in the conversion of souls.

The great open meeting of all believers for true and Spirit-led worship, mutual edification, and the observance of the Lord's supper, having fallen into desuetude throughout Christendom, we plead for its restoration in the name of our dishonoured Lord, and on behalf of His much-injured saints. Meetings for evangelists preaching the gospel to the world, and meetings for true and Spirit-taught ministers teaching the saints, are right ; but it is wrong to omit the great scriptural meeting of apostolic times, the assembling of the church, as such, “*on the first day of the week,*” for the breaking of bread and the worship of God.

We are happy to find an attempt being made at present towards having an *open meeting* among believers on all other days save the Lord's day : but it seems strange to stop it on that day, seeing that *the great open meeting of Christianity*, according to scripture, is the assembling of the saints “ON THE FIRST DAY of the week” for the breaking of bread and the worship of God ;

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and no human substitute for it will nourish and perpetuate the spiritual vitality of the children of God. Let all believers, renouncing sectarian practices and human expediency, and acting in the spirit of "*love to all saints*," and on the ground of the divine principle of being "*members of Christ*," "come together" for worship on the divine footing of being of the "one body" of Christ, and they will verify His promise—"there am I in the midst of them."

Our meaning will be made plain if you bring our modern churches face to face with the first Epistle to the Corinthians, for they will there see an assembling of the saints in the unity and freedom of the *communion* of the Holy Ghost which finds no counterpart within their limits.* The testimony in our days is sadly out of proportion to the blessing. Many souls have been converted; but how few are gathered to the name of Jesus outside of everything that He does not own or allow? Every saved soul should be there in proof of his love and faithfulness to Christ. It is not Christianlike to take His benefits and not think of His glory. "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" (Luke xvii. 17). "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Rev. iii. 7, 8).

* We refer christian teachers to *Lange's Commentary* to see that we are not singular in expressing ourselves thus. In vol. vi. N. T., on 1 Corinthians, p. 303, we find the following:—"Primitive Christian Worship.—Of this, as observed at Corinth, we have a vivid picture afforded us in this chapter xiv. Indeed, it is the only one extant of the kind giving us a clear and instructive glimpse into the nature and working of church life in those early times. The first thing that strikes us is the absence of all fixed order. No hint is given of the superintendence of any individual or class of persons regulating the services in the church assemblies—even where the mention of such would most naturally be made—as in the case of the disorders spoken of in verses 26-34. The exer-

cises seem to have gone on spontaneously—very much as is now the case in many social gatherings, where ‘the meeting,’ as the saying is, ‘is thrown open.’” This is a very striking extract from *Lange*. His writers go by what they find in the original scriptures; and here we are told that in the worship-meeting of the early church there was :

1, “*The absence of all fixed order.*”

2, “*No hint is given of the superintendence of any individual or class of persons regulating the services in the church assemblies;*” and,

3, “*The exercises appear to have gone on spontaneously, very much as is now the case where the meeting is thrown open.*”

But some, who plead for ecclesiastical corruption and man’s improvement on the apostolic method of worship, may ask—May we not meet in the name of Jesus, and have His presence in our modern churches? No, not if you meet under man’s arrangements, for that is upsetting Christ’s order; and you cannot expect Him to countenance you by giving His presence in so doing. If it is according to man’s rules you are gathered, that precludes meeting in Christ’s name; and, in such circumstances, you cannot have Christ’s presence in your midst, for though He may give His blessing by His word and Spirit, He manifests Himself to such as keep His word and do not deny His name. (John xiv. 21).

The word says—“Let all things be done decently and in order.” It would not be decent, nor in order, for the head of a house to be subject to the rules of the children. If you ask—where, then, am I to worship? Where Christ’s presence is—that is, where there is a people gathered to His name (Matt. xviii. 20); where there is the absence of all fixed order; where there is “*no superintendence of any individual or class of persons regulating the services in the church assemblies;*” and where the worship goes on “*spontaneously,*” or rather under the sovereign control of the present Spirit. If you worship on other principles, and according to a system ordered by man, and where the services are regulated and conducted by a special class of men, priests, clergymen, or ministers, it is not worship after the pattern found in the New Testament; and it is a shame for any saved soul to go on with that which cannot be countenanced by Christ’s presence, but is a dishonour to His holy name.

Christ is the centre of worship in heaven!

Christ the rejected One here amongst men,

None other name of salvation is given;

Sound it, believers, again and again!

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Christ is the Sacrifice ! Christ is the Altar !
 Christ is the mercy-seat sprinkled with blood !
 Come, ye desponding ones, fear not nor falter,
 Christ is our Peace in the presence of God.

Christ is the Victim divinely appointed,
 Spotless, accepted, attested by fire ;
 Christ our Melchisedec, robed and anointed,
 Royal and priestly His seamless attire.

One only Sacrifice, one only Altar,
 One only Mercy-seat God doth allow ;
 Dream not, O man ; His decretal to alter,
 Sealed with the blood of the Holiest now.

One only Offering God hath appointed—
 Stretching His hand, He withheld not the knife !
 One only Priest He hath crown'd and anointed :
 Jesus ! the Way, and the Truth, and the Life !

Jesus ! the centre of worship in heaven !
 Jesus ! despised and rejected of men !
 None other name of salvation is given—
 Worthy is Jesus, the Lamb that was slain !

W. R.

A TRIAL IN THE HIGH JUSTICE COURT OF HEAVEN.

THE trial is one of intense interest. Human infirmity, passion, prejudice, and the motives which oftentime influence the course of justice have no place here. The dignity of the Judge ; the absolute impartiality of His decisions ; the issues at stake, and the holy calm of the court in general, invest the proceedings with an interest never witnessed in any tribunal on earth.

The trial is a representative one.

The *Judge* is the angel of the Lord in the power and character of Jehovah.

The *Prosecutor* is Satan the open and declared enemy of God and man.

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The *Prisoner* is Joshua, the High Priest representing Israel before God.

The *Spectators* are Angels—Ministers of God.

Satan the prosecutor stands at Joshua's right hand "to be his adversary" (Zech. iii. 1, R. v.) Satan is remorseless. He has not one atom of pity for his poor dupes. He exacts vigorous service, and also lures them on to everlasting ruin. Satan can lie, deceive, and murder at his pleasure, but in this trial there is no need to exaggerate; the guilt of the prisoner is unquestionable. Satan's charges and accusations are true. The "filthy garments" in which the prisoner is clad, instead of holy garments for glory and beauty (Exod. xxviii.) in which as High Priest he should have been dressed, are clear evidences of his guilt. The filthy garments proclaim him, and the nation in him, as morally filthy. There is no defence. The silence of the prisoner under the searching gaze of the Judge and the accumulated proofs of Satan attest his guilt. No excuse is attempted; no palliation of guilt offered; the prisoner's mouth is shut, not one word is said, nor can be why judgment should not be pronounced, why a sentence of penal banishment for ever from God and from heaven should not be recorded.

Satan in malicious triumph can point to those "filthy garments" as proof to all in the court of the prisoner's guilt. Who can silence Satan? The Judge alone can do so, and do it in righteousness. Sin is never slurred over; nor is mercy exercised at the expense of righteousness. Others might have been better, or even worse than the prisoner, but no such plea can avail with God. Israel, as represented in Joshua her high priest was a guilty and rebellious people. All the way from Egypt to Canaan, she sinned with a high hand under priests, prophets, judges, and kings. Jehovah Himself had been the constant witness of Israel's guilt. She had sinned against grace, law, government, and unchanging love.

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The offended One Himself pleads the cause of the offender. The righteous Judge is the sinner's advocate and friend, and pleads his otherwise hopeless, helpless case against the charges of Satan, be they true or false. Jehovah silences the accuser in the high court of heaven. "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath *chosen* Jerusalem rebuke thee" (ver. 2). O God of *all* grace! The sovereignty of God is our refuge. His right to pardon or condemn is the only hope of a despairing sinner. "Is not this," said Jehovah, "a brand plucked out of the fire?" What Joshua was, that every saved sinner is. What is the value or worth of a half-burnt brand, but to be cast into the fire out of which it was snatched by the hand of love, by the grasp of omnipotence. Every one of the redeemed in glory owes deliverance to the grace of God, to the blood of the Lamb and to that *alone*. Yonder saint with palm of victory, harp of triumph, and crown of gold is *in himself* but "a brand plucked out of the fire." Every saved soul is an eternal debtor to the grace of God. O to hide in the Living God Himself! O to throw one's guilty self on God who could righteously consign to the lowest hell!

Next, the Angel-spectators are addressed. Their mission of *mercy* is to touch unclean lips with the coal of judgment (Isa. vi.); their mission of *care* to watch over in daily life God's heirs of Salvation (Heb. i.); their yet future mission of *judgment* is to gather out the tares and cast them into a furnace of fire (Matt. xiii.) But here the delightful task assigned them is: "Take away the filthy garments from him." Every trace of defilement is to be removed; the filthy garments are not washed and put on again. They are completely taken away. "Sins are made an end of." The garments of sin are never re-worn. We can no more give up sins, than could Joshua remove his filthy garments. Our defilement can only be removed by another. It is a work done *for* us, not *by* us. It is the work of Jehovah *alone*. "Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass

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from thee" (ver. 4.) The judge becomes the sinner's Saviour. He who had right over the clay to make vessels unto honour or dishonour according to His sovereign right and pleasure, here moulds a vessel to highest honour. Jehovah Himself removes a sinner's defilement according to His knowledge and estimate of it. The *Salvation of God* thus becomes our boast and glory; what He has done our song (Exod. xv.)

But when God is in question we can no more limit His grace than we can gather up the dust of the earth. His grace is boundless, rich, limitless, and free. He giveth grace upon grace. He heaps it up. Divine grace is like a mighty ocean, or 'as Ezekiel's river which we enter, the water rising gradually to the ankles, to the knees, then to the loins, rising yet higher: "It was a river that I could not pass over; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over" (Chap. xlvii. 3-5).

Yet, again, the voice of Jehovah breaks in upon the scene! Now Joshua is directly addressed, not in words of condemnation, but in accents of purest grace. "It is God that justifieth." Here Jehovah indulges the feelings of His own heart. He lavishes His love upon one utterly destitute in himself of title or claim. "I will clothe *thee* with rich apparel" (ver. 4 R. V.) Divinely provided garments! In them the once degraded, filthy sinner is now arrayed. What a change: from distance to nearness! From ruin to glory! From the bar to the throne! From darkness to light! From hell to heaven! Ah! this is indeed the *Salvation of God*. He not only saves from sin and its eternal consequences, but covers the saved one with beauty—His own; with glory—His own. Our highest conception of the conclusion of this trial would have been the freedom of the prisoner, but lo he passes from the dock and arrayed in robes costly and beautiful, he is assigned a place amongst, yet morally higher, than the angelic hosts. "To sit with ME in My throne" (Rev. iii. 21) is the portion of an overcoming saint; of no angel is that said.

NO MORE SORROW.

SORROW in its origin is evil ; only when touched by the Saviour's hand does it become sweetening, sanctifying, improving. A day comes when this sorrow will not be needed ; when this discipline will be superseded ; because we shall be perfect even as Christ Himself is perfect. In the world that will be, Marys and Marthas will no more weep because a brother dies, or join the procession of the lengthening sisterhood of human sufferers. Then there will be no more Rachels weeping for their children because they are not. The wine will no more fail at bridal feasts, and *light after light will no more go out in happy homes* ; marble halls will no more be silent, and hearths will no more grow cold ; but broken ties will be reknit ; lost links shall be found ; all hearts shall bound and no heart shall break ; for we shall be where there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for ever.

What a blessed thought ! not that there shall be no more sorrow, for that is the least part of it, but that there shall be no more necessity for the discipline of sorrow ; no more pride to be humbled, no more covetousness to be dissolved, no more earthliness to be broken up, no more evil to be extracted from our nature ; for we shall then be holy as He is holy, and therefore happy as He is happy. It is a glorious prospect : “ There shall be no more sorrow.” And what does that imply ? That there shall be no more sin. Sin is not part of our world ; it is not a perpetuity ; it is an intruder ; it is an interloper ; and it shall be expunged from creation, and extracted from every atom of the whole earth ; and then our tears shall be dried up, and *sorrow shall disappear from every heart ; and there shall be, what some one sings so well :—*

“ No sickness there,
No weary wasting of the frame away,
No fearful shrinking from the midnight air,
No hidden grief.

The Common Property of all Believers.

“ Let us depart,
If home like this await the weary soul :
Look up, thou stricken one, thy wounded heart
Shall bleed no more at sorrow's stern control.

“ With faith our guide,
White-robed and innocent, to tread the way,
Why fear to plunge in Jordan's rolling tide,
And find the haven of eternal day ?”

C.

THE COMMON PROPERTY OF ALL BELIEVERS.

DEAR young believer, we earnestly trust you will carefully look up every passage referred to, with its context. Every one of the blessings enumerated is the common portion of ALL who, through grace, have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Distinguish between “possession” and “enjoyment.” All believers possess, but all do not enjoy these blessings.

ALL HAVE—

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Peace,Rom. 5, 1 | All blessings,.....Eph. 1, 3 |
| Eternal Life,1 John 5, 11 | Liberty,Gal. 5, 1 |
| Redemption,.....Eph. 1, 7 | Shepherd-care,.....Ps. 23 |
| Hope,Heb. 6, 19 | Guidance,Ps. 32, 8 |
| Deliverance,Heb. 2, 15 | Promises,.....2 Cor. 7, 1 |
| Access,.....Eph. 2, 18 | All-sufficiency,2 Cor. 9, 8 |
| AssuranceCol. 2, 2 | An inheritance,Eph. 1, 11 |
| Christ's love.....Rev. 1, 5 | The new man,.....Col. 3, 10 |
| Christ's glory.....John 17, 22 | The Holy Spirit,...Rom. 5, 5 |
| Christ's peace.....John 14, 27 | The Son,.....1 John 5, 12 |
| Christ's joy.....John 15, 11 | Fellowship,1 John 1, 3 |
| Christ's mind.....1 Cor. 2, 16 | Sins condemned,...Rom. 8, 3 |
| God's love,1 John 4, 11 | Sins forgiven,Eph. 1, 7 |
| God's care,1 Peter 5, 7 | Sins purged,.....Heb. 1, 3 |
| The Father's love, 1 Jn. 3, 1 | Sins borne,1 Peter 2, 24 |
| The Father's words, Jn. 17, 8 | Sins forgotten,...Heb. 10, 17 |
| Boldness,.....Eph. 3, 12 | An unction,.....1 John 2, 20 |
| Confidence,.....Eph. 3, 12 | An High Priest, ...Heb. 8, 1 |
| Purged conscience,...Heb. 10 | An Advocate,1 John 2, 1 |
| All things,.....1 Cor. 3, 21 | God for us!.....Rom. 8, 31 |

The Common Property of All Believers.

III

ALL ARE—

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Saved,.....Eph. 2, 8 | Sons,Rom. 8, 14 |
| Justified,.....Rom. 5, 1 | In Christ,.....Rom. 8, 1 |
| Washed,.....1 Cor. 6, 11 | In the Spirit, Rom. 8, 9 |
| Reconciled,2 Cor. 5, 18 | Quickened.....Eph. 2, 5 |
| Sanctified,.....1 Cor. 6, 11 | Raised up,.....Eph. 2, 6 |
| Complete in Him, Col. 2, 10 | Seated,Eph. 2, 6 |
| Perfect ed ever, ...Heb. 10, 14 | New Creation,...2 Cor. 5, 17 |
| Accepted,Lev. 1, 4 | God's elect,.....Rom. 8, 33 |
| Clean every whit, Jn. 13, 10 | God's Assembly...Acts 20, 28 |
| Redeemed,.....Rev. 5, 9 | God's habitation, Eph. 2, 22 |
| Chosen in Him,.....Eph. 1, 4 | Christ's body,...1 Cor. 12, 27 |
| Predestinated,Eph. 1, 5 | Lamb's bride,Rev. 19, 7 |
| Blessed,Gal. 3, 9 | Vine-branches,John 15, 5 |
| Dead with Christ, Rom. 6, 8 | Brought to God, 1 Pet. 3, 18 |
| Light,.....Eph. 5, 8 | A peculiar people, 1 Pet. 2, 9 |
| Kings,.....Rev. 1, 6 | A royal priesthood, 1 Pet. 2, 9 |
| Priests,Rev. 1, 6 | Of God,1 John 4, 4 |
| Heirs,Rom. 8, 17 | Born again,.....1 Pet. 1, 23 |
| Saints,Rom. 1, 7 | All fair,.....Song 4, 7 |
| Children,Gal. 3, 26 | <i>One pearl ! Matt. 13, 46</i> |

The historical beginning of God's people will be found in *Genesis*; their deliverance is recorded in *Exodus*; their positional sanctification is the subject of *Leviticus*; their testings in the wilderness are written down in *Numbers*; their obedience is the main point developed in *Deuteronomy*; the triumphs of faith is given us in *Joshua*; and their abounding evil and unfaithfulness to Jehovah is fully narrated in *Judges*.

A STREAM OF WITNESSES

To the historical facts of the New Testament, for the first three hundred years of Christianity, with the approximate dates of their lives, according to Dr Lardner's works, who, after presenting to his readers extracts from writers for eleven centuries, says :

“We have had express and positive evidence that these books were written by those whose names they bear, even the Apostles of Jesus Christ, who was crucified at Jerusalem in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, when Pontius Pilate was governor in Judea.”

Barnabas, A.D. 71. Clement of Rome, 96. Hermas, 100. Ignatius, 107. Polycarp, 108. In these five authors Dr Lardner finds quotations or allusions to every book of the New Testament. Papias, 116. Quadratus, 123. Aristides, 126. Agrippa Castor, 132. Aristo of Pella, 140. Justin Martyr. Diognetus. Soter, 164. Dionysius, 170. Philip. Pinytus. Palmas. Modetus. Tatian, who harmonized the four Gospels into one story. Hegesippus, 173. Musanus, 176. Claudius Apollonaris. Melito, 177. Irenæus, 178. Athenagoras. Miltiades, 180. Bardesanes. Theophilus, 181. Apollonius, 186. Rhoden. Victor. Bacchylus. Theophilus. Narcissus. Pantæus, 192. Clement of Alexandria, 194. Polycrates, 196. Heraclitus. Maximus. Candidus. Appion. Sextus. Arabianus. Hermias, 200. Serapion. Tertullian. Minucius Felix, 210. Caius, 212. Alexander of Jerusalem. Hippolytus, 220. Ammonius. Julius Africanus. Origen, 230. Asterius Urbanus, 232. Firmilian, 233. Judas. Proculus. Geminianus. Tryphon. Gregory, 243. Dionysius of Alexandria, 247. Cyprian, 248. Cornelius, 251. Lucius. Novatus. Dionysius of Rome, 259. Commodian, 270. Malchion. Anatolius. Eusebius. Stephen. Theodotus. Theognostus. Pierius, 283. Dorotheus of Antioch. Another Dorotheus. Theonas, 290. Victorinus. Methodius. Lucian. Hesychius. Pamphilus, 294. Phileas, 296. Philoromus. Peter of Alexandria, 300. Archelaus. Arnobius, 306. Lactantius. Alexander of Alexandria.

The Council of Nice, 325. Many interesting particulars of the lives and labours of many of the foregoing authors will be found in Eusebius Ecclesiastical History, written in the fourth century, and the remains of their writings are published in 24 large volumes, by Messrs Clarke & Co., Edinburgh.—*Anon.*

THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP.

Psalm xxiii.

WE are not surprised that this beautiful pilgrim psalm has been repeated by Jews from time immemorial when they sit down to meat, nor that it has been termed "the nightingale among the Psalms." We love divine groupings; now here is one. Jesus as "the *good* Shepherd (John x. 11), lays down His life for His sheep, and that is the burden of Psalm xxii.; Christ as "the *great* Shepherd" (Heb. xiii. 20), in resurrection and strength, guides the pilgrim host through the wilderness, and that is the happy subject of Psalm xxiii.; Christ is "the *chief* Shepherd (1 Peter v. 4) in the glory, and in that light we may surely read Psalm xxiv. He is "good" in death, "great" in resurrection, and "chief" in glory.

Jehovah is the Shepherd of our psalm; now Christ takes up the cause of His redeemed (John x.), and in His once pierced hands we see the "rod" and the "staff" which never wax weak, and we sing all along the path:—

In Christ's own love abiding, no change my heart need fear,
I'm safe in such confiding, for nothing changes *there*;
The storm may rage around me, my heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me, and can I be afraid?

In commencing their pilgrim path, the Lord's redeemed will find a gracious cure for all restlessness of spirit in the knowledge of God, not simply what He gives and does, but what He *is*; not His favours alone enjoyed by the soul, but Himself known, loved, and trusted. "Jehovah is my Shepherd" is an intensely interesting and personal thought. It is faith's appropriation of God for the individual wants of the soul. Have *you* appropriated God and all that He is for yourself? "Jehovah is my Shepherd," is a statement which covers all the journey, meets all the need, triumphs over every hostile power, and answers every difficulty. He knows the duties of a shepherd, and He knows too the ways of the sheep. Are they defenceless?

He is strong to defend. Do they need correction? His hand of love applies the rod. Do they want support? His staff sustains. Do they require guidance? He leads them into paths of righteousness. Do they need pasture? His green fields and still waters both feed and gladden. Do they need light and help in the valley? He has hung up the lamps of eternal love all along the path, which never go out. The light ever burns, and He is with thee, thy travelling companion all the way through. Deep and quiet, therefore, is the language of faith, "I shall not want." How can I? How could I with such a caretaker and provider as God?

Nor need I fear sickness nor old age. O saint, encircled in the arms of almighty strength, and shielded in the bosom of infinite love, reject every worldly-wise maxim, and from underneath His wing, where thou art sheltered and covered, say, "I *shall* not want." The soul that confides in Jehovah can with quiet confidence reply, "I shall not want." Jehovah is the Divine provider for soul and body. Which is better off? The soul that trusts *man* or *God*?

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." May God Himself expound this precious word to our hearts! Does He lead the flock *to* green pastures? Yes, but that is not the thought here. You do not lie down to feed, but to rest. He first serves the needy soul, then "*maketh*" him to lie down, because he is satisfied. Has God written that word *satisfaction* on your heart? There is a present satisfaction in His infinite goodness and will, and there is a future satisfaction "when I awake with His likeness" (Psalm xvii. 15). "He maketh me to lie down," for He knows our restlessness and the strength and activity of nature. Has the moment come in your spiritual history—that supreme and never-to-be-forgotten moment—when you have said, "Lord, it is enough"? The blood of Christ has set you down in God's most holy presence, not as a beggar but as a *worshipper*. Here, then, it is not *standing*, for

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that speaks of service ; nor *walking*, for that tells of journeying ; nor *sitting*, to learn ; but you *lie down* happy and contented ; it is the figure of calm, quiet, full repose.

Then He leads the flock beside still waters, or waters of quietness, for it is the joy of the Shepherd to conduct the troubled hearts of His own into peaceful scenes of communion. *There* the flock under the watchful eye, and guided by the skilful hand of the Shepherd, are led along the banks of that river where neither wave nor ripple disturb the ransomed of the Lord. Yet a little while and the banks of the river of life, with its abundance of ever-summer fruit, will be trod by the unwearied feet of the flock : “ they shall walk with *me* in white, for they are worthy.” The Lord ever keeps the good and best wine to the end. This, then, is heaven’s eternal joy, that no thought of personal unworthiness as now shall ever break in upon the soul, while we walk and talk with the everlasting Companion of our joys and glories.

“ He restoreth my soul.” *When ?* When the heart is broken. When the trials of the Church oppress ; when the failure of loved and honoured brethren—spiritual guides—have led in the van of deep and growing dishonour to thy Lord ; when health, wealth, and comforts are claimed by the Lord that loves thee, and the pressure of His hand is felt, *then* the Lord restores the fainting spirit. God gives a voice to the exercises of the human heart thus oppressed, and, supposing that God has forsaken it, “ What sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel. My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God,” as if *He* could forget His beloved, or be indifferent to their exercises and troubles ; as if *His* eye slumbered, or *His* arm had grown weak, or *His* love grown cold ! “ Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint : and to them that have no might

He increaseth strength " (Isaiah xl. 27-31). *How* does He restore the soul? Look at the Master calmly sleeping amidst His troubled disciples. Some devoted heart has noted the weary look of Him who came to rest our souls, and a willing hand has provided a pillow in the hinder part of the vessel, removed as far as possible from the bustle and noise (Mark iv. 38). *There* He slept, while the storm without was answered by the storm within the breasts of His own. Terrified, His disciples awoke the Master. "Carest Thou not that we perish?" Surely the storm that would have sunk *them* would have sunk *Him*, for He and they were together. But that were impossible, so *before* He lifted His head from His pillow and hushed the winds and waves, He calmed the fears and distress of His own, saying, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? *Then* He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea" (Matt. viii. 26). He would have His beloved in His own peace in the midst of the world's storms. Ah! what opportunities we miss in not taking our part in the circumstances of Christ. Why did not the disciples gather round the pillow and gaze and adore as they beheld His face!

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness." Here the paths of practical righteousness are entered upon by the ransomed of the Lord. A conscience "purged" for God, made permanently fit for His presence, you can never forfeit. But the practical maintenance of a "good" conscience for God and man, maintained by self-judgment and communion, with an uncondemning heart, are priceless verities in these days of high doctrine and low walk. But does God conduct His pilgrim host into paths of righteousness to distinguish them—to mark them off as a people of power in the world? "Nay, but for "His own name's sake" God has connected His name and glory with the walk of His people, and if they prove indifferent to His glory, and cease to walk worthy of His name, *He* knows how to vindicate His blessed truth and testimony. The name of Christ is dear to the heart of God.

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Verse 4. Now we enter the valley of the shadow of death, not surely an unknown or untrodden path, for faith can discern the footprints of the Man of Sorrows all along the way. It is not "the article of death" that is here meant, but the whole path of the pilgrim-sons of God, from the cross (Psalm xxii.) to the glory (Psalm xxiv). Deliverance out of the shadow of death is as sure for us as for Israel of old (Ps. cvii. 14), and light too shall yet burst upon us in full-orbed splendour (Isa. ix. 2). Why termed "the *shadow* of death"? Because wherever there is a "shadow" there must be "light." Ah, yes; we are living and walking between the lights of grace and glory, the path of exercise, tears, disappointment, and practical death to the flesh lying between. But does the "valley" not suppose mountains? Yes, and we will climb them by and by. The land of glory is stretching out before us, and its beauties and grandeurs are about to burst upon our gaze, then, O then our souls will triumph! Nor is it, "I walk *in* the valley," but "I walk *through*" it, for the end is as sure as the beginning, and He means us to reach the glory and light at the end. "The crown and kingdom are in view."

Besides, "I will fear no evil." Right bold is the language of faith. We do not hear the pilgrim saying, "There are no evils," for Satan has filled the valley with them, but he says, "I will *fear* no evil, for 'Thou art with me.'" Here the Psalm divides. The pilgrim has been speaking *of* Jehovah, now he speaks *to* Jehovah. He turns from others to Him. Surely this is another advance in our spiritual history! When Jehovah *alone* becomes the portion of the soul, the lamps of love light up the valley, and God is by my side, and the crested wave becomes as a sapphire pavement beneath my feet. No saint ever failed *because* he was weak, but because he did not realise that he was weak, for then God is clung to. His love becomes the confidence of the soul, and His encircling arm our strength. "Thy rod and thy staff *they* comfort me." The "rod" to

correct and the "staff" to sustain. We are as thankful that decline of heart is arrested, and wandering feet reclaimed, as that the staff is in His hand to uphold and never waxes weak. Our failures are corrected and our weakness sustained by His love and power.

Verse 5. "Thou *prepar*est a table before me." There is no hurry with God. Our enemies are the enemies of the Lord. Marshal the *difficulties* of the wilderness. *Christ's love* in its depth and tenderness will enable the pilgrim host to triumph over all. Let all creature-*powers* gather round the defenceless host, *God's love* in its infinite breadth and strength, is the banner borne aloft by the pilgrim band (Rom. viii. 35-39). But whether in presence of wilderness-difficulty, or enemy, it is all the same to Jehovah, who calmly dresses a table for His beloved. Deep, rich and varied are the experiences of the saint seated at Jehovah's table; there he is encircled by arms that never weary, is pressed to the only heart where no reproach is ever found. But grace upon grace is given. Jehovah anoints the head of each guest with the holy oil—the Spirit's unction and power. Priestly nearness to God, and kingly dignity for God, are thus *presently* conferred upon every member of the blood-purchased flock; "*hath* made us kings and priests unto God and His Father" (Rev. i. 6). But the story of wilderness grace is not yet told out. Jehovah has Himself prepared and spread a table in the wilderness, and that in presence of every hostile power, then He bids me worship and reign, and now the heart, big with matter (Psalm xlv. 1), utters itself thus, "*My cup runneth over.*" Christ's cup of *wrath* was full, and He drained the last dregs. Your cup of *goodness* is full, ever full, and always overflowing, but you will never, no never proclaim it *empty*. Why this overflowing grace? Beloved, God has given us the means to be generous, to be royal givers. You may draw upon the treasury of heaven to any extent. You may fill up blank cheques to any amount. Let the need of others be your care,

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and when you give do it as an imitator (follower) of God (Eph. v. 1). "Give and it shall be given you." My cup "*runneth over*." What is this? Abundance? Nay more. Will we term it by the word *redundance*? We will be eternal heritors of His glory up *there*; we are daily pensioners of His goodness down *here*. He gives the Holy Ghost for our own souls' enjoyment (John iv. 14), and He gives the Spirit also for abundant testimony to others (vii. 38). It is the *one* gift of the Spirit, whether for ourselves or for others.

Verse 6. Now we are getting to the end of the valley. We entered it with the certainty of Jehovah's shepherd-care, and we leave it with even firmer tread and brightening hope. "*Surely* goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." "*Surely*" is the pilgrim's stamp upon the remaining days of his pilgrimage; it affirms the certainty of love for every wilderness-hour and moment of need; the Lord in like manner, stamps the certainty of His speedy return from heaven, saying, "*Surely* I come quickly," *His last words from heaven* (Rev. xxii. 20). We are counting the mile-stones as we pass. The last one is almost in sight.

" Beyond the smiling and the weeping,
We shall be *soon*."

There is a double river of blessing tracking every step of the journeying host. From the cross to the throne the goodness of Jehovah covers the need of the desert, and the mercy of Jehovah meets the failure of the wilderness. Will the river ever cease to flow? No, it *shall* follow me "*all* the days of my life"—the dark days as well as the bright days. Now comes the fitting sequel, the triumphant conclusion to the path of faith, to the life of experience, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Highest kind and character of Jewish blessing is to dwell for ever in *Jehovah's* house; but for us the *Father's* home is reserved, and for us the Father's Son of love will come and receive us "unto Himself" (John xiv.). He will not *lodge* us

in those heavenly mansions for a time, but we will *dwell* for ever—yes, “*for ever with the Lord.*”

Fellow-pilgrim, the Shepherd is with thee, goodness and mercy followeth thee, the house and kingdom are before thee, the Spirit's holy unction resteth on thee, the overflowing cup of Divine goodness is thine, and the victory full and final is most sure. Hallelujah!

DEFILEMENT.

WE refer, of course, to moral defilement. How is it communicated, and how is it spread abroad? Many Christian business men whom we know, are being constantly brought into personal contact with men of all sorts and conditions—some of whose moral character and even religious associations are of the worst conceivable. Are these Christian men defiled thereby? Salutations are freely exchanged, and certain acts of a social kind partaken of together. Yet the child of God, in these and other acts necessitated by the social system in which we each have our part, remains undefiled. This leads us to enquire: Is moral defilement contracted by physical contact with defiled persons, or is it in the heart's acquiescence in the evil in question? We are not Jews; we are Christians. The Israelite of old was defiled by a touch, or even by his presence in a tent of death (Numbers xix.). He was defiled by what was external to himself. It was no question of the *heart*, but of his hand, and his presence where prohibited.

Does the Old Testament principle apply in Christianity? Jealous regard for the glory of Jehovah and for the purity of His house is common to both Testaments. But it must be borne in mind, that the character of the present dispensation is essentially distinct from the preceeding one. Christianity is not a developed Judaism, but presents in principle and in

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numerous details a series of sharply-drawn contrasts. Judaism was a religion of form, of ceremony, of law. Not that individual faith in God was lacking; this was ever true, even before Moses established the Judaic system. But we speak of what is characteristic. Christianity, on the contrary, is a religion of vital force, of reality, of grace. Now, Numbers xix., Leviticus xiii. xiv., have undoubtedly their answer in Christian times, but that answer must be sought for in what is *real*, *i.e.*, the state of the heart. The *outward* of the Old Testament gives place to the *inward* of the New. The *external* defiling touch was quite in keeping with Jehovah's government of an earthly people. The *internal* state, or soul condition of a heavenly people, is just what might be expected under the ministry of the Spirit.

But does an outward and external link, or physical touch with a defiled person, defile others, irrespective of the state of heart or intelligence? Or is defilement a question of the heart's relation to evil, and not one simply of outward association? Let us put this to the test. "Evil thoughts" defile the person harbouring them; so, too, "railings" (blasphemies), but do these defilements which have their source in the heart (Matt. xv. 18) defile those who may be in religious association with such persons? The fact of such association in itself does not defile. But if the corrupt nature in each of us opens itself to receive the evils, or condone them, *then* defilement ensues. Defilement is communicated when the corrupt nature which is *in* each one of us answers to the defilement *without*. The evil within soon expresses itself in outward word and action. Evil anywhere, even when unknown, necessarily affects all within its range, tending to lower the holy tone and spiritual feeling, say of an Assembly. Who can claim exemption from this? All companies of God's people are so affected, but all are not defiled. Actual defilement is a very different thing. Then there are measures and varying degrees of defilement. Thus an Israelite

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of old might be unclean till the even, or for seven days, or worse still, be expelled from the congregation. This, too, has its counterpart in the Church. We would here remark that not ordinary cases of defilement, but *wickedness* is that which excludes from the fellowship of God's people now (1 Cor. v. 13).

We all get more or less defiled in passing through the wilderness, and hence the constant need of the water of separation (Num. xix. 9). These defilements unfit for communion, and for service, so we have in the feet-washing of John xiii. and in the advocacy of the Lord on high (1 John ii. 1, 2) ample provision to meet the need. Now, *defilement* does not hinder one partaking of the Lord's Supper. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." But *wickedness* does. Defilement of a serious kind may really hinder and check the outflow of worship by an Assembly, and we may add that an extreme case of defilement may amount to wickedness of such character as demands excision from an Assembly of God's people.

The Lord Himself is an authority to which all must bow. In the first part of chapter xv. of St. Matthew's Gospel, the traditions of the elders are sharply contrasted with the authority of the written Word. Then the Lord proceeds to put the question of defilement on a New Testament basis, showing that it is not by physical touch, or personal or intermediate contact that it is communicated from one to another, but is traced to the heart's acquiescence in the evil, and from that impure fountain—so ready to receive outward suggestions of evil—it is then spread abroad in word and deed.

"*Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man*" (verses

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18-20). Now, this is the New Testament canon. Defilement is a question of the heart's going with evil, not in any outward touch or contact.

But 2 John 10, 11 has been adduced in proof of Church defilement. This, in our judgment, is a grave mistake. Second John contemplates individual action. Church discipline must be sought for elsewhere. The passage before us refers to a person going about defaming Christ, assailing His blessed character, either on the Divine or human side, or both. Now, whoever bids such an one God speed on his Satanic mission is a "partaker of his evil deeds," not necessarily of the evil doctrine. The text refers to an intelligent understanding of what the Antichrist is doing, and of his soul-destroying doctrine. The "God speed" was the outward expression of what was already in the man's heart. In other words, the man was defiled *before* he greeted the heretic. Defilement has its source in the heart.

How far-reaching is all this! How searching! What an invaluable principle for action in these trying times! Instead of confounding *all* in any religious community in one common cesspool of moral iniquity, we are thus enabled to discriminate, preserved from hasty action, and preserved from shutting out from our love and fellowship thousands of saints personally clear from evil; in fact, discipline in the New Testament only applies to individuals (1 Cor. v.), never to churches nor to communities of professing Christians. Where evil exists and is sanctioned one has to clear one's-self by separation. But the wholesale rejection of Assemblies of God's people, on the plea of a remote or immediate connection with evil, and amongst which the by far greater number are in absolute ignorance of, and therefore *not defiled*, is a misnomer and unknown in the New Testament. We again repeat, that saints are defiled when the heart goes with the evil, not otherwise. On this Matt. xv. is beyond all question the authority for our statement.

“Bring me a Minstrel.”

If our thoughts of defilement are scriptural, and we are satisfied they are, then we dare not put the brand of defilement upon whole companies of God's people, irrespective of the spiritual state or condition of heart of those so stigmatised. Intelligent fellowship with an evil person but manifests the state of the heart, and the one so acting is defiled *before* the outward expression of it in act.

We quite understand that the scriptural idea of defilement calls for an exercise of soul not required, where it is held that *all* are defiled by the presence *simply* of an evil person in the midst (Rev. iii. 4). The common but erroneous thought of defilement stifles all exercise, leads to hardness of spirit, and harshness of conduct to Christians generally. Never brand companies of saints as evil, as defiled, irrespective of the state or condition of the heart.

May God make us all less suspicious, yet very jealous for His glory and for the purity of His house, coupled with a fine sense of unfeigned love and tenderness to the beloved saints of God.

“BRING ME A MINSTREL.”

EVER since sin came in, the children of faith have found the present scene an uncongenial one to the spiritual life that divine grace has implanted within them. The moral atmosphere around the godly is not conducive to heavenly-mindedness; communion with God is not helped thereby, but the reverse. Hence the soul that would really enjoy those unseen and eternal things that are properly its own must abstract itself; it must put itself outside of its existing environment (as far as that is possible “while in the body pent.”)

In 2 Kings iii., the Spirit of God puts before us an instructive lesson as to this. The King of Israel—Jehoram, son of the wicked Ahab—was setting forth on an expedition to subdue

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the King of Moab who had revolted against him. He sought the co-operation of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, who, accompanied by his vassal, the King of Edom, consented to go with him to the war. Alas for Jehoshaphat! True servant of God though he was, it was the third time he had suffered himself to be ensnared into fellowship with the ungodly (1 Kings xxii. 10; 2 Chron. xx. 35-37). As on a former occasion, so now also, he had qualms of conscience about what he had undertaken, and so proposed to seek the mind of Jehovah at the hand of one of His prophets. Accordingly the three kings waited on Elisha in Samaria. To the king of Israel the prophet said severely, "What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother;" adding, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee nor see thee." The prophet of Jehovah thus drew a sharp distinction between Jehoram and Jehoshaphat, even though the latter was pursuing a path of disobedience at that time.

"But now bring me a minstrel." Why was this? "And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of Jehovah came upon him." The presence of Israel's ungodly king was an offence to Elisha's spirit. He felt restrained and hindered by reason of it. The holy atmosphere of communion with God which the prophet was accustomed to breathe was, as it were, polluted by the very fact that Jehoram was before him. The "still small voice," which was the express symbol of Elisha's ministry of grace, could not be heard amid the clamour of the wicked (1 Kings xix. 12). Hence he felt it necessary to abstract himself; he judged it incumbent upon him to get in spirit outside of his surroundings before he could ascertain the mind of Jehovah, in order to give it forth to the only really godly man who would value it. "When the minstrel played the hand of the Lord came upon him. And he said, Thus saith the Lord," etc.

Balaam never knew such an experience as this. Though he gave expression to some of the divinest thoughts contained in Holy Scripture, he did it merely as the instrument of a power superior to his own. His own affections and sympathies were by no means engaged in the service; indeed he would most willingly have said the opposite of what he did say about the people of God, if God had permitted him to do so. Hence the presence of the ungodly was no affliction to him; he experienced no godly restraint of spirit by reason of it, and he felt no need to abstract himself from the influence of evil surroundings in order to get into the mind of God.

Our sympathies are with Elisha. We all prove experimentally day by day the many hindrances to communion with God with which this world is full. “The cares of this life” affect some, and the deceitfulness of riches affect others, even amongst the true saints of God. They clog our steps, they dim our eyes, they weigh down our spirits, and keep us on a low spiritual plane, *if we allow them to do so*. But faith does well to spread its wings and soar above all surrounding influences, that its delight in the things of the unseen Christ may be full and complete. 2 Cor. xii. presents us with a wonderful experience once granted to the honoured apostle of the Gentiles. He does not name himself, but tells us of “a man in Christ,” who was caught up to the third heaven, there to listen to words which could not possibly be communicated to men in a merely earthly condition. So completely abstracted was he, that he affirms twice that he could not tell whether he was in the body or out of the body at the time. While recognising fully the miraculous element in the apostle’s happy experience, is there not a voice to our souls in it? Is it not among the things that are written for our learning?

The life that is ours in Christ is an essentially heavenly thing. Full understanding and enjoyment of it cannot be until God’s full thought concerning us is realised, and we find our-

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selves in the Father's house, with our bodies fashioned like unto the body of the First-born Son, all that is mortal being swallowed up of life (2 Cor. v. 10). But eternal life is really ours now, many a divine statement assuring us of it, yet it is an exotic in this world, and we need to live in spirit outside of this world if we would enjoy in any measure the rich spiritual portion that God has given to us in His Son.

The apostle's words in 1 Corinthians vii. 35, have often powerfully impressed me: "that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction." What do we know of this? The language supposes the soul living by faith within the precincts of the heavenly sanctuary, holding communion with the Lord without a burden and without a care. This is the Spirit's desire for us all. He is the ever-present divine link between our souls here and Christ there, and it is His deepest delight to make good to faith now those things which will only be entered upon as an actual possession when the Lord returns.

Will any suggest that these remarks are unpractical? The reverse is the truth. It is in occupation with the unseen that our souls gather strength for all the circumstances of the way; it is this, and this alone, which renders our hearts bouyant in the midst of all that of necessity comes upon us in an evil world and a fallen Church.

—W. W. FEREDAY.

The Heavenly Places

Are five times mentioned in the Epistle to the Ephesians. *First*, as the sphere of blessing, i. 3. *Second*, where Christ is occupying its highest seat, i. 20. *Third*, where the saints in Christ are seated, ii. 6. *Fourth*, where the highest spiritual beings are, iii. 10. *Fifth*, where our spiritual conflict is carried on against wicked spirits, vi. 12. The vast regions of heaven are thus variously peopled, but soon the heavens are to be cleared of evil, and of Satan and his militant hosts, Rev. xii.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM.*

IN responding to the request for a brief paper on "Christ's Kingdom," I must ask to be allowed to take the subject itself for my text, and practically to leave aside the two Scriptures (Isa. ix. 1-7 ; Rev. vii. 9-17) that have been given me with the subject.

My chief difficulty is the thought that in all probability the selector of the subject uses the words "Christ's kingdom" in a sense different from that I should attach to them, and it is also highly probable that those who hear this paper will find their views less in agreement with mine than with the compiler of the programme of study. In ordinary usage at the present day "Christ's kingdom" refers to the spiritual sway He exercises among men, and such a phrase as "the extension of His kingdom" is practically the same as "the extension of the Church." Yes, I venture to say at the outset that the two words are by no means interchangeable. Nor must Christ's kingdom be confounded with "the kingdom of God," or "of heaven." Briefly, I would say that I believe the kingdom of God has various manifestations, though many of the underlying principles abide. The Church, the kingdom, the millennial glory of Christ, are phases of that kingdom in which the beginning and the end is God.

For the conception of Christ's kingdom, we naturally turn to the Old Testament. The prophets, major and minor, have much to say about a kingdom in which the Lord shall rule, and many a message of doom and judgment is lighted up by the promise of a day when Israel shall be exalted, when the Lord shall reign, and all nations shall gather to His feet. From David's day onwards this promise was made and renewed ; during the reign of the Kings, in the exile, and after, the hope

* Written by request for a Class meeting for Bible study, the subject being prescribed.

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gleamed before the people; prophecy and prayer, psalm and song were couched in language drawn from the thought of the King and the kingdom. When the angel made his great announcement to the Virgin, he summed up many an old prophecy in the words, "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father, David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." When Christ had been born in Bethlehem, the wise men from the East came to Jerusalem asking, "Where is He that is born king of the Jews?" And the Gospel that tells us of that search and enquiry, tells us also that Jesus came preaching the good tidings of the kingdom, and gives us the proclamation by the King of the principles of His kingdom and the laws that should govern the conduct of His subjects. Had they received Him, He would have come into His kingdom. But "we will not have this man to reign over us," was their refusal and the cause of their rejection.

It should be noticed that in the preaching and teaching of Christ, the spiritual side of the kingdom is put forward. It is sadly true that the conception of the kingdom current among the Jews had greatly deteriorated. "In truth," says Edersheim, who wrote with full knowledge of Jewish thought and ideas, "the men of that period possessed only the term—as to it merely the form." Elsewhere he says that the picture presented to the Jewish mind at the thought of the kingdom would be that of Israel's exaltation, rather than of the salvation of the world. The purely national elements formed well-nigh the sum total of Rabbinic expectation. We need not go back to very ancient history to see what response is made by a nation to a man who plays upon the national feeling, setting it in opposition to other races. False Messiahs played that game with great success. But Christ's kingdom, whenever it comes, must be founded upon righteousness and holiness. As the event proved, the

necessary moral and spiritual conditions were absent from the people.

Have, then, those prophecies and promises ever been fulfilled? Is there any reasonable sense in which we can say that the Lord God has effectively given to Christ the throne of his father David, and that He has begun that reign over the house of Jacob that shall last for ever? Have the glowing pages of psalmist and prophet received any fulfilment in what has happened since Christ stepped out from His Galilean home as the One of whom the prophets spake? Has He really reigned? Have the Gentiles come to His light, and kings to the brightness of His rising?

Leaving those questions unanswered for a moment, let us move along another line. It was one of the counts in the accusation against Christ, when before the Roman Governor, that He had taught rebellion against Cæsar in claiming to be King.

It was probably an inference from His teaching about "the kingdom." "Shall I crucify your King?" was Pilate's jeering question to the Jews. Wild was the answer, and disloyal to all the hopes and promises that have sustained Israel: "We have no king but Cæsar." And over His head was the accusation written, "THE KING OF THE JEWS."

After His resurrection the disciples apparently hoped that the tide had turned and that the disaster of the Cross would be retrieved. "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" The answer was one of the dark sayings of the Lord, "It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in His own power."

The Gospel began to spread, progress being met by persecution. The arch-persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, was himself "apprehended" by the Lord in the way, and afterwards, as Christ's disciple, made

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exceptional claims as to the part allotted to him in the ministry of the Word, alleging that truths that had been kept secret from the beginning of the world had been made known to him, and through him to the believers of his time and the times that should come after him. And it is surely something more than a curious fact, or a feature of mere literary interest, that in connection with his teaching, he used a quite fresh set of figures. "The King," as a title of Christ, is never mentioned by him; one feels that he would shrink from the name that some even now apply to the Lord, "King Jesus." And though he speaks of the kingdom, he does so very seldom, and only on the broad lines that mark Christ's own teaching as to the spiritual characteristics of those who form the subjects of the kingdom. His metaphors rather are a house and its vessels for various uses; a temple that God inhabits by His Spirit; a body, of which we are limbs and members while Christ in heaven is head. I repeat that there is here no striving after some new literary metaphor, or a dislike to figures of speech that might have become hackneyed. He deals, in fact, with new truths; his new wine must have new bottles. They are not flowers of speech, they are facts of deep spiritual import. The point is worth considering well, for Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews; his mind was saturated with the language of the Old Testament, and not without reason would he discard thoughts and language that were dear to him in proportion to the vividness of his perception that they were fulfilled in Christ.

What is the explanation of this? It is to be found, as I believe, in the difference between the Dispensation of the Jewish people and the Dispensation of Christian times. I know that in some quarters the student of the *dispensational teaching* of Scripture is regarded as somewhat of "a crank," but I have no doubt of the substantive reality of the distinction.

An illustration may help to the understanding of the point.

There are many places along our coasts where a man may stand, and, as he looks along the shore, he will see some great headland jutting out into the sea, and beyond that another. Unless his eyes are trained to appreciate distances over the water, the two points seem to be very close together, while in fact a large bay lies between the two, and in this is situated town and harbour, while a broad river brings the accumulated waters of many a stream down to the ocean. But my spectator sees nothing of all this—to him only the headlands are visible. Such is the perspective of Old Testament prophecy ; according to St. Peter, holy men of God bore witness to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow. These are the headlands, but what lies between ? How soon should the glories “follow” the sufferings ? For though *we* speak of the ascension and exaltation to God’s right hand as Christ’s glory these are not the glories of which the prophets spake. His present exaltation and Headship are known only to faith. The prophets have in view public honour and glory, the acknowledgment of Christ’s claims by the Jews, and the universal homage of the Gentiles. This has not yet come to pass.

Now, St. Paul makes the distinct claim that to him was revealed what (to follow out my metaphor) lies in the bay. I do not mean that he gives in advance a history of the centuries between the cross and the glory ; he does not predict times and events, but he teaches the character of the interval, and unfolds, as he expressly says, what was God’s purpose—a purpose that from the beginning of the world had been hid in God (Eph. iii. 4-9). Paul, like Peter, notes the headlands, and speaks of them, but in language different from St Peter’s and that of the prophets. The sufferings of Christ (the first “headland”) had their results to the Jews as a nation—it meant the fall of the Jew ; the other headland is the receiving of them back to the favour of God—an event contemporaneous with their acknowledgment of Christ

as the promised hope of Israel. There is a break in the prophetic history of the nation, and in that break comes the present action of God in the calling of the Gentiles, and the building up of believing Jew and Gentile into the Church of God. And so it is that the throne and the kingdom practically recede in the teaching of St Paul, and the other figures are used (with which the thought of Kingship is incongruous)—the house, the temple of God, and especially the body of Christ.

Consider for a moment the language of the prophets concerning the kingdom. In the passage from Isaiah already cited, it is said, "Unto *us* a child is born, unto *us* a son is given." No Hebrew ever thought of bracketing the Gentile nation with his own people and speaking of them comprehensively as "we" or "us." It is the throne of David that is in view. So also in Jeremiah: "I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper; . . . in His days Judah shall dwell safely." The other nations shall participate in the blessing. "The Gentiles" (says Isaiah) "shall see Thy righteousness, and all kings Thy glory." But it is *as* Gentiles they see it; they are not, in the view of the prophets, on the footing of the Jew, nor are Jew and Gentile, as in the Church of God, merged into one body.

We come back to the question:—Has there ever been a time when these things have come to pass? The old method of interpretation (indicated in the headings of our Bibles) by which the punishments were allotted to the Jews and the blessings to the Church, is impossible. The Church which St Paul spoke of is not within the purview of the prophets at all. And we shall not "rightly divide the word of truth," to use St Paul's phrase, unless we see the part Israel plays in the purpose of God—that its history does not merge in the Church, and that when the fulness of the Gentiles is come (I again use St Paul's words)

Israel will take up the broken thread of her history, and at last will receive the King, who is at present rejected by her. *Then* will Judah be saved and Israel dwell safely; Jerusalem shall be called the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Not long ago, the man who held these things as truths of Scripture would be thought something of a visionary. But recent years have seen the growth of the Zionist movement—the scheme set on foot among the Jews by which they hope that Palestine shall again become their home, as it is still their Fatherland. Dwelling in all nations of the earth, they become assimilated to none. Attempts to found a Jewry in lands other than their own (as in Argentina) have failed; the very latest plan of forming a settlement under British protection in East Africa meets with scant favour; nothing will satisfy the true Jew but the fulfilment of the longing that is expressed every New Year's Day, "Next year in Jerusalem!" When they will return, by what means the kingdom is to be restored to Israel how the Jew will turn from rejection of to faith in Christ is beyond our knowledge. Nor will the devout mind insist (as some of the early Christians did, and as some students of prophecy still do), that Christ will literally and physically occupy a throne in Jerusalem. It may be, as some Scriptures seem to indicate, that He will reign through a Vicegerent. It is one of the points on which he who knows most will be most diffident in judgment. But behind all doubts and uncertainties there lies the promise to Christ of a world-wide kingdom—a promise that cannot fail.

Have we, then, no part in the expression, "the kingdom of Christ"? In a secondary sense we may use the phrase, but such use is figurative rather than the true and proper application of the regnant idea. Just as St Paul writes that "sin reigned," and "death reigned," we may acknowledge the reign

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of Christ in our hearts, and seek to be His loyal servants and soldiers. The ancient father, Justin Martyr, alleged against the Jews that they had falsified the Greek translation (the Septuagint) by removing passages that supported the Christian faith, and instanced Psalm xcvi. 10, "Tell it out among the heathen the Lord reigned *from the tree*." Be that as it may, for us His Cross becomes His throne, and the principles and statutes of His kingdom—the call to meekness, purity, and peace—come to us with an authority not the less but the greater because He reached that throne by the Sorrowful Way. He reigns by love.

Yet in maintaining "the proportion of the faith," we have to see that it is in the future there lies a kingdom that shall truly be called the kingdom of Christ. And if to us the promises of God are Yea and Amen in Christ, not less will every promise to the Son of His love be fulfilled. The word still stands, "I will give Thee the nations for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." W. J.

USEFUL RULES FOR EVERY DAY LIFE.

1. Have a deaf ear to unkind remarks upon others, and a blind eye to the trivial faults of your brethern. 1 Cor. xiii.
2. Do not put the worst construction upon real or supposed wrong actions or words of fellow-believers. 1 Cor. xiii.
3. Do not brand a man as heterodox because of faulty expressions, or because he differs from *you*. 1 Cor. xiii.
4. Never drink in the spirit of the tale-bearer: mitigate and soften strongly worded charges; yet faithful in the condemnation of evil. 1 Cor. xiii.
5. Do not speak of misunderstandings as lies. Credit persons as speaking the truth. "Love believeth all things." 1 Cor, xiii.
6. Pray much, perseveringly, and believingly. A habitually neglected closet is the sure index to a ruined, wasted life. 1 Corinthians xiii.

7. Read the Scriptures daily for your own soul's profit and spiritual intelligence. Read difficult portions on your knees, while availing yourself of all the help possible. 1 Cor. xiii.

8. Do not waste your energies in building up a party or system; such work is the merest chaff, and only awaits the consuming fire. 1 Cor. xiii.

9. Think far more of the points wherein you are agreed than of those you differ from in fellow-believers. 1 Cor. xiii.

10. Warmly and tightly grasp the hand of *every member* of the body of Christ, save in cases where *known* evil in doctrine or morals exists, or complicity with either. 1 Cor. xiii.

11. Firmly maintain the truth of your individual responsibility to Christ as Lord in your service. Welcome advice, but refuse dictation as to mode and way of working. Stand firm as to this. 1 Cor. xiii.

12. Never preach nor teach as the servant of any ecclesiastical association. Preach Christ and teach as the Lord's servant, whose you are and whom you serve. Do not confound personal service with Church fellowship. 1 Cor. xiii.

13. Seek earnestly moral conformity to Christ in your spirit and life; for this purpose read the Gospels much, and walk in *His* steps. A holy and consistent life at home and abroad is worth a cart-load of *spoken* sermons. The life will preach a more effective sermon than the lips. 1 Cor. xiii. Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine: continue in them. 1 Tim. iv. 16.

14. Ever remember that your influence for good or evil is eternal. Moral impressions are almost indelible. Your influence more or less every soul you come in contact with. Be circumspect therefore. 1 Cor. xiii.

15. Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. xv. 58). At all times and under all circumstances breathe the spirit of 1 Cor. xiii.

FALSE ASSERTIONS DISPROVED.

“THE New Testament is a forgery of the Councils of Nice and Laodicea, and the faith founded thereon, delusion and falsehood.”

A. D. 325. The Council of Nice. The Council of Nice was convened in the year 325, by the Emperor Constantine. And the three principal things debated and determined was the heresy of the Arians. The keeping of Easter; and the affairs of the Church.

The Council of Laodicea was held about the year 363. See Chamber's Encyclopedia.

A. D. 337. Constantine died. We have express evidence that the Roman Emperor Constantine, soon after the Council of Nice, ordered fifty copies of the whole Bible to be carefully written. His letter to Eusebius is as follows:

Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to Eusebius, “It happens, through the favouring providence of God our Saviour, that great numbers have united themselves to the most holy church in the city which is called by my name. It seems, therefore, highly requisite, since that city is rapidly advancing in prosperity in all other respects, that the number of churches should also be increased. Do you, therefore, receive with all readiness my determination on this behalf. I have thought it expedient to instruct your prudence to order fifty copies of the sacred scriptures (the provision and use of which you know to be most needful for the instruction of the Church) to be written on prepared parchment in a legible manner, and in a commodious form, by transcribers thoroughly practised in their art,” etc., page 203 of his life, by Eusebius, published by Bagster & Sons.

Count Tischendorf, in his preface to his English New Testament, writes as follows concerning the discovery of the ancient

copy of the Bible on Mount Sinai. "The Sinaitic Codex I was myself so happy as to discover in 1844, and 1859, at the Convent of Saint Catherine, on Mount Sinai. It is written in four columns, and contains both the Old and New Testaments, the latter perfect, without the loss of a single leaf. And it is not improbable that it is one of the fifty copies of the Scriptures which the Emperor Constantine in the year 331 directed to be made. In this case it is a natural inference that it was sent from Byzantium to the Monks of Saint Catherine by the Emperor Justinian, the founder of the Convent."

AN HISTORICAL FACT.

THE BURNING OF ROME, A.D., 64.

TACITUS, the Roman historian who lived in the first and second century, bears witness to the fact that Christians were numerous in the reign of Nero, and they were falsely accused of burning Rome in the year 64 A.D. Tacitus says, after describing the fire, "But not all the relief that could come from man, not all the bounties that the Prince could bestow, nor all the atonements which could be presented to the gods, availed to relieve Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration. Hence, to suppress the rumour, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of that name, was put to death as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius. But the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also, whither all things horrible and disgraceful flow, from all quarters, as to a common receptacle, and where they are

encouraged." He then describes the terrible sufferings of the Christians. Note—The above is taken from Volume I., pages 422 and 423, Bohn's edition of Tacitus.

Read Paul's epistle to the Romans, to find out the condition of the Roman Empire in the time of Nero, and also to see how falsely the Christians were accused.

On the foregoing passage of Tacitus, and in reference to the persecution of the Christians under Nero, Gibbon remarks, "The most sceptical criticism is obliged to respect the truth of this extraordinary fact, and the integrity of this celebrated passage of Tacitus. The former is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius, who mentions the punishment which Nero inflicted on the Christians." Such is the ample admission which this inveterate opposer of the truth of Christianity is here compelled to make. —ANON.

NOTES ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

JEHOVAH AND PSALM TWENTY-THREE.

Jehovah *Jireh* (Gen. xxii. 14)—the PROVIDER is the theme of verse 1.

Jehovah *Shalom* (Jud. vi. 24)—our PEACE is the subject of verse 2.

Jehovah *Rophi* (Exod. xv. 26)—our HEALER is the happy thought of the first clause of verse 3,

Jehovah *Tsidkenu* (Jer. xxiii. 6)—our RIGHTEOUSNESS is impressed on the latter part of verse 3.

Jehovah *Shammah* (Ezek. xlvi. 35)—His PRESENCE is the delightful subject of verse 4.

Jehovah *Nissi* (Exod. xvii. 15)—our BANNER embodies the truth of the first part of verse 5.

THE TRESPASS OFFERING.

The distinction between sin and trespass may here be pointed out. Trespass refers to *acts* done against God or man, sin to the *root* from whence these acts proceed. It will be observed that in the sin offerings, particular acts are not specified, as the immediate object is the condemnation of sin itself, there the man is regarded as a *sinner*, but in the various trespass offerings particular offences are carefully enumerated, and the man regarded as a *transgressor*. All transgression is sin, but all sin does not necessarily partake of the character of transgression. In the sin offerings the victim and the offerer are identified, the laying on of hands on the head of the victim being the fit expression of this identity; but this was never done in cases of trespass, although confession, full and ample, was required. Thus in the sin offerings the *condemnation* of sin is the great point, while in the trespass offerings the *confession* of sin is a necessity.

It is of profound importance to note carefully that sin is not measured by conscience or knowledge of what is evil, but by the holiness of God. Thus sins of ignorance were not excusable or passed lightly over, but had to be provided for in the most solemn manner possible (chap. iv.)

In the trespass offerings, to meet offences done *against the Lord*, whether known or unknown, the blood of a victim alone could suffice, besides the offender making ample amends for the harm done. In the first thirteen verses of chapter v. the prescribed ritual is to meet sin and trespass together.

In cases of trespass against one's neighbour, restitution for the wrong done must be full and ample, the principle had to be restored and a fifth part added. This would satisfy man's claim, but even in these cases, forgiveness and atonement, as always, can only be obtained through the death of another, for

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“without shedding of blood is no remission.” If you have wronged any one *before* or *after* your conversion, go at once and confess it; get right with God and man. If you have misjudged or slandered any one go at once and confess it. Do not let pride hinder you doing what is right. “Confess your faults one to another.”

ALL CHRISTIANS

Are saved, Eph. ii. 5; are justified, Acts xiii. 39; are forgiven, 1 John ii. 12; are sanctified, 1 Cor. vi. 11; are washed, Rev. i. 5; are delivered from wrath, 1 Thes. i. 10; have eternal life, John iii. 16; have peace with God, Rom. v. 1; have redemption, Col. i. 14. All Christians are children, sons, heirs, kings, priests. All these blessings and glories, too numerous to mention, are ours *now*, and should be fully known and as fully enjoyed.

YOUNG CHRISTIANS

Should diligently study the Scriptures, even if they work less. Curtail your service if need be, and read and study your Bibles, else you will never be efficient workmen—the Scriptures supply the furnishing you need. Servants of God should do their utmost to create a taste for Bible reading. We have no hope for the rising generation unless the number of Bible readers is greatly increased. This is work which every Christian should put his hand to.

EVERY CHRISTIAN

Is a member of the “One Body,” of which Christ in heaven is the Head. While, therefore, resolutely refusing evil, assiduously cultivate love and fellowship with *all* the members. Unity in the maintenance of the truth and holiness is our soul’s desire. Christ prayed for it (John xvii. 21), and died for it (John xi. 51, 52). If mere ecclesiastical and minor points of difference are to be magnified *as vital*, then farewell to unity. There is a platform on which all loyal to Christ and to the Scriptures can

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meet Then do so hand in hand in fellowship, and shoulder to shoulder in service.

ON THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL DIFFERENCES.

THE faith of God's elect, *i.e.* Christianity, was not delivered to the Church, nor to a body of ecclesiastical men; nor was it delivered to the college of doctors at Jerusalem or modern university. It was delivered to THE SAINTS (Jude 3), hence no party of professing Christians, however gifted, numerous, devoted, or influential, can rightly claim exclusive possession of *the truth*. The faith once delivered to the saints is the common heritage of the redeemed. *Our* measure of the truth is not THE TRUTH; nor are those of *our* party only THE ORTHODOX. Many have been trained in a school of presumption, and hence it is hard to give up what one has been taught, or formerly held, or to suppose that there is much real good outside our own party. The self-satisfied smile, and "You know we are right," betrays where one is. Of course there is the divine and the human, the right and the wrong; but don't hold the right in a spirit of pride and of lordly assumption towards others who in their measure are maintaining what they believe to be of God.

If the following lines have had a personal application to writer or reader let it be a thing of the past. Let the warmth and breadth of Scripture set our hearts on the wings of the morning *out* towards every saint and servant on earth, in an all-embracing love and interest, and which no denominational difference shall quench:—

“ Herein I recognise the high-learned man !
 What *you* have never handled, no man can ;
 What *you* can't grasp is sheer nonentity ;

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What *you* cannot account for cannot *be* ;
 What *your* scales have not proved can have no weight ;
 What *you've* not stamped can never circulate."

We are getting older, and nearing too "The Judgment Seat of Christ." These considerations ought to lead to more calm and dispassionate judgments. Principles and things once stoutly maintained as of paramount importance, may, on more mature consideration—as the faith in its parts and as a whole is calmly weighed in the sanctuary—be relegated to a secondary place in our theological creed, and the hand and heart open to receive saints shut out from both by the exercise of a rigid ecclesiastical procedure. Be ready to give up or receive on clear decided Scripture testimony. Hush to silence in your conscience the voice of antiquity and the authority of past or present leaders. Listen to them with attention and follow them *only* in their appeals to the Word of God. Don't let the weight or influence of great names turn you from the voice of the Shepherd. Let the words of the living God alone be heard. The conscience is His domain. *Never* trifle, nor compromise, nor sacrifice one iota of the truth of God, but *ever* remember that you know and possess only a part. We long to see the ecclesiastical walls of separation falling. There were none in Apostolic days. We would be right glad to witness the theological battlefield cleared of its combatants for a time at least, and the point of the sword turned from friend and brother to our common enemy. O for a season of quiet from the din and strife of contending parties, like that enjoyed of old. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied" (Acts ix. 31).

If we obstinately refuse to cease mere party warfare, and shut ourselves up within the four walls of a cold ecclesiasticism, remaining callous and indifferent to the cruel, heart-breaking divisions everywhere going on, we may be *soon* taught a sharp

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lesson. We have all parties and all believers before our mind in these remarks, for all have sinned ecclesiastically, and the general state of things is to our common sin and shame. Do we feel it? Are we low enough to humble ourselves? The restoration of the Church to its original and primitive integrity is a moral impossibility. But a godly re-union of the Lord's people scattered through the 1300 sects and parties in Christendom is a very different thing indeed. It would be a real joy to us, and we would welcome the proposal as the answer to many prayers and tears, were believers as such coming together to humble themselves before God, and to confess common sin. We would be glad to be allowed to be present at such a solemn gathering. What then? What would God do for a broken people confessing their sins in His presence? Why may we not count upon the grace of God and the power of the Spirit to lead believers in the desire for union, on, of course, a godly basis? Union would be too dear bought at the expense of truth; nor could we sanction for a moment the false principle of agreeing to differ on fundamental truths of Scripture. But is there no hitch somewhere? Is it really fundamental truth—that which touches the glory of the person or overthrows the work of the Saviour—which separates us from beloved saints of God? Let us all search and see. We do not write in the interests of any part of the Church of God, but in that of all.

The alarming and rapid increase of popery in these lands is an ominous sign. We are within measurable distance of a storm of popish persecution bursting in upon us, and we are not prepared for it. Popery is advancing with gigantic strides, and perhaps her jails, and tortures, and fires will accomplish the desired end. The desolations of Zion only excite the sneer and contempt of the uncircumcised, while alas! the faithful are torn by strife and division. May the Lord stir us all up to deep searchings of heart and conscience!

TRUTH FOR THE LAST DAYS.

THE DEITY AND HUMANITY OF THE LORD.

CHRIST Jesus in the glory of His Person as God, revealed in flesh, as truly divine and truly human, is the Rock of Ages on which *all* revealed truth and *all* redeemed persons rest. The whole system of Christianity is built on this mighty foundation. The Bible is a huge fraud and its glories, its hopes, its blessings, all a delusion unless Jesus of Nazareth is Jehovah of old, and the babe in the manger God manifest in the flesh. We emphatically assert that the denial of the Deity of Jesus Christ, leaves us without the distinguishing glory of the Holy Scriptures, and without salvation. The divine and human natures of the Lord in *one* Person were never separated.

The Deity of the Lord is revealed in each of the FIRST chapters of the four Gospels; also in the FIRST chapters of the epistles to the Colossians, the Hebrews, in John's first epistle, and in the Revelation; besides, in numerous statements and proofs scattered throughout the Sacred Volume. But why is the Deity of the Lord so prominent in the FIRST chapters of the Gospels and in the epistles named? Because the divine glory of His person is the necessary foundation of the truths and facts revealed in these portions of the Sacred Scriptures. He became man so that He could die for our sins; because He is God, ever and always, He could sustain the Cross. Jesus of Nazareth; the slain Lamb is "*God* manifested in the flesh." Death had no claim upon Him. He *became* dead (Rev. i. 18). The Deity of Jesus Christ is not *a*, but *the* vital truth of Christianity. Has God come down to men in their actual present circum-

stances? Has He revealed His will? Has He manifested Himself in such a manner as to win the heart and beget confidence in Himself? He has and the four Gospels unfold the wondrous disclosure in full.

In Matthew i. 21 Jesus takes the place of Jehovah in relation to Israel. Jehovah's people is the people of Jesus. Then in verse 23 He is named Emmanuel "God with us"; see Isa. vii. 14; viii. 8. The people of *Jehovah* is the people of Jesus and the land of *Emmanuel* is the land of Jesus for He is God—*God with us*. In this connection we may observe, that it is wrong to speak of the death of God, or the blood of God, or the mother of God. Jesus who was God died. Christ who was God shed His blood. Mary was the mother of Jesus who is God. The name God simply, refers to essential Deity. But Jesus was truly born of not *a* but "*the virgin*"; was truly and really a man, absolutely perfect as such, and absolutely human in all respects—sin excepted. The divine and human natures of our Lord may be distinguished, but must not be separated, for after all it is the Person who is seen in action—who is the Actor. Both natures make the Christ of God.

Then in Mark i. 2, 3, we read, "as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, behold I send my messenger before thy face who shall prepare thy way" etc., R.V. But when we turn to the prophecy chap. xl. 3, 4, we find it written of Jehovah and God. The conclusion is irresistible; Jesus of Mark i. is none other than Jehovah and God of Isaiah xl.

In Luke the manhood of the Lord is the prominent thought throughout, and in keeping with the general design of the evangelist the circumstances connected with the Incarnation are more fully detailed than in the other Gospels. But the Divine glory of Jesus could not be hid. "*God manifested in the flesh*" is graven on the first two chapters of the Gospel.

In John the sun shines; the gold glitters in every page, in

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every incident, in almost every word; in the synoptic Gospels rays of light are everywhere discovering Jesus the Man as Divine, as God. But in the fourth Gospel the Incarnation is only passingly alluded to—"the Word *became* flesh" (chap. i. 14). "The Word" could not be *made* anything. He voluntarily *became* flesh. The Deity of the Lord is *the* magnificent fact which stamps its character on every page of this hallowed book. It is the Gospel of the Divine glory of Christ. Here the highest trained intellect is powerless; indeed the more powerful the mind, the greater the danger. The babe who simply believes is on safer ground. The combination of wondrous simplicity for the babe to revel in, with the unfathomable depths which the most profound theologian has never reached, makes this Gospel a life-lesson and study for earth, as assuredly its truths will engage the heart and mind of the redeemed and of angels too, through eternity.

Take the first forty-two words of the Gospel. Our existence dates from our birth, but Christ's generation is eternal. He never *began* to exist. As man, of course, His human history began with His Incarnation, but He who was truly man had an Eternal, a prior existence and history. "The Word *became* flesh" but He, the Word, was not made. He made all things, but Himself was not made.

"In the beginning was the Word." The Word was and is a Person: see verse 3 where the Word is spoken of in the masculine "Him" and 1 John i. 1-3. "*From* the beginning" gives a start, an historical date. "*In* the beginning God created," gives a positive, definite commencement. But John i. 1, is anterior to the "from" of the Epistle which is Incarnation, or the yet earlier "in" of Gen. i. 1, which is creation. "In the beginning was the Word." Go back millions of ages to any and in every beginning, He *was*. Christ the Word eternally existed. Unfathomable thought, yet simply told. The pre-existence of Jesus to all created Beings and inanimate objects,

to the moral and material, to the invisible and visible is the basis of our faith. We believe it, not because we understand it, or comprehend it, but because it is revealed and must be so. Fathom this mystery we cannot, but its truth we own, and its necessity we gladly acknowledge.

Then follows another of these sublime statements "the Word was *with* God." The first clause asserts the eternal existence of the Word; the second clause equally declares His distinct personality "the Word was with God." The third clause "the Word was God" is proof that Deity—pure and simple—is His. Eternal as to His generation; distinct as to personal existence; God in essential Being, there yet remained one statement to bar the door against unbelief in the Divine glory of His Person: was Jesus the Word equal with God? He was: "the *same* was in the beginning with God." Jesus of Nazareth was in essential Being co-equal with God. We have in the opening verses of this Gospel what Jesus *is*, not what He became.

In verses one and two the Divine glory of His Person forms the Rock of Ages on which the marvellous truths of this Gospel repose. The foundation is immoveable. Then in verse three (which coalesces with Gen. i. 1) the Word makes all things; that is all creation owes its existence to Him. He, the Word, *was not made for* "without Him was not anything made that was made." Then His relation to the moral part of the world is expressed in verse four, "in Him was life: and the life was the light of men."

Having established the truth of the Word in essential Being (verses 1, 2), and as becoming flesh (verse 14)—needful for revelation *to us*, for how otherwise could we know God—His title as the Word is dropped. God became flesh! How grand!

We have then, first what He is Himself—a glory which ever shines outside all that is historical and beyond all that is dispensational; next, His relation to the universe—moral and

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material—all that has a beginning owes its existence and origin to Him; and lastly, the relation of the Word to men, as life and light. Christ as the Word is the exact expression of what God is. He is also THE WORD OF LIFE (1 John i. 1), and THE WORD OF GOD in judgment (Rev. xix. 13).

Thou art the everlasting Word,
The Father's only Son;
God manifest, God seen and heard,
The heaven's beloved One;
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow.—Amen.

"The saints in Colosse were on the down-grade." The *heart* of the Hebrew believers was claimed by Ritualism; the *mind* of the Colossian Christians was demanded by Rationalism. Both evils which are ruining the Church are met by presenting Christ in the fulness and glory of His person. This is God's way and the only way you can counteract these grave evils. You may denounce them, but unless a counteracting object is presented, remonstrances are in vain.

In Colossians i. 15-18, we have sketched for us by a Divine pen certain personal and relative glories of Christ. If weighed and truly accepted, then Rationalism is doomed in its principles and bearing on God's saints, and their happy deliverance wrought from a mischief that is rapidly leavening one half of Christendom. Christ is the remedy for every form and phase of declension amongst God's people.

1. Christ is "the image of the invisible God." No mere man could be this. God in His Being is invisible both to men and angels, but Jesus represents Him in His character and attributes to the universe. God became man that He might do this. Had it been said that Jesus was *like* God then inferiority would have been implied. But no, Jesus, a Divine Person represents God. He existed before He became man. The character of

God; the moral glory of His Being was expressed by One who was truly God, yet became man by Incarnation.

2. "The first born of all creation" (R.V.) This is a title of rank, of dignity, and not one of time (Ps. lxxxix. 27). No matter when or where Christ came into the world, the instant He did so He necessarily became the first of all creation for He was the Creator of all. He who ever was and is God, became man, and is thus first in all glory, dignity, and eminence. This title rests on the fact that He is Creator.

3. "All things have been created through Him and unto Him" (R.V.) The whole creation—visible and invisible, animate and inanimate came from His creating hand thus displaying His power and wisdom. "Unto Him" too, for the ultimate end of all is His glory.

4. "He is before all things" in point of time, and in Him or in virtue of Him "all things consist"—all are maintained in virtue of Him.

5. "He is head of the body." He is not only head of creation but in a far more intimate sense to us He is the Church's Head. What glories gather and centre round and in Christ! The One we love and sing of is none other than God, become man that we might speak to Him and He to us. The head of John was laid on the bosom of Him who was and is truly God, man too of course, else intercourse and intimacy would have been impossible.

6. "First born from the dead." In the vast scene of creation Christ takes precedence of all in His title as "first born" (verse 15); as also in the more limited but more glorious sphere of those embraced in the first resurrection (verse 18). The divine glories of Jesus overpower the soul, while they grip us tightly to Him. We cannot do without these glories; they form our soul's strength in weakness. Our littleness is dwarfed and we

are glad to be nothing in Him who died to make us His very own and that for ever.

Time and space forbid an examination of Christ's glories in Heb. i. and Rev. i. The very reading of these chapters has created in our hearts the most profound sense of His dignity and worth and with adoring souls we say and sing:—

“Take Thou our hearts, and let them be
For ever closed to all but Thee.”

THE HUMANITY OF THE LORD.

To assail the Person of our Lord either on the Divine or human side is the work of Satan and should be resisted as such. Salvation is a moral impossibility if the Deity of the Lord is denied or His Holy humanity be impugned. It is not as generally stated God AND man, but God manifested in flesh; Emmanuel, God with us. Two natures in *one* Person. Rom. ix. 5; 1 Tim. ii. 5.

The selected virgin to become the mother of our Lord was Mary the espoused wife of Joseph. The reality of the Lord's manhood is unquestionable. He was actually and truly born of the Virgin Mary. He, *God* the Son, partook of human nature. But the circumstances connected with the conception and birth of Jesus distinguish the Incarnation of our Lord from any human birth before or since. Incarnation could not be spoken of in relation to any mere human being. The angel Gabriel thus announced before-hand the marvellous event: “Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. . . . How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall over-shadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God” (Luke i. 31-35, R. V.) Jesus, then, was not the actual Son of Joseph: compare with

Matt. i. 18. Had Joseph been the actual father of our Lord, then the taint of sin would have been in the human nature of our Lord. Had he not, on the other hand, been truly the Son of the Virgin He could not have died for our sins. *Legally* the Son of Joseph ; *truly* the Son of Mary.

The Lord assumed humanity in a *holy* condition. In Adam it was *innocent*. In us it is morally fallen or *sinful*.

It will be necessary, also, to distinguish between sin, and its physical consequences, which in themselves are sinless, as hunger, thirst, pain, weariness, etc. Now these latter the Lord voluntarily and in grace took up during His life, suffering these things which in themselves were sinless, yet the consequences of sin. On the Cross and only there He as freely and voluntarily atoned for our sins. But the holy condition of our Lord's humanity set Him in a position in which neither sin nor its consequences had any claim whatever on Him. What claim had sin on a holy being? His holy nature had not sin attached to it outwardly or inherently. He *knew* no sin. He *did* no sin. Human nature in Him was holy ; MUST have been so "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. i. 20). The miraculous conception of our Lord alone explains Heb. x. 5, "a body hast thou prepared me."

We earnestly warn our readers against unholy tampering with the person of our Lord. "The doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9), is the denial of His Person. Such anti-christian teachers are to be shunned, and not even have extended to them the courtesies of life, "give him no greeting" (R.V.)

May the Lord enable us all to act in prompt obedience to the Word, especially in view of the general laxity, and toleration of evil on every hand, and that to the dishonour of the Lord, on the specious plea of charity !

ON GATHERING TO THE LORD'S NAME.

“FOR, where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them ” (Matt. xviii. 20).

This is the Lord's gracious provision for His people in days of Church-ruin and confusion. Here the Lord's own voice breaks in upon the discordant sounds and voices from sects innumerable, and bids us pause and hear. We turn from *them* to *Him*. How comforting to the spirit! What a relief to the soul to hear Him say, “This is the way: walk ye in it.”

“*For*” connects the gathering together with what precedes—discipline in verse 18, and the prayer of agreement in verse 19, not that these are the only objects for which God gathers together His saints. 1 Cor. xiv., Acts xv. 4, Heb. x. 25 show various purposes for which saints are gathered, besides those referred to in the Matthew-scripture.

“*Where*” refers to the place where saints are gathered. It may be in a house, a room, a hall, a chapel, a barn, or in the open-air. The place is immaterial. We once broke bread, worshipped, and ministered with a company of saints in a cellar, and that cellar became for the time a Bethel. “Where” leaves the place an open question.

“*Two or three.*” In the plains of India, in the deserts of Africa, in the ruined civilizations and apostate countries of Asia, in the sparse populations of many an island, or in the remote villages of our own country, “two or three” Christians are competent to act upon the truth of Matt. xviii. 20, and count upon the certainty of the Lord's presence with them. They need no minister to conduct the service, no priest to lead the worship. In cities, or where an extensive work of evangelization has been carried on, the “two or three” may be of hundreds, or even thousands. The words of our Lord are so

framed as to embrace the lowest number possible to form a meeting, with the highest number conceivable.

“*Are gathered together.*” The words of the Lord suppose an *actual* assembling of God’s people. The Church in a certain town and a Gathering are not one and the same. The Assembly in a certain town or village consists of *all* the saved in that town or village. The Christians composing the Assembly may be scattered amongst a dozen or more denominations or parties. But all constitute God’s Assembly in that particular place. “Are gathered together” is an occasional thing, hence we cannot speak of a *Gathering* in a certain place unless the saints are at that moment actually, physically assembled together. The Church *is* the Church, whether it be gathered or not. Thus, “If, therefore, the whole church be come together into one place” (1 Cor. xiv. 23). The Church is one thing, the coming together another. The same persons may or may not compose both. But the point to apprehend is that a “Gathering” is only such on intermittent occasions: see 1 Cor. v. 4; Heb. x. 25, etc. Would they were more frequent! “Often” (Mal. iii. 16). All saints comprise the Church, but all saints are not gathered to the Name. The brethrenistic use of the phrase, “A Gathering of Saints” is often employed in a loose and sectarian sense. The power behind the words “*are gathered together*” is the Holy Ghost. It is He who truly gathers saints to the Holy Name of the Lord. “Are *met*” may be by mutual agreement. “Are *gathered*” is the action of an agent and of a power outside of ourselves.

“*In (or unto) my Name.*” Now, the use of one’s name supposes the absence of the person, while at the same time carrying with it the full value of the person—what He is. The Name stands for the person. This Scripture is of PRESENT AND ABIDING application. It has its force *now*. It contemplates the ruined state of the Church. The disruption and scattering on every hand was foreseen by our Lord when He uttered those precious

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words. Herein is faith's resource for moments and occasion of difficulty. Two or three Christian people may find themselves cast together. What are they to do? To form a Church—to establish a denomination? *No*. These "two or three" gather to the Lord's Name. Nothing could be more simple. The very number—three it maybe—would forbid officialism, which flourishes best on the decline of spirituality. How simple! A few weak, poor, ill-instructed believers may gather together in the Lord's Name and count upon His presence in their midst. It is not the Name of *Jesus* to which they are gathered, *that* speaks of His manhood. But the NAME intimates all that He *was* and *is*. He is High Priest, Intercessor, Advocate, Head, and bears other titles and relations, all involved in "My Name." What fulness and depth! What a volume of truth is wrapped up in the Name of Him who was, and is, and ever shall be.

"There am I in the midst of them." His Name and presence are inseparable. The one is dependent upon the other. If the company—large or small—are gathered to His Name, His presence is assured. The Name involves what He is, as the holy, the true (Rev. iii. 7). Only grant that the assembled saints confess a true Christ, that holiness and truth are however feebly, yet truly maintained—*that* gathering has Christ in the *midst*—the most honoured place. His presence is secured on the sole condition of being gathered to His Name. The relation of the gathered company *to Christ* is the sole question. Its relation to a party is not in the text at all, and must not be imported into it. No circles, nor parties are contemplated here, nor groups of assemblies distinguished by even Scriptural truths, but gatherings of saints to the Name of the Lord. There is *a* unity in Scripture, but it is the unity of all saints, not a confederation of assemblies.

What we need is simplicity in reading Scripture, and equally so in acting upon it. Do not reason, but obey. You will find Matt. xviii. 20 a very real solution of the difficulty in these

church-troublous times. Then, thus gathered, the principles in the church epistles will prove of inestimable value in guidance for worship, service, discipline, and generally to act for Him, till the night ends and the everlasting morning breaks.

"TWO, OR AT THE MOST THREE."

THE first epistle to the Corinthians undoubtedly gives us the mind of God as to the inner working of the assembly on earth. Not divine counsels (as in Ephesians) but divine order is the main thought of the Spirit of God in that epistle. Amongst much other valuable instruction, we have in chapters xii.-xiv. the manifestations of the Spirit in the various members of the body of Christ, with the rules which should govern those manifestations. In chapter xii. it is laid down that divers gifts have been divinely distributed amongst Christ's members here below, all of which should be in exercise for the edification of the whole body. Not concentration, but distribution, is God's idea. Following this is the well-known chapter on love—that precious divine quality which is so necessary if all the machinery of the assembly is to work harmoniously and for blessing. To this is added in chapter xiv. many practical rules concerning the public exercise of the gifts. It has often been urged that these rules are virtually obsolete now, because the two gifts specially named—tongues and prophesying—have ceased to exist in the Church. To this we must reply that if certain gifts have been withdrawn from us, the great truth on which all is based, the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church, remains as true as ever. The reason why the apostle says so much about tongues and prophesying is because the Corinthians were foolishly ignorant as to the relative value of those gifts. The first-named, being the most showy, had a very large place in their minds, and was apparently being freely used when the assembly came together, in forgetfulness of the fact that the

object of tongues was for a sign to them that are without (verse 22); prophesying, on the other hand, being an essentially spiritual gift (verse 3) was naturally at a discount amongst a people whose condition was carnal and infantine (iii. 1). But while the assembly on earth remains the temple of God, indwelt by the Holy Ghost (iii. 16, 17), the rules divinely laid down in chapter xiv. have their full application to all the gifts which God still permits us to possess and enjoy.

To come to the words at the head of this paper. In verse 27 we read, "If any man speak in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most, by three." In verse 29, also, "Let the prophets speak two or three." There is no mistaking the force of these instructions. Those possessing gifts were not to suffer their desire to exercise them, to overpower them (verse 32); not more than two or three were to speak at one session. This deserves the earnest attention of all who would please God in the assembly at the present time. On special occasions, when saints come together at convenient centres for mutual edification, there is a great danger of these divine limitations being disregarded. Speakers, in their longing to impart as much spiritual instruction as possible to their brethren, and hearers in their desire to hear the voices of servants of Christ whom they value and love, are apt to transgress the Spirit's rules, without perhaps considering that they are doing so. Yet Leviticus v. 15, and many kindred Scriptures, shew that sin cannot be viewed lightly, even if committed unwittingly. It should be confessed and judged in its true character before God.

The measure prescribed by the Holy Spirit naturally commends itself to the mind as good and wise. Is it possible to carry away from a meeting the substance of more than two or three valuable discourses? (I say "valuable," for that which has no value should never be intruded upon the assembled saints). If more discourses are given, is it not just so much waste? And are we not in some danger of developing "itching

ears," if our desire to hear has no limit? Is it not infinitely better to attend humbly and devoutly to a little given to us from God, exercising our consciences and searching our hearts in the light of it, than to flippantly gulp down a mass of matter that in the result leaves us no spiritual gain?

Some public holidays are just passed. Tidings which have come to hand from various quarters, concerning special meetings which have been held, have suggested these few remarks. May the Lord, in His mercy, lead us all into deeper conformity with His own blessed Word and ways. W. W. FEREDAY.

"A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL SEE ME."

JOHN XVI. 16.

"A little while"! "A little while"! O Master,
 What is it Thou hast said?
 The vast train of expectant years grows vaster;
 The deep, dark tide of sin flows wider, faster;
 We listen for Thy tread.
 Hope watching stands, our storm-tossed vessel steering,
 But the dark skies vouchsafe no sign of Thine appearing.
 "A little while"! Faith reads the promise over,
 While louder roars the storm;
 Then gazes, keener-eyed than any lover,
 O'er the night-blackened surges to discover
 Some vestige of Thy form;
 And oft, the dreary night-watch to beguile,
 Repeats—"A little while,"—He said, "A little while."
 But love, with instinct truer, deeper, keener,
 Nor sign nor vision craving,—
 Garnering Thy precious words up, as a gleaner
 The golden ears; with heart and brow serener
 For all the tempest raving,—
 Feeling Thee near, and conscious of Thy smile,
 Counts the slow-rolling ages but "A little while."

—The late DR. E. R. CONDER.

THE MAGNETISM OF THE CROSS.*

It is because the facts and incidents of the Gospel narratives are so familiar—are such an oft-told tale—that some of these facts do not startle and surprise us. I do not speak of the miraculous and the wonderful—of blind men recovering sight, and of dead men being raised to life, or of earthquake and darkened sun, or even of visions of angels, or the powers of the unseen world. I have in mind, rather, the claims and the statements made by our Divine Lord—claims that would be absurd (and worse) if He were mere man, and statements that time would mock at, however sincerely they might be believed by His followers, if those statements were not true, particularly if they look into the future, and partake of the character of prophecy, in the common sense of that word.

One such utterance of the Lord I ask your attention to at this meeting: “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me” (John 12).

Have you ever given a moment's consideration to the circumstances in which these words were spoken? If we could divest ourselves of all we know of Christ and of Christianity, its claims, its impression on the world and on ourselves, how should we regard such an utterance?

The place was Jerusalem, the chief town of a rather turbulent province of the Roman Empire. The city was thronged with people who had come up to Jerusalem to keep a feast that was held in honour by the Jews—a feast in remembrance of their deliverance, centuries before, from Egypt. Among the number was a young man from the Northern province, concerning whom there had been some popular agitation in preceding months, for it was thought He was perhaps a prophet such as God had sent to Israel in ages gone by. But the popular estimate was changing, and was ranging itself alongside the official views, which

*A paper read at a meeting of young men.

had always been hostile to the influence and teaching of the young provincial, who had not even the prestige that would attach to a man who was born and brought up in the centres of learning. What reception would be given to a young man from a Yorkshire or a Gloucestershire village, if he presented himself in London or Oxford, denouncing abuses and declaring that he had a message from God? It was no mere contempt that was meted out to the young prophet—if He were that. Definite instructions had been given that if any man knew where He was, it should be reported, that He might be taken, and nothing could be hoped for from the tender mercies of the ruling class. His death was discussed and justified; this only would satisfy them. So that this religious duty to which the young Teacher gave Himself—His attendance at the feast—carried with it, as He knew, the risk of His life: and *somehow*, He knew *what* death He should die. It was while under the shadow of the coming cross—the most awful and most shameful death that man could suffer—that He made this tremendous claim, and declared that if He were lifted up from the earth He would draw all men unto Him.

It is proverbially an unwise thing to prophesy. Time tests all oracles, and his touchstone can be applied to these words. We have both a right and a duty to ask whether the statement was only the splendid flight of a disappointed man, or a Divine knowledge of the harvest that would be reaped from the seed then about to be sown.

This is not the place to meet critical objections, yet I refer to one, however. It is this:—It has been urged by unbelieving men that in St. John's Gospel we have not the *authentic* words of Christ,—that the book is a comparatively late forgery which has value in recording the *deeds* of Jesus, but is of no value in respect to His teaching. I take it that there is no need to discuss this on the present occasion. All the instincts of the heart revolt against any such account of the teaching of the

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Gospel. But this remark has to be made:—At the worst, the Gospel is alleged to have been written in the second century by a man living at Ephesus. Would a forger have ventured on such a forecast of the future? When he wrote (on the hypothesis) the time must have seemed long, and the prophecy was still unfulfilled: the words would discredit his book at the outset. The Gospel was indeed spreading, but mainly in the lower circles of society. *Faex urbis, lux orbis*, exclaimed one writer; “The filth of the city is the light of the world;” but at the alleged time of the forgery Christianity was still in the shadows and its confessors were persecuted.

There is one other point to mention by way of interpretation which, by the way, meets a possible difficulty. “I will draw all men unto Me.” Someone may say, in all sincerity, “But *has* that been fulfilled? Is there any sense in which it can be fulfilled, if the dark underside of the Gospel is true,—that men may be lost,—that there are sons of perdition—that there is not only a resurrection to life, but a resurrection to judgment. If *any* are lost, how can *all* be drawn to Christ?”

This is a fair objection. If Christ really meant that every man would be saved, and that none should be lost, the case goes against Him, for such a result, as far as we can see, has not followed His being lifted up from the earth. But did He mean it? In our own speech we use the word “all” frequently enough without intending it to be so absolutely inclusive that there is no one outside its scope. If, in regard to some public function, we say, “All Croydon was there,” no one presses for a literal construction. In oriental speech there is perhaps even less of literality than with us. When Matthew says that *all* Jerusalem was troubled with King Herod about the star and the King, there must have been many who neither heard nor cared. When Mark says, that *all* the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem were *all* baptized of John in the Jordan, we do not picture to ourselves a deserted city and dis-

trict, or imagine that "the revival" of that day embraced every man. When Luke says that *all* the Athenians spent their time in telling and hearing some new thing, there were surely large exceptions. And when Paul said that the Gospel had come unto the Colossians even as in all the world it was bearing fruit and increasing, he certainly did not mean that there were not dark and unfruitful spots where the light of the Gospel had not penetrated. I suppose that every writer in the New Testament—and out of it—might be cited to show that in common speech "all" does not, in any fair interpretation, mean absolutely everything that *might* be covered by the word.

A glance at such a book as the Englishman's Greek Concordance, or Young's Analytical, shows that the Greek word will not always take our English equivalent. Some of the passages indicate that "all kinds" is rather what is meant. "*All manner* of sin shall be forgiven." Peter saw in his vision "*All manner* of four-footed beasts,"—not, as a cast iron interpretation would make it, *all* the four-footed beasts in the world,—while the familiar passage that love of money is the root of all evil means really that it is a root of every form of evil.

In this sense the words of Christ have been triumphantly fulfilled. He has not drawn to Him every man, but His Gospel has shown that it has power to draw, and fitness to meet the need of *all*. East, west, north, and south, men have been drawn by that object of humiliation and dishonour—a crucified man. The apostle John, in the visions vouchsafed to him during his exile in Patmos, heard praise given to the Lamb "as it had been slain," because by His blood He had redeemed a people to God "out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

"The end is not yet" perhaps, but already the triumphs of the Gospel have secured the fulfilment of that vision. Out of every nation, out of every class of men in every nation, have been those who found the crucified Christ an attraction that has won and held their hearts.

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North and south, east and west. These are the great divisions of the world. If we turn our eyes northward, we have the work by the Moravian missionaries among the Greenlanders, and of Brainard among the North-American Indians. Crantz writes in his "History of Greenland" that these workers found how little was effected by the attempt to make rational creatures of the Greenlanders, but after six years of unsuccessful labour, they discovered "that the plain testimony concerning the death and passion of Jesus" could touch "the dark and benighted minds of the wild heathen." Crantz adds, "I have been filled with the greatest amazement to behold the powerful effects of the word of the Cross on heathen who, according to their first appearance seemed utterly incapable of comprehending this great mystery of godliness."

If we turn southward, we may take the South Sea Islands, where the story of the labours of J. G. Paton reads like an extension of the book of the Acts. Men in the lowest state intellectually and morally have been turned from their cannibalism to Christ. Or, girdling the globe eastward from those islands, we come upon Patagonia, concerning whose inhabitants Darwin wrote, after one of his voyages of scientific research, that it would be utterly useless to attempt to evangelize them. But the attempt was made, and with such success that he (non-believer though he was) admitted that he had been mistaken, and sent a contribution to the Church Missionary Society to carry on the work. Still moving on, we touch Africa, where, up and down the continent, will be found Christian churches, the result of apostolic labours and martyr-like deaths, yet giving proof that Christ has an attraction even for the swarthy Afric of Uganda, of Kaffraria, and of Boritsu.

But it is not among low-caste aborigines alone that the Gospel makes its way, or rather that the uplifted Christ shows this constraining power. If "the heathen in his blindness" is reached by that light, the intellectual races of the east, and the

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cultured nations of the west have, in a measure, owned the sway of that central figure of history.

Of late, indeed, there has been an outcry against taking the Gospel to the east, to peoples of ancient civilisation who, we are told, have sacred religions of their own, religions which have answered their purpose for a good many years. Besides, as it is said oracularly, "East is east, and west is west," and the implication is made that understanding of one by the other is impossible, and that what suits one is useless for the other. And, we are assured, our western faith is quite unsuited to the genius of the east.

At the bottom of this there is a singular piece of forgetfulness, for the Gospel came to us from the east itself; Christ and His apostles belonged to an oriental nation, with oriental speech and modes of thought, and the likely suggestion has been made that fresh light will break out from the Word of God when it comes to be studied by easterns as it is now studied by westerns. But, in spite of *a priori* theories as to the unfitness of Christianity for the ancient nations of the east, the work that is going on is a matter of common knowledge. In India, in China, in Japan, and Formosa, can be found those whose eyes have been turned to the crucified Saviour. There is the common sneer about "rice-Christians," as those are called who are supposed to profess Christianity simply for the advantages it may bring them: but what quality of convert can be found in those eastern lands has been shown by the martyrs of the Boxer rising, and by the well-known story of Pastor Hsi. While I write this very paragraph I hear of an able minister of the Gospel whose decision for Christ was brought about by the consistent life of the native Christians of Shanghai, at a time when he was a banking clerk there.

But this is, necessarily, a telescopic view of things. We see these peoples from afar, and in the mass: and as one Chinaman looks to us just like another Chinaman, we perhaps think of

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them all as being, in their inner nature, of one type. Yet if we knew the people we should see differences as great as those that exist among our own countrymen. Not only every nation, but every temperament among all the nations, has felt the constraining influence of Christ's Cross.

We know something of the "glorious company of the apostles," and we do not commit the mistake of thinking of them as conforming to one hard-and-fast type. We have a conventional idea of the Jew, ancient and modern, but in the band of Christ's followers there were Jews and Jews. The differences are reflected in what we read of the men, and in their writings. There are souls that nourish themselves in the pastures of St. John's Gospel, and, it may be, find little herbage in the Jewish cast of St. Matthew's evangel. St. Luke, though he drew from sources that were common to the other synoptists, gives us a narrative that is very different from the brief, almost soldier-like report of the Roman Mark. And Luther is not the only Christian who, though drinking deeply from the living waters of the Pauline epistles, wronged the practical character of that by St. James, and contemptuously dismissed it as "an epistle of straw." St. John is the contemplative mystic. St. Matthew is the orderly man of business; St. Mark the rapid historian of service. St. Luke, the cultured physician and man of literary tastes, is the sympathetic narrator of the wide aspect of the Gospel of the Son of Man, and the travelling companion of the large-hearted apostle to the Gentiles. Thomas has been miscalled "the doubter;" he seems, rather, to have been so deeply attached to the Lord that he was ready to go with Him to Bethany that he might die with Him; yet he had a strain of melancholy and pessimism in his nature that made it not so easy to believe evil, as hard to believe good. Peter we all know—and love; impetuous, hasty, warm-hearted and true, but failing in the crises of life, just as we, too, often fail in the point of character that we thought was our strength.

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That company around the person of our Divine Lord was but a sample of the many types that have been drawn to Christ by the magnet of His Cross. We can trace these types in our own experience and within the little world in which most of us move, or see the divergences in what we know of public Christian men. Take the ministers of our own borough; what widely differing types there are, so that we wonder how it is that such varieties of men should be impressed into the one service. The explanation is the compelling power of the Cross. Each man may have his own view of many of the most serious problems of life and of doctrine; not any two of them, it may be, would identically agree as to their interpretation of the Cross, and their view of the atonement: but the *fact* of the Cross, and the glory of Him who there was lifted up, is the one dominating thing that gives a unity to the whole company. Or, to come still closer to our own little circle, to the few to whom we can open our hearts on sacred things, how diverse they are in thought, in outlook, in mental and spiritual conceptions; yet are they one in their adoring surrender to the Divine constraint that comes from the Cross.

The same differences are to be noted, as I have remarked, in those public men whose names are identified with Christian faith and labour in our lands. It may provoke a smile if I say that the Archbishop of Canterbury and Dr John Clifford have not much in common. It is, indeed, hardly possible, in the present state of ecclesiastical politics, to mention two men between whom yawns a deeper gulf. Yet you may conceive of them as standing at the extreme ends of the base of a triangle: they look towards its apex, where their eyes meet on an Object that holds them both with a constraining devotion: and the nearer they are drawn along the sides of that triangle to the object of their vision, the nearer they will be drawn to each other. The editor of *The Church Times*, and the editor of *The War Cry* might find it embarrassing if they were shut up to-

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gether for an hour or two, but they are, we trust, with all their differences, at least sound in their relation to the central fact of the Cross. The one, with whatever mistaken thoughts he may have, would bring back the recollection of that Cross by "putting the Mass in the forefront of Sunday worship:" the other, though refusing all sacraments, proclaims the Cross in his terse motto of "Blood and Fire." But time would fail me to tell of men and women who stand pre-eminent in all departments of life and activity, who have been drawn by unseen yet irresistible chains to the feet of Him who, for their sakes, gave Himself up to that "most bitter Cross:" of gentle poetesses, like Frances Ridley Havergal, Adelaide Procter, and Christina Rossetti, to say nothing of poets of tougher make like Browning: of painters like Holman Hunt and G. F. Watts: of men of learning like Sir Monier Williams: of scientists like Sir William Dawson and Lord Kelvin: of philanthropists like George Moore and Sir George Williams: of soldiers like Hedley Vicars, or the better-known General Gordon: of statesmen like Gladstone and the Earl of Shaftesbury: of lawyers like Cairns and Hatherly.

And why should I exclude from "the cloud of witnesses" the divines of our own or of other lands,—men whose intellectual powers and attainments are as high as those that adorn any other profession, and whose lives of study and service are a witness to the power that won and held them? The testimony of these men, surely, should have an "expert" value, such as would be the case if we cited Sir Wm. Crookes on a point of chemistry, Sir Frederick Treves on surgery, or Sir Hiram Maxim on mechanics. Our faith should not rest on the statements of the greatest of divines, but we are at least in good company when we find ourselves with Sanday and Moule, with Denny and Dykes, with Findlay and Beet, and the thousands of others whose words and works testify that they have saluted with adoring reverence their uplifted Lord. These do not honour the

Cross so much as that they are honoured by it, and in the final day of approval and reward, the unknown slum-sister, the humble villager who wins and watches over a handful of young people, or the man who surrenders social position and uses all his means in ministering to God's poor, may find themselves nearer to their adored Lord than those whom we put in the front rank of Christian workers.

I emphasize the fact that it is the Christ of the Cross—not the teacher of Nazareth, not the founder of a new religion, not the propounder of a new philosophy—that has ~~such~~ power over the hearts of men. The Cross was not *all* that St. Paul preached, but it was the staple of his preaching. He gloried in it. To the Corinthians he set forth Christ crucified, that is, not the mere historical fact of the crucifixion, but a Christ whose distinguishing feature it is that He was, and for all eternity is, the crucified One. To the Galatians he set Him forth—"placarded" Him, as the word means—before their very eyes, crucified. And when we come, as come we must, to the river's edge, it is the Cross that holds the eyes of the saintliest. "It is not all my theology," said the dying Spurgeon to a friend, "and it is perhaps not enough to live by, but just now my creed is summed up in these four words: Jesus died for me". And when George Herbert lay a-dying, and one encouraged him by reminding him of his zeal in the restoration of Bemerton Church, he replied: "It is a good work, if it be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus." And to come to later days, when that scholar and saint, Dean Burgon, was beyond all other speech, he was heard to murmur: "Thy Cross! Thy Cross! Thy blood! Thy blood!"

But it was not as the refuge and resort of the despairing and the dying that Christ made His great declaration. He has won, not only the worst, but the best of the race. He has transformed into loyal bond-servants not only those whose life journey is reaching its goal, but especially those whose life lies before them, with its possibilities and powers. It was "a young man named

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Saul" at whose feet the murderers of the first martyr, Stephen, laid their clothes the while they carried out their deadly work, and who not long afterwards suffered the loss of all things that he might win Christ. And all along the ages there has been the same evidence of the power of Christ over the developing, rather than the decaying life. His armies are recruited from the flower of manhood and womanhood. It is the evidence given by the present Revival; everywhere the story is of young men and women who have been led to the acknowledgment of the Lord. And in writing this paper for young men, I do not exceed my province when I make the personal appeal to each hearer: What is *your* relation to Him who was "lifted up" from the earth? The circumstances in which His words were spoken were solemn and significant. "How sayest thou that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" "Yet a little while . . ." was the grave response, and, departing, He hid Himself from them. The call is not repeated for ever; the light does not shine in perpetuity on those who close their eyes to it; the magnetism of the Cross does not compel those who "*will* not to come" unto Him. I trust the response of each soul is, "Lord, I hear,—I look,—I come." W. J.

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Faith and Love. F. W. Robertson, Sermons, vol. ii., No. 10: "The divine attribute in the heart of God is *love*. The mightiest principle in the heart of man is *faith*. Love is heaven; faith is that which appropriates heaven."—On God's revelation of heaven (vol. i.):—"Love to God can only mean one thing: God is a character. To love God is to love His character. For example, God is purity. To be pure in thought and look, to turn away from unhallowed books and conversation, to abhor the moments in which we have not been pure, is to love God."

On the sacrifice of Christ (vol. iii.) 2 Corinthians v. 14, 15 :—
 “Death, that is the sacrifice of self, is equivalent to life. The death of Christ was a representation of the life of God. The whole of the life of God is the sacrifice of self. God is love ; love is sacrifice, to give rather than to receive, the blessedness of self-giving.”

The martyred Rabbi Akiba, on Deut. vi. 5, x. 12 :—“To love, serve God with all the soul means, to yield it up to Him in death.” Cf. Rev. xii. 11.

Conscience in contrast with Intellect. F. W. Robertson (vol. i.) :—“There is a false anxiety to be true to our principles rather than to make sure that our principles are true. A man may unsettle the verdict of his intellect, it is at his peril that he tampers with the convictions of his conscience.”

Difficulties in Revelation. J. H. Newman, Parochial Sermons, vol. i., p. 243 (on “The Christian Mysteries”) :—“Difficulties in revelation are especially given to prove the reality of our faith.” Page 244—“Our Lord spoke in parables, that they might see and hear, yet not understand (Mark iv. 11-25), a righteous detection of insincerity ; whereas the same difficulties and obscurities which offended irreligious men would but lead the humble and meek to seek for more light, for information as far as it was to be obtained, and for resignation and contentedness where it was not given.”—Vol. iv. (on “Obedience with Love”) :—“The difficulties of Scripture often arise from the defective moral condition of our hearts.”

The so-called Illusiveness of the Millennium. F. W. Robertson, Sermons, vol. iii. No. 6 :—“Life is an education. You do not reveal to your son the aim of his education, the process of which the boy is not aware of. So does God lead on, through life's unsatisfying and false reward, ever educating. In the first century the early Christians believed that the Millennial Advent was close ; they heard the warning of the Apostle, ‘The time is short.’ Now, suppose that instead of this they had seen all

the dreary page of Church history unrolled ; suppose that they had known that after two thousand years the world would scarcely have spelled out three letters of the meaning of Christianity, where would have been those gigantic efforts, that life spent as on the very brink of eternity, which characterise the days of the early Church—and which was, after all, only the true life of man in time? It is thus that God has led on as a father leads his child when the path homeward lies over many a dreary league. Nothing here is disappointment, if rightly understood.”

Truth. F. W. Robertson (vol. ii. No. 17) :—“ There are two ways of reaching truth—by reasoning it out and by feeling it out. . . . Feel a truth : that is the only way of comprehending it. St John felt out truth. He understood the Lord by loving Him. You find no long trains of argument in St John’s writings.”

Dean Alford in Poems :—

“ Be true to every inmost thought,
And as thy thought, thy speech ;
What thou hast not by suffering bought
Presume not thou to teach.”

J. H. Newman, Sermon on Personal Influence :—“ An individual trained to practice what he teaches is the legitimate interpreter of the Scriptures, and none other. . . . The men commonly held in popular estimation are greatest at a distance, they become small when they are approached.”

F. W. Robertson, Sermon on the character of Eli (vol. iv.) :—“ There are two sorts of men who exercise influence. Those who perpetuate their own opinions, form a sect, etc. ; such were the ancient Rabbis. Those who stir up faith, conscience, thought, who are not anxious that those they teach should think as they do, but that they should be conscientious, that faith in God should be aroused in earnest. Such men propagate life itself in inquiring minds and earnest hearts.” “ The aim of

ministry is to guide to the living God, to open ears that God may speak, to bring the soul face to face with God."

Isaac Taylor, in "Elements of Thought," page 80:—"Doubt is some degree of belief that what has been affirmed is true. Disbelief is knowledge that it is not true. For any one to profess to disbelieve a proposition when he does not know that it is false is a real dogmatism concealed under the affectation of avoiding dogmatism."

F. W. Robertson, Sermon on the Unity of the Church of Christ:—"If the different members of the Church all held the same views, all spoke the same words, all viewed truth from the same side, they would have no unity, but would simply be an aggregate of atoms; would have no peace—peace subsists between those who differ."

Prayer and Praise. Leighton on 1 Peter (vol. ii., p. 134):—"They know little of their own wants and emptiness, who are not much in prayer; little of God's greatness and goodness, who are not much in praises."

J. H. Newman, Sermon on Secret Faults:—"Private prayer is at first omitted with compunction, but soon with indifference. Habit has made it a secret sin."

Watching. J. H. Newman, in Sermons Vol. iv.:—"To be detached from what is present, and to live in what is unseen; to live in the thought of Christ, as He came once, and as He will come again; to desire His second coming, from our affectionate and grateful remembrance of His first—this it is which men in general are without. Watching is a suitable test of a Christian, that particular property in which faith and love, if genuine, show themselves. Many men want the tender and sensitive heart, which hangs on the thought of Christ and lives in His love. Life is short, death is certain, and the world to come is everlasting."

Fasting. J. Wesley (in Journal, 7th June, 1763):—"Is not

the neglect of this plain duty one general occasion of deadness among Christians? Can any one willingly neglect it and be guiltless?"

Forms of Self-Righteousness. J. H. Newman, Sermon on Reliance on Religious Observances (vol. iv.):—"A state of mind in which a person has no serious fears of future judgment and is well satisfied with himself. . . . Self-righteous men are men who live to the world and do not think of God, do not measure themselves by what is unseen and spiritual. . . . Worldly men are self-righteous men. . . . Another class of self-righteous men are they who do not believe in the divinity and atonement of Christ. They measure themselves merely by their own conscience, and their conscience is dark and blind. They have low and narrow views of duty."

The World. F. W. Robertson, Sermon on Solomon's Restoration (vol. iv.):—"The world is that collection of men in every age who live only according to the maxims of their time. The world changes its complexion in every age. The Christian must leave the world alone. His blessing lies in quiet work with the Israel of God. When a Christian says, 'I must taste what life is while I am young,' he has taken Solomon's first step, and he must take the whole of Solomon's after and most bitter experience along with it." "God is your only Eden, and out of Christ you can have nothing but the restlessness of Cain." "The penalty you pay for a youth of pleasure is, if you have anything good in you, an old age of weariness and remorseful dissatisfaction."

NOTES ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

OUR RESOURCES

Are ample. God is *for* us (Rom. viii. 31). Christ is *with* us (Matt. xxviii. 20). The Holy Spirit is *in* us (Rom. v. 5). Every form and phase of outward and inward trial and difficulty is

thus anticipated. Are not the resources ample enough to meet the combined forces of evil? Which is greater?—the whole power of evil or the whole power of the Godhead? Let each one practically solve the question for himself, and give to the winds all fear.

SEALED AND BAPTIZED.

God seals believers with the Spirit, which marks them off as belonging to Him (2 Cor. i. 21, 22, and Eph. i. 13). Christ baptizes into one body in the power of the Spirit (John i. 33, and 1 Cor. xii. 13). Neither act is capable of repetition. We “are sealed unto the day of *redemption*” (Eph. 4, 30), and as there is “one body” a fresh baptism (spiritual) is uncalled for. All Christians are sealed—an individual act, and baptized—a corporate act. But you may be “filled” for special service more than once (Acts ii. 4; iv. 31).

CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT.

The presence of Christ in an Assembly of even two or three persons is conditional on their being gathered to His Name (Matt. xviii. 20). The presence of the Spirit in an assembly, or in the Church at large, is in no wise conditional (John xiv. 16). He may be grieved (Eph. iv. 30); or quenched (1 Thess. v. 19); but driven away He cannot be till His home on earth—the Church (1 Cor. iii. 16), and the bodies of the saints (1 Cor. vi. 19)—be broken up at the coming of Christ.

CIRCLES OF INTEREST.

The divine circles of interest are: *Israel* loved by Jehovah (Mal. i. 1); the *world* loved by God (John iii. 16); the *Church* loved by Christ (Eph. v. 25); and the *family* loved by the Father (1 John iii. 1). These four circles of divine interest should measure our interests. We need our sympathies broadened. We are narrow and cramped. Connect prophecy with Israel, evangelisation with the world, fellowship with the Church, and brotherly love with the family.

THREE STEPS IN CHRISTIAN LIFE.

THE first step—all believers are dead with Christ.

The second step—all believers are risen with Christ.

The third step—all believers are seated in the heavenlies in Christ.

Now these truths are not presented in the Scriptures as cold, dry doctrine for theologians and Bible Students to fight about. They are truths as warm, as fresh, and as practical as the grand truth: CHRIST DIED FOR SINNERS. The youngest Christian should know them experimentally.

First, all believers are dead with Christ. In this respect we are associated with Him. Now what is Christ dead to? He is dead to sin: Is He not? Sin was not *in* His nature, for He was the Holy One as born into this world; neither was sin *on* Him, save in that hour when it was laid on Him by Jehovah—on the cross (Isa. liii. 6), “on the tree,” says Peter (1 Epistle iii. 24), not, *to* “the tree” as if He had been bearing them all His life, but “*on* the tree.” When Christ died, He died unto sin; that is to have nothing more to do with it; all connection with it was over. Now this truth is applied to all believers “For in that He died, He died unto sin (not sins) once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.” Here then we have Christ’s death closing up all connection with sin, not with sinners, for He is coming to judge them, but with sin. He is out of the scene where sin is, and out of it by death. Now His life on high is for God alone. Let us read on: “Likewise,” now mark that word, “Likewise reckon.” Now what does “reckon” mean? It signifies *to account*. What then are we to reckon or account? “Ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. vi. 10-11). Thus the two things said of Him: dead unto sin, and alive unto God,

are to be reckoned or counted as true of us. Of course we are not actually dead, but we are to *reckon* ourselves "dead unto sin" as if we were really so. Now follows the practical conclusion "Let not sin therefore *reign* in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (verse 12). It does not say "Let not sin *remain*," but do not let it "reign" or have sway over you. Do not let it master you.

Second, all believers are risen with Christ. Here again we are associated with Him. Now to what is Christ risen? To the "things which are *above*." We read, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. iii. 1). Now the little word "if" here does not imply a doubt. It is not used conditionally, but is employed in the sense of "If you are an Englishman, act as one." Christ, then, has risen to a new sphere of interest in the heavens or "*above*." We, as risen with Him, are to *SEEK* the things above and *SET* our mind upon them (verse 2). Now dear young believers: Are you doing this? or does the earth and its interests so engross your minds that there is no spiritual energy in pursuing after heavenly things? Are our minds occupied with the things *here* or with those *there*? How very searching to our consciences is all this, and how eminently practical! What a different character it would impart to us were these truths realised and practically carried out.

Third, all believers are seated in the heavenlies in Christ. "Hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 6.) This is a truth without a conditional "if." It is absolutely true at this moment. The heavenly places are infinitely better than the best of earthly places. Money, place, influence, power, are as dust when compared to what we have up *there*. "Blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3). Thus we are both *blest* and *seated* in the highest and best of places—the

heavenlies, but of course, in Christ. Soon we shall be blest *with* Him and seated *with* Him ; now both are *in* Him.

How the heavens should be regarded by us instead of earth ! What interests we have above !

Here, then, we have three successive steps: (1) Dead with Him, and thus dead to all He is dead to ; (2) Risen with Him, and thus risen to all He is risen to ; (3) Seated in Him in the heavenlies, where the fulness of blessing and the highest position are conferred upon us.

DEAD TO SIN AND DEAD TO SINS.

PAUL writes of believers as “dead to sin” (Rom. vi. 2), and Peter also of Christians as “dead to sins” (1 Epistle ii. 24). Now sin and sins are not synonymous terms. We rightly enough distinguish between a law and its application ; between a tree and its fruit ; between a root and its outcome. So these two words “sin” and “sins” are distinct terms, yet closely, yea vitally connected. “Sin” is the root of evil in a person, in every one of Adam’s race on earth. “Sins” are the outcome of the evil within, seen in daily life. One can readily see and own, too, that every act of evil, every foolish word must proceed from a source, from a root ; hidden, of course, because *within*. A polluted spring has its source somewhere, a poisonous fruit has its root somewhere, but where in the moral world is this hidden source, this unseen root ? *In* every child of Adam it exists. No one can deliver himself from this terrible thralldom which the Apostle speaks of as “the body of this death” (Rom. vii. 24).

Prayer cannot effect deliverance. The most earnest struggles of the most devout cannot bring about a separation from the evil within and without—the latter the outcome of the former. What is to be done ? To Christians we urge, read what God

says about "sin" and "sins". "Our old man" or "sin" has been crucified with Christ (Rom. vi. 6). This is the first statement, and a fundamental one, of your coming deliverance. You are fighting the old man, you are vainly trying to subject it to the authority of God, and it cannot be done. It is a hopeless task (Rom. viii. 7.) What then? Listen. God has crucified it with Christ. The meaning is, that God has subjected it to an act of judicial dealing so as to express His abhorrence of it. It is not dead as some aver. The force of the term "crucified" as used doctrinally by Paul, does not signify death. See the distinction between the terms "dead" and "crucified"—believers are "dead to sin" (Rom. vi. 2), while sin or "the old man" is "crucified with Him" (verse 6).

Sin, or "the old man" in the believer is not dead. Scripture and every-day experience confirms the fact that the old man exists, in unimpaired force and vitality in each one of us. But God has imprinted on it an indelible mark of judgment. It has been stamped by God as loathsome in His sight. Crucified with Christ is the expression of God's abhorrence of it. Now do you accept this weighty truth? If you do, half the victory is won. The other half is given us by Peter, "dead to sins." "Dead to sin"—the root. "Dead to sins"—the fruit. The former is condemned (Rom. viii. 3); the latter are forgiven (Col. ii. 13). We, as Christians, are in God's judgment dead to both.

Now comes the crucial question: Are we acting on this? Sin *in* us can only be got rid of by death, or by the personal coming of the Lord. But we have now dominion over sin by accepting this truth; *it* crucified and *we* dead to it, and *then* walking in the power of the Holy Ghost. We repeat, THE JUDICIAL JUDGMENT OF GOD IS ON THE OLD MAN, hence expect nothing good to spring from such a corrupt source. It is altogether bad. Walk in the Spirit. Occupy the mind with what is good and holy and according to God.

PRACTICAL TRUTHS FOR BELIEVERS.

1.—GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

"THE Righteousness of God" (Rom. i. 17 ; iii. 22-26) signifies His consistency with Himself in fully and absolutely justifying a sinner believing on Jesus. God has glorified Himself in saving sinners believing on His blessed name. His character as Holy, as Love, as Light, as True, as Righteous is wrapped up in *our* salvation. His character and our salvation thus stand or fall together. If it were possible for one who had once clung to God and pronounced justified by Him, to finally perish, that would be a catastrophe, but one more awful still would be, that God would cease to be God, for He had denied Himself, but that CANNOT be. God is God, and He CANNOT deny Himself. The moral glory of God in His own very nature is bound up in the eternal salvation of *all* the saved and justified.

O what strength! What confidence this imparts! Here questionings cease. The Righteousness of God which before was our fear, is now our gladness. That righteousness which was *against* us, is now *for* us and we joy in it. Our salvation can no more break down, than can the Righteousness of God cease to be. Righteousness is for us, yea for us eternally (Rom. iii. 26).

2.—THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

The blood of the Lamb shed on Calvary, and then sprinkled on the throne was the blood of God's Son. The abiding efficacy of His blood in the divine presence, and the changeless, ceaseless love of His heart are grand realities. His tears on earth, His sweat in the garden, must be distinguished from His blood shed on Calvary; *this* latter alone gives peace (Col. i. 20).

3.—GOD'S SALVATION.

Salvation by the love and strength of God was the precious

lesson taught Israel on the shore of the Red Sea—learnt in the stillness of their souls as they beheld what God wrought, turning the sea of death into crystal walls of salvation. Triumphantly the host crossed the sea, the never-failing arm of Jehovah the support of the redeemed (Exod. xiv).

4.—THE DEATH OF CHRIST AND OUR DEATH.

Christ died *for* our sins (1 Cor. xv. 3), and *unto* sin (Rom. vi. 10). As sinners we share in the former; as saints we have part in the latter. Hence, believers were once dead *in* sins (Eph. ii. 1), now as alive to God they are dead *to* sin (Rom. vi. 2)—the principle, and dead to sins (1 Peter ii. 24)—the practice, yet a believer may sin, for which provision has been made in the advocacy of Christ (1 John ii. 1).

5.—PEACE! PEACE!

Peace amidst the thronging duties of life! Peace in the wreck around and in the race of life! Peace amid the din and strife of the ecclesiastical world! Peace while wronged and injured! Peace while surging billows roll around! Peace in the storm! (Matt. viii. 23-26) and peace in prison! (Acts xii. 7). Peace all along the path till we see Christ's face in glory! (Phil. iv. 7).

6.—THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The Lord's Supper is a holy feast. In it we remember Him and announce His death. Those are the two distinguishing truths in this holy eucharistic service. Christ remembered and His death announced. He has lifted us from ruin to glory, will we not therefore *remember Him*? It is not command, but love's request (1 Cor. xi. 23-26).

7.—THE WORD OF GOD.

His Word—the Bible—is inspired, or God-breathed, in all its books and parts as originally written. It is our only authority in all things, for all circumstances, and at all times. There is

needed a generation who shall tremble at the Word of God. It is life's chart; our guidance, our light, our moral safeguard. Thank God for the Sacred Volume (2 Tim. iii. 15).

8.—GOD'S HAND.

"My times are in Thy hand"—Is it a safe hand? an almighty hand? a tender hand? Yes, all that, and more. The hand that holds you up is one of ceaseless love, of infinite grace, and of enduring strength. Our times, whether dark or bright, whether of sorrow, of death, of poverty, of desolation, are in Jehovah's hands. Enough, Lord! (John x. 28-29).

9.—INFINITE CARE.

His love is boundless. His grace is measureless. His care is unceasing. His power is omnipotent. Cast *all* your care upon Him. Lean hard your weakness upon Him. He is the First and the Last. Be careful for nothing. What is needed, and what He so prizes, is the heart that rests and reposes in the certainty of His tender care (1 Peter v. 7).

10.—GOD'S WISE AND GOOD PLAN.

"All things work together for good." All tears shed, all disappointments felt, all sorrows endured, all life's difficulties, all and each circumstance of life works together in God's great plan of eternal good. Life's twisted web is in His hand and He will soon unravel the mysteries and complications in your history (Rom. viii. 28).

11.—THE THRONE OF JEHOVAH.

Jehovah on His throne has tided us over many a danger and over many an angry wave. With our feeble grasp on *that* throne, our pulse is quickened afresh and we become strong in the strength of our God. Our littleness is lost in His greatness. We mount on the steps of His throne, and *it* becomes our security and guard (Psalm xciii).

12.—CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD.

The ORDER of the Lord's priesthood is after that of Melchisedec (Heb. v. 6)—type of the Lord in the glory and dignity of His person (vii. 1-3). Thus there is secured for us an "unchangeable priesthood." What strength this imparts to tried and suffering saints! (verse 25). The Melchisedec character of priesthood is millennial, and will be exercised by the Lord when "He shall be a priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 13). The PATTERN of the Lord's priesthood is after that of Aaron's—type of the Lord's in present priestly grace (Heb. iv. 14-16); in practically maintaining us all along the way—ever living to intercede for us—saving even to the "uttermost" of human need—taking account of our sorrows, difficulties, trials, exercises, and tears. His compassion and tenderness are boundless. He leads our worship, and in all things, and at all times represents us before God in the heavenly sanctuary. His own special place there, is on "the right hand of the throne of the Majesty." There He sits as our "*Great High Priest*"—a title of dignity peculiar to our Lord. The priesthood of Christ is not to procure righteousness, but to help, bless, comfort, and sustain a people *made* righteous through grace. The priesthood is only exercised on behalf of believers.

13.—THE ADVOCACY OF CHRIST.

"If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii. 1). Our relationship to God as His children is a fixed and eternal one; it cannot cease. No power of evil can nullify it. But the *enjoyment* of the relationship will be interrupted by the *allowance* of the flesh in us. The fact of the inward existence of the flesh, *i.e.*, the carnal mind, does not of itself soil the conscience, nor hinder a holy and happy walk with God; but if we allow it to act, it does. Hence God's gracious provision in the advocacy of Christ. This most needful part of the blessed Lord's intercessory work and service of love on behalf of His own is founded on the, *to us*, precious fact that

propitiation has been made once and for ever; yea, He is *it* abidingly in the presence of God. He is also, and ever, in His own person, "The Righteous One." What a firm basis! What strength for our faith! Propitiation and Righteousness are the pillars on which the advocacy of Christ securely repose. The intercession of Christ on the cross was for sinners (Luke xxiii. 34). Whereas His intercession at the right hand of God is for believers (Rom. viii. 34). Now this latter branches out into at least two main channels, namely, priesthood, as in the epistle to the Hebrews, and advocacy, as in John's first epistle. The former is with *God*; the latter with the *Father*.

It will be observed that the advocacy of Christ begins, *not* when a Christian confesses sin, but when he *sins*. "If any man sin we have an Advocate." In answer to the gracious intercession of Christ, the Holy Spirit uses the Word in dealing with the soiled conscience, recalling the backslider to the love he has sinned against, leading the erring one to true and thorough confession, and thus communion with God is restored and the soul is again happy. We do not go to the Advocate, nor does he come to us when we sin, but He goes to the Father about us, and that is just the service we need at such a moment, and on such an occasion. Salvation is not forfeited by the sin or failure of believers, but the *joy* of it is for the time, and hence that can only be restored, when true confession takes place (Psalm li. 12).

It is interesting to observe that the word "Advocate" applied to Christ as the One who looks fully after our interests on *high*, and when we sin—a time when we might naturally think our interests were imperilled—is also applied to the Holy Ghost, who undertakes all for us as fully down *here* (John xiv. 16-25, etc.) "Comforter" is the same in the original as "Advocate."

14.—CHRIST'S PERSONAL COMING.

'I come again and receive you unto myself' (John xiv. 3). His

coming is at *hand*. The moment is unknown, but the fact is more sure. He comes down from heaven into "the air" (1 Thess. iv. 17)—the appointed trysting place. The "shout" of the Commander, the "voice" of the Officer, and the "trump" of God gathers the whole company of the redeemed of all ages, from all climes; out of all circumstances, from the earth, the tomb, and the sea, and in one great host gathered up in the clouds to meet the Lord. What joyous millions shall gather and cluster around the Lamb! What meetings of long-lost friends! What re-unions of scattered brethren! What an assemblage of the saved from righteous Abel to the last member of the first Resurrection—completed ere the Kingdom is set up (Rev. xx. 6). All of the "first Resurrection" will not be caught up at the descent into the air (1 Thess. iv. 14-17)—there will be subsequent companies translated to the heavens, after the rapture of those contemplated in John xiv. 1-3; 1 Thess. iv. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 23. Are our lights burning brightly? Are our loins tightly girded? (Luke xii. 35-43).

15.—GOD FOR US.

Say not my soul, "from whence can God relieve my care?"

Remember Omnipotence hath servants everywhere.

His method is sublime, His way supremely kind,

God never is before His time, and never is behind.

16.—OUR CLOSING WORD.

Heart to heart in communion. Shoulder to shoulder in testimony. Hand in hand in fellowship. For God and not the world. For Christ and not the devil. Onward—press on. Upward, look up. Fight the Lord's battles and not your own. Walk on calmly, serving all in the strength of seeing Him who is invisible (Heb. xi.)

WATER-BAPTISM.

THIS Christian rite was instituted by our Lord *after* His Resurrection, and *before* His Ascension. The only commission to baptise is recorded in Matt. xxviii. 19. It is a command addressed to servants to baptise, not to the general body of believers *to be* baptized. The commission in Mark xvi. 15 is to preach. The history of baptism for 30 years is unfolded in the Acts. The doctrinal teaching of baptism will be found in the Epistles to the Romans and Colossians. Baptism is burial unto death, *i.e.*, unto Christ's death (Rom. vi. 4). Immersion is, without doubt, the scriptural mode, although neither in 1 Cor. xii. 13; nor 1 Cor. x. 2, can the question of mode be introduced. The mode therefore is not vital to the rite, but the NAME to which persons are baptized is. Persons and households were baptized. In baptism one was thereby constituted a disciple. Baptism is not the sign that one has passed from death unto life. It is burial unto death. Baptism is a figure of burial, and this with a view to identification with the death (not your own) of Jesus Christ. Col. ii. 12, Rom. vi. 4 are texts which have not been sufficiently weighed in the baptist-controversy. But we do not make baptism a test question, nor a centre of gathering. Christ is the NAME for earth and the NAME for Heaven; the NAME for time and the NAME for eternity, and there we leave the subject, which by the intemperate zeal of many has divided the Church, and caused wide-spread sorrow amongst God's people.

RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS.

The personal recognition of friends in heaven is unquestionable from Luke ix. 30. 33. How did Peter know Moses and Elias? The former had been in heaven for about 1500 years and the latter 900 years. "*Then* shall I know," explains it (1 Cor. xiii. 12). We shall know as we are known. Every Christian friend of earth shall be known and recognised in the glory-land.

TO THE LORD'S BELOVED AGED PEOPLE.

WE have a growing reverence for the aged. It ever was and is a characteristic of Jewish religious life to honour the aged. It is a touching and beautiful sight to view one in the sunset of life waiting at the brink of the river for the parting of the waves. The heart yet brave; the love of early days as passionate if more matured; the purpose of the soul unchanged, and the calm unshaken confidence—the growth of many years—reflected on the patient, if withered and suffering countenance. How chastened! How mellowed! How useful the ripe experience!

One danger to which the Lord's aged people are peculiarly subject to, is to rest on their oars, and seek to pass the evening of their days in a "Home of Rest," assuming that their work is done. That was not the spirit of brave old Caleb, who when 85 years old said, "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me," forty years previously, "as my strength was then even so is my strength now for war, both to go out, and to come in" (Jos. xiv. 11). Caleb was not tired of the conflict. He drew his spiritual strength from God: the source of his courage was in God Himself.

The physical vigour of youth may give way, but there is a power outside the domain of nature, "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint" (Isa. xl. 31). O beloved aged pilgrims, our rest is on the other side of the river; our Home is on high. Throw off the indolence which with age and infirmity creeps over the soul, and nerve yourself to

battle on, to serve till He come. A few more struggles and then Eternal rest !

One of the most eloquent of Scottish divines whose burning words once fell on our ears, the late Dr Guthrie, thus wrote: "They say I am growing old because my hair is silvered, and there are crow's-feet on my forehead, and my step is not as firm and elastic as before. But they are mistaken. That is not me. The knees are weak ; but the knees are not me. The brow is wrinkled ; but the brow is not me. This is the house I live in. But I am young—
younger than I ever was before."

For ourselves, and for all our beloved aged pilgrims, we long and pray for spiritual vigour. Where, of course, there is a collapse of the physical powers, one can only wait in patience the joyful summons "Come Home!" Press on with increasing desire. The manna is needed equally for your closing hours as for the springtide of earlier days. Feed on Christ ye fathers and mothers in Israel !

BOOK NOTICES.

Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 5s 6d. Exposition of the Epistles of John the Apostle, 7s 6d. By W. Kelly. London : Weston, 53 Paternoster Row. 1905.

With unfeigned pleasure do we call attention to these volumes, whom few writers indeed could produce in these days of ever-growing departure from the God-given truth of Scripture. Each is provided with a new version of the inspired text ; but it is the exposition which our readers would value chiefly, coming from one who is the last surviving of a generation of men of God mighty in the Scriptures, as understood in the light of that teaching of the Spirit which alone will counteract the baneful effect of development on the one hand and of infidelity on the other.

The volume devoted to the Epistle to the Hebrews, as Mr Kelly states in his preface, is "demanded by the unbelieving spread of ritualism." In it any reader would find an armoury of help towards dealing with that phase of error, wherever it exhibits itself. Apart from such aid, most skilful and spiritual handling of the more difficult portions of the Epistle will be met with in each successive chapter. We may single out, for instance, pp. 91-93, dealing with the difficult passage, as it is accounted in chapter v., verses 7-10. The introduction deals already with the much-vexed question of the authorship of the Epistle, which, as Origen wrote in the third century, "God alone knows." Very forcible reasons are here offered for adhering to the tradition that we owe it to the Apostle Paul. What may be alleged to the contrary has nowhere been more clearly set out than in the late Dean Farrar's book entitled, "The Early Days of Christianity;" but we think that what he has to say there in support of Apollos' authorship, is discredited by Mr Kelly's considerations. In the version of xi. 31 there is a regrettable printer's omission of "not."

The Exposition of the Epistles of John discloses, in the preface, an interesting bit of autobiography, which reminds us of the value that the Epistle to the Galatians had for Luther, as the Romans, in like manner, for the late Mr Darby. The book originated in a series of addresses, which we think must have been particularly helpful to younger hearers. Take the seventh, on ii., 14-27, in connection with the class of babes in the Church. How striking that it is to such the apostle addressed his words about Antichrists and knowledge of "all things," besides the promise of Life Eternal. Again, it is in the Third Epistle that we receive the warning from those early days of the capital danger of development, which Protestants now, scarcely less than Catholics, wantonly neglect, in spite of the solemn words, "Have not God."

E. E. W.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS.

Matthew xiii.

A SKETCH OF THE FIRST TWELVE CHAPTERS.

THE story unfolded in this Gospel is of One Who, in Divine and human right, is King of kings and Lord of lords, the object of prophecy and promise of old, yet, singular to say, cradled in a *manger*! His destiny is one of surpassing greatness, for His kingdom is to girdle the globe, yet, marvellous to relate, the Cross, and not a throne, closed His earthly career. Nevertheless, the glory to which He is prophetically destined was but eclipsed, not extinguished. The Cross of the Messiah seemed to be the grave of the hopes of Israel. The King of the Jews was crucified and buried. But the Cross became the birthplace of Christianity, and now for 2000 years the Gospel of God's grace has gone out, bearing on its bosom salvation for lost millions of the human race. The Kingdom in *power* is postponed till the Gospel of grace, to Jew and Gentile alike, has completed its glorious conquests. Then the Kingdom of the Heavens—universal in extent, righteous in character, and more enduring than the ordinances of sun and moon—shall be established on the ruin of all opposing power, and to the confusion of every foe. The Kingdom shall be the refuge of the oppressed and weary, whose tears shall be wiped away, the sob of creation hushed, and the wail of man stilled for ever.

Every fresh reading of the Gospel deepens on our spirit the sense of sadness, for, while we witness the royal deeds, and listen to the kingly teachings of the Monarch of Israel, we instinctively feel that the shadow of the Cross was o'er His path, giving its own peculiar tinge to all He did and said. It is the *rejected* King who is the Actor in this marvellous history—disowned from the outset, not by Gentiles, but by His own people, whom for centuries He had, as Jehovah, "fed them according to the integrity of His heart, and guided them according to the skilfulness of His hands."

His advent into the world troubled the metropolis of His kingdom, and struck terror to the heart of Herod the king

(Matt. ii. 3). The world was asleep. The sway of Rome extended from the Tiber to the Tyne, while the real ruler of the world lay not in a palace, but in a manger! a babe, yet the Ancient of Days, Whose goings forth have been of old. Ah! little did the Cæsar dream that his mighty empire in the zenith of its strength and greatness would be crushed and shivered to atoms, become like chaff, and the last and worst of his imperial successors be ignominiously consigned to the lake of fire by that same babe, Who shall hold the sceptre of universal sovereignty in no nerveless grasp, but lay it on the whole scene beneath His throne. There shall be a mighty calm for 1000 years. Oh, marvellous story! so absolutely true, yet surpassing the strangest fable ever written.

The royal genealogy of the King, on which is founded His legal right to the throne of Judah—*down* from father to son, not *up* from son to father, as in Luke—is the subject of the first seventeen verses of the gospel. Then the King comes into the scene of His yet future sovereignty. But Who is He? He is *Jehovah*, the Saviour of His people; Emmanuel, *God* with His people, yet truly a *Man* as born of the Virgin. This wonderful story is told us in the last eight verses of the first chapter.

The effects of the presence of God in the world are next shewn. Some seek the life of the new-born King, as Herod; others worship Him, as the magi. History is ever repeating itself. God is hated, and God is worshipped—such is the tale of chapter two.

Before the King publicly takes his place in Israel, He must be suitably introduced. So His herald comes from the deserts (Luke i. 80), according to the prophecies of Isaiah (xl.) and Malachi iii., and at once enters upon his brief, but energetic ministry. He works no miracles. Preaching and baptizing sum up his extraordinary mission, which was to prepare the people for the due reception of the King. He insists upon repentance, for never had the nation sunk so low, nor the fortunes of Israel become so desperate to all human appearance. John announces as his theme, "the Kingdom of the Heavens" is at hand. The presence of the King was the fact which demonstrated the truth of his preaching. If the King was actually in the land, the Kingdom *must* be at hand, for the power and glories of the Kingdom were centred in Him. The righteous character of the Kingdom necessarily shut out Pharisees and Saducees as such from baptism. Entrance "into the Kingdom" then, as now, is by the new birth (John iii. 1-12). Natural descent from Abraham is of no avail. The

axe is laid at the root of the trees. This section closes with a beautiful personal tribute to the greatness of the King, who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire: the former intimating the characteristic work of this age (Acts ii. and 1 Cor. xii. 13), the latter referring to a process of judicial judgment on the threshing-floor of Israel yet future (iii. 1-12).

But now another stage in this wonderful history is reached, and then the herald retires from public view. The King Himself comes on the scene, and for the first time. The occasion and circumstances were of absorbing interest. Many roused under the preaching of the Baptist, confessed their individual and national guilt, and in acknowledgment thereof were baptized in the Jordan, thus morally separating themselves from the guilty nation, for baptism is ever a separating ordinance. Baptism had no claim upon the King. Repentance did not apply to *Him*. The baptism of the Lord was an act of pure grace on His part; on the part of the people it was a necessity. Jordan had a claim upon *them*. Jordan had no claim upon *Him*. This was the first public step to the Kingdom. He would make His ascent to the throne from the depths of the swellings of Jordan. How does the Father and the Spirit answer to this first public identification of the King with His people? "The heavens were opened unto Him." The New Testament records four occasions in which the heavens open to Christ. Two of those are past (Matt. iii. 16; Acts vii. 56), and two are yet to come (Rev. xix. 11; John i. 51). The Father's expression of delight in His Son was retrospective: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I *have* found delight," so it reads. The delight was in *Himself*, not in any act or series of acts. Then He is anointed for power and service by the Holy Ghost. What a group of interesting facts are related in the closing five verses of the chapter.

The starting-point of the Lord's public ministry in Israel is noted in verse seventeen of chapter four: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say "Repent: for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand." The imprisonment of John is the chronological event from which the Galilean ministry of the Lord commenced (see also Mark i. 14). What contrasts in the life and varied circumstances of the King! In chapter three He stands on the banks of the Jordan with the opened heavens over His head, the Father uttering His retrospective expression of delight in Him, and the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of holiness and power, resting upon Him. What a beautiful scene! But in chapter four He stands in the wilderness amidst the wild beasts,

and for forty days he withstood and foiled the fierce temptations of the devil. His only weapon was the written Word of God. The King of Israel who fed thousands, and at whose marriage banquet the aristocracy of heaven are guests (Rev. xix. 9), endured the pangs of hunger! Then He calls and gathers to Himself His first band of missionary-disciples (iv. 18-21). These four *followed Him*, so that the Spirit and the ways of the King might be reproduced in their service. The presence of the Lord was the college where they graduated. Then this wonderful fourth chapter closes with a brief resumé of His work in Galilee. It is a summary of work (not presented in chronological order), in which we view the King as teacher, as preacher, as healer. "All manner of sickness, and all manner of disease" fled at His touch and word. Was there ever a Kingdom inaugurated by such princely deeds? As a consequence His fame spread, and great multitudes from all parts of the country followed Him. To those multitudes who had witnessed His works, He would now instruct in His doctrine.

The King is the law-giver. He needs no Parliament, or Senate, or body of advisers. No nation on earth ever possessed such a unique system of laws as are unfolded in the sermon on the mount, occupying chapters five, six, and seven. Therein He propounds the laws governing the conduct of His subjects. These laws are the reflection of the King's own character. The principles of the Kingdom apply to rich and poor alike. The remarkable feature of the sermon is the King's personal interest in every one who has entered "into the Kingdom" by the new birth. His personal authority is the dominant factor in all departments of the Kingdom, and amongst all composing it. "*I say unto you*"—fourteen times repeated—is the imposition of His will in the Kingdom throughout. The laws themselves form a rare combination of righteousness and grace, and by these He forms the character of His people, Himself the type and pattern of all morally excellent.

But Jesus was not only the King according to the flesh, a veritable descendant from David, He was also in His own Person, Jehovah, the Divine Saviour. The greatness and glories of the coming Kingdom and headship over the nations, formed the boundary of horizon to the Jew. Jerusalem, the metropolis of the millennial world, and the nations flocking up to it in yearly pilgrimage, yielding their homage and pouring out their wealth and riches, these are the thoughts which have ever fed Jewish pride. But sin is a reality, and its consequences—governmental and eternal—form a need which no national

position of future pre-eminence can satisfy. Jesus as Jehovah is on the scene to deal with sins sad consequences on earth, and bear the sin itself on the Cross. Palestine is the scene of this special operation. Thus, from chapters eight to twelve, we have Jehovah the King manifesting Himself as such by miracles, by word, by deed in the midst of the people. The authority of the King, the compassion of the King, the omniscience of the King, the prophetic knowledge of the King are severally and in some instances unitedly displayed in blessed activity. There was nothing left undone to reach the heart of Israel. The power of the King was everywhere triumphant, and His presence everywhere felt, but Israel had neither heart nor conscience for God, and so the Messianic claims of Christ were proudly rejected. His lowly guise and moral excellencies were not looked for in *their* conception of the Messiah. Israel looked for one who would save them from their *enemies*, but God had provided One who would, first of all, save them from their *sins*, for that was the deeper need (Matt. i. 21). The story of His rejection is historically told in these chapters, yet all was foreseen by Him, and *that* gave its own tinge of sorrow to all He said and did, and which many have noted as one of the most interesting features of this precious Gospel.

In chapter xii. we have the determined and definite rejection of the King by the leaders of the people. In verse 22 we have recorded the incident which led up to that most awful sin, for which there was no forgiveness in *that* Jewish age which was rapidly closing up, nor in the age to come, *i.e.*, the millennial age. A man, demon-possessed, blind and dumb too, was publicly brought to the Lord, Who healed him. The miracle was one of the most remarkable ever wrought. The man himself was a present and living witness of the grace of Jehovah, and of the power of the Holy Ghost exercised by the King in healing virtue. There was no attempt to deny the truth of the miracle. It was self-evident to all. The people were struck with astonishment and moved for the moment, saying, "Is not this the son of David?" But the impression was neither deep nor permanent. The leaders were roused to immediate activity. Their influence and authority were at stake. It was a critical moment in the history of Israel, and Satan (who was behind the scene on the one hand, and the Holy Ghost on the other) won the day. The leaders, wilfully blind to the plainest facts evidencing that the King was present, attributed the miracle wrought before their eyes to the power of Satan: they blasphemed the Holy Ghost, and thus brought upon themselves

and upon the nation (of which they were the leaders and representatives) the sentence of *no forgiveness*. A new generation shall inherit the promises under the reign of David's Son and Lord (Psa. xxii. 30-31). But the grace of the King is not exhausted. His heart yet lingers over His people, so other warning testimonies are adduced, drawn from facts with which all were familiar (38-42). Judah—the highly-favoured and privileged part of the nation—rejects her King. It is out and out rejection in will, in word, in deed.

What then remains? The King sketched in a few sentences the future of that unbelieving Jewish generation. The word "generation," as used in verse 45, does not mean the Jewish *race*, but the unbelieving Jewish *state* or moral condition (Deut. xxxii. 5), which ends at the second coming—the coming of the King in power and glory. The unclean spirit of idolatry was rampant in Israel (Ezek. viii.). After the partial restoration from the Babylon-captivity, under Nehemiah and Ezra, the Jewish house was "empty, swept, and garnished" (verse 44). But in the near future, after their return as a nation (Isa. xlviii.), the people will be wholly (save a remnant) given up to idolatry, which will find a home in the very midst of Jehovah's people. Satanic worship and idolatrous practices exceeding anything ever witnessed before, shall then characterise the last state of Israel—her last state the worst (verse 45). The King has nothing more to say. In the closing verses of this solemn chapter He severs the external link with the nation. His bonds with Israel, formed after the flesh, are broken in the significant action recorded in verses 46-50. His new family would not be of fleshly or of natural descent from Abraham, but those—whether Jews or Gentiles—who do the will of His Father are here acknowledged as His brethren, and thus the chapter closes. The ground is now cleared to introduce the great subject on hand, "The Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens."

THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS.

The dispensational character of the Gospel is a plain matter of fact, and not open to cavil or disputation. Hence the sermon on the mount (v.-vii.), the parables of the kingdom (xiii.), and the Olivet-prophetic discourse (xxiv.-xxv.) can only be understood on the dispensational plan. The arrangement of the materials in these respective portions are not in chronological sequence, but exhibit Divine design which is to the loss of those who ignore it.

The word which stamps its character on the Gospel is *Kingdom*. Round it every truth and incident circles, and everything revealed in the Gospel takes shape and character from it. Nor must the Church and the Kingdom be confused. They are distinct in character and aim. Christ stands related to the Church as its *Head*; whereas the head of the kingdom is Christ the *King*. As Christians we are both in the Church and in the Kingdom.

The Kingdom is variously presented in the Scriptures: first, to Jewish responsibility (Matt. i.-xii.); second, the Kingdom in mystery is a series of seven parables (xiii.); third, the Kingdom in tribulation after the removal of the heavenly saints (1 Thess. iv. 15-17); fourth, the Kingdom in manifested power at the glorious Appearing, according to the general testimony of the Old Testament—of the prophets in particular.

“The Kingdom of the Heavens” is a phrase peculiar to our Gospel. It occurs thirty-two times, and is the New Testament form of the Old Testament expression “The heavens do rule” (Dan. iv. 26). It neither means “Heaven” nor the “Church.” The Kingdom of the Heavens is the consummation of what prophets foretold and seers beheld in vision. The coming Kingdom occupies about a third of the contents of the sacred volume. The Kingdom of the Heavens is to be established on the earth. Its greatness, its glory, its extent, its stability, its endurance, its righteous and holy character, and, above all, the pre-eminent glory of its King, make up a study of surpassing interest. The centre on earth of this great system is the Jews as a people, Palestine as a land, and Jerusalem as a city. *That* was the Kingdom preached by John the Baptist, and by our Lord—the King Himself. But the *Mysteries* of the Kingdom of the Heavens would indicate a change in the character of what is now suitable in the absence of the King. How possibly could we have greatness and power in characteristic display on the earth in the absence of the King? The meaning of the phrase therefore must apply in a different connection from that contemplated in the Old Testament. There the King on earth, and reigning over it in public display, is *the* grand object for Israel and the Gentiles. But in our chapter the rejection of the King by Israel, His session at God’s right hand, and the Kingdom consequently in abeyance, give their own character to the new state of things. Christianity in its acknowledgment of Christ, of His rule on earth while He is in heaven; Christianity, or rather the history of Christendom, in its outward and inner features and its end, are in brief, the Mysteries of the Kingdom, and forms the subject of our chapter.

We may also remark that the *parables* of the Kingdom were spoken after the public repudiation of the people, and outward break with the nation, hence the word *parable* does not once occur in the first twelve chapters of the Gospel. The reason why the King spoke to the Jewish multitudes in parables was that He had judicially given up both leaders and people. The parables contained light and instruction to the disciples, but to blinded Israel all was dark (see xiii. 10-17, 34-35).

THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM.

Before considering these parables in detail, several questions suggest themselves: Why seven parables? How are they divided? Why termed "Mysteries of the Kingdom"? Why is the first parable not said to be a similitude of the Kingdom? And lastly, What is the length of time covered by these parables? Satisfactory answers to these questions will enable the reader to grasp the subject with a measure of intelligence and fulness. Books, treatises, and sermons innumerable have been published on this chapter, and perhaps on no other portion of the Word has such varying and, in many instances, contradictory interpretations been shewn.

Why *seven* parables? This numeral, which is the ruling number in the Apocalypse, occurring about fifty times, signifies what is *perfect, complete*. It is frequently broken up into three and four; the former signifying what is *divine*, the other what is connected with *man*. Thus, these seven parables are intended to give us a complete sketch or history of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

How are the parables *divided*? The first four were spoken to the "great multitudes" on the sea side (verse 1). The three last, as also the explanation of the tare-field parable, were addressed to the disciples in the house (verse 36). The first group presents the *outward* character of the Kingdom during the absence of the King in heaven—the forms which the public profession of Christianity would assume, and so were fittingly addressed to the multitudes, as more directly concerning them. The second group would more particularly engage the spiritual interests of the disciples, of whom others besides the twelve gathered in the house (Mark iv. 10), to these the *vital* character of the Kingdom was unfolded.

Why termed "Mysteries of the Kingdom"? There are no mysteries in the Old Testament; in fact, the word "mystery" does not occur in the Old Testament Scriptures. There are many New Testament mysteries. The word signifies what is

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secret or *hidden*. The Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens are wrapped up in parables clear as sunlight to the disciples, but the parabolic teaching dark as midnight to the mass (verses 11-13). The Lord purposely chose this form of instruction with the very end in view, that none but disciples should and could understand. These parables are termed "mysteries," because they present the Kingdom established amongst the *Gentiles* in the absence of the King. Now, the prophets of old write of the Kingdom established amongst the *Jews*, and the personal presence of the King with them. There is no mystery in that all; is open and revealed. But the Kingdom of prophecy is postponed, and the King is in heaven, not on earth, hence the Kingdom now takes shape and character accordingly. The Old Testament prophetic Scriptures never contemplated the Kingdom as it presently exists, and as alone developed in this chapter. In these mysteries are unfolded the rise, history, and doom of Christian profession in relation to Christ as King and Lord.

Why is the first parable not termed a *similitude* of the Kingdom? Because the Kingdom of the Heavens, in its present mysterious form, did not commence till the King went on high. The mysteries date from that epoch. The work and action of the first parable was preparatory to the establishing of the Kingdom amongst the *Gentiles*. It will be the Kingdom in *power* amongst the *Jews*. It is the Kingdom in *mystery* amongst the *Gentiles*. The presence of the King characterises the former; the absence of the King is the key to the understanding of the latter. The first parable sets forth the lowly action of the Lord when on earth—"A sower went forth to sow"—but it is His presence *in heaven* which introduces the mysteries of the Kingdom, hence the first parable is not termed a likeness of the Kingdom.

What is the *length of time* covered by these similitude-parables? From the ascension of the Lord till His return in power—about 2000 years. Observe that two actions close up this age, which may be spoken of as the harvest and the vintage. The harvest refers to the separation of the wheat from the tares. The vintage is the expression of unsparing judgment upon the tares or wicked (verses 32, 42, 49, 50). The duration of these mysteries extend beyond the translation of the heavenly saints. It is judgment—pure and simple—which is the closing act in this dispensation. The coming of the Lord *for* His saints is in no wise alluded to in these parables, and should on no account be introduced in any part of the chapter. In the first of the seven

parables the King is witnessed in the lowly character of a *sower*, but in the coming harvest the King is beheld as a *reaper*.

1.—The Sower (verses 3-8; 18-23).

The chapter opens with a highly significant action. The King had pronounced upon the future of Israel, then He severed His connection with the nation till resumed in millennial days, now, on "the same day," He disowns their worship, and turns to the Gentiles. "The same day went Jesus out of the house and sat by the sea-side." Historically, the break with Israel was at the Cross. A remnant, of which Paul was one, received the King, Who in grace for their sins, died on the Cross, but the nation as such, refused their Messiah when on earth, and equally so when in heaven. God in governmental chastisement used the Romans as before the Babylonians to scourge His people. In both cases their temple—the centre of national and religious interest—was raised to the ground, the people sent into captivity, and their beloved city given over to spoilation and capture. The Lord went out of the *house*, *i.e.*, the temple, and sat at the *sea-side*, *i.e.*, figure of the Gentile world (Dan. vii. 2; Rev. xvii. 15). "Behold, a sower went forth to sow." The prophets of old spoke and wrote of the sufferings of Christ and the glories following (1 Pet. i. 11), but that the Messiah of Israel, should first of all enter upon such a lowly service as a sower of seed, formed no part of their testimony. Sowing was neither suffering nor glory. Had it been written, "A reaper went forth to reap," it would have been in consonance with human thought. But going forth to sow was indeed a new action, and one necessitated by the state of the people. The fig-tree (Israel nationally) was covered with leaves while absolutely destitute of fruit (Matt. xxi. 19). After centuries of care and culture the vineyard of Israel yielded no fruit for Jehovah, hence the Kingdom of God was transferred to the Gentiles (verse 43). Now, if fruit was to be gathered from either Jew or Gentile, the Lord must do a work to produce it. He sowed during His personal ministry on earth. The reaping is yet to come. But as sure as He sowed He shall reap.

This parable with its accompanying explanation is also related in Mark iv. and Luke viii. Matthew terms the seed, "the Word of the Kingdom." Mark speaks of it simply as "the Word." Luke, as "the Word of God." In addition to these the seed may be regarded as the Word of Salvation (Heb. ii. 3). It is also to be noticed, that the singular and plural pronouns are employed, in keeping with the special design of

each Gospel. The former is by Matthew: the latter, by Mark and Luke. In this first and fundamental of parables, there are *four* casts of the seed. In the first there is no result; in the three which follow there is. It is only in the fourth, however, that permanent results follow on the reception of the seed sown in "good ground." Apart from the dispensational character of these groups of parables, the moral value to us is very great. This one has a serious voice to preachers and hearers.

We shall now briefly glance at the various ways in which the seed operated, how the Word of God was treated by the four classes of hearers.

The wayside hearer (verses 4, 19) is the most common case of any. The Word is preached—the person hears. There may be a certain effect produced, but it is only transitory, for Satan is there to catch away the seed before it can find a lodgment in the heart. This class of Gospel-hearers in our days are numerous, and are to be found in every grade of society, from its highest to its lowest. The fowls who devoured the seed point to satanic agency (verse 4), but Satan himself is the real source of the almost universal carelessness and indifference to the Word of God (verse 19). The moral character of the great enemy of God and of man is referred to in his descriptive designation as "the wicked one." As to who he is there can be no question, for Mark (iv. 15) terms him Satan, and Luke (viii. 12), the devil. Satan attends every Gospel meeting with but *one* object in view—to ruin souls, either by stealing the seed before it has time to take root (Mark iv. 15), or corrupting it in the hearts of the hearers. Satan does this and more "lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke viii. 12). Thus the Lord plainly and openly exposes the wickedness and wiles of Satan. "We are not ignorant of his devices."

The stony-ground hearer (verses 5, 6, 20, 21) is in advance upon the former. In this case the Word is received with joy. But, mark, it is not joy that the sinner needs; it is *peace* with God about his sins. The *saint* is called to joy, the *sinner* to peace. Hence, in this case the heart is indeed touched, the feelings are aroused, perhaps the person weeps, but the Word has been received without any exercise of conscience—no sense of sin felt. Souls should never be hurried into a confession of the name of the Lord. There is an immense amount of mere superficial work abroad. Always look for depth and reality in souls; bring people face to face with the realities of sin, judgment, God, heaven, hell; seek rather for

quality than quantity. Press the necessity of repentance, and do not press John v. 24 upon the acceptance of persons where no *felt* need exists.

The thorn-hearer (verses 7, 22) is also in advance of his fellow, the stony-ground hearer. The rich and poor make up this very numerous company of unfruitful, unproductive hearers. The many cares of the poor, and the deceitful riches of the better-off, equally choke the Word. Look well to your condition, Christian reader. If the Lord has given you riches, pour them at the feet of your adorable Saviour and Lord, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and *riches*, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. v. 12). If you are burdened with cares, go cast *all* upon Him, for He careth for you (1 Peter v. 7); *then* "be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. iv. 6).

The good-ground hearer (verses 8, 23) is a *doer* of the word, and not a hearer only. James describes the good-ground hearer in these words--practical words, which we beg our readers to ponder over, as in the sight of God—"Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and *continueth* therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (i. 25). Why *good* ground? Simply because prepared by God's Spirit. Then fruit is produced in proportion as there is subjection of heart and conscience to the "Word." "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear *much* fruit." May it be an hundredfold with every reader of these pages!

In Matthew the quantity of fruit borne is from a hundredfold *down* to thirtyfold; whereas in Mark it is from thirty *up* to a hundred. The work of the sower was perfect, neither was there defect in the seed. But failure and declension in not maintaining the high standard is intimated in Matthew, while in Mark the increasing quantity shews the progress in the soul and life of some. Dispensational failure is the point in the first Gospel; moral advance is the lesson in the second Gospel.

Three things characterise this class of fruitful hearers: (1) they *understand* the word; (2) they *receive* the word; (3) they *keep* the word (see Matt. xiii., Mark iv., and Luke viii. for these and other interesting distinctions). The whole truth of these parables is contained in the three portions referred to. This first parable is the key to the understanding of all the others. "Know ye not," says the Lord, "this parable"? (Mark iv. 13).

Having had the personal ministry of the King in sowing the

seed or word of the Kingdom, we have, in the six parables which follow, the Kingdom established amongst the Gentiles—the Kingdom in mystery. The first three of the six are each introduced by the formula, “another parable” (verses 24, 31, 33); the last three have also their distinctive introduction, “Again, the Kingdom of the Heavens” (verses 44, 45, 46). Those six similitude Kingdom parables cover the whole period from the ascension of the King till His return in power.

2.—The Wheat and Tare Field (verses 24-30 ; 36-43).

The *second* parable is that of the tare field. Prominence is given to the tares: their sowing, growth, and end, hence the question of the disciples: “Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.” Not the wheat, but the tares form the distinguishing feature of the parable. Persons have had considerable difficulty in this parable, from not clearly distinguishing between the “Church” and the “Kingdom.” The consequences of confounding the two have been most hurtful to souls. Papists and Protestants alike have erred in this, and based their persecutions of each other on the fatal mistake of supposing that the field is the Church—“*the field is the WORLD*” (verse 38). The sower in this parable is Jesus, the Son of Man, sowing instrumentally—that is, through and with His servants (Mark xvi. 20). Then they slept while they should have watched; but Satan, in his ceaseless activity, *never sleeps*—a lesson well worth learning by saint and sinner. The consequence of this slothfulness, was that tares were sown in the field—“certain men crept in unawares” (Jude 4). Soon the result appeared—tares and wheat growing together. Now comes the anxious question of the servants: Are we to pluck up the tares?—that is, the children of the wicked one. “Nay,” was the touching reply, “lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.” He would rather allow this mixed state of good and evil to continue, now that His servants, through their unwatchfulness, have permitted the enemy to sow in their Master’s field, because in their attempts to “root up” the tares they might injure the wheat. But observe *very carefully*—first, that the field is the *world*, not the Church; and second, that both were to grow together—not *fellowship* together—a very different thing indeed. It is not the presence of evil in us which hinders communion with God; nay, the sin in us is a very good reason indeed why we should go to God about it, and have communion with Him regarding it. It is the *allowance* of evil—the

practice of it—which hinders and interrupts the holy and blessed walk with God. The world will be cleared of evil men by Christ at the harvest—*i.e.*, at the end of the age ; not before it (verse 41). The millennium will not be brought in by a process of reformation. Increasing evil, not decreasing evil, is the sure testimony of Scripture. The Lord will deal with it all at His coming. There are some lessons of deepening importance to be gathered from a devout perusal of this parable.

The Lord Himself spoke this parable at the sea side to the multitudes, but He gave its interpretation to His disciples in the house (verse 36). The explanation is so concise and so simple, that the controversy in all ages concerning its meaning is like chaff. There are seven points in the parable ; attention to these will make the reader thoroughly acquainted with the Lord's teaching in this important Scripture.

1. The Sower of the good seed is the Son of Man. This is the Lord's chosen title of Himself. It is only once applied to Him (Acts vii. 56). As Son of God He quickens the dead, as Son of David He is the rightful heir to the throne of *that* illustrious monarch of Israel (Psa. ii.), as Son of Man He inherits a wider range of glory in connection with the human race at large (Psa. viii.).

2. The field is the world. The Church, the Kingdom, and the world are distinct spheres. It was in the larger of the three that the seed was sown. It was the seed really that was the instrumental means of creating both the Church and the Kingdom. In a coming day, the Kingdom, not the Church, will be co-extensive with the world (Dan. vii. 14-27). The Church consists of a select company gathered out of the world, *in* it, but not of it (Acts xv. 14).

3. The good seed are the sons of the Kingdom. In the former parable the seed is said to be the *Word*, here it is spoken of as persons. In the first parable the Word is that by which we are born of God and become His children (Jas. i. 18 ; 1 Pet. i. 23), but in the second parable believers are the seed—the Word is in them and thus they are accounted as it. The second parable is an advance upon the first. This thought is not one foreign to other parts of the sacred volume (Jer. xxxi. 27 ; Zech. x. 9).

4. The tares are the sons of the wicked one. "It makes much for the beauty of the parable, and is full of instruction, that wheat and tares are not seeds of different kinds, but that the last is a degenerate or bastard wheat" (*Trench*). To appearance tares or darnel closely resemble wheat, and having been sown *amongst* the wheat, it would be an exceedingly

dangerous operation to root it up. To do so would almost certainly injure the wheat. Both the wheat and tares are persons. "The wicked one" is, of course, Satan, but his moral character, as essentially evil, is in view in verse 38. He stamps his own character upon those who are his (see John viii. 44; 1 John iii. 8, 10, 12).

5. The enemy that sowed them is the devil. The human instrumentality employed in sowing the good seed is passed over, and the work traced to its source—the Son of Man; so here in that of the tares the source is in view—the devil; not his agents but the master-mind that inspires, directs, and controls. Thus the contrast is sharp and decided. The sower in the one case being the Son of Man, the other being the devil. The devil is not an original genius. He imitates. He counterfeits. He does not sow a *different* kind of cereal. His object is to destroy the work of God by the introduction of a spurious Christianity, to mix law and grace, to make Christianity a graft upon Judaism, to destroy by corruption from *within*, hence he sows amongst the wheat. This certainly is an advance upon his earlier effort (verse 19). Here in the midst of what is of God he establishes a system of evil.

6. The harvest is the end of the age—not world. The harvest is a discriminating, separating judgment. It is then that the tares are separated from the wheat. The vintage—the other symbol closing up this age or dispensation—succeeds the harvest and is the expression of judgment—pure and simple. The age is the whole period in which the Jews are scattered under the disciplinary hand of God—the period of national chastisement. Till then, good and bad, light and darkness co-exist, wheat and tares grow together in the world. Evil is dealt with at the end of the age—first, in separating it from the good; second, in the execution of Divine judgment. The wheat is gathered home, and the tares are cast into the fire.

7. The reapers are the angels. Angelic agency and ministration form an important part in the closing stages of this age, and in the introduction of the world to come, *i.e.*, the millennial Kingdom. We have to do with the good, the angels with the bad. It is ours now to separate the *precious* from the *vile* (Jer. xv. 19). It is the work of angels at the harvest to separate the *vile* from the *precious*. The Son of Man was the *sower* (verse 37). So the Son of Man is the *reaper* (verse 41). At the commencement of the age human instrumentality was employed in the sowing; at the end of the age angelic instrumentality is used in the reaping. Dealing with evils in

the world is angelic work. We deal with evil in the *Church* (1 Cor. v.), angels with evil in the *world* at the Coming.

It is important to note that the field, *i.e.*, the world, is the property of the sower. He bought it (verse 44). He had thus a right to sow therein; the devil had none. It was owing to the negligence of the servants that the enemy came and sowed in the very centre of that where the Lord had wrought. After a time the result of the two sowings appeared. The Lord absolutely forbids any present dealing with the tares. If the servants slept while the enemy did his deadly work, how could they be entrusted with the execution of judgment? *That* work is relegated to another day, and to other hands than theirs.

"In the *time* of harvest"—a somewhat lengthened process—the tares are bound in bundles; associations of evil, and classes of evil are distinguished and judged accordingly. The actual execution of judgment upon the tares is in the closing act of the age—the vintage or unsparing judgment. The wheat are gathered into His barn. The contrast between the two classes of persons—the sons of the Kingdom and those of the evil one—is strikingly presented in verses 42 and 43. The doom is eternal in both.

It is at the close of the explanation of this parable that the interesting distinction is made between the Kingdom of the Son (verse 41), and the Kingdom of the *Father* (verse 43). The former is on earth; the latter in the heavens, but in closest fellowship with and proximity to the other. The two form but *one* Kingdom which, however, can be distinguished in its main parts.

The two parables which follow that of the tare field, should be read and studied together. The numeral *two* seems common enough in these parables. Thus, in the first, we have the Sower and the wicked one, and two hindrances to growth—cares and riches. In the second parable we have two sowers—the Son of Man and the enemy; two seeds—wheat and darnel; sons of the Kingdom and sons of the wicked one; the tares for the fire, and the wheat for the Kingdom. The reader may pursue further examination for himself.

The mustard tree and the leaven spring out of the previous parable—the natural outcome of the tares being so plentifully found amongst the wheat. The *outward* and abnormal growth of a professing Christianity is taught in the mustard seed parable; while the spread of doctrine and dogma *within* her borders is the main point in the parabolic teaching of the leaven.

3.—The Mustard Seed (verses 31-32).

The *third* parable is that of the mustard seed, "the least of all seeds." This is a picture of Christianity exceedingly insignificant in its rise. Latterly, however, it becomes a great power in the world—a vast political system in the earth—so much so that the birds of the air lodge in its branches. There is an exceedingly solemn thought in all this—solemn, as showing the rapid and awful increase of evil; for if, in the *first* parable, the fowls took away the seed, in the *third*, corrupt Christianity, or the earthly profession of the name of Christ, positively affords a shelter for these same fowls. The kingdom of heaven has thus become a huge worldly political system built up by Satan, and which, to all its other iniquity has wickedly attached the name of Christ. In the days of Constantine—fourth century—the so-called Church became the dominant power in the state. This has been the arrogant and pretentious claims of the Papacy ever since her rise. Make the Church great; that has been her ruin spiritually. She may boast of her wealth, and aim at political position and worldly greatness, but, in the eyes of the Lord, she is all the poorer, all the more destitute of true spiritual power and riches (Rev. iii. 17). The more she climbs the ladder of worldly fame, the deeper she morally sinks. The Church is in the world, but is not of it. The Church and the world once walked *apart*, now they are in each other's arms. What a loss to both! Daniel iv. sufficiently indicates the meaning of the symbol of the *tree*. Historically there is a reference to the time when Christianity became a great power in the world; when thousands, by threats and cajoleries, nominally became Christian; when offices of State could only be filled by the baptised; when an emperor could sit in the councils of the Church and enforce its—or rather *his*—decrees at the point of the sword; when a whole army were christianised through baptism by imperial command. May the Lord enable us to walk apart from *all* political parties and worldly principles! "Our *citizenship* (conversation) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 20).

4.—The Woman and the Leaven (verse 33).

The *fourth* parable is that of the leaven. It is the Kingdom of the Heavens in another aspect. It is not so much *persons* as

doctrine that is in question here. It is the introduction of, and wide-spread doctrine which is the point in the parable, as catechisms, articles of faith, formularies, in which doctrines and truths of Scripture are presented as dogma, mixed with error and corrupted, more or less, through the human channel. It is an impossibility to preserve the truth in its integrity as God gave it, when reduced, cut up, and arranged as a human standard, and compendium of Christian doctrine. When certain truths are divorced from their context, they lose their power and freshness and become mere dogma, lifeless and defective. We want the truth *as* God gives it, and *where* God gives it in His own WORD—the SACRED SCRIPTURES. It is a total mistake to take leaven as meaning the gradual extension of the truth or gospel amongst men. Leaven, in the Word of God, not once means *good*, but always *evil*; thus, we are told to “*beware*” of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. xvi. 6-12). Beware of good! That sounds strange, does it not? Again, “Purge out the old leaven” (1 Cor. v. 7). “Purge out” what is good! Surely not. Leaven was to be excluded from all the fire-offerings of the LORD (Lev. ii. 11). There was one marked instance of the use of leaven, and the exception proves the rule, that in all cases it means evil. Fifty days after the presentation of the first fruits to God—that is, Christ risen from the dead—two loaves “baken with leaven” (Lev. xxiii. 17) were to be offered. Surely this unmistakably points to the presentation of the *Church in her actual state* at Pentecost (Acts ii. 1), on the fiftieth day after Christ rose from the dead. Ah! it is but a day-dream of men—a fancy, without a tittle of Scripture to support it—that this parable of the leaven signifies a universal diffusion of the Gospel among the mass of the peoples.

Neither reformation of doctrine nor morals will bring in the new era of peace. The distractions of the Church cannot be healed by any human hand. Doctrines more corrupt than ever, are surely spreading and leavening the great mass of Christian profession. The leaven is working and surely undermining the public religion of the day. Men by thousands are drifting away from God into a practical infidelity which will culminate in the great apostacy or abandonment of Christianity. As it is, tell us of one distinctive truth of the Bible that is not openly flouted and denied? Corruption of doctrine leads to corruption of morals. If the sources and springs of truth are poisoned, the results are seen in the

prevalence of crime. Paul's manner of life was based upon doctrine (2 Tim. iii. 10). Sound doctrine is the basis of good conduct. Principle precedes conduct. Christ Himself brought in *grace*; Christ Himself will bring in the *glory*. When He comes a second time He will bring the power of the Kingdom *with* Him, as said the dying thief: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest *in* (not 'into') Thy Kingdom" (Luke xxiii. 42). Taught of the Spirit, he was, in point of intelligence, far beyond many. The modern expectation of the Kingdom set up by the conversion of the world and the betterment of the human race, by the well-meant efforts of philanthropists, social reformers, and missionary societies, has not a shadow of support in the Scriptures. These parables absolutely negative such a thought.

THE SEVEN PARABLES DIVIDED.

Verse 36 introduces a natural and unforced division of these parables. The first four were spoken to the multitudes at the sea shore; then the Lord goes into the house, and gathers His new family around Himself. He is about to unfold the inner secrets of the Kingdom, and which none but disciples could enter into and enjoy. He also declares in full the meaning of the tare field, then utters the remaining three parables.

5.—The Hid Treasure (verse 44).

Having had the *outward* aspect of the Kingdom witnessed in the abnormal growth of what is now Christendom in the parable of the mustard tree, we then find in that of the leaven that the *within* of the professing body is utterly corrupt. Worldly greatness, and inward corruption seem the fundamental ideas in these two parables. Then the two which follow—the treasure and pearl—afford us aspects of the Kingdom from God's point of view. The Kingdom is not all evil as these two latter parables shew.

The *fifth* parable is the treasure hid in a field. Treasure hid in a field. We have had the Divine explanation of the term *field*; it signifies the world (verse 38). In the second parable it is "his field," here, it is simply a field. He does not say to whom it belongs. The whole creation, the world included, belongs to Christ on the simple ground that He created all (Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2), but if He had dealt with a fallen world as Creator only, judgment must have followed as a matter of course. Here, however He takes the field as its purchaser, having shed

His blood to possess it. What a price to pay for a morally ruined world! He buys the field. He does not buy the treasure, but He buys the pearl. The field is purchased for the sake of the treasure hid in it. To confine the treasure to *Israel* and the pearl to the *Church* is a mistake. Without doubt, the pearl sets forth the Church in its costliness, unity, and value to Christ. In this we are happily agreed. But the treasure hid in the field, signifies *all* the redeemed. Others beside, *Israel* were hid in the world. All *hid* in the field, are clearly embraced in the thought of the treasure—every saved soul from Adam to the end of time. Another point of exceeding interest in this briefly related parable is the *joy* of the Lord in His purchase. In this the Lord is presented as a Finder, and in the following one as a Seeker. He *finds* the treasure; He *seeks* the pearl.

It is highly important for the understanding of this parable, that we clearly distinguish between “redemption” and “purchase.” Creation—heavenly and earthly—is purchased, but its redemption is future, as we read—“until the redemption (*future*) of the purchased possession (*present*)” (Ep. i. 14). Again, redemption is future, as in Romans viii. 19-23, while the purchasing has been effected (2 Peter ii. 1), the price—the *precious blood of Christ* (1 Peter i. 19). Here, then, we have the field—that is the world (verse 38) bought for the sake of the treasure in it. Is that not a touching thought to our hearts? Have we not, in the strangeness and sovereignty of grace like this, a fresh motive to devotedness of heart, and energy of service? Ah! beloved, we were “*hid* in the field.” All saints are “treasure” to whom? To the eye and heart of our God. Jesus in His own eternity—in the divinely blessed solitudes of the past, and alone with His Father—*then*, even then, had His delights with the sons of men (Prov. viii.). Strange that He could count us “treasure” while we lay in the death, distance, and darkness of nature; but so mighty His love that He travelled on and on until Calvary and its sufferings were undergone—the cup was drained to its dregs—the judgment fully borne. Then the Lord went to His seat on high—all beneath forming a footstool for the Blessed One. Now, as risen, all power in heaven and earth is His. “Thou (the Father) hast given Him power over *all flesh*, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him” (John xvii. 2). On His Cross He bought the field, giving “all that He hath,” more He could not give, nor do; on the *Throne* He will possess Himself of the treasure—all

believers in their preciousness to God. He has "hid" the "hid" treasure, for there are two hidings in the verse. First, *hid* in nature's darkness, then sought and found, and again *hid* by the finder, till the day of public manifestation (Col. iii. 3). The parable takes us no further than the hiding of the treasure. But what a happy completion. The treasure belongs to Christ. It is His wholly and exclusively. His as purchased and redeemed. He would have us pass through this scene of His own deep dishonour, "as unknown, and yet well known," until that day—fast nearing—when He shall remove every stain of the wilderness path, and present us to *Himself* without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing.

Well known *there*—
Oh! what joy for Christ to take them
To the Father, Who will make them
Welcome in His mansions yonder;
Strangers *here*—to be no longer.

6.—The Merchant-man (verses 45-46).

The *sixth* parable is the merchant-man seeking goodly pearls. In the previous parable the likeness of the Kingdom is to *treasure*. In this, the briefest of the seven, the similitude is to a *merchant-man*. It is not the "pearl" but the seeking merchant-man to which the Kingdom is likened. The treasure was found hid in the *world*, the pearl is found in the depths of the *sea*. Here attention is called to Christ searching the universe for pearls of value. His eye lights on *one*. He is captivated by its beauty. The search is over. He has found the best. No other jewel of such incomparable value and beauty. In the previous parable He buys the field, but here He buys the pearl. He "bought *it*." Here, there is intense singleness of purpose. One object absorbs thought, attention, love. The merchant-man gave Himself up for it. To possess Himself of it, He sold all that He had. Here the teaching of the parable closes with this grand fact: The pearl (the Church) belongs to Him who found it, loved it, and bought it. The treasure might consist of *many* pieces; the pearl is but *one*. This is a much misunderstood parable, and yet it is remarkably simple. Who is the merchant-man? Is it the sinner? Strange that it should be supposed so, but this blunder, as many others, lies in thinking of self instead of Christ. We should ever be on the search for Christ, and really it is wonderful, how often and in so many varied ways the Spirit of God—the Glorifier of the

Lord Jesus—will present Him to our hearts. His sufferings and glories under the Spirit's conducting are discovered if we are only looking out for Him. Holy Scripture is full of Him; speaks of Him in every page.

Christ is the merchant-man seeking goodly pearls. It is language foreign to Scripture to represent the sinner seeking Christ. Was it Adam who, when he sinned, went after God, or did God go after him! "Adam, where art thou?" was the language of a Saviour-God; it was God seeking man. Did the lost sheep seek the shepherd, or did the shepherd seek the sheep? "*I have found my sheep which was lost.*" "The Son of Man came to *seek* and to save that which was lost." Can the sinner buy the pearl of great price? What! is it really come to this, that people will be bold enough to say that Christ (even were He the pearl) could be bought? And what has a sinner to give? Righteousness he has none (Rom. iii. 10); goodness he has not (Rom. iii. 12). What has he, then? Sin, sin—nothing but sin. No, no! reject the God dishonouring thought as utterly unworthy of Him and equally unworthy of our truest blessing—that the merchant-man is the sinner and the "pearl of great price" Christ. The merchant-man *seeking* goodly pearls supposes not only love, but *taste* and *skill*. He found "*one* pearl of great price;" other pearls there were, but none of costliness or beauty equal to the one He found. The Church, then, in her unity, beauty, and value, was the pearl for which He sold all that He had as Man on the earth, and Messiah in Judea. He found this *one* pearl where the costliest are ever found—in the *depths of the sea*. He found us under the judgment of God. He saw beauty and value, and for the love He bore the Church, "He gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word: that He might present it to Himself, a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25-27). *First*, He possessed Himself of the pearl by giving Himself for it; *second*, He is now removing all grit, cleansing and beautifying it; *third*, He presents it to Himself—love's triumph; all glorious and spotless.

The wondering worshipping nations of the millennial earth will behold the church as Christ *now* views her, as He values her—"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, every several gate was of *one pearl*." Each separate gate of pearl is enclosed

in the jasper wall of the heavenly city (Rev. xxi.). The *jasper* is emblematic of the Divine glory. The *pearl* is the grand and great millennial picture, and its setting nothing less than the glory of God.

7.—The Drag Net (verses 47-50).

The *seventh* parable is the last of the series. The Kingdom of the Heavens has yet another mystery wrapped up in it, and which is disclosed in this concluding parable. The net cast into the sea points to a world-wide testimony to God's grace now, and to the Kingdom in the coming crisis. The field, *i.e.*, the *world*, is the scene of operations in the second parable. The sea, *i.e.*, the *nations*, is the sphere of activity here. In our parable, the agents to whom are entrusted the happy work of carrying the glad tidings to every creature under heaven, are *hid*. It is the work, not the persons that are specially in view. The fishermen are curtly referred to under the pronoun "they" (verse 48). Now the Gospel has gone out, and has been preached throughout the known world in Paul's day (Col. i. 23). But there are many millions of the heathen world not yet reached during this century of Christian missions. The conversion of the world by the preaching of the Gospel is nowhere taught in Scripture. "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. xxiv. 14)—not the conversion of "all nations," but the Gospel of the Kingdom to be a witness to all such.

After the removal of the Church, and of all saints who have died in faith (1 Thess. iv. 17), the Gospel of the Kingdom is sent out once again. The peoples of the Roman earth, and the distant heathen as well, shall hear the trumpet call of the heralds of the King announcing His near return. The general effect of the testimony of God in Christendom, and amongst the heathen, is to fill the net with fish of every kind—good and bad. The net is filling, but not yet filled. "When full, they drew to shore." However much in principle you may apply this drawing-in of the net, and sorting and separating the fish *now*, the direct application is to be found at the end of the age. The net is yet in the sea, not on the shore (verse 48).

The judicial work is committed to angels. They do not bind the tares. Companies are formed before the angels take their part in the scene. They commit the tares to the fire

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(verse 42), as also the bad fish or wicked (verse 50). The fishers on the shore separate the *good* from the bad—there is discrimination on their part; the angels sever the *wicked* from the just. The servants of the testimony of God, concern themselves only with the *good*. The ministers of judgment occupy themselves only with the *bad*. Angelic ministry is largely used in the closing stages of the age. The everlasting Gospel is to be preached to all under heaven during that most interesting crisis in the world's history, lying between the Rapture (1 Thess. iv. 16-17) and the Return in Power (Rev. xix. 11). When the net is drawn in (it may be more than once) at the close of the age, the results are witnessed in Matthew xxv. 31-46, and in Rev. vii. 9-17. There will be a millennial testimony under the personal guidance of the King; this is figured in John xxi. 11, where it is significantly said, "Yet was not the net broken," in contrast to the scene in Luke v. 6, "And their net brake." Every human testimony *now* breaks down because of the weakness of the human vessel.

But how are good fish to be known from bad? By what marks or signs can we distinguish them! Leviticus—that remarkable book which distinguishes between the holy and the unholy—answers our question. "These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath *fins* and *scales* in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. Whatsoever hath no *fins* nor *scales* in the waters, that shall be an abomination unto you" (Lev. xi. 9-12). All having the ability to *swim* were good fish. Some swim low, others high, and others on the surface of the water. It is not at all a question of attainment as title to the Lord's table or to church privileges. All fish not having "fins and scales" were to be utterly rejected. Let them move in their own proper sphere at the bottom of the waters; the mud and filth of this world is no place for the child of God. Beloved reader, are you right with God? Is there one unsettled question between you and Him? May the Lord bless thee richly and abundantly, for His own name's sake!



FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

READER, do you know what is meant by a Sadducean grave? It is one over which the trumpet blast of resurrection never sounds. Resurrection was boldly denied by the Sadducees; that great truth formed no part of their creed (Luke xx. 27; Acts xxiii. 8). Now, having believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what has God *done* and *said* about your many sins? First, He transferred them—all of them—to Christ on the cross: “Jehovah hath laid ON HIM the iniquity of us all” (Isa. liii. 6). Christ has really borne them on His own body on the tree (1 Peter ii. 24). If therefore my sins were laid on Him, borne by Him, they cannot be on me. There are no sins *on* us, but there is sin *in* us. The former are forgiven, the latter is condemned. How complete the salvation!

Second, on believing, not feeling, not working, but simply on believing, God has blotted out all our sins and past life, sunk them as lead in the depths of the sea (Micah vii. 19). Buried *all* our sins for ever and for ever, in a Sadducean grave of divine forgiveness and divine forgetfulness. Hallelujah, it is done! not doing, but DONE. Your sins are absolutely and eternally forgiven. Jehovah has cast them behind His back that He may never, no never see them (Isa. xxxviii. 17), and dismissed them from His memory to be remembered no more (Heb. x. 17). Purged from before the face of God (Heb. i. 3); and purged too from the conscience (Heb. ix. 14). “Once purged, never to be repeated. The value of that one act abides for ever (Heb. x. 17). To God, to Christ, to the Holy Spirit, your sins and your whole past life are for ever gone. What remains? What but the love that put them away—what but the grace which frankly and fully forgave. In divine forgiveness there are no measures, or degrees, or limitations. The babe in Christ has a forgiveness in all respects equal to the father in Christ. “I write unto you little children because your sins *are* forgiven you for His name’s sake” (1 John ii. 12). How wide and fathomless the gulph between the Cross on which He died and the Throne on which He sits, and into this gulph our sins have been cast.

"Can the peace of the weakest believer be lost?" Certainly not. "*He is our peace*" (Eph. ii. 14). Can He be lost out of heaven? Why He is the centre there. Your peace can no more be lost or forfeited than Christ Himself be lost out of the heavenly scene. What we feel or experience is quite another thing, and *we must not confound peace with its effects*. Where are you looking for peace? Within or without? In yourself, or in Christ on the throne? Christ on the throne is the peace of the writer. Christ, risen and glorified, is the abiding peace of every one who simply believes on God Who raised Him up from the dead. The fruit of the cross, yea, its full moral value and glory are witnessed above, in the Person of the Lamb as it had been slain. Then comes our *present* standing: "this grace wherein we stand." We stand now and for ever in the full blaze of God's unclouded favour.

"Are we standing in that grace *now*?"

Yes, for it is unchangeable as God Himself, whose grace it is:

"But if we lose our temper and sin, do we not then forfeit His unclouded favour?"

No, but you forfeit for a season the *enjoyment* of it. The rich, full, unclouded grace of God Who gave His Son rests upon you ever—night and day.

"Why?"

Because it is *God's* grace, and all His gifts are without recall (Rom. xi. 29).

Then the future also is provided for. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." So completely is fear removed, so truly has the judgment of God rested upon my past life, that we can positively rejoice in hope of God's glory, which before was our terror. Thus, then, as we survey our yesterday, it is *peace*; our to-day is one of *grace*; our to-morrow *glory*, only glory. Peace covers our past, grace covers all the need of to-day, glory is our sure portion to-morrow—an eternal morrow.

What we have *done*, not what we are, our sins, not our sin, the *acts*, not the nature from which they proceed, are in question in the first part of the Romans (i.-v. 11). Our sins must have a *root*—a source. This question therefore, which is a sore trouble to thousands of God's people, is then entered upon by the apostle, and occupies chapters v. 12-viii.

Deliverance from the Mastery of Sin.

Sin and sins are distinguished in Scripture. Thus sins are forgiven (1 John ii. 12); sin is condemned (Rom. viii. 3); sin is the root, sins the fruit; sin is the source, sins the outcome. What we have *done*—sins or deeds; what we *are*—sinful in nature. Our first and great anxiety when awakened by God's Spirit was the question of our sins. Our second great trouble as believers is how to get dominion or mastery over sin in us. Deliverance from the power of evil within, is the all-absorbing question of thousands. Numbers of true believers who rejoice in the forgiveness of sins, who *know* they are saved, are yet groaning under the power of a nature, which God at conversion neither eradicated nor improved. Such persons have holy desires after holiness, and breathings after God. *It is not holiness that is the need.* It is *power* to carry into effect the longings of the new nature. Deliverance is the need of the soul.

We are furnished in this truly magnificent chapter (Rom. viii.) with a full and triumphant answer to the anxious question at the close of chapter vii., "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Herein we have the deliverance itself unfolded, and the Deliverer Himself becoming the boast and glory of the believer.

Those two chapters—vii. and viii.—cannot both present Christian experience, for in the one we have described a state of utter powerlessness to do the good which the renewed mind desires; in the other we have a scene of complete and final triumph—the Christian victor coming out of the conflict with laurels on his brow. Are you, beloved reader, the *wretched* man of chapter vii., or the *emancipated* man of chapter viii.? Why, in the one, the personal pronoun *I* figures upwards of 30 times, and necessarily so, for it unfolds the experience of a soul learning self under law, details the painful process by which it experimentally arrives at the conclusion that the inward state is too bad to be helped or bettered; it then looks out of itself for a Deliverer, not a helper, and so the soul emerges from the slough of despond into the Christian liberty of chap. viii.—which opens with the glorious declaration that there is "*no condemnation*," and closes with the precious statement of "*no separation*," with all the grace and privilege lying between these points.

Now we are free to be for Christ. Death has accomplished our deliverance, and has given us title to the victory—that is our death with Him. Thus, then, our chapter viii. opens with the precious sentence: “There is therefore *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Mark the word “*now*.” After all the evil has been brought to the surface and dealt with; after the whole subjective state has been fully discussed, and the springs and sources of life and action laid bare before our eyes; after the torch of divine truth has lighted up the dark chambers of the soul; then we can say, “there is therefore *now* no condemnation.” Might not this first verse be accepted as a summary of chapter v., and verse 2 of chapter vi., while verse 3 would as fittingly motto chapter vii.?

Now, this deliverance sets the believer in a glorious *position*, even in Christ Jesus; sets him in the power of the Holy Ghost as to his practical *state*; and also sets him in connection with God as to his absolute *security*.

Beloved fellow-Christian, is it the longing of your soul to know and to be established in the grace of God? O when His unclouded favour becomes the repose of our hearts, the sacrifice of His Son the rest of our consciences, then let us use the *new* found liberty and blessedness of all this grace, as reason why the flesh in us should not be spared a bit. We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; but the flesh is in us. O use the grace of deliverance to spare it not.

The Glorious Position.

Who is He, in Whom and as Whom we are set before God? Is there stain or spot on Him? The Son of the Father was owned and accepted as such, when for the first time He formally took His place amongst the choice ones of the earth (Ps. xvi. 3). The opened heavens, the descending Spirit, and the Father’s spoken testimony, proclaimed that the Son was present amongst men (Matt. iii. 16, 17). But wonder succeeds wonder, and grace upon grace is given, for the tomb gives forth a MAN for God and for us now in heavenly glory. This Man was lifted up on the cross for our sins, and so perfectly did He glorify God in putting them away—not simply as the *victim* for sin, but as the *victor* over it—that God in righteousness lifted Him out of

death and enthroned Him at His own right hand, setting His glory in the face once spat upon by men.

Is there, then, one single element of blessedness—one green or verdant spot—one ray of glory for the heart and eye of God apart from yonder risen Man? And we are *in* Him and *as* Him before God. O glorious position! How safe! How blessed! How happy!

Peaceless souls ever reason from what they are practically, to what they are positionally—from what they feel, experience, or realise, to what they suppose they are before God. Never reason *upwards*, that is from your state to your position. It is not your state that determines your standing; but your standing marks off your state. Reason *downwards*, that is from God's heart of love; learn there His thoughts of grace towards you, and let *that* regulate your life and state. The truth is, that the whole blessedness of Christ risen and triumphant, and the greatness and extent of His work on the cross, are imputed to you here, *in this world*. God acts towards you, beloved fellow-believer, from what *He* has found in the person and sacrifice of Christ—the virtues of which fill the holy place. Blessed for ever be the name of our God! He has gathered around Himself the memorials of sin judged and put away according to His glory and the claim of righteousness (John xiii. 31, 32), and soon He will surround Himself with the living witnesses of His grace, who will celebrate in eternal strains the everlasting virtues of the Person of His Son. Thus, then, we have the common position of the redeemed, "*Them* which are in Christ Jesus."

"Ah! that is doctrine."

Nay, Paul won't have it so. He makes it intensely real and personal, for in the second verse he says, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made *me* free from the law of sin and death." "The law of sin and death" wrought in me once an unbeliever. I could but *sin*: I could but *die*. Now, however, through the working of the Spirit of life—Christ's life therefore, a life free from charge—we are set free from that law, as regards even natural life, for we *may* not die; as also death in the conscience—the present effect of being under law. I *may* die; I cannot say, I *must* die. I *may* sin; I cannot say, I *must* sin. "Law" is used in Scripture, and amongst us daily, as the expression of a uniform and fixed principle of action, as, for instance, the law of gravitation. This is its regular and habit-

ual sense in Scripture, where not applied to any of the sacred writings and must be distinguished from "*the law*" given by Moses.

Now we sing "Unto Him that loved *us* and washed *us* from our sins in His own blood, and hath made *us* kings and priests unto God and His Father." Each saved one can say, "He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*." So here, if the position of the redeemed—"them which are in Christ Jesus"—is our *common* heritage, we have also *individual* application—"hath made *me* free from the law of sin and death"

"Till we behold Thee on Thy Throne,
In Thee we boast, in Thee alone,
Our beauty this, our glorious dress
Jesus the Lord, our Righteousness."

The Practical State.

The practical life and state of the Christian, according to Scripture, consist in this, that he consciously possesses the indwelling of the Holy Ghost as *life, character, power, relationship, and sympathy*. We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The two principles of life are here contrasted. *I was* in the flesh: *I am* in the Spirit. God never views the believer in the old Adam-nature—*never*. He beholds him in Christ as to his position on high, and in the Spirit as to his life on earth. What then about the man in chap. vii.? Is he not in the flesh *practically*, although not positionally? True; but God does not recognise *that* as the expression of Christian standing and of Christian experience. It is the Spirit that creates in us all that is according to God; the life, actions, the sources of our moral being are formed and characterised by the personal presence of the Holy Ghost in us. The life which the Christian receives is distinct from the Holy Ghost, for *He* implants the life in the soul. Yet they are so identified before God, that it is said, "the Spirit is life" (verse 10).

The contrast between "spirit," and "flesh" in Christians, as the respective sources of good and evil, their tendencies and issues, with the irremediable badness of the one and the triumph of the other, even on to resurrection or change of the body (verse 11), is pursued from verse 4 to verse 13. The whole

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power, character, and enjoyment of Christian life might be summed up thus:—*The Holy Ghost* in us. This is Christianity, and nothing short of it characterises a Christian in God's sight.

Then, in verses 14-18, we have the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of Adoption, leading our souls in triumph into the deep, divine enjoyment of our glorious privileges. He is the witness in us of our *relationship* as children, for by Him we cry, "Abba, Father." He it is, too, who instructs us in our *dignity* as Sons of God; and becomes also the earnest in our souls of the *inheritance*, for we are co-heirs with Christ. All this is made good in us, by the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit has come down from Christ glorified—from the Anointed Man in the presence of God, and has taken up His abode in the Church, for which see 1 Cor. iii., but also to dwell in the bodies of the saints, as in our chapter—the moral link between what is on earth approved of God, and the exalted *Man* on high; the witness, moreover, of Christ's glory and position, gained through death as man, leading us into that very place He has secured through His work, and what is *that*? His own very place and blessedness as man in the glory of God. Is He the Son? We are sons. Is He the Heir of all? We are heirs. May the Lord give our souls to drink deeply into this cup of rare and rich delight!

Now the spirit of the believer made free by the delivering work of the Son of God, in dying for his sins, and condemning sin in its very principle and nature, and knowing it consciously by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, has its links established in a scene of glory—beyond the suffering and the weeping of the way. O blessed seasons! when the heart bounds forward and rests itself in glories, where God and the Lamb are source and object of eternal delight (verse 18). But has not the poor body its *present* links with a suffering and groaning creation? What means the universal wail? Why the tears and broken hearts and seething mass of human misery? Creation groans; its bosom swells with an agony known alone to God. Man has ruined the scene over which he was set as link between it and God, and dragged the creation down to present misery. *It* had no will or choice in the matter (verse 20), *he* subjected it to vanity. But it sorrows on "in hope" (verse 20). Its

long-anticipated deliverance—which has been the yearning of men in all ages, the dream of the poet, the labour of the philanthropist, the excelsior of the statesman—will surely be accomplished in a way unlike the carnal thoughts of men, but in a manner and style befitting the God of love and glory. Here the creation is regarded as on the earnest outlook for the coming manifestation of the sons and heirs of God in glory (verse 19), for *that* glory will throw its skirts over the groaning earth and deliver it from its thralldom of at least 6,000 years (verse 21).

Is the Christian insensible to the wretchedness around? Does not the lash as it falls on the poor suffering animal send a thrill through the soul of the believer? Who so sensitive as he to the sufferings of others? Have you never groaned at the sense of injustice? Have you never sighed at the sin and unbelief of man? Is the groaning of the saint (verse 23) and of the Spirit (verse 26) the groan of unbelief?—of uncertainty as to present acceptance, or doubt as to future participation in the glory to be revealed? Nay, these groans are of a holy character. The struggles for deliverance detailed in chapter vii. are not dignified by the title “groans.” Jesus, who ever lived in the cloudless favour and delight of His Father, yet more deeply than all then or since, comprehended the sorrow and entered practically into the moral wreck and universal ruin in which man was involved. Tears, broken hearts, and death—the fruit of sin—moved the heart of Jesus: “He groaned in the spirit and was troubled” (John xi. 33); and when the unbelief of man in the glory of His person as the Resurrection and the Life were expressed, He again groaned in Himself (ver. 38), and then vindicated His title as Son of God by resurrection from the dead (see also Rom. i. 4). Ah! these groans had a voice for the ear of God, and the answer was the resurrection of Lazarus by the Father, but in conjunction with the Son (verse 41). And O wondrous privilege, to have fellowship in the power and sympathy of the Holy Ghost with the groaning *One* of John xi.! Thus the Spirit of God gives expression to, and voice and character to the, it may be, unintelligent prayers of the saint. The Searcher of all hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, who in us maketh intercession according to God (Rom. viii. 26, 27).

God for Us.

We have had the Christian set in Christ Jesus. Then we have had present and personal deliverance realized by the blessed action of life in Christ Jesus making *me* free from the *law* of sin and death—"me," the captive of chapter vii. now the free man of chapter viii. The deliverance, be it observed, however, is not from sin and death, but from sin's *law* and death's *law*. This is followed by an exposition—not of the doctrine as if it were unpractical, but of the *truth* of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer, and the range and blessedness of His action *therein*. But now in this concluding section of our chapter, which is from verses 28-39, we have God Himself as the rock, and rest, and blessedness of our souls. We are here introduced into the centre and source of all that is solid, and rich, and enduring. The counsels of God secure us, the predestination of God marks off the blessing to which we are set apart (verses 28-30). He is a God of wealth and love (verse 32). He is a justifying God, and the elect are "*God's elect*" (verse 33). And then we have the tenderness and strength of divine love (verses 34-39).

Read, beloved friend, read till the magnificent thought burns into the soul, that God in the silence of ages before the world began, sat upon the throne of Absolute Sovereignty, and purposed thoughts of grace and glory concerning thee; yes, before ever the book of history was opened, or ever its pages were blotted, and when there was no sin to judge, and no misery to move His blessed heart. Historically we had the sin, and then in time came the remedy, but with God it was otherwise. The blessing was planned before ever the need existed, and thus the measure of the blessing is altogether independent of man's state. The measure of the blessing is the heart of God. O see then the mighty arm of God stretched out; it is an arm of love, it is a hand of glory pointing on to the everlasting ages of His own rest, which will succeed the blessed era known as the millennium, and He says, "*You are there.*" And what in purpose He determined, His omnipotent power and love will infallibly secure. Do you reply, "And what, Lord, will be my condition in those eternal and unfading scenes of bliss?" "As my Son in glory," is the answer. Thus if I look back I see God

counselling for my eternal and unmeasured blessing ; if I look onward I behold the glorified family, and Jesus in the midst, chief of the glorious throng—and I am to be there for ever *like Him* and for ever *with Him*.

Said we not rightly, that He is a God of love and wealth ? Come, see He is opening the treasures of love and grace ! Draw near, beloved saint, He is a giving God. Does He give out of those opened treasures ? No ! He “gives us *all things*”—the treasury itself. Does He grudge parting with such wealth, and what is the style of His giving ? He “freely” gives. He “frankly” forgave. Who and what has God given ? *Who ?* His Son. *What ?* All things. And this God is ours.

Now the bold challenge is thrown out by the delivered one. Hear it, ye principalities and powers ! Hear it, ye enemies of our Lord ! Hear it, Satan and all thy demon host ! “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect ?” Mark you, it is “God’s elect.” Can you grasp the saint from the hand of omnipotent power ? Can you pluck the delivered brand from the bosom of infinite love ? Calm and divinely grand is the reply of the Spirit of God to the bold challenge of faith, “It is God that justifieth.”

The first clause of verse 34 should be read as the finish of verse 33, as founded on the previous statement, “It is God that justifieth.” Beloved reader, say it in triumph, “Who is he that condemneth ?” for in the opening of this wonderful exposition of grace, the *thing* condemnation for thee does not exist, while here at the close there is *none* to condemn. But let us trace still further the path of deliverance, and here the heart is at once arrested as the story of Christ’s love and work is once again told out (verse 34).

He fathomed the depths of our misery by going down in grace to the point where the judgment of God met Him, even Calvary’s depth of woe ; but He has also gone up to the heights of glory. Nothing could be lower than the cross. Nothing could be higher than the right hand of God. The extent of His work—its range—embraces all lying between His Cross and Throne. Need you therefore be surprised, as the eye rests upon this victorious One, rising from His agony (having endured it to the full) to His glory, at the second bold challenge of the delivered one : “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ?” We have had the greatness and extent of His work (verse 34),

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which was the outcome of His love, because of our wretched condition as sinners. The spring and power of the work was "the love wherewith He loved us." The work was the demonstration of the all-conquering and triumphant love of Jesus.

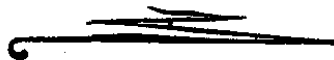
The pagan and papal powers bent their energies to the task of breaking the links of love formed between the soul and Jesus; but the links were forged by God Himself, of omnipotent strength, of eternal love; unbreakable therefore by all the power of the enemy. But let us marshal the difficulties which are vainly supposed to thwart the purposes of redeeming love, which are employed to separate the believer from his eternal Lover: tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, death, and slaughter (verses 35-36). Can these, *but* creature-difficulties, snap the golden chain—the link of life and love eternal? Nay, they practically rivet the links of Christ's everlasting love, and bind our souls more firmly to Jesus. In them all, we drink more deeply of His measureless love, and prove its strength and tenderness, and emerge out of all creature-difficulties with flying colours, not conquered, but *more* than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Now that we have had demonstrated the impotence of all the enemy's efforts to separate the believer from *Christ* and His love; we have next creature-powers arrayed in all their strength; Satan's closing and grand attempt to separate us from *God* and His love. Who dare meddle with the special objects of Jehovah's choice? What are all the powers of hell and earth combined? What are powers or difficulties to the *Living* God? And so heights are explored, depths are fathomed, but Christ has already in grace measured the one and sounded the other. But may not "things to come" interrupt the holy flow and current of Divine Love? Nay, the moment of final triumph is nearing for Him and for us; "things to come" will bring us together in the same glory and same predestined blessing. "Things present," whether of trial, or fear, or sin, cannot separate "for having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." Can spiritual principalities and powers, and angels, too, combined, thwart the counsels of redeeming love, or reach the heart of God, the positional resting place of the saint? (John xiv. 20). Why, these very powers are already vanquished, have become part of the footstool for the feet of the Ascended Man who gained the victory through death

and resurrection, and Who triumphed over the whole power of the enemy in His wondrous cross (Col. ii. 15), and then dragged them in triumph at His chariot wheels (Eph. iv. 8). "Life," as the fruit of Christ's victory over our sins, instead of opposing the purposes of Divine and sovereign love, would the rather hasten their accomplishment, "for when Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." "Death" cannot separate; we do not now belong to it; but *it* belongs to us, is part of our heritage (1 Cor. iii. 22). Ah! beloved, we have to do with the love of God, a love strong, irresistible, and eternal.

We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, and this is *positionally* true of every soul brought to God; but alas! that so many quickened persons are found *practically* in the flesh, as in chap. vii., and insist upon it moreover as a God-given and continuous place and experience for them, whilst the grapes of chap. viii. lie untasted, and the fields of Christian liberty lie untrodden, and the harvest of grace remains unreaped. Lord, break the fetters of Thy people, and as Thou didst say, "come forth"—"forth" from the death and darkness of nature—oh, say to the yet undelivered, "Loose him and let him go."

Ours is the place of overcomers. What are creature-*difficulties* in view of the *tenderness* of Christ's love! What are creature-*powers* before the *strength* of God's love! And the tenderness of the love is equal to its strength. My reader, is this, then, the persuasion of your soul that no creature dare lift up itself against the delivered of Jehovah's grace? Art thou treading the path of deliverance? Is the work of Christ in dying for thy sins, and in the condemnation of sin itself (and that in its very nature and roots when He became a sacrifice on the cross), the ground only and alone of thy complete deliverance—the Spirit, the witness of it to thy heart, and the love of God thy present triumph of soul? "What shall we then say to these things?" Is there room for aught save to worship in the presence of *such* grace?



THE OLD MAN AND THE NEW MAN.

A NEW TESTAMENT STUDY.

IT is all important for our practical progress in the divine life that we carefully distinguish terms. Accuracy of expression is the result of accurate thought, and this latter can only be acquired by devout study and careful reading of the Holy Scriptures. You are only sure of the truth, certain that you possess it in its fulness and purity, as you "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. i. 13).

The Responsible "I."

There are three things as to which there is considerable confusion in the minds of many. The person, the nature, and the fruit thereof. Responsibility to God is not attached to the nature, but to the *I, myself*. The three constituent parts of our being are spirit, and soul, and body. These make up the whole man (1 Thess. v. 23). The source of human responsibility to God is stated in Gen. ii. 7. Creature responsibility must not be confounded with Christian responsibility. The former remains unchanged, and equally applies to all—saved and unsaved. Christianity, just as Judaism of old, has created a system of responsibility peculiar to itself, commensurate with its wondrous disclosures, and privileges and blessing bestowed, but which in no wise supersedes, rather additional to our responsibility towards God as His creatures. To this *I, will*, consciousness, judgment, memory, etc., are inseparably connected, forming part and parcel of the man, *myself*. We repeat, each man is directly responsible to God, whether his state be one of sin or holiness, and this responsibility to God ever abides in time and eternity, in heaven and hell.

The Sinful Nature.

In the Fall, a principle of evil entered into the man, which only grew and strengthened under successive revelations of truth till it culminated into *positive hatred* to God. Man's sinful nature asserted its sway over the creature, thoroughly dominating the man and leading him on from iniquity to iniquity, from horror to horror, till at last, roused into frenzied passion, he became the declared enemy of God, crying out for the murder of God's beloved Son—"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" But, carefully observe, that responsibility does not attach to the nature, however vile it may be, but to the whole personality. *I* am responsible, not the sinful nature in me. Its activity *I* am bound to restrain. The sin or nature in us is independent of, and additional to that which goes to make up the person—spirit, and soul, and body. Sin in us is spoken of doctrinally as "the flesh" (Gal. v. 16, 17); also as the "carnal mind," or "mind of the flesh" (Rom. viii. 7); again, as "the old man" (Eph. iv. 22)—only this latter views the nature in its outward expression as shown in daily life. Every Christian has both the old nature and the new nature in him; but neither nature is responsible for its activity. The person is responsible for the *allowance* of the nature in thought and deed, but not for its *existence* in him. It is persons who are accountable to God, and not the nature of the person. We should, however, be able to trace every act, every word, and every thought to its respective source within. Learn also to distinguish between the *I* and the sin that dwelleth in me (Rom. vii. 15-22, 25).

Sins and the Nature.

Then our sins must not be confounded with the nature or the source from whence they proceed. We might compare the three things to a tree. The person is the trunk, sin within is the root, sins the fruit. The outcome of the nature in its almost endless variety are our sins. The works of the flesh are much more numerous than the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 19-23).

The Old Man Sinful and Corrupt.

The "Old Man" is the sinful nature in each member of the race, part of our sad inheritance through Adam—our federal

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head,—but it is the nature viewed in outward expression. Whether regarded as *in* you or as belonging *to* you, it is all one sinful thing. Substantially it is the same whether spoken of as the flesh, sin, the carnal mind, the old nature, or the old man. The different shades of meaning underlying these separate expressions need not concern us at present. Practically they signify the same thing—evil in its concrete form.

Now what is the character of the “Old Man”? How does Scripture describe it? “The old man which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit” (Eph iv. 22). It is not only corrupt in its nature and issues, but it goes on ever propagating itself in like character. Further, its lusts or desires are characterised by deceit. In other words, the old man is one mass of festering corruption. It may take shape in a Pharisee or publican. It may present itself in the guise of a religious teacher as Nicodemus, or in a hardened character of crime as in the unnamed dying robber. “The “outside” may be washed and *appear* beautiful, while the “within” is full of corruption (Matt. xxiii. 25-33): outside, *deceit*; inside, *corruption*.

The Flesh: Its Moral Character.

But there are other characteristics of the old man viewed Godward, tersely noted in Rom. viii. 7. “The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law (*authority*) of God, neither indeed can it be” (R.V.). The flesh is in avowed enmity to God, and absolutely refuses subjection to His authority, and, indeed, this latter, *i.e.*, obedience to the Divine will, cannot be. Such then is the true character of the old man, which since the Fall has dominated and swayed the responsible “I.”

If such is the moral character of the flesh—hopelessly corrupt and irretrievably bad—what remains? What has God said of and done to this thing so abhorrent to Him? “*Knowing this*,” writes the apostle, “that our old man is crucified with Him” (Rom. vi. 6). The old man, or the flesh, is not dead, is not changed, is not sanctified, is not eradicated, is not terminated, is ever unchanged in its opposition to Divine authority, as also in undying hatred to God Who in love gave His Son to die. The flesh and the Spirit are ever opposed and opposing powers

(Gal. v.), while the painful experience of a divinely quickened soul but without the Holy Ghost as power (Rom. vii.) are sad evidences that the old man in each one of us is *not dead*. If this is so, how then are we to understand the Divine statement, "Our old man is crucified with Him"?

The Old Man Crucified with Christ: God's Abhorrence of the Nature.

Now crucifixion is not synonymous with death. The article of death may or may not be painless, and it may take place in the midst of a sorrowing household, but "Crucified with Christ," contemplates judicial dealing. It is by the action of a throne or seat of judgment, and was only inflicted by the Romans on the vilest of criminals. It expressed the abhorrence of the offended government towards the crime committed. Ultimately, of course, the lingering, drawn-out agony, which might last for days, ended in death. The robbers were crucified, yet the *immediate* cause of their death was the breaking of their legs (John xix. 31, 32). The point to be laid hold of in the statement "Our old man is crucified with Him," is GOD'S ABHORRENCE OF MAN'S SINFUL NATURE. How otherwise could it be so stated or shewn forth! Therein is expressed God's detestation of that vile thing—our old man. God's judgment upon His Son is the measure of His judgment upon the nature of man, hence the force of the words "Crucified *with Him*." But to infer from the fact that God has meted out to the flesh unsparing judgment in the cross, that therefore the old man is dead, is contrary to scripture and universal experience.

We have Crucified the Flesh.

That crucifixion when applied to the old man does not mean its death, is evident from Gal. v. 24, "And they that are Christ's (*i.e.*, all Christians) *have* crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." This every Christian—from the babe to the father—has done. In what sense have we crucified the flesh, save in the acceptance of God's judgment upon it?—crucified by God and crucified by us. But however fully any one of us may enter into this great foundation truth and fact—which is the

door of deliverance into the glorious liberty of chapter eight of the Epistle to the Romans—yet the old man has not been slain, is not dead, but is very much alive, even in those who are the loudest in proclaiming its death. It is no answer to say that you are to reckon it crucified or dead. Scripture does not attach the word *reckon* either to God's crucifying of the old man (Rom. vi. 6) or to our crucifying of the flesh (Gal. v. 24). Both are true. The cross of Christ and the conscience of man are the respective spheres of operation.

God's judgment upon the old man is repudiated by unbelievers; by Christians it is heartily accepted and this *acceptance* is their crucifying the flesh, hence their right and title to reckon themselves dead to sin (Rom. vi. 11). You identify yourself with God in His judgment upon the flesh. Your soul and conscience add their "Amen" to it, thus you crucify the flesh. Then we have and enjoy present deliverance from the power of the flesh—not from its presence but from its thralldom (verses 6, 11, 12, 14). The old man must be held in check, *not* by the new man, but by the Holy Ghost acting in the Christian (Gal. v.). The holy desires of the new nature, but its utter powerlessness without the Holy Ghost are lessons graven on the surface of chapter vii. of the Epistle to the Romans.

The Old Man and the Christian.

The old man and the Christian never part company till death or the Coming separate them, nor has the crucifixion of the flesh either by God or by us reduced it to a state of non-activity much less one of death. If the old man is dead how account for the constant trouble it causes us? The old man is neither dead nor buried, as some affirm. "Sin that dwelleth *in* me" and "evil is present *with* me" refutes such teaching.

The Nature not Cleansed, but Condemned.

We would remark that a not inconsiderable section of those spoken of as "Perfectionists" argue for the cleansing of the nature by the precious blood of Christ. This pushed to its legitimate conclusion, has led many to suppose that they are thereby in a state of "sinless perfection" which has not

infrequently landed its advocates into open sin and shame. God would thus teach such persons through bitter experience, the folly of denying the existence, and unless judged, the activity of evil within. Those dear people are self-deceived, for says the apostle, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8). The blood of Christ is applied to our sins, death to the nature, not the death of the sinful nature, but our death to it. Sin or the flesh is condemned, and we through grace are to reckon ourselves dead to it. Our attention has been called to the following statement: "So perfectly is the sin, the evil root in our nature, 'put away' by the atoning blood of Jesus, that not only has the believer 'redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace,' but the very nature in which sin is inherent has been by God condemned, sentenced, executed on the Cross of Christ."

There are two errors in this statement: (1) That the evil in our nature is "put away." If that were so, there could be no inward conflict. Whence comes our inconsistencies, our failures, our sins? Do they not proceed from the evil nature in us? If so, then the evil root is not "put away," and Scripture nowhere affirms that it is. Is the writer of the foregoing a Perfectionist? (2) The atoning blood of Jesus is not applied to the root of evil in the nature, but to our sins—the fruit thereof. The blood of Jesus meets our guilt, our positive transgressions, while the sin, the root, is condemned. The well-known and oft-quoted text, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7) does not refer to the nature at all, but to sins. Attention to the wording of the passage would preserve from mistake. It is *sins* that are in question—"all sin," literally *every sin*.

Distinguish between the Old Man and the Person.

The "old man" is not the person, for in the three occurrences of the expression, we learn that it is not the "I" or "myself," but a something belonging to the man, thus "*Our* old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6); again, "That *ye* put off the old man" (Eph. iv. 22); and "Seeing that *ye* have put off the old man" (Col. iii. 9). In each of the three texts cited the old man is regarded as distinct from the person, yet as belonging

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to him. A man puts off an old garment, but surely the man and his clothes are not the same. The house which the Christian inhabits (2 Cor. v.) is no more *the* man, than the clothes he wears. A man's belongings are not himself. We have put off the "old man" and "put on the new," hence proof positive that the nature and the person are not one and the same. It should have been unnecessary to refer to such a self-evident truth, were it not that it has been taught of late, that the old man is *myself*. The absurdity of myself putting off myself, and putting on myself must be apparent to all who give it a moment's reflection.

The Old Man Put Off.

The old man then has been put off, and in the fullest practical manner. The old ways, habits, actions, words, which go to make up the old man, have been put off. It is not what *God* has done, it is what *we* have done. We put off what He has crucified. *That* character of life by which we were known and recognised in our unconverted state and ways, has been put off, as a man puts off an old, worn-out garment, and the new man put on, which is that character of life lived by Jesus on earth.

The New Man of which Jesus is the Measure and Pattern.

This is "the truth as in *Jesus*." Why the introduction here of that name of sweetest sound and worth? Jesus speaks of *earth*, as Christ does of *heaven*. It is here that we put off the old man, and here that we put on the new man. In Jesus we have the pattern of the new man—the sum of all moral excellence and beauty. The old man has no pattern, needs it not. The character of the old man may differ somewhat, as witnessed in one and another, but only in detail. In essential characteristics it is the same in all. The new man, too, has its own distinctive features, the same in all Christians, and of which Jesus on earth is the Divine model and pattern. All that goes to make up the new man in its entirety was witnessed in perfection in the life of our Lord here, and that is why we have the words, "the truth as in *Jesus*." His life and death were the condemnation of the

old man, and His path on earth—from the manger to the throne—the bright exhibition of and witness of the new man—what it is. We are “to walk even as He walked.” Our standard of life is not the law, but Jesus as He trod this earth: see Gal. ii 20. The moral principles which governed His life should, in like manner, so act upon us that the life of Christ be again witnessed here. Alas! it is ever a faulty and blotted reproduction, even at the best.

The Character of the New Man.

Further, “that ye put on the new man which after God (*i.e.*, His moral character) is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Here an interesting distinction meets us. The new man is *created*, while the man himself is *born* of God. We have heard not infrequently the remark, “that the new nature is born of God, and hence cannot sin,” based upon a misconception of 1 John iii. 9. But the nature is created, while the man is born. “Doth not commit sin,” or practice it, is the force of the words. Then righteousness and holiness are the two great fundamental principles of the new man. Righteousness supposes a soul right with God and man—every just claim answered. Holiness refers directly to the nature of God as light—what He is in Himself intolerant of evil. Now, on these great foundation truths the excellences and virtues of the new man repose. They are the pillars of a true subjective Christianity, reproduced in the every-day life of the Christian. It is what ought to *be*, what is in measure displayed by every true saint. In Col. iii. 10 a further and practical truth is asserted of the new man, it is “renewed in knowledge.” That is, it grows, it develops, it never gets old, it is ever renewing its life under the power of the Holy Ghost. In the passage in Ephesians we read, “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind,” the exhortation coming in *between* the putting off of the old man, and the putting on of the new man. To put off and to put on, the spirit of the mind must enter into both acts, else otherwise legalism would rule the mind, and all result in forced efforts, of which asceticism in monastery and convent is the necessary fruit.

Nature and Person.

It may be well to remark that a person may, as occasion calls for it, be identified with either nature. Thus, "our old man is crucified with Him," the *nature*; and "I am crucified with Christ," the *person*. Again, "the new man which after God is created," the *nature*; and "if any man be in Christ there is a new creation" (2 Cor. v. 17, R.V.), the *person*. The distinction, however, is ever maintained between the nature and the person.

Our Destiny and Present Aim.

We are predestinated to the image of God's Son in glory. What a high destiny! Are we each one contributing to God's great purpose concerning us? Now, God will infallibly secure our moral and physical likeness to Christ; but in the meantime the moral qualities of the new man, as love, joy, peace, meekness, gentleness, etc., should be increasingly cultivated. Beloved brethren, are we becoming more Christ-like, humble in spirit, meek in a scene of contrariety, and gentle in our bearing towards all?

May the life-motto of every child of God be that which characterised the great apostle of the Gentiles, "For to me to live—CHRIST, and to die—GAIN" (Phil. i. 21).

Baptism and the Old Man.

Some articles on the much discussed question of Baptism have recently appeared in a monthly journal entitled *The Witness*, edited by Mr John R. Caldwell. It is painful and naturally an unwelcome task to refer adversely to these articles, especially as they come from the pen of the gifted Editor. To know him is to love him for his own sake. He has also endeared himself owing to his many years of loving and devoted service to his, and our beloved Lord and Master. But we are satisfied that the Editor himself, would fully acknowledge that personal

considerations, however strongly felt, must be subordinated to the higher interests of truth. With unfeigned love to our beloved brother, we propose to offer a few remarks on some of his statements.

In the Dec. no. of *The Witness* of last year, p. 195, we read :

“The simple truth of believers’ baptism, symbolizing our death, burial, and resurrection with Christ, is at present being assailed by those who contend for the baptism of whole households apart from the question of their being born again.”

Will the Editor furnish us with but *one* text in proof of his statement that *our* death, burial, and resurrection with Christ is symbolized in baptism? Does Romans vi. 3 and 4 confirm the contention of the Editor? Let us see : “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized unto (*eis*) Jesus Christ were baptized unto (*eis*) HIS DEATH.” The preposition *eis* signifies motion towards an object, and that objective is Christ and His death. The argument of the apostle is to this effect : we cannot continue in sin, for our doing so would contradict the great Christian truth that we “are dead to sin” (verse 2), and would also belie our profession in baptism (verse 3). Thus reality and profession must negative the thought of abiding in sin. How live in that to which you are dead? Our death is not in the text at all, as anyone can see. We are baptized to His death, not as a witness to *our* death, burial, and resurrection. But does verse 4 prove the *opposite* of what we find in verse 3, which we have just read? Strange if it should. “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto (*eis*) death.” Whose death? Ours or His? His death without question. We are buried unto His death. Scripture exactly reverses the order insisted upon by the Editor. He invariably makes death precede burial ; whereas Rom. vi. 3, 4 teaches that it is the burial of living persons to death, *i.e.*, *His* death. Does Col. ii. 12 support the statement that “*our* death, burial, and resurrection with Christ” is symbolized in baptism? for if so it is in direct opposition to Rom. vi. 3, 4, and the apostle is made to contradict himself, for without question the obvious meaning is our burial in baptism unto the death of Christ. It should be unnecessary to insist so strongly and repeatedly on this, were it not that the text is *made* to speak the very opposite of what it really says.

Col. ii. 12 reads, "Having been buried with Him in baptism wherein* ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead" (R.V.). Now believers *are* dead with Christ, but baptism does not set forth that weighty truth. If the contrary is asserted, let Scripture be adduced. The doctrine of Romans is "dead with Christ": that of Colossians is risen with Christ: while Ephesians lifts us a step higher and sets us down in heavenly places "in Christ." Now the teaching of Col. ii. 12 is in full accord with Rom. vi. 3, 4. Baptism is *burial*, and it is unto death, *i.e.*, His death. But does not the text of Col. ii. 12 take you on to "risen with Him"? It does, but will the careful reader note that the rising with Him is *vital* truth, not symbolized in baptism at all. Baptism takes us on to death—His death *and no further*. If raised with Him it is by faith in the working of God in the soul—that same power by which Christ was raised from the dead. Faith is not connected with the baptising, but with the rising. The passage does not present the "risen with Him" as antecedent to the baptism so as to express it in the ordinance. "Risen with Him" is not symbolized in baptism—this latter never symbolises *life*, but ever and always to *death*. The rising forms no part of the baptism. Baptism neither here, nor in Romans, symbolizes our state in Christ, and, consequently, association with Him as dead and risen, nor a state of soul already formed in you. It is ever unto His death.

*Readers will be interested in an important foot note in *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, Vol. V. 33, in which the highly gifted and scholarly author gives ground for the alternative reading "in whom."

"Some do not connect 'risen' with baptism. If so, I apprehend the passage must be read thus: 'In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism; in whom also ye are risen together (meaning with Christ) through faith,' etc.

Baptism clearly signifies death, and it is not the baptising but the coming out of the water which can be applied to resurrection. The giving of life is in no way the sense of baptism, even as a figure, but leaving the life of Adam by death (the death of Christ), and entrance through that gate into a wholly new place and position."

It is not a question of translation, but of interpretation. "In whom" (verses 3, 11) is translated "wherein" (verse 12). It is the same word in all in Greek. If the reference is to baptism then it must be *wherein*; if, to Christ, *in whom*. We are satisfied that the latter is the truth.

The burial of living persons to death is not contrary to nature, at least in the vegetable world. You bury a living seed to die (John xii. 24).

But the Editor further remarks: "If according to God, crucified with Christ, and dead with Christ, and risen with Christ, what ordinance could more appropriately or more effectively set forth this truth than immersion in water, and being raised up again by the power of another from that temporary grave?" Suppose we narrow the contention to the first of these statements, "Crucified with Christ." Apart from the fact, that it is difficult to see how *immersion* in water can appropriately set forth the truth of *crucified* with Christ, it is after all a question to be settled by Scripture. Pardon the dogmatism of our assertion: *there is not a shred of Scripture in support of the statement which we now traverse.* Let it be produced, and at once the question is settled authoritatively. Where is crucified with Christ set forth in baptism? *Where?*

As to the baptism of households, the Editor writes in the January no. of *The Witness*, p. 15. He refers to four households as having been baptised, but he is mistaken in including the household of Crispus. In this instance the household believed but there is no record of *their* baptism. This latter is predicated of Crispus alone (1 Cor. i. 14). No doubt all were baptised but there is no mention of it, either by Luke (Acts xviii.), or by Paul (1 Cor. i.). As to the household of Stephanas who addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints (1 Cor. xvi. 15) the Editor writes: "This is conclusive evidence that they were not infants, and that they were believers." Joshua said "As for me and my house we will *serve* the Lord." "Jacob said unto his household . . . Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments." "Thou shalt rejoice, thou and thine household"; "Thou shalt eat it before the Lord thy God . . . thou and thy household." Now just let us adopt the reasoning of the Editor, and see how it suits. The house of Stephanas addicted themselves to ministry, "conclusive evidence" says the Editor, that they were not infants. Why could not infants be associated with their parents in such service? A household moves in common—all in one common interest. Why this practical separation of parents from their children? We do not say there were, or not infants in the household of Stephanus. Are we to understand that there were no

infants in the house of Joshua for the same reason? Were there no infants in the house of Jacob because of their personal inability to answer to the command of their illustrious father? Were there no infants in the households of the Jews of old, for how could they rejoice? Were there no infants in the Jewish households when they eat of the male firstlings of the herd and the flock, for how could infants eat meat? Why this forced separation of the infants from the family interests? Jews, ancient and modern, reject the reasoning of the Editor which is contrary to the genius both of Judaism and Christianity.

Then we have the baptism of Lydia and her household. Why all this supposition and reasoning: Was she married? Had she children, etc.? The narrative is simplicity itself. Her personal faith and faithfulness are alone in question. Her household was baptised, and not a hint given of whom the household consisted, not a hint as to their faith or not. Should we not learn from the absolute silence of Scripture on these points? We do not argue for the baptism of infants, and have never done so, but for that of households by *immersion*. We would as decidedly object to the unwarranted assertion that there were infants in these households, as that there were none. Whynot take up the term "household" as simply employed in the Divine word, without raising questions as to the presence or absence of children. The individual faith of Lydia and the personal faith of the jailor are alone recorded in Acts xvi. The believing (verse 34) is in the *singular* and applied to the jailor only*. As to the spiritual state of the households in this chapter not a

*The learned author of the *Analytical Concordance* (Young) in his *Concise Critical Comments* says on verse 34, "he having believed in God; nothing is said of their believing," and this witness is true. With the breadth of the commission before us, "disciple ye all the nations" (Matt. xxviii. 19, Young), in which neither faith, forgiveness, salvation, preaching, etc., are found, and the baptizing of households (Acts xvi.), in which there is no mention whatever as to their faith, but only that of the responsible heads: Are we wrong in following this apostolic practice?—"Not a vestige of Scripture!" Nay, that is not correct. "Make disciples of all the nations" (R.V.). The verb and noun is represented by a simple verb in the Greek. "Disciple all the nations baptizing them," *i.e.*, the nations—not *persons*, but *nations*. It is not persons out of the nations, as in Acts xv. 14, but the nations themselves which were to be made disciples: see *The Englishman's Greek New Testament* (Bagster). It is impossible to conceive of nations without children of which they form such a large proportion.

word is said of their personal faith, not a sentence. We need scarcely say that the acts of the respective heads—Lydia and the jailor—would have a corresponding effect upon their households, that being a principle of universal application.

The Editor thus sums up:—"The whole argument is fallacious, and upon unbiassed inquiry must be dismissed." The greater number of saints in past and present times, do not view the matter as the Editor does, many of whom stand out conspicuously in the annals of the Church for scholarship and piety. Are we all biassed? It might be well not to write in such terms. It is not conducive to the tightening of the bonds of brotherly love, an object which the Editor has much at heart.

But we return to the December no. of *The Witness*, p. 196: "If baptism be a burial (and this is admitted), what is it then that is buried? Surely it is 'the old man,' the same that, in God's reckoning, was crucified with Christ, that died with Christ, and that *died to sin in Christ*" (italics ours). We sincerely trust that the Editor will, on further consideration, recall this very erroneous statement. If it is the old man that is buried in baptism, as the Editor says, then the whole argument as to "believers' baptism" goes. It is the old man that is baptized! Does he not contend for *believers'* baptism? Is the old man a *believer*? You cannot have both. The one is destructive of the other. It is all confusion. The baptism of the *old man* cannot be that of the *believer*. If the person is the old man, he is not a believer, and you cannot baptize a nature. It is all a jumble. "The old man," as a term, occurs three times in the New Testament (Rom. vi. 6; Eph. iv. 22; Col. iii. 9). In each instance it is distinguished from the person, as "*our* old man," and "*ye* have put off the old man." Its unchanging character is also stated, "the old man which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit" (R.v., Eph. iv. 22). The statement of the Editor that the old man dies to sin, is we are sorry to say, a *direct contradiction* to the inspired account of the character given of the old man. It "waxeth corrupt," that is instead of dying to sin, it propogates its own character and goes on in corruption and deceit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh"—can never become spirit—can never cease to be other than what it is—a mass of corruption. Our beloved brother has unconsciously, we trust, stated two *absolute impossibilities*. The old man "that died to sin (*first*

impossibility), in Christ" (second impossibility). We have already been told that the old man is buried in baptism. Another has written, that it has been washed away in the baptismal waters. Now we are informed that it is in Christ—we repeat, a moral impossibility. You cannot baptize the old man, nor wash it away in baptism. Nor is the old man dead with Christ, *that* is only true of Christians. It is persons, as men, women, and households, who were baptized. Baptism is never predicated of the old man—*never*. We conclude, therefore, that while the old man is crucified with Christ, it is neither dead, buried, nor washed away. We deeply regret these unscriptural statements, especially as coming from those who are somewhat dogmatic in their assertions that the advocates of household baptism have not "a vestige of Scripture" in support of it.

To be in Christ is a continuous state. Those in Christ are new creation (2 Cor. v. 17), for whom there is no condemnation (Rom. viii. 1); all in Him are blessed beyond all telling (Eph. i. 3; ii. 6); all such are to be raised if dead, or changed if alive at the Coming (1 Thess. iv.; 1 Cor. xv.). We are in Christ by the Holy Ghost (Rom. viii. 9). All in Christ have been sealed by God with the Spirit (2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 13). To be in Christ is in contrast to being in Adam. We *were* in Adam. We *are* in Christ. Now just as those under these headships share in the condition of their head, so all under the headship of Christ share in the condition of their head (Rom. v. 12-19). As Christ is dead to sin, so are we as in Him. As Christ is dead to the law, so are we as in Him. The reckoning of all this and more in daily life is immensely important and practical.

We suppose the Editor meant persons when he wrote that the old man died with Christ, and in Christ died to sin. But in no sense could the old man be in Christ, and in Him die to sin, whether viewed as nature or person. To say the least of it, it is confusion, and worse still, if persisted in. This teaching comes painfully strange from the writer of the closing paragraph: "It is the old and deep-rooted desire to bring the flesh (?) into the kingdom, but the Word of the Lord is plain—flesh and blood cannot enter it; the new-born man alone has a footing there." Were the charge true, *which it is not*, what about the Editor who sets flesh *in Christ to die to sin*? We say no more. We earnestly trust that our beloved brother may see his way to recall these statements.

A Plea for Christian Toleration.

Baptism is an individual matter. Church-fellowship in the administration of the ordinance was in no instance sought nor given to those who baptized in apostolic days. In all cases servants of God baptized on their *personal* responsibility to Christ. The interference of the Church would have been resented as trenching upon the authority conferred upon the servant. On the other hand, the Lord's Supper is without doubt a church ordinance: for baptism see Matt. xxviii. 19, where the commission is entrusted to *servants*; for the Lord's Supper see 1 Cor. xi. 23, where it is committed to the *Church*.

We are satisfied that the undue prominence given to baptism is the main hindrance to a godly re-union of the scattered members of the "one body." If uniformity of thought and practice on this, as on other non-vital subjects, is to be insisted upon as essential to fellowship at the Lord's Table and in public service, then it becomes an absolute impossibility to hope for a general re-union of saints. We had better at once face the situation. There are differences and ever will be till He come.

If our beloved brethren who so strongly insist upon a certain view of baptism, would kindly exercise forbearance towards their, perhaps, less instructed brethren, it would be well, and conduce to brotherly love and unity all round. None of us deny the truth of baptism. We repeat that where "Believers' Baptism," or "Household Baptism," or even "Infant Baptism," is regarded as a *sine qua non* for the Lord's Table, or to a place in one common platform in service, it becomes thereby a sectarian table and platform. There are other subjects of greater weight and importance in which beloved brethren differ. It is evident that Paul did not regard baptism as a subject of cardinal importance (1 Cor. i. 14-17). Beloved brethren, do let us leave this burning question where God has left it, *i.e.*, to the direct and personal responsibility of each of the Lord's servants.
