

WORDS IN SEASON.

“A WORD SPOKEN IN DUE SEASON, HOW GOOD
IS IT!”—*Proverbs* xv. 23.

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PROPITIATION ; WHAT IS IT ?

IN the striking language of the East, a servant, on receiving the orders of his master, will reply with the words, "*It is done,*" as an expression of his instant obedience. But this unqualified, unquestioning subjection in life and in death to the will of another, was never really found in perfection, save in Him who said, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me : nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done ;" the One who upon the cross said, "It is finished : and He bowed His head and gave up the Ghost."

He had blessedly revealed the Father's heart amongst men, and He had rendered to Him devoted service, unswerving obedience, and confiding dependence ; thus had He glorified God on the earth in His patient, spotless, holy life. Likewise did He glorify God on the earth in that death which He died upon the cross. As the brazen serpent was lifted up from the level of the ground where lay the bitten Israelites, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. Speaking of this, John adds (xii. 33), "This He said signifying what death He should die"—not *where*, but *what death* He should die. By the divine ordinance, the brazen serpent was fixed to a pole and brought into the camp ; the pole being probably fixed to the earth, erected therein for all to behold. And thus, also, the sacrifices were not slain in the tabernacle, the priestly enclosure, but in the court outside.

In like manner, it was not in heaven, but on earth that Christ died. It was here that He suffered for our sins, that He was exposed to the powers of darkness, that He was numbered with the transgressors, that He endured the judgment of God, and with wicked hands was crucified and slain. It was on the cross and on the earth that sin was condemned in the flesh, in the Person of that holy and that blessed One who was made sin for us. It was there He endured the hidings of God's face, there that the blood of atone-

ment was shed, there that He finished the work God gave Him to do, there that He was Altar and Sacrifice, Offerer and Victim, confessing our sins as His own. In a word, on the cross and on the earth was His vicarious work accomplished. There alone was eternal redemption obtained, and everlasting salvation wrought ; for there only did He suffer for sins, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

When all this was accomplished, "He said, It is finished : and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost." Therein was the death of the Victim, the shedding of His blood. Consequent thereupon followed *whatever answered to the high-priest's bringing the blood of the sin-offering within the veil*. Otherwise the solemn and significant type of Lev. xvi., which God had Himself enacted for faith to apprehend, evidently would have broken down in its most salient and expressive feature ! It is, indeed, as difficult to understand that God in righteousness could raise His Son, or that resurrection from amongst the dead by the glory of the Father with all its blessed results to those who rose with Him, could have taken place before propitiation was made as to accept either of the two alternatives, that it was accomplished *before* the death of the victim or not until *forty days after* ; for such inferences alike do violence to the divinely-appointed type of propitiation made in the holiest with the blood shed on the day of atonement. The very first result of that eternally-efficacious and divinely-complete work of the cross, once for all, the one offering once offered, *must be for God* ; just as the grandest feature of the great day of atonement consisted in the high-priest's going with the newly-shed blood of the sin-offering *before the mercy-seat* to fulfil the divine enactment of making propitiation for the sins of the people. And let it not be overlooked that this was pre-eminently a *high-priestly* act, for no more than another man was a priest entitled to pass the veil. The high-priest alone, in the sweet odour of that

incense which expressed the excellency of the Person of Christ, and in the deeply significant silence which no word of his disturbed, sprinkled before God that blood which, in its Anti-typical value, had a voice for Him and a preciousness in His eye which no human language could express. The voice of prayer and the voice of praise were alike hushed within the holiest, where the blood ceaselessly spoke of propitiation made.

Christ, then, as the Anti-typical High-priest, must of necessity, may we not reverently say? make propitiation *where* propitiation could alone be made. *It is not for us to say how.* Let each with chastened heart, and with unshod feet, bow before the truth which the Spirit of God unfolds, seeking only that we should reverently receive what God *has* revealed. This we do know, that as the only-begotten Son He was in the bosom of the Father, and as the Son of Man was in heaven, during the days of His sojourn upon earth; as also we know that the same day that He made atonement He was with the converted thief in paradise. These things in no wise intrench upon each other.

But to return. Such propitiation could only be founded upon the death of the victim on the day of atonement. It was characteristically a priestly act in a priestly place, or, more correctly, a high-priestly act in the holiest, entrance to which was characterised by the blood of the sin-offering. The typical high-priest entered "not without blood" (Heb. ix. 7); the Anti-typical entered "by His own blood" (ver. 12). In *each* case, the entering in is *inseparable from the blood* which when shed had to be immediately presented, as it were, to God, sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat. That blood of a victim opened the holiest to the earthly high-priest, but not to the people; but that precious blood which flowed from an uplifted Saviour, was no sooner before God in the holiest (not materially, of course, but in all its essential and infinite value in His sight) than the vail was rent in twain for

every one that believeth, the way into the holiest being thenceforth made manifest.

It is well we should recall that, clearly enough, Scripture shows that propitiation could only be made *by* the high-priest, *in* the holiest, *on* the day of atonement, consequent upon the *death* of the victim and by the sprinkling of its *blood* on and before the mercy-seat. When by the Antitype this had been accomplished in all its full and eternal reality, once for all, *toward God*, God *could* and God *did* instantly express His divine delight therein, and give His efficacious answer thereto *toward us*, by rending that vail, which had hitherto stood as an impassable barrier between Himself and His people, from the top to the bottom ! All the *work* on which this was righteously based was *done upon the cross*, and vicariously for us ; but the High-priestly action was not properly part of that work which was finished on Calvary, but consisted in the exercise of a *function* which was not vicarious, but priestly, not on earth, but in heaven. Between these there is no recognition in Scripture of any middle place (vide epistle to Hebrews throughout). His vicarious work was altogether wrought on earth ; His High-priestly functions wholly exercised in heaven. That is, as to the figure, not in the camp, not in the court, not in the holy, but in the *most holy* place.

Propitiation having been made, God could consistently with His own holy and righteous character act in grace and mercy to men generally. He had given His Son to the world, and for the world has He become a propitiation, not for the sins of the world, but for the world as such (compare 1 John ii. 2 and Rom. iii. 25). That propitiation for the world He *is now*, consequent upon the finished work of the cross, the One offering once offered. Nor that only, but *He is* that "propitiation for *our* sins," the sins of believers. We approach a throne of grace, the mercy-seat, the propitiatory, and we thus obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. His advocacy with the

Father for us, and His intercessions for us as High-priest with God, are alike founded upon the finished work of the cross and the blood of propitiation within the holiest, "whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High-priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say His flesh; and having an High-priest over the house of God; *let us draw near.*"

CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD, WHERE EXERCISED.

"Set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. viii.). Why so? Because if we have nothing more to be done, Christ has nothing more to do. (I speak not of the priestly work, but of putting away sin.) He has sat down—He is resting, having nothing more to do. The offering has been made, and cannot be repeated (ver. 2, 3). The whole of the priesthood is carried on in heaven itself. The offering was another thing. The offerer brought the victim, the priest received the blood and carried it in.

On the day of atonement there was another thing: the priest had to go through the whole thing by himself, not carrying on the work of intercession, but that of representing the people. Christ took this place; He could say, "Mine iniquities," &c., for He bore our sins. We can never speak of bearing our sins; He, the sinless One, bore them for us. He was the Victim, and at the same time the Confessor, owning all the sins.

Then, as priestly work, He carries in the blood, having offered Himself without spot to God (the burnt-offering in that sense). He was "made sin."

He offered Himself freely up, and the sins were laid on Him, and He takes that dreadful cup, then goes and sprinkles the place. His priesthood is entirely in heaven.—J. N. D., in "*Collected Writings*," vol. 27, p. 562.

ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD.

"And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all. For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God."—*Acts xx. 25-27.*

UPON the solemn occasion of these words the Apostle had a select audience. The persons addressed by him were "elders" of an assembly in the New Testament associated with the highest truth as regards the Church, its position, portion, and privileges, of which Paul was the chosen minister. Under the eye of these leaders had he testified the glad tidings of the grace of God, and among them preached His kingdom. The Apostle could therefore say that he had declared unto them *the whole counsel of God*. Let us consider the significance of this statement.

He first speaks (ver. 21-24) of the gospel which he had proclaimed as the means of working repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; then (ver. 26, 27) of instruction given as to the kingdom, from the delivery of which, it is to be observed, he expressly states he had not shrunk. The one brought gladness to hearts burdened by the sense of guilt; the other was likewise good news—"glad tidings of the kingdom" (Luke iv. 43), "glad tidings of the glory" (1 Tim. i. 11). Why, then, does Paul speak of not having *shunned* to declare unto them the whole of the divine scheme? Because one portion of the message with which he had been put in trust—doctrines to the Church not being in this Scripture prominent—was more than all unpopular. Even

amongst enlightened "saints which are at Ephesus" their most honoured teacher must spend three years in persistent pressure of truth by way of warning, to "every one night and day with tears" (ver. 31). As elsewhere (xiv. 22), he must exhort the flock at Ephesus to continue in the faith: entrance into the kingdom could for them be through much tribulation alone. It is this section of Paul's doctrine that we would affectionately, yet solemnly, press upon the conscience of our Christian reader.

Distinction must ever be carefully made between the "gift" of eternal life (Rom. vi. 23; Eph. ii. 9) and the "prize" or "reward" which the Lord Jesus will confer upon each, according as *his work* shall be (Phil. iii. 14; Rev. xxii. 12). Believers enjoy the first by anticipation; of the latter, one can only say it is in reserve (1 Pet. i. 13). The one is connected with the gospel addressed to "the lost," of justification by faith without works; the other is the subject of testimony amongst "the saved." This latter is exemplified by the ministry of James (I. 3, ii. 17, 24, &c.; compare 1 Pet. i. 17, &c.); but it is of peculiar significance as ministered by the Apostle of the Gentiles, of special interest as entering into the writings of one not only a minister of the GOSPEL of redemption, but given a dispensation of God as minister of the CHURCH, as the Body of Christ (Col. i. 23-25). In his doctrine as to the KINGDOM, the sphere of reward and of loss, Christians may accordingly expect to find the richest guidance for their *path*. We shall here endeavour by the Lord's help to trace some of its chief outlines.

It is matter of common knowledge amongst students of the Word that the gospel preached by Paul is akin to that precious phase of Grace which appears in the third of the gospel narratives (Luke); and, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," a like resemblance may be observed between the Scriptures ascribed to Luke and those of Paul as regards the believer's responsibility. It is noticeable that in

Luke's first treatise, especially in the intermediate part, we find the kingdom of GOD largely regarded as future, and this notwithstanding that the Lord says, "the kingdom of God is among you" (xvii. 21). Thus, xii. 31, xiii. 28, 29, xvii. 22-37, xix. 11-27, xxii. 15-30. So too, characteristically, in Paul's epistle to the Philippians, which sets forth the Christian path. Again, in Luke's gospel (xx. 35), we read of them "which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world" (in the resurrection); with which compare 2 Thess. i. 5: "That ye may be counted *worthy* of the kingdom of God;" and Phil. iii. 11: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead." Of necessity no such expressions are employed, as from God's side, of the conditions of eternal life which flows from unqualified grace.

According to Luke, the Saviour was constantly proclaiming the "gospel of the kingdom" (iv. 43, viii. 1, ix. 2, 11, &c.)

Very early in Paul's ministry, as already seen in his communications to the Thessalonians, had his teaching embraced kingdom truth; and no doctrine unfolded by the Apostle at a later period as to the CHURCH modified such instruction. Not only to the Corinthians and Galatians did he administer the gravest warnings as to the works of the flesh (1 Cor. vi. 9; Gal. iv. 19-21), but when we reach the epistle to the Ephesians, it is to read of classes of persons who have no inheritance in the kingdom, by way of warning to "saints" (i. 1, v. 3-7). They who did such things should not inherit the kingdom of God. It may now be asked, what did Paul mean by saying to their elders that he was "pure from the blood of all"? Is there not a reference to Ezek. xxxiii.? There was need for the children of Israel, not only to sprinkle the blood upon the lintel, but to put leaven away from their houses. It was not enough to escape from the destroyer; they must aim at entering into Canaan.

Until souls apprehend the difference between truth

as to the kingdom, and that which relates to the Church, so as clearly to distinguish between responsibility and privilege, there is no just thought of God's ways : until then one's *walk* cannot fail to be far from the level of His purposes and desires concerning us. The Church and the kingdom are the two great circles of truth ministered by Paul, neither of which crosses the other ; together they cover the ground of "all the counsel of God," which is based upon redemption. Until this last is known, all is vain.

Let us not neglect any portion of the revelation our God has vouchsafed, but day by day look up for continuous sustaining grace, that spirit, soul, and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. v. 23). Satan would deprive saints of their hopes, would have us suppose that we have now all that we ever shall have : let us strive to set before the Lord's people the "prize" of their calling on high. How different might be the lives, because the aims, of such as are ill-acquainted with the blessings that attach to kingdom truth ! How many stumblings might be saved ! A rich inheritance lies before every child of God as being a joint-heir with Christ. Shall we take it up ? "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12). We dare not be occupied only with our present privileges, portion, and place in Christ (Ephes. ii. 6), infinite as, when our souls contemplate "Ephesian truth," we find the resources of that treasury of grace, carrying them to a range of blessing worthy of our God. It will be, by assimilation of truth, roasting what we have taken in hunting (Prov. xii. 27 ; Heb. vi. 12), holding fast what we have, as gathered in the presence of God, by following Christ and acting for Him in our life, that none shall beguile us of our reward, none take our crown. Dear Christian readers, be strong and very courageous ; quit yourselves as men, taking the whole armour of God—able thus to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand !" E. E. W.

THE LORD JESUS, THE KINSMAN REDEEMER.

THERE is a subject of considerable interest in the earlier parts of the Gospels, but more especially to be found in Mark, Luke, and Matthew, since these three display Christ in His human relationships as the devoted Servant of God, or as the perfect Man in the midst of mankind, or in the narrower circle of the nation as the only true Israelite—the Messiah—the promised Seed.

The subject of interest to which I would call attention is introduced to us in the characteristic differences of each evangelist, and is nothing less than the fact that the Lord, in His lifetime on the earth, *regained* and beyond measure *surpassed* every position in which God as Creator, or the Almighty as Jehovah, had been discredited, and forced into the strange place of a Judge, whether by Adam's sin and forfeiture of Eden, or by man's breakdown as the servant of God, or by the nation of Israel's rebellion in Canaan, and their consequent dispersion to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Let us begin with the example last named, and call to mind, as Matthew describes to us, the state of Israel when the real Son of David and Son of Abraham was given to the faith of the nation at His birth in Bethlehem. Under the Roman yoke, as the Jewish people were, instead of under the direct government of God their Jehovah (as was *their normal position* in the world); carried into Babylon, as they once were; and, lastly, made tributaries to Cæsar—are sufficient contrasts with Jerusalem and Solomon to assure any who need such a proof of the displeasure of Him who had sold them into the hand of their enemies. The whole line of prophets opens out to us the moral causes and political reasons of this favoured nation's overthrow—punishment in the righteous ways of their

Jehovah, God of the whole earth! In brief, their pathway out of Egypt by Moses, and across the Red Sea, and the overwhelming destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts, were but the inauguration of a new race of people, with whom God had bound Himself up by promises and covenants which threw them out into the pre-eminence that marked their every step—with Jehovah, the God of Israel. The responsibility was equal to the height of this distinguishing nearness; therefore, *both* are declared under that one charter of their true liberty—"You only have *I known* of all the nations of the earth; therefore you will I *judge*, saith the Lord." Egypt, the wilderness, Jordan, and Canaan once shone bright, magnificently bright, as the people were led on by "the pillar and the cloud."

What a people is this, called out to make a history of histories, and under what auspices! How grandly they come out with Moses under the strong arm of Jehovah's deliverance, and how victoriously they enter into the land with Joshua, under "the Captain of the Lord's host."

But where was all this glory gone when Jesus was born into their midst? "Ichabod" had been written as a premonitory warning in the days of Eli, and Ezekiel had witnessed the departure of the glory in his times, only to be exceeded by the actual poverty which marked the royal house and illustrious lineage of David, when Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ, closed up that line, and gave room for the offended pride of the people:—"Is not this *the carpenter's son*? Is not His mother called Mary? And they were offended in Him."

That wonder of the world has collapsed, and a theocracy has broken down when connected with the responsibility of the nation; as the Creator had been previously outraged in the person of Adam, the man upon whose fidelity hung the destiny of the whole world—alas for mankind, and the bright prospects of Israel

besides! All is gone out in darkness and disgrace, that once shone so brightly; the whole is in ruins—one vast overthrow, the hour of Satan's triumph and man's defeat! God has been dishonoured everywhere and on all points wherever He came out to walk with His creatures. The walk in the Garden, how short! and the walk with Israel, the beloved people, how all is become the witness of God's righteous indignation and of man's punishment. The cradle of heaven-born hopes and promises is turned into the grave of the saddest disappointment and shame! Satan seems to be master of the whole position, "walking to and fro throughout the whole earth" in the title and power which human transgression and God's holiness had put into the devil's hands.

Will God leave all this that He created for His own praise and delight in the hands of the enemy? Has He no resources adequate to such an occasion? Has He no one in reserve to make such an extremity as this the grand opportunity of vindicating the glory of God against Satan? What an hour, what a new moment in the everlasting interests of God and His creatures is this, and how answered and met "when the fulness of time *was come*, God *sent forth* His Son, made of a woman;" He who alone could be the Light in the midst of darkness like this has come forth from God, and is come into the world, has taken on Him "the Seed of Abraham," taken "part with flesh and blood," to be made "perfect through sufferings." What a relief and resource to us, as we are now called to trace the new history and ways of "flesh and blood" in this Jesus-Emmanuel, for having come upon no less an errand than to glorify God in the very place where He had been outraged, and to finish the work which was given Him to do.

And now comes the question, *Where* will this Jesus, the Messiah, begin this mighty work—the complete vindication and reinstatement of God by Him "who was found in fashion as a man"? His first steps will

be surely over the pathway of His people Israel's disgrace, according to that word, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son;" on that spot He will plant His feet, and light up once again with more resplendent glory than ever attached to their earlier history (when "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea") the way that He will make *for Himself*, as He passes from Egypt into the wilderness with John the Baptist, and down into the waters of Jordan with His repentant people in their confession of their sins, that He may join them as the Fulfiller of all righteousness. He is up to the height of the faithfulness of God, the Jehovah of Israel, and He is down to the level of the remnant's condition and state. What a new link is this in Jordan between God and His people, and how different from their triumphant march over that river with Joshua and the typical ark of the covenant before the God of the whole earth.

If, however, this new place of John and Jesus and the remnant and Jordan bring up their reminiscences and regrets, in comparison with the illustrious journey of the same people with Moses and with Joshua, yet the scene before us in the 3rd of Matthew is morally resplendent in its own peculiarities—the nation or the believing remnant must learn *the holiness* of their Jehovah, whose almighty power they had celebrated on the shores of the Red Sea. If looked at in the light of "the holy, holy, holy One of Israel," they had to find that self-same power against them, and to drive them out from the very land in which it had once set them and defended them. The Jehovah that teaches with a strong hand has set them their lessons *now* according to what they have been *towards Him*, and it is at this point that Jesus by His forerunner identifies Himself with the remnant who are *morally* in the place corresponding to the ways of God in righteous government towards them.

They are come out at the call of John the Baptist, instead of Moses, when the "I Am" had sent him as

the deliverer *in power*; and are confessing their sins with the hope that the kingdom of heaven which John preached as at hand should be set up under the Messiah, who was to come after him. The Antitype of the Ark of the covenant is now in Jordan with them; and "thus it *becometh* us to fulfil all righteousness," from the lips of Jesus, is but the counterpart of that other word which tells us it became Him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory to make the Captain of their salvation "*perfect through sufferings.*"

It is upon these new associations between the Messiah and the people, and between Jesus and Jehovah, that the heavens will fold themselves back in approbation and delight. They have found their relief in the activities which have given the remnant in Jordan their resource; "and Jesus when He was baptised went up straightway out of the water, and, lo, the heavens were opened *unto Him*, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him." The heavens in their history had long ago gathered blackness in the days of Noah, and had folded themselves up in impenetrable silence till now; for what had they to look down upon with satisfaction, or for the God whom they concealed to command? but to the Man coming up out of Jordan they will delightfully open, and the voice from within, as well as the Dove from without, will alike tell of God's vindication, by accrediting Him who has done it as "My beloved Son in whom I am *well pleased.*" New relations are witnessed to *here*, and what a new starting point is *this*.

The priests' feet *stood firm in Jordan*, but never after this fashion. True, the nation may have forfeited every title to blessing, and have been turned out of Canaan to take the place of repentant sinners. But who is this Stranger in their midst, and yet no Stranger, and what is He with them for, and what will His identification with them procure *for them* in the

title of righteousness towards Himself, and as the securer of grace and forgiveness to them? These are the new questions. But the heavens and the Spirit like a dove have united themselves with the Man, "the beloved Son." Jehovah is once more in relation with His ancient people, not under the new covenant as yet, but by means of Him who will be in due time its Mediator, though at present the only true Israelite and the veiled Messiah. Man, in the Person of Christ, supplies to Jehovah grounds and reasons for coming out afresh, according to His own righteous government! "It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom, . . . to make the Captain of their salvation perfect *through sufferings.*"

Israel and man had not only broken down before God in Eden and in Canaan, but had put power into the hands of Satan—for the wages of disobedience are thus turned into capital for the devil—and if this Second Man is equal to all emergencies and calls of one in His position, He must overcome him who overcame Adam, and will be led into temptation. "Then was Jesus *led up of the Spirit*" into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Man in the garden and Israel in the wilderness had fallen under the temptations to which they were exposed on their way into rest; "they could not enter in because of unbelief." As a Man come into the midst of all that was groaning under the bondage of corruption, what course will He pursue in His active love, but that of "perfect through sufferings," and consequently He will be pre-eminent as the Man of sorrows, and acquaint Himself with grief. "Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses;" moreover, He will go down into poverty, and say, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." He will accept no exemption from the range of human griefs, and sorrows, and sufferings, but be the One in the midst who will go more fully than anyone else possibly could into their sources and

extent, on account of His own inherent perfectness, and so take up all in the real feelings of manhood, yet according to God, and *with God*. Strange sight!

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit: and a fresh moment of interest is come, and another question is to be tried—Will He, who has first been marked out by the heavens, allow Himself to be tempted of the devil, that He may conquer everywhere by life, and morally too in life, where all else have been overthrown, till at last Jesus will, by His own death, overcome him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage? *Who leads this Jesus into the wilderness?* and *why must He be led of the Spirit to be tempted?* are enquiries which we may well make, and which get their answer and meaning as we see the devil leaving this victorious One, and angels coming and ministering to Him!

Regaining the place which Adam lost can never be the measure of His paths, who in making a new position for Himself surpasses every previous one. Thus, if we enquire what He was to God, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," is the answer. Do we ask what He was for man? "The Spirit in the form of a dove" alighting on Him, and abiding, is the unmistakable reply. Do we ask what He was for Israel? Let Egypt, the wilderness, and the waters of Jordan, with John and the remnant of that day, and the opened heavens say! If we further enquire what He was as regards the devil? Man in the Person of Christ is master of the entire position, and has made all His own. He who fasted forty days and forty nights, and was afterwards an hungered, could not be moved away from His allegiance to God, nor out of the place of devotedness which became Him as the true Servant. He closed His heart against all that the devil had to offer to the extent of "the glory of the world." Man had dishonoured God as Creator long ago, but this Second Man bows to what it became

God to do, and is led to be tempted that He might go lower than all mere human responsibility and failure; and likewise go higher for God than any previous claims had demanded from man.

Thus He will go up to the mountain top, and take His seat as the great Expositor of the mind of Jehovah, as regards the principles on which the incoming kingdom should be founded, and the style of behaviour suited to those whom He would introduce into it; for they are to be perfect, "as their Father in heaven is perfect," who makes His "sun to shine on the evil and the good." Moreover, Moses said on his mountain, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but this Expositor will say, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him;" and "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

There is no compromise anywhere between God and His relations with His creatures. The claims and holiness of God are alike exceeded in doctrine on the mount, and in living obedience by Christ Himself. The devil is nowhere with this last Adam (after His temptations in the wilderness) till Gethsemane, where the last efforts are tried by Satan to terrify that heart by death and the grave, which he could not shake by the blandishments of the world. Man in the Person of Jesus has gone down under everything, having emptied Himself and been obedient to death, even the death of the cross; and what could God do on His part, but raise Him up over everything, and give Him a Name above every name that is named, "not only in this world, but in that which is to come"? God has a Man now glorified as the righteous reward of His obedience and sufferings, and finally His death, the death of the cross—where He made atonement for our sins by bearing them, and suffering the Just One for the unjust, and putting out of sight all the hindering causes of sin and guilt for

ever. By the blood-shedding of Christ, God has been set free from all the calls of judgment which pressed for punishment and death, for Christ has died in our stead—He has liberated God, so to speak, so that having a Man in the heavens whom He has glorified, the counsels and purposes from everlasting in Christ can now come in, and God can even go beyond Himself in all that He had ever set up in creation and Israel, by bringing in His own *mysteries*, the things which had been “kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

And who has done all this? but that very Jesus Emmanuel who has also carried His believing people outside the range of death and judgment to make us partakers of a life with Himself, the risen One, which by the power of the indwelling Spirit will enable us to take up every principle of conduct, and to be satisfied with nothing less than to live Christ over again, till He comes to have us with Himself where He is! In the meantime, while waiting for Him, what dignity attaches to the saint of this dispensation as told—Ye are the temples of the living God, and the Holy Ghost dwelleth in you; and again, Ye are not your own, but bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body.

The Lord Jesus made a position for Himself as a Man when upon the earth, and elevated doctrine and practice to such an extent that He would at last die to put God in the place of a Justifier, and by His own session at the right hand on high become the new Head of life to His Church, that His members may go back and take all up in living power which He ever spoke or did, and be in this way superior to all that became mere man as man, and finally be like Himself in nature, righteousness, and glory, as the proper manifestation of the unfettered power of God on behalf of Christ and the Church for ever!

IT is but a few years ago that there lived in a town of Northern Germany a young man who had been brought up in the Roman Catholic religion. He believed, however, neither in that nor in any other; but had long cast off all thoughts of God, and lived in sin so open and so terrible, that he was remarkable amongst the ungodly and the depraved as one who outdid them all. How wonderful are the ways of God! Like him who beheaded the giant with his own sword, so God made use of the exceeding sinfulness of this young man to awaken in him the first desire after salvation. He became alarmed at his own wickedness. "I am worse than any other," he thought. "If it be true that the wicked go to hell, it is plain where I am going. If ever a man is lost eternally, I must be that man!" Night and day did this thought haunt the wretched sinner; he found no pleasure even in sin. "If only," he thought, "it were possible to be saved!" What could he do? He had been told of penances and prayers, of convents where monks spent their days in works that might at last atone for sin; and he felt that no labour would be too great, no torture too severe, if he only might have the faint hope of pardon at last! He resolved to become a monk, but he wished first to know in what convent in the whole world the rule was the strictest and the penances the most terrible. If it were at the other end of the earth he would go to it, and then he would spend the rest of his days in penance and in prayer. He was told that the convent under the strictest rule was the monastery of La Trappe, distant about 1,500 miles from his home; he could not afford to pay the expenses of his journey, and therefore resolved to walk the whole way, begging as he went. This alone would be the beginning of a penance, and might gain him one step towards heaven.

It was a long, weary journey, each day beneath a hotter sun and through strange lands. He felt scarcely

alive by the time he came in sight of the old building where he hoped to gain rest for his soul,—for his body it mattered not. Having rung at the gate, he waited till it was slowly opened by an aged monk, so feeble and infirm that he seemed scarcely able to walk.

“What is it you want?” asked the old man.

“I want to be saved,” replied the German; “I thought that here I might find salvation.”

The old monk invited him to come in, and led him into a room where they were alone together. “Tell me now what you mean,” said the old man.

“I am a lost sinner,” began the German. “I have lived a life more wicked than I can tell you. It seems to me impossible that I can be saved, but all that *can* be done I am ready to do. I will submit to every penance, I will complain of nothing, if only I may be received into the order. The harder the work, the worse the torture, the better it will be for me. You have only to tell me what to do, and whatever it may be, I will do it.”

“If you tell me to do the most fearful penance, I am ready to do it,” the German had said; and the old monk replied, “If you are ready to do what *I* tell you, you will go straight home again, for the whole work HAS BEEN DONE for you before you came, and *there is nothing left for you to do*. Another has done the work instead, and *it is finished*.”

“It is finished!”

“Yes, it is finished. Do you not know that God sent His own Son to be the Saviour of the world? Did *He* not come? Did He not finish the work the Father gave Him to do? Did He not say on the cross, ‘It is finished’?”

“What was finished?”

“He undertook to bear the full punishment of sin, and He did bear it, and God is satisfied with the work done by His Son. And do you know this—Where is Jesus now?”

“He is in heaven.”

“He *is* in heaven. But why is He there? Because He HAS finished the work. He would not be there otherwise ; He would still be here, for He undertook to do *t all*, and He would not go back to His Father till *all* was done. He is there because God is satisfied with His work. And, dear friend, why should you and I try to do that work which the Son of God *has* done? If God had left it for us to do, we could never do it ; were we to perform all the penances that ever have been or could be performed, they would be utterly useless to us. In doing them, instead of gaining anything, you would be but adding the crowning sin to your life. It would be as much as to say, Christ has not done enough. It would be to cast contempt upon the perfect work of the Son of God, and to dare to attempt to add to that which He has said is finished. Yes ; in here Christ is insulted and God is made a liar ; and were it not that I am so old that I can scarcely walk to the gate, my escape should testify against the place. I would not remain here another day. As it is, I must wait till the Lord comes to fetch me ; but you can go, and I beseech you to go, thanking God that His Son has done all for you, and that the punishment of your sins is for ever past. And remember always *that Christ is in heaven.*”

What astonishing tidings for the poor weary sinner! Did he believe them?

He did ; and after a short time of rest, during which he learnt more of the blessed gospel from the lips of the old monk, he returned to his own land, there to make known amongst sinners, lost as he had been, the news of that love and grace of which he had first heard in the monastery of La Trappe. There he was employed in this blessed work but a short while since, and probably is still there. May the voice from La Trappe reach your heart here now, and may the “good news of the glory of Christ” bring peace and joy to many who, instead of walking 1,500 miles to hear it, have the gracious message brought to them!—*Extracted.*

WATCHING.

My only hope, His coming ;
 My only joy, His love ;
 Still through my lattice watching,
 I lift my heart above.

Why tarriest Thou, dear Master ?
 The evening shadows fall :
 Oh ! chariot wheels, move swiftly—
 Come, Jesus, Lord of all !

The brightness of Thy coming
 Dawns now upon my sight ;

Thy chariot wheels come hidden
 By clouds of shining light.

The glory floods my chamber,
 My heart from earth is free ;
 My Lord, my Life, is coming,
 Is coming now for me.

I soon shall rise to meet Thee,
 Caught up Thy face to see,
 Shall dwell with Thee for ever,
 With Thee, my Lord, with Thee !
 E. E. D.

WHERE WILL YE NOT FIND THEM?

“My sheep hear My voice.”—*John* x. 27.

“I know My sheep, and am known of Mine.”—*John* x. 14.

Where will ye not find them,
 Those dearly purchased sheep ?
 In the lonely moorland valley,
 On the mountain's lofty steep,
 In their humble cottage home-
 steads,
 'Mid poverty and care,—
 They know their gentle Shepherd,
 And He knows their dwelling there.

Where will ye not find them ?
 On some lonely ocean isle,
 It may be bleak and barren,
 But He is there meanwhile ;
 With the humble and the contrite
 heart
 'Tis His delight to dwell ;
 And His sweet ministry of love
 The lone one knoweth well.

Where will ye not find them ?
 In the crowded city lane,
 Hard press'd by late and early toil,
 Or on beds of weary pain ;
 They hear the Shepherd's tender
 voice
 Above the roar and din,
 And they know the Holy and the
 True,
 Though all around be sin.

Where will ye not find them ?
 In the palace of the great,
 Some hearts, aweary of the world,
 Unheeding of its state,
 Have found a joy earth cannot
 give,
 Wealth that can ne'er decay ;
 And they're waiting for His well-
 known voice
 To call from earth away.

Where will ye not find them ?
 In the thronging business mart ;
 They must do battle in the world,
 But Jesus has the heart.
 They serve the Lord in daily life ;
 He knows their trials there ;
 But each shall have his own
 reward,
 When they meet Him in the air.

Where will ye not find them ?
 In the forest, on the flood,
 The savage and the Indian,
 From idols turned to God.
 Each one has heard the Shepherd's
 voice ;
 How well He knows them all ;
 In the dawning of the morning
 They will gather to His call !
 H. S.

LIFE IN CHRIST.—*Titus* i. 3, 4.

IT is at the beginning of this chapter that the Spirit of God marks with an especial character that on which I chiefly desire to speak—that which the Apostle begins with.

The details of the chapter I shall not enter into save to look at what is in connection with the eternal thought of God towards us, which we find in verses 2 and 3. Evil had come in, the Spirit takes notice of it, and the effect in a most remarkable way is to throw them back on the whole mind and thought of God from the beginning. As evil progresses and corruption comes in, the Apostle turns back to the origin of all, and coming from the divine nature itself, all that could meet the evil and carry us on must come from that—*i.e.*, the eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before the foundation of the world; that which was in the mind of God (as to the thing itself) before the beginning, that which God had in His mind and the counsel of God *for us* before the world itself was created. It just shews us what we are, and what man is, with and apart from that eternal life.

If we look at Ephesians, we find it in connection with Christ and the Church (Ephesians iii. 3-7), a mystery hidden through all ages in God, until Christ was raised up as Head of the body, the Bride. It is not on this I would dwell; I am not going to speak about the Church, but would turn back to what this life is, and would dwell on this thought and promise of life in the mind of God before the world ever existed. Before *that* (I say), this life existed in a Person—Christ—the One who was “in the beginning with God, and was God,” and that is the Christ with whom my life is hidden with the Father; and being in Himself Life, He came into the world as *the Life*, and manifested the Life; the thing was embodied in the Person of the Lord *as man*, and there it was the Life of man—not of angels. That which was specially God’s divine

thought towards man is shewn out when Christ becomes man; and this life is communicated to us, the instrument used being the preached word of truth. This divine life had been manifested here in a Man, the Lord Jesus. He having given it to us, it is now manifested in our bodies; it has the character of godliness in its manifestation, it tells you what you are. It is in a poor vessel, where there is a wretched will, but it tells you what you are and what the world is; throws out an additional light to shew what man is as a creature totally departed from God (morally speaking). The world has grown up in departure from God, that is, the world we live in; all that we see around us has sprung up from the creature having got away *from God*; but the life we have existed before the creation of the world, and this passage of Scripture is very full of the simple, quiet blessedness of what that life is, practically manifested and given in Christ.

A great deal of evil had come in (read ver. 10-16), Satan corrupting the truth by the wild reasoning of man's mind. The Apostle specially warns Timothy and Titus, and throws them back, not on common Christian profession, but on the faith of God's elect, the acknowledging the truth which is after godliness—they were to be as those who knew the thoughts and mind of God, and were cast on Him. If I have got divine teaching, I can say I know the Shepherd's voice; if it is not His, I shall know that too. The truth which is after godliness is not only acknowledged, but it is marked and stamped as of God by a man living to and for God. Godliness is what a man would do if instigated by God, and if God were close by him. What a person would *not* do if God were there, it is clear would be certainly not for God; a man daily taught by the knowledge of God how to be living for God, would do everything to manifest the ways of godliness—knowing those ways because knowing God. I speak not of doing right instead of wrong, or of conscientiousness—a believer clearly ought to be

righteous with regard to others—but I speak of *godliness*. You never can be for *God* without knowing what *God is*. I can't walk worthy of *God* if I don't know Him; I cannot walk with Him without *that*, though I may walk uprightly with man; but here it is walking *worthy of God*—godliness (the loins being girded, affections tucked up).

This applies to all revealed to us in Christ. A believer as to his motives and life has Christ's mind revealed, showing him how to guide himself through all circumstances. Christ was always Himself, never governed by circumstances. Sorrow could draw out His heart in divine love, but in motives—all circumstances—He was always Himself; perfect, of course. It is "the mind of Christ" that believers have. What a wonderful place we have got! Only as we are taught of *God* can we get hold of the hope of eternal life promised by *God* "before the world began" (mark that); for as to the Adam life, it never could be *that*; but a divine life in those who are saved, a life for *heaven*, we have got it now, and shall be there on account of it: there will be its full manifestation in everything there; *every* word and *all* praise will be according to the presence of *God*. As participators of the divine nature, we shall be in fullest blessedness there, where nothing inconsistent with the divine nature can exist; but everything will be in accordance with that life, and ourselves, as possessors of it, in the highest and most blessed perfection.

We belong to that place *now*, whilst our bodies are here, but the life we have got came down from thence—has its only full sphere of blessedness there, the promise of *God* "before the world began;" the life for us in the mind of *God* before ever the world existed. I don't speak now of predestination, but of the thing itself in the mind of *God* before ever the world existed. If we turn to 1 John i., we see how this life came down. Read verses 1-3: "Our hands have handled of the *Word of life*"—a *real Man*, the life which

was with the Father manifested down here in the Person of Christ. If you asked, you would find in many great vagueness of thought in connection with this life. It is Christ *Himself*. "When He, *who is our life*, shall appear," &c. Before He speaks of the communion of life, He speaks of its manifestation. John could see what it was down here amongst friends and enemies: "We have looked upon," &c. The life which was with the Father is the life promised before the world began. I get what it is perfectly displayed; I see this life in One who, in due time, fully manifested it in man; the Second Adam is the Man in whom its perfection is seen, a Man in this world in all points tempted like us, a perfect Man without sin, walking in the world in meekness and holiness, and set before us to follow! Turn to 2. Timothy i. It shews us the way it was given us *in Christ*. God connects two things here—for He has saved us *by Christ* according to purpose and grace before the world began. In this life we see a thing that has its display in heaven; we have got it now, but in a place where it is hindered.

It leads our thoughts and feelings to be ever in heaven, where that life was before the world began, though displayed in all perfection by Him who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light. The life was in heaven before being manifested here, and (wonderful truth!) in the power of this life Christ has gone through death and abolished it; it is an abolished thing for saints, it takes us out of all the misery of the race of the first Adam. It was not known by saints of the Old Testament—they could not say "absent from the body, present with the Lord"—it was all dark to them. Elijah was taken away for a testimony without passing through death, but Christ passed through it, abolished it, and is gone up to heaven, and life and immortality are thus brought to light.

Turn to John i. 4: "In Him was life," &c. You never could say that of a saint. God gave us to have

that life *in His Son*, if in ourselves we might lose it ; but if He is my life I cannot. "He that hath the Son hath life," &c. He is the life and light of men, not of angels. This is an unutterably humbling truth for us. If God was exercising life-giving power, it was in man, and, therefore, this Son of His love became a man. God displays it by the incarnation of the Word, the eternal Son ; He was given in promise to us before the world existed, and He came into the world personally. The Word made flesh dwelt among men in all the circumstances in which we walk. He goes down into the death we were under, and goes up to the right hand of God as the display of this life in a Man up there. What a thought ! That eternal life in this world as a man, a poor man, a carpenter, One who had not where to lay His head ! The life promised before the world began, now has been made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and, in due time, manifested to those who believe through preaching Christ Himself, the great first-fruits offered the day after the Sabbath, a first-fruits of the life that we, as saved, have in Him—He the first-fruits of the great harvest of God. I repeat, this life given in promise by God before ever the world was, was manifested by this Christ, who, in the power of it, passed through death, and in heaven it is now manifested in the Risen Man, Christ Jesus ; and down here it is manifested through preaching, and that is how we get it.

Preached in the world *now*, and what does the world make of it ? That's the solemn thing for your consciences ! If we take this world we get, not the last Adam, but the first. If we turn back to the garden of Eden, we get a clue to the present state of the world, and how it began. Man is created in responsibility to keep his first estate ; God commands him not to eat the fruit of a certain tree ; he eats it, doing his own will ; he is cast out of Paradise, and the world begins where Paradise ends ; and that is the

world we live in, only a thousand times worse, since it has now rejected Christ! Yes, this world around us is the world that sprung up when man was driven from Paradise, and man in a state of responsibility departed from God, made the world what it is—and what a world! Solemn as the responsibility of man in it is, for us (who have life) it is only by-the-by. True, we have to go through it, but it has nothing to do with the eternal life we have, except as being the place where the eternal life has been manifested and brought to us. And what is man (departed from God) about? Making a scene of delights for himself, by cultivating the arts and sciences (you find the most beautiful exhibition of arts and sciences among heathens), making a scene for developing and displaying faculties that have nothing to do with God—the worst as well as the best have nothing to do with Him.

Well! in this world eternal life has been, and is manifested now; but do you think that it is by first mending and reforming man, and setting the world right, that God gives eternal life? Is life to be got by reforming the world, by modifying the evil of the ways and tastes of a man away from God, improving man first *without* God? What is man? A responsible being (responsibility has never been lost) away from God, and in departure from God, he has built up for himself a world without God. You go and bring God into all the fine things that man is doing, and what the effect is most of us know. It is a matter of fact that this world, with all its pleasures and things that delight the flesh, does not let *God* in, nor Christ, who is the eternal life. I get it as a thing that comes in between; eternal life has come down here, and the Christian has it in a world that has all its life from the first man, in a world entirely departed and alienated from God, and which had its origin in man having been turned out of Paradise, and a world that when Christ in divine beauty and grace was in it, spat in His face and turned Him out! and *that's* the world I am in *now!*

But where does my heart go out of it to? To that blessed life that I have in Christ. I may have got it but yesterday, but the thing I have was up there *for me* before the foundation of the world. I have got Christ as my life—the life I live is by faith of the Son of God, &c.—and it was in God's mind to give me this life before the foundation of the world. "Whoso hath the Son, hath life," a life not of man at all; and what is the effect of it? from whence did I get it, I say? *What is the life* I got from the *first Adam*? All sin; if put under law, not subject to it; a life with lusts, and a will of its own; I judge it altogether. When Christ was there, the tree being bad, judgment was pronounced against it. The flesh is a judged thing. I find only sin and condemnation in connection with it, but I get God dealing with this sin in the flesh: "What the law could not do," &c. (not *sins*, but *sin*). Oh! I say, sin is in the flesh. I have got it, and I hate it; it is lusting in me, making me dislike what Christ likes, whilst my heart is set on Christ.

But I find God has dealt in judgment with it, and finally at the Cross. He condemned it, and there it was judged, and that is where I find I am. I have sin, but I am not to be judged for it; Christ was made sin for me, who knew no sin, etc. He in grace has taken it; and my soul in the power of this truth gets perfect peace, and no more conscience of sins, all is merged into the deliverance Christ has wrought. I have perfect liberty, sin has not dominion. I judge entirely this flesh of mine, and all its lusts and will, because *it is* a judged thing. I am crucified with Christ. I stand in a new condition. I have eternal life in Him; Christ *is* my life; I have liberty and joy by His going through death. I have died and am risen with Him; that is where I am brought.

I have the life of *Him* who came into the place where I was away from God, to bring me to God. I belong to Him; I am risen with Him where the eternal life is to be displayed; in spirit I am up there

now, whilst in the body waiting for Him to come. I am in the world—*that* is merely by-the-by, to me only a thing I have to pass through, not of it even, as Christ was not. He passed through it, and left us an example that we should follow, walking in His footsteps. I am to reckon myself dead—"As we have borne the image of the earthy, even so," &c. A believer doesn't belong to the first Adam, but to the Last. The life of Christ, that is all he owns as his life—that life so blessed, so divine, that the world shrank from it because it was so perfect, and God put it on His throne as the only place fitted for it.

Christ, down here, displayed everything that characterises this life. I would mark one or two traits of it—one is that quiet confidence with God which is the fruit of divine love, *that* which can trust, and is capable of blessed communion with God, enabling one through all things and circumstances here to walk on, confiding in God. One could not have had true confidence if Christ had not died to put away sin, and brought me into relationship with God, having a purged conscience. I can delight in God, and, as regards walk through this world, Christ is my life, my *all!* I am consciously dependent on Him. As we pass on through the world we have to overcome: how? "This is the victory that overcometh," &c. Life has this especial character, it avoids evil, and walks in grace and love through the world. If I have the life of Christ, I am to walk down here as He walked in practical life, "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body," with the consciousness that it came from God promised before the world was.

We shall most surely find defectiveness in this, from not having the spirit free; we have to watch that things of this world don't narrow up this thing that is to be made manifest. Don't we continually find we are under the power of circumstances by which the heart is often narrowed? How often we have to say,

“I did not think of this at the right moment;” but if always bearing about the dying of the Lord, it would be easy to manifest His life. If the heart is full of Christ, it will be always ready for Christ. The tendency of saints is to have the heart narrowed up, never ready for God and their neighbour. It would not be so if we could only get the heart exercised under a deep consciousness of what the life we have got is, and what the world is—what a poor, little, wretched thing it is! Having hearts exercised to discern good and evil whilst down here, we should pass through it as strangers and pilgrims, having cleansed consciences, able to judge the flesh as being only the old thing—life given, and the world (grown up from man having rejected God), the place where this life is to be exercised, and we get various exercises, it is true.

Turn to all the Apostle Paul had passed through: “We who live are alway delivered unto death.” He gloried in tribulation and in infirmities, if only the life might be manifested. What I desire is, that your hearts should get hold of what this eternal life is, so as to live in the power of it, that you should see how it came revealedly into the world *in Christ*; seeing all its blessedness and beauty in Christ, the heart clings round it. In Him was the light and life of men. What a thing, in the place where Satan rules, to have God’s own life given to us in His Son, and that we live Christ only! But remember, this life has no affinity with the world, and we have to manifest the light of life in the midst of the world that won’t have Christ. Alas! how constantly everything tends to make us live by sight instead of by faith; but whatever we fail in, we shall certainly find that God has given us *everything in Christ*; and oh! may He give us to know more and more what that eternal life is, which was promised before the foundation of the world!

[EXTRACTS.]

“Is the departed One to *you* the absent One? Is the absent One daily to *you* the missing One, the longed-for One? The wanted One is the coming One!”

“Full of the Holy Ghost.”

“We are not only to be like Christ by-and-by, we ought to like the absent One now. Don't go and try to imitate the second of Acts, but go and get the power that produced it.”

“People go and pilfer Israel's blessings, calling Zion the Church, &c., simply because they don't know their own blessings.”

J. E. B.

MAN'S HEART AND THE HEART OF GOD.—The cross shews that man's nature is incapable of being acted upon by any motive whatever. The highest acts of insolence that it was possible for man to do against God, brought out the very thing that put the guilt away. “Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost” (Matt. xxvii. 50). With this cry, which announces the end of all human relationship with God, save in judgment, and the end of all means which God could employ to re-establish such a relationship with the children of Adam, Jesus expired! A new basis has been laid in righteousness, and by the full revelation of God in sovereign love for the eternal joy of man, in the last Adam, in the new creation. There is no heart in the universe that has been so revealed as the heart of God.—J. N. D.

THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST.

THE Christian who would gather methodical instruction from Scripture as to the salvation of God discovers sooner or later the two aspects in which propitiation is viewed there—the earthly and the heavenly aspect of Christ's expiatory work. Heaven and earth alike must render glory to God in this matter.

An endeavour having of late been made to merge the heavenly in the earthly aspect of Christ's sacrifice, which in effect is to reduce the atonement to a level scarcely higher than that assigned to it by Roman Catholic theology, demands notice in these pages. We would earnestly warn our readers against that fatal denial or surrender of *heavenly truth* which seems ever to harass saints, Satan being unceasingly intent upon undermining the most treasured elements of Christianity. Believers, guided by the Word, have thus to see whether they are upholding God-given truth against these assaults.

The Lord Jesus offered *Himself* (Heb. vii. 27; x. 10), His soul (Isa. liii. 10). This offering was initiated on earth (Heb. i. 3; ix. 12, 14), but could only be in strictness completed by presentation of the blood in heaven. Is this the truth of God, or is it not? Let the reader answer in His presence! On the cross that precious blood was shed. On whose behalf? Whom did it concern?

The blood, according to Lev. xvii. 6, 11, was given by God upon the altar "to," for, the sinner. Our God sent His only-begotten Son as Himself a propitiation for our sins (1 John iv. 10). Jesus suffered without the gate, that He might with His own blood sanctify the people (Heb. xiii. 10). So far, our souls are directed to earth.

But there is a higher aspect of the sacrificial blood: establishing the glory of God, it *must* purify the heavenly places, must be sprinkled before and on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens (Lev. xvi. 12-14;

Heb. ix. 23). To set this forth, there must be the unfolding of that great secret of Him whose thoughts are not as man's thoughts, the accomplishment of His counsels. The Lord Jesus was raised from the dead "in virtue of the blood of the eternal covenant" (Heb. xiii. 20). At an earlier stage of the inspired exposition, we read of the blood of the Christ "who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God," purging our consciences from dead works to serve the living God (ix. 14). Now, the sprinkling of the blood before God was the necessary preliminary to the sprinkling of our hearts (Heb. x. 22; xii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 2). Who can gainsay this in the light of the Old Testament Scripture to which Heb. ix. refers, and not resist the Spirit's teaching? The first testament. (or covenant) was not inaugurated without blood (ver. 18). The complex idea of a testamentary covenant, with the character of a purchase (compare Acts xx. 28), in this chapter, may be elucidated by the usage of Roman law then generally familiar, as to which there are ample sources of information, but commentators unhappily are silent. Not merely did the divine transaction contemplate death, but the significance of the altar, which appears in Exod. xxiv., being first sprinkled with blood, is essential to the argument of this chapter. Then "he (Moses) took the blood and sprinkled it on the people." Save as we have regard to Ex. xxiv. 6, 8, we can have no right apprehension of the instruction conveyed by Heb. ix. The blood was apportioned between Jehovah and the people (compare i. Cor. x. 16).

Turning now to the ordinance for the day of atonement (Lev. xvi.), we find that Aaron had to pass through the tabernacle and enter the holiest "not without blood," as expressed in Heb. ix. 7. And so with the Antitype. We have in our Lord Jesus "a great High-priest who has passed *through the heavens*" (Heb. iv. 14). Luther strangely missed the reference, and in the light of this passage based his belief in

consubstantiation upon Christ's omnipresence. "By His own blood He entered in once for all into the holy place, having found eternal redemption" (Heb. ix. 12; compare Job xxxiii. 24; Psalm xvi. 10). With this the parenthetical verses 16, 17 are specially connected. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity come in the death of the testator." *Come in* before God (compare margin of the Revised Version). The meaning of the Greek word here employed has been fully discussed by commentators, so as to leave little doubt that it was technical. The blood carried in should be the witness of the sacrificial death; just as proof of death is necessary before a testamentary disposition can be effectual; and the Lord's title to enter in "for us" (Heb. ix. 24) was made up, was completed, then. By His resurrection the problem was solved which an Old Testament saint could never have explained. The sacrifice entailed *death*; hence the high-priest of old, passing within the veil, could but present "blood of others" (ver. 25). Christ, however, after His blood-shedding—His certain death as Sacrifice—entered the holiest as High-priest, and when He rose the divine counsels of redemption were accomplished. If Christ be not risen, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins, argues Paul elsewhere (1 Cor. xv. 15, 17). That the Sacrifice and High-priest should be identical was foreign to human thoughts. Death and resurrection was God's glorious purpose. Resurrection and perfection go together. Resurrection, as another has expressed it, is "the *fundamental* truth of the gospel."

"It was *necessary* that . . . the heavenly things themselves [should be purified] with better sacrifices than these" (ver. 23). Observe that the Holy Ghost says "sacrifices." These (sin-offering, burnt-offering, &c.) meet in that which has before God the character of "one sacrifice" (Heb. 10), being but different phases of it; so that heaven and earth alike bear witness to the finished work. Earth was the first to attest the

Lord's death (Matt. xxvii. 51, 53); finally, "in the end of the Sabbath," heaven gave its voice (xxviii. 1-8). The whole nature and character of God had been in question, His sovereignty as well as His holiness, the maintenance and vindication of which must ground a full display of His love. The "perfect death of Jesus" is seen in "the blood put upon the throne;" for not only are we "justified by the scape-goat" ("Synopsis" i., pp. 206, 209, last edition).

It does not, as has been represented, become a question of adapting the reality to the type. Are we now asked to believe that the earthly tabernacle and its vessels derived their glory from anything short of being perfect copies (Heb. viii. 5; ix. 23) of the heavenly originals? We have not so learned Christ. Once admit, dear reader, that the reality falls short of the copy, and you will open the door to German rationalism of the boldest sort, which impugns positive statements of God's word. But not less serious is that other pole of unbelief, which in its various forms makes havoc of souls in our day, with its doctrine of the Mass. A Roman Catholic or developed Ritualist denies not that the precious blood was shed, that the work was finished as to this world; but the *heavenly* aspect of the sacrifice—which imparts to it continual efficacy, as the support of eternal redemption—is that to which he shuts his eyes. The Mass, or priestly oblation, is offered on earth, as though sinful children of Adam have to supplement what the Son of God must be conceived to have left unfinished! And so we find Roman Catholics representing that Melchisedec acted as priest, *sacrificing* bread and wine. Why is this done? The answer is not far to seek: undeniably, his priestly functions were exercised on earth. But the priestly functions at present exercised by Christ are in heaven! Thus Roman Catholicism shuts out the present priesthood of the Lord as Anti-type of Melchisedec no less than of Aaron. Christ continueth for ever, essentially after the order of Mel-

chisedec, after the power of an indissoluble life, but as "first being King of Righteousness" (Heb. vii. 2, 16, 24). "After that" will come the millennial priesthood of the "King of Peace," having to do with an earthly sanctuary (see, in particular, the book of Ezekiel), and connected with the ninth chapter of Leviticus. Our object here is to emphasize the importance to souls of not losing sight of or abandoning the comparisons when examining the contrasts between the Aaronic priesthood and that of Christ.

The temple-services allured the Hebrew Christians; hence the epistle addressed to them, which under the hand of God remains for our instruction. It was required to detach their souls from these to the heavenly aspect of the Sacrifice and the true High-priest (Heb. xiii.) If the blood were not presented by Him in *heaven*, His atonement was completed as regards this world alone. There could be no offering on *earth* by the Lord, in His character of High-priest, of His blood to God (viii. 4). But if High-priest, He must present it, and so in heaven. Such is the truth worked out and made known by the epistle to the Hebrews. We learn that *place* was essential to priesthood.

John xix. 30 should occasion no difficulty to souls. In ver. 28 the same word is used for the fulfilment of the Scripture as here appears in solitary grandeur, such as to have influenced some commentators in supposing that it means the full accomplishment of divine counsel. Lev. xvii. 11 must first find place in the working out of God's plan: "I have given it to you upon the altar, to make atonement [a covering over] for your souls." Then Lev. xvi. 14, 15: the blood is given back to the blessed God. The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16), is our covering before God. Our hearts may well bow with adoration at the wonderful, divinely precious language of Acts xx. 28,—"The Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood."

E. E. W.

DARK DAYS AND BRIGHT ENDINGS.

IT was a dark day for Israel in Egypt when a new king arose which knew not Joseph, and Satan, the god of this world, who had listened to the sentence of the Lord God in the garden,—the Seed of the woman should bruise his head,—could act through Pharaoh, who, influenced apparently by wise political motives only (Exod. i. 10), set going a movement which, if allowed to be carried out, would have blighted effectually the hopes of the nation. “They have taken crafty counsel against Thy people, and consulted against Thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance” (Psalm lxxxiii. 3, 4); but “there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord” (Prov. xxi. 30). “He bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: He maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thought of His heart to all generations” (Psalm xxxiii. 10, 11). Faith in some of these feeble and oppressed people, faith in the living God, the God who calleth things that are not as though they were, faith that reckoned on His intervention though knowing not how it should be shewn, was in exercise (Heb. xi. 23). And the mother commits her babe in her extremity to Him in whose hand is the hearts of all men, and who turneth them as the rivers of water whithersoever He will. And now God acts in His own way, His hand unseen save to faith; the circumstances all just natural and simple. The daughter of Pharaoh sees the child; and, behold, the babe wept; and she had compassion on him (Exod. ii. 6), and took him and nourished him for her own son (Acts vii. 21).

The enemy is defeated, his plans frustrated, the mother's heart relieved and filled with joy, her darling

babe is safe, and the deliverer of the people nourished and brought up in the very palace of the king. How wonderful it all is. God honours the faith that counts on Him and glorifies Himself, while He laughs at the impotent rage of the foe.

Such are some of His ways, "who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm xxx. 5). "The evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen. i. 5).

"We cannot always trace the way
Where Thou, our gracious Lord, dost move;
But we can always surely say,
That God is love.

"Yes, Thou art love,—a truth like this
Can every gloomy thought remove,
And turn our tears and woes to bliss;
Our God is love."

It was a dark day for the people when Haman the Agagite, the Jews' enemy, was promoted by King Ahasuerus to a place of power above all the princes that were with him (Esther iii. 1); when a greater than Haman, the unseen but ever watchful and restless foe, found in the son of Hammedatha a ready tool to work his cruel designs; and once more it seemed as if he had succeeded in blighting the hopes of the human race. The decree had gone forth from Shushan, the palace, sealed with the king's ring, and hastened by the king's commandment, to kill and cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. But another eye is looking on, no disinterested Spectator of the whole plan; all is known to a greater than Haman, or the powerful enemy he serves, and His hand, though unseen, is about to work deliverance for the people. The One who, in the days

of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people, and have heard their cry and known their sorrows," was unchanged, and the fasting and weeping, the mourning and wailing, caused by the decree of King Ahasuerus, is all heard by Him; and He who had a Moses as His instrument in that day, had a Mordecai and an Esther now, by whom He would frustrate the devices of the foe, cause the wicked to be snared in the work of his own hands, and bring about, by means of His own, which none could possibly have foreseen, His people's deliverance, turning their sorrow into joy, and the day of darkness and the shadow of death into one of light and gladness.

The affair of Bigthan and Teresh (ii. 21), though written in the book of the chronicles before the king, might have been forgotten, and certainly none could see beforehand how the circumstance could have any possible connection with the welfare of the people and their deliverance from death; but times and seasons, circumstances, the hearts of kings, all are in His mighty hand, and He knows the end from the beginning, and knoweth the way He will take. "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure," are the words of Him, infinite in wisdom, and whose power none can withstand, the One with whom faith has to do.

"On *that* night could not the king sleep" (ch. vi. 1). A sleepless night is no very uncommon thing with kings, surely, no more than with others. A small affair this might appear to be, but part of His plan it was who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will. But this leads to the discovery of the record of the plot against the king's life, and the faithfulness of Mordecai; and now the tide turns, and the honour and dignity Haman thought would be his (vi. 6) is awarded to Mordecai, while on the

gallows prepared by Haman for Mordecai he is himself hanged. And instead of the thirteenth day of the twelfth month witnessing the slaughter of the people, it was for them a day of gladness and joy and honour, a feast, and a good day. And the despised and hated Mordecai went out from the presence of the king arrayed in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

It was a dark day in the history of David when Ziklag was burned with fire, and David's wives and his soldiers' wives, and their sons and daughters were taken captive, and David and his men wept till they had no more power to weep, and David's own followers spake of stoning him. Israel's enemy, the enemy of David too, acting on the evil heart of unbelief, causing him to depart from the living God, had suggested, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is *nothing better* for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines" (1 Sam. xxvii. 1). He might now seem to triumph, and whisper into the ear of David that all hope was over, and it was in vain to trust any longer in God, whom David had so grievously dishonoured. What could David do? He did the best thing, yea, the only thing he could do,—“David encouraged himself in the Lord his God” (1 Sam. xxx.), and victory, full, speedy, and complete is the result. “Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us” (Psalm lxii. 8).

“The storm may roar without me,
 My heart may low be laid,
 But God is round about me,
 And can I be dismayed?
 His wisdom ever waketh,
 His sight is never dim;
 He knows the way He taketh,
 And I will walk with Him.”

It was a dark day for the saints when Saul, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high-priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that, if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. Little did he think how that journey would end. A voice from that glory above the brightness of the mid-day sun arrested his mad career. The Lord Himself, who loved the Church and gave Himself for it, spoke to the persecutor in tones of wondrous grace, "Why persecutest thou Me?" turning the whole current of his thoughts and will into a totally different channel, and turning the reckless persecutor into the devoted servant of Christ and the Church so dear to Him; and in the very city of Damascus did he preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.

The Lord in glory is the same to-day. He sees all, He hears all, that transpires in this dark world below, while He waits for that moment when at the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, the sleeping saints raised and the living ones changed, we shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Take courage, then, sorrowing, tempest-tossed believer, God is for us; His power is almighty; His understanding is infinite; His love, what tongue can tell? Be of good cheer; the morning cometh, the morning without clouds! There remaineth a rest to the people of God,—a rest that will never be disturbed, never be broken in upon; no more sorrow, no more tears. No night there! Oh, cheering thought, "For ever with the Lord!"

"Tears of anguish shed at midnight
Shine like pearls in morning sunlight;
Thus our sorrows end through grace
In the light of Jesu's face."

W. R. H.

A GOSPEL STUDY.—SHOWING GRACE.

THE gospel, or glad tidings, of the grace of God, is the designation (Acts xx. 24) of the message to be proclaimed in these days. The Lord in His life preached, but preached the glad tidings of the kingdom of God (Luke viii. 1), whilst teaching about and offering everlasting life to any one in Israel who would receive it. On the day He rose, however, it was evident a new era had begun to dawn on this world. Gospel times were at hand; for He commissioned His disciples first on that day to preach the glad tidings of the grace of God unto all nations, beginning at, or from, Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 46, 47). Now this message, a new one for men to hear, was not the result of any afterthought on the part of God. It had always been His purpose that such should be proclaimed, though until after the death and resurrection of His Son the fitting time for it had not arrived. The resurrection an accomplished fact, the time long looked forward to by our God had drawn near, and the Lord, who had suffered unto death, the death of the cross, bearing thereon divine judgment for sinners, had the joy, we may well believe it, of charging His disciples with the service of proclaiming to any one, and to every one, tidings hitherto unheard.

If we desire, then, to acquaint ourselves with that message, and to learn how it was preached, we must necessarily consult the pages of the New Testament. The result of that probably will be that many a passage or history in the Old Testament will have an interest for us, as illustrating something connected with the Gospel, which, if read as a chapter in history merely, it would not possess. Let us turn to 2 Sam. ix. for an illustration of this.

David had reached the zenith of his power and glory. He had brought the ark of God into Jerusalem. He had subdued, too, the nations round about

him, and had given a substantial proof of it by dedicating to the Lord the silver and gold taken from those whom he had conquered, viz., Syria, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, Amalek, Edom, and Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah ; whilst Hiram of Tyre and Toi, king of Hamath, courted his alliance, and the latter gave him gifts. Humanly speaking, there was nothing lacking to David. From Edom to the Euphrates he ruled supreme ; none could withstand him.

It was at this juncture that he asked the question given us in the first verse of the chapter in Samuel already referred to : “ Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake ? ” Who suggested that to David ? No one, certainly, on earth. Evidently, the question implied it, he had held intercourse with no one who could answer it ; nor, it is clear, had any petition reached the foot of his throne to entreat his favour towards any of the house of Saul for Jonathan’s sake. David asked the question, and, as far as his courtiers were concerned, he asked in vain. None of them could tell him ; none of them, it is clear, had interested themselves in such a matter. Saul had been the king’s persistent enemy. All knew that. His grandson—for it turned out he had one, an heir male—was living across the Jordan in obscurity. But why should anyone about the court interest himself in such a person ? This question then, humanly speaking, had its origin in David’s heart ; for though at the height of his glory, he had not forgotten, not would he forget, the link that had subsisted between Jonathan and himself. Time did not efface the remembrance of it. Years, indeed, had rolled by since Jonathan’s death ; for the child, five years old on that eventful day (2 Sam. iv. 4), had grown up to manhood, and was himself a father (2 Sam. ix. 12) ; but Jonathan yet lived in the king’s heart : and that question, “ Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness

for Jonathan's sake?" told to all at court that, though Jonathan's deeds might, perhaps, no longer be talked about, he was remembered with affection by the conqueror of nations who was reigning at Jerusalem.

Had that question of David's met with an answer in the negative, the bowels of his heart must have been shut up; he so desirous to act in grace, but finding no one who was a fitting subject for it. Who should answer the question as David desired it to be answered? A man was found, Ziba, a servant of the house of Saul, who might tell the king what he wanted. Evidently it was no passing whim. It was not a momentary impulse that had swayed him. He was in earnest. He was desirous to show kindness, if the suited object could be discovered. Ziba was therefore called, and the question was put to him by the king. In such a business David would delegate a commission to no one. He would himself ask the question, and receive the answer direct from Ziba's mouth.

A moment of interest that must have been, as Ziba began to answer, "Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame upon his feet." "Jonathan hath yet a son." A suited subject for the king's favour could be found. There was one, but only one. The person sought after must be one of Saul's house, and of Jonathan's race. No one who did not answer to that description could share in the favour contemplated by the king; for the individual must answer to the requirements set forth by the one on the throne.

Can we read such a history, and observe the salient features of it, without being reminded of God, and the grace in which men may share? The desire David expressed had its origin, as we have said, humanly speaking, in David's heart. Many a person there might have been that day in want among the people; but to none except to those of Saul's house, and of Jonathan's race, was the king's favour waiting to be shown. Poverty, sorrow, suffering some might perhaps have pleaded, but all that would not in itself

have qualified the subjects of it to a share in David's special favour. Only to those of a certain race was the offer of grace to be extended. In this instance only one was found qualified to be a recipient of it.

As it was with David, so with God, but with God in an absolute way, the desire to act in grace springs wholly from His heart, and had its origin, we learn, in His heart before the foundation of the world (Ephes. i. 4). As with Jonathan's son, so with us, the favour to be shown is reserved for a certain race, one especial family, for the offspring of Adam are not the only family existing in the universe (Ephes. iii. 15). To none, however, but to those of his race has God offered to show grace. We may trace out the comparison; we must also mark the difference. One person only was found a fitting object for the king's favour. Thank God, thousands and ten thousands have been found fitting objects of divine favour. No one outside of Jonathan's direct line was sought after by David. To all those of Adam's race God offers the fullest grace. "I will give unto him that is athirst," are the words of Him that sitteth upon the throne, "of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. xxi. 6).

"Jonathan hath yet a son." What words for David's ear and David's heart. His desire could be satisfied in acting in grace towards that son, who was yet in total ignorance of the king's thought, or of the king's wish. Blessed indeed was the one that day who answered to the class that David had described. For him there was in store what no one probably on earth, beside David, had ever supposed.

"Jonathan hath yet a son." Just one. Thank God, as we have said, it is not one only of the children of men who answers to the description of those who can be subjects of divine and saving grace. But who, and what are such? The lost and dead (Luke xv. 24). Such is the description given us by Him who came to seek and to save the lost (Luke xix. 10). How many answer to this? All of Adam's race. None of his

offspring are found morally by nature in any other class. To such is participation in divine favour offered; on such, lost and dead, can God freely bestow it.

David was in earnest when Ziba's announcement had been made, "Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet." Now what use could such an one be to the king? He could not fight his battles; he could not wait on him; he could not minister to him. "Lame on his feet"! This told of Mephibosheth's incapacity and helplessness. Certainly he had done nothing to merit the king's favour, for till that moment David did not know of his existence in life. He could perform no act of valour to merit it, for he was lame, and how lame his subsequent history brings out: for when David fled from Absalom, Mephibosheth had desired to follow in his train, but could not, for Ziba had surreptitiously carried off the ass on which he was accustomed to ride, so he could not leave the city. Of what use, then, could he be to David? Better leave him, some might have said, in obscurity. Of what use could he possibly be? Of the greatest. He was just the fitting one for David at that moment. True, he could do nothing to earn the king's favour. His connection it was with Jonathan that marked him out as one suited for it, and his lameness made him only the more fit for it. He could be of great service, for he could be proof to all Israel of the grace in the king's heart.

How desirous was David to show kindness for Jonathan's sake; yet not more willing, not more desirous to bestow the favour he wished, than God is to act in grace toward us; for He sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world. He gave His only-begotten Son. He sent Him to die on the cross. Willingly the Son came. "I delight to do Thy will, O My God," are words which tell us of it (Psalm xl. 8). For lost ones, for dead ones He came. What had they done to deserve such love? Nothing. *Lost* tells of the activity of their will, like the sheep which wan-

dered. *Dead* speaks of the soul's condition. Such could not serve God. What can a dead person do? What good works can a dead soul produce? Of what use can such be to God? Let us hear the divine answer to that question: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that *in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus*" (Ephes. ii. 4-7). Of such use can those once dead, when recipients of life and salvation by grace, be to God. David, till Ziba told him, knew nothing of Mephibosheth. God knows, and Christ knows who those are who were chosen in Him before the "foundation" of the world, given to Him of His Father, and all of them shall come to Him.

Ziba's answer given, there was no holding back on David's part because Mephibosheth was lame. Nothing that could have been told David of his condition would have made him swerve from his purpose. Mephibosheth was Jonathan's son; that was enough to secure for him the outflow of royal favour. So the king sent, and fetched him from the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar. Nothing that God saw in us, or knew about us, has made Him change towards us. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman" (Gal. iv. 4). "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." And now that the world has rejected His Son, God has raised up a ministry of reconciliation, and given to the ministers of it the word of reconciliation to announce it to guilty creatures (2 Cor. v. 18-21).

Mephibosheth is now brought into the king's presence, and beheld for the first time the one whom Saul, his grandfather, had relentlessly and unrighteously persecuted. Mephibosheth with David!

What a meeting! Mephibosheth fell at the king's feet. Fitting position. Who will break the silence? One word does it: "Mephibosheth," said David, addressing him by name. Surely that must have encouraged him. "Fear not." That must have assured him, putting him at his ease before him, without the room for one doubt, as the king proceeded to announce the ground on which he would deal kindly with him for Jonathan, his father's sake. He might think of his lameness, might call himself a dead dog, but no sense of his incapacity to serve the king actively was to be any barrier in his thoughts to the outflow of the royal favour; yet the consciousness of his condition he was not to overlook. Would it not deepen in his heart a sense of the greatness of David's grace? Jonathan, thy father's sake; that was the ground, and unchanging ground, for Jonathan was dead. Had he been still alive, he might perchance by some act have forfeited the king's favour; being dead, that was impossible. Hence kindness to Mephibosheth on David's part was assured to him, if only he would receive it. How like God's ways with us, showing kindness to those who could not claim it, just like Mephibosheth; but worse, who deserved unsparing judgment, which Mephibosheth did not deserve at the hand of David. The guilty, the lost, God would set perfectly at home in His presence, telling them of the death of His Son, and of the abiding efficacy of His blood shed once for all on the cross. Now, since that is the ground on which God can act in grace, that ground can never alter. As Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth was a fitting subject for David's favour; and "for Jonathan, thy father's sake," assured him of the unchanging ground on which he stood that day. The guilty, the dead, such are suited subjects for divine favour; and the death of Christ once for all on the cross is the unchanging ground on which we stand, justified by His blood.

How many readers of this paper share in this grace?

Lost and dead : to such it can be shown, and none in that class can say they are excluded. Whosoever believeth on Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Mephibosheth was before the king, in whose presence he had never been before. Henceforth he would always stand before him. Thus privileged by the king, who could deny him this favour? David had granted it. Who could annul it? But more : he had sworn to Jonathan that he would not cut off his kindness to his seed. That oath was fulfilled ; and far more than what he had sworn did he do. Mephibosheth must have an inheritance, and a place at David's table always.

What had been his position? Dependent perhaps in measure on Machir's kindness. Now how wealthy he had become. "I will restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father, and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." Who of men, but David, had thought of this? Nothing less would suit his heart. The inheritance, the favour, was not measured by Mephibosheth's deserts, nor by his desires, but solely by those of the king himself. Unworthy, of course, he was "to eat bread at the king's table as one of the king's sons." This was favour unmerited, unsought, and unthought of by the recipient of it. Did he cavil about it? No, he accepted it. David could do much ; but our God has done more. All the land of Saul, thy father, was the measure of Mephibosheth's inheritance ; heaven and earth is that of ours. *As* one of the king's sons he could be ; but that little word *as* told its tale of David's grace and David's powerlessness. Far, far beyond man's thoughts are God's. We are His children, His sons and daughters ; and "if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17). How interesting is such a history when read in the light of the gospel.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

WHEN the Emperor Licinius was persecuting the Christians in Armenia, the Thundering Legion was stationed at Sebaste. Forty men in that Legion declared themselves Christians, and were sentenced to be exposed naked all night on a frozen pool—for it was winter, and bitterly cold. In a house on the edge of the pool a large fire was kindled, and food and wine and a warm bath were prepared under the charge of Sempronius, a centurion, and a guard of soldiers; and it was announced to the forty, that if any of them left the pool and entered the house, they would be considered to have denied Christ. So night came on, and the keen wind from Mount Caucasus made the citizens close their windows and doors more tightly, and heap up the fuel on their hearths. And on the frozen pool were the forty warriors, some standing lost in prayer, some walking quickly to and fro, some already sleeping that sleep which only ends in death. And ever and again, as the hours went slowly by, they prayed: "*O Lord, forty wrestlers have come forth to fight for Thee; grant that forty wrestlers may receive the crown of victory.*" And now, as the cold grew more intense, one of the forty could endure no longer; and he left the pool and came to the house where Sempronius and his men were keeping guard. But still the martyrs' prayer went up to heaven: "*O God, forty wrestlers have come forth to fight for Thee; grant that forty wrestlers may receive the crown of victory.*" And the prayer was answered. Sempronius, the centurion, was touched by his comrades' bravery. He declared himself a Christian, and took his place upon the frozen pool. And when the cold had done its work, and forty corpses lay upon the ice, forty glorious spirits, with Sempronius among them, entered into the presence of their King.—*Extracted.*

HAVE YOU ACCEPTED OR SLIGHTED THAT WHICH IS "WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION"?

WHEN we receive any truth on the divine authority of the Word of God, and the reception is by faith—we receive it for eternity. It is no evanescent thing that the memory quickly and carelessly surrenders, but it abides permanently in the soul as the incorruptible seed of the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.

But in how many cases the words and the facts of Scripture are adopted; they are tacitly or verbally assented to, and the memory, perhaps, retains them; and yet—alas! they have never reached the fleshly tables of the heart, have never been written with the finger of God there. There is a special danger of this where Christianity is the religion of one's country, where Bibles prevail, and churches and chapels are thick upon the ground, and where there is an organised ministry with colleges, schools, &c. all on professed Christian principles. Amid such a state of things there is so general and so usual an outward recognition of what we refer to, that the contrary is a rare exception; men profess and call themselves Christians as they call themselves Englishmen, and, accordingly, the word of God and the facts recorded receive a stereotyped assent which is delusive and dangerous. For Satan knows how to use a verbal orthodoxy, and an outward recognition of the Bible and biblical truth, to blind the soul to its real state in the sight of God.

Take, for instance, the word that we find in 1 Tim. i. 15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Here is a very simple statement, but one of immense moment for the soul. God is the speaker, and He gives His authority to the statement. How is it, then, that so few are *impressed* by the won-

derful truth of which it speaks? God takes pains, as one may say, to indicate the importance of that which He here communicates. It is, He says, a *faithful* saying on *His* part, and it is worthy of *all* acceptance on *our* part. "God is faithful," says this same apostle, who here writes to Timothy (1 Cor. i. 9; x. 13), and being Himself the faithful One, He imparts that faithfulness which characterises Himself to the word which He communicates to us. Again, in 1 John i. 9 we read: "If we confess our sins, He is *faithful* and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Thus we find that because He is Himself faithful, His word is a faithful word and His work a faithful work.

What shall we say, then, is the meaning of this being a *faithful* saying? Why, surely, that it is one which may infallibly be relied upon; one which shall not fail or lapse; one to which God pledges, as it were, His own character. It is signalled in this remarkable way by the Spirit of God. A poor sinner, reading this Scripture, is thus encouraged of God to rest the salvation of his soul on what God here declares.

But this saying is, moreover, commended to us for *our* acceptance. God attaches His own credentials, the credit of His own name and glory, to this faithful saying; He says it is "*worthy*." Worthy of what? Worthy of *all* acceptance—*i.e.*, of the acceptance of *everyone*, worthy of universal acceptance. Then, reader, it is surely worthy of *yours*! Have you, let me ask, accepted from God the blessed fact of which this saying speaks? Has your heart by faith rested upon His having given His Son—rested upon this wondrous, this incomparable truth, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners? That He should come into the world at all is no little thing. He who was, even in the depths of His humiliation and shame, never less than "God over all, blessed for ever;" He whom we fittingly address in the language of Scrip-

ture—"From everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God;" He, the Father of eternity and Creator of all created things, condescended to come into such a sad and sinful world as this! That was humiliation, surely; but why, why did He visit this earth? *Because of our sins!* Because we were lost, and were ready to perish! Because other help there was none; no other Redeemer could be found! Thus were we on the brink of everlasting perdition but for the grace and goodness of God.

But that blessed One came into the world and preached the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. He takes His stand in the midst of the rebellious Jews, and declares, "I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that *ye might be saved*" (John v. 34). In this simple way does He affirm what His presence implied, what His words signified. He was here, as He clearly implies, as the Saviour of men, and His words were for their salvation.

Take another Scripture (Rom. x.), where we see not the Master, but the servant; not the Saviour, but His apostle. "Brethren," says he, "my heart's desire and prayer to God for *Israel* is, that they might be *saved*." But as he proceeds, he takes a wider range; he gets beyond *Israel*, and his language embraces all to whom the heart of God goes out in mercy and in grace: "For the Scripture saith, *Whosoever* believeth on Him shall not be ashamed;" and again, "For *whosoever* shall call upon the name of the Lord *shall be saved*." Yes, dear reader, God sees us by birth and by practice lost, and ruined, and undone, and He cannot, He will not, propose to us anything less than what will fully meet our case—even that we should be **SAVED**.

And how is this to be effected? Hear, then, the word of the Lord: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." How clearly, how simply does God declare the way and means of that eternal blessing of which

He is the Bestower! And to make assurance doubly sure, He confirms what He has said with these words: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The heart and the mouth; believing and confessing; righteousness and salvation. These are what God has put together. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ—that faith which is of the heart—gets this divine answer, that we are reckoned *righteous* before God; and confession of the Lord Jesus—not the mere profession of the lip, but that genuine confession of Him which is connected with genuine faith—gets this divine answer, *salvation!* How real is the blessing, how solid, how lasting! We are saved; and if saved, everlastingly saved, for that which God doeth He doeth *for ever!* And that He might have the joy of doing this, He sent His Son into the world; and that sinners might be saved, He, the Lord of life and glory, became a man and suffered and died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God.

Oh! dear reader, may not we say, Our heart's desire and prayer to God for you is that you might *be saved?* "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

GLORY.—"Jesus desires that we should see His glory. Solace and encouragement for us, after having partaken of His shame: but yet more precious, inasmuch as we see that He who has been dishonoured as man, and because He became man for our sake, shall, even on that account, be *glorified with a glory above all other glory, save His who has put all things under Him*—for He speaks here of *given glory*. It is this which is so precious to us, because He has acquired it by His sufferings for us, and yet it is what was perfectly due to Him—the just reward for having in them perfectly glorified the Father."—J. N. D. *on John xvii. 24.*

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

November, 1865.

MY DEAR——,

Your welcome note reached me. Our resource, our answer to Satan, our joy is that the veil is rent because of the death of the Son of God; we are in heaven, and more than that, in God's presence, whiter than snow as to the soul. It is there we learn what the death of Christ implies—what sin is, what *flesh*—in communion with God.

Let me unfold this a little. Our *first aspect* of the cross is, when coming up out of the world in guilt and sin, we find Christ and His cross between us and God. We come to God by Him—we get peace, reconciliation, &c. The cross is thus the door—the way into the heavenlies; but being saved, *having got inside*, within the veil (Heb. x., in the holy of holies by the blood; but sealed there, in Eph. ii.), I find myself now in the light of God's presence, fitted to be there (a divine, full title by the blood), united to Christ, my righteousness; now capable, as I have the power of the Holy Ghost, and according to my measure, to enter into God's thoughts of the death of His only-begotten Son; there is a far different estimate from what I had below, *on the other side of the cross*, all needed as that was.

I discover now (to my amazement, I might say) that the question of sin having been brought right out before God, and the Lord having undertaken the work of redemption in meeting it, God seeing it in *its real character* before Him, its stupendous nature and magnitude, nothing but a perfect purgation of it, in a way that God's whole moral nature and Being should be glorified, could now satisfy. I find Christ has done this, yea, eternally glorified God in respect to sin, and all sin for ever—so that there never will be any glory known like the cross of Christ, on earth or in heaven. Thus *inside*, I begin in my

measure, and in true communion, to learn God's estimate of all—what sin is, flesh, *my own nature*, His love, Christ's unfathomable love and efficacious work. Here I learn the *One Body of Christ*, what we are one to another; the supper of the Lord assumes its real import, because it announces (shews) the death of Christ.

Practically, I often find people *grovelling* down here, not even in the divine understanding of the first and outer aspect of the cross, not in peace. I take up my place within the veil, and may not be understood! I find working—instead of heavenly affections, desire to be with Christ, the purifying hope of His coming to take us into the Father's house, unfeigned love to one another!—alas, I find bickerings, suspicions, quarrellings, lusts—alas, fruits of the flesh. . . . G. A.

THE LORD'S HIGH-PRIESTHOOD.

Plainfield, December 24, 1886.

DEAREST BROTHER,— . . . I do not accept what is new in the paper in question. "*Fundamental error*," thank God, I do not believe it. The writer *has*, no doubt, been misled by an attempt at a full, exact rendering of an Old Testament type (Lev. xvi. 17), in consistency with Heb. viii. 4, to suppose that the Lord must have entered heaven with His own blood between death and resurrection, and this to make propitiation.

Is it not possible in this case, as in so many, that words used in one sense by the first writer may be understood by his reviewer in a different sense, and thus a much graver estimate be made of them than the truth requires?

What does C. E. S. mean? That Christ bore sins in heaven? No, assuredly: he believes, with every sound Christian, that He bore them only in His own body on the tree; that there He exhausted the wrath which would otherwise have been our portion; that there He shed the precious blood by which alone propitiation is made; and that "it is the *blood* which maketh atonement for the soul." The one who accuses him has no idea, I suppose, that

C. E. S. holds anything else than this. For it is the *blood*, and only that, that he supposes the Lord presented to God after death and before resurrection, and of this there was immediate acceptance, as testified by the rent veil of the temple upon earth.

He takes nothing therefore from the value of the work of the cross; he adds nothing to it for acceptance with God. And this is not a doubtful matter, but as plain as can be. He is therefore *fundamentally sound* as to atonement, whatever else may be in question.

Now suppose he calls this bearing in of His blood to God the making of propitiation, and that this be an abuse of terms, it may be very unhappy, and calculated to mislead indeed, but it does not touch the conclusion that, however confused and confusing his language, he is not fundamentally unsound.

It is not, therefore, righteous to charge C. E. S. with holding that the work was not "finished" which our Lord declared so. The work that propitiates, he fully agrees, *was* finished on the cross: the propitiation *with it*, he supposes, required (according to Heb. ii. 17, connected with Lev. xvi. 17) the Lord as High-priest to present it Himself in heaven; and since resurrection was the proof of preceding acceptance, this must have been before resurrection.

But before we pass on to this, let us try to understand him more fully as to propitiation being made in heaven. And here the first point is, not is he right or is he wrong? but what does he mean? What is propitiation? A dictionary would tell us that to "propitiate" is to make favourable, to appease. "Propitiation" may have either the sense of appeal itself, or of *that which* appeases. To confound these two senses here, would be all the difference between fatal error and entire orthodoxy. Here, therefore, how easy to slip into apparently righteous, in reality most mistaken, accusation of another.

Does C. E. S. mean that *that* which propitiates was wrought in heaven? He believes propitiation to be by blood, as we know; does he mean that the blood was shed in heaven? Of course, no one supposes that. Well, then, he *can* only mean that the appeal itself takes place in heaven, because there is the throne of God, and there the

precious blood has been presented before Him. I think no one would charge C. E. S. with fundamental error here. At bottom, thus far we all agree, although we may express ourselves differently as to it.

Another question will naturally be asked here: how far does the Scripture use of propitiation agree with this? The trouble is often to reconcile our use of terms with that in Scripture, even when we have really the same thing in our minds. In all the New Testament the common version uses "atonement" only once, as is well known, and there wrongly for "reconciliation." The Revised Version drops it out altogether, yet the truth is fully presented. Propitiate, propitiation, are used but six times. Of these, Luke xviii. 13 we cannot insist on; two passages, Rom. iii. 25 and Heb. ix. 5, refer to the mercy-seat and its Antitype. Only three remain: Heb. ii. 17, where the Revised Version and J. N. D.'s alike translate, "to make propitiation for the sins of the people," and 1 John ii. 2 and iv. 10, in both of which Christ it is who is spoken of as "the propitiation for our sins."

The main passage for our purpose is, of course, the one in Hebrews, the text relied on by C. E. S. Here some would have the word rather "expiate," because "sins," not God, are the direct object, and you cannot say "to propitiate sins." But while there is some truth in this, it is not the whole truth, for the idea of propitiation inheres in the word as everywhere else used, and must here. J. N. D. therefore, with the full knowledge of what is in question, retains this rightly.

That the reference is to Lev. xvi. is undoubted also, and the characteristic of the day of atonement is surely "atonement in the holy place," where expiation is not the sense, but propitiation: the blood put on the mercy-seat is that on which all else depends, and makes it the mercy-seat or "propitiatory," as is the force of the word. C. E. S. is surely, therefore, justified in his thought of propitiation being made in heaven, if the holy place represents heaven. Or would the editor of ——— assert that in the Antitype there is no correspondence with the type?

Suppose, however, a difference of expression, there is no real difference as to what is meant thus far. It is the *effect in*

heaven of the work done on earth which the sprinkled blood proclaims, not anything added to it, and in this C. E. S. and his accuser are agreed.

But here is the real difference. C. E. S. sees that in the type for the blood to be on the mercy-seat, the High-priest must himself enter the holiest; now, then, in the Antitype he argues it must be the same. *Christ must enter the heavens* to present to God the value of His work, in order for there to be actual propitiation.

But here there is a manifest difficulty; for when did He thus enter? In resurrection? But the rent veil and the resurrection itself show that acceptance did not wait for Him to enter thus. Nothing, then, seems to fulfil the conditions in Mr. S.'s mind, but an entrance between death and resurrection.

Heb. ii. 17 decides for him, also, that it is as High-priest that Christ makes propitiation; and "if He were on earth," says the apostle, "He should not be a priest" (Heb. viii. 4). It must be then, it is argued, after He left the earth. ——— meets this by the statement that, although it was the high-priest who made propitiation, yet this was "extra-priestly" work. This, surely, is unwarrantable. Every part of the sacrificial service, on other occasions, devolved upon the priest as such. The sprinkling of the blood upon the mercy-seat ——— denies to be propitiation, I conclude, because this is in the holy place. What, then, in all the work beside can be claimed as not truly priestly? Then turn to Heb. ii. and read: "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a *merciful and faithful* High-priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." Surely, the whole thought here is of priestly work, which does not in the least affect the truth of His being "the representative of the people."

Propitiation is surely then, if anything is, priestly work; and the high-priest is only the *great* priest, more fully the priest than any other. C. E. S. is in this, again, more correct than his accuser.

Both are wrong, I believe, in that in which they agree, that the words in Heb. viii. 4, "If He were on earth He should not be a priest," necessitate the thought that the

Lord was not a priest till after death, not a priest at the very time He offered His sacrifice !

The text says nothing of the kind, and *Heb. v. 5 forbids the thought*. "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made a High-priest ; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee." This speaks undoubtedly of incarnation ; and if these words give, as is implied, the Lord's call to His Priesthood, *then His Priesthood is essentially linked with His manhood itself*.

What, then, of *Heb. viii. 4* ? First of all, let us read it as it should be read : "For if He were on earth, He should not even be a priest, seeing that there are those who offer gifts according to the law ; who serve the *representation and shadow* of heavenly things," *i.e.*, the tabernacle. Israel's priesthood was connected with an earthly sanctuary, the type of the heavenly one, the sphere of Christ's service. But who would separate the sacrificial service from the tabernacle ? or who imagine that the priests only acted as priests when in the sanctuary ? Even so, while there is everything to show that the great High-priest is a heavenly Priest, and His sanctuary a heavenly one, there is nothing to *confine* His priestly service to that carried on in heaven. This is rather to force than interpret the text, although I am sure that only conscientious adherence to it is intended.

Yet it has made needless difficulty. Looking at Christ *in* the sanctuary, the apostle assures us that if He were on earth He should not be a priest. Does that really deny that there was any priestly action upon earth ? What, then, was His intercession for Peter ? What His wondrous prayer in *John xvii.* ? Was He not a heavenly *Man* all through ? Why, then, not a heavenly Priest ? His ministration all through belonged to the heavenly sanctuary, as should be plain.

This was anticipation, doubtless, of a place He has now taken openly, and our joy is to know Him there. Christ was Priest when He offered Himself, and He offered Himself upon the cross. Propitiation was accomplished in heaven without the need of the Lord's going there for this. And His being there now, nay, His *going* there as Priest, is in Scripture the sign of redemption already accomplished (*Heb. ix. 12*). There is in it but one entrance, once for all.

May I ask, in conclusion, what is there in all this that we may not as brethren speak frankly of to one another, without these ready charges of "fundamental error"?—Ever, dearest brother, affectionately in Him, F. W. GRANT.

Reading, Dec. 13th, 1886.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—I am sorry that anything I have written should have stumbled your correspondent, who writes, "Scripture knows nothing of any other entrance than that of ascension."

This raises a question—are His entering into the holiest by His blood and His ascension the same thing? Are they convertible terms? They clearly are not synonymous. Now some of us have found in previous controversies—*e.g.*, that on the sufferings of Christ, and that also on the righteousness of God—the importance of marking how Scripture speaks, its phraseology, its form of expression being replete at times with instruction. Till we had learnt *that* we blundered, and thought others were wrong, but found it was ourselves who were using the terms in a way not warranted by God's Word. I believe it is the same as to the matter on which your correspondent writes. To come to the point. Is he authorised from the Word of God to make the statement given above? I believe not. And certainly he has not supported it by any reference to that Word. If the Lord's entrance as High-priest into the heavenly sanctuary by His own blood is *not* synonymous with His ascension into heaven, your correspondent's ground, seems to me, to be taken from under his feet. But, whilst saying this, let me add, that I fully justify him in not accepting a word I have written, unless he sees it in the Scriptures. That is right. Let the Word settle all such controversies. Are then the entrance of the Lord as H. P. by His own blood and the ascension recorded in Acts i., one and the same event? I believe not, for several reasons:—

I.—When speaking of the entrance in Heb. ix., the sacred writer draws an analogy between it and the entrance of Aaron as High-priest into the holiest on the day of atonement. Contrasts, too, there are. Aaron entered *once* each year, the Lord *once for all*. Aaron entered the *earthly* sanctuary, the Lord the *heavenly* one. Aaron entered with the blood of *bulls* and of *goats*, the Lord by *His own blood*. As to the analogy. Aaron went in as H. P., so did the Lord. He entered alone (Heb. ix. 7), so did the Lord. He entered to make propitiation by blood for sins, so did the Lord (Heb. ii. 17). For that could only be made by the H. P. with blood, and in the sanctuary. So the Lord as H. P. did that after death (Heb. viii. 4). Aaron went in on behalf of the people, representing them and the priestly house. So did the Lord. But His High-priesthood and service in connection with it, both the past and the present, are solely for others, not at all for Himself. In this last, of course, whilst the analogy holds good as to representation, there is a contrast which must not be forgotten. Now, was the Lord's ascension solely for others as His Priesthood was and is? By no means. He asks to be glorified with the Father with the glory

which he had with Him before the world was, having finished the work given Him by the Father to do. God, too, has highly exalted Him, because he stooped to death, the death of the cross (John xvii. 4 and Phil. ii. 9). The truth as to His person, and His voluntary humiliation called for His ascension. Another thing. He entered into the sanctuary on high as H. P. by His own blood. That characterized His entrance. He could not otherwise have entered as H. P. to make propitiation. Entering in by His own blood was an essential element in the case. But could we say, *He entered into His glory by His own blood?* Did He ascend to God's right hand by *His own blood?* On the other hand, He could not have entered on His High-priesthood till He had died on the cross. His High-priesthood is connected in the closest way with, and dependent on, His atoning death. His entrance by His own blood declares that, and shows that Heb. ix. 11-12 does not speak of ascension, but of something else.

II.—Scripture plainly speaks of the ascension. Mark xvi. 19, "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Luke xxiv. 26 and 51, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory." "Carried up into heaven." Acts i. ver. 2, 11, 22, "taken up," "gone into heaven." Ep. iv. 8, "Having ascended up on high, He led captivity captive." 1 Tim. iii. 16, "Received up into glory." 1 Peter iii. 22, "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto Him." Not a word, not a hint, in all this of a sanctuary, or of His blood. Now as Scripture plainly marks an analogy between the entering in of Aaron and that of the Lord into the sanctuary on high by His own blood, we may ask, is there, in the entrance of Aaron in Lev. xvi., anything analogous to what is spoken of in connection with the Lord's ascension into heaven? This last speaks of triumph and conquest. He led captivity captive. He sat down. Did Aaron conquer any foe by entering in within the veil? Did he sit down inside? We can all answer these questions, and the answer negatives most conclusively the thought that the Lord's entrance as H. P. by His own blood, analogous as it was to that of Aaron's on earth, was the same thing as His ascension. His entering into the sanctuary was *not* His entering into His glory.

III.—If Heb. ix. 12 treat of the ascension, then propitiation by blood was not made till six weeks and more after the Lord's sacrificial death, a conclusion only to be stated, I think, to be rejected, seeing it would be an anomaly in the history of sacrifice, and certainly at variance with the teaching of Lev. xvi. All in that chapter was done that day. Atonement, I believe, was completed in all its aspects the day the Lord died. Could we believe, unless Scripture states it, that all that took place *after* He died, and *ere* He ascended, took place before propitiation was made, *i. e.*, before God's nature had been cared for by the blood of atonement? Impossible, I venture to think.

Your correspondent speaks of the Lord's entrance in a disembodied state. Now I am not called upon to explain this if Scripture does not; but I am called to believe that He entered in by His own blood, which clearly was not His ascension. But I know no *a priori* reason why, what your correspondent speaks of, is so objectionable. Christ has entered the heavenly sanctuary once for all, never to come out of it till He

appears to His earthly people. He entered, I believe, on the day He died. They saw Him no more. He will not come out, till He appears to them, to which Zech. xii. 10 and Isaiah lii. and liii. refer. He went in on the real day of atonement. He will come out on the day that Israel will learn, how and when He made atonement for them. Yet He will descend from heaven (1 Thes. iv. 16), take up His saints, return there, and come out with them (2 Thes. i. 7; Rev. xix.), without ever once leaving the heavenly sanctuary. That, all taught in the Word will admit. If then He can descend from heaven in the future, and return to it, without ever leaving the heavenly sanctuary, I know not why He could not have entered that as H. P. ere He rose and ascended to heaven. His resurrection from the dead was not coming out of the sanctuary on high. Now it is remarkable that, whilst the Hebrews dwells so much on the Lord's presence in the heavenly sanctuary, it never once, if I remember right, certainly in the doctrinal part, mentions His ascending thither. It views Him as ascended, I need not say, for He has sat down at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honour. But Hebrews never mentions the *act* of ascension, though Scripture elsewhere is not reticent on this matter. See the way it speaks. "When He had by Himself purged sins, sat down." The act of ascending is passed over. So x. 12 and xii. 2. Now why is this, if not because ascension was no prelude to His entrance on His High-priestly duties on high? To have brought it in would have introduced confusion in the teaching concerning His High-priesthood in heaven, for He had entered the sanctuary once for all before ever He rose. I will now release you. The desire to help your correspondent has made me write at such length.—Affectionately yours in Christ, C. E. S.

I stand before God in the conscious perfectness of *that which He is*—one with *it* morally, in Christ who has glorified *it* in the act done for me, and who is now in glory, where righteousness has placed Him because of it, and all the favour of God in love can now shine out on me according to this, not one blessed perfection of God with which I am not brought into perfect accord, which has not been glorified in my being brought there by Christ; and by faith I stand in the consciousness of it, and I know Him in the full revelation of Himself, I am reconciled to Him as He is.—
J. N. D.

“KNOW YE WHAT I HAVE DONE TO YOU?”

SINGULARLY blessed it is to contemplate the Lord in the gracious attitude He assumes towards His disciples in John xiii. How totally unexpected it was on their part may be safely gathered from the utterances of wonder and alarm that break from the lips of Peter, “Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?” and again, “Thou shalt never wash my feet.” Of all the surprises the disciples had experienced when they beheld the miracles the Lord wrought, or when He told them of His sufferings which were to follow, not one was so great as this. The wonders He wrought, the announcement that He would die at Jerusalem, and the further revelation that He would rise again, not one of these things astonished them so much, apparently, as that that blessed One whom they had beheld, and listened to, and loved, should cast aside His garments during the Passover supper and, girding Himself with a linen towel, begin to wash their feet!

Do *we* also wonder, and ask how it could have been? We find a sufficient answer in the first verse of the chapter: “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end,” or, to *the uttermost*. And we have this also in the third verse: “Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God.” No less than four reasons are thus given us for what the Lord did:—1st, His unending love; 2nd, His absolute power; 3rd, His mission from God; 4th, His return to God. For this four-fold cause He girds Himself for service. For this cause *then*, and for the same cause *now*, “His own” while “in the world” are subjects of a ministry which is as salutary as it is significant, and as condescending as it is comforting!

If He love His own *unto the end*, how can He suffer defilement upon them? If He have *absolute power*, what shall stay His hand? If He *came from God* to

save them, why should He not do it to the uttermost? (Heb. vii. 25). If He have gone *back to God*, having reconciled us by His death, surely He will also save us in the power of His life! (Rom. v. 11). Therefore, beloved reader, for you and for me, as well as for Peter, if He do it not we have *no part with Him*. Viewed rightly, how soul-sustaining this is. He must *needs* do it, because otherwise you could have no part with Him, and that would pierce His heart with grief. He loves us, and perfectly, and for ever! He has died for us, and is returning to fetch us, as the next chapter (John xiv.) shows, but meanwhile He lives for us; yea, wonder of wonders, lives to serve us! The blessed One who has had His ear bored for perpetual service (Ex. xxi. 6; Ps. xl. 6; Is. l. 4, 5) has loved us so as to go down into death on our behalf, and is now alive for us in the presence of God as High-priest, and as Advocate with the Father. And having all things in His own hand in the presence of God to which He has returned, and whither also He is effectually bringing us, nothing less than this will satisfy Him, that He should be able to express in every way His service to us now, and, moreover, expend the affections of His heart upon us for ever.

Beloved reader, does your heart respond to the sweet music of His love? Then joyfully yield yourself to His present service. He wants the outgoings of your affections towards His blessed person. He wants your grateful, worshipping appreciation of His finished, sacrificial work. But more, He wants you to be consciously in the experience of His never-ceasing, personal service to you as High-priest with God, in maintaining you in practical power and enjoyment of all you have and are, and as Advocate whenever you miss the mark and go badly, so that you may have every day the joy of having part with Him—that is, a communion deep and blessed, an intimacy without reserve and without restraint.

And, oh! how humbling it is to learn that even

after all the wonderful work of the cross, the shedding of His blood, and our being thus washed all over once for all, and notwithstanding that we are dead and risen with Christ, yet did He not habitually wash our feet we could have no part with Him, no communion with His heart's affections, no intimacy of spirit with Him. Oh! how it exposes what even believers are on the one hand, but how it exalts, on the other, the rich and abundant provisions and resources of His infinite love!

But this especially should touch our hearts and attract us more and more to Himself, that if there be anything as to us which He cannot brook, it is that there should be between us and Himself any distance or reserve, any impediment to the full expression on His part of His infinite love, and any check on our part to its habitual and abundant enjoyment.

I do not here touch on the *example* which He gave in the action recorded in John xiii. Not until we understand and enjoy His service to us can we rightly enter upon or efficiently render a kindred service to one another. May we through grace know the blessedness of enwrapping ourselves (as it were) in His never-ending love, while experiencing the necessary sequence of it in His never-ceasing service, so long as we are "His own" who are "in the world."

THE GOD OF IMMENSITY, INFINITY, MINUTENESS.—Planets are racing through the sky at the rate of 100 miles each moment, but see how carefully God keeps their time. Jupiter never reaches his goal at any given point a moment too late or a moment too soon. One mistake of a second would wrench the system past all computation. The most unwieldy of the stars comes exactly to time. Turning from the evening sky, the astronomer said, "God is a mathematician." And as the *motions* are exact, and timed to the millionth of a second, so the *masses* are arranged

and guarded with the minutest care. God stands with scales more exact than those of the goldsmith. God is minute as well as vast in His universe. If His lines and angles stretch across the whole universe, yet the measurement is exact. What, then, is the inference from these heavens? The stars do not say, "Christ;" but they tell of a minuteness of God's care for worlds that is more than matched by His care for the souls of men. And how fitting, then, is the belief in a God who *is*, and who is ever *near*; a God who hears prayer, who has cared and cares for man, and who has revealed His grace in the moral glory of the Person and work of Christ, even as the glory of His wisdom and power are displayed in radiant orbs above us.—*Condensed from D. W. Faunce, D.D.*

MIRACLES AND LAWS OF NATURE.—What is a law of nature? It is God's usual way of doing things. What is a miracle? God's unusual way of doing things. No law binds Him to do His will in any particular way. In that case He would be imprisoned in His own natural laws. Even the silk-worm, that spins its own winding-sheet, at length bursts through its prison. Is the Infinite One entombed in His own world? It is a law of my nature that my arm shall hang down at my side. It weighs just so many pounds, and is attracted by just so much force to the earth; but when I lift my arm, I overmatch the law of gravity. The law exists and acts; but my will, practically and within a limited range, counteracts or suspends the results of that law. My will is above, or stronger, than that natural law, or is *supernatural*. Now if I can work right above a natural law, cannot God much more do so? If I am no prisoner of law, is He fettered thereby? The real wonder is that miracles are so few—that God so generally leaves natural laws to go undisturbed. The entire absence of miracles would be the most improbable of things.—*D. W. Faunce, D.D.*

BELOVED CHILDREN.—*Eph.* iv. 20—v. 2.

WHAT a wonderful place the Lord sets us in here, and sets us in the consciousness of it too (shows us how we get it, and the effects and fruits of it); and that consciousness is hindered by everything that is in contrast to God—wordliness, carelessness, or negligence—but it is where God has really set us, and we are to be “followers of God as dear children.” To think that such a word should come out of His mouth to us, calling us “dear children”!

We are familiar with the thought of being sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus; but when we think of the nearness and intimacy of this, and His revealing Himself to us and acting as such! It is not what He has done to deliver us from condemnation; but when the sin is all gone out of memory to be remembered no more, He sets us in this relationship of dear children, and sets us in the consciousness of it. If He says to me, “Dear child,” what a thought I have of Him and the wonderful condition I am in! Suppose a father says, “Dear child,” the expression gives consciousness of the love. He may have done all kinds of things *for* me, but the very word conveys to me where I am.

If we come to think of it and measure it, we have to think of Christ. He says: “I have declared Thy name unto them, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” He dwells in us to be the power and enjoyment of it, and attracts down from the Father’s heart what He feels for Him and for us; and that is shed abroad in our hearts. We are accustomed to look at God as Judge, and a solemn truth in its place: “He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look on sin;” but there is such a complete dealing with the whole question of sin according to God’s glory (looking at the work of Christ), that I get into the light, and the only thing it shows is that

I am as white as snow, leaving the heart free to enjoy this "grace wherein we stand."

Being justified by faith, I have peace with God (referring to poor sinners), and I can say, I am waiting for the glory; and besides that, I have access to this grace wherein we stand. It is of all importance for our hearts and affections that we should be there with God. We can't enjoy it fully if we allow evil, and even negligence dims our hearts. We get the doctrinal part before; and now He says, You are my dear children. It is not a mere doctrine, but the address of God, when He says "dear." What is it says it? It is His heart—what He feels about us. We are all poor sinners, I know; but He says it because He feels it. He is expressing Himself and reaching us, and that is what is so thoroughly blessed.

A child is to be obedient and dutiful, and all that; but it is so wonderful that God should express it; and He reckons on our hearts walking in it. (How dismal it is if a child of a family does not walk in the affections of it. A stranger you can have done with, but with one of the family it is dreadful, like harassing raw flesh). It is the outgoing of God's good pleasure and delight; and I know I am His delight—poor, unworthy creature as I am (but it is not a question of worthiness—that is in Christ). In God's sight the sin has been so dealt with that His heart can go out. There is no feebleness in the spring of love in Christ. *It took Him to the baptism.* "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." Till then the love could not go out freely; for His love He got hatred, but *then* His love could flow out in unmingled freeness.

Perfect love in the drinking of that terrible cup; now it is free to act—grace reigning because righteousness is accomplished. His whole love can go out through grace. I get through the work of Christ, God free to satisfy His love, all the purposes and delight of His own nature. "He will rest in His love."

Now, as it were, God says, I am content; I have made that person as happy as he can be. You never get a word about the prodigal son when he comes to the father (a deal about him when he is coming), but you hear about the father, and his joy in having him. The poor prodigal was happy enough; but it is not "meet to make him happy" (he had the best robe), but it is meet to make merry and be glad; for this my son was lost and is found. He tells it to us that we should know it: it was meet that *He* should make merry and have all glad around Him, because this poor sinner had come back. There is no hindrance to the full satisfaction of His soul, His own joy to have this *one* in.

We get two great truths here. The work of Christ—that was needed to put away sin and open out this love; there is a new creation, and we are dead; we have put off the old man, and put on the new. Then the love is perfectly free. And I get hold of another thing: What did it all come from? What have I got into? It comes from God; the very nature is *of God*. "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who *of God* is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." We are of God and the righteousness of God, all is of God and according to God; and we have a nature capable of understanding it, and of enjoying all God is.

All is free and full, and this nature can let itself out to me in love. The thing I am brought to enjoy is of God; and all my intelligence for conduct, and feeling, and everything is of God. Paul could say, "Be followers of me;" but the Spirit here goes up to the source, and says, "Be ye followers of God,"—you must take after your Father—"renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him," "after God created in righteousness and true holiness," and love too. Having the divine nature, we are in the presence of God,—sin put away, and we in the light as God is in the light. We are brought into the presence of

God in a double way, and capable of enjoying it. It is not of human wisdom or knowledge, but of a pure heart. We have more and more every day if we are walking with the Lord; but it is not intellect. All the intellect in the world never knew what it is to be loved by—never found out, God—never found, God.

We learn Him by our wants. He who learns what strength is, and knows the comfort of strength, is a poor, feeble person who can't get on upon a rough road, and the strong one lends his arm. What a comfort strength is to him. The real wants, the need that we have, God has met in every possible way. "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The perfectness of His love came out, in that, when we had no strength to get out of our state, He says, I must' come down to you. That is one end (it is *endless*), but it takes me up to enjoy God Himself. He comes down to the sinner where he is, and thus he learns there is love enough to reach from the holy throne of God to him, and to take his poor heart up to the throne of God. Not wisdom or intellect, but God revealing Himself.

As God was acting in this love, I get the very spring of it, and the root from the beginning to the end as I know Him. The light comes into my conscience and makes everything manifest, and the love comes too. We have to learn more of the treacherousness of our hearts, of the wiles of Satan and of the world; but I get into positive relationship with God,—and sin outside (by faith I mean), and there we have to keep it.

Set in the heavenly places as to doctrine, then we get the practical power. He sends us out from Himself to the world that men may know what He is. How close we have to keep to Him, and to judge ourselves—learning unsuspected bits of self and selfishness; and self confidence in us.

There is another element. We see we are brought to God. Not I as a poor human being having to do with God; I get Christ between—Christ revealed as

man. He came down to where we were as poor sinners. He can reproach Philip: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." God did not want to exalt Himself; but there was one new thing with God, to come down to us; the love that came down to be near us (as a man, but the divine nature breaking through the lowliness); so that when I talk to "the carpenter's son," I find the Son of God, the most lowly, humble Minister of goodness to me. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

Poverty was the new thing with God, and the poverty was that He came among us. I know God by it. I get it in an intimate Object, and the nearer I get the more I see the divine majesty. He is close to us—reaches us, touches us; nay, He is become our life. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." So near us—not physically, though He was that—that "He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all one."

All the power and grace in Him, but we all brought to this like condition. "I go to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." And the One I can be familiar, and intimate, and at home with, I find engaged with myself.

He expects our affections, expects our interests in His glory. If you thought of My happiness, you would be glad that I am going to My Father, away from this troublesome earth. "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father." In our hymn we get—

"O Jesus, Lord, 'tis joy to know
Thy path is o'er of shame and woe."

He expects us while worshipping and adoring Him to have our part in His joy, and that is where He comes so near.

There is great comfort in putting off the old man.

Practically in power I have put it off (I have to fight it every day); I have put it off altogether. We have a right to say, through the efficacy of Christ's death, "I have put off the old man and put on the new." I get complete deliverance. I may forget it, and let the old man come in, but "ye have put on the new, which *after God* is created in righteousness and true holiness." Morally, it is association with Himself. Who is the righteous One? God. And the holy One? God. Well, you are *after God*. No lower measure and standard. Even when He chastens us, it is that we may be made partakers of His holiness. In us it is a new creation, in Him it is eternal. That is what I am before God and according to God's work and doing, and I have done with the other man.

I am after His nature, or else I could not enjoy God. You can't get an animal that eats hay to eat meat. Christ has become our life, and the new creation in me is after God, according to what He is. He has not created anything inconsistent with Himself. In that life I am to live. That is another thing. We are feeble and weak: if we have it, it is in virtue of Christ's work, and He being glorified, we have the Holy Ghost. Being sprinkled with the blood, I receive the Holy Ghost; He comes and dwells in me. I get a nature capable of enjoying God; and He takes of the things of Christ and shows them to me. He stirs me up, leads, guides, and corrects, and rebukes my conscience if necessary. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Don't grieve Him. "We know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit that He hath given us."

There I get not only a nature to enjoy, but power suited to my capacity, whether as a babe or father in Christ. Christ having taken His place at the right hand of God, the Holy Ghost comes down and says: "This is your place. He is gone to His God and your God, to His Father and your Father, and you are all dear children." The blessed Spirit of God dwells in us, and we are not to grieve Him.

We have the new nature, and the Holy Ghost to keep our minds alive to the consciousness of it. And He takes of the things of Jesus and shows them to us. My sins are gone, and I am as white as snow. Dead with Him. He has stepped in and charged Himself with the whole thing—drank the cup. I am dead and risen, and I get consequently this—the present grace, and the earnest of what I shall have when He comes. I have it in a poor, earthen vessel, and am learning to discern good and evil, learning a deal about myself and about God ; but learning it as a dear child.

It may be very humbling, as it was to Israel in the wilderness, but they could never have learned it in Egypt. In the wilderness they had many humbling things to learn, and so have we ; but we are walking in the light as He is in the light, and we have “boldness in the day of judgment,” because as Christ is so are we in this world before God. Not as Christ *was*, because He was absolutely *sinless*. Wonderful to say, as He is in glory, as He is because grace has put us *in Him before God*. Then the Holy Ghost comes as the earnest. I am standing as an earthen vessel between the accomplished redemption and the glory He has won. We are dear children, and He speaks to us as such. The spring as to conduct is, “You as My child honour your Father.” If I am not your Father, there is no sense in the thing.

As brought to God, I have learned what God is as to His ways of grace (verses 31 and 32): “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice : and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Did God come and clamour against you in justice? He sent His Son to give Himself for you, and has forgiven you. There is a man that wronged me ; I am going to forgive him, as God forgave me, and (if I am near enough to God to do it) to show out what we have been learning is the joy of our souls.

“Walk in love.” There we see the preciousness of Him who brought it so close to us, as “Christ hath loved us, and given Himself for us,” &c. Don’t you know what that means? Have you not understood what Christ’s love to you, as a poor creature, was? Have you not learned for yourself? Did He not give Himself up—no light thing? Yes! Then you go and give yourself up! He did not merely give a great deal to us (He did give us everything), He gave up *Himself*. The law requires the measure of your love to yourself to be that of your love to your neighbour; grace requires you to give up yourself entirely. In a sinful world, I want something more than the former. I have to do with people who wrong, and insult, and harass, and outrage me. Christ did more than love us as He loved Himself; He gave Himself up entirely.

The perfectness of love is measured in self-sacrifice. We may fail in that, but there is no other measure. “We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” Was not God manifested in Christ? Is not Christ your Model? He the blessed Son of God, walking through this world, manifested God, with a divine superiority over evil. It is put away between us and God; and I am to be above it between me and man, the power of good in the midst of evil. If you see unrighteousness, and your spirit boils over (you may “be angry and sin not”—righteous indignation at evil—but if it boils up that won’t do), Christ was the expression of unavenging righteousness: “If ye do well and suffer for it,” &c.

One word as to carrying this through. “Walk in love,” &c. (verse 2). I give myself up *for* others, but *to* God. If I give myself *to* others, I may not go right, for they may not go right. The lower and worse the person I give myself up *for*, the higher it is. The principle of Christ was, He gave Himself *to* God, but for the vilest. It was a sacrifice of love—love that has its motive in itself for God, its object in God—and that kept it steady in the path.

You get further in the chapter: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." You find light brought in, the full light of Christ into the conscience, and the full love of God into the heart, and then you will go right. Our consciences kept alive, and walking in the undisturbed consciousness of that word of God, "Dear children"—the way He addresses us—the feeling of affection going out from His heart, so that when I go to Him there is not only the love that sought the sinner, but the love now in the relationship that finds delight in expressing itself.

Wherever you see the world or selfishness gets in (evil, too, I need not say), *that* is not *after God*, but after the world and after the devil. That is like a man asleep; it never says he hears or speaks (he may dream). "Arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." If my heart goes with the things of the world, Christ is not shining into it. There may be glimmerings, but I can't say "Abba," and go to Him with the sense that He will say, "Now, my dear child, go and follow Me." And we *ought* to be walking in it!

J. N. D.

HYMN.

(From the German by M. B. R.)

LORD Jesus, faithful Shepherd!
 What love, what care like Thine?
 Thy wanderings sheep Thou brought—
 Safe home in grace divine. [est
 And now Thine eye doth watch me,
 Lest from Thy paths I stray;
 Thy mighty arm supports me,
 Protects me night and day.

Refreshed by living waters,
 In pastures green I'm fed;
 Through trial and temptation
 By Thee in safety led,

Thou art my comfort, Saviour,
 Thou art my arm in fight;
 To know Thee near is blessing,
 And peace, and life, and light.

Thy voice shall banish sorrow;
 Nor wilt Thou tarry long,
 For now the morn approacheth,
 That morn of waking song.
 Then all Thy ransomed pilgrims
 Thou wilt with Thee unite,
 And thus appear, Lord Jesus,
 O glorious, wondrous sight!

HYMN.

(From the German by M. B. R.)

ALL glory, praise, and thanks to Thee,
 Lord Jesus Christ, for ever be!

Who didst for sins atone;
 Son of the Highest! Thine the crown,
 And Thine the honour and renown,
 Now on Thy Father's throne!

To save the ruined and forlorn
 Thou wast as Man amongst us born,
 On Calvary Thou wast slain;
 O love unequalled! Thou didst there
 Our load of guilt and misery bear,
 And life for us didst gain.

Then glory, praise, and thanks to Thee,
 Lord Jesus Christ, for ever be!

We raise the note again:
 Our glorious Sun of light and grace,
 We soon shall see Thy blessed face,
 And joy to praise Thee then.

MURMURS VERSUS PRAISES.

SOME murmur when their sky is clear,
 And wholly bright to view,
 If one small speck of dark appear
 In their great heaven of blue.
 And some with thankful love are filled,
 If but one streak of light,
 One ray of God's good mercy gild
 The darkness of their night.

In palaces are hearts that ask
 In discontent and pride,
 "Why life is such a dreary task,
 And all good things denied?"
 And hearts in poorest huts admire,
 How love has in their aid
 (Love that not ever seems to tire)
 Such rich provision made.

R. C. Trench, Archbishop of Dublin.

A GOSPEL STUDY.—REPENTANCE.

“THAT repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among (or to) all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke xxiv. 47). These words fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus, when He met His disciples in the upper room at Jerusalem on the day He rose from the dead.

To preach repentance was nothing new. John the Baptist had preached it (Matt. iii. 2), and the Lord likewise (Mark i. 15). Where failure has come in on man's part as concerning his duty to God, repentance is a needed exercise ere God can allow the guilty one to enjoy His favour and goodness. Hence to all the nations was repentance to be preached, beginning at Jerusalem.

In the Acts we see this commission begun to be carried out. Peter in the upper room proclaimed the need of it to the multitude pricked in their heart (Acts ii. 38). Paul on Mars Hill, within sight of heathen altars and temples, insisted on it (xvii. 30). Nor were these the only occasions on which that subject was taken up. In the temple courts, Peter's voice was heard insisting on it (iii. 19). Before the Sanhedrim the apostles proclaimed it, as they told of Him whom God hath exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins (v. 31). In Samaria, Peter urged the importance of this on Simon Magus (viii. 22). At Ephesus, both publicly and privately, Paul had pressed it (xx. 21). Wherever he went, first unto them at Damascus, next at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, the great apostle showed that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance (xxvi. 20). The failure of each and all was thus declared, and the path which could lead into blessing was at the same time pointed out.

Jews and Gentiles alike had failed. All equally

God's creatures, all His responsible creatures, though not all responsible in the same measure, repentance was needed for every one. Who commanded it to be preached? God. And why? He has told us by the mouth of His servant Paul: "Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world (or, habitable earth) in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31). It was a fitting moment, and a fitting place for the Apostle Paul to proclaim it. A fitting moment, for he and his hearers were living on earth between the resurrection and the return of the crucified, but now exalted Saviour, to judge and to reign. It was a fitting place, because standing in the midst of so many temples and altars, he thereby set forth the impossibility of "man being saved by the law, or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature." Philosophers might jeer, the Epicureans might deride, the Stoics might maintain an impassive appearance, but none could with safety afford to neglect the important and solemn announcement then made. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is not merely an historic event, and a miraculous event which happened in Judea, but it concerns the whole habitable earth. Wherever the children of men dwell, the fact of the Lord's resurrection concerns them. It is a witness to all of a day of judgment, and an announcement to all that the Lord who was crucified is to be their Judge (2 Cor. v. 10). Repentance, therefore, had need to be pressed, if any were to be saved. God desires to save, and hence has sent forth this message. Accordingly, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul constantly and earnestly pressed; pointing out, too, the need of doing works meet for (or worthy of) repentance (Acts xxvi. 20), the goodness of God leading men to repentance (Rom. ii. 4).

But what is repentance? How many a one has been perplexed about this, through lack of simplicity, and, it may be, from defective teaching. Now, repentance is a judging of one's self and of one's ways, and a turning from them. A change of mind? Yes. About whom, or what? About God? No; about myself and my ways. But that is not all. The Scripture insists on works worthy of repentance. Fruit worthy of it is to be produced. An example of it Jeremiah prophetically describes, in language which in a future day Ephraim will make use of: "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn Thou me, and I shall be turned; for Thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." And what is the answer on God's part? "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore My bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxi. 18-20).

How, some may ask, can this be brought about? It is an important question. And when the conscience is aroused, fearing the coming judgment, it is a question which cannot be lightly dismissed. How simple is the answer. He who was crucified is exalted to give repentance and remission of sins (Acts v. 31). The coming and unerring Judge is the One who gives repentance to those needing it, who will receive it. He *gives* it. Efforts, toil, self-mortification, all are in vain. He *gives* it, as we learn; for it is wrought in the soul by the word of God acting on the conscience by the power of the Spirit. So it is characterised as repentance towards God, and repentance unto life (Acts xx. 21; xi. 18); fruit of godly sorrow, which works repentance unto salvation not to be repented of

(2 Cor. vii. 10). There is then to be considered the instrumentality which can work it in us, and the dealing with individuals to effect it. To illustrations of both, let us now turn.

And first as to the instrumentality. That is the word of God. "The men of Nineveh," the Searcher of hearts and future Judge of men declared, "repented at the preaching of Jonas" (Matt. xii. 41). Then a deep acquaintance with revelation is no needful preliminary qualification. The Ninevites had no previous revelation from God. Education, scholarship, leisure, these are not indispensable requisites, as that history markedly testifies. Of course there were men of education and of leisure in that large city, but there were many also who had to labour for their bread. Was it only the learned who bowed to the prophet's message? All classes gave heed to it, no one, perhaps, being more surprised at the result than the messenger himself.

Told to go to Nineveh, the metropolis of a great Asiatic power, the prophet attempted to evade the discharge of such a service, but in vain. God's purposes of goodness to that city and its inhabitants were to be carried out; and Jonah, the son of Amittai, of Gath-hepher, of the tribe of Zebulun, was the instrument selected for this purpose. And his wilful disobedience, and his miraculous preservation in the depths of the sea by being in the fish's belly, only the better fitted him to assure the Ninevites that God did judge evil, and yet could act in grace towards those who had wilfully disobeyed Him. Cast out then by the fish on dry land, he went to Nineveh a stranger, unknown probably to any one within its walls, and so without a friend in it, or a companion by his side. And he went with a message not calculated, humanly speaking, to assure him of a favourable reception, nor one which probably had ever been heard there before: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah iii. 4).

Who was to preach that? A man of the kingdom of Israel, which under Jehu had paid tribute to Shalmeneser II., a former king of Assyria. This fact, unnoticed in Scripture, but recorded on the black obelisk now in this country, was doubtless known to the prophet, and well known to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Who, then, would be likely to listen to such a preacher, one of a country the Ninevites would despise? Who would favourably receive such a messenger, announcing what to unconverted man is most unwelcome—the near approach of a crushing judgment? How, too, should such an one know the near or distant future? they might ask. Had they not wise men to forecast the future? What could that stranger know, which they did not? Such thoughts as to the probable reception he would meet with might naturally have passed through his mind. But what was the result?

No messenger with such an ordinarily unwelcome message had ever met with the reception which Jonah did. He "began to enter into the city a day's journey; and he cried and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah iii. 4). In that one day his work was done. The word told on the people, and hearts were bowed. What caused this remarkable result; for remarkable it was, standing out as it does without a parallel, or anything approaching to it, in the history of Christian missions? Was it some peculiar personal influence exercised by the preacher? We know how personal influence can sway those brought under it. But the prophet had only traversed about one third of the city. Multitudes in it could not as yet have seen him, much less have heard him. Was it anything especially attractive in his intonation? It is unlikely that a native of Northern Palestine would have charmed by his voice or pronunciation the rulers and courtly subjects of the renowned and long-standing capital of the Assyrian empire. Was it the persuasiveness of his message? He only announced

destruction, without one ray of hope to gild the edge of the dark thunder-cloud, and that destruction as near at hand. Was the king struck with the appearance or manner of the prophet? It would seem the king had never seen him, when he issued his decree for a general fast with external tokens of humiliation; for we read, "Word came unto the King of Nineveh." He heard of the prophet, but had not seen him.

Yet all hearts were bowed, as bullrushes before the wind. What had done it? The prophet was alone when he began to preach. Listeners heard, and could not keep silence. The word was passed on. People could not be still; that was evident. For the king heard through some intermediate agency, and himself swelled the number of workers in the cause, as "he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh, by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing; let them not feed, nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God; yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not? (iii. 6-9).

Now, what had wrought this marvellous result? Human influence certainly had not. Humanly speaking, everything was against the success of the message. Jonah preached the preaching which God had bidden him. God then blessed it, and pressed home on consciences His own word. It was the simple word of God which had acted in this marvellous and widespread way. What earnestness was displayed. He who reads all hearts has Himself told us, they repented at the preaching of Jonah. What reality was manifested. The beasts had not sinned; the Ninevites had. Ignorance of the true God, of

course, was universal in the city. They possessed no written revelation from the God of heaven, and any traditionary record had probably died out. To the first verbal revelation, however, that they received they gave attention. No excuses were made, no palliation of the past attempted; but clothed in sackcloth, both man and beast, and fasting all alike, that vast city was prostrate, as it were, before the footstool of the Almighty, brought low by the preaching of His word. And what were the tidings announced? Grace? No; judgment—nothing but judgment.

Never before, and never since, has such a spectacle been witnessed—a whole city bowed down by the word of God, and all its inhabitants casting themselves on the sovereign mercy of the Creator. Noah preached righteousness, but, as far as we know, preached it in vain. Three thousand were pricked in heart at Pentecost, but Jerusalem was not humbled. At Nineveh how different. As we have said, with every circumstance humanly speaking adverse to success, the preacher a stranger, and quite alone, a native of Northern Palestine, and of that kingdom which under Jchu had paid tribute to Assyria, the message, too, anything but attractive, yet all were bowed in humiliation and fasting before God. A message from the God of heaven whom they did not serve, and whom they had not known, brought all within the vast enclosure of Nineveh on their knees in sackcloth and in earnest supplication.

What more marked illustration of the simple power of the Word could be conceived? Jonah preached, consciences were reached, all hearkened. All signs of merriment vanished; lightness and frivolity fled away; all were in earnest, for they believed the message. Who after reading this will put a limit to the power of the Word? If the instrument is looked at, man might say it is hopeless work. But who should not confide in the simple delivery of the message? God spoke by His servant, one who had sadly failed, and

the city of 700,000 fell prostrate before His footstool. God works still, and by His word which works repentance. It may be a word of grace, or, as it was in this case, a word of judgment which is used. In any case it is God's word, His message which does the work. What confidence this should give. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. iv. 6).

The goodness of God leadeth to repentance. Illustrated in this history that surely was. God, who is love, is also light. He bears for a time, but not for ever, with the ungodly. Judgment must come, if repentance is not wrought in the soul. His period of forbearance with Nineveh was then well-nigh exhausted. Forty days more, and judgment must have overtaken them. Who warned them of it? God, by His servant; God, whom they knew not. Was their ignorance of Him a sufficient plea for arrest of judgment? No; they were His creatures, and responsible creatures. Forty days, and then—what? Unsparing judgment. On the brink of a precipice they stood, but wholly ignorant of it, till Jonah preached, sent by the God of heaven to warn them, and to bring them to repentance. For judgment is His strange work. On the brink of a precipice men still unsaved now stand. Have they forty days respite assured to them? Nay; not forty hours, not forty minutes, not forty seconds can they call their own. The judgment-day is fixed; the Judge is appointed; and how soon any one still unsaved may be beyond the reach of grace no one can say. But as with the Ninevites, so with men now; He who knows the span of life on earth and the limit of forbearance He has allotted to each one, is the One who has sent out a message commanding all men everywhere to repent (Acts xvii. 31).

The Ninevites believed God (Jonah iii. 5). The work was real. The message effected the divine purpose; it put the conscience of those ignorant heathen

in connection with God. He was now everything to them ; their idols were nothing. The whole question was—Could, would God be merciful? An answer in the affirmative—a definite, unhesitating reply—could alone satisfy them. They prayed, surely, as they had never prayed before. They prayed to One they had not known, or worshipped before. They agreed to fast, and to clothe themselves in sackcloth. For how long? For a day? No specified time was expressed in the decree. We can understand that. They turned from their evil ways, and were prepared to fast and to wear sackcloth, till assurance was vouchsafed them that the threatened doom was averted. What earnestness is manifested when the conscience has been reached by the word of God. God saw them ; God heard them. “God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way ; and God repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them ; and He did it not” (iii. 10).

To God they cried : “Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?” (iii. 9). The Holy One, blessed be His name, did not let them sink into despair. To Him they turned ; to no intermedium did they betake themselves. With God they had to do. They learnt that, for He had spoken to them by His servant Jonah. To Him they cried ; nor did they cry in vain. What a waking up for them ! what opening of eyes ! God, whom they had not served, held them responsible for their ways, and threatened to punish them for their wickedness. What mercy that He warned them, who did not deserve it, forty days before the divine forbearance would be exhausted. He desired to save ; He does that still. “Who can tell,” &c., they cried. For no mercy had been offered them. Thank God, no one need say that now. We *can* tell, for God Himself has assured us, that no one who comes to His Son shall in any wise be cast out.

We have spoken of the instrumentality God uses—

His word. But there are occasions, when some special sin, or course of sin, has to be pressed on the conscience ere relief from fear of judgment can be obtained. An instance of this is furnished in the history of Joseph with his brethren, when they went down to Egypt to buy corn (Gen. xlii.-xlv.) Joseph, when he saw them, knew them, but they did not know him. Purposes of grace he had towards them, as his conduct throughout proved. No bitterness, no vindictiveness was found in him whom they had cruelly treated. He would have them at ease before him, and at home with him; but repentance must first be wrought in them. How did he bring this about? They must judge themselves for the past.

In pursuance of this, he first made himself strange to them, and spake roughly to them (Gen. xlii. 7). They had been the original cause of his imprisonment. They must be imprisoned (17). Then the remembrance of their brother came back with power. Joseph did not speak of it; no one in Egypt knew of it; but a monitor there was within their breasts, which, though it may have been dormant for a time, could not be silent for ever. It now awoke, and his very look of anguish was vividly recalled to each one: "We saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear." Memory does not die, though it may for a time slumber. When the dead are judged according to their works, will they not remember them? Joseph's brethren now recall the scene, and own they were verily guilty; and rightly, therefore, were they now in trouble.

But they had sold Joseph into slavery, and Judah had been the leader in that. Slavery must they face as their doom, and Judah especially, ere grace on Joseph's part could be known by them. This we see in xlv. Accused of stealing the cup, but guiltless of it, they declare their willingness that the offender should die, and the rest should be slaves in Egypt to him whose hospitality had been so abused. Horror

stricken they became when the cup, after a search was made, was found in Benjamin's sack. All turned back to Egypt; and now Judah, to save Benjamin, volunteers to be the slave in his place. He faces the very doom to which he had consigned Joseph. When this was reached, relief came. The doom was averted; for Joseph was yet alive, and they stood owned as his brethren in his presence. Wisely had he dealt with them. All had to remember and judge themselves for the past; and Judah, the greatest offender, saw nothing before him but life-long slavery, or the breaking of his aged father's heart. To that he was brought, an exercise surely never forgotten. That done, relief appeared. Joseph revealed himself to them, and the black cloud of life-long slavery, a fitting punishment, rolled away, and they all basked ever after in the sunshine of Joseph's undeserved but continuous favour. The goodness of Joseph they then learnt. The goodness of God, which leads to repentance, all God's saints have known.

C. E. S.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

I JOHN i. 4.

ONE thing I noticed was this, that the thing that was revealed to them—the eternal Life that was with the Father—is *declared by them* in all the fulness and integrity of its revelation to them, though passing through such a poor medium as to what these fishermen were in themselves. It partook of no imperfection from them, for God was the Author of both one revelation and the other. How precious that is! It is the eternal Life which was with the Father which they declare unto us, through what they *saw* and *heard*, and nothing else, and nothing less; and it is this which we have heard and seen, and nothing else or less, and we are in Him that is true—*i.e.*, in His Son Jesus Christ.

Another thing I noticed with especial force this morning, and it is this, that the word "fellowship" is the link between the two halves of the chapter. It is the theme of the chapter, if not indeed of the epistle subordinately. What is fellowship in the mind of God? It is the communion of saints with "the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." Is nothing else fellowship? *Nothing*. It is *our entrance into* what is the common joy, and delight, and blessedness of the Father and His Son. There may be associations and affections among saints on earth, but all fall short of "fellowship" if not "with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." How do we get into it? By the revelation of the eternal Life to us. Hearing and seeing Him, we are drawn into this new world. Of course, the Holy Ghost is the power of it, and the new nature the capacity for enjoying it, but these are not here the subject. The Object in whom the Father has been revealed, and who is the Substance of our blessing, Himself the eternal Life, who is our life, is what is here.

Then, again, who have part in this fellowship? Only those who are walking in the light, as He is in the light. This is the absolute condition of entering into this fellowship, whether we think of it with God Himself or with one another. And the more I weigh it, the more I am convinced that "one with another" is just one with another, and it is the solemn declaration that there is no "fellowship" of saints except as we are walking in the light as He is in the light. Sin separates, love only binds together, and God is love. Love gathers, but love gathers out of the darkness *into the light*. There only can love lay down her gathered lamb or sheep. There it is safe.

The Church is "in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ." Blessed position, in which the weak one will seek to abide. But, then, how can such poor, sinful, failing things as we are *be* there, or *abide* there? Ah! the cross comes in in answer: "The blood of

Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." That has fitted us for being in the light ; and we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Thus we are restored ; and if we confess our sins, thus are we cleansed. Precious grace for you and for me, and all saints." J. R.

. . . Surely heaven becomes more attractive to our hearts as Jesus removes one and another of our precious ones before us. One thing has been a great stay to my own soul when our darling babe was taken up, viz., that earth is not the place for the enjoyment of the affections begotten of God in our relationships down here. Here we form the link, and here too we may taste the sweetness of the joy, but heaven in all the vastness of its eternity is the place in which to the full, and in His presence too, we are to enjoy the love and presence of those dear to us. Time is but a few moments in comparison, and not till we get home can we do more than sip of this cup of blessing.—Ever yours affectionately in Christ, J. R.

FELLOWSHIP IN REJECTION.

MY heart has perfect repose in the thought of being rejected. I only trust I shall always be able to bear it in meekness ; neither in disdain turning from and scorning those who thus act, nor in self-vindication retaliating, but accepting all simply as that path in which we are to have fellowship with Jesus, who was so misunderstood, and whose principles were so little appreciated, even by His apostles and brethren. It is so valuable a school to learn in ; the one in which the more you love the less you are loved, and still not be faint and weary. At times my heart is very sick at the aspect of things ; such divisions, such jealousies, such evil surmisings ; but then, I think, thus it was with the Lord. If I am called a teacher of blasphemy, so was He ; if I am called a Sabbath breaker, so was

He ; if my authority to teach is questioned, so was His ; if He was neglected by His own people, so are we.

J. G. B.

MODERN MARTYRS IN AFRICA.

“THEY made the utmost effort to obtain their release, but all to no purpose. Three of the younger were at last returned to them, but the other three were shamefully tormented and done to death.

“They were taken, with Kakumba and Mr. Ashe’s boy, and also Serwanga, a tall, fine fellow who has been baptised. These three were tortured ; their arms were cut off, and they were bound *alive* to a scaffolding, under which a fire was made, and so they were *slowly burned to death*.

“As they hung in their protracted agony over the flames, Mujasi and his men stood around jeering, and told them to pray *now* to Isa Masiya (Jesus Christ), if they thought that He could do anything to help them. The spirit of the martyrs at once entered into these lads, and together they raised their voices and praised Jesus in the fire, singing till their shrivelled tongues refused to form the sound—“*Killa siku tunsifu.*”

“Daily, daily sing to Jesus,
Sing, my soul, His praises due ;
All He does deserves our praises,
And our deep devotion too ;
For in deep humiliation
He for us did live below ;
Died on Calvary’s cross of torture ;
Rose to save our souls from woe.”

Bishop Hannington’s last words to his friends in England—words scribbled by the light of some camp-fire—were : “If this is the last chapter of my earthly history, then the next will be the first page of the heavenly—no blots and smudges, no incoherence, but sweet converse in the presence of the Lamb.”—*Life of Bishop Hannington, murdered in Eastern Central Africa, Oct., 1885.*

THE SUFFERINGS AND THE GLORIES OF CHRIST.

“WHAT God hath joined together let no man put asunder.” Thankfully may we own that God has connected these things together, and will not suffer them to be sundered. Every thought or experience of the sufferings should conduct the heart onward in anticipation of the glories to follow. Thus we read of the Lord Jesus, “Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Thus also of Abraham the pilgrim while in “a strange country,” “He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ;” and again of the patriarchs generally, we read they “ confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth ;” and the Holy Ghost’s comment on this is, “ They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country ;” “ They desire a better country, that is an heavenly : wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God ; for He hath prepared for them a city.”

In respect to the Lord, we find Him appealing to the two disciples who walked with Him to Emmaus on the day of His resurrection,—“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” Very evidently does He imply that such an entering in was by the ordained pathway of His sufferings,—thus accounting for the sufferings by their terminus in glory. And upon this He expounded to those favoured disciples, Cleopas and his companion, “in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” His subject was evidently “the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow,”—these He found “in all the Scriptures,” beginning at Moses and travelling down the line of testimony to the very last of the prophets. In Peter’s first epistle (i. 10-11), we have a very distinct statement respecting these

prophetic Scriptures, viz., "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you : searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory (glories) that should follow." The very first announcement of a prophetic character from the mouth of God ("thou shalt bruise His heel") contained a reference to the sufferings of Christ ; and when the Lord expounded to the two wayfarers, "beginning at Moses," the things concerning Himself, He doubtless began with this initial declaration, in which God first broke the eternal silence concerning the Man of His counsels. It was only by submitting to have His heel bruised that He could fulfil the purpose of God in bruising the serpent's head. If God was to be glorified, *ought not Christ to suffer?* If Satan was to be cast out, *ought not Christ to suffer?* If the world was to be judged, *ought not Christ to suffer?* If He could not otherwise acquire those glories of Prophet, Priest, and King, and the higher glories of Head and Bridegroom of His body and His bride, *ought not Christ to suffer?* If we otherwise could never taste His grace, could never share His throne, or see His blessed face, *ought not Christ to suffer?* If otherwise the earth could never be fitted for the display of His millennial glory, and become the scene in the eternal state of God's tabernacle among men, *ought not Christ to suffer?* Heaven and earth, God and the saints, Christ and the Church, are all elements in the question, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" But the necessity for His sufferings was no greater than is the certainty of His glories, for the latter is no less the guerdon than the sequence of the former. How, then, can the glories fail to be adequate to the sufferings? Immeasurable were the sufferings, and equally immeasurable the glories, which are now waiting for Him who endured them! These consider-

ations, then, assure our hearts, both of the certainty and of the magnitude of the glories of Christ. We can thankfully and joyfully look onward, as those who so "love His appearing," that our souls thrill with the anticipation, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 13).

But turn we now to trace a little the analogy of our own path. The apostle says, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." We premise here that the "with Him" governs the suffering as much as the reigning. It is not suffering merely which carries in its train the reigning; but those who shall reign with, are those who have first suffered *with Him*. Having died together, we shall also live together; having suffered together, together shall we also reign. Such is our blessed and unchangeable association together with Him.

The more or less life-long sufferings of Christ are those in which we are assimilated to Him. They may be regarded as twofold in character: sufferings for righteousness' sake, and for the learning obedience. Such were the sufferings in which Paul coveted practical fellowship. They were the sufferings which qualified the blessed Lord to sympathise with us in order that He might also succour us, being "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Like the Master, His apostle took qualification by the sufferings to serve the saints, and pre-eminently to comfort them; "for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation" (2 Cor. i. 5-6). It will be observed that here the antithesis to the sufferings is present consolation.

The apostle in his day, and the Lord never ceasingly, sympathised with and succoured the saints,

being qualified to do so by having trodden the path of suffering. The Lord's suffering from the unrighteous was the witness of His righteousness. So should it be with us. The Lord's suffering that He might practically learn obedience, was a perfect pattern also for us; but how great the difference here, for obedience was ever our obligation, but with Him voluntarily rendered, and on His part "*not My will, but Thine*" expressed His absolute surrender to God, while on our part there was an antagonistic will that had to be broken and brought into subjection to Him. Herein for us is what has been termed "the mystery of suffering." Paul writes to the Romans of his great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart; to the Corinthians, of his much affliction and anguish of heart; and to the Colossians and Laodiceans, of the great conflict or combat of soul that he was passing through on their account. And we may not doubt that it was these painful experiences to which he referred when he wrote, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church; whereof I am made minister," &c.

But, taking now a wider range, we read in Rom. viii., "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Here we necessarily feel more at home. The Lord, and even the apostle, how much are they beyond us; we can only cover our faces in confession! But how blessed to draw forth the precious consolation this word affords. It is no question here of either failure or faithfulness on our part. But God is faithful, and *that* ministers unfailing and unfading joy. You suffer

with Him, says God, for all saints do (alas, *how little*, we may well confess), therefore, says He, you shall be glorified together. Here again the sequence is complete; you suffer with Christ here, you will be glorified with Christ there. Wonderful will it be to be in glory, yea, to be glorified; but who, who upon earth, can tell what it will be to be glorified together with Him? Do you sometimes marvel that you do not more ardently long for the coming of Christ? The answer is not far to seek. Did we know Him better through the word ministered by an ungrieved Spirit, we should love Him more, and did we love Him more, the more should we pant for His coming, rejoicing even in the thought thereof with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Reverting to 1 Peter i. 10, 11, it is in this invaluable Scripture, standing alone as it does in its disclosure of truth, we learn that the Lord Jesus Christ was THE subject with which the prophets of old were occupied in their researches. They had one Object, as they had one topic—the person of Christ, His sufferings, His glories—and the Spirit which inspired them was His Spirit, the *Spirit of Christ*. To whom could He direct them but to Him? With whom could He occupy them but with Him? The pathway of His varied and unequalled sufferings and their full fruition when the day of glory dawned! Of these the Spirit of Christ testified; with these were He and the prophets occupied; and these things were what the latter were led to minister to us. Things—wondrous, precious, blessed—now so fully made known, and so abundantly made ours! Deeply interesting and full of instruction is this disclosure of what was going on in the hearts of God's witnesses of old. Types and shadows, teaching and testimony, poetry and prophecy; here, there, everywhere, one commanding thing always in view—the Christ of God, His sufferings and His glories, and meanwhile that salvation for His saints which should bring them into partici-

pation both of the one and of the other in their lesser measure. From Moses to Malachi, the prophets of Christ, for such they were, undeterred by paucity of materials and obscurity of dispensation, searched and "searched diligently," that they might continue their unbroken testimony to the sufferings and the glories of the Christ of whom they witnessed. But how this diligence, this laborious research of these old prophets, rebukes our own lukewarmness. What inviting fields of heavenly verdure are before us, rich pastures of divine truth, and peaceful waters of spiritual refreshment; the Lord's never failing shepherd-like care in feeding and succouring His saints, and the Holy Ghost for power of apprehension and of enjoyment; yet what poverty of soul, what leanness, what lack! Is it not because we know so little of the searching "diligently" which characterised those men of faith and of God—the prophets of Jehovah and His people? The Lord graciously give us a revived interest in, and a renewed love for His precious soul-sustaining and life-energizing word. *In* that word we find Christ; *by* that word we live; *on* that word we feed; *with* that word we are armed; *from* that word we are furnished; and *to* that word we are ever directed by the Spirit of God! In a word, it is full of Christ and fragrant with Christ throughout. May we, through His grace bestowed, be *diligent*, that we may be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless!

"'I LAID me down and slept; I awakened: for the Lord sustained me' (Ps. iii. 5). How emphatic and simple. Is it so with you, reader? Does all your trouble find your heart resting on God as your Father, that, when it is multiplied, it leaves your spirit at rest, your sleep sweet, lying down, sleeping and rising as if all was peace around you, because you know that God is, and disposes of all things? Is He thus between you and your troubles and troublers? And if He is, what can reach you?"—J. N. D.

THE POINT OF FAILURE.—*Rev.* xxii. 8, 9.

WONDERFUL was the revelation vouchsafed by the Lord Jesus Christ to His beloved disciple John, when in connection with some of the most exalted visions of future glory an angel had been commissioned to unfold to a fellow-servant on the earth what the Lord desired to announce through him.

Separated as he was from the rest of the world on the lonely Isle of Patmos, it was good of the Lord thus to cheer His exiled saint with rays of heavenly hope, for all hope as to any present earthly joy must long since have been dismissed. He had in measure learnt, yea, was learning out still, that to follow in the footsteps of the Master meant the pathway of a rejected Christ. From the snowy summit of ninety winters the apostle gazed down upon the world—a troubled, changing scene and an aching void—and then looked up to witness in vision the judgment and destruction which awaited it, and the fearful desolation which would sweep in successive stages upon the earth. But in the midst of this God turned his eyes away, whilst the curtain of heaven was drawn aside and its wondrous glories disclosed. “Write therefore the things which thou hast seen, the things which are, and the things which shall be after these,” were the words thereupon conveyed by the lips of the One who was the First and the Last, the living One, who had been dead, and, behold, was alive for evermore; and John sat down to pen this work of his old age, which should become the cheer of downcast, persecuted saints through centuries of gloom—a beam of sunlight to gladden them on their journey home.

In a truly personal way had John, the evangelist, learnt Jesus. It was on the banks of the Jordan, where centuries before the Israelitish hosts had watched its waters roll back, as the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant touched its brim, to make way for the armies of the living God whom

Joshua had been called to lead—on that spot, so memorable in Jewish history, and so intimately associated with scenes of God's sovereign power and grace, John the Baptist first directed John the son of Zebedee to Jesus, whose disciple he became.

Amid all the startling and changing scenes from thence to the cross, John kept Jesus company. At the first miracle (in Cana of Galilee) he was there; at the last supper he leant upon His breast, and enquired and learnt, from the Saviour's lips and by the Saviour's act, who should betray Him on that awful night; only he, with Peter and James, witnessed the raising of Jairus's daughter; and in the same company he watched the cloud of glory and its occupant on the Mount of Transfiguration, and heard the Father's declaration from heaven which testified of His beloved Son. During the agony in the garden, as well as in the high-priest's palace, John was near at hand, and to him the last commission of Jesus was given from the cross, "Behold thy mother!" thus conveying in a sentence a world of meaning, following as it did upon the tender expression to Mary, "Woman, behold thy son!" and "from that hour that disciple took her to his own home." Even after the resurrection, he, in company with Peter, was the first to receive from Mary of Magdala the astounding tidings, on the resurrection morn, that Gethsemane's tomb was empty, and the body of the loved One, which on the third day, according to custom, she had desired to embalm, was no longer there. He was with the disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem, when the Lord appeared in the midst and said, "Peace be unto you;" and eight days later was once more with them when He again appeared, and the unbelieving Thomas was convinced. On a certain memorable morning on the Sea of Galilee, John had witnessed that same Jesus standing on the beach, and cried, "It is the Lord," when the impetuous Peter, plunging into the sea, went forth to reach Him; and it is with the

‘beloved disciple’ and the warm-hearted Peter following Jesus, John closes the Gospel of the Son of God.

No less than four times in his gospel (xiii. 23 ; xx. 2 ; xxi. 7, 20) has John recorded with unmistakable precision that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved, as if with a special affection and esteem. But the themes upon which he specially delights to dwell are those which unfold the personal glories of Christ as the Son of God, and which develope in their detail the record of a heart of love.

It is only occasionally after the ascension we hear of John in the historical portions of the word, but whenever his name is mentioned it is associated with some incident of faithfulness towards the Lord.

Luke tells us in the Acts, how he had met with the 120 believers engaged in prayer in Jerusalem’s upper room. He tells us the story of the marvellous miracle of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, in which John shared ; of his being taken, together with Peter, before the Sanhedrim ; of their bold and fearless answer to the assembled Pharisees, that they “must obey God rather than man ;” and of the subsequent scourging which John had to suffer for the Master’s sake. After, however, the final mention of him in connection with Peter, as travelling through the Samaritan villages preaching the Gospel, his name disappears from the New Testament save a single notice of him by Paul, in Gal. i. 19, as one of the pillar apostles.

For eighteen years we have no mention of the beloved disciple, and the next time we hear of him is at the rocky Isle of Patmos, whence he had been banished “because of the word of God, and because of the testimony of Jesus Christ.” The contemporary apostles had all passed away, called by the voice of the ascended Lord to follow Him through the martyrs’ gate of ignominy and shame to the realms of rest, where He Himself had gone before ; and John alone remained. He had watched the commencement of the ministry of the Apostle Paul, had witnessed the

marvellous course of that energetic man in his 32 years of suffering and devoted work, from its beginning on the Damascus road to its close on the Roman scaffold; but not till Paul had laid down his pen did John lift his, to tell out the divine side of the life of that Christ on earth whom Paul had portrayed in glory.

In the twenty-one chapters of the gospel, the divinely-inspired penman presents to us the *person* and *authority* of the Lord Jesus Christ. He stands before us pre-eminently as the Son of God, the Object for devotion and for praise, and through Him to the Father the apostle points, as the One who "seeketh such to worship Him" as worship Him in spirit and in truth. In his first epistle, Jesus Christ is once more introduced as the "true God and eternal Life;" the manifestations of that life in us are strongly urged, its divine characteristics and moral outflow are pressed home upon the conscience, and every contrary element in the saint is tested and rebuked. Upon the elect lady in the second epistle, John urges the necessity for maintaining unflinchingly a stand against any who, desiring something more than Christianity, turn aside, and abide not in the doctrine of the Christ; and finally, everything that could be encouraged in the practical fruit of the first and second epistles is made the distinction of the third.

Those assemblies which John had watched with apostolic zeal and fervour in their gradual growth, he was now to witness from the standpoint whence the Lord gazed upon them "with eyes as a flame of fire and feet like fine brass as if they burned in a furnace," and alas, what a spectacle did they present! From beginning to end is the history of the Church told out with its harrowing picture of moral ruin, and as John's pen flows on 'neath the guidance of the Spirit's power, detail after detail only tell the more unmistakeably of the hopeless wreck upon every hand. Over the history of the Church on earth, as a vessel of testimony for God—over the history of the saints who composed

it—over the creature in every circumstance of life, John has to write failure! failure! failure! and once again he has to own, yea, delights in owning, that the only Object in heaven above, or earth beneath, worthy or capable of claiming adoration, and worship, and praise, is God and the Lamb.

Against Jezebel, to whose seductions Thyatira had listened, *his* pen had indited the solemn rebuke of the living Lord; *his* pen had traced the abominations of the harlot and the reward to follow the homage of any other object than God Himself; and one might well say:—"If there be one creature upon earth who will ever own the rights and claims of God as the personal and only object for the worship of His saints, that one would be the writer of the Apocalypse." This had been the theme of his life—the subject of his ministry—the story of his pen; but alas! alas for the record of human failure, John was not allowed to close his book for the last time without proving even himself to be unworthy of the exalted message which it had been his by the grace of God to convey; and to future ages John handed down the closing blot on his beautiful ministry—"I, John, *heard* and *saw* these things"—and then, alas for the human ear and eye which were to trace the record of their failure from Eden's garden to Revelation's close, "when I heard and saw, *I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel* who showed me these things;" and he who through his lifetime had used his pen and voice to rebuke others, was now rebuked himself on the very point in which he was most intimately versed!

And this has ever been the case. It matters not where we search on the historic pages of the Inspired Word, this sad story comes out, that the saints in every age not only *failed* in their witness to God, but that they invariably failed in the very particular concerning which there was the least excuse.

Let us turn to Genesis for a moment, and take the first instance of failure on the part of man. In the

26th verse of the first chapter, man is given his place by God ; a place of lordship and dignity, of *complete dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth ;" before Adam, as head of that creation, the creatures were made to pass, and one by one he called them by their name, but yet amongst them all "there was not found a helpmeet for him." Alone, in the realm of innocence, that man, created in the image and likeness of God, stood—none to vie with him in position, or in place or power, among the creatures of the earth, and he was made to realize, as he gazed on the passing crowd, that he was above and beyond them all.

The Creator alone reserved by right His place of superiority to the exalted creature, whom He had placed in the garden "to dress it, and to keep it:" and obedience to *His* word was solemnly enjoined upon the man of Eden's delights, with the warning from the lips of God, that all he held dear would be forfeited if he failed in that obedience which was His by right to demand. The sequel of that bright starting-point in human history is soon told, and known only too well!

With everything around him to convince him of what he owed to God—when every blade of grass, and flower, and tree, and fruit told him of a surpassing love—with a position which must have been dazzling in its magnificence even to one who knew not yet its contrast to the realm of sin, *he fell, and only a single act involved his fall* ; a trifle, perhaps, in our eyes, as we look back to-day at that simple deed, but measured by the circumstances of the man, and judged by the character of God, can we wonder at the direful consequences which fell therefrom upon the human race?

Everything his heart could desire had been given to him by the hand of God—creation in luxurious bounty had been made to yield her increase as food for this privileged man—in all the freshness of endowed authority, and of the knowledge of *obedience* to the

One who created him, he trod that world of innocence; and yet, strange to say, it was in *the very point with which he was so perfectly acquainted* that failure found its victim. The word of God was *unheeded*, the temptation of an *inferior creature* was bowed to instead, and so Adam irretrievably fell directly the testing came.

We pass on, and over the next page or two of history, dark enough in their shadows but for the glints of sunlight which some of the names of the fifth chapter strike across the page, and in the sixth we linger for a moment to take a glance at the prominent figure who comes before us. Lower and lower had the race outside the garden sunk, until at last we witness a scene of unbridled debauchery on every hand. Corruption and violence stalked through the earth in uncovered shame, and in the midst of it Noah preached of righteousness, whilst the preparation of the ark went on as a solemn witness to the reality of the message which the Spirit of God directed him to deliver. But Noah's years of preaching closed at length; his last sermon was finished, and had yielded no fruit. "Come, thou and all thy house into the ark," said Jehovah unto him, "for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation;" and on his entering in God closed the door, while over the earth His judgment rolled in unrestrained fury, and "all in whose nostrils was the breath of life . . . died."

The curtain drops—this act in the thrilling drama is ended, then the curtain lifts again for us to look in upon a new world, as it were, where we find Noah installed as the first magistrate of the freshly constituted civil government; but, strange to say, the first culprit we read of who appeared at the bar to answer to the charge of failure in righteousness, of which the old world had been guilty, and which the officer of the new world was expected to condemn, was no other than the magistrate himself! Yes, he had failed; and failed, too, in maintaining that rectitude which he had for more than a century been pressing upon others.

History repeats itself. Nimrod and the Tower of Babel, with its confusion of tongues, still tell us that man, in spite of judgments and warnings, remains the same, and the human heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" but again God has a man in reserve, and, as a witness against the faithlessness and idolatry of an apostate world, Abram is called out from "country, kindred, and father's house" to walk in a path of separation to God. It is not now a question of *lordship and dignity* as in the case of Adam, for the age of innocence is passed, and conscience has mounted its throne; nor is it that of *righteousness*, as in the case of Noah, for self-will, self-indulgence, corruption, violence, lust, have already poisoned with their sting both preacher and congregation, who have long since passed away; but now it is the deep, calm, settled idolatry of the human race which lifts its hydra-head, and lays bare, in a new form, the endless resources of Satanic power.

The "God of Glory" (Acts vii. 2) rose up in His majesty, and cried unto Abram, "Get thee out." *To follow God* "to a land that I will show thee" was the path marked out for him. The *Elohim* of Adam and Noah becomes the *Jehovah* of Abram; and with bright promises of future greatness and future blessing, "Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto Him," a pilgrim and a stranger, with nothing to depend on but the word of the living God! For a hundred years he trod this pilgrim path, learning in separation and by faith how God could care for him. He had left all that was nearest and dearest in this world (Gen. xii. 4); he had in early days learnt, by a false step and a falsehood, the folly of not trusting God fully for his daily needs whilst treading the path with Him (Gen. xii. 10-20); he had subsequently stood boldly for the truth of faith and separation against the worldly-minded Lot (Gen. xiii.); he had espoused his cause and struggled for him against those who would take him captive (Gen. xiv.); he had firmly refused the bribe of the King of

Sodom, and earned the approval of a faithful God (Gen. xiv.); and yet, after 100 years of service and witness like this, we find him in Gen. xx. in the presence of Abimelech, utterly forgetful of the path he had all his lifetime been pursuing, and he FAILS—not in a point of which he was in comparative ignorance, but in the truth of holy separation before the world and faith in God, of which he had been the most brilliant expositor and example throughout his time.

Abraham is laid to rest, Isaac and Jacob sleep with their fathers. The grand *personality* of Abraham is succeeded by the *family* of Israel, and into a “*great nation*,” as promised to their forefather, they rapidly develope; but instead of obtaining the blessings which were theirs by promise, sin and Satan scored their victories again, till, when the book of Exodus opens, we find the descendants of Abraham, the “Father of the Faithful,” have become a groaning nation of Egyptian slaves. But God, who is not slack concerning His promises, bends down once more as the cry of the people “came up unto” Him “by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.”

The redemption of this people was the next act which God would perform. Where was the man to effect His purpose, and convey His message to this down-trodden race? Moses was the man. In that Egyptian cabin on the banks of the sacred Nile, God had watched him as an infant in his mother's arms, and had followed with His never-slumbering eye and tender care that anxious mother, as she placed her little treasure in its tiny ark among “the flags by the river's brink;” and whilst the sister of that helpless babe “stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him,” unseen, the Watchman of Israel kept guard still closer by, and directed the footsteps of the daughter of the proud Egyptian king to the spot where the young

child lay ; and whilst He tenderly thought of the mother's beating heart, the child's welfare, and the interests of His people in a coming day, He also remembered the Pharaoh who was opposing Him, and whom He would yet use to effect the very purposes which he sought in every way to counteract. Thus the very palace of that mighty eastern monarch became the school for this youth of the house of Levi, until God's time came to teach him a still grander lesson in a loftier school, where for forty years, in the backside of the desert, the future mediator of the first covenant was instructed in the ways of God.

Well-nigh ten times forty years had rolled over the heads of the slave-bound nation of Israel, and another forty years were soon to commence their course, when to the Mount of Horeb the shepherd of the flock of Jethro came, to meet, to his amazement, the Angel of the Lord "in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush," from whence God speaks, and declares Himself as the great "I Am," and commissions this timid Israelite to go forth with the message of divine love to His chosen people, and His divine request to the imperious king to let the children of Israel go.

The shepherd's rod, at Jehovah's bidding, becomes the proof of Almighty power ; and the wordless lips and stammering tongue are taught to convey to the eloquent of the earth the wondrous oracles of God. The plagues in the land of Egypt attest *Who* is at work behind the scenes, and the magicians even are forced to own "it is the finger of God." Obedience to His word sheltered the Israelites that last night when the avenging angel passed through the land, and the passage of the Red Sea on the following morn only told the more unmistakeably what the mighty hand and outstretched arm of Jehovah could accomplish ; and the hosts redeemed by His mighty power sang the song of victory upon the other side.

From Marah to Elim, from Sin to Rephidim, the angel of God and the cloud led them on, and in the

third month we find them pitched in Sinai's desert at the foot of the holy mount. In those three short months the people had *proved* God, and heartily could they endorse the stirring words communicated to Moses in the mount,—“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto Myself;” and very fitting in consequence were the claims then urged by God upon them, that they should obey His voice and keep His covenant, for “*then* shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Over and over again, Moses preached that sermon of obedience to the commands of Jehovah to the people he was called to lead, and well they knew, the only ground upon which they could enter Canaan.

During the short period of forty years, Moses had seen the fearful results accruing from the pride of the human heart and disobedience to Jehovah's word, and the bones of 600,000 brave men bleaching in the sands of the desert were the solemn attestation to the mighty leader that pride and disobedience would surely be visited at the hands of a holy and righteous God. Yet within one year only of the close of the wilderness journey, when experience had so gravely taught her lessons to this holy, intelligent, and gifted man, we find him (Num. xx.) forsaking the path of humility, and disobeying the command of Jehovah, and forfeiting his title of leadership, because of failure in the very path with which he was so well acquainted. It was not that naturally he had become incapable of being a leader, for “his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated,” but the voice which whispers to us from the grave in the plains of the land of Moab, tells us that one moment of unwatchfulness on the part of a wise and gifted leader had been sufficient to terminate his service.

From the heights of Mount Hor (Num. xx.) a similarly sad story comes down to us through the long

ages, and we witness the affecting sight of the great high-priest stripped of his garments in the presence of the people, and the honour and position in the sanctuary of God which it had been his to know given to another, whilst Aaron was gathered to his people and died there. God had given him a place in His service which he alone could occupy; God had specially gifted him, and instructed him in the office which he had to fill. Moses, *the leader*, could not fill the position of a *priest*, nor was Aaron, *the priest*, competent to fill the office of a *leader*; yet, when the back of the leader was turned, the priest attempted to take his place (Ex. xxxii.). His incompetence for such a post became speedily evident, for being unfitted to lead the people, it naturally followed that the people led him; and being obliged to fall back upon his own peculiar gift, he attempted to exercise it when it was not the moment for doing so, and when he was not in the right state either; hence the worship became a spurious mockery, and he utterly failed in the path to which he was so specially called, by leaving that calling in order to occupy the place which had already been marked out for another. His miserable excuse would not have availed against the anger of God, but for the earnest prayer which the leader offered on behalf of the priest. What a humiliating sight!

Once again (Num. xii.), he fails because of the envy generated in his breast in consequence of the influence and position exercised by his brother, Moses. But the crowning grief is told in Num. xx., when the leader *and* the priest fall together, and he who was to be in the place of the people to represent them before God, stepped completely aside from the path he was so qualified to fill, and rebelled against the mouth of Jehovah at the water of Meribah (Num. xx. 24).

Joshua steps forward at Jehovah's command to lead the people across the Jordan into the coveted land of Canaan. "Jordan was driven back . . . at the *presence* of the Lord, at the *presence* of the God of

Jacob." No human power was there, no wisdom forged by human brain, no sound from human lips, nor yet the thunders of Jehovah's voice. Silently, solemnly, the priests went forward with the ark of the covenant. That was all. The waters were cut off, and "all the Israelites passed over on dry ground"!

The frowning walls of Jericho now loom before them, and the enemies of God are there. Joshua is taught that the power and wisdom of God are sufficient for such an emergency, and he speaks to the people: "*Ye shall not shout, nor make your voice to be heard, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth.*" There was to be nothing of man; there was to be complete dependence on God. What a pathway! Seven times round the doomed city patiently trod the priests, with the ark of the covenant and the rams' horns. That was all. The walls of Jericho fell flat; and *then* said Joshua to the people—"Shout; for Jehovah hath given you the city." Surely Joshua, we might well say, in the presence of the mighty power and wisdom of God of which he had been the privileged witness and vessel, would never move a step in his own strength, or rest satisfied with his own counsel.

The seventh and ninth chapters of his book dissipate our conjectures; for scarcely had Jericho fallen than he permits the people to try *their* strength against Ai, only to discover that even with such a *small* city, and so *few* people, they must be defeated unless God went with them. Likewise, when the enemy's wisdom was in question, he had confidence in his own to meet it, and when the Gibeonites came with their sacks and bottles, their old shoes and garments, and mouldy bread, and asked Joshua, in plausible tones and flattering language, to make a league with them, he "*asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord,*" but, trusting in *his* wisdom, made a compact which he rued to the day of his death.

We may pass over the prophets, and glance for a moment at David, the exalted King of Israel. We

have but to read the solemn words of the Lord in the twelfth chapter of the second book of Samuel, to see that one who showed such nobility of character, such sterling faithfulness, such self-denying zeal, such integrity of purpose when walking in a humble, secluded path with God, can, when raised to a prominent position of might and power, forget the very principles for which he has all his lifetime been noted, and stoop by reason of the deceitfulness of ease and comfort to which he had been accustomed, to acts so degrading as would cause the meanest man in his kingdom to shudder.

Of Elijah we might take a passing thought, and we gaze in blank astonishment and admiration at that man on the heights of Carmel, standing alone in the presence of the king and nearly a thousand priests of Baal to prove that God is God; and we seem to hear that triumphant cry from the people's lips, "The Lord He is God! the Lord He is God!" as "the fire of the Lord fell" in answer to Elijah's prayer, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench" (1 Kings xviii.). But look again. Once more we gaze in blank astonishment, as we see this erst-while bold and fearless man running away for his life because of a woman's threat (1 Kings xix.), and forgetting altogether the very principle for which he had stood so boldly in the presence of a hostile world.

We might multiply instance after instance, but it is enough. We have already seen in the New Testament how John failed in that with which he was so intimately acquainted; but two other notable instances likewise come before us. First, that of Peter (Gal. ii. 11, 12), who failed by making a distinction between the circumcision and uncircumcision, though the breaking down of such barriers had been his special mission to unfold; and in proof of it, the descending sheet from heaven had been the forcible witness to him that "what God had cleansed, that call not thou

common." "I withstood him to the face," says the Apostle Paul, "because he was to be blamed." Moreover, we find repeatedly in Peter's history, that though so marked by boldness and decision of character, and for warmth and integrity of purpose and of heart, yet when put to the test he repeatedly failed in those very points wherein we should not naturally have had the slightest distrust.

But, oh, what a comfort to our hearts to know that if the servant fail, the Master remains unchanged! That *prayer* of the blessed Lord (Luke xxii. 32), that silent *look* in the high-priest's palace (Luke xxii. 61), that searching *voice* on the banks of the Tiberian Sea (John xxi. 15-17), all whisper to us of a love that knows no limit, and of a grace that never ceases to care for the failings and unwatchfulnesses of the human heart.

In Paul, again, we get a striking instance of the invariable point of failure on the part of God's servants. He who was the special apostle to the Gentiles to unfold to them, the mystery and the personal presence and power of the Holy Ghost on earth—he who insisted repeatedly on the Spirit's guidance and the recognition of His authority in every detail of life, was the very one to go directly contrary to the counsels of the Holy Ghost (Acts xx., xxi.) and to follow the bent of his own mind and will, the fruit of which act he had to reap in a prison cell.

Clearly do we see from these many instances, so varied in their characteristics and paths, the need of constant watchfulness upon our part. God never tests, God never has tested, God never will test His people in regard to a subject of which they know nothing, or but very little; but, as we see the recorded instances of the past, and witness the remarkable instances of failure in the present, so, we may rest assured, will be the undeviating course in the future, that God will ever test His people concerning that which He has taken the greatest pains to teach them, and which the

Afflicted saints, let sorrow cease,
 And sighs and sobs give place to peace ;
 His coming brings you full release—
 His love shall last for ever !

Expectant saints, extol His grace,
 For you has He prepared a place,
 Soon shall you gaze upon His face—
 Whose love shall last for ever !

PRACTICAL NOTES ON VARIOUS SCRIPTURES.

“ We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to purpose.”—Rom. viii. 28.

WE cannot unravel the tangled, twisted thread—the diversified complications in human life ; the lights and the shadows, the joys and the sorrows, are so intermingled. The *why* and the *wherefore*, the anxious questions of the human heart, will be answered in the glory. God alone can and will disentangle the thread.

Here then is the Strength of God's elect. Here rests their faith : “ The Lord sitteth upon the flood : yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever ” (Ps. xxix. 10). In the meantime, till “ earth's sad story ” be re-told, till the history of the race be rehearsed, and the actions and motives of men laid bare in presence of and before the throne of the Eternal, “ *we* know that all things work together for good.” Our God—the God who in love gave His Son to die—has a vast and perfect plan before Him. The most trivial circumstance of life fits into God's magnificent design, which has for its end and object to display the glory of Christ and the heavenly saints in association with Him ; with Israel, the nations, and the earth too, blessed under the beneficent reign of the Lord of glory.

*Commit thy way, O weeper—
The cares that fret thy soul—
To thine Almighty Keeper,
Who makes the world to roll ;*

*Unto the Lord, who quieteth
The wind, and cloud, and sea ;
Oh, doubt not He provideth
A foothpath, too, for thee.*

*In Him hide all thy sorrow,
And bid thy fears good night ;
He'll make a glorious morrow
To crown thy head with light.*

The "most holy" perfume.—Exod. xxx. 34-38.

The instant you touch Christ or reach Him, whether in this world or now on high, you get perfection. *That* was a marvellous sweep from heaven to earth, but it was the stoop of a divine person. But when we linger with adoring hearts over the life of Christ, and trace Him in all His path from the womb of the virgin (Luke i.) till "carried up into heaven" (Luke xxiv.), we bow our heads and break our hearts in worship, and reverently say, "Yes, Lord, we have reached human perfection in Thee!"

There are seven things in the Jewish ritual termed "most holy":—The innermost chamber in the tabernacle (Exod. xxvi. 34); the brazen altar (xxix. 37); the golden altar (xxx. 10); the pure and holy perfume (xxx. 36); the meat or flour offering (Lev. ii. 3); the sin offering (vi. 25); and the trespass offering (vii. 1).

There were *four* precious spices of equal weight, and "tempered together," which formed the perfume; but ere it could be brought into the Lord's presence, it must be beaten "*very small.*" As some of our finest flowers only emit their delightful aroma when crushed and bruised, so the peerless One of God, *the* flower of paradise, was **HERE** bruised and crushed by God and man, that **THERE** the fragrance of His life and person

might eternally fill "the holy place." *All* the frankincense of the flour offering (Lev. ii. 2) was claimed by Jehovah as His special part. The holy perfume was for the Lord. But we are privileged to enter the holiest, and smell the perfume *there*. Why were *four* spices needed to constitute the holy perfume? Ah! may it not be because it is in the *four* Gospels this rare flower is described? There too we witness the perfume beaten "very small"!

Death and ruin.—Num. xx.

This solemn chapter *opens* with the death of Miriam, the sweet songstress of Israel, and *closes* with the death of Aaron, the high-priest of Israel, while between we see the dark and heavy clouds of unbelief settling down upon the whole congregation. Moses too, the mediator, and the one on whom the human hopes of Israel were founded, miserably breaks down. What a scene of death and of hopeless ruin! Are the circumstances too desperate for God in which to display His glory? Is the grave situation one beyond the sphere of divine dealing? We confess that those battle-fields in which man is thoroughly vanquished have a peculiar charm for us. We solemnly linger over them, and view the utter wreck of the creature. What is the grand lesson imprinted on a ruined creation? And what will God do? How will He work? God's triumphs are displayed amidst our confusions and ruins. He lifts up His glory, tarnished in the hands of man, and displays it in its perfection in His ways in Christ. O blessed moments and circumstances, when all is utter and hopeless ruin, and we can only "stand *still* and see the salvation of the Lord." What a wonder-working God is ours! He alone abides faithful. He wrought in the *dust*, and out of it fashioned a man (Gen. ii. 7), figure of His working ever since.

"What hath God wrought?" in a scene of death, desolation, and ruin! is faith's triumphant exclamation all along the way. We will repeat it again and

again while the rays of the coming glory play around our heads, and sin and death make utter havoc of all beneath the sun.

W. S.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

BAHAMAS, JAN. 30, 1887.

A FEW notes of the Lord's work in these islands might be of interest to our brethren in England. If not out of place, you might find room in "Words in Season" for them.

For about five winters these shores have been visited by our brother Holder, who has laboured hard and under trials and disadvantages, but happily very blessed results have attended his labours so far. The people were under clouds of darkness and superstition, but had the advantage of good, plain, and sound education, thus being enabled to read the Word for themselves, which they were induced to do through hearing that which they never heard before of the character and duration of God's salvation. Law and grace, faith and feelings, salvation and judgment, and many other precious truths have been exercising these dear people up to the present time. Many have been graciously delivered, and are now feasting on the good things, remembering their Lord and looking for His return.

It would be but right to explain here that only a portion of these islands have been visited, and that the most difficult field of labour has been left through lack of labourers. Three servants of the Lord are here now from Canada, as also our brother Holder; still there is room for more, ample room. Some of the islands, peopled by coloured men, women, and children who have no learning comparatively, would welcome gladly and gratefully any dear servant who would tell them of Jesus, and teach them how to read the Bible. They are very degraded and immoral in some of the unfrequented islands, and all are poor. Yet they are grateful, affectionate, respectful, and honest. As

regards safety from molestation, one is really more at ease and freer from insults than on the shores of England. You get more civility and kindness than in any place I know of. Climate is not so severe, but in the summer visitors are liable to take malaria. God grant that some dear children of God may learn to deny self, and surrender themselves to Him whose they are, to spread the gospel tidings instead of going over beaten paths, with often as little apparent blessing.

On arriving in Nassau, N.P., we were struck with the eagerness to hear the gospel on the part of the people, asking us when we were going to preach. Tracts they accepted readily and gratefully. If we had them, we could easily circulate thousands. Nassau being a port, many vessels pass in and out all the time; and if a reading-room were opened up for the fishermen and sailors, a very precious work might be carried on. Children of God are crying to the Lord for labourers; and books and tracts sent by any saints would be received and judiciously distributed. We received a parcel of tracts from our brother Loizeaux, and God has blessed them.

God has blessed the gospel much, and refreshed our hearts. Many have confessed Christ, and are now rejoicing. Two of the day-school teachers are at the Lord's table; and it is delightful to listen to the children singing the simple gospel, showing it is brought before them and will produce fruit. I cannot describe how glad the people are to listen; they come out in crowds. Small settlements will turn out *en masse*, young and old, white and black. When meetings are held in-doors, room cannot be found to accommodate them, but they stand outside and listen with the greatest attention. Simplicity is what is needed. Much of the work is open-air preaching, and results are not always seen, yet afterward news reaches us of blessing through tracts distributed, or by the word spoken.

We are constantly reminded of the provision of

God, as also marks of gratitude from the children of God showing fellowship in the gospel. At the close of one meeting we were presented with oranges, eggs, sugar-cane; on other occasions, we have been conveyed from one settlement to another by boat. Our coloured friends have gladly carried our bundles, opened up temperance hall to preach in, brought us fish and fruit, and, as far as they are able, shown hearty fellowship in the gospel. We have seen appeals in the *Believers' Almanac* for labours in distant India, China, and Africa, with their millions. God grant such appeals have not been in vain. Yet there are difficulties in the way—distance, language, caste, religion, customs. But here there is nothing of that, beyond the breaking through the form of godliness, which is somewhat strong, not having a knowledge of the plan of salvation; their thoughts of salvation being reformation, striving to keep the law, attending meetings on Lord's day, keeping away if not suitably attired, and so forth. We can promise a hearty reception will be given any coming in the name of the Lord. There are about 45,000 inhabitants in the Bahama group. We have visited five settlements up to the present; probably fifty persons have confessed Christ. Meetings every evening, sometimes twice a day; Lord's day three meetings.

Any brother desiring details as to climate and other information, shall be pleased to communicate with. Address—Wm. Blatchley, care of Mr. T. W. Sweeting, Nassau, N. P., Bahamas.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HISTORY AND FAITH.—A Japanese Christian convert thus put it:—Believing that Jesus died will save nobody, is simply a matter of history. Believing that Jesus died *for me* will save anybody, for this is an act of faith. St. Paul saw this when he said, "He loved *me* and gave Himself *for me*."

THE PERSON OF CHRIST AND THE FATHER'S HOUSE.

WHEN the Lord Jesus was about to suffer unto death, Gethsemane, the cross, and the grave looming before His soul, He occupied Himself in the most tender and gracious way with the anticipated sorrows that would afflict the hearts of His disciples.

But in everything the blessed Lord was perfect. He who knew how to suffer Himself, knew how to succour the beloved ones of His heart, who by His agony and death would be plunged into sadness and bereavement, which He alone was adequately able either to estimate or to relieve. How, then, does He minister alleviation to the afflictions of His disciples? And the enquiry is no less pertinent than instructive, seeing that the Holy Ghost by the same means would allay in the hearts of the saints of this day any sorrow or sadness by which they are overcharged. The two things He presented as a divine panacea to their afflicted hearts were His own Person and the Father's house, both being connected together by, and bound up with, His return from heaven. See John xiv. 1-3.

I. "Ye believe in God, believe also in ME." Here is clearly the primary element in all divine consolation—the *Person of Christ*. "I know *whom* I have believed," said the apostle, and his way of knowing Him *is ours*. He had not seen Him in His flesh, did not know Him after the flesh; but in the highest, truest, and best way he knew Him, viz., as revealed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. As a man indwelt of the Holy Ghost, yea, as a man in Christ he knew Him; and we cannot doubt that what sustained the hearts of the early disciples, and what sustained (in even more acute sorrow and persecution than their's) the heart of Paul, was the peculiarly precious consolation that flowed from a knowledge of, and an unchangeable association with, the Person of Christ. Let us ask ourselves, beloved fellow-sufferers,

whether there be any sorrow, any crushing blow even, however aggravated in character, which could fail to be mitigated did we but recall to our hearts, in the unction of the Holy Ghost, the unchanging blessedness of our relation to the Person of Him of whom it is written, "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them."

II. *The Father's house.* How definite are both these things, the *person* and the *place*! Earthly sorrows, losses, and crosses can never diminish, or damage, or endanger our association for eternity with the Person of Christ, and no earthly mutations, or complications, or aggravations can invade the Father's house, or damp or chill the joy and the worship that resound through its hallowed courts for ever. And in the Father's house is the place prepared of which the Lord spoke with emphatic clearness, "If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare *a place* for you." He was going to the Father's house, and He desired to connect their hearts most definitely with the scene which He was about to make radiant with His own presence. Was He going there to enter upon new associations, and to occupy Himself with another of the heavenly families? No; He was going to that bright scene to be *their* Comforter, to be occupied with *their* interests, yea, to provide for *their* reception. And, lastly, He would inaugurate their entrance upon the eternal blessedness they should share with Him in the Father's house, by Himself coming to fetch them! Oh! *what a Comforter is He!*

They are blessed who suffer and sin not, for suffering is the badge that Christ hath put upon His followers.

Oh, how very easy it is to deceive ourselves and to sleep, and wish that heaven may fall down in our laps!—*S. Rutherford.*

HE IS A PROPITIATION.

“HE is a propitiation” (1 John ii. 2). The thought is not necessarily of bearing sins here; it is rather the thought of blood upon the mercy-seat: bearing sins was the scape-goat. Both, of course, present Christ in different aspects. The mercy-seat is essentially the judgment-seat, where God sits in righteousness, *till* the blood is put there. Dealing with respect to where we are, and bringing up to God, are two very different things. When the blood is there, I go up. Favour towards persons in grace, is another thing quite from bringing them in by blood. The throne is one of judgment *first*; it is mercy or favour *through* righteousness. Socinians might say the one thing, they would never say the other.

Our coming to Christ for every sin is the brazen altar. *Brass* is judgment of sin according to man's responsibility; so we read of Christ's feet being like unto fine *brass*, in the midst of the candlesticks. *Gold* is generally God in divine righteousness—judging of everything according to the divine presence; so Christ was “gold tried in the fire.” We have full atonement on the golden mercy-seat. The gospel brings down to us what Christ's work *did*. When we have received it, and know our places as priests, we go in.

Reconciliation must be according to *God's* character, in its aspect towards man. Propitiation the aspect to Godward (Rom. iii. 25). We make a difference between Christ going within the veil to present His blood, and its being rent for us to go in. *Then* I get resurrection. Our responsibility is according to the place we are in, in every variety of relationship—wife, child, servant, etc. The believer is responsible for another thing altogether, he is called to be an *imitator of God*. Of course, man's responsibility is as a sinner, if Gentile; as a lawbreaker, if Israelite. The cross meets all. Justified by blood, we are forgiven, and thus responsible to *Him* down here. Resurrection was limited to earth; ascension was needed to lead into heaven.

The existence of the temple is ignored in Hebrews, only the tabernacle is mentioned. The “holy” and “the holiest” are one *now*. “Let us draw near” shows plainly they were not *there*. Hebrews does not go beyond a certain point. It looks at a person walking in trial on earth, with a priest

between him and God; a *very* different thing from being united to Him. In our imperfections, very blessed in its place. Ephesians takes us up *past* resurrection, perfect in heaven, by ascension. The burnt-offering is coming to God by death. God must be glorified about sin—voluntary offering for favour and acceptance. I do not come to *worship* with a sin-offering. When I come to worship, I come with the sacrifice of a burnt-offering—the recognition of sin put away; for it must be according to righteousness. We do not come up as *sinner*s to worship; I go up as a saint to worship. (Look at yourself before you go up, to be sure you go up rightly, with purged conscience, etc.) You do not come to worship either as *I*; you come to worship as *we*. It is as accepted through Christ that we worship.

Worshippers once purged have no more conscience of sins. When I look at myself, or into myself, of course I see my *flesh*. Does a Christian, then, ever cease to have the character of a sinner? Does Christ ever cease to be your Saviour? No. So in a prayer-meeting, it is all well and right to come confessing sin, and to seek grace, etc.; for you come there in your actual condition. But if you go to worship with sin on your conscience, though you have failed and omitted to confess and get a cleansed conscience, *when you go up to worship you take the place of those so gathered*. On his return to his own closet, such an one may be led by that very fact to judge himself, confess, etc.

In 1 John i. there are three characteristics of the Christian. 1st: In the light as God is in the light. 2nd: Having fellowship with all saints. 3rd: Cleansed from all sin.

What is fellowship? Having common thought with the Father and the Son is fellowship. My place, my life, is in God's light. I have got into the light. Well, so, instead of going on in natural selfishness, *you* having got into the same standing as I, *we* have fellowship together—communion of thought, etc. Whenever John speaks of *grace*, it is the Father and the Son. Grace can only come that way. When testing man, it is God. As to the difference between "who-soever" and "whatsoever," the first takes up the *individual*, the second the nature. The nature must live on the object. Priesthood has to do with *God*; advocacy has to do with *the Father*.—*B. Herald, Sept., 1871.*

POWER AND AUTHORITY IN JUDGMENT
ERE LONG, BUT NOW IN MANIFESTED
GRACE.

"ALL power (or, authority) is given unto Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). Who thus speaks? a man? Yes; for He had died, and risen from the dead. When did He so speak? After men had openly refused Him, and had crucified Him. Of what does He speak? Of a grant bestowed on Him by the One who is the source of all sovereign power in the universe. What is this grant? All power, all authority, in heaven and on earth.

A solemn announcement, enough to make the heart of the stoutest opponent fail. A heart-inspiring announcement, calculated to encourage the weakest of His saints. *All* authority given to Him. Then He must prevail. However violent, however persistent, however determined may be the opposition to His will, it must in time give way. Resistance must prove itself to be powerless, the conflict hopeless. He must and will prevail. Who will prevail? The crucified One. Men sought to get rid of Him here. His presence was a continual trouble to them, a source of uneasiness. His ways, His words, His whole life condemned them. Have they got rid of Him? Listen. All authority is given to Him in heaven and on earth. Then His enemies, the very ones who clamoured for His death, the company that plotted against His life, all these must submit to Him some day. Yes; to His authority, whose claims to be their King they scornfully rejected, whose relationship to God as His Son they derided, and whom when suffering agonies on the cross they inhumanly mocked.

All authority in heaven and on earth! Like a rock, which defies all the power of winds and waves, such an announcement stands. For eighteen centuries the enemy has sought to stir up opposition after opposition against Him, and against His word; but like

storms, powerful and even terrible at the time, they have passed away without affecting in the smallest degree the grant of which He speaks. It is just as true, just as certain to-day, as it was when He revealed it. Its full and literal accomplishment is as much to be depended upon now as it was then. This only is the difference: it is nearer its fulfilment by many centuries. *How near, who can tell?*

Where did He make this announcement? In Galilee, the place of rejection, when He met His brethren by appointment. What a change had taken place. Many of these who had witnessed a little while previously His triumphant entry into Jerusalem now beheld Him, the rejected One of the nation, not in Judea, but in the northern province of Galilee. Was discouragement because of His crucifixion to crush the heart and to damp the energies of these who had believed on Him? What room for discouragement could there be, if all authority in heaven and on earth was given to Him? His cause must be triumphant. It must finally overcome all opposition. Its sun can never set. Its meridian splendour and power, we know, it has not yet reached. No cause like it. Struggles in the past have often ended in victory, but how often only after those who commenced them had for ever left this scene. Death terminated their career on earth, ere the pæan of victory could be sounded forth. In the case before us, it is He who had died who thus speaks; an intimation that by death He had lost none of His rights. All shall be made good; "for He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. xv. 25). On earth as well as in heaven, He will be, He *must* be, triumphant.

A heart-inspiring thought it, then, surely is for the weakest, the most oppressed of God's saints. And to nerve such for service in a world which has rejected their Master, He made that announcement of the grant which He had received. He made it, not to the world to overawe it, nor at Jerusalem, where it will

openly be made good, but to the disciples to encourage them, and on a mountain in Galilee, the locality even and name of which has passed into entire oblivion.

A mountain in Galilee! But which? Indeed, that matters little. Who would care to identify the spot, or to re-people in imagination that mountain side? It is not for us history simply; it is history closely bound up with prophecy. It was in Galilee, which reminds us of His rejection; it was on a mountain, a fitting place as an assurance of future triumph. For He who is coming will reign over earth, and His heavenly saints from above will survey earth beneath them, as the disciples, when on the mount with Him, might have looked down on the country below illumined by the sunlight of an eastern summer's day.

Authority over demons He exercised when on earth. They could not move without His leave. They could not remain if He bade them depart (Mark v.) Authority to cast them out in His name He gave to the twelve (Matt. x. 1). Authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, He delegated to the seventy (Luke x. 19). But that of which He spake in Matt. xxviii. embraces far more. In its fulness it belongs to Him alone, and will be delegated to no one, though His heavenly saints will reign with Him.

All authority in heaven. To whom is this given? To the crucified One, who did not deliver Himself from the hand of His puny creature, man? Who can resist Him, and ultimately prevail? Of His final and universal triumph there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. Long it may seem to have been delayed. Every one in whose hearing He announced that in Galilee has long passed away. But two of those then with Him have reminded us of its sure fulfilment. Peter, writing to the strangers of the dispersion, testified to the beginning of its accomplishment, since He who suffered once, the Just for the unjust, has gone into heaven; angels, authorities, and powers being

made subject unto Him (1 Peter iii. 22). John, by the spirit of prophecy, has anticipated the day when the event will be celebrated on high, as he heard a loud voice saying in heaven: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power [or authority] of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Rev. xii. 10). What a contrast to that time in Galilee when Peter and John were in His company. Then the enemy, to outward eyes, had prevailed. By and by, he will be cast out of heaven for ever, subsequently be driven off earth, and finally be cast into the lake of fire. On this earth, where for a time he had seemed to prevail, in that land where he had apparently triumphed, the Lord announced to His disciples the final success of that cause with which through grace they were connected.

For all authority on earth is given to Him likewise. As yet, however, we see no outward manifestation of it. In heaven all well know what is given to Him; His very place there witnesses of it. But here it is different. Yet it is true, all authority on earth, as well as in heaven, is His. And this will be made good, His enemies themselves being judges, when He exercises it sitting on the throne in judgment. For the Father "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man" (John v. 27). Under the Son of Man all things are to be put (Ps. viii. 6). Would any ask now, Who is this Son of Man? He is the once crucified, but now risen, ascended, and glorified One. What a thought for those who have rejected Him! Authority to execute judgment! Then all who will come into judgment must from that time forth openly acknowledge it, and be for ever illustrations, and in the most awful way, of the truth of that which He confided to His disciples in Galilee, ere He ascended on high.

Authority indeed is His, and it will be felt and submitted to throughout heaven and earth. But that is

future! Is there no manifestation of the authority given to Him now? Thank God there is. Not in judgment, not in casting down the devil from heaven, not in putting down all that is opposed to God, but in giving life to as many as the Father hath given to Him. "Thou hast given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him" (John xvii. 2). Authority over all flesh. All flesh, then, are at His disposal. What folly on man's part, yea, what wickedness, to have crucified Him. Every one of Adam's race must own and submit to Him. But how, and when? Either now as a recipient of eternal life at His hands, or by and by as a criminal at His bar. Thank God He, the rejected One, is still exercising His authority in quickening souls, though surely He might, in perfect righteousness, as far as man is concerned, have turned His back for ever on that race by members of which He was crucified.

Reader, how will it be in your case? How and when will you own authority given to Him? *Now* is the day of salvation. *To-morrow* the question may be settled for you beyond hope or power of reversal.

C. E. S.

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE,
SAITH YOUR GOD."

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."—*Mark* i. 35.

"The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned."—*Isaiah* l. 4.

THERE are plenty of weary ones in this poor, weary world, plenty of sad and sorrowful ones, plenty of broken hearts; but there never was but One of whom it could be said, "*He pleased not Himself.*" I mean that this was *always* true of Him; we know this is

not always so with us. Alas! how much of self and self-pleasing there is in all we do. But He came to do His Father's will, whatever that involved, and He knew all beforehand. "Reproach," He could say—and this He said to God, His Father—"hath broken My heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I *looked* for some to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none" (Ps. lxxix. 20). Was there ever such an One on earth? Many have known sorrows and reproach, but few, if any, could say they had none to comfort, none to take pity. But He, the Holy One, the Son of God, the Creator and Upholder of all things, was in this world "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," and had none to take pity, none to comfort.

Unfathomable wonder and mystery divine!

The voice that speaks in thunder says, "Sinner, I am Thine."

Do you say sometimes, "Surely none had ever trouble like mine; how weary I am"? Ah! He knows. He was *acquainted* with grief, and in His lonely path of suffering He has learned how to speak a word in season to just such as *you*; and is it not wonderful to think that He cares for *you*—seeks that *your* heart should be without cares? None but One who loves you perfectly would do this. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Was He not *acquainted* with grief? Indeed, indeed, He was. At the grave of Lazarus, when He saw Mary weeping, and heard her pour out her heart, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died,"—"Jesus wept" (John xi. 32, 35). When the Greeks came up to worship at the feast (chap. xii.), and the Lord looking to what was before Him, said, "Now is My soul troubled." And when the treachery of Judas pressed on His holy soul, "He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that *one of you shall betray Me.*"

What a path of sorrow and of suffering was His! He *suffered* for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He

might bring us to God, "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." But He suffered also from man, the creature He came to save; and when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. He *suffered*, too, being tempted. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He *suffered*, and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." He *could* say, I looked for some to take pity, for comforters, *but I found none*. But you *cannot* say this; He is the comforter of His people. We have not an High-priest which cannot sympathise. "*Touched with the feeling* of our infirmities," He is able to sympathise, "able to succour," and "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Heb. iv. 15; ii. 18; vii. 25). "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33).

"O Lord, Thou too once hasted
 This weary desert through,
 Once fully tried and tasted
 Its bitterness and woe;
 And hence Thy heart is tender,
 In truest sympathy,
 Though now the heavens render
 All praise to Thee on high."

W. R. H.

R.

J— R— was visited on his death-bed by a friend, who very seriously asked him to describe the state of his mind. The appeal aroused him; it freshened his dying lamp; and, raising himself up in his bed, he looked his friend in the face, and with great deliberation, energy, and dignity, uttered the following words:—"Christ in His person, Christ in the love of His heart, and Christ in the power of His arm, is the Rock on which I rest; and now" (reclining his head gently on the pillow), "death, strike!"

“THE BATTLE IS NOT YOURS,”—“THE
LORD SHALL FIGHT FOR YOU.”

Most marvellous, most wonderful !
Such puny creatures, we,
Have placed within our trembling lips
Words, comforting and free !
Our failing heart is known to God
When evil seems to gain,
When fighting 'gainst such fearful odds
Our strength seems spent in vain !

Ah ! 'tis not so ! it is not so ;
What king before the fight
But counts if he can meet the foe,
With strength uphold the right ?
Our God hath counted well the cost
Eternal life to give,
'To bring His chosen through the fight,
With Him on high to live.

Then fear thou not, nor tremblingly
The battle-field survey,
One, higher than the highest, hath
Regarded it ; then say,
The battle is not mine, but God's—
His word, it must prevail ;
Thus far, no further shalt thou go ;
Their boasted strength must fail !

God saw the tide of evil rise,
Now surging to its height,
He had wherewith to meet the cost,
To conquer in the fight :
Well furnished is His armoury
With buckler, sword, and shield ;
Invisible, His presence still
Abideth in the field.

The end will come ; it cannot be,
That evil always reign !
A wondrous end to all of earth,
To toil, and hours of pain ;

Past hours of suffering all eclipsed,
 One only thought of there,
 That hour—the darkest on this earth,—
 When Jesus judgment bare!

J. M. I.

THE UNWEARIED ONE.

Unwearied were Thy footsteps, Lord,
 Through Israel's barren land;
 Unwearied grace Thy presence marked,
 Did hearts but understand.

Unwearied goodness all might share
 Was found alone in Thee;
 Unwearied kindness shown to men,
 Each opened eye could see.

Unwearied diligence for God,
 In Thee had full display;
 Unwearied ministry to men,
 From dawn to close of day.

Unwearied patience in Thee shone,
 Though dull of heart were all;
 Unwearied mercy was displayed
 To those Thou cam'st to call.

Unwearied strength was found in Thee
 To succour and sustain;
 Unwearied, tender sympathy
 For hearts in grief and pain.

Unwearied skill in Thy right hand,
 To meet Thy people's need;
 Unwearied, too, Thy list'ning ear,
 When faith with Thee did plead.

Unwearied, Lord, Thy service still,
 Nor shall Thy service cease;
 Unwearied love our cup shall fill
 With endless joy and peace!

A GOSPEL STUDY.—FORGIVENESS.

FORGIVENESS of sins is one of the blessings which Israel will enjoy under the new covenant (Jer. xxxi. 34). Forgiveness of sins we can share in now, because the blood on which the new covenant will be based has been already shed.

Under the law such a favour was unknown, till the Lord Himself came and announced it. Till then God showed Himself to be gracious in according forgiveness for an act of sin, whatever man might have thought of it (Levit. iv., v.), if the appointed sacrifice was brought to His altar, and there dealt with aright. For, apart from sacrifice, none could count on forgiveness being assured to them. Plenary forgiveness of sins with which we are familiar was not in those days dispensed. The revelation made to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah (xxx. 31-34; Heb. viii. 12; x. 17) did, however, predict it; and the voice of John the Baptist, calling the people to the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, announced the near approach of that favour. Yet neither Jeremiah nor John were commissioned to preach it. It was a favour still to be waited for, a favour, too, surely desired, as the multitude, stirred by the Baptist's heart-searching preaching, were baptised of him in Jordan confessing their sins.

John preached, and crowds were attracted, and submitted themselves to that rite, the special ordinance of God in their day, which was at once the confession of their need, and the expression of hope that God would meet it. They were cast upon Him. The law, they evidently felt and knew, could not by the provisions of the Mosaic ritual supply what was wanted; so God's altar was not the centre to which all now directed their steps, nor were the priests then overburdened with a multitude of sin-offerings to be duly dealt with on behalf of sin-burdened consciences. All classes turned elsewhere, even to the Jordan, where

was a priest of Aaron's house proclaiming fearlessly and effectively the need of repentance, and of baptism by him if any desired to enjoy forgiveness of their sins. It was a stirring time, and a new chapter in the history of God's dealings with His people. Unchanged in His nature, maintaining at its full height the standard of holiness, God was preparing His people for participation in the fulness of His grace. The Baptist pointed his hearers to the near advent of Jehovah Himself, coming to a people who confessedly had sinned, yet not to condemn, but to bless them (Acts iii. 26). His was a ministry raised up by God to make ready for the Lord a prepared people.

At length the Lord appeared, and did what John could not. He announced forgiveness of sins (Mark ii. 5 ; Luke vii. 48), but only, as far as we know, to a few individuals during the course of His ministry amongst men. To all baptised of John He did not proclaim it. We know not that He did so to any of them. We do know that to the woman in the Pharisee's house He declared it, and that in His public ministry He kept alive the hope of it. But that woman He assured of it, and that apart from any offering to be taken by her to God's altar to procure it. No sacrifice which she could have taken to Jerusalem could by any possibility have met her need. Presumptuous sin was not provided for by the law ; hence the favour bestowed on her is of such interest to all of us. It was the earnest of the gospel of the grace of God, which can now be freely and fully proclaimed to every one upon earth. As yet, however, but a few individuals could know it, and they heard it from the Lord's own mouth. The joy was His, and rightly so, of first telling a wretched, guilty creature of the forgiveness of sins, really based on God's acceptance of the true Sacrifice, the Lamb of His own providing,—His well-beloved Son. New, indeed, to those acquainted with the letter of Old Testament revelation was such an announcement. The reason-

ings of their hearts laid bare to us attest this (Mark ii. 6, 7 ; Luke vii. 49).

His death drew near ; His last night before His cross had come. Alone with the twelve in the upper room, at the institution of His supper, the Lord supplemented the revelation made through Jeremiah, as He announced on the shedding of whose blood the new covenant would rest (Matt. xxvi. 28). Fitting it was that He should declare this,—a joy surely to His heart, who was about to suffer agony and death on the cross, to maintain untarnished the holiness of God, and to allow divine grace to flow out in righteousness to the vilest and to the lost. Three days more, and His disciples would be commissioned by Him to preach far and wide to any one and to every one who would receive it, forgiveness of sins in His name (Luke xxiv. 47), beginning at Jerusalem.

Six weeks later, the gospel of the grace of God began to be sounded forth, a gospel suited for every race, every rank, and every age between Pentecost and the rapture. "Beginning at Jerusalem." Such was the Lord's announcement, when raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Crucified in weakness He had been, now quickened in the Spirit, and about to ascend to His Father, to sit on Jehovah's right hand, until His enemies be made His footstool, He desired that in the very city of His rejection, the place of His most public humiliation, the good news of forgiveness of sins through His blood should first be proclaimed. Then far and wide, on sea and on land, amongst civilised races and amongst barbarians, north, south, east, and west, wherever the children of men dwell, the divine proclamation of the plenary forgiveness of their sins could be carried by those who rejoiced in it on their own behalf. So Peter could preach it at Cesarea to the household and friends of the centurion, Cornelius ; and Paul was authorised to proclaim it to a company to whom personally he was a stranger, gathered in the synagogue at Antioch in

Pisidia. From place to place, and from nation to nation, this gospel spread. The converts at Ephesus, a great centre of idolatry, received it (Eph. i. 7); the saints at Colosse rejoiced in it (Col. i. 14); all classes of Christians to whom John wrote were sure about it (1 John ii. 12). In apostolic times there was no doubt about it. No one could, no one did in those days share in full Christian blessing without it. So it is still; for the knowledge of it received into the heart by faith is in an ordinary way the necessary condition for the receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 38, x. 43-45; Eph. i. 13), and its attendant train of blessings.

Forgiveness of sins was preached, forgiveness through the blood of Christ. It was a proclamation on the part of God, but based on a Sacrifice which He had accepted. Accordingly, the sacred writers of the New Testament present it in this twofold way. They declared themselves to be the bearers of this proclamation, which they were authorised to set forth (Acts xiii. 38); and they pointed to God's acceptance of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ in attestation of the truth of it (Heb. x. 11, 12).

In Old Testament times it was different. There were sins for which a sin-offering could be brought. There were those for which no sacrifice under the law was provided, and the penalty for which was death (Num. xv. 30, 31). God might, of course, act in mercy in such cases, and forgive. At times He did. Under such circumstances no sin-offering could be offered, but the sinner could be assured of forgiveness on the simple authority of God's word.

To an instance of this, furnished us in 2 Sam. xii., let us now turn. David had sinned in the matter of Uriah's wife, and was guilty before God of adultery and murder. It was the great blot on his life (1 Kings xv. 5), and God could not pass it over. It must all come out to the light. So Nathan visited the king. How God's righteousness and God's mercy shine out.

Righteousness necessitated the dealing with David on account of it; mercy moved God to send the prophet to the king respecting it. "The Lord sent Nathan unto David." This was not the first time Nathan had been commissioned to visit David (2 Sam. vii.), nor was it the last, as we shall see. But the service on which the prophet was now sent called, humanly speaking, for great tact. It was by no means an enviable one. David had evinced no sign of repentance. No expression of contrition, it is clear, had passed his lips. Months had elapsed, yet confession to God had not been made. One learns how a saint can fall, and how dull the conscience can become. Shall we point the finger at David? Could any do it, who had learnt about themselves? Should we do it with the apostolic admonition in remembrance, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12)? What are we? What should we do if we rushed into temptation? Let it be remarked too, ere we pass on, that it was God sent to David; it was not David seeking after God.

The prophet approached the king. The one who had the mind of God visited him, in whose hand God had placed the sword of judgment. Now face to face, the prophet of God confronting the minister of God (Rom. xiii. 4), with marvellous tact he leads on the king to pass judgment really on himself, unconscious, it would seem, as he did so, of the heinousness of his guilt. David's anger was kindled against the supposed perpetrator of such cruel injustice. He could be indignant at the conduct of another, oblivious of his own; but he must judge himself, ere grace could be accorded him. The sentence went forth from David, only for him to learn that the judge was the criminal. He was the guilty man; Uriah's wife was the one little ewe lamb; and now the secret history of Uriah's death stood out exposed to all the world. "The man that hath done this thing shall surely die," said David. "Thou art the man," was Nathan's quick rejoinder. Uriah fell in battle;

that all Israel knew: but the reason for it, a secret probably between Joab and David till then, now comes out. "Thou hast smitten Uriah, the Hittite, with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon" (ver. 9). The history of this iniquity stood disclosed. God had seen it; God remembered it; God would have David convicted of it. Convicted? Yes. Not to drive him to despair, but to lead him to repentance.

No room was allowed for equivocation or excuse. Thou hast smitten Uriah, the Hittite, with the sword. But David had struck no blow; Uriah died as a soldier by the hand of the enemy. Had David glossed over his sins by such an excuse? If he had, he could do it no longer. "Thou hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon" were words the truth of which he could not deny. All distinction between legal guilt and moral guilt was in this case demolished. No death warrant had been signed by David; the Ammonites who smote Uriah were perfectly ignorant of David's plot against the life of his faithful servant; yet in God's eyes it was as much David's act as if he had signed the death warrant for Uriah's public execution, or had put forth his own hand and had struck him dead. "Thou hast smitten;" "thou hast slain." The whole transaction was thus laid bare. Quietly and successfully, doubtless, David imagined the affair had been managed. An illustration of the divine word: "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes" (Ps. l. 21). David was now undeceived. God had not been in ignorance of his sins; He had not been indifferent. Surely there are some who, since David's time, have acted as perfidiously, though without discovery here. Every crime is not detected on earth. The same eye, however, which witnessed David's actions observes those of

others ; and He who remembered David's sins does not forget unrighteous dealing on the part of others. Either in this world or in the next, God, the moral Governor, takes up such controversies, and settles them.

Convicted by the prophet, the king has nothing to say but to acknowledge it. "I have sinned against the Lord" was all he said. To confess was all he could do ; and that was all that was needed for the grace of God in forgiveness to be extended to him. "I have sinned against the Lord." But others have said like this, yet to no purpose ; for God reads the heart, and He knows the motives of the creature. Pharaoh could say, "I have sinned this time" (Exod. ix. 27), when alarmed by the thunder and hail, and desirous of its removal ; yet he had not repented, for he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, when the mighty thunderings had ceased. A second time he confessed the same, when the locust had destroyed of vegetation all that the hail had spared ; but his only object was to get rid of that plague (Exod. x. 16, 17). Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned," but betrayed the state of his heart as he added, "Yet honour me now before the elders of my people, and before Israel" (1 Sam. xv. 30). Judas, when he saw that the Lord was condemned, confessed to the chief priests that he had sinned (Matt. xxvii. 4). He had probably reckoned on the Lord delivering Himself, and so hoped to keep the money without being guilty of His death. In none of these cases was there real repentance. In David's case how different. He was not thinking of his character before men, and how that could be saved. He saw and confessed what his guilt was before God. He thus cast himself unreservedly on Him: Now the one who really does that will never repent of it.

"I have sinned against the Lord." A short, real, but solemn confession—an acknowledgment that he was in God's hands, and deserved only death for his

offences. "The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die," was the prophet's immediate and reassuring rejoinder. The mercy of God could be extended to one convicted of bloodguiltiness. The law could not meet the case. It demanded David's death on the two counts, viz., of adultery and of murder (Levit. xx. 10; Num. xxxv. 31). No sacrifice could be offered, for he had sinned presumptuously (Ps. li. 16; Num. xv. 30, 31). There was nothing for him but the sovereign mercy of God. Could that be extended to him? God did not leave him one moment in doubt. The prophet had not to go away, and wait till he could assure him of his pardon. Immediately on David's confession, Nathan authoritatively declared it: "The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."

On what could the convicted one rest? On the word of God. He had nothing else; and on that word once uttered, and never, that we read of, repeated. Once uttered. Yes. Has God to speak twice? David did not ask that. He heard surely, and rejoiced in the mercy of his God. Like him, the woman in Luke vii. accepted without a question the announcement on the part of the Lord of her forgiveness. The other guests might question it; she did not. Could any one suppose that she walked out of that house otherwise than in peace? So with David. He did not cross-examine the prophet to be sure that there was no mistake. Each surely took what was said, and received it as it was meant. Was not that honouring God, the creature bowing readily and in simplicity to the word of the Creator? How differently have many of us acted. How differently do many still act—so slow to receive the gospel message, so slow to bow to the unfettered proclamation of forgiveness (Acts xiii. 38).

David had nothing but the word by Nathan. We have both the word of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke xxiv. 47) and the revelation of God's acceptance of

His Sacrifice on the cross (Heb. x. 11, 12). What more could be wanted by those to whom forgiveness of sins is preached? All has been done which had to be done. Nothing more will be provided to make assurance sure. If God's word cannot be trusted, of what use is the divine revelation? If God's acceptance of the Sacrifice on our behalf is not enough, what will be, what can be?

"The Lord hath put away thy sin," the prophet declared. God, who alone could do it, had done it. David could not put it away; Nathan could not either. God could, and did. Then it could never be imputed to David. That he understood (Ps. xxxii. 2), and of that the apostle reminds us (Rom. iv. 8). We know, therefore, that sinners can be assured against any imputation of guilt resting on them for that which they have done. "The Lord hath put away thy sin," was the word for David. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" is God's word for us (Heb. x. 17).

Full and everlasting forgiveness, however, does not exempt the subjects of it from divine dealings with them in government. David had to experience that, even to the end of his life. The child born to him by Uriah's wife (for in that light Bathsheba was still regarded) must die, and the sword should never depart from his house. Of that, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah were examples. Governmental dealing, however, ends with this life. God's favour to us, based on the sacrifice of Christ, lasts for ever. Of this God assures His people.

That interview between Nathan and David terminated. God smote the child, and the child died. Subsequently Solomon was born. Again Nathan, by God's direction, visited the king (2 Sam. xii. 24, 25), not to revive the remembrance of his guilt, but to assure him of the continuance of divine favour. Bathsheba again bore a son, and David called his name Solomon, as previously directed by God (1 Chron.

xxii. 9), the earnest, as his name implied, of peace and quietness in Israel during that son's reign. But "the Lord loved him," we read, "and He sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and He called his name Jedidiah," *i.e.*, Beloved of Jehovah. What a touching, tender proof of grace on God's part, and of His desire to reassure His servant of it. Solomon spoke of the character of his reign. Jedidiah assured David that his child was an object of Jehovah's love.

But grace surpassing that are we called to rejoice in, seeing that we who, like David, needed forgiveness, which Solomon at that time did not, are taught in the Word that as subjects of divine grace we are "beloved of God" (Rom. i. 7; 1 Thess. i. 4), and can be described by the Holy Ghost as "beloved in God the Father" (Jude 1).

C. E. S.

GENESIS AND I. GALATIANS.

IN Genesis we have the Father. It is the book of the patriarchs, and the affections of the Father are displayed and exercised there beautifully.

Abraham, as well as others in this book, desires a child; and though his house might have been established in a servant, a loved and trusted servant too—Eleazer, of Damascus—this will not do for him; as long as he was childless his heart was unsatisfied. He makes a feast when his son Isaac is weaned. It was his joy to hear himself addressed as a *father*, and Sarah will then also have the house cleared of the bondwoman and her child.

Jacob adopts the sons of Joseph, giving them the place and inheritance of the first-born, and welcoming them with full affection.

These are among the instances which we find in these early patriarchal days, of the counsels and affections of our heavenly Father shadowed or expressed in these His representatives in the book of Genesis; and, I may add, there is no law, no Moses, no school-

master in this book ; God has the elect immediately under His own hand and eye, dealing with them by a home method, so to express it, and not as by the introduction of "tutors and governors." The law came in afterwards, and then the elect were carried to school, and put under rules and ordinances foreign to the home of the family—treated rather as servants than as children. The head of a school is a schoolmaster. But the dispensation of the Spirit has now come. The Son Himself has been manifested. He was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons. The elect are now on the ground of His accomplished redemption, and in the acceptableness of His blessed Person.

Now this condition of things is the Father's delight. There was a need of the schoolmaster for a season, but that need has been answered, and the Father has His child home again. This is not the age of the infant (the child that cannot speak), but the age of the son (the elect who have the Spirit, the Spirit of adoption that cries Abba, Father, filling the house with that music),—it is the time of the weaned child, Isaac, and all that appertains to the bondwoman must leave the house.

This again, I say, is the Father's delight ; the affection of the Father finds occasion now to indulge itself to the full. But the Galatians were disappointing this affection ; they were returning to ordinances ; and this is contrary to the Spirit of adoption, taking the elect from the Father's house again to put them under tutors and governors as before, and destroying the free, gracious, confiding communion of children with their Father. They were bringing back Hagar to the house ; and it is this which the Spirit so earnestly resents in this part of the epistle to the Galatians. It is the grieved and wounded affections of the Father that speak in this fervent epistle. Sarah had expressed this resentment in the book of Genesis, when she said,

“Cast out the bondwoman and her son.” That word is quoted here ; for here, in like manner, the Spirit, in behalf, so to speak, of the Father, expresses the like resentment. Paul would act the part of a parent in this chapter (see ver. 19). By faith we are *justified* (Gal. iii. 7) ; by faith we are *made sons* (iii. 26). A return to ordinances, or works of law, therefore reproaches Christ, as though He had not accomplished our justification ; but it also silences in our heart the cry of adoption, and thus disappoints the love of the Father.

It is this which this chapter, with some indignation, resents ; and I do feel that this gives this part of the epistle a very affecting and beautiful character. It is the resentment, or uttered disappointment, of Him who, so long ago as the days of Abraham and Sarah, let His elect know this,—that no condition of things, as between Him and them, would satisfy His heart, but the relationship of a Father to those who not only are, but who know themselves to be, children who are weaned, like Isaac, from the milk of ordinances, and brought home to feed at the Father’s table.

J. G. B.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

I HAVE no doubt that evil is increasing—we are warned of it ; but I believe are getting into the truth of real Christianity. The light it brings makes the darkness and evil more visible. Heartlessness for God is what is most striking, and the pretensions of reason and man. He makes a god of his own imagining. Growth in knowledge is needed—that is, a return to original truth as in the Word, and our relationship with God (blessed truth it is)—and throws light on all around us. But while this is needed to walk in these times, yet, assuming this, what I feel anxious about, as to brethren, is their being devoted, and not conformed to the world ; simplicity and undistracted-

ness of walk ; and in their ways non-conformity to the world, that the testimony may be distinct, and the effect of these truths ; this, and walking in loving communion with God, is what I pray for amongst brethren. "The word of His patience," and we "as men that wait for their Lord," is what we have to have at heart. But Philadelphian state connects itself directly with Christ—"My word," "My name"—and such as are in that state He will show that He has loved ; and this is worth all the rest.

We must not forget, in the sense of the evil around us, that the Lord remains the same. What was heart infidelity before, as return to truth develops itself becomes open and positive infidelity ; and Christianity must take its relative place of positive faith,—faith wrought by the Holy Ghost in the Word—direct faith in it, not by education, nor by the Church. Any profession, merely, will be rather the corruption and moral apostacy of Ritualism, a very real thing, which makes the Church the ground of believing ; for faith it is not. Direct faith in the Word—that is, in God—is the test of real Christianity. The Church becomes a judged thing, not the ground of believing. This is a very definite position, but which allows nothing but real faith, always true, brought out to light by growing corruption and evil. But, then, it is of all moment that devotedness and a holy walk be maintained, because men judge more by this ; and as a testimony, this must be and ever was so. "He that is holy" is with "He that is true" in Christ's character for the Philadelphian state.

One thing is needed for workmen—good courage, because of the Lord, not terrified by adversaries (see Joshua i. and 2 Tim.), when beginning the work, or when evil had come in, and the last days were in view. The Lord is above the evil, though He does not set it aside till judgment ; and faith recognises that He is. Did He set it aside, He must judge, and then the time of grace would be over. J. N. D.

MY DEAR SISTER IN THE LORD,—Time or quietness to write in, I find not. Yet, amid the turmoil of the way, He has granted me to write a few words to some in affliction and trial—of whom the number at the present time is large. We talk of the wilderness, and of having renounced all to follow Him, but how little do we know how this one thing to do—to forget that which is behind, and to look to that which lieth before, and to press on to the mark of the prize of the high calling of God. The battle of life becomes hotter and hotter, the road more steep and slippery, but all this only to wean us more and more from our own selves.

I hear the 29th and 30th November are the days for the Manchester meetings. May the Lord prepare hearts for a blessing, and pour a large one out.

One's path, as walking with God, has *to be learnt*, and the Saviour is patient enough in teaching it. But how one learns the contrast between what His mind and heart presented to God's eye, and what one's own heart and mind present to Christ's. Safe and saved in Him—for ever; but *what* has He saved? and how does the completeness of the salvation in Him make us see how little we have attained to saying, "Lord, I come to do Thy, will and Thine only." "Thy will, my will. Nothing owned by me as my desire or will, till it is known to be Thy desire or will first." A conqueror in all things, practically victorious, I asked Him to make me. Not free from Satan only, and from all judgment to come, but, *therefore*, free from the world and from self. How little do we know what it is, having conquered, to stand fast.

The doctors send out patients wholesale hence to Sydney, N. Z., &c., and very rashly, in many cases lately, it has been ordered. But let anyone propose to go out thither to look up a few poor sheep of the Master's, and the same doctors are terrified at the mad folly. But if we walk humbly before the Lord, and humbly

with Him, He will be with us. And sure I am He loves to say, "It is well it was in thy heart." I do count on the prayers of the poor of the flock. Monday the boat starts at three: four or five saints on board to break bread together, if the Lord will.—Most affectionately,

G. V. W.

"GOD IS FAITHFUL."—*Psalm lxxxix.*

"JUSTICE and judgment are the constant attributes of His throne. Mercy and truth announce Him when He goes forth. This form of expression is beautiful. God has a throne. There everything must be brought into consistency with it. But in His active going forth tender mercy and goodness announce Him, and faithful truth will tell His people He is there when He comes forth. His activities are mercy and faithfulness because His will is at work and His nature is love. Yet His throne still maintains justice and judgment. How truly this has been shown in Christ!—will doubtless be so in the last days of Israel—but signally so in Christ, and even then because of Him.

Mercy, then, faithfulness, the character of the divine throne and of the divine actings, past accomplishment of redemption, what the title of God is, and the power in which He has broken the hostile power of evil, all to us known as the Father's love through the Son by the Spirit, bring the spirit in the midst of all trial into the enjoyment by faith (but the true enjoyment of the heart), of the light of God's countenance according to all the favour He bears us in Christ."

J. N. D.

"I shall shine; I shall see Christ as He is; I shall see Him reign, and all His fair company with Him; mine eyes shall see Him."—*S. Rutherford's last words.*

NOT a little remarkable is it that the Spirit of God sets before us in this chapter both these elevated characters, in distinct connection with "new-born babes." In chapter i., we are born again by the word of God; and in chapter ii., we are addressed as *new-born* babes. The apostle, in this striking language, cuts off all thought of his instruction being adapted only to those well versed in divine things: he starts at the earliest stage.

If really born again, or of God, we are babes of the family, new-born ones unto God. For babes, milk is not only suitable, but essential. For life sustaining, for strength giving, for growth promoting, it is the divinely prescribed and the divinely provided pabulum, the preparation of which is not of human skill, but of divine wisdom and goodness. Exactly so is it with the milk of the word—the sincere, or pure, milk which God's precious grace has furnished for the new-born babes of His family. This we are exhorted to desire, to covet. First laying aside the recited elements of evil—malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and that constant snare, evil speaking—we are instructed to *desire* the Word. Let us ask ourselves if this be the habit and character of our souls. Do we love the word; do we long for, or desire, the word of God; do we covet it, as the babe ardently and habitually draws from the breast? The Word is as the infinite breast of God for His new-born babes, and the sincere milk of the Word is for the growth unto salvation of all who have indeed tasted that the Lord is gracious, or good.

It is this taste that the world has never acquired; but they who have it find a whetted appetite and an unslaked thirst for the word of God, and it has the characteristic of growing by that upon which it feeds; for the more we feed upon the Word, and imbibe its ever-flowing streams of nourishment, the more do we return to it with spiritual zest and holy desire of heart.

And if any have *not* this, we do not hesitate to say it is due to having failed to take deep draughts from the precious waters of life; for it is as impossible to be surfeited with the word of God as to be surfeited with the air we breathe.

So far, we have been occupied with the new birth, which is a question of the *nature* and what is essential to that nature, its indispensable nourishment. If we are born of God, we have a new nature superadded; we do not cease to belong to the Adamic creation and to the human family, to which properly pertains that which is of its nature as created, distinguished from that which has befallen it, viz., sin and the flesh, which now characterise it. But since we have believed unto salvation, we can through grace say, "We are of God" (1 John v. 19); "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. ii. 10). How marvellous, how blessed is this new creation work of God—that which is of Him from first to last—made partakers of His very nature, born of God, privileged to draw from the breast of His infinite and unfathomable love that which can alone supply and satisfy, both now and for eternity, the spiritual desires which He has incorporated with the nature He has given us. If anything could be more wonderful than our reception into His family, it surely is that we should have a nature qualifying us for the relationship in which we are set, and which could alone find a suited scene for its exercise in that circle where divine affections have their uncontrolled and everlasting enjoyment.

But our subject is "Worshippers and Witnesses," and we find the first of these in ver. 5—"A holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And we would call special attention to the fact that, if we be babes, we *are* this holy priesthood. As the babe is as truly and as fully of the nature of its parents when new born as when full manhood has been attained, so is it with the children of God; and our Scripture, by its expressive

silence as to any other qualification, teaches us that it is by the possession of this nature, and by that alone, that we are constituted a holy priesthood—in other words, constituted spiritual worshippers, brought into God's presence, within the veil, with hands and hearts laden with spiritual sacrifices, acceptable (or *made fragrant*) to God by Jesus Christ.

Very precious encouragement is found here for young believers, babes in Christ, the lambs of the flock; they have accorded to them every necessary qualification for worshipping the Father. If they be His children, they are His worshippers. The Spirit of adoption dwelleth in them; they cry, "Abba, Father;" and if no other expressions break from their lips, and their lisping, stammering tongues frame no other utterance, in those simple words are concentrated all that is vital in spiritual worship.

Let us, then, once and for ever banish the thought that worship is for the deeply taught, or the highly gifted, and the babes must keep silence on those occasions when the saints are found together as worshippers. Whose voice is that which is most musical to the father's ear, and carries most melody to the mother's heart, if it be not that of the youngest child? Only let us take care that we offer up *spiritual* sacrifices, and not carnal. Not those which are long, and learned, and laboured; not those which are eloquent or elaborate; but those which are spiritual, or, in a word, those which are of the Spirit of God, who as truly and blessedly indwells the babes as He does the young men or the fathers. Every broken and un-studied exclamation that the Spirit of God elicits from the lips of a new-born babe in the worship of the assembly is a spiritual sacrifice presented by a holy priest, and by Jesus Christ is rendered so fragrant unto God in the holiest, that its sweetness shall be before Him for ever.

But our Scripture also gives us the title of royal priests (ver. 9), reminding us of the Melchisedec priest-

hood of the Lord Himself; not that which He is exercising now, but that in which He shall be displayed before restored Israel and the countless myriads of believing Gentiles when His kingdom is established in power and glory, in answer to Ps. cx., when God's Christ shall be established in pure blessing as a Priest upon His throne. . Meanwhile, we are called to the exercise of a priesthood before the world which is characterised as royal, or kingly, and therefore, however insignificant in measure, lacks nothing in the character of Melchisedec priesthood. For we are made priests of God and of Christ, and come forth from Him as His *witnesses* to and before the world, and purely for its blessing; while for the glory of Him from whom we thus come forth as sent into the world (John xvii. 18), we shew forth the praises (or divine virtues and excellencies) of Him who hath called us "out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter ii. 9).

And here, again, we would earnestly impress upon our youngest readers who are born of God—His newborn babes—that *they* are these royal priests, and these priestly functions are what *they* are called to before the world in which they move day by day. The workshop or warehouse, the factory or the field, the quiet hamlet or the crowded city, may be the scene we occupy, but whichever it is makes no difference—we are, in the exercise of a kingly priesthood, to be Christ's *witnesses*. What manner of persons, then, ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness (2 Peter iii. 2). As worshippers, we are a holy priesthood within the holiest in all the sweet odour of Christ *before God*; as witnesses, we are a royal priesthood come from Him who is the Most High God to shew forth *before the world* the precious excellencies of Christ, for the blessing of all who will receive the testimony to His name.

Another apostle (Heb. xiii. 15, 16) teaches these two things, and in the same order: first, the sacrifice

of praise to God, the fruit of our lips confessing His name ; and secondly, the doing good and communicating, which sacrifices are well-pleasing to God. In offering the first we are His worshippers, and in the last we are His witnesses. And yet a third apostle, in the effusiveness of his heart, which was filled with worship (he being in the Spirit on the Lord's day), breaks forth in strains with which we may fittingly close, " To Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father : to Him be the glory and the strength to the ages of ages. Amen."

Reader, if you are one of God's babes, you are one of the Father's worshippers and of Christ's witnesses ; *forget it not*. How great is the number of those who, while ready enough to speak of themselves as babes in Christ, or lambs of His flock, *appear to forget* that the babes or lambs who answer to the Shepherd's voice are those who desire His word, who offer spiritual sacrifices as worshippers, and who shew forth the virtues of a rejected Christ, as witnesses of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

" RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD."

THE " righteousness of God " is never imputed to the sinner. God imputes righteousness to the one who believes His testimony about His Son, that is, He reckons that person righteous ; but He is never said to impute *His* righteousness. Rom. iii. shows us how God can be righteous in justifying the ungodly ; there then, His righteousness is treated of. Rom. iv. teaches us on what principle a person can be justified : hence the term " righteousness of God " is dropped throughout that chapter, and righteousness alone is treated of. For the righteousness of God means that God is righteous, and acts consistently with what He is. The moment, then, that we seize the meaning of the term

“righteousness of God,” we understand why Scripture never speaks of God imputing *His* righteousness to the sinner, and the phraseology is seen to be clear and precise. If we think of God in connection with righteousness, we know that He is righteous, and will by-and-by “judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts xvii. 31). But if this were all that we knew of God’s righteousness, who could be saved? For if God enters into judgment with us, we know what the end of that must be (Ps. cxliii. 2). Thank God, His righteousness is also manifested in justifying the ungodly, and this is one of Paul’s special subjects of instruction. The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel (Rom. i. 17). It is manifested now apart from law, though “witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe” (Rom. iii. 21, 22). To this people are to submit themselves if they would be saved (Rom. x. 3); and all who do that, become God’s righteousness in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21). Viewing righteousness in relation to the sinner, we learn that God can impute righteousness without (or apart from) works (Rom. iv. 6). The principle on which God can do this is faith; hence it is called the righteousness which is of faith (Rom. x. 6), and we are reminded of the Old Testament Scripture which declared, “The just shall live by his faith” (Hab. ii. 4; Rom. i. 17). An illustration of God justifying a man on this principle is given us in Abraham (Rom. iv. 1-3); the moral class who can share in it is exemplified in David, after he had sinned so frightfully in the matter of Uriah the Hittite (ver. 6-8), whilst the special testimony now put before souls for them to be justified by faith, when they believe it, is set forth in verses 23-25 of that same chapter: and the effect on the man of this way of justification is this, he has peace with God,

and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Rom. v. 1, 2); for the whole question of his standing before the throne of God is settled by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, writes the Apostle, "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Hence justification is more than forgiveness, for it witnesses to the soul of its unchallengable standing before the throne of God. Forgiveness of sins the *sinner* needs to be assured of. Justification forms part of the gospel for God's *saints*, as the epistle to the Romans makes clear, in which forgiveness, only twice mentioned (iv. 7; xi. 27), is assumed as known and enjoyed by those to whom Paul wrote to enfold the manner and result of their justification by faith.—(*Bible Witness and Review*, vol. iii., p. 314.)

He had set His love upon us where we were, giving His Son, who was without spot or motion or principle of sin; and making Him (for He offered Himself to accomplish the will of God) sin for us, in order to make us in Him—who in that condition had perfectly glorified Him—the expression of His divine righteousness, before the heavenly principalities through all eternity.—(Synopsis 2 Cor. v. 21).

"And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is Judge Himself."

The heavens (though in result God be seated in Zion) bring in their display of the righteousness of God; distinct in itself, note, from His judgment. This is general. It is not in itself the judgment of God. I doubt not, He shines forth in glory therein, but in a particular manner. We can say it is the glorified saints who display this, of course with Christ Himself.—(Synopsis Psalm 1. 6.)

He having perfectly glorified God when He was made sin for us, and bore our sins, God's righteousness has set Him as Man at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; and part of that righteousness of God is that He should see the fruit of the travail of His

soul and be satisfied: He must have us, therefore, in the glory with Him, and like Himself.—(*Delusion of Death to Nature*, p. 10.)

TESTIMONY.

WE have to be Christ's in a world that has rejected Him, and be the expression of that, one tittle of which is not in the world. We are called to run towards Him in glory. If we have not got the consciousness that Christ is there, that He is in us, and we in Him, we have not got into our true condition as Christians here; for the effect of the Comforter dwelling in us is that we have the consciousness of Christ being in us and we in Him. All responsibility flows from this. I have never got into a Christian condition in which to go through this world until I see my place as seated in heavenly places in Christ, and indwelt by the Holy Ghost on earth. The responsibility consequent on such a position is that I should in everything manifest the character of *God Himself*. You may say, How *can* I show the character of God? What was Christ? Was He not the manifestation of God? And we are told to walk as He walked. It is in Him as man that the nature we are to imitate is presented to us, as it ought to be developed in us here below.

In the life of Christ here, we see God manifest in the flesh. He was moved in His conduct to others by the motives that characterise God Himself. Are we always bearing about the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our body? Are our hearts really set upon being *nothing* that Christ may be *everything*? God has given us an Object in which He manifests Himself, and which is the Object of His own delight, in order to attract and lead on our hearts to Him.

We do not go back to Gilgal, to the circumcision of the cross; we do not keep the cross applied to everything in and around us, and so the flesh springs up, and when it does it hides God. While down here, we have to bear about the dying of Jesus. If we go down with the stream, we may find it is what we like, but it is *not Christ*, and not what suits Him. The Lord give us to have Christ so dear to us that His image may be stamped upon us as we walk through this world.—*B. Herald*, Sept., 1871.

VICTORY OVER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.

2 Cor. xi., xii., xiii. ; Gal. ii.

SOON we shall be in that scene of glory and of blessed joy where the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost will have undisturbed sway, where there will be no serpent's trail, no wicked flesh, but where all the glory of God and the Lamb will be manifested and ourselves reflecting it, so full of the Spirit that all our thoughts and feelings will be in perfect sympathy with the mind of God! One sees, in Corinthians, the apostle shewing how a believer can attain to the same now ; not theoretically, but practically—dead and buried, and risen with Christ. Paul's chiefest joy was to come, when in that scene of glory ; but he had, too, special joy down here, making it the one object of his life to let the life of Christ shine out amidst all hindrances and all who opposed ; while poor Peter was more feeble here (Gal. ii.) than when the Lord was on earth, for here he compromised the Gospel itself.

In Paul we find the power of life. As to the life itself, we shall never have it more than it is ours now, nor shall we ever have another eternal life than that we have now ; but the *great thing* is to get *power with it*, so as to get the *victory over all circumstances* that would hinder the shining out of it.

The law gave certain requirements to the creature, which if not met put him under the curse, but being dead to the law, and having a new life in Christ, put him above it all. If the curse was pronounced, it rested on the creature, but did not prevent Christ coming in. The law brought man to extremity, but if in Christ not under law. Everything that belonged to Saul of Tarsus was judged, and the penalty borne by Christ ; and Paul had his part in Christ. He could say, "To me to live is Christ ;" He is in me, and I in Him. In a poor, earthen vessel (Paul could say) God has put a spark of the life in Christ ; and not only that, but Christ is living in me—not

keeping evil in check only, but moulding the new man—from glory to glory, that is the power of life. It is blessed to have life; but there is the power of it shewn out in Paul down here. And he looked on for the Saviour to come and make the poor body a vessel of glory, filled with the Holy Ghost.

But how could Paul, a poor, weak thing, looking out for glory by and by, but down here full of infirmity, so live in the power of that life as to let it shine out, whatever the circumstances through which he passed? The answer is, it is Christ in me, and His power is competent not to let a bit of the old root work in me. To me to live is Christ; and Paul did it beautifully in the power of Christ in him, at a time, too, when the flesh and Satan and all evil was rampant round about him. There he was, saying the life I live, I live by the faith of the Son of God. That was his power, and through the whole course of his life he was experiencing its force down here. We see in him that power of life in everything.

In these tabernacles are a set of thoughts and feelings which, in their outbreak, characterise and constitute the expression of the flesh; but when connected with Christ, the spring and motive of a person's thoughts and feelings is different, enabling a believer to say, The life I live, I live by the faith of the Son of God. The force of it is, *by the faith* of the Son of God—getting positive power in faith.

Paul lifted up his eyes, and saw that Christ in the light, letting him know that all his springs were in Him, the living fountain up there, and he was so filled with Christ that all of Paul was excluded. First, the Spirit of life in Christ had been given, and then the power of life flowing from faith in Him; so that if Peter came in compromising the Gospel, Paul brought that power in to withstand Peter; looking up, seeing not only his perfect acceptance, but that he got power from Christ—able to say, not only Christ is my life, but I live Christ, and this moulds the man. He was

down here a poor, earthen vessel, but he held in it that life of the Son of God. He said: I see Him up there as my righteousness and life, and that is power to me to live to Him; and in all these infirmities and afflictions of mine, the only question is to make good the life I have in Him. He could say to the Galatians: Christ looked down at me, and sent me to build you up. Don't compare my ways to these Judaising teachers, or to Peter. I am dead to the law, and have to live down here in the flesh by the faith of Him who loved me and gave Himself for me. I know what Christ's thoughts are about it all. He is wanting to come out of the glory, and He will take me up in a body fitted for that scene of glory; but I have got Him now as my life. He gave Himself for me. That was what acted on Paul's mind in all the circumstances round about him. Whether the Jews or Peter were compromising the Gospel Christ had committed to him, he knew Christ was with him.

We don't go to war at our own charges. If any seek to do so, the greatest mercy that can be shewn to such is to let them know they can never succeed. When in that scene of glory Christ is coming to take us to, we shall be *perfectly satisfied*, and if looking to that, we shall not pity ourselves for anything we can give up, as if any sacrifice we can make is anything.

Can you say you are making good the eternal life? You have a poor, feeble body, and the life of the body is not the life of Christ; but can you say that amidst all failure here (and there is plenty of it), you are not troubled, save at anything that is *against* (not yourself, but against) *Christ*? Are you full of joy at the thought of that coming scene when the glory of God and the Lamb will be displayed, though you may be crumpled and trodden under foot now? Is it true that, as God looks upon Christ, He sees us not only one with Him, but as those who are to be *entirely separated from the world*, and living unto God and Christ, and if feeble, yet having that one object,

CHRIST, up there, ever as the object of faith, and the thought of what God is leading us on to? Is it manifest in us what the victory is that overcomes the world? We cannot be without power to testify of Christ, *impossible*, if filled with Christ up there; so there could be no such thing as not knowing what as servants a people are called upon to be, after knowing Christ as theirs—the glorified One on high!

G. V. W.

LEVITICUS.

CHAP. IV. 35.—The only priestly work I can see there is what the priest did, not as in peace between God and the people, but as representing them—only that Christ was Victim as well as Priest, and having offered Himself for it without spot, He offered Himself as it, *i.e.*, gave Himself up to death as sin-bearer, confessing, therefore, all our sins on Himself as Victim; but this preceded, I apprehend, this offering, for He offered Himself personally as a spotless Victim, *i.e.*, spotless to be one—then the Lord lays the sins on Him—He is made sin for us. Instead of charging it on others as Adam did, He owns them as His own, and knowing the just rights of God as regards sin and sinners, offers Himself up to death and judgment—but I doubt whether this was not more as Victim than as Priest—to secure the divine glory and save God's beloved; this the Priest did, and this was arranging all on the altar, but it was entirely between God and the Priest. The wrath and death which followed was not a priestly part—that brought out the sweet savour as perfectly effectuating the offer, and was in itself, as coming from God, the fruit of sin-bearing.

Chap. viii. Further, on the day of Atonement, the blood was brought within the veil, because if Christ had not done this, Israel could not, after all, have been blessed. The goat was primarily and properly for Israel, but in the priestly application of blessing, the

blood is shed on the altar, and the priest blesses from the altar as outside.

And though it is evident that Christ had nothing to be cleansed from, and needed no blood-shedding, as verses 10-12 indeed express it, yet He is in His present place in the power of that blood. He is raised from the dead in the power of the blood of the everlasting covenant. Having taken our sins He entered in as Priest in the power of that blood, which He Himself shed for us. It is not only that we are sprinkled with it, blessedly true as that is, but He has entered into the exercise of priesthood in the power of it, for us indeed, but in the measure of His divine glory, for in that work God Himself was glorified—all He is, displayed and made good in revelation in it.

Christ was consecrated to God in blood, not surely because He needed it, but that His obedience, by which we are saved, was unto death, and He is to God and loved of the Father according to the sacrifice of Himself—His laying down His life, yet it was only for us, yet withal for God's glory.

Hebrews ix. takes up man as incapable of entering, the way into the Holiest not open, and the way the High priest entered shewing this state of things; and then by death the whole old state of things and ground of relationship done away—sin put away, our sins borne—and Christ, Man, appearing in the heavenly place, in the presence of God for us.

In our chapter we have the altar anointed seven times, the full divine and perfect sanctification so marked; in Hebrews, He offers Himself through the Eternal Spirit—thus Christ enters through blood—He could have entered without, but had so abode alone. But entering through blood in the efficacy of His own sacrifice, in which God was glorified and sin put away, He introduces us as Himself, through and according to the value of that blood, into His own place and standing, and now appears for us there—our present state which we are in and know by the Holy Ghost.

All they had to say to the Sanctuary was to go in and be hid there. But note in chapters ix., x., nothing is said but of his acting as previously except in x.; this is (x. 17), I apprehend, a mistake—it is (not blame, but) Moses' reason why he ought to have eaten it. Had it been brought into the Holy Place, it ought to have been burnt with fire, but it was not, and hence ought to have been eaten; this would make it appear that their conduct (ix. 11) was wrong.

Chap. ix. *There was no proper Propitiation but on the great day of Atonement—no going within the veil; but I must look into this further.*

Chap. xvi. The purification in the Sanctuary was a distinct part of the great day of Atonement; the cleansing of the outer sanctuary distinct. The burnt-offering came afterwards quite distinct; nobody was to be in the outer sanctuary, when the High Priest went through the cleansing of the inner—that was the essential substantive thing, the blood being brought to the throne, as the Lord's lot, and that was done for himself and his house (the priest's) and all the congregation of Israel. Verse 16 comes in by the by. There was to be a cleansing of the place—that had been done for the most Holy when the blood was brought in, and it was to be done for the tabernacle—outside there was no such cleansing. In verse 18 he comes to the cleansing of the outer sanctuary, so that what was cleansed was the Sanctuary itself, the blood being sprinkled before God Himself and on His throne, for Aaron, his house, and all the people, and during this time, no one was to come into the outer. Then he went out of the Sanctuary, and cleansed the altar of incense, *i.e.*, all was cleansed when man approached to God—not when man was cleansed by God. The tabernacle as the place of approach was cleansed; then came the putting the sins out of sight, quite another matter but connected. And then as a distinct service, in other garments, the service of offering outside. Nor was there any specific cleansing of

the candlestick and table—they were not approaching-places.

I notice with much interest lately that cleansing, on the great day of Atonement, referred only to the Tabernacle itself and what was in it—not to the court or what was there. Here only the blood was carried into the Holiest of all. But as to cleansing, the heavenly places alone are in view—this is full of interest; there was a cleansing away of sins on *Azazel*, but that was a distinct part (not as to Christ, separated in His work—the goats were one Christ) but it was a different subject—sins put away, but no approach in that to the Sanctuary. And as to the Holy of Holies, the witness still there that the way was not open. Still, though only the shadow not the image of the things to come was there, the principle of entrance in peace into the presence of God was there—the blood was on the Propitiatory. This was a thing wholly apart from all regular Jewish offerings, none of which contemplated entrance there. But what was done, was cleansing everything within, because God was there; it was apart, unconnected with any other sacrifices. When it was complete, the High Priest offered burnt-offerings—but they were no part of this service. This, too, was not available for an occasion—it was effectual for God Himself, here only for a year no doubt, but cleansed all around Him for Himself, for what He was, and when all was revealed was an eternal redemption.

It seems to me that though I doubt not that the blessed Lord in bearing our sins held the place of Aaron as representing the people and confessing their sins on *Azazel*—not properly a priestly but a representative office (for priestly was in ability to approach God when others could not, and here he took their place as sinners)—yet Heb. v. 9, 10 points out distinctly that He was established as High Priest, only after His sufferings, “being made perfect,” *i.e.*, having been passed through His consecration by the things

which He suffered, He became, and is thus and then saluted of God a High Priest—God publicly owns Him thereon.

The putting the blood on the mercy-seat was meeting God in respect of sin in the essence of His Being in death the fruit of sin—a wondrous truth! It was when made sin and bearing its curse, forsaken of God and dying that Man's obedience was perfect, and love to the Father in Jesus, and that wherein God's righteousness against sin, and supreme love to sinners was manifested. In the place of sin, as made it (and God Himself was perfectly glorified, John xiii.*), obedience was perfect. Then the sprinkling seven times before the mercy-seat was the perfection of its effect for our approach. This sevenfold sprinkling therefore was done on the altar of incense—God was not seated there. The scape-goat met responsibility and judgment founded, of course, on the blood of the other, but the first part gave access to God as He is, and the fitness of incense service, and this is truly blessed. The scape-goat was, first of all, Israel as an earthly people on earthly ground, in the flesh, but of course applicable to us (as Isaiah liii.), but to us as having been on this ground, guilty as sinners in the flesh by what the flesh produced; but now out of it, all that gone, not in the flesh, and as to that perfected for ever; and so now standing on the ground of *the blood within*, with "boldness to enter into the holiest"—not *justified without* merely, but "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light"—so that while the positive preciousness of the blood remains for God Himself, yet it is not contrast with a state of guilt, but positive joy and worship where there is none.

The more it is weighed, the more important does the great day of Atonement become. It is not a burnt-offering to be accepted according to a sweet

* In John's Gospel, forgiveness of sins does not come in.

savour, nor a sin-offering to restore a soul by priestly intervention, or the people and priest in sprinkling before the Veil and on the altar of incense, so that communion might be restored to them. It is in no sense application consequent on failure in responsibility. It was a sin-offering, and of course in respect of the priest and his house, and the people, but not application and restoration—God was in view. No doubt that the sins were carried into a land not inhabited, but it was not personal restoration nor access; as the blood on the mercy-seat, it laid the ground for it, though in another way. It was substitution, doing the work which bore the sins away out of God's sight. So in sprinkling the Tabernacle, it was "because of the iniquities of the children of Israel among whom I dwell." The blood was brought in in respect of sin no doubt, but as meeting God's own nature. The sins were gone, but no blood was put on the brazen altar; it was not measured judicially by man's responsibility. The sins did not suit God's presence, and cleansing was effected on God's throne and before it, and on the altar of incense. We go into the Holiest—the Veil is now rent.—*Notes and Comments by J. N. D.*

O! how far Christ surpasses that which was greatest under the Levitical economy. Heaven is the sanctuary into which He has entered; and the blood which He carried in is His own, the blood which has obtained an eternal redemption.

"By His own blood He entered in once, having obtained eternal redemption for us." The sacrifice is shewn here as forming part of the glory of Christ; the humiliation of the cross, and suffering for sin, *do not appear here*. But Christ having obtained eternal redemption by His blood, entered into heaven carrying that blood into the presence of God.—*Collected Writings*, vol. xxviii., p. 35.

THE WORLD.

Go estimate, amid the humbling wrecks
 Of broken cisterns and of blighted joys,
 The worth of the vain world which has deceived thee.
 Strange that it should so long with Syren voice
 Have lullaby'd thy spirit, weaving dreams
 Of visionary bliss around thy path.
 Baseless enchantment, ne'er to know fruition !
 The *World!* 'Tis but a synonym for change.
 As well recline thine head upon the surge,
 The ever-varying billow. Like the dove,
 Which of old tracked a wilderness of waves
 With weary pinion, and with wailing cry
 Roaming the waste to find a leafy bough
 Whereon to set its foot : so does the soul
 (Pluming immortal pinions for the flight)
 Travel the world's tumultuous sea in vain
 To find a resting place. It findeth none !
 Life is one scene of tempest. There may be
 Lulls in the sweeping storm, the alternations
 Of cloud and sunshine ; but no more than gleams,
 Not the true lustre of the fixèd star,—
 Rather the fitful, meteoric glare,
 One moment dazzling with its lurid light,
 The next all dark, and, by the power of contrast,
 Darkness more sensible. E'en when the cup
 Of life is fullest, is it not enough
 To mar its brightest hour of festive joy
 (As did the characters of living fire,
 Which gleamed of old amid the revelries
 Of Chaldee's lords), the possibility
 That death may come and write
 His MENE TEKEL on the clay built walls ?
 The tie to life how frail ! There is between us and the grave
 Nought but a breath ! To-day the bark may spread
 Her canvas to the gale ; all may presage
 A prosperous voyage, fann'd by gentle zephyrs.
 One creaking plank the morrow may reveal.
 Seal'd is her doom—the starting timber yields—
 And down she sinks into the eddying wave,
 A shatter'd wreck ! Oh ! whither shall we flee,

'Mid the convulsion of these thick'ning storms
 (This heaving ocean of vicissitude),
 To find some haven of repose,
 Safe from the tempest shock? Lo! from an ark,
 Riding triumphant o'er the angry deep,
 Accents of love proceed. It is the voice
 Of an unchanging God; changeless alone
 Amid all change. Oh, blessed Hiding Place!
 As louder raged the hurricane of old,
 And mightier was the flow of gushing waters
 O'er a submerged earth, the higher rose
 Upon the bosom of the foaming surge,
 Proof to the roar of elemental war,
 The patriarch's ark. So, Christian mourner, safe
 Within thy Cov'nant Shelter, wave on wave
 May roll successive over thee, as if
 The rifled fountains of the deep were suffer'd
 To riot at their pleasure; but each billow
 Uplifts thee farther from the shores of Time;
 Nearer thy God; and, as behind thou leavest
 A devastated earth, faith elevates
 Above the wrecks of sublunary bliss,
 And brings thee to the golden gates of heaven.

WELLS OF BACA.

 THE GLORY.

OH, precious, precious, precious
 Lord;

Oh, what a burst of bliss;

Oh, what a vision fills mine eyes;

Oh, what a glory this!

Oh, *face of Jesus!* holy Lord;

Oh, what a sight I see!

Thy *very* face, most precious Lord,

In glory beams on me!

What rapturous joy, beloved Lord,

What ecstasy complete;

To look upon that face of Thine,

And fall at Thy blest feet!

But Thou dost take me by the
 hand;

Dost fold me to Thy breast;

Dost still the panting of my heart
 With Thine heart's peace and
 rest!

Thy voice, Thyself, Thy chariot-
 cloud, [home;

Thy white-robed throng brought
 All that we've waited for so long,
 In one bright moment come!

Oh, Saviour, Jesus, Christ the Lord,
 Our lips break forth in praise;

We've reached the haven of our
 We on Thy glory gaze! [hope,

Bliss, bliss, transcendent bliss is
 While we Thy glory view; [this,
 Such sweet, such thrilling happi-
 Mere mortal never knew. [ness

Oh, Lord, with wonder and surprise,
With rapturous amaze,
In joy we feast our ravished eyes
Upon Thy glorious face !

There see that all the Godhead
shines

In Thee, and calls for praise ;
The God we've known as "Light"
and "Love,"
Beheld in glory's blaze !

Th' eternal God Himself displayed,
Thou everlasting Word ;
The Father, Son, and Spirit viewed
In thy blest person, Lord !

But hark ! what thrilling melodies
Come floating thick and fast ;
Ten thousand times ten thousand
tongues
The new song sing at last !

Oh, blessedness beyond compare,
Surpassing human thought ;
The bliss divine, ineffable,
Of saints to glory brought !

Of saints who in the likeness shine
Of Thee, the Glorified ;
Of Thee who shed Thy blood for us,
Thy body, and Thy bride !

And shall our lustrous beauty pale,
Our joy in heaven abate ?

Shall Thine own glory fade, blest
Thy majesty and state ? [Lord,

No, no ; as lasting as Thyself,
Enduring evermore,

Are all the glories, all the joys,
Of this eternal shore !

Most blessed Lord, belov'd, adored,
Our Bridegroom, Lamb of God,
What everlasting bliss is ours,
The ransomed of Thy blood !

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

NOV. 22ND, 1847.

My dear friend and brother in Jesus Christ,—It gives me much pleasure to see your translation of ———. I reserve the pleasure of reading it, or rather of having it read to me, for moments in which the Lord says to us, as He did to His apostles, "Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile." But I cannot refrain from telling you, my dear friend, that the pleasure that the appearance of your work gave me has been somewhat abated by the far too favourable opinion which you have expressed in your preface respecting me. Before I had read a word of your translation, I made a present of a copy to a very dear and sincere friend of mine, who brought me word that you had spoken in praise of my piety in your preface. The passage produced the same effect on my friend that it did on me when I afterwards saw it. I hope, therefore, that you will not take in ill part what I am about to say to you on the subject, and which is the fruit of a tolerably long experience.

Pride is the greatest of all evils that beset us, and of all our enemies it is that which dies the slowest and hardest.

Even the children of the world are able to discern this. Madame De Staël said on her death-bed: "Do you know what is the last to die in man? It is self-love." God hates pride above all things, because it gives to man the place that belongs to Him, who is alone exalted over all. Pride intercepts communion with God, and draws down His chastisement, for God resists the proud; He will destroy the name of the proud; and we are told that there is a day appointed when the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man laid low.

I am sure, then, you will feel, my dear friend, that one man cannot do another a greater injury than by praising him and feeding his pride. "He that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a snare for his feet," and "a flattering mouth worketh ruin." Be assured, moreover, that we are far too short-sighted to be able to judge of the degree of our brother's piety. We are not able to weigh it aright without the balance of the sanctuary, and that is in the hand of Him who searches the heart. Judge nothing, therefore, before the time, until the Lord comes and makes manifest the counsels of the heart, and renders to every man his praise. Till then let us judge of our brethren, whether for good or for evil, with becoming moderation, and remember that the surest and best judgment is what we form of ourselves when we esteem other better than ourselves.

If I were to ask you how you know that I am one of the most advanced in the Christian career, and an eminent servant of God, you would no doubt be at a great loss to reply. You would perhaps cite my published works. But do you not know, my dear friend and brother, you who can preach an edifying sermon as well as I can, that the eyes see farther than the feet go, and that unhappily we are not always, nor in all things, what our sermons are; that we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. I will not tell you the opinion I have of myself, for in doing so I shall probably all the while be seeking my own glory, and while seeking my own glory appear humble, which I am not. I had rather tell you what our Master thinks of me,—He that searches the heart and speaks the truth, who is the Amen, the faithful Witness, and has often spoken in my inmost soul (and I thank Him for it),—but believe me, *He* has never told

me I am an "eminent Christian and advanced in the ways of godliness." On the contrary, He tells me very plainly that if I knew my own place, I should find it that of the chief of sinners, and least of all saints. His judgment, surely, my dear friend, I should take rather than yours.

The most eminent Christian is one of those of whom no one has ever heard speak—some poor labourer or servant whose whole is Christ, and who does all for His eye, and His alone. The first shall be last.

Let us be persuaded, my dear friend, to praise the Lord alone. He only is worthy of being praised, revered, and adored. His goodness is never sufficiently celebrated. The song of the blessed (Rev. v.) praises none but Him who redeemed them with His blood. It contains not one word of praise for any of their own number, not a word that classes them into eminent or not eminent; all distinctions are lost in the common title, *the redeemed*, which is the happiness and glory of their whole body. Let us strive to bring our hearts into unison with that song, in which we all hope that our feeble voices will one day mingle. This will be our happiness even here below, and contribute to God's glory, which is wronged by the praise that Christians too often bestow on each other. We can't have two mouths—one for God's praise, and one for man's. May we, then, do now what the seraphims do above, who with two wings cover their faces, as a token of their confusion before the holy presence of the Lord, with two cover their feet as if to hide their steps from themselves, and with the remaining two fly to execute their Lord's will, while they cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, all the earth is full of Thy glory."

Excuse these few words of Christian exhortation, which, I am sure, will sooner or later become useful to you by becoming part of your own experience. Remember me in your prayers, as I pray that the blessing of the Lord may rest upon you and your labours. If ever you print another edition, as I hope you will, strike out, if you please, the two passages to which I have drawn your attention, and call me simply "a brother and minister in the Lord." This is honour enough, and needs no addition.—Your friend and brother,

J. N. D.

WAITING AND WATCHING.—*Luke* xii. 13-44.

THE whole of this portion is founded on the deep consciousness of Christ Himself in passing through the world, that all in connection with earth was closed and broken up. The fire was kindled; all would come out more distinctly at the cross; but all that was in opposition was now actually shewing itself, bringing out the truth of the portion and the position of those who are Christ's being entirely *heavenly*, having nothing down here, waiting for the Lord with loins girded. He having been definitely rejected, all linking them to earth is broken.

In chapter xi. some said, "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils." What was that but calling the Holy Ghost a devil? It was a hopeless sin, the direct enmity of Satan. In this chapter, also, we find "singleness of eye"—our responsibility to let our light shine out; also, two characters of Satanic power—1st, malicious, a liar; 2nd, a murderer. In chapter xii., "Be not afraid of them that kill the body." If open persecution come in through Satan, they are not to be afraid. But in verse 13, there is the danger of the worldly influence of Satan, a *quiet* influence, the more to be feared because not open—a kind of influence that goes on when not watching, and weans the heart away from the only thing we have as Christians, *i.e.*, a heavenly portion, making us solicitous about, and setting a value on, worldly things; but the Lord comes to the rich man to shew the utter folly of any who are making the world their portion, and then He enters on the use to be made of riches. We have not got apostles at whose feet to lay down everything for the Lord, but we are to hold all *mammon* for the service of the Lord, our portion being in heaven, yet having the privilege of using it for the Lord, turning what is mere dross and dung into something for service to the Lord, and then not to have a care.

Sweet the way in which the Lord discharges them

from all care: "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." How blessedly they are brought into direct connection with the Father. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but the word of God endureth for ever. Directly we come to a Father taking care of us, the heart is discharged entirely from care about this world. How blessed the thought of that God being *our Father* without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, and that we are in this blessed relationship because Christ has taken us into it with Himself. "Fear not, little flock," &c. As those belonging to the kingdom, how ought we to walk? All laying up treasure here carries the heart with it; if laying up treasure, we shall like to *keep it*. On the one hand, warned against the spirit of the world; on the other, not to have a care, because He who is your Father careth for you. Walking with loins girded and lights burning, be ye as men waiting for their Lord, every moment having in the whole spirit, tone, and temper the sense of constantly waiting for the Lord girded (the long garments tucked up for service). There then is the distinct power of life seen. Servants in the midst of all down here, waiting for their absent Lord with their affections tucked up (loins girded). It is a great thing to walk through the world with the distinct thought that the Lord is *out of it* because it would not have Him. Suppose yesterday, or six days ago, He had been rejected by the world, and He had told us He was going to prepare a place *for us*, what should we think of the nature and character of that world that had blasphemed and rejected Him? Could we be taken up with it if our hearts are really attached to Himself, and He up there having done the work to bring us into the place of holiness before He went, that we should be up there *accepted in Him*? Should not we be waiting for Him with girded loins, walking through the world that spit upon and hated Him with hearts out of it?

It is to be *constant* watching. Blessed are those ser-

vants (ver. 37). "Soon I shall take my turn in serving. You must now be watching with hearts and eyes fixed on Me, but when I come I shall have it My own way; I shall gird Myself and put you at My table, and then I shall serve you. Here there must be watching and waiting, but there is a place where I shall have things My own way; I shall spread the table and serve you. All the fat of the house will be set before you; lay your account upon that. You are to be in the place where you are not going only to rule the world that turned Me out, but *there* where all the energy of My love will flow out to you."

The watching for the little while now, is for the out-flowing of the eternal blessedness of His love at that day when He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down that *He* may serve them. There it is not watching, but service to those now watching. The loins girded for service and watching is to be the character of our walk all through this present wilderness path, suffering linked with it. If we suffer, we shall reign. We get suffering as the consequence of what He puts into our hands. What a wonderful thing for us that we are to be set in the place of rule in everything below Him. Now one sees here the blessedness of His love to His own; how He takes their hearts out of the world, expressing Himself as if all was over. His own heart cannot get on in such a world. He is driven in on Himself by the condition of all round Him, forced to shut up the very love ever ready to flow out.

The whole thing is, morally speaking, over; the world judged, He out of it; and that is the place you get, the place *He is in now*; that is what detaches the heart from all things not of the Father, but of the world. The Holy Ghost sets Christ's walk before us to shew us the character and spirit we ought to have in the world if our hearts would go rightly through it. It is only as the heart is fixed on Jesus as the One soon coming—that only will make us in our lives the

diligent expression of His coming. Not only our treasure above, counting all but dross, but the practical place of separation to Him, the heart thinking only of Him, and separating from the world that won't have Him. Oh! may He fix our hearts on Himself, that He may see us in spirit and walk like men waiting and watching for Him. The Lord truly keep our hearts waiting and longing for Him from heaven!

J. N. D.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

“CEASE YE FROM MAN.”—*Isaiah* ii. 22.

“THERE are moments when God makes us feel that we cannot rely on man, but only on Him. Often we have comfort from men. ‘God’ who comforteth those who are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.’ But we must not rely on man. Hence there are moments when we say in our haste, ‘All men are liars,’ and we are cast upon God. How truly the Lord was so, I need not add; yet in grace He could say to His disciples, ‘Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations.’ But there was an hour when He must say, ‘*One of you shall betray Me,*’ and feel it; and, ‘All ye shall be offended because of Me this night, and shall leave Me alone.’ That showed His perfection. It teaches us to lean on the Lord only, not diminishing cordial confidence and openness of heart, but teaching to rely on God. Unhindered joy will come afterwards. But in all trouble the Lord thinks of us.”

J. N. D.

“HOW KNOWETH THIS MAN LETTERS (OR LEARNING), HAVING NEVER LEARNED?”—*John* vii. 15.

“His knowledge of ‘letters’ (*i.e.*, languages) amazed some of His hearers. He knew the Aramaic, His native speech probably; He quoted Hebrew; He used Latin words again and again, with the precision as to

derivation which marks the scholar, and He quoted from the Greek language the very words of the Septuagint."—*D. W. Faunce, D.D.*

"BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM."—

Matt. vii. 20.

Herbert declared that lust and passion were no more blameworthy than hunger and thirst.

Hobbes, that right and wrong are mere quibbles of the imagination.

Bolingbroke, that the chief end of man was to gratify his passions.

Hume, that humility is a vice rather than a virtue, and that adultery elevates human character.

Paine was in his last days a drunkard.

Voltaire was found by his friends to be so often a liar that his word was worthless.

"YOUR FAITH SHOULD NOT STAND IN THE WISDOM OF MEN, BUT IN THE POWER OF GOD."—

I Cor. ii. 5.

Lamarck held to spontaneous generation.

"Vestiges of Creation" took even more extreme views.

Darwin denounces both.

Huxley is at sword's point with Darwin on a Creator breathing life into one or more beings.

Wallace insists that Darwin's great doctrine of natural selection is not proven, and, if proved, would be entirely inadequate to account for the origin of man.

Herbert Spencer gives up "evolution," and "involution" is now to be the word.

Owen contends for the physical unity of the race.

Agassiz, while granting the *moral* unity of race, contends for different pairs in different geographical centres.

Lyell.—“The life of this eminent man is a history of retracted opinions.”—(*Recent Origin of Man: Southall.*)

But Hitchcock, Dana, and Guyot all insist that science, no less than revelation, declares those grandest of words, “*In the beginning, God*”!

THE JEWS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE New Testament, which was translated into Hebrew by the late Rev. I. Salkinson, missionary among the Jews of Vienna, has been reprinted in a second edition of 120,000 copies. Of this number 100,000 have been bought by one generous Scotch donor, to be distributed gratis among Hebrew-reading Jews all over the Continent. Two missionaries lately came from England to make a distribution from Vienna, and they have been sending copies to about 300 Rabbis, many of whom have undertaken to circulate them among their co-religionists. Very few have stated that they had any objection to read the New Testament. In connection with this movement it may be mentioned that one of the most learned and respected of Hungarian Rabbis, Dr. J. Lichtenstein, who has been 35 years Rabbi of Tapio-Szele, has lately startled his co-religionists by two pamphlets in which he affirms the divinity of Christ. The pamphlets, being very ably written, have been noticed by all the leading newspapers, and have raised much controversy, for Dr. Lichtenstein professes to remain obedient to the Mosaic dispensation while recognising that Christ was the Messiah. How he reconciles such a mongrel profession we are not told. Evidently he has not accepted Gal. v. 1-4.

HINTS ON BIBLE STUDY.

MANY are deterred from systematic Bible study by the vastness of the field to be explored, the depth of the mine to be fathomed, and their own inability for the work. Then the old adage acts as a bugbear to others, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." The Bible is "a big book," and its doctrines and facts form "a mighty subject!" Yes, it is true, quite true, that the Bible is infinite in its sweep and range of subjects. It contains heights inaccessible and depths unfathomable, while it assumes to start with the utter inability of a creature mind to grasp it, or contain its fulness.

But are those reasons why we should *not* study the Bible? Nay, rather such a book invites to earnest and godly consideration, for it is a truly wonderful book, and the wonder is increased and the interest intensified the more it is read and studied. The Bible is God's book to man, and the Holy Spirit is alone the teacher and expounder thereof. Thus, then, it is better to know a little than none at all. The little we learn will not puff up, if balanced by grace. A stock of Bible knowledge stored up in the heart and memory is a valuable acquisition, when correspondingly accompanied by humility and grace. Great, indeed, is the difference between a self-satisfied student of Scripture and a humble and devout one. The former is one who is trying to grasp with his puny intellect THE INFINITE; the latter brings his ignorance to the Divine Word, and has himself been grasped and controlled by the facts and truths of Scripture. It is an immense blessing, and a present and real one, to have the conscience *gripped* by the Word of God.

Do not rest satisfied till you have got a comprehensive idea of each of the sacred books; details may be more simply apprehended afterwards. The full and verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures should be an indispensable article in the faith of every Christian. The authority of God's Word over mind and con-

science flows from the fact of its plenary inspiration. From the *first* English translation of the Bible (1380) till the *last* (1884), a period of 500 years, we have been approaching nearer and nearer to the original, and the faith of the Christian may repose with certainty in the fact that he possesses in his English Bible THE WORD OF GOD.

Of Greek manuscripts there are more than 1500 available for the purpose of Biblical criticism. The oldest Bible in existence is probably THE VATICAN MANUSCRIPT, which dates from the fourth century. It is not quite perfect, some important portions of both Old and New Testaments being lost. The next codex of value and antiquity, also dating from the fourth century, is known as THE SINAITIC MANUSCRIPT, and was discovered by Professor Tischendorf in a convent on Mount Sinai in 1844. Next in importance comes THE ALEXANDRIAN MANUSCRIPT, preserved in the British Museum, and which only reached this country, as a gift to Charles I., exactly seventeen years after the publication of the Authorised Version in 1611. It is a curious circumstance that those ancient treasures are respectively in the possession of the Romish, Greek, and Protestant Churches. Now these very valuable manuscripts were unknown to the godly and scholarly men commissioned by King James to produce the Bible known as "The Authorised Version." The "readings" in these ancient MSS. are of immense value, and along with other helps have done much to fix and settle disputed texts.

The *writings* of Moses (the oldest books in existence) are of equal authority with the *words* of the Lord Himself (John v. 46, 47); yet the latter were spoken fifteen centuries after Moses wrote the Pentateuch on the plains of Moab. The real author of the Bible (of each of its 66 books) is the Holy Spirit, who was sovereignly pleased to employ about fifty writers in the production of the inspired volume. The

composition of the whole extended in irregular intervals through the course of about 1600 years. One common testimony to Jesus of Nazareth, Son and Lamb of God, runs through the entire volume. Undermine the authority of Moses, and you ruin the authority of all. The Bible a forgery? Nonsense! If not divine, it is a gigantic miracle. How could men living hundreds of miles apart, and hundreds of years between, unite in writing a magnificent book like the Bible? Never become an apologist for the Bible. It needs not your puny arm to defend it. It has withstood many a shock. Earth's and hell's heaviest artilleries have been directed against it, yet, lo! it lives as full of vitality and power as ever! Every attack only recoils upon its adversary. We no more fear for the future of the Bible than we do for the throne of the Eternal.

Written or unwritten creeds and confessions always dwarf the mind, and set limits to attainments in Biblical knowledge. Utterly discard them, for they are only (if correct even) the measure of the compiler's mind. Cast aside "harmonies." Depend upon it, if God had meant you to learn Christ by the "harmonizing method," *He* would have constructed one. Discover the differences in the Gospels, and get hold of the principle on which these beauties in the four accounts of the Lord's life are presented. The *King* in Matthew, the *Servant* in Mark, the *Man* in Luke, and the *Son* in John are the characters in which the Lord is displayed in these divine records.

The Bible is full of difficulties, chiefly owing to the nature and character of the revelation—which of course is *divine*—and also because of man's state of sin and corrupt mind; but patience, waiting upon God, and the manly confession, "I do not know," reduce the difficulties one by one. Many difficulties, but not *one* contradiction. Is there one contradiction in the Scriptures? *Where?* Value aids and helps; to despise such would be to despise God-given

ministry. But, above all, bring to the Scriptures confessed ignorance, and a mind blank as a sheet of clean writing paper, *to receive* impressions of the truth as presented by God in all their perennial freshness and infinite fulness.

W. S.

DELIVERANCE FROM SIN.

IN dealing with the things of God, it is well for us to remember that His word alone must teach us, and to it we must submit. Even the various modes of expressing our thoughts on such subjects must also be tested by the same standard, and discontinued where found to be unscriptural. Indeed, our only wisdom is in holding fast to the very language of Scripture, for *it is written in "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth"* (1 Cor ii. 13). And, if we have no pet theories, or well-worn and long-used expressions which we desire to maintain, we shall be glad to do this, having everything to gain and nothing to lose by so doing.

In looking, then, into the subject of deliverance from sin, let us seek to confine ourselves to that subject alone, and gather from the word itself what God has revealed about it; and may the Holy Spirit be our instructor while we do so.

In the first part of the Epistle to the Romans, up to chapter v. 2, as many now are aware, we have the question of our guilt dealt with, and the guilty one, on believing upon Him who delivered Jesus for our offences and raised Him for our justification, is justified on the principle of faith—reckoned righteous by God (see ch. iv. 23—v. 1). Other blessings there are which flow from that also, but I need not take up those here; it is well, however, to notice the fact.

From verse 12 of ch. v. we next have brought before us the two heads—Adam and Christ—and the two races connected with their respective heads; the one race constituted sinners, the other constituted righteous, by their connection with the head.

At the close of the chapter, where the grace of God is seen over-abounding where sin abounded (verse 20), the wretched heart of man, moved by Satan, would seek to turn even the grace of God into the license of sin; and it seems as though some had said, "O, then, if that be true, let us commit the more sin, and there will be the more grace to meet it." Indeed, this is a common argument used even by some Christians in our own day who rebel against the preaching of free grace, because they think it will give license to sin. Thus, this very objection becomes the thing which leads the apostle to shew us how, as Christians, we are delivered from sin; a most important and most practical subject surely.

We learn from ch. viii. 3, that when the Lord Jesus Christ was a sacrifice for sin on the cross, there and then "God *condemned sin in the flesh.*" Now that is a very important statement of divine truth—God condemned sin in the flesh. It does not say He *put it away*, nor does it say that He *ended it.* "*Condemned sin in the flesh*" is what Scripture says, and *it* is wiser than we are. Wherever, then, sin in the flesh is found, this is true concerning it—God has condemned it.

Let us suppose that I believed at this moment, for the first time, the end of ch. iv., viz., that God had delivered Jesus our Lord for my offences, and raised Him again for my justification, I should at once be a justified man. Suppose next, that I were to die shortly after believing that truth, should I need the teaching of ch. vi. to fit me for the presence of God? Surely not! God has already condemned sin in the flesh; and my *actual death* would free me from sin (ch. vi). I should leave it behind for ever, and enter the presence of God in virtue of the blessed and perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus; able to enjoy it also, having an absolutely perfect state, as alive in Him.

The death and resurrection, then, of the Lord Jesus

Christ avails for my justification. My moral history as a child of Adam (and which was a history of sin) closed in the cross of Christ; He having died for my sins, and in His sacrifice, the old man or sin in the flesh having been condemned; while *I, myself*, am now *in* Christ Jesus. Now *all this*, be it remembered, is true of everyone who has believed the gospel of his salvation, irrespective of his feelings or experiences. The teaching of ch. vi. (deliverance from the power of sin) and ch. vii. (deliverance from law) is *not*, then, required to fit the person for heaven. God has, I repeat, already condemned sin in the flesh, so that *actual death*, or the coming of the Lord, frees for ever from both sin and law.

What, then, it may be asked, is the use of ch. vi.? I reply, its use is to teach us Christians how we can be *practically* freed from the power, dominion, and slavery of sin while we are still here, alive in this world, and while sin is still actually in us. And could anything be more important? What fruit for God is there if a soul is groaning under the dominion of the tyrant, sin? where the blessed and glorious liberty of the Gospel if this has not been apprehended and accepted? and where the holy, happy worship inside the veil, in conscious nearness to God (Heb. x.), if this is not known? Surely, then, it is most important. But let us not forget, it is not Christ's death *for* us that accomplishes these wonderful ends, though that is *the basis* of everything; but it is *our death with Christ*, and the carrying that out in practice, which gives us this mighty and present deliverance from sin; and this we shall see still more clearly shortly.

The question having been raised of sinning that grace may abound, the apostle meets it by replying, "How shall we, who have died to sin, live any longer therein?" (ch. vi. 2); not how shall we who are justified from our *guilt*—that question was settled in the first part of the epistle—but "How shall we who *have died to sin* live any longer therein?" Note here, it is

the person as such, not the evil nature, but *the person*, who as a Christian is in Christ, and therefore this is true of him only as a Christian. Being in Christ, who has *actually died for sin* and *to sin* at the cross, the condition of Christ with regard to sin is the absolute condition of everyone who is in Him. We have not actually died at all, neither is our having died with Christ a judicial action in any sense; but being in Him, His condition as regards sin (for that is the subject we are dealing with at present) is ours, and we are viewed by God as having died to sin. I have not died to sin as a man actually, for I am here, alive in this world still. It is only as a Christian it can be said I have died with Christ to sin. I could not die to sin apart from being in Christ, and I could not be in Him as a sinner; I must be in Him, and therefore a Christian, before it could be said of me; so that as a Christian I have died with Christ to sin. This, I again repeat, is true of *every Christian*. Not a judicial act; but, by the grace of God, the condition in which God views all who are in Christ Jesus; for the condition of the Head with regard to sin must of necessity be the condition of each one belonging to that new race of which He is the Head.

What a conclusive answer to the caviller who would plead for continuing in sin! We Christians cannot do so, is the apostle's answer, for we have died to it. How, then, can we live on in that to which we have died? It is a contradiction!

But he gives a second reason for not continuing in sin. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised unto Jesus Christ were baptised unto His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death," &c. (verses 3, 4). Thus the very initiatory rite of Christianity forbids their continuing in sin, for in it they have been buried unto *His death*. Their *condition*, then, as in Christ and having died to sin, and their *profession* as having been baptised unto His death, both alike forbid such a thought. And if these

things are realities, *i.e.*, if the soul has really been identified with Christ in His death—if it be real, and not mere empty profession (which it might only be)—then such *shall be* identified with Him in His resurrection (verse 5).

Then the apostle takes up the evil nature, and shews that God has already dealt with it for a specific purpose. "Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that has died is freed from sin" (ch. vi. 6, 7). The question may fairly be asked here, What is our old man? The answer would appear simple enough, if Scripture is to be our guide. It is the evil nature in us. This the verse itself seems to make plain, for it says, "*Our* old man." It is therefore something which *we possess*, which we can call *ours*. Moreover, it is what *we* are said to have "put off" (Eph. iv. 22; Col. iii. 8, 9); consequently *we* are no longer to be characterised by the actings of the old man, but by the new which *we* have "put on."

Our old man, then, is said to be "crucified with Christ." Now here we *do* find judicial dealing. God has dealt with our old man by crucifying it with Christ. It is sometimes asked, "How could God crucify a nature?" But might we not just as fairly ask, if we take the old man to mean the person in his old standing, "How could God crucify a person who is not, after all, and never was, really and actually crucified?" It might be said of this last that it is a question of substitution. But that will not do, for Christ never was the substitute for the old man, else the old man would be and must be spared! whereas it is condemned (ch. viii. 3) and crucified (ch. vi. 6). No! the truth is, in the death of Jesus on the cross we see God's judicial dealing with the old man. It could not be made better (ch. viii. 7); therefore God condemned it and crucified it, and He has nothing more to say to *it* (though He may have

to say to us in government if we allow it to act), and at death or the rapture *we* leave *it* behind for ever.

Now we reach the reason why God has thus dealt with our old man, viz., "That the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Let us now see what we have in these verses, 2 and 6. First, the person has died with Christ to sin. Second, the old man has been crucified with Christ. Now these are facts for faith to lay hold of; they are not matters of experience. The first is true of us as being in Christ; the second is true of us also as Christians, and is what took place when Christ died, for there and then only did God deal with our evil nature. But let us ask here, at this point, does the mere knowledge of these facts give practical deliverance from the power and dominion of sin? No, not at all! They are the *basis* for the deliverance, but the actual and practical deliverance from sin as a master is only obtained by acting according to verse 11, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord." This, and this only, gives deliverance.

And note further: we are not told to reckon the old man to be dead. Never! though many tell us to do so. God, however, does not. We are to reckon *ourselves* dead to sin, for in verse 2 we are said to have died to sin. Now if we accept the fact that we have died to sin, and that God has crucified the old man, and if we really reckon *ourselves* to be dead indeed unto sin, then the whole body of sin is annulled for us, and whether it presents itself in the form of lusts and passions within, or temptations from without, its power is nullified and we are free. We are no longer bound to *serve* sin; it was our master once, but "he that has died is freed from it:" and we have died, therefore we are freed, cleared, discharged, justified from sin as a master; for such is the force of verse 7, *the whole subject* being deliverance from sin as a master, and not deliverance from it in *any other*

sense. It is not a judicial CLEARANCE from the evil nature, or from sin in its totality, like chap. iv., where we are justified from our sins, and they are covered and gone for ever. Such a thought would be sinless perfection and a mere delusion, for while as Christians we know our sins are gone, we also know to our sorrow that *sin* is *not* gone. But having died with Christ *I* am no longer a slave to sin, for *I* have died to *it*, and am therefore free from his service, to serve a new Master, and live in newness of life (vi. 4), and serve in newness of spirit (vii. 6).

This, then, I again repeat, is the only way of practical deliverance from sin, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus." Struggling against sin will not give the longed-for deliverance; prayer will not bring it. This most have to learn by bitter experience. God's way must be accepted: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus." But how hard the lesson is to learn! What struggles ere the soul will give up and accept God's way! Yet it must be done: "Reckon," &c. Then, and then only, does the soul find out and experience practical deliverance from sin; not from its *presence*—but from its *power*. The slavery is ended and the captive is free. Death has freed him; not Christ's death for us, but *our death* with Christ, and the carrying out that in practice by "reckoning."

After the soul is freed, the next part of the chapter takes up the question, Who are you going to yield yourself to now you are free? Surely to God. But that I shall not touch at present. I trust I have shewn clearly, and from the word, how deliverance from the *power* of sin is obtained. May the Lord by His Spirit use the Word to all our hearts, so that each may know its power and blessedness, till we see His face and are delivered from the *presence* of sin for ever.

A GOSPEL STUDY.—FAITH.

FAITH towards our Lord Jesus Christ was part of Paul's testimony to the Jews and to the Greeks (Acts xx. 21). Faith plays an important part in the gospel of God, and has characterised in one way or another God's people in all ages. For from the days of Abel onwards, God's saints, when really faithful, have found the current of things on earth against them, because it is against God. "Without faith," then, "it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." "By it," also, we read, "the elders obtained a good report" (Heb. xi. 6, 2). Hence the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews would encourage his readers by examples of faith in God, culled from the history of saints before the cross,—examples drawn from history in its proper *chronological* order, yet illustrating in a *moral* order the conditions under which faith may be called into exercise on the part of a saint whilst on earth.

Beginning with Abel, who was accepted before God on the ground of sacrifice—thus indicating on what alone it is one born in sin can have a place in God's presence—we next learn, in the instances of Enoch and of Noah, of two conditions, in one of which God's saints will be found; either like Enoch, to be taken out of this scene before divine judgments are poured out on earth, this answering to the Christian's sure hope; or, like Noah, to pass through the judgment, preserved on earth for blessing, this answering to the expectation of God's earthly people in a future day. The prospect of the saint in the future thus delineated, we next learn of faith exhibited by the patriarchs in the days of their pilgrimage (8-22), then of faith in times of conflict (23-31), and lastly, of faith in times of declension and in days of fierce persecution (32-40), all instructive and encouraging for us in the present scene.

“Now faith,” we are told, “is the substantiating of (or, giving substance to) things hoped for, the conviction (or, the proving) of things not seen.” What a simple explanation of that which, doubtless, has troubled many a one in the early days of his spiritual career. But what a power there is in that of which those words speak, which nerved and animated saints of old to deeds of valour, to endurance of trials, and to implicit confidence in God. For faith may be manifested by confidence in God, as well as in the quiet resting on His written word. Leaving aside for the present the illustrating the latter, it may not be time thrown away to ponder a little on the former. And for that we would direct the reader to two instances, both of them women,—the one concerned for the salvation of her child, the other for the salvation of herself and of her house.

To turn to the first. Joseph was dead, who had been lord over the land of Egypt, and a new king had arisen which knew him not (Exod. i. 8). The royal favour under which Israel settled in Goshen was no longer extended to them. Persecution with a view to the extinction of their race was now their lot. Cruel bondage was not enough. The attempt, too, to enlist the two Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, in the king's service had signally failed, so an edict had gone forth addressed to all the Egyptians, authorising any one to cast into the river every male child that should be born of the Hebrew race. Now, why was this? Political reasons instigated Pharaoh and his princes (Exod. i. 9, 10). But a deeper reason there was than that; for surely the enemy of souls was in all this working behind the scenes to ruin for ever, if he could, the whole race of man. For had all the male children of Israel been destroyed, Christ could not have been born of the house and lineage of David. Hence the conflict, ostensibly between Egyptian interests and those of Israel, was really between God and the devil. God desired to bless men; the devil sought to ruin

them. At this juncture, Jochebed gave birth to her second son, who was subsequently called Moses. We say at this juncture ; that is, after the decree had been issued authorising any Egyptian to drown Hebrew infants ; because in the case of Aaron, who was three years older than Moses, we have no hint of his mother's difficulty in preserving him alive.

Now, clearly, at the date of Moses' birth, Jochebed might have viewed every Egyptian as a possible foe to her offspring, had not Amram and herself had confidence in God. But looking on the infant, and seeing its beauty, they nourished it, hidden in their home for three months, because they did not fear the king's commandment. Unable to keep it there any longer, the faith shown in hiding it at home was to be manifested also in casting it more directly on God ; so his mother made an ark of bullrushes, or papyrus, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. The materials were ready at hand. Papyrus (or the paper reed), slime (or bitumen), and pitch were all that were needed, and the ready hands of the mother made with them the vessel into which she would entrust her child to the care and keeping of her God. It was an *ark*, we read—the word in the original only elsewhere used of the vessel which Noah prepared for the saving of himself and his house. Perhaps the story of the flood, which by that child was subsequently to be written in words taught of the Holy Ghost, was known to her ; and her faith rising up to the emergency, she would place the infant in an ark, in confidence that, as Noah and his family had been thus preserved in one, her child might also escape its otherwise, humanly speaking, impending doom.

On the waters of the flood, the cause of death to many, the ark which hid Noah and those with him floated safely, till the dry land began again to appear. In the ark of papyrus, and amid the flags in that river, into which doubtless more than one Hebrew

infant had already been thrown in accordance with the king's decree, the little one, hereafter called Moses, could safely rest. Can we doubt, what we have said above, that as the word used of this paper reed vessel is the same as that in which Noah and his family were preserved alive, the mother, acquainted with the salvation of the patriarch, looked to God to preserve her precious son from death? Nor was she disappointed, though surely the manner of his deliverance had not entered into her mind. But man's steps and man's heart are in God's hands, to direct as He will. By Pharaoh's decree, the child ought to have been drowned. Naturally, any one in his house might have been viewed as a relentless foe; and the last person that Jochebed would have desired to set eyes on the child was the one who first espied the frail vessel. Pharaoh's daughter saw the ark, and commanded the maid to fetch it. God had directed her steps to the spot where the ark was placed, and God touched her heart to compassionate the infant as soon as she saw it. For the little ark brought to her, and opened, her eye lighted on the infant, and the infant wept. The feelings, surely, of a woman were at once called forth; those feelings implanted in the breast by Him, one of whose creatures was that little baby. At once she perceived it was one of the proscribed race. Now was to be settled an important question. Should she side with her father, or take the part of the oppressed race? Duty, natural inclination, patriotism might have made her do the former. But the child wept, and her womanly tenderness was at once called forth. She had compassion on it, and resolved to save it, though perfectly aware it was the infant of one of the Hebrew women.

But what should she do with it? The infant's sister (Miriam, we suppose) now stepped forward, and offered to call a nurse of the Hebrew women. Pharaoh's daughter consented; a nurse was got. The child's own mother was now commissioned to care for

it, and to bring it up as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. How Jochebed's faith was rewarded. Her infant, hitherto in danger any moment of death pursuant to the king's decree, was now to be preserved from death by the will of that king's own daughter.

How had God worked! He had guided the steps of the princess to the bank of the river; He had attracted her attention to that little mysterious-looking ark of reeds; He had moved her with compassion when she looked upon the weeping infant; He put it into her heart to bring it up as her own son.

What must the mother's feelings have been? Who but a mother dreading the loss of her infant can understand what passed in her soul, as she laid him in faith in the ark which she had made? Who but a mother can fully enter into her joy, as she received him back, as it were from the dead, to tend him with all a mother's devotion, in the happy consciousness that no one would now dare to touch or to compass the death of her child. It was now beyond the reach of death, though the king's decree stood unrepealed. Drawn out of the water by Pharaoh's daughter, it never could be cast back into it. Faith, her faith, was rewarded, as she embraced once more her infant thus saved from death. But its salvation was of God.

To turn now to the other example. Moses had just died, and Israel were about, under Joshua, to cross the Jordan to take possession of their inheritance. Before that was effected two spies were sent, commissioned by Joshua to spy out the land. Their commission was to view the land, and Jericho. God's purpose was, in addition to that, to save Rahab and her family—a name and person unknown then to any in the host of Israel. They entered the city strangers to every one within it, but their steps were directed to Rahab's house. Soon their arrival was reported to the king, who sent to her to demand their surrender. She refused, and hid them. Now the reason of her conduct came out, as she talked with them under

cover of darkness on the roof of her house. Whilst God had been leading Israel to the bank of the Jordan opposite to Jericho, He had been working on the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and had been working in Rahab, whom with all her house He designed to save from the destruction impending over her people. "I know," she said, and thus disclosed to the spies what was going on, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Joshua ii. 9-11).

Well had their steps been guided to that house, where they learnt how God had been working for them on the west of Jordan. What was Jericho, with its walls and battlements, if the hearts of its defenders melted within them? But fear is not faith. All feared because of Israel; Rahab had faith. She received the messengers, and sent them out another way. "I know," she said, "that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you." She told them what she knew; she told them what she and the rest of her people had heard. "We have heard," &c. All had heard of the Lord's doings on behalf of Israel. All were afraid because of Israel. But all did not know that the Lord had given them the land. Rahab, however, did; and further she knew, and she confessed it, that the Lord their God was God in heaven above, and on earth beneath. Then He was the One true God. There was, there could be, no

other. In the midst of abounding iniquities, surrounded with idolatry and all its filthy rites, with altars and shrines on every high hill and under every green tree, that woman had learnt, and knew, that Israel's God was the true God, and that He had given them the land. She had no doubt of it. Her language was clear and precise. "I know," she could say. How God can teach a soul, and that in a way which nothing can shake, however unfavourable, humanly speaking, the surrounding atmosphere may be. "I know." Like the beggar, when his eyes were opened, who brushed away as cobwebs all cavilling and specious arguments by his simple announcement: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see;" so Rahab, speaking of herself and for herself, unhesitatingly said, "I know." "I know." "We heard." What a difference was this. *She* had heard, and *she* knew, and had given proof of her faith, having hid the spies under the stalks of flax on the top of her house. She had taken their side, she had taken God's side; against her people and her country, and that at the risk of her life. "Faith cometh by hearing."

The God of Israel was the God of heaven and of earth. Then He must prevail; it would be hopeless to resist Him. He had given Israel the land; then the doom of those who opposed them was fixed, it was certain. Judgment on her people and on her land was at hand. She could not doubt it. She knew it, and that before a single soldier of the host of Israel had crossed the Jordan. Cities great, and walled up to heaven, her people could boast of; the Anakim they could point to; the Amorite power in the hill country, and the Canaanitish power in the open country, both as yet intact, they might speak of; but that one word, as it is in the original, *I know*, outweighed in her mind all possibilities, and effectually dispelled for her all doubt, as to the issue of the coming conflict. Hence, after telling the spies what she knew, she put before them what she desired.

Nothing could satisfy Rahab but the promise of salvation for herself and her family. She spake as one over whom a doom was impending, which, if possible, must be averted. A vague hope, resting on no real foundation, a fair speech on the part of the two men, nothing of that kind could satisfy her. She wanted an assurance on which she could rest, and a token to which she could turn. But the men were strangers to her. What did she know of them? Nothing. She would bring God into the matter, and make Him a party to the engagement. "Now, therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death" (12). Uncertainty she could not endure. Assurance of deliverance from the coming judgment she craved, she desired. And by making God a party to the engagement entered into with her by these strangers, did she not evidence her confidence in the faithfulness of their God? What she asked she got. She asked for a solemn engagement on their part. They gave it her on the condition that she kept their visit a secret. She asked for a true token by which safety would be ensured to her and to all in her house. She got it, for the men said to her: "We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then

we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear" (17-20).

So the men departed. As yet there was no appearance of the coming invasion. The spies had to hide three days on the mountains before they could venture to attempt the passage of the Jordan, which was now in full flood. Would they ever reach the river, and rejoin the camp of Israel? Jericho was aroused; the country was searched to find them. Was the danger of an invasion really imminent? Looking at the river now in full flood, the men of Jericho might have taken heart. The river must subside ere that host can reach us, they might naturally have said. But Rahab felt she must act, so she put the scarlet line in the window, according to the word of the spies. Anybody, everybody might see it, but she knew of what it was the token and the confession—the confession that she sought salvation from the coming judgment, the token that from the doom of her people she would be delivered. Did she wait to bind the scarlet line in the window till the city was closely invested, and all hope of its relief was cut off? One would suppose not from the narrative that is given to us (ii. 21). How or when Jericho would be captured she knew not; but as to its capture she was clear, for the Lord, she well knew, would give to Israel the possession of the land. She would not, she could not (may we not say it?) risk the chance of being taken unawares. She had got the token; she would make use of it; so she bound the scarlet line in the window, confident that if the line was there, safety in the midst of judgment was assured to her.

Soon, very soon, was her confidence put to the test. The host of Israel crossed the Jordan; the river opened a way for them by divine power; and they invested Jericho. For six days they marched round it. Not a shout from the people was heard, not an arrow was shot into the city. For six days these tactics must have appeared to those within but a

show of power without reality. The walls were just as strong on the sixth day as they were on the first. One can fancy the beleaguered garrison regaining confidence, as they saw the victors over the Amorite power east of Jordan acting in that fashion day after day. Did Rahab remove the scarlet line when she saw the city still intact? We may be sure she did not. She knew the judgment would come, whatever might be the delay, and she knew her hope of safety lay in that line being then seen in the window.

But when would the crisis arrive? Who in Jericho knew that? God had fixed the day, and had acquainted Israel with it. But no one that we read of made it known to those within its walls. The seventh morning dawned. The host again went round that city doomed to destruction, but seven times instead of once. For the seventh time the trumpets were blown; then for the first time the people shouted, and the walls of that stronghold fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him. But where was Rahab? Her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall (ii. 15). The walls fell down at the shout of the people. But her house must still have stood intact; for the spies went into it, and brought out into a place of safety all that were therein (vi. 22, 23). Her house being on the town wall, enabled the spies to escape from the city though its gates were shut, and zealously guarded. Her house being on the wall, enabled the scarlet line in the window to be the more plainly seen by the invading host. Her house being on the wall, but evidently standing, though the wall right and left must have fallen down flat, demonstrates that God watched over her at that solemn moment, and over all in that house; and she found, and they found, there was security and salvation from destruction for all who took shelter behind that scarlet line.

At such a moment as the capture of a city, the assailants are not wont to be careful in their actions;

yet she proved, and all with her, that there was salvation for them, because the scarlet line was in the window. No one inside that house had a hair of their head hurt, nor did Rahab lose one thing she had possessed. "They brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had" (vi. 23). The word of the spies was true. The token was all that was needed. What a thing it is to be safe from judgment in the very place where it is being executed.

She showed her faith in receiving the spies, and in sending them out another way; so she was justified by works (James ii. 25). By faith she perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies in peace (Heb. xi. 31). She knew that God had given to Israel the land, so she took shelter in her house behind that scarlet line, believing the promise of those two strangers—the token *they* gave her. The way of security was pointed out by them. Her part was to obey, and to trust. She did what they told her; she trusted to what they said. She found it was all that was required. She had put the scarlet line in the window, and she waited in confidence behind it. Those outside the city could see there was one within it who counted implicitly on the promise of those two men.

So should it be with people now. Judgment is coming on the unbelieving, and on the ungodly. We know who is to reign, and to have everything put under His feet; and God, who has revealed this, has told us of the way of salvation in the words addressed to the Philippian jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31). There is security now for all who avail themselves of it. Rahab asked for herself and for her kindred. She desired salvation for them all, though then perhaps none of them knew what she knew. She learnt that they could be saved as well as herself, but only if they severally availed themselves of the shelter of the scarlet line. They could be saved with her,

but none of them could be saved if they kept outside her house. Each must act in the appointed way, and keep within her house, in the window of which was that significant token.

In a position similar to that of Rahab between the departure of the spies and the fall of Jericho is every believer on earth now. The world may discern no catastrophe impending. Peace and safety may be its cry; but the believer, like Rahab, cannot risk being taken unawares. She knew she was safe only when she had got the scarlet line bound in her window. Each one knows now he is safe, when he has trusted, and trusts to the abiding efficacy of the blood of Christ, believing on the Lord Jesus. Each member of her family could be assured of safety, when he or she had crossed the threshold of her house,—safe not simply because Rahab believed the spies, but because each one had taken refuge with her behind that scarlet line; for none could be lost who kept inside that house. What a company it was! Each one morally no better than others in Jericho, yet they were together marked out, as separated from all the rest, through having taken refuge from coming judgment behind that cord in the window. Behind that line, and within that house, was the only place of security, and there not because of the position of the house, nor because it was well built, but simply and solely because of the scarlet line which was kept displayed in the appointed place.

What lessons, then, do these two women—Jochebed and Rahab—afford us. The one did what she could for the salvation of her infant. She cast it on God. The other did what she was told for the salvation of herself, and of all her family who would keep with her in that house. What encouragement for parents to trust God for their offspring does Jochebed's history afford; and what a simple illustration of the way of salvation from eternal punishment does the history of Rahab and her household afford. Are all readers of this paper sheltered from judgment by the blood of Christ?

C. E. S.

THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE.

“CHOSEN” by God, Lord Jesus Christ, in Thee
In those past ages of eternity.

Chosen for blessing in that realm above ;

“Given” Thee—a token of Thy Father’s love.

But why this choice? and why this gift divine?
That we, such poor vile things of earth, might shine
Pure and unspotted, seen in heavenly rays,
And thus “shew forth the riches of His grace.”

The riches of that grace that flowed in blood,
When He, the Victim, for His people stood ;
When He, the Sinless, took the sinner’s place.
Yes! all shall see the riches of that grace!

“The glory of His grace.” In that bright blaze
His chosen shine, but only to His praise ;
“Holy and blameless” in that glorious light,
“In love” that fills the scene with sweet delight.

Children! That name shews now the Father’s heart.
Oh, wondrous grace, that we should have a part
In His affection, Jesus, Lord, with Thee!
Can this the fulness of our blessing be?

’Tis His “good pleasure” that it should be so ;
This favour here, He gives our hearts to know.

“Seated in Him in heavenly places” now,

Together soon before His throne to bow. H. S.

“ONE of the first elements of obedience is a perfect repose of soul in God. You would not be easily startled by events if you saw all that you have in Christ to enable you to meet everything calmly. Oh! it is simple. Where do you begin? with the heart of Christ? If you have got that, let what evil come, you are hidden in a secure place—in Him. He is always thinking of you, while you are only occupied with self.”—G. V. W.

SAVED FROM SELF.—A CHEERING INCIDENT.

STAYING on the continent, some years ago, I heard that one of whom I had often heard as a Christian was then in the same town. I had a great desire to call upon him, so I went one day to his house. I felt some explanation was necessary, as I was quite a stranger; so telling him that I had come from England, I said, "I thought, sir, I should like to ask you if you are enjoying the forgiveness of your sins?"

"Wonderful! marvellous!" he said. "You have come from London to ask me whether I know that all my sins are forgiven. Wonderful! beautiful! beautiful! I had a friend who stayed six weeks in the house with me, and I never knew he was a Christian till after he was gone back to London, when he sent me a tract."

"Then you know," I said, "you are saved from the *wrath to come?*"

"I do."

"From *Satan?*"

"Thank God, I do."

"From the *world?*"

"Yes."

"From *yourself?*"

"Never! I THANK YOU. What! Christ standing between to save me from *my own self?* The depression which has often come over me has its answer *now.*"—*Communicated.*

"WHAT false views we take of one another, if we look only at the exterior. The faces of many bear a look of peace and quiet repose, but how little we know all that passes within! The heart of Him who knows it all, the heart of the Son of Man in heaven, is changeless, and He has made Himself responsible for every lamb in the flock."—G. V. W.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

YOU know that I sometimes indulge myself in a fancy, or even in a conceit, if you please to call it so; and if I remind you of one, it is far more with a view to your own profit and refreshment of soul, than that you should decide to which of these in other respects it belongs.

As we were driving, the other day, from Sligo to Carrick on Shannon, you know how one of our party asked what was the character of the epistle to Philemon. It was suggested, in reply, that it might be compared with the studio of a photographer, and that Paul might be considered as an artist arranging his dearly beloved Philemon in the best possible way and manner, and "bringing him into focus."

Having done this to his mind, he does not let in "*the full, bright light of the glory*" upon him, for he is not to be taken for *the heavens* as yet, but on the contrary; so that we may observe with what perfect and even divine skill Paul waits upon and applies "the softening and sweet rays of the grace of Christ," and brings these to bear upon this dear son in the faith, and then finally, with consummate art, selects and finds a *suitable object for the momentary rest of the eyes* in the runaway Onesimus.

All these preliminaries being arranged, and Paul yet supplying an additional consideration or two of a very personal and pleasing nature, lest Philemon should by any possibility betray a dash of sternness or severity on his countenance at the thought of receiving back this poor Onesimus "*for ever*" (ver. 10-20), the artist declares the work *is set and going on*, and in an incredibly short time a beautiful likeness is produced, which is declared by those who know best to be not more exact as to Philemon individually than in its resemblance to those near relatives in the family

of faith, and resplendent in the very outline, and, as we thought and think, in one or two of the striking features of the Head of this new race of another creation, Him who is the Firstborn of these many brethren.

And now that our dear Philemon is finished and framed, and copies handed round to us, would *you* not like to visit this wonderful "studio" for yourself, but with the understanding that you surely take your turn with the artist?

If you consent—as I hope you will—let me beg of you to "be taken," as Philemon was, *for the earth*; yes, for the earth, the little while that we are on it, with our lights burning, our loins girded, and ourselves on the very tiptoe of expectation waiting for the Lord—waiting to be caught up into the high heavens over our heads, and then to put off the image of the earthly, and put on the image of the heavenly. *Then shall we be taken for the glory.* But till the twinkling of the eye and the moment do their part, may I beg a proof impression by Paul to go alongside of those "of whom the world was not worthy" while they were in it.—Very affectionately yours,

J. E. B.

July, 1866.

"IN connection with the names written on the breast-plate, every time the high-priest breathed the breast-plate moved; and I am not *on the breast-plate*, but *in the heart* of Christ. I am connected with every throb of that living heart of Christ."

"WHEN the high-priest went into the holy place, he took a quantity of sweet-smelling incense, which was burnt to go up as a cloud to cover the mercy-seat. Is there nothing like a cloud of incense in God's presence for us? Yes. Christ is up there for us, with such a sweet-smelling savour, that its fragrance is filling heaven."—G. V. W.

“WE look for a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.’ Ah! there will not be scenes there in which man in failure will meet the eye of God. It will be the Lord’s earth then; no serpent there, no temptation, but everything that meets the mind of God. Not man as a creature in Eden, but man where all in man meets the mind of God; the whole a scene becoming His Son. That One, both God and Man—able to introduce God in everything. God thinks it meet that His Son should be in a place every part of which has the savour of redeeming love, that He should have His people there in glory with Himself. When we come to the glory, it will not be the Golden City, not what we are, but *Christ Himself* that will be the absorbing object of our hearts, the being with Him, and the being able to appreciate what He is; all the deluge of glory nothing, compared with being where He is fully and completely appreciated, and He the alone object of every individual heart.”

“SMITE the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.’ The Lord did not quote the latter part of this verse, nor the beginning of it. ‘Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,’ against the Man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts.’ That is *God’s* estimate of Him whom man valued at thirty pieces of silver (Zech. xiii. 7). The last part of the verse is exceedingly sweet: ‘And I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones.’ What a sweet thought that must have been to the Lord’s heart, that if *He* was smitten, God would turn His hand upon the little ones. If wrath came on Him and the sheep were scattered, there was that drop of sweetness at the bottom of the cup. Oh! I cannot tell you what that word has been to me in hours of trial and difficulty. God’s hand being turned upon the little ones—not one of them ever lost. Where were Mary, John, Peter? God knew they were where they would all turn up unharmed; they were given by God to this Shepherd, and God kept them for Him, and no one could pluck them out of God’s hand.”—G. V. W.

“‘LET not your heart be troubled ;’ *there* is rest. Outside there is trouble, trouble, nothing but trouble all around, but if the heart is kept happy outside, experiences do not signify at all : outside darkness only makes the light within shine brighter. It is very sweet the Lord saying, ‘Let not your heart be troubled ;’ sorrows of the wilderness and pilgrim fare there may be, but no need to let the billows of outside circumstances break into your heart. Thank God, Christ *does* look upon my heart and yours.”

“THE path of sorrow may be yours, but you cannot say you are ‘The man of sorrows.’ You may be in depths that you cannot lie in—‘poured out like water,’ but He, the Man of sorrows, has a heart to meet you in everything. He entered Himself into every sorrow ; His experience makes all ours ‘beggarly.’ If one looks at the experience of Abraham and others, we find *His* infinitely larger : His sorrow was without sin. Sin falsifies it in us in a measure. In trial, I am a sinner, and I shall be sure to give way to the flesh in some point or other ; but there was not the smallest particle of dross to mar the perfection of that Man of sorrows ; not a particle was there to come out in Him, as it does in us, of the flesh or fleshly ‘evil.’ We could not fully know what the flesh and the world were, save as in contrast to Christ ; He is the touch-stone of everything, and He filled this scene, as He passed through it, with the beautiful manifestation of the character of God. If I could not go to Him when I find sin working in me, what refuge should I have ? Ah, blessed Lord ! cannot I count on Thee if I find hypocrisy or anything else ? Amid all the strange things that come up in this heart of mine, my soul needs to be where (with the sense of everything being against me in connection with the flesh, the devil, and the world) I am yet able to say, *God is for me*, and if He be for me, who against me ?”—G. V. W.

THESE LAST DAYS.

To me there is nothing more sad and melancholy than the low estimation in which the truth of God is held by all classes of society in the present day. In the days of Samuel the prophet, the truth was precious. The fact is that men of the world are engrossed in the cares and vanities of this life; heaping up treasures for themselves, or seeking to gain a name and reputation for themselves before men; and on the other hand many of the children of God are, *alas*, hand and glove with a world which lieth in the wicked one; and appear to be totally insensible to the danger of holding friendship with a world at enmity with God. A Christian, in God's estimation, is the salt of the earth—the light of the world. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." "Ye are My witnesses," saith the Lord.

How little, *alas*, do we answer to our responsibilities in this respect. There is no room for boasting; as we can only truthfully say of ourselves when we have done all, "We are unprofitable servants." Well would it be for all if we would more frequently examine ourselves by the word; then we should know better how far we are seeking to honour God, rather than ourselves, in any little work or service.

Writing to the children of God, the Apostle Paul says, and mark the word: "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? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the

Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." We see here the importance, nay, the absolute necessity of keeping the house of the Lord clean. "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever" (Ps. xciii. 5). And "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14). "For this ye know" (Eph. v. 5), "that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience. Be ye not therefore partakers with them."

Now let me ask, where do we see these high and holy principles carried out as they should be? Alas, be it said to our shame and dishonour, that we have one and all utterly failed in this respect, and brought disgrace upon the name of our blessed Lord. In order to keep the house of the Lord clean, there must of necessity be discipline; but let it be godly discipline; not merely according to our peculiar views and habits, but in every respect based upon the ordering of God's word; nothing more, and nothing less than that; and then rest assured, beloved brethren, there will be more decency, order, and corresponding blessing than what we usually see in the assemblies of the saints of God. Following out God's principles, we must begin by separating ourselves from all and everything which is not strictly in accordance with godliness and holiness. The word says, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:" (What a motive for obedience! may this be a word for the conscience of any who may be pleased to read this little paper.) "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity

and truth" (1 Cor. v. 7, 8). The prophet Samuel, in admonishing king Saul, says: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. xv. 22).

The day of the Lord is near at hand, so that it would be useless to waste our time in vain jangling about words which tend not to the profit or edification either of the speaker or the hearer; but let us be sure of this, that to begin with judging ourselves, and keeping ourselves pure from all that tends in any degree to bring dishonour on the name of our beloved Lord and Master will be the most effectual way of correcting what we see to be wrong in others. And should we not be so successful in this respect as we may have hoped; yet at all events by thus seeking to please God, we shall keep a conscience void of offence before God and man.

Before I conclude, let me once more say, "The night is far spent and the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." As Christians, we are called to exhibit Christ in all our ways and walk through this life, in the first place; secondly, to seek to place the truth of the Gospel before the world; and lastly, to unite in worship with all who call upon the name of the Lord out of a pure heart; and so far as we can consistently, live peaceably with all men.—*Extract.*

WE must trust our Leader in the mountain we have to traverse on our daily path.

"Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown;
Jesus we know, and He is on the throne."

The secret is, *His* mountain has been made a way, though not one of our construction. Our entry of happy experience for the day will be—"Thou hast made my mountain strong."—*Margaret Stewart Simpson.*

THE PATRIARCH JACOB.—*Gen.* xxxii. 24-32 ;
xxxv. 1-14.

HERE Jacob was on his return from Padan-aram. He was a saint of God, and valued the promises, but the means he used were reprehensible in every way. There was real faith in his heart ; he was willing to yield (though it were only a mess of pottage) to get them ; but there was no uprightness in him at all. It is true that he was not going with his own wretched will, like Esau, but still he was not going with God. There was value of the things of God, but no practical faith with God, and for twenty-one years God was chastening him, though giving him what he valued. God protects him from Laban, and will not let Esau touch him. He was a believer that valued the promises, but did not walk by faith.

You see grace in it ; but at the end of his life he says, " Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." God's patient love had taken care of him, and he could speak of " the angel that redeemed him from all evil." It was exceeding sad. It was not unbelief, but he was a believer not walking by faith. You get his character portrayed, and even in the end how the poorest believer is better than the world. He blessed Pharaoh ; " and without all contradiction the less is blessed of the greater." He has got God's blessing, and he can bless Pharaoh ; when it comes to the world, he is the great man.

We get God's dealings with him, chastening, &c. ; but there is more than that. We see how terribly there is the want of uprightness with God where the believer is not walking with Him. It was not Jacob wrestling with God, but God *with him*. He would not allow Esau to touch him, for He was preserving and caring for him ; but *He* takes him in hand to deal with him, and makes him limp all his life. He got the blessing, but through this struggling, God giving

him strength to do it, showing the astonishing patience of God : grace it was, of course.

Acceptance is a settled thing, but the state of my soul is not a settled thing. Supposing I had a child, it is and always will be my child ; but is it no matter how it goes on ? That is the very thing that makes it matter. I encourage it or chasten it ; I deal with it. God withdraws not His eyes from the *righteous*. It is my righteousness that is settled, and does not depend on what I am. I *ought* to have a peaceable spirit, and that depends on what I am. God wrestles with Jacob. There had been chastening, but Jacob needed to be brought into direct contact with God. He makes him discover his weakness, and what he is, and have the remembrance of it all through his life. If people belong to Him, and are walking without Him, He finds them out, but *alone*.

“Jacob was left *alone*.” God is wise, and holy, and love in His dealings. Jacob had the consciousness that the Lord had blessed him, still He must have Jacob discover where he was. No prosperity, no children could be any comfort to him, if he had not peace with God practically. God has a controversy with the soul if it is not walking with Him. If I am walking up to the light I have, and not with a bad conscience, He has no controversy with me. You never hear of God wrestling with Abraham ; *he* intercedes for others. It is the dealing of God with a person who is not walking simply and practically by faith.

He touches the hollow of Jacob's thigh. The Lord breaks him down. If He is to bless, He must give an abiding discovery of what he is, and he carries it with him all along. It was grace and mercy. He was a halting Jacob all through, because he was halting in his walk with God. He says, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” It was right in its place, but it was not happy intercourse ; it was *forcing* blessing out of God, as it were. He will not tell Jacob His name ;

there was the victory of faith to get the blessing ; but there was *no revelation of God*. (The fullest blessing is His full, perfect, infinite love. He loves us as He loves Jesus, and we call Him Abba, Father ; that is revealing His name—that is revealed in Jesus—but whatever the Name is, it is God revealed.) Here He did hide Himself. He came to give blessing, but He does not reveal Himself ; and that is the effect of not walking with God. He does give blessing, and needed blessing ; but He does not reveal Himself, and if needed He makes him halt all his life. He gives him flocks and herds ; but He says, " I must have *you* for Myself ; I won't let you go on like that." He had been halting morally, and God makes him halt actually.

In the second part I read, you get another thing showing the exceeding riches of His grace. He is going back. He is away from God, though he was right to go to Laban, for his mother sent him ; but all through he had been cheating his father, and in the interval he had shown the same spirit. He told Esau he would meet him at Seir, and he had no intention of going to Seir ; he had no idea of his strangership and pilgrimage, and he settled. Then he had to go and sell his land and be off. He settled before he got back to the point he started from ; and we must always get *back*.

Even in Abraham, he had to get back to the place of the altar he had at first, and he had no altar between. God took care of him, but that is not communion. God takes care of us, and gives us outward blessings and inward too, and chastening, but that is not communion with God, and that is what we have to look to. Abraham goes to Egypt, and gets into a scrape. God was with him, but he never was with God ; and we cannot be with God without the life of faith. We must go back the way we came, back to the place where we departed from God. A man may own his actual sin ; but to have the soul restored

and get the blessing, he must go back to where his soul left God, and he can have no altar else.

Jacob is not a stranger and a pilgrim with God. Now God comes and says, Go up to Bethel, and make there an altar to God, &c. He is to come back to be with God. It was great blessing to be back, but it was all lost time between, except learning what he was. Mark what follows. There is meeting God; it is not God meeting us, wrestling with us, chastening, or bringing the soul to its bearings. A man may be walking very fairly outwardly, and not know at all what it is to have to say to God; and in such a case some fall might come. He might like to pray and have communion with God, and finds it all dark, and no light of His countenance.

Jacob says to all that are with him, "Put away the strange gods." How came this? There were false gods, and he knew it all the while he was wrestling. He knew it as a fact; but when he went to meet God, his *conscience* took note of it. I can't be in communion with God and have idols in the tent. Is there NO idol in *our* tent? Is there nothing that takes our hearts off from God, that possesses our hearts,—some closet in our hearts that we shut from God, or something we find shut when we go to God? The moment it comes to be an altar in God's house, all the strange gods come into his conscience and mind, and he must get rid of them. I discover all that is there that I knew when it comes to the altar, and that I do not think of if it does not shock my natural conscience. I can't bring them to the altar.

He says, God "was with me in the way that I went." Now he has the consciousness of God being with him, and sees the grace that was with him, saved him from Esau, and gave him abundance. Everything is blessing when we are with God, everything works together for good; and he had had plenty of trouble and fear on the way, but God had been with him. What a difference that is to wrestling with God to get the

blessing out of Him! (He was right to do that when he was *there*.) Seeing God's hand, and eye, and power, and the light of His countenance, all the circumstances are gone, and the God who had been with him is there. He goes back into communion. "El Elohe Israel" was acknowledging he had got the blessing; but now I get the house of God—not God giving blessing unrevealed, but now I can raise my altar in peace to the God of the house of God; and God does reveal Himself. He appeared to Jacob, and there was no wrestling. He appeared to him and blessed him. It is all coming from God—God speaking freely and fully, not His saying, What is your name? He had called his name Israel before—it was part of the discipline and exercise, though giving him strength. He is now taking it into His own hands and giving it of Himself; it is not Jacob wrestling for the blessing; but he has not even to ask God His name. He says, "I am God Almighty," &c. What a difference between struggling with God and feeling we have to, as inconsistent creatures to get a blessing, and God revealing Himself of His own accord, where we feel it is all faith. Jacob puts away the strange gods, and God comes and reveals Himself and talks with him, and then he goes up in peace.

In Abraham, it is not coming back to get the blessing, but God coming and dining with him; and then He says, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" and he was called the friend of God; he was walking with God. You never hear that of Jacob. He was faithful, and trusted Him. There was failure, of course, but God comes in in the most intimate way. With a person I have intercourse with, I do my business with him and go away—do him a kindness if he needs it—but if I have a friend, I tell him what is on my heart about others; I trust his heart, and communicate it to him. God says, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing I do?" Was he struggling for blessing? He had got it! Was he seeking to have God

revealed? He was there talking with him on the mountain! and he pleads with God for others. When God tells him what He is going to do, he says, "Wilt Thou spare the place for fifty righteous?" and God says, "I will." Then he says, "For forty-five?" and God says if there are forty-five He will not destroy it; and Abraham is emboldened, and goes on till he is ashamed to trespass any more on God's power; and God does much more perfectly, for He separates the righteous apart as they were. He was walking in communion with God; his present relationship with God was settled and habitual. God can tell him His thoughts, and Abraham can intercede with God for others. That is more than Jacob at his best.

It is different to be at peace and to have that intercourse with God that gives me His mind. You get more experience of a certain kind in Jacob—chastening exercises and wrestlings; in faith too, and it is not insincerity. The power of the Spirit enables me to stand up in the conflict. God says, I can't give you up, and I can't allow it; you must bear the effect of your inconsistency for long, and sometimes for always. He suits His dealings to the need. That does not go to the detection of all that is in my heart. When it is a question of communion, I find out the idols. If I had looked at myself with God's eye, I should have found it before. I find the inconsistency of idols and detect them, then God reveals Himself in blessing. He could not be there on a par with idols in the heart. He will lead the soul on, and give it strength for conflict, but He could not go on with idols. Then there is communion, but only to make Jacob arrive at the blessing, and then He goes up.

Abraham was always walking in the consciousness of the blessing. It was altar and tent, and he builds it here and there. He lost it when he was inconsistent for a moment, and got it back; and he stands the expression of all His wonderful grace, and a bright example of faith, and God makes him the vessel of

all this wonderful revelation. He was in spirit walking with God about God's affairs.

There has been inconsistency, and you have been away from God perhaps—had chastening to remind you of it. God must have you with Himself to bring out what is there. He will bring your own name up. You won't get Israel without being Jacob with God. If you think of the altar, are there no things that are dividing your heart with God? When God says, Come and meet Me, was there nothing you then thought of? Has nothing entered into our hearts—no thought in our mind (*and allowed there*), or doing, or walking, that does not suit the blood of Christ? That is an idol! Things that we are unconscious of, going on with habits and in unconsciousness that there is no Christ in such and such a thing. Is there love for that, clinging to that, and affection for that? Is it Christ? You can't say it is! God in blessing make us find it out, to lead us to communion.

Are you content to have blessing? There are two ways in which God gives a part with Himself. Joying in God when we are brought to Christ—that is the highest blessing. And there is another thing: He gives us a part in the activity of His love to other people, in gospel preaching, seeking souls, serving saints, services of love if it be but a cup of cold water; there I get God's thoughts of others. I must have His thoughts for that. I can't be His fellow workman if my soul is not with Him already. When the soul is walking with God and in His interests, there is the spirit of intercession, and that is immense blessing. God's love is there, shed abroad in one's heart, and it flows out to others; and it is an immense privilege to have identity of Christ's interests in the world. That can't be with idols. Could He treat you as His friend, give you His thoughts—not of yourself; infinitely precious that is. Has the heart that kind of confidence in God?

You need not fear want of lowliness in being near

God ; it is found in being away from Him. Paul was not proud when he was in the third heaven, but after he came down, then he needed the thorn in the flesh, lest he should say, "No one has been there but you, Paul."

Are the idols so gone that you are at rest with God, and He can talk with you? Can your hearts say they are free with God? God is thinking of us in that kind of way that He is trusting us with His thoughts. The Lord give us to know what it is to walk with Him so that we are free, and the freer we are the more humble we shall be. Walking with the Lord, we find our own nothingness. The Lord give us such nearness to God, that everything may be detected that does not suit that intercourse!

J. N. D.

THE ORDER AND AUTHORSHIP OF LEVITICUS.

IN the wilderness, under the shadow of Mount Sinai, God gave most, if not all, the communications set forth in that book of the law known to us under the title of Leviticus, though nowhere in the sacred volume is it ever so designated.

To the Greek Septuagint we seem indebted for this name. And since we meet with the term *Levitical* in Heb. vii. 11, applied to the Aaronic priesthood, we can see, as we peruse this portion of the Pentateuch, that the title is not inaptly chosen, for it treats so fully of the institution and of the duties of the Levitical priesthood. In accordance with this, the Peshito Syriac Version designates it "The book of the priests." In the Hebrew Bible, however, it is only known by its opening word, *Vayikra*—i.e., "and He called ;" for in common with the other books of the Pentateuch, the Jews, viewing the five as one whole, designated each by a word, or words, found at their commencement.

Each of the methods for distinguishing these different books has its advantage. The one, with which English readers are familiar, reminds us of its subject. The Jewish method above mentioned impresses on the reader that each is but a part of one great whole.

Let us now turn to the object in view in this paper, which is to attempt to set before the reader what may be called proof, undesigned on the part of the sacred penman, that the book, as we have it, was really arranged by the Spirit of God.

Looking into it, any one can see that it divides itself naturally into two great parts, viz., chaps. i.-xvi. and chaps. xvii.-xxvii., each of which may be subdivided. The first half (i.-xvi.), it will be found, sets forth teaching which has interest for others beside Israel, though primarily addressed to them, and which liturgically considered directly concerned them. The second half (xvii.-xxvii.) treats of that which especially did, and especially will, concern God's earthly people Israel.

From this statement; proof in support of which we shall endeavour to adduce, it will be seen that what especially applied to the people owned as God's in the days of Moses is relegated to a second place. Now why was this? Surely in that day, with the deliverance from Egypt and Egyptian thralldom fresh in their remembrance, that which especially concerned Israel would naturally have held the first place in the thoughts of Moses. Not so was it with God. There was ever before Him the One by whose death He would be perfectly glorified, and by which saints—not those of Israel only—would be richly blessed. There were also, as we now know, purposes of grace concerning His saints to be known and shared in by such on earth, ere Israel, in accordance with the divine counsels, could finally enjoy their portion in the millennium. God knew what no one, unless He had been pleased to reveal it, could then have even surmised, that the Christian dispensation, of many centuries

duration, must intervene between the ascension of the Lord and His millennial reign. To write, then, in the wilderness a book, within two years of the exodus, which should in its arrangement harmonise with that, was surely to furnish the Christian reader with proof that, though Moses was the penman, the real author of Leviticus was none other than God.

New Testament revelation begins with historical records, four in number, of the life and death of the Son of God. With this same subject Leviticus, in its typical teaching, opens, teaching, as it does, in chaps. i.-vii., of the offerings, and of the laws of the offerings—pictures, as it were, of Him in life and death whose history is related to us at some length in the gospels. For whether we look at the meat-offering, which especially typifies Him in His life of humiliation, or whether we are occupied with the burnt-offering, the peace-offering, the sin-offering, or the trespass-offering, all of which direct our attention to His sacrificial death, we are not allowed to forget His life of spotlessness, which ended in His death in devotedness to the divine will. The first subject of New Testament teaching is also the first subject in the book of Leviticus.

Following the directions about sacrifice, we next read in Lev. viii.-x. of the institution of the Aaronic priesthood. Now, had this book been merely the effusion of the human mind, Moses might have treated of the institution of the priesthood at its commencement, and no one could naturally have thought that a disorderly arrangement; because, till the eighth day of Aaron's consecration had come, none of the offerings, of which chaps. i.-vii. had treated, could have been sacrificially dealt with by him and his sons on behalf of the people. But Moses, we see, first wrote of the sacrifices, and then of the priesthood. Was this by accident or by design? No one surely, with the New Testament in his hand, is authorised to say it was by accident. And if unwilling to admit it was

by design, such an one at least can produce nothing in refutation of it.

With the epistle to the Hebrews before us, it is next to impossible to resist the conclusion that the institution of the Aaronic priesthood has its place in Leviticus in a moral order, and that by design on the part of the real Author of the Bible, who alone at that day could have known of the coming Christian dispensation, and of the divine teaching which would be connected with it. And certainly no one, when in the wilderness of Sinai in the days of Moses, could have conceived that the true Sacrifice and the High-priest would be one and the same Person, and that He must first present Himself as sacrifice before He could enter on His priesthood. New Testament teaching has clearly brought out both these facts, and has plainly declared as to the latter. "For if He were on earth, He would not even be a priest, seeing there are priests that offer gifts according to the law; who serve the representation (or copy) and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See (saith He) that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Heb. viii. 4, 5). Is it not, then, in perfect keeping with New Testament revelation that the institution of the priesthood in Leviticus should be treated of after the death of the sacrifice has been in different ways set forth? Believing the book to be of God, we see it could not have been otherwise.

Turning again to the New Testament, we are taught therein of the coming of the Holy Ghost to dwell on earth, and of all which flows from that consequent on the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. In harmony with this, we next read in Lev. xi.-xvi. of defilements, and of the manner of cleansing from them, with the account of all that went on upon the day of atonement to deal with the question of sins and of uncleannesses. What a defiled and defil-

ing creature man is! This section of the book brings it out by its ceremonial regulations. And here again we see that the order of subjects in Leviticus is in agreement with the order of New Testament revelation, in so far as the latter teaches us fully of what we are by nature, only *after* the atoning sacrifice of the Lord has been offered up on the cross. But there are two interesting points in this section of the book, both of them found in chap. xi., which merit attention—the one indicating that there may be something on earth which cannot be defiled, the other illustrative of the principle of finding deliverance from defilement by death.

The lawgiver had been impressing on the people how the carcase of an unclean creeping thing would spread defilement (31-35). Right and left that carcase contaminated every thing it touched, and every one who came into contact with it. To this there was one, but only one exception. "Nevertheless, a fountain, or pit, wherein there is plenty of water, shall be clean" (ver. 36). That which was a source of cleansing, or refreshment for man, a spring, or a cistern in which there was a gathering together of waters, was undefilable by that carcase. Is it beyond the bounds of sober interpretation to view this as a faint foreshadowing of the Holy Ghost's presence here below, as revealed in the pages of the New Testament? Does not such a foreshadowing come in just at the right place, viz., after the sacrifice and priesthood of the Lord have been typically taught, and before the full effects of His sacrifice, as far as Leviticus could enter on them, are brought out?

In the following verses (37, 38), we are told that if "any part of their carcase fall upon any sowing seed which is to be sown, it shall be clean. . . But if any water be put upon the seed, and any part of their carcase fall thereon, it shall be unclean unto you." The seed sown would die ere germinating, so would be clean; but if it had already been moistened, germina-

tion, it is plain, might have begun, in which case it could not die, hence it was unclean. Have we not here a foreshadowing of deliverance from uncleanness by death, a principle with which all Christians should be acquainted? I only touch on these in passing, just noting that in chapter xvi. we have set forth God's provision through atonement by blood to meet the question not only of guilt, but also of uncleanness. And again, must we not admit that the order of Leviticus in this matter is in keeping with the order of the New Testament teaching about the full effects of the Lord's atoning sacrifice? He announced His own death; but it was only after the Holy Ghost had come that the epistles of the Romans, Ephesians, Hebrews, &c., which treat of it, were written.

Here the teaching in this book not confined to the wants and condition of Israel ends. The life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, His priesthood, the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, and teaching the consequence of it, can be seen prefigured more or less clearly in the chapters referred to. Now coming to the second half of the book, that which especially concerns Israel as the earthly people we shall find traced out in due order.

Called out of Egypt, and made God's people by redemption at the Red Sea, Israel were to be separated unto God, and to maintain on earth the revelation He had given of Himself as Jehovah. So in chap. xvii., they were duly reminded of that by the provision therein made to guard against idolatry (1-9), and to maintain inviolate the rights of the Creator, as the One to whom life belongs (10-16). Hence they were forbidden, and now under a penalty if they disobeyed, to eat blood. Thus reminded of the testimony committed to them (Deut. vi. 4) to be witnesses for Jehovah upon earth, a privilege enjoyed by no other nation, He who had made them His people at the Red Sea (Exod. vi. 6, 7; xv. 13), He would regulate the daily life, whether of the priests or of the people.

Hence the subjects of chaps. xviii.-xxii. And if His people, they will have as such a history; so in xxiii. we have what may be called *their ecclesiastical calendar*, which gives us in their festivals, and in the order in which they were to be observed, their history on earth as Jehovah's people from the exodus to the millenium, and on to the eternal state (ver. 39). For their political history, as depicted by prophecy, we must turn to Gen. xlix.; for their ecclesiastical history we turn to Lev. xxiii.

If such is the extent of their history as God's people, it is plain He can never finally forsake them, however they might deserve such dealing with them on His part. Of this we have an intimation and an assurance in the regulations as to the golden lamp and the twelve loaves, on which during the darkness of night the light from that golden candlestick was constantly to shine. As one unbroken whole would the nation be ever viewed by God (Acts xxvi. 7; James i. 1), though apostacy might break out among them, and the guilty be visited with condign punishment. All this we see in xxiv.

Then if they are God's people, and have a national history, and a future before them, they have an inheritance likewise. To this reference is next made in chap. xxv., in the provision, first, for the observance of the Sabbatical year, and next, in that unique institution, the year of jubilee. The Sabbatical year taught them that the land was Jehovah's, not theirs. Had they always observed that ordinance they might always have remained in the land (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21); hence follows the institution of the jubilee, foreshadowing God's purpose to restore, and that finally, the land of their inheritance to the nation which had lost it. And that they would lose it they were warned in chap. xxvi., in which an early outward symptom of returning blessing is stated to be in the Lord's remembrance of the land (42). To that Ezek. xxxvi. 8 points, and of it when accomplished Psalm

lxvii. 6 speaks, when rightly translated: "The earth *has* yielded her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us." Brought back to their land in grace, and that finally, surely they will be moved to express their thankfulness for unmerited favours to the God of all grace. So the last chapter treats of vows to be rendered and accepted.

Commencing then, as Leviticus does, with the provision for the people to bring an offering for their acceptance, if moved by a sense of divine goodness, it closes with the regulations about vows, and the paying of them to Him who had been gracious to them. In the beginning of the book, they were reminded in type of the sacrifice of the Lord, and of their need of it to be accepted before God; in the close of it, which looks on to their conscious enjoyment of God's full favour, based of course on the sacrifice of His Son, provision is made for the expression of their hearts' thankfulness, but without any typical allusion to the Lord's death. Is not this all as it should be—perfect in its way?

And now, in conclusion, may we not say there is a design in the arrangement of this book which manifestly betokens its divine authorship—a design which the human instrument would have been most unlikely to have conceived? We peruse the book, full of communications given by God in the wilderness. These communications assert their divine origin. Their arrangement affords proof, undesigned on the part of Moses, that the book, in the form we have it, is from God.

C. E. S.

HUSH!—We must lend an attentive ear, for God's voice is soft and still, and is only heard of those who hear nothing else. Ah, how rare it is to find a soul still enough to hear God speak!—*Fenelon*.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

HOLINESS CHURCH.

—————, JUNE 28, 1887.

REV. SIR,—On Lord's day afternoon, I listened for more than an hour (on the Foreshore) to the addresses of five members of your congregation, and I now write to you as a fellow-servant of Christ, to say how deeply grieved I was at the character of those addresses. I thankfully recognise the sincerity of the speakers and their good intentions. No doubt they believed they were doing the work of the Lord. But I can truly say that since I have known Him for myself as the God of my salvation, a period of 30 years, I have never listened to any Christians whose teaching was, according to my judgment, so thoroughly opposed to the Word of God and the character of true Christianity.

I trust I may be preserved from using any language unbecoming in one Christian man to another. To arouse any feeling of a resentful character is far from my wish. My desire is rather to appeal to you to judge whether what is going on every Lord's day under your sanction and approval, and what I suppose I may therefore consider you responsible for, is or is not according to God.

What I found was—that with each of the speakers there was a depreciating of pardon and justification as commonplace and insufficient, and an exaltation of sanctification, holiness, and the clean heart! This was amongst a promiscuous assemblage of perhaps 100 persons. And I go further, and say that three things of immense importance appeared to me to be uniformly slighted or ignored.

These were (1) *The Word of God*, for no Scripture was read, nor any attempt made by any one of the speakers to establish what was advanced by proof from its pages. Now and then there was a slovenly quotation of a word or a verse, but no endeavour to bring forward the undeniable authority of the Word of God.

(2) *The way of salvation* by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection. There was scarcely any recognition whatever that this was necessary, or had ever taken place.

(3) *The Person of Christ*: Himself the living example for

His saints on earth ; the One who perfectly glorified God here ; His faithful witness ; the brightness of His glory ; the express image of His person ; the One now glorified in heaven, our High-priest with God and our Advocate with the Father. Not a word as to anything of this escaped the lips of any of the five speakers.

That which took the place of these things was self-satisfaction and mutual exaltation. Each speaker took himself or his wife as his text, and from first to last it was *ourselves* ; what happy people we are, what good people we are ; we never quarrel, never disagree ; we have no angry feelings, no cross words, no black looks ; we never have an evil thought. It is like the garden of Eden before man sinned, the only difference being that we have known what sin is, but, thank God, it is all clean emptied out of our hearts. Hallelujah ! Oh ! we can't describe it to you, it's so beautiful ! it would be like describing to one who is blind what sight is ; but you should come amongst us, you should live with us, and then you would see what holiness is. Hallelujah ! And you can all of you have it. David said, "Create in me a clean heart ;" and you can get it just as he did ; you have only to trust. I shall never forget when I got it, and I have had it now for so many years, &c., &c. Hallelujah ! Amen ! I hope that I have not unfairly described the *best part* of what I listened to ; for I call the worst part that which was entirely personal and self-laudatory.

But I turn from this to the Word of God, and I read there, "For we preach *not* ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." Now this preaching of Christ Jesus the Lord was entirely wanting, and what usurped its place was "ourselves" from beginning to end. Each speaker was full of self, and confessedly self-satisfied !

I had afterwards half-an-hour's conversation with one of the speakers, who affirmed that he had *not sinned for about five years*, and who did not hesitate to avow that he walked *as Christ walked* ! He did not lay claim to His divinity, and owned that he had to learn ; but so had Christ, who grew in wisdom, he said ; and, regarding Christ as a man, he (the speaker) walked as holily and as perfectly as did He. Reminded that the thought of foolishness is sin, he denied

that he ever had any foolish thought for which he was responsible. Satan suggested evil thoughts as he did to Christ, but there was no sin in that; he had no evil or foolish thoughts from within, nor had he ever had since he had got a clean heart! I presume this *you* also hold. Now I find in Scripture that Job was *perfect and upright, and feared God and eschewed evil*. But he says (xl. 4), "Behold, *I am vile*; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." And again, "Now mine eye *seeth Thee*. Wherefore *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*." What a lack of all this was there with your speakers. No seeing God, only seeing self; no abhorring of self, but self-justification and self-approval; no *repentance*, no *dust*, no *ashes*! Next I find that God says by His servant Solomon, whom He had endued with wisdom above all who went before or came after him, "There is no man that sinneth not" (1 Kings viii. 46; 2 Chron. vi. 36); and again, "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccl. vii. 20). Turning to the New Testament, James says, "In many things we offend all;" and further, "Confess your faults one to another" (iii. 2; v. 16). John affirms that "if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" also, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Now all this has no application if I accept the teaching against which I desire respectfully to protest.

Scripture inculcates that we should examine ourselves and judge ourselves; but if by a simple act of faith, or "just trusting," as your exponents put it, I get my poor, wretched heart exchanged for a pure or a clean heart once for all—or, as one of them said, get all the sin clean emptied out of it for ever—then I have no cause for confession or self-judgment. In spite of what the Word of God affirms, I have no sin and no faults; I want no High-priest and no Advocate. Self-abhorrence, and repentance, and dust and ashes are all out of place, for I am (spite of God's dictum by Solomon) the very expression of "a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not."

I am convinced that such teaching exhibits a very low type of Christianity. It coalesces with derogatory thoughts of Christ in the spotless perfection of His holy character,

and on the other hand with self-exaltation. It painfully indicates that sin, in its far-reaching roots and springs, and its subtle and insidious character, and its multiformity in detail as measured in the presence of Him in whom there is "no darkness at all," has never been understood. It is impossible that any one who had learnt what self is before God as Job learned it, or had learnt what God is as those who have the Holy Ghost dwelling in them are privileged to learn it, could soberly affirm that he had not sinned for five years. It is only a gross indication how far it is possible for a Christian man to reduce the Scriptural teaching of the real character of sin and of holiness to the level of his own fleshly mind. In such a case God has not His true place before the conscience; the conscience accordingly becomes deadened, and only what is gross and palpable—that which even a conscience so perverted must needs condemn—is recognised as sin! Subtle sins, such as evil thoughts and motions of the heart, are referred to *Satan* as being temptations of his, and thus responsibility is cast off; whereas James says, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (chap. i. 14).

In fine, a Christianity in which self was so exalted, *ad nauseam*, and in which Christ in His person and His work had so remote a place, I never listened to. The bulk of the audience were doubtless "without hope and without God in the world;" but instead of Christ being preached unto them, they were told they had only to trust and they would get a clean heart, God would give it them, and they would live a life like Eden! Not one word about being cleansed from their sins by the blood of Christ, about being born again, having eternal life, everlasting salvation through faith in His name; nothing about the two natures, that which is born of the flesh and that which is born of the Spirit; nothing about feeding upon Christ and following His example; nothing about beholding Him, and being thus changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Lord the Spirit.

Lamentably poor and lamentably defective, therefore (while professing to be a great advance upon ordinary religious teaching), are these "holiness" tenets, and utterly unworthy of the name of Christianity. So long as I have a

fallen nature, sin dwelleth in me, and to deny it is to deceive myself, and shows that the truth is not in me. But I am also born of God, and thus have two natures; the Holy Ghost dwelleth in me; I am in Christ and Christ is in me! By always bearing in the body the dying of Jesus, the life of Jesus is made manifest in our body. By reckoning ourselves to have died with Him unto sin, we have deliverance practically from its power. Sin shall not have dominion over us.

How simple, how blessed, how Christ-honouring and self-condemning is Scripture to the believer, drawing forth the heart in worship and praise to Him who has so wondrously wrought for our blessing, and for what is, above all, everlasting glory to Himself.

May He open the eyes of yourself and those with you to the discovery of that holiness which is truly the holiness of God.—Yours in the love of Christ, W. R.

[REPLY.]

JULY 1, 1887, VICTORIA ROAD.

Dear Sir,—Your long and elaborate letter to hand. We have got a knowledge that our ways please God. We are, therefore, not careful to answer further.—Yours, &c.,

T. P.

NOTES OF THE LORD'S WORK IN THE BAHAMAS.

HARBOUR ISLAND.—A mixed settlement of about 1,800 inhabitants. Mostly white people attended the meetings. Not such large numbers came out as in other settlements, but those that did attend were anxious souls. It was not idle curiosity that led them there, as it took some courage to ascend the steps leading to the upper room. Those that came were despised people, as several meet there every Lord's day, having separated from their brethren and sisters in the denominations, and thus caused their displeasure, but they have the approval of their Lord, whom they are gathered to, endeavouring to comply with His wish, breaking bread in remembrance of Him until He come. Met with brother R. Holder, who has also been there since we left,

telling us of two or three who have been added to the little company gathered to His name. God gave much blessing in the gospel from the day we arrived, and interest continued after we left. During our stay here of twelve days, many decided for Christ, among them some young people who have since shown stability and freshness, two of them breaking bread. May they be led on, and kept from the blighting, defiling influences of this present evil world. The children of God appeared to be refreshed also. How our hearts need constantly to be occupied with Christ—not past or present blessing, but with Himself—so that out of full hearts praise may flow to Him. While here, we received very many expressions of fellowship in the gospel. Beds were made for us to carry with us, a provision that has done us good service; food and shelter were also provided. Kind hospitality we have met with every step of the way, marks of His care. There was some opposition here from outside, stones being thrown on the roof two or three times, which had the effect of bringing forth praise from us for the privilege of standing for Him. Generally speaking, Christianity is looked upon as something to be observed on the Lord's day, not realising its practical power for the every-day life. May the dear slumbering children of God be aroused in these days of much profession. We often meet with those who wonder if they have the *right kind* of faith! Many blind eyes were opened in this settlement. All praise to Him.

COVE.—A mixed settlement of 600 or 700 inhabitants. We arrived and found the Lord had been before us, we following, to find a very precious provision in the shape of a large Temperance-hall placed for our use—both for sleeping quarters and preaching the gospel—as well as rich answer to prayer, preparing the ground and giving increase to the seed sown. The hall was generally crowded, with an overflow in the gallery very often; quite a marked interest during our stay; and they still gather for study of the Word and prayer, going on quietly and happily. As many as 250 would attend, and crowd into the hall; the powerful lungs would take up the strain of gospel hymn, which could be heard quite a distance. Some failing ones would come to us for direction and guidance. Our brother Matthew Yates,

an aged coloured brother, showed us much kindness in looking after our bodily needs, also commending us to the Lord—a dear spiritual man, even right along, very respectful and thankful for mercies continually bestowed; also, after we left, sending us little packages of provision and fruit, enquiring after us. On leaving, a boat's crew volunteered to row us to the next settlement, wind being contrary. God blessed His Word to one of the crew, who went home rejoicing—one whom the Lord had forgiven much, he being a notorious character, but just as bright for Him after receiving pardon. After three days' absence, returned again; received hearty welcome and much blessing in the gospel; young converts making progress. Interest continued after we left.

W. B.

Bahamas, W.I., April 26, 1887.

TIDINGS FROM SAN SALVADOR.

APRIL 25, 1887.

PORT HOWE.—We are in this place of many very evil reports, to find out that such reports are happily more fiction than fact. We anticipated on our arrival here unprecedented difficulties, but to our great joy the very opposite meets us—the warmest welcome and heartiest fellowship in the gospel;—dear neglected people, grateful beyond expression. More come out to listen than has ever been known before, some who have not been out for sixteen years. It seems our hearts are too small to rejoice as we should in consequence of such rich and abundant blessing. We have only been here a week, yet during that brief period (there is no knowing accurately as to numbers, as many from the surrounding settlements have received blessing) we have spoken personally to more than a hundred who are exercised; many have decided. The children of God in the Baptist Church appear to be spiritually minded, having much real discernment, giving us up freely the building for meetings, which we have held every evening but one; addressing the scholars in the day and Sunday schools also, both being in very good order, the scholars showing intelligence and proficiency. On our arrival (having been tossed about and becalmed, taking us five days and a half from

Nassau), we pitched our tent on the beach in a convenient position, and that evening preached in the open-air to a large crowd, the Christians readily recognising the note sounded was true, pointing the perishing distinctly and simply to Christ. So the meeting-house was placed at our service, which was very acceptable, being well-seated, large, and plenty of lamps. Collections were suggested; but it did not take long to explain that the gospel is free, without money, without price. Large crowds have attended every meeting, and not a vestige of fleshly emotion or excitement has been manifested. This is to our surprise, as we heard so much about the people going into swoons, and so forth, and remaining in that condition for one, two, and three days, and then behaving in the most extravagant manner; but these things, we trust, belong to the past. The place is not large, but the people, as before mentioned, far more hospitable and intelligent than we had expected. We passed two or three nights under canvas, which caused some little grief to the people, who were afraid we should take cold, as the dews were heavy. However, we have not felt any serious hurt through the exposure. Just at present we have availed ourselves of shelter provided by a neighbouring sister, using our tent for cooking and dining-room. Preparing our meals is a new experience for us, which takes up some time; altogether we manage very well. We are very thankful to Him for such guidance and blessing. We realise that we are the subjects of very many prayers. You will gladly learn how abundantly they have been answered, God giving much increase to the seed sown: marked interest at every point. The natives are so glad to have us here for such a continued time, as they are accustomed to be visited only about once or twice a year, the visit not extending over half-a-day at the most, generally about four hours, so the appointed missionary leaves them pretty much alone. Possibly it is just as well; anyway, they have got instruction from the Word, and they are hungry for it: one dear soul saying, the Lord willing, I must forego a day's work, and come and get some instruction; another saying, if it were not that I am married, I would be glad to be with you always to learn more of Jesus. Such news as this is welcome indeed, and will refresh you as it has done us. Here there has been as much, if not more blessing than at any

place; they are very free, simple, candid, and kind; we have their confidence, and thus we can speak with much plainness to them. The children come-around, also, and speak with us, bringing their friends with them. One dear soul, who decided last Saturday, shows much interest, bringing her sister first, afterwards several others, to be spoken to, and have Christ ministered to them. The busy shipping season for pines is fast approaching, which may keep some away, as they work very hard; still we can look to Him, He may come before that, so it is just to go on steadily preaching the Word, depending upon God to bless and give the increase. We have various kinds of visitors. All, so far, manifest interest and care for us; one enquiring about our washing, another coming for a tract; some bring us a little fruit, others bring their wares for sale. Altogether, we are constantly meeting with incidents to call forth praise and thanksgiving for abounding grace.

W. B.

PSALM XXIII.

Thou Lord my Shepherd art,
 With Thee I ne'er can stray;
 Thy pasture's green refresh my soul
 Whilst here the waves of trouble roll,
 Still waters mark my way.

I shall not want with Thee,
 Nor fear of evil dread;
 Thy presence Lord, my spirit cheers,
 Whilst here, amid this vale of tears,
 My hungry soul is fed.

Since Thou art leading, Lord,
 What cause for doubt or fear?
 Tho' through the valley now I tread,
 By Thee, my Shepherd, still I'm led,
 With rod and staff to cheer.

Thy table, too, Thou spread'st,
 A feast of love divine;
 Thou bid'st us gladly break the bread,
 And eat, and drink, our living Head,
 With Thee, the welcome wine.

O blessed Shepherd Thou,
 Tho' silly sheep am I,
 So oft to grieve Thee by my ways ;
 Yet, Lord, my tongue shall sing Thy praise
 Through all eternity.

No more to wander then,
 No more to grieve Thee, Lord ;
 But chant Thy praise through endless days,
 And nought but love's sweet censer raise,
 To Thee, the Lamb adored ! T. G.

BREVITIES.

No reproof or denunciation is so potent as the silent influence of a good example.

No man ever offended his own conscience but, first or last, it was revenged upon him for it.

Bad habits are thistles of the heart, and every indulgence of them is a seed from which will spring a new crop of weeds.

On all occasions it is well to be a little more than tolerant, especially when a wiser and better man than ourselves thinks differently from us.

The approaches of sin are like the conduct of Jael ; it brings butter in a lordly dish ; it bids high for the soul. But when it has fascinated and lulled the victim, the nail and the hammer are behind.

COURAGE FOR THE RIGHT.—Dorcas died regretted : she was worth regretting, she was worth being restored ; she had not lived in vain, because she had not lived unto herself. The end of life is not a thought, but an action—action for others. But you—Why should you be regretted ? Have you discovered spiritual truth, like Paul ? Have you been brave and true in defending it, like Peter ? or cheered desolate hearts by sympathy, like Ananias ? or visited the widows and the fatherless in their affliction, like Dorcas ?—*F. W. Robertson.*

"GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH."

"And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. *And there I will meet with thee.*"—*Exodus xxv. 20-22.*

THE cherubims of beaten work, of *one piece with the golden mercy-seat* (ver. 19), symbols of the attributes of God, are seen in Ezekiel as the *supporters* of the throne. "Justice and judgment," says the Psalmist, "are the establishment (or the foundation) of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face" (Ps. lxxxix. 14). Thus the ark is called "the ark of God whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts, that dwelleth between the cherubims" (2 Sam. vi. 2). These "living creatures," or cherubims (Ezek. x.), the supporters of the throne, were "full of eyes" (Ezek. i. 18; x. 12), and "ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning" (Ezek. i. 14).

"God," as another has beautifully said, "has a throne. There everything must be brought into consistency with it. But in His active going forth, tender mercy and goodness announce Him, and faithful truth will tell His people He is there when He comes forth. *His activities are mercy and faithfulness, because His will is at work and His nature is love.*" Not only "the eyes of the Lord are in every place *beholding the evil and the good*" (Prov. xv. 3), but "He withdraweth not His eyes *from the righteous*" (Job xxxvi. 7): "for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong on the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. xvi. 9). "The place where we now know the propitiation for our sins is the place where we behold the majesty, power, and glory of God, all now in our favour, because forming, as it were, part of the mercy-seat itself."

"The Lord recompense thy work," said Boaz to

Ruth, "and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, *under whose wings thou art come to trust*" (Ruth ii. 12). To God, as a shelter from the enemy, as a resource in times of trouble, saints of old could turn. "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me; for my soul trusteth in Thee: yea, *in the shadow of Thy wings* will I make my refuge until these calamities be overpast" (Ps. lvii). And find God also the only source of refreshment and joy to the spirit, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. "Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice" (Ps. lxiii. 7). Yea, "as an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him" (Deut. xxxii. 11, 12). What a God! we must surely say; how excellent His loving-kindness; "therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings" (Ps. xxxvi. 7). And what a people! "Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the LORD" (Ps. cxliv. 15).

Another point of importance in Ezekiel's visions is, that "upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a *Man above upon it*" (Ezek. i. 26): a *Man* upon the throne of God, "the Man of Thy right hand," "the *Son of Man* Thou madest strong for Thyself" (Ps. lxxx. 17). And it is remarkable that this Psalm begins with, "Thou that dwellest between the cherubims." In this blessed Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, and tabernacling among us, *all the fulness of the Godhead*, we are told, *was pleased* to dwell (Col. i. 19). What a wondrous thought this! how near God has come to us in the person of His Son. Ezekiel "saw *visions of God*," symbolical representatives of the attributes of Him who "sitteth on the throne judging right," "the *likeness of the living creatures*," "the *likeness as the*

appearance of a Man ;” but John could say of himself and others, “ *We beheld His glory*, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father.” And “in Him,” another apostle tells us, “dwell^{eth} *all the fulness* of the God-head bodily” (Col. ii. 9). *God* has come nigh to us in the person of Jesus, “full of grace and truth.”

Surely we can only bow the head and worship as we read such words as these. And as we trace His pathway on earth, whether at the gate of the city of Nain, where, His heart full of compassion to the widow just about to bury her only son, He puts forth His power and raiseth the dead, and delivers him to his mother (Luke vii.); or if we contemplate Him in the fishing boat asleep on a pillow, in a great storm, awakened by His disciples, with their unbelieving cry, “*Carest Thou not that we perish?*” as He rebukes the winds and waves with the word, “Peace, be still,” so that there was a *great* calm (Mark iv.); or if we read those touching words, spoken of Him at the grave of Lazarus, “*Jesus wept,*” ere He put forth His mighty power by a word, “*Lazarus, come forth,*” and “he that was dead *came forth;*” or if we stand and gaze on *this same Jesus* as He came near to the guilty city, Jerusalem, and *wept over it* (Luke xix. 41), and listen to His lament over it in Luke xiii., “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!”—what can we do? but with adoring hearts sing *to Him* :—

“Fairer than all the earth-born race,
Perfect in comeliness Thou art;
Replenish’d are Thy lips with grace,
And full of love Thy tender heart.
God ever blest! we bow the knee,
And own all fulness dwells in Thee.”

W. R. H.

R.

GOD OUR REFUGE.

“God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble.”—
Psalm xlvii. 1, 7, 11.

YE days, and weeks, and months, and years
Speed on with rapid flight,
And bring that bright, eternal day
Which ne'er shall know a night.

Earth's shadows soon shall flee away,
Earth's sorrows have an end,
And we with our adorèd Lord
Eternity shall spend.

For ever shall His glories blaze,
Ineffable, divine ;
With rapture shall we see His face,
And in His beauty shine.

E'en now, though yet we see Him not,
Believing, we rejoice ;
And while His glory thrills our souls,
We long to hear His voice :

The Shepherd's sweet and gracious voice,
His tender tones of love,
That voice which, calling, won our hearts,
And carried them above.

Here clouds our vision oft-times dim,
And storms our head assail ;
They ne'er disturb the peace of God,
Nor come within the veil.

Sheltered within the holiest,
Life hid with Christ in God,
We long to be at home with Him
Who's washed us in His blood.

Assembling saints shall hear His shout,
Shall congregate above,
And with Him in the Father's house,
Shall celebrate His love.

Rejoice, ye saints, again rejoice,
 Nor let your courage fail ;
 Our joy, and confidence, and strength
 Is He who *must* prevail.

God's counsels centre in His Son,
 And stand beyond recall ;
 His glories shall for ever shine,
 And God be all in all !

THE BANQUET OF MERCY.

IN Old Testament times the character of God was blessedly revealed, though not brought into the full and beautiful display in which it appears in the New Testament. Even in only one of the books of the former we find five times over that He is a God who is FULL OF COMPASSION (Psalm lxxviii. 38, lxxxvi. 15, cxi. 4, cxii. 4, cxlv. 8), and this establishes at once the incomparable value of the word of God. By the visible creation around—"the things that are made"—I can understand "His eternal power and godhead" (Rom. i. 20), but they carry no conviction to my soul that He is full of compassion. But the Old Testament reveals this all-important fact to every soul that bows reverently and believingly before it—that the God with whom we have to do has found His own joy and His own glory in bringing Himself before us in His word in that character, with which He has stood invested ever since human failure existed—a God full of compassion !

When I turn to the New Testament, I find *this* God manifested in flesh ; and thus in Mark vi. 34, we read that when the Lord Jesus saw much people He "was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd : and He began to teach them many things." He saw the sad void there was in their hearts. They were in need of pas-

ture for their souls, and He sought as a Shepherd to minister to their necessities ; and for this all-sufficient reason, that compassion for their wretchedness and ruin moved His mighty heart, and He coveted for Himself the joy and blessedness of being the servant of their necessities for the glory of Him whose errand of mercy He was fulfilling.

Again, in Mark viii. 2, surveying the dense mass of people who had followed Him from the towns and villages, listening to the wonderful words He spake, and witnessing the scarcely less wonderful works which He wrought, He says, "I have compassion on the multitude." His blessed heart sought vent ; for the God of whom the Psalmist, the sweet singer of Israel, wrote, was there "full of compassion." He would have denied His claim to be "the Shepherd of Israel" had He left them to perish for lack of truth, or to famish for want of food. He giveth sight to the blind, He satisfies the poor with bread and filleth the hungry with good things ! What a banquet of mercy did He spread for all who would become the guests of Jehovah ! Whatever the character of the sorrow and the misery, the ruin and the distress, He was there to alleviate and to redress the ravages and the wrongs which Satan had wrought, and the havoc which sin had made. It was to Him no question of how numerous were the needy ones, or of how deep and how varied were their necessities ; no question either of those or of these, but of what was on the heart of Jehovah in His own spontaneous and undeserved goodness towards the flock of the Shepherd of Israel. Every lamb and every sheep was under the eye of the Shepherd ; and looking around on their serried ranks, His heart finds expression in the blessed words, "I have compassion on the multitude."

And is not this a word for to-day ? Has He changed the tenor of His language in the nineteenth century ? Is it not the privilege of faith to hear the same words even now, although the response must be individual in

every case? His compassions fail not; His faithfulness is as the great deep!

The banquet of mercy is still furnished for the Lord's guests, and faith finds even to-day that "yet there is room." The poor sinner may discover there is as fine an opportunity as ever for the child of faith to get a seat at the King's board, at the banquet which His boundless love and mercy have provided. There can be no question either as to the bounteous provision made or the boundless compassion which makes it. But there *is* a question, and that is, Is there faith to get the blessing? Faith, faith alone, gets it; unbelief, unbelief alone, misses it.

This is grandly illustrated in Mark ix. 22, 23. The father of the man possessed with a dumb spirit, on bringing him to the Lord, says: "If Thou canst do anything, *have compassion* on us, and help us." He piteously pleads with the One who was "full of compassion," and appeals to Him to exercise it. But *that* was not the difficulty. Everything on that side was boundlessly ample and blessedly offered. The only question left was, Is there faith for the blessing? And thus the Lord answers him, "If thou *canst believe*, all things are possible to him that believeth." And the father's weeping reply, straightway given, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief," brought the deliverance immediately. The demon was cast out, and the Lord's hand is given to the young man to aid and to encourage him to stand before his Deliverer in adoring wonder.

Reader, have you faith to be saved, or are you wrapping yourself in the fatal garments of unbelief? May the Lord expel the demon, and make you a guest at the banquet of mercy.

I SHALL find One in heaven nearer and dearer to my heart than any one I know on earth. Nothing is so near to us as the Christ that is in us, and nothing is so near to God as Christ.—J. N. D.

A GOSPEL STUDY.—FAITH IN A WRITTEN WORD.

THE book of Esther is full of interest to any who would mark the activity of God in defeating designs of the common enemy. As has been often remarked, the name of God does not appear in any part of it ; but the watchfulness of God over the best interests of man can be traced throughout. He never slumbers nor sleeps. No move, therefore, on the devil's part to thwart His designs escapes His cognisance ; and if He allows the plans of Satan to be developed, it is that He may the more completely triumph over him.

Reading the book, we are instructed in events which especially concerned Ahasuerus (or Xerxes, as he is better known in profane history), but events which also had an important bearing on the welfare of the human race. Of the king's wealth, and of his invasion of Greece profane historians have written, recounting that portion of his history which really concerned only the actors in it. Of God's interposition to defeat the devil's attempt to ruin for ever the whole human race the book of Esther treats. To God do we owe that chapter in the world's history, which illustrates at once His faithfulness and His desire to save sinners.

Vashti the queen set aside by the king, Esther, in the providence of God, is put into her place, after which the development of those events which so concern us all, begins its course. Haman, raised to power, could not brook the refusal of Mordecai to bow down to him. Determined, if possible, to wreak vengeance on the son of Jair (ii. 5), he persuaded the king to issue a decree to exterminate all the Jews in his kingdom. Political reasons were assigned why the king should accede to the suggestion of his favourite ; and zeal for the king's service and realm were the professed grounds for Haman's activity in the matter. The king agreed, and issued a decree in accordance

with Haman's desire, a decree to take effect in every province of the empire.

How easily can man become the tool of the enemy ! Neither Ahasuerus nor Haman had the least conception of what they were really doing. Political considerations were put before Ahasuerus ; personal motives swayed Haman. He scorned to put Mordecai alone out of the way ; he would exterminate his people with him. Had Mordecai only been killed to gratify Haman's spite, the guilt of shedding innocent blood would certainly have rested on his head, but men would not have thereby suffered irretrievable ruin, for Mordecai was a Benjamite, and not one of David's house. Satan however, whose tool Haman was, had another and a far-reaching object in view, viz., to cut off not simply Jews in Shushan, but David's race, now back in Palestine by the favour of Cyrus, the progenitor of Ahasuerus, from whom the Saviour of the world was to come. Who perceived that ? who could prevent it ? One alone could and did prevent it, and we are quite sure He perceived it.

It was not the first time that a crafty plot of the enemy in this matter had been counteracted ; nor was it the last : and it is deeply interesting to remember, that however great might be the power on earth enlisted by Satan in his design, and however hopeless, humanly speaking, might be the possibility of resistance on the part of those whose lives were seriously threatened, God always opened up a way of deliverance, that the line through which the Lord was to come should never be broken. The Israelites in Egypt shew this (Exod. i.) ; David, hunted by Saul, exemplifies it ; Joash, preserved in the slaughter of the seed royal (2 Chron. xxii. 10), witnesses to it ; and the deliverance of the Jews in the days of Esther confirms it. Had the devil then had his way, the Saviour, who was to be Abraham's seed and David's son, could never have appeared.

Fourteen centuries had elapsed, and five more were

to run out, ere the Seed promised to Abraham (Gen. xxii. 18) should come; but that line continued unbroken throughout the nineteen centuries which rolled by between Abraham and the Lord. Ever watchful to take advantage of any circumstances that might favour his ends, the enemy used men as his instruments to defeat God's purpose of salvation. Ahasuerus the tool of Haman, Haman the tool of Satan, and God allowing it all that He might triumph in the deliverance of His people, what a scene is this to contemplate! Blindness and spite on the part of man, malignity and craft on the part of the enemy, and fixedness of purpose and grace on the part of God, all this comes out to us in the book of Esther.

Haman succeeded in getting a royal decree for the destruction of all the Jews found in the kingdom of Ahasuerus. His work for that day was done. Activity was displayed by the scribes; the posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment. Then Ahasuerus and Haman sat down to their carousal. What is man! Those two, as far as they were concerned, had sealed the doom of the whole human race by the decree which was being promulgated; then, with lightness of heart, they sat down to drink! (iii. 15).

Haman's wrath against Mordecai, and his purpose against Mordecai's race, was not a feeling of the moment, nor, it would seem, was it kept concealed in his breast. For a whole year, day by day, had the lot been cast before him, to ascertain, one presumes, when the propitious moment should arrive to broach his plan to the king (iii. 7). Now, believing it had come, the crafty favourite suggested it to the pliant sovereign, who gave ear to it, and gave his ring for it, that sealed with the king's ring the authenticity of the decree should be undoubted. The decree thus duly drawn up was published in Shushan, and copies of it were sent off in haste to the "king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province" (12). Hilarity

might reign in the king's banqueting room, exultation doubtless filled Haman's heart, but sorrow and mourning were widespread. "The city Shushan was perplexed." "Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry." "And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes" (iii. 15—iv. 3).

What caused all this sorrow? Haman's enmity to Mordecai had not been kept smothered in his bosom, nor can we suppose that Mordecai was unaware of it; yet we have no hint of any weight on that score burdening Mordecai's heart. What, then, changed the current of men's thoughts, engendered perplexity in the city Shushan, and diffused widespread, genuine, and deep sorrow elsewhere? *The king's decree*, the written word, confronted men—a word which would not be changed, a word which must have its fulfilment, unless some means of deliverance should in time be discovered. Haman's enmity in itself would have caused no sorrow, but the decree of death, issued by the one in whose hands was the power to kill, made all the difference.

We can imagine the feelings of any Jew as he read that proclamation, and saw that its authenticity was attested by the seal of the king. Just one year, and then death must overtake him; just one short year, and all happiness for him in this life would end; just one year, and his earthly possessions, gathered perhaps after years of patient self-denial, and days of anxious toil, would become the property of a stranger. Or suppose a young couple just starting in life suddenly meeting with that decree. All brightness and joy would depart; the hitherto rosy-coloured future would become dark with the clouds of the impending storm. That written decree would blight all their

earthly prospects ; and if their prospects were bounded by earth, what would they have to look forward to? The destruction of their race they would have to face, with no hope of deliverance from it. All that could encourage their enemies, and incite them to slaughter the Jews, was found in that decree. The authority of the law would be with them, the desire for plunder would stimulate them.

The written decree ! What a change had that wrought ! Objects, aims, which hitherto had engrossed many of them, must have appeared in a new and, may we not say it, in a truer light. Eternity can light up the present, and display it in its true colours. One brief year, and death would overtake them at its close. The decree they read. It was written, it was sealed with the king's signet—no man could reverse it. Who could administer comfort to those affected by it ? A Persian had no fear of death by reason of it ; it did not touch him. A Jew had no hope of life after its promulgation, if within the range of the king's dominions. Go where he might, from end to end of it, in no corner, in no secluded spot within the limits of the empire, was he safe. The decree was aimed against the race. So, by virtue of his birth into this world, the Jew found himself threatened with death. How could he be indifferent to the terms of it ! How could he be comforted with the certainty before him, as far as that decree could make anything sure, that the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month Adar, would see the termination of his earthly existence ? Had any one tried to rally him, how could he have done it ? *It is written* would have been the poor man's answer. *It is written* must have quashed all hope. *It is written* would have been a sufficient reply wherewith to expose the folly of all such endeavours. Clear and explicit were the terms of the decree, what it said, that it meant. Brought face to face with the written word, the vanity of much of the present and the solemnity of the

future evidently weighed heavily on many a heart, for in every province there was among the Jews great mourning, and weeping, and wailing.

Mourning, weeping, wailing: an expression this was of the intensity of their feelings, and at the same time a confession of their helplessness to avert the calamity. But, as has been said (and how true it is), man's extremity is God's opportunity: so the Lord their God worked for their deliverance when everything seemed against them, and at a moment when it would least have been expected. It was when the earth was wrapped in the darkness of night. How often has this been seen; an encouragement, surely, that in the darkest hour hope may spring up, for the Almighty, if He pleases, can interpose and work deliverance. It was at night that God wrought to bring Joseph out of prison. It was at night that Peter was saved from death. It was at night that He who should by death annul him, that had the power of death, was born into this world. It was during the hours ordinarily devoted to sleep that the Lord rose. It was at night, too, that God began to work visibly for the rescue of the Jews from the doom which overhung them.

For three days all the Jews in Shushan, and Esther and her maidens in the palace, had fasted, preparatory to her venturing uncalled for into the king's presence. Now the answer from God was to be vouchsafed. Esther, accepted by Ahasuerus, had invited him and Haman to a banquet. Haman's exultation knew no bounds, as he returned home that evening to tell of an invitation to a second banquet with the king and queen on the following day. But "on that night could not the king sleep" (vi. 1). Dreams sent by God to Pharaoh were the occasion of Joseph's liberation from prison. Sleep withheld by God from Ahasuerus resulted in the salvation of the Jews from the doom to which the king's decree had consigned them. Mordecai thereby came into prominence, and

shortly afterwards into power; Haman got what he deserved, execution on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai; and the enemy, whose tool he had been, received a crushing defeat by the discomfiture of his plans just when all seemed in train for bringing them to a successful issue. "On that night could not the king sleep; and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him" (vi. 1-3). Two restless men were in Shushan that night—Ahasuerus and Haman. Ahasuerus was deprived of sleep by God that divine purposes concerning His people should be carried out. Haman, intent on the desire of his heart, could not wait for the month Adar to come to rid himself of Mordecai. He would at once secure his death on the gallows, to wreak vengeance on whom he had procured that decree which would wipe out the Jewish race from the king's dominions. Two restless men these were, both now to further God's designs. The one, the king, declared what was to be done to Mordecai; the other, Haman, had publicly to make it known throughout all Shushan.

Thus in the very hour when Haman counted on victory, Mordecai's personal deliverance from the doom designed for him was effected, and Haman was to witness it. Who could hope to have him hanged on the gallows, whom the king delighted to honour? Probably Mordecai was unaware of the imminence of his danger, till after his deliverance was accomplished. God's interposition on that night saved him from the gallows on the morrow. But the decree already issued, and published far and wide, was to take effect ten months hence. Was it merely, then, a respite

accorded him till the month Adar came round? God was working for the deliverance of the race. How that could be brought about the history now narrates.

Esther's discovery to Ahasuerus of the plot resulted in Haman's execution, and that of his ten sons, thus extinguishing his race in the direct male line. It resulted, too, in the exaltation of Mordecai to favour and power next to the king, and in the issuing of another decree, this time in favour of the Jewish race, "wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey, upon one day, in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar" (viii. 11, 12). As far as the previous decree was sent, so far was this fresh one carried.

On the promulgation of the first decree the posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment (iii. 15). On this second occasion we read that Mordecai "sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels,* and young dromedaries," the swiftest animals being pressed into the service, and the messengers hastened, and pressed on by the king's commandment (viii. 10, 14). The king's acquiescence in the first decree all could see; the king's heartiness in making known the second all might remark.

And now how was this second proclamation received? To the former, neither the city Shushan nor the Jews in the remotest corner of the empire were indifferent. To the promulgation of the second decree was any listlessness displayed? No; an eager

* In the Revised Version, it thus stands: "Sent letters by post on horseback, riding on swift steeds that were used in the king's service, bred of the stud" (ver. 10); and in ver. 14: "So the posts that rode upon swift steeds that were used in the king's service went out." The exact meaning of the original seems uncertain.

interest in its contents was at once discernible. "The city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them" (viii. 15-17). What a change had been wrought. Perplexity gave way to gladness; feasting took the place of fasting. Why? The thirteenth of Adar had not yet come. The first decree stood unrepealed. Why this change? The *written word* of that second decree had made all the difference. Relief had come; a way of escape from that dreadful doom was offered the Jews. They believed it, and they acted as if they believed it. Liberty to stand for their lives, and to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish all the power of the people and province that would assault them, assured them of immunity from death, so they could wait in perfect confidence the approach of that once-dreaded day.

But observe: if they would escape the doom threatened by the first decree, they must stand up for their lives, and kill their opponents. Activity must characterise them, in accordance with the terms of the second decree, else, did supineness overcome them, death would be their portion. For they had enemies, though the king's decree showed he was favourable to their welfare; and the thirteenth day of Adar told its tale, and witnessed of the doom that would have overwhelmed them, had God not interposed, and moved the king's heart to grant Esther's request; for at Shushan the Jews slew of their enemies 800, and in the provinces 75,000—upwards of 80,000 in all. Great, indeed, had been their danger. God, however, wrought a good deliverance. But months before that day came, their sorrow was turned into joy by the appearance of that second decree, in the accomplishment of which they put implicit confidence—the *written word*

they rested on. Further, they learnt that they were in the eyes of the king an accepted people, though the vast majority of them had never seen the king, and probably had never been at Shushan. But Mordecai had seen him; he was accepted before him; and all could know that who learnt of his reappearance from the king's presence chamber clad in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a crown of gold upon his head.

How instructive is all this to us! The written word in those days spoke to people. They heard it, they believed it, they were affected by it according to the tenor of its communication. Now God, not Ahasuerus, has spoken to all of us, and has announced a coming judgment, in view of which He "commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 30, 31). But what is man? He is *more ready* to believe the decree of Ahasuerus than *the word of God*. All in Shushan, and all the Jews throughout the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, believed that first decree, and all concerned were affected by it accordingly. On Mars Hill the coming judgment was announced, and the appointment of a fixed day made known, and the Judge indicated. How was this divine communication received? Some mocked, some procrastinated, a few believed (32-34). That was the effect on the hearers. What has been the effect in the reader's case? Were that the only announcement from God, what hope could there be for any one of us? All of us by nature are children of wrath; all of us, too, have sinned. How then shall we escape?

Thank God, another communication has appeared, written too in the Scriptures of truth, a communication from the lips of the appointed Judge, telling us of a way of escape from the judgment. "He that heareth

My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). Who has listened to this, and believed it? As those decrees of Ahasuerus affected all the Jews, so do these divine announcements concern all of Adam's race who have heard them. Supineness in standing up for his life would have cost a Jew dear in the reign of Ahasuerus; supineness in the matter of the soul's salvation now must, if not corrected, result in everlasting perdition. Did any Jew doubt about his danger when he read the first decree? Did any doubt as to deliverance from death when he read the second decree? Must not his faith, too, in the king's favour to them have been confirmed, as he heard of Mordecai's reappearance from the king's presence with the token of Ahasuerus's favour? Every Jew knew that the acceptance of Mordecai by the king was the assurance of the acceptance of all connected with him—*i.e.*, all the Jews. Similarly, what room is there for us to doubt of the acceptance before God of all those on whose behalf the Lord Jesus is in heaven, as we know Him, who died for us to make atonement, now there, and crowned with glory and honour? What, then, have any to do to share in salvation? What did the Jews? They did what the decree told them. What, then, are any now to do? To act as God's gracious word, in John v. 24, instructs them.

C. E. S.

 FRAGMENT.

FOR myself,—I speak as man,—I never found peace before God, or conscious rest with Him, until I was taught the force and meaning of that cry of Jesus of Nazareth—"Eloi Eloi, Lama Sabachthani." Never until I understood that He, who knew no sin, had (then and there, on the cross) been made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in

Him," could I rest as a sinner in the presence of a holy God. And, as I suppose, it is owing to the distinctive peculiarity of that—His sorrow under the wrath of God,—*not being understood*—that so many Christians have no settled peace at all.

The questions of sin and of guilt have never been met in their consciences. The incarnation is amazing and beautiful. That the eternal Son of God, the only begotten Son of the Father, should have become a babe and been laid in a manger of an inn: the contrast between the glory He came out of and the place man assigned to Him, *is* a contrast!—God and heaven could express their delight over Him, then and there, as well as feel it (Luke ii. 8-14). But the bearing of our sins in His own body was NOT in the cradle, but on the cross, and *on the cross alone*.

The flight into Egypt—the return and settling at Nazareth of the Child, the Youth in the temple and in returning from Jerusalem, the hidden retirement of His early manhood—is beautiful, each in its place: but none presents us with Him as in the act of bearing our sins. Again, when we look at Him as (when He voluntarily identified Himself with those that owned their need of repentance, confessing their sins) at His baptism, in His service and ministries, all, and each part of all, is beautiful and perfect; but if heaven could approve Him in each step, heaven, too, could give its avowals of approval to Him. Yet He stood not as sin-bearer under the judgment, at any of these periods.

Again, what a contrast, and who ever felt it as He felt it, between Himself as the Seed of the woman and the race of man to whom He had come! What a contrast between Himself personally and individually, and the house of Israel, His own, among whom He had come. Himself, not only "God manifest in the flesh," but "that holy thing" that was born of the virgin; holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, apart from sin; and yet voluntarily, amid sinful

men and with guilty Israel, the immaculate Seed of the woman, the King of Israel in His holiness. This brought with it sorrows. So, when He had entered upon service, did the constant persecution for righteousness, which He endured, and the consciousness that there was none who could sympathize with Him, and that fallen men welcomed not the mercy of which He was the messenger ; sorrows He had to endure at the hand of the world and man, but even that was not forsaking of God. But in none of these parts, nor in the being straitened when His soul turned to His coming baptism ; nor when, in the garden, His soul passed into the scenes which then lay immediately before Him, was there (any more than any where else) that which there was when He cried out—"Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani." Here, too, He was perfect—forsaken of God, He would not, did not, forsake God—never did God or heaven see perfection shine out of Him as then and there, when His obedience was at the goal,—“Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” But, if heaven found—in His submission under forsaking, for the sake of others—its delight, for it was the revelation of God as the Saviour-God, there was, there *could be*—(just because *it was forsaking* for sin, our sin, which He had to endure)—no expression of approval, NOTHING BUT FORSAKING.—“Why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

I do not see how a sinner can find rest until he has learnt somewhat of that which is distinctly peculiar to Calvary : learnt that, then and there, there was a cup drunk by the Lord, in obedient submission to God,—cup of wrath due to us only, drained by Christ at Calvary. The only spot I turn to, when in conscience the question is about sin or guilt, or sins (of the human family, of myself as an individual, &c., &c.), is Calvary, and to the Lord there, crying out—“Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani.”

He bore my judgment in my stead, then and there, in His own body on the tree, in the presence of God,

and received the woe of wrath and forsaking at the hand of God. And there is my quittance, clear, and full, and complete, but there alone.

The experiences of His soul when He said, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" were altogether peculiar and distinct from that which He had to endure and experience at any other time whatsoever. In that suffering of His, as forsaken, I get the measure and the judgment of my sin against God.—*Reprinted by permission from "The Present Testimony."*

LORD JESUS, MY SAVIOUR.

LORD Jesus, my Saviour, I'm blest in Thy favour,
I love Thy sweet name, it is dear to my heart ;
My Lord in the glory, Thou'rt ever before me,
I soon shall be with Thee, ah, never to part:

While here I await Thee, oh ! make me more like Thee,
That Thou in each thought and each action may'st shine ;
Oh ! keep mine eyes on Thee, nor let me stray from Thee,
Oh ! let me not wander, my Saviour Divine.

Tho' rough be the journey, Thou hast trod it before me,
Thou knowest each trial in this valley of tears ;
Thou art ever beside me, to guard and to guide me,
To share in my sorrows and banish my fears.

Thus daily I'm learning the world to be spurning,
Where Thou wast rejected my home could not be ;
As Thine 'twill reject me, but Thou dost protect me,
And safe in Thy keeping I ever shall be.

Tho' scorned here and slighted, to Thee I'm united,
And nothing can sever my soul from Thy love ;
The love that I'm tasting, each moment I'm hasting
Its fulness to prove in Thy presence above.

DUBLIN, JULY, 1868.

In Romans, man is looked upon as living in sins, and needing justification.

In Ephesians, man is looked on as dead in sins, and justification is not spoken of.

Hebrews is more contrast than comparison.

In passing through this world, we need the word and the priesthood—the word, to judge our conduct—the priesthood to support us.

The enjoyment of the consciousness that I know God depends on my walking with Him.

Holiness and truth are the characteristics of Christ.

In Rev. iii. 1, 2, what a strange thing! God saying they were dead and yet expecting perfect works!

If we have to wait for Christ, He has to wait; and we have only to wait until He has done waiting.

One of the characteristics of true faith is lasting out to the end: Saul's faith did not last, and he lost the kingdom.

Wherever there is conscious strength, there is real weakness: and wherever there is conscious weakness, there is real strength.

It is a dark world; but at night if I see a light, it is the nearest thing to me; so is Christ's coming.

The nearer you are to Christ, the more you will find out His greatness and your nothingness; the nearer you are to man, the more you will find out his weakness.

It is a great mistake to say you should not always be on the mount: it was after Paul came down from the mount he was in danger of being puffed up.

We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: the Jews were blessed with earthly blessings in the land.

The very things which Christ would have had to judge in us at the throne, God has judged Christ for at the cross.

The world ought to read Christ in us, just as they would the ten commandments on the two tables.

It is God's view of the Blood—not mine—which gives me peace ; I rest in His estimate of it—not mine.

“He shall go no more out”—he may have been cast out here below, but up there he shall go no more out, *i.e.*, when he shall have once come.

Does Christ's approbation satisfy your heart in going through this world ?

Quickening means nothing short of the impartation of divine life to the soul.

Quickening and sealing are different things, as much as building a house is different from coming and dwelling in it.

But there is no reason against a soul being quickened and at once sealed on his believing in the person and work of Christ, for the Holy Ghost is come down from heaven.

The terms on which souls get the Spirit is faith in the person and work of Christ.—J. N. D.

IN THE EVERLASTING ARMS.—As a child, when wearied with play, nestles in his mother's arms, and, without one lingering fear of danger, sweetly sleeps, so does the weary believer, when called to die, nestle with fearless confidence in the Everlasting Arms. What mother-love is to the confiding child, the all-embracing love of the Infinite One is to the dying Christian whose faith recognises the everlasting Father in the gracious face of the glorified Jesus. It was because Stephen's eye rested on that divine face, while he lay bleeding on the rough bed of martyrdom, that inspiration did not say he died—even that was too harsh a term—but that he “fell asleep.” O, beautiful conception of death ! Going into a soft, sweet sleep, which ends the sorrow and toils of earth, and is followed by a waking amidst the music, the bliss, the glory of heaven, and a beholding of the beauty and love of God in the face of Him who is the altogether lovely, the Son of Man, the Son of God—this is death.—*An Extract.*

BELOVED OF GOD.—*Rom. i. 7.*

Oh ! the wondrous joy of knowing
 God hath set His love on me ;
 Love eternal, ever flowing,
 All unhindered now, and free.

I, a rebel, death deserving,
 I, a sinner, in my sin,—
 He could set His love upon me,
 Give His Son my soul to win.

Yea, before that sin had entered,
 In the counsels of the past,
 He had set His love upon me,
 Love that must for ever last.

In the bosom of the Father
 Dwelt the well-beloved Son ;
 There 'twas planned to save, and gather
 Blood-bought sinners into one.

Blood bought ! who can tell how precious
 Purchased ones at such a cost ?
 Who can tell the heart so gracious,
 Thus to seek and save the lost !

Oh ! the riches of the wisdom !
 With the glory of His Son
 He hath linked my life for ever,
 Yes, with His exalted One

He hath made me one for ever.
 Oh ! the riches of His grace !
 Incomplete were He in glory,
 Were denied to me this place.

For in those eternal counsels
 I was given to His Son,
 Given to complete the glory
 Of the place that He hath won.

Thoughts of human worth ne'er enter
 Here, where only Christ is found,—
 Christ the Head, and Christ the Centre,
 Blessing flowing all around.

Wondering worlds shall there admire Him
 In the saints He loved so well,
 While those loved ones gathered round Him,
 "He is worthy" only tell.

What can I then do but praise Him,
 Who hath set His love on me,
 Lowly seek to learn more fully
 What this wondrous love must be?

H. S.

 HYMN FOR ABSENT FRIENDS.

Sung on H.M.S. Bacchante.—Tune, "Stephanos."

HOLY Father, in Thy mercy,
 Hear our anxious prayer ;
 Keep our loved ones, now far absent,
 'Neath Thy care.

Jesus, Saviour, let Thy presence
 Be their light and guide ;
 Keep, oh keep them, in their weakness,
 At Thy side.

When in sorrow, when in danger,
 When in loneliness,
 In Thy love look down and comfort
 Their distress.

May the joy of Thy salvation
 Be their strength and stay,
 May they love and may they praise Thee
 Day by day.

Let the Holy Spirit's teaching
 Sanctify their life ;
 Send Thy grace, that they may conquer
 In the strife.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
 God the One in Three,
 Bless them, guide them, save them, keep them
 Near to Thee.

Extract from "Cruise of the Bacchante."

A LITTLE ENQUIRY.

WHAT various departments of enquiry and knowledge there are in the fruitful and beautiful oracles of God! 2 Tim. iii. suggests this. There is the devotional, the prophetic, the practical, and the doctrinal. Each of us, it may be, has a tendency to nourish our souls with one or other of these, somewhat out of due proportion; and the character of our mind will form itself accordingly, and the character of our communion also.

Some of us may be known rather as orthodox, some as spiritual, some as practical, some as intelligent. Might we not pause for a moment, and ask, have we not been unduly feeding our souls with one or other of these meats from off the table, to the damage of the full health of the soul? And can this be discovered from the character of mind which prevails among us, and from the character of communion which our own souls have with the Lord and one with another? I believe this would be profitable; and is it so? Are the mind and the communion which have been produced among us (let me so express it) of so marked a character that we can discover from them the food we have been living on, and the air we have been breathing?

There is a variety of character among us, surely; we need not question that—it must needs be so, I might say—but still, is there not something prominent, something pervading? I believe there is; and I am disposed to express it in this way—that we have been looking more at our *social* than our *personal* standing, and cultivating *knowledge* rather than *devotion*. The result as to our communion one with another has been marked accordingly. We find, on social occasions, very generally points of enquiry, pointed and nice distinctions (correct also I allow) taken and discussed; but the exercises of the soul in conflict, or the experiences of the soul about the virtues of the “kingdom of God within us,” are less our material. We have

been wanting in "fervency of spirit," and have talked, and talked accurately, about truth, but have not *broken the heart over it* sufficiently.—*Simple Testimony*, vol. iii., May, 1847.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

GRACE.

R——, 4TH DEC., 1860.

DEAR H——,—We all want to know grace—the vastness of God's grace. God does everything; the creature is but dust and ashes. How can He take such pains with dust and ashes? Because, insignificant as we are, He gave us to His dear Son before the world was, to be jewels in His crown throughout eternity. And we shall be that, spite of everything. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we *shall* also bear the image of the heavenly." And who will get the praise then? Why, then, don't we give it Him now? Because we cannot afford to be "*nothing*" in our own eyes and those of others. Alas! that we should be so foolish. But His aim is to stain the pride of all glory but that of His Son. In Him we may glory, and we shall. "No love like His." It is a great thing to know, and to live in the memory of it, that ALL the fulness is in Him. God expects nothing from us saints, any more than from sinners. It is all in His Son. He does wish us to draw out of that sweet and flowing spring. Then, indeed, will the living water brighten our hearts and faces, and brighten those of others also. But it will be Christ, and not us. It will be "liberty." We are no more slaves, but sons—free, of the house for ever.

I have just finished Galatians, reading it for my own refreshment, and most full has it been. The absolute distinctness of *law* and *grace*, and the impossibility of commingling them. I am either under blessing or under curse; but it is indeed blessing—only blessing—blessing for ever.

26TH DEC., 1861.

Remember, dear ———, that God loves you *to begin with*, and that your ways *do not alter that*. O, no! He lets you feel the powerlessness of your will for good—not to upbraid, nor to discourage; but to say, “Now come and try Me: see if MY grace is not sufficient for *you*.” O, if we but believed that not one thing in our daily path but His love thinks of, and that it really does gladden our Father and our Lord to be referred to for help, or direction, or comfort, how sweetly we should get on. I commend you to God.

But do try to get your heart longing for the Word. You know what I mean. Only begin—set apart ten minutes, or twenty, for communion with Christ, and depend upon it, before a week is over you will be longing all day till the hour arrives. Try to begin with some thought of His love, and to remember that He has a *claim*, because of His blood, to your whole self—a happy, happy claim.

We need to learn *grace*. It is only known by knowing *myself* as the opposite, and that wholly; but all we discover, or ever will, does not alter *grace*. O, no; it only proves that it *is grace*.

But then, next comes *faith*. Experience ploughs up the soil; faith receives the precious seed of God's grace, even Christ—and O, what a fruitful seed is Christ in a prepared heart! What love, joy, peace, &c.! and what victory! Do you believe that we have NO strength? Then remember that the Holy Ghost is given to us to be our power. Leaning on Christ, by Him we can do all things.

J. R.

PEOPLE complain that there is so little outward power in their walk. Ah! that is because they are receiving so little from Christ.—G. V. W.

GOD'S DWELLING-PLACE.

“And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them; according to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.”—*Exodus xxv. 8, 9.*

“See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern which has been shewn to thee in the mountain.”—*Hebrews viii. 5.*

IN these words did Jehovah make known to Moses His desire to have a dwelling-place in the midst of the people whom He had redeemed. With love that many waters could not quench, “His delights were with the sons of men.” But where, in a world where every step was defiled by the serpent’s trail, could a spot be found suited to His holiness? No place less pure than the heaven of heavens would be a fitting habitation for Him before whose throne the cherubim hide their faces, and “rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.”

Moses is called up to the mount, and is instructed to set up a tabernacle, which should be a facsimile of heaven itself. The first thing that passes before his vision is the ark, with its mercy-seat, and the cherubim above upon it. “And there I will meet with thee; and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim.” It was His seat of authority and government in the midst of His people, but hidden within the veil. The golden altar of incense stood before it. The seven-branched golden lampstand, the table and the exposition of the twelve loaves, or shewbread, were seen in the mount; and after their pattern all was constructed. According to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did he. When all was finished, “the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”

Beautiful and perfect as were these earthly shadows of heavenly things, they have passed away; but their antitypical realities abide for ever. We shall find

every one of them in the heavenly sanctuary ; but, in their fulfilment, far exceeding the earthly type. "With boldness we enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which He has dedicated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh," and with unveiled face look upon the glory of the Lord. It is the joy of His heart to reveal to us beforehand by His Spirit "things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, which God hath prepared for them that love Him." In Rev. iv. 1 we are called up to view them.

When John, in Patmos, heard behind him a great voice as of a trumpet, he fell at His feet as dead ; but when, a second time, he hears the same first voice *talking* with him, he manifests no fear. It was the voice of the Lord Jesus he heard ; it was the Lord Jesus Himself who opened the door ("I am the way ;" "I am the door") ; the Lord Jesus Himself who said, "*I will shew thee.*" It is the delight of His heart, even now, to welcome every one who, by faith, desires to tread the golden street—and to point out to them the glories of His Father's house.

Entering by the opened door, the first thing He shews us is the unveiled and unclouded glory of the One who sat upon the throne—the invisible God, whom, personally, "no man hath seen or can see." In transparent brightness the glory shines out like a jasper and a sardius. All is encircled by a rainbow, "in sight like unto an emerald." "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about"—sign of His unchanging covenant with the earth in mercy (compare Ezek. i.).

Before proceeding further, the Lord turns directly to the object nearest to His heart, the company of the redeemed, fruit of the travail of His soul. Round about the throne were seated, in calm dignity, a company of royal priests, in the highest and nearest place to Himself that God could give them. It was meet

that they should fall down and worship, and cast their golden crowns before the throne, saying, "Thou art worthy."

As for the throne itself, it was all life and intelligence—a throne of cherubim. "In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living ones, full of eyes before and behind,—and they were full of eyes within." These cherubim, His instruments of judicial holiness, are first seen at the east of the garden of Eden, with a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. Next on the mercy-seat, looking down on the sprinkled blood; no flaming sword there. They were of one piece with the mercy-seat, as the four living creatures were one with the throne. Four were seen in Solomon's temple; two, of colossal size, stood upon their feet in the holy of holies. Underneath their wings, which extended the whole width of the house, was placed the ark of the covenant (2 Chron. iii. 10-13 and v. 7). In the vision of glory (Ezek. i.) the same cherubim, the same throne, the same glory, the same surroundings were seen by the prophet in the opened heavens. The worship, too, was similar. His throne has existed from all eternity, and will exist for ever, unchangeable as Himself. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." "Thy throne is established of old; Thou art from everlasting."

"And before the throne was a sea of glass like unto crystal." No washing of the feet was needed there: the laver was replaced by solid crystal purity.

"Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God." Not to give light by night, as in the tabernacle (in heaven is no night, no need of lamp or light of sun there), but as representing the consuming power of the Spirit of God in perfect development (Heb. xii. 29). All was lighted by the glory of God, "and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Shall we find the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat in this

paradise of God? "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing as slain." "Ye have come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,—and to the blood of sprinkling." In the midst of the four cherubim was the eternal memorial of the blood once presented for acceptance and put upon the mercy-seat; vindication of the righteousness of God, whose majesty demanded this propitiation as satisfaction for sins. It was God's lot—abiding witness of an humbled and suffering Christ. The elders, when they look upon the slain Lamb, raise the new redemption song, "Thou art worthy; Thou hast been slain, and hast redeemed to God by Thy blood," &c. The angels listen outside.

The veil which once concealed the ark in the tabernacle, and behind which the Godhead was hidden while He trod this earth in humiliation, is now withdrawn; we enter *through* the veil, that is to say His flesh, and gaze upon the brightness of that eternal glory He had with the Father before the world was.

There is food, too, for the heavenly inhabitants of this paradise of God. The tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, replaces the table of shewbread and its twelve loaves. The bread of God which once came down from heaven is seen in the midst of the throne, counterpart of the golden pot that had manna, once treasured up and hidden in the ark of the covenant—memorial of the wilderness journey: present food for our souls by faith; God's provision for His people whilst waiting for the Morning Star.

The absence of any allusion to the golden altar of incense is significant. As a means of approach to God it was no longer needed. For those who were enthroned in the holy of holies, high priestly intercession was ended, but was continued for suffering saints on earth, about to pass through the great tribulation. On the opening of the seventh seal (chap. viii.) there

is a short and solemn silence in heaven. Seven angels having seven trumpets stand before God, waiting His command. "And another angel (the great High-priest Himself) came and stood at the [brazen] altar, having a golden censer. And there was given unto Him much incense, that He might give [efficacy] to the prayers of all saints at the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints, out of the hand of the angel before God." On the sounding of the sixth, or second woe trumpet, "I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God" (ix. 13). Touching proof of His faithfulness and grace. While heaven and earth were being shaken, and judgments of a darkening and hellish character let loose upon men, He, ever patient and merciful, had remained standing at the golden altar, listening to the feeblest cry of those who were passing through the fiery trial.

Thus far we have seen the heavenly counterpart of all that was shewn to Moses in the mount; but no pattern of the heavenly Jerusalem, or of the Bride, the Lamb's wife, was he privileged to look upon. These heavenly visions were reserved for the followers of a rejected Christ. His own hand draws aside the veil which at present hides the coming glories. He invites us to "come and see" where He dwells. He will have us to stand upon the "great and high mountain," and thence to view the golden city, so that when called to enter, we shall be no strangers there. Again the scene changes. In the new heaven and the new earth, the holy city, New Jerusalem, is seen coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. "And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their God."

J. M.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

THE Bible is a book which has (so objectors tell us) been refuted, demolished, overthrown, and exploded more times than any other book you have ever heard of. Every little while somebody starts up and upsets this book; and it is like upsetting a solid cube of granite. It is just as big one way as the other; and when you have upset it, it is right side up, and when you overturn it again, it is right side up still. Every little while somebody blows up the Bible; and when it comes down again it always lights on its feet, and runs faster than ever through the world. They overthrew (?) the Bible a century ago—in Voltaire's time—entirely demolishing the thing, they said. "In less than a hundred years," said Voltaire, "Christianity will have been swept away from existence, and will have passed into history." Infidelity ran riot through France, red-handed and impious. A century has passed away, Voltaire has passed into history, and not very respectably, either; but his old printing-press, it is said, has since been used to print the Word of God; and the very house where he lived is packed with Bibles, a *depôt* for the Geneva Bible Society. Thomas Paine demolished the Bible, and finished it off finally; but after he had died a miserable death in 1809, the book took such a leap that since that time more than twenty times as many Bibles have been made and scattered through the world as ever were made before, since the creation of man.

I have heard of a man travelling around the country exploding this book and showing up "the mistakes of Moses," at about fifty pounds a night, especially as Moses is dead, and cannot talk back. It would be worth something after hearing the infidel on "the mistakes of Moses," to hear Moses on the mistakes of the infidel. When Moses could talk back, he was rather a difficult man to deal with. Pharaoh tried it,

and met with poor success. Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and it is said found a grave in the Red Sea. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram tried it, and went down so deep that they have not yet got back.

A young infidel was travelling in the West with his uncle, a banker, and they were not a little anxious for their safety when they were forced to stop for a night in a rough, wayside cabin. There were two rooms in the house; and when they retired for the night they agreed that the young man should sit with his pistols, and watch until midnight, and then awaken his uncle, who should watch until morning. Presently they peeped through the crack, and saw their host, a rough-looking old man, in his bear-skin suit, reach up and take down a book—a Bible; and after reading it awhile, he knelt and began to pray; and then the young infidel began to pull off his coat and get ready for bed. The uncle said, "I thought you were going to sit up and watch." But the young man knew there was no need of sitting up, pistol in hand, to watch all night long in a cabin that was hallowed by the Word of God, and consecrated by the voice of prayer. Would a pack of cards, a rum-bottle, or a copy of the *Age of Reason* have thus quieted this young infidel's fears?

When Lepaux, a member of the French Directory, complained to Talleyrand that his new religion, "Theophilanthropy," made little headway among the people, the shrewd old statesman replied—

"I am not surprised at the difficulty you find in your effort. It is no easy matter to introduce a new religion. But there is one thing I would advise you to do, and then, perhaps, you might succeed." "What is it? what is it?" eagerly asked Lepaux. "It is this," said Talleyrand; "go and be crucified, and then be buried, and then *rise again on the third day*, and then go on working miracles, raising the dead, and healing all manner of diseases, and casting out devils; and then it is possible that you may accomplish your end!"

The philosopher went away silent ; and no infidel has succeeded in fulfilling these conditions. But Christ has died, and has risen again, and the apostles suffered the loss of all things, even of life itself, wrought miracles in His name, and left their testimony on record in this Book. Then the apostles quote from the prophets, and the prophets quote from the Psalms, and refer to the Law which was given on Mount Sinai ; and so we go back from book to book, until we reach the book of Genesis, and that does not quote from anybody or anything. You have then reached the fountain-head.

Then there are certain things in the Bible which, to my mind, bear the impress of Divinity. Do you suppose that if the Bible had been written by some learned doctor, revised by a committee of eminent divines, and published by some great religious society, we should ever have heard of Noah's drunkenness, of Jacob's cheating, of Paul and Barnabas's dissension, or of Peter's lying, cursing, or dissembling ? Not at all. The good men, when they came to such an incident, would have said, " There is no use in saying anything about that. It is all past and gone ; it will not help anything, and it will only hurt the cause." If a committee of eminent divines had prepared the Bible you would have had a biography of men whose characters were patterns of piety and propriety, instead of poor sinners, as they were. Sometimes a man writes his own diary and happens to leave it for some one to print after he is dead ; but he leaves out all the mean tricks he ever did, and puts in all the good acts he can think of, and you read the pages, filled with astonishment, and think, " What a wonderfully good man he was !" But when the Almighty writes a man's life, He tells the truth about him ; and there are not many persons who would want their lives printed if *all* the truth were told.

We call this Bible a book ; but here are sixty-six different books, written by thirty or forty different

men. Each book bears its own witness, and stands by itself on its own merits; and yet each book is linked with all the rest. This book seems built to stay together; it is inspired by one Spirit.

The authorship of this book is wonderful. Here are words written by kings, by emperors, by princes, by poets, by sages, by philosophers, by fishermen, by statesmen; by men learned in the wisdom of Egypt, educated in the schools of Babylon, trained up at the feet of rabbis in Jerusalem. It was written by men in exile, in the desert, in shepherds' tents, in "green pastures," and beside "still waters." Among its authors we find the tax-gatherer, the herdsman, preachers, exiles, captains, legislators, judges, men of every grade and class are represented in this wonderful volume, which is in reality a *library* filled with history, genealogy, ethnology, law, ethics, prophecy, poetry, eloquence, medicine, sanitary science, political economy, and perfect rules for the conduct of personal and social life.

Suppose thirty or forty men should walk in through that door. One man comes from Maine, another from New Hampshire, another from Massachusetts, and so on from each state, each bearing a block of marble of peculiar shape. Suppose I pile up these blocks in order, until I have the figure of a man, perfectly symmetrical and beautifully chiselled, and I say, "How did these men, who have never seen each other, chisel out that beautiful statue?" You say, "That is easily explained. One man planned that whole statue, made the patterns, gave the directions, and distributed them around; and, so each man working by the pattern, the work fits accurately when completed." Very well. Here is a book coming from all quarters, written by men of all classes, scattered through a period of fifteen hundred years; and yet this book is fitted together as a wondrous and harmonious whole. How was it done? "Holy men of God spake as they were

moved by the Holy Ghost." One mind inspires the whole book, one voice speaks in it all, and it is the voice of God speaking with resurrection power.

Again, I conclude that this book has in it the very breath of God, from the effect that it produces upon men. There are men who study philosophy, astronomy, genealogy, geography, and mathematics; but did you ever hear a man say, "I was an outcast, a wretched inebriate, a disgrace to my race and a nuisance in the world, until I began to study mathematics, and learned the multiplication table, and then turned my attention to geology, got me a little hammer, and knocked off the corners of the rocks and studied the formation of the earth, and since that time I have been happy as the day is long; I feel like singing all the time; my soul is full of triumph and peace; and health and blessing have come to my desolate home once more?" Did you ever hear a man ascribe his redemption and salvation from intemperance and sin and vice to the multiplication table, or the science of mathematics or geology? But I can bring you, not one man, or two, or ten, but men by the thousand who will tell you, "I was wretched; I was lost; I broke my poor old mother's heart; I beggared my family; my wife was heart-stricken and dejected; my children fled from the sound of their father's footsteps; I was ruined, reckless, helpless, homeless, until I heard the words of that Book;" and he will tell you the very word which fastened on his soul. It may be it was, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" perhaps it was, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" it may have been, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He can tell you the very words that saved his soul.—*H. L. Hastings, Boston, U.S.A.*

PRAYER: ITS CHARACTER AND OCCASIONS.

IT is clear from the Word of God that prayer is the natural expression and characteristic vehicle of dependence. And to a really subject heart, dependence and the habitual recognition of it are alike congenial. Nor are they only this, but are good and acceptable with God. Truly, there can be no prayer unless there be dependence, nor true dependence unless there be humility. And humility before God is that which He sets a high value upon, as therein alone do we take our true place before Him. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Prayer is, moreover, the language of faith, and without faith it is impossible to please Him; for "he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Thus, "Behold, he prayeth," marked that Saul of Tarsus was a believer. God, then, is honoured by our faith and dependence; and God honours their exercise as the constant expression—which prayer really is—of our according to Him His true place, and accepting from Him our own place as His creatures, redeemed by His grace, and established in that true dependence before Him which will be unchanging for eternity.

Now prayer may be distinguished as (1) that of the individual—private prayer; (2) that of the household—family prayer; (3) that of the saints—assembly prayer. Each has its distinct place, and is of equal importance with the rest. Where is the individual, where is the family, where is the assembly that could afford to dispense with its season of prayer, its occasion of prostration before God in a spirit of self-

humiliation and creature-dependence? To neglect any one of these exercises is not only to imperil the blessing of our own souls, but to grieve that Holy Spirit of God who maketh intercession for the saints according to God.

How can we neglect private prayer without losing touch of the God of our salvation, and thus growing lean in our own souls, spiritually impoverished, and stunted in growth? How can we neglect family prayer, and not experience damage in our own families? Family prayer gives the Lord His place in the home circle—its joys and its sorrows; and we firmly believe that we can *never* neglect family prayer without the household becoming demoralised, and the whole tone and character of domestic life being seriously damaged. And equally so is it impossible for saints to neglect to avail themselves of the meetings of the assembly for prayer and supplication without inflicting injury upon themselves, which nothing else can compensate or remedy. God is a jealous God, and is entitled to *claim* from us that which is here contended for; but how much happier is it when we find it so necessary and so happy an exercise of soul, that we are drawn into the presence of God as a child is drawn to the breast of its mother.

If saints were more impressed with the reality of the presence of God in our midst, the attraction to a heart truly delighting itself in Him would be irresistible. What could be more emphatic than the language of Matt. xviii. 10? "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." How cheering is the encouragement here ministered by the blessed Lord to His saints on earth. "My Father," He seems to say, "waits upon you! His ear is open to you! Only agree about what you want, and come together as gathered unto

My name, and I Myself will be in your midst, and that which ye ask shall be done for you!"

Why do we know so little of communion with the Father and the Son ; why is our worship so defective ; why is our walk with God of so halting a character, but because we are so little and so seldom truly cast upon God ? It is when we are bowing before Him that the things we do and say, our conduct, habits, feelings, thoughts get their true character, and become exposed to ourselves, and how much more to Him ? Nor can anything tend more beneficially to their correction than the discovery how uneasy we are while we are looking at them in the act and attitude of prayer, with His eyes only, as it were.

A word or two may be needed as to prayer in the assembly. Surely if it be corporate prayer, the prayer of saints for what they alike feel to be their need, and about which they are agreed, it will be expressed audibly. Silence in the prayer meeting, if long protracted, only tells the tale of individualisation ; for if there be unity, there should be the outspoken expression of it, and not merely individual hearts, however many, uplifted to God. *This* is blessed, and should be habitual, as to which says the Apostle, "Pray without ceasing." But when we come together, it is not for silence, and much less that we may each privately, in the solitude of his own thoughts, commune with God, but that we may *pour out* our wants to Him, making known our requests, as unitedly led of the Holy Ghost, in outward and audible expression. Each heart should in that way be carried along in the current of the Holy Ghost, by the utterances of him who is the mouthpiece not of himself, but of all. How happy is it when the Father hears the well-known voices of one after another of His children, pleading with Him for His blessing. All will acknowledge that, in the liberty of a family circle, it is often the voices of the youngest and the feeblest which have most melody to the parents' ear.

Nor is the attitude of prayer unimportant. How grievous is it to observe that, in many a meeting for prayer, three-fourths, not to say more, of those present, even when many of them are young persons, never rise from their seats to assume that attitude which expresses deep prostration of heart toward God. We may not uncharitably suggest that those who, while physically capable of kneeling, prefer the more comfortable position of occupying their seats, can know but little of that real bowing of heart and soul before God which the act and attitude of prostration suitably expresses. "I bow *my knees*," says the apostle (Eph. iii. 14).

One other character of prayer may be named, that which is ejaculatory. It is the sudden, unforced, and impulsive lifting of the heart to God at any moment, and in the midst of any engagement, because we know we are in the secret of His presence, and have liberty to address Him—the One who gives heed to every true appeal to Himself, however unstudied and undesigned be its character, and however informal its exercise. If in the freshness and power of real communion with the Father and the Son, in an instinctive consciousness of nearness to God, its reality will not be marred by want of reverence, nor will its impulsiveness diminish its value to the heart of our Father and our God.

But why, it is asked, do you not use "the Lord's prayer"? Because, we reply, we are *not* the Lord. His prayer is found in John xvii.—that marvellous epitome of His precious thoughts towards His saints, and the deep desires of His heart for them, right onward until the glory is reached. You may be right in that, says the objector, but what I refer to is the prayer in Matt. vi. and Luke xi. which He taught to His Jewish disciples. Why do you not use that? In like manner we answer, because we are *not* His Jewish disciples. We are Christian believers, saints by calling. Lovely and suitable to its season, as

everything is which comes from God, that prayer was beautifully fitted for the lips of disciples just emerging from the shadows of Judaism. It conducted their hearts, while in the transition state between Judaism and Christianity, into an apprehension of the Fatherhood of Him whom they addressed—His bounty and His goodness, His protecting care, the fitness of subjection to His will, the forgiveness of injuries, and the recognition of His authority and His glory. But the distinctive elements of Christianity are not found in it. Atonement ; redemption by the blood of Christ ; justification before God and eternal life known ; the presence of the Holy Ghost ; the Lord's coming ; and eternal glory together with Him in the Father's house—*where are these ?* Christianity dates from Pentecost (Acts ii.), and referring to His own departure that the Holy Ghost might come, the Lord says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in My name*, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing *in My name*: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Now in the prayer referred to there is no mention of the Holy Ghost, nor of the Lord Himself, His name, His person, His work on earth, His intercession, His coming glory. Thus it is not, and cannot be, the asking in His name which the Lord inculcated upon us.

Where then shall we find true Christian prayer? We answer, in the prayers interspersed in the Acts and epistles—especially in Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Thessalonians. True prayer is the spontaneous utterance in faith toward God of a heart moved by the Holy Ghost, and necessarily the Holy Ghost will lead the heart according to the revelation which God has given of Himself, His counsels, and His ways.

May the Lord in His grace make us "instant in prayer," abounding therein with thanksgiving. Do we want blessing for our own souls? Do we want blessing in our families? Do we want blessing for the

Church of God? Prayer in the closet, prayer in the family, prayer in the assembly is God's own blessed provision; the pathway of every blessing from above.

PLAIN WORDS ON JUSTIFICATION.

THAT was a grave question that was propounded by one of the ancients to the patriarch Job more than three thousand years ago, "How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" And as it has lost none of its interest by the lapse of centuries, we may fittingly inquire, (1) Is there such a thing as justification with God? Evidently Bildad the Shuhite (Job xxv.) would have inclined to a negative answer; for he proceeds, in language not a little pathetic, "Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in His sight. How much less mortal man, that is a reptile? and the son of Adam, who is a worm?" And if we turn to the words of the psalmist David, we find (cxliii. 2) that he speaks in a similar strain, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." Happily we live in the meridian light of the New Testament; and as we consult its pages we are at no loss to discover the true answer to our question. That wonderful third of Romans that stops every mouth, and proves every man guilty before God, adds further, that by "deeds of law shall no flesh be justified in His sight." We are consequently forbidden to marvel that the Shuhite of patriarchal days, and the psalmist in Israel's palmier times, should alike—knowing nothing beyond the flesh and the law—conclude there was no justification before God. For us, on the contrary, how blessed it is to find that when the apostle summarily describes man's condition and guilt in the brief words, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," it is but a preparatory clearing of the

ground for the gracious assertion that follows in the same breath, "Being *justified freely* by His grace." We read also in Gal. iii., "The Scripture foreseeing that God *would justify* the heathen." And again, in Rom. viii., "Whom He called, them He also *justified.*" These then being God's words, we need not multiply proofs that there *is* such a thing as justification before God.

Let us now inquire, (2) Who is the justifier? In the nature of things justification involves a justifier. Who then is this justifier? Again we turn to Rom. iii., and in verse 26 read those blessed words, "To declare at this time His (God's) righteousness; that He might be just, and *the justifier* of him that believeth in Jesus." So also in Rom. viii. 30, "Whom He (God) called, them *He also justified.*" God, then, is the Justifier, and the importance of this can scarcely be overstated; for whom He justifies must be justified indeed! It is no fallible work, marked and marred by human imperfection, but an altogether divine thing of incontestable and immutable value for eternity. The magnitude and grandeur of this piece of divine truth fired the heart of the apostle when he exclaimed, "*It is God* that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?"

We prefer as our next inquiry, (3) Who are they who are justified? For if there be such a thing as justification, and, as we have found, God Himself the Justifier, it is of importance for us to understand whom He justifies. Again we turn to Rom. iii. 26, and read there the conclusive words, that He is "the justifier of him that *believeth in Jesus.*" Nothing could be more plain. It is the believer, and the believer only, whom God justifies. We do not hesitate to say that no person can possibly know what it is to be justified who is not a believer in that blessed One—the Man of Calvary once, but the Man of Glory for ever! But perhaps it will be answered, that in the next chapter we read of God justifying "the ungodly." Perfectly true, but not in his ungodliness; for it

instantly adds, "*his faith* is counted for righteousness," from which it is clear that the word describes his state up to the time when he became a believer, and accordingly—not as then ungodly, but as then a believer—God justified him. This word "ungodly" then describes man's state by nature, and that is fully unfolded in the fifth chapter, where three expressions are used descriptive of our natural condition. In the sixth verse, "without strength;" in the eighth verse, "sinners;" and in the tenth, "enemies." The first of these terms is negative, man is *powerless* for good works; the next is positive, he is practically an evil worker, a *sinner*; the last is worst of all, he has a heart whose inmost springs are at *enmity* with God. This was clearly proved when Christ was here on earth; for God Himself was manifest in the flesh, and dwelt among us in perfect love to man, and was hated without a cause. He was the song of the drunkard, and for His love they gave Him hatred. *Such is man!* Nevertheless, blessed for ever be His name, "By Him *all that believe* are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." *Such is God!*

But it is time we address ourselves to the question, (4) What is justification? Refer, please, to Rom. iv. 3 for God's answer to our inquiry: "Abraham believed God, and it was *counted unto him for righteousness.*" Again, in verse 5: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is *counted for righteousness.*" And also in verse 9: "Faith was *reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.*" The simple answer then is that justification is judicial righteousness; in other words, God's accounting or adjudging us to be righteous before Himself—on what ground we shall see by-and-by. At present we must be clear as to the thing itself, and would emphatically impress upon the reader's mind this simple, but profoundly important truth, that justification signifies the being accounted by God and before God to be

judicially righteous, which is the positive, absolute, and changeless standing of the believer now and eternally. This, and this only, is justification. Thus it is not merely pardon or forgiveness, which is rather of a negative character, but a positive state of accomplished and ever-subsisting righteousness in Christ before God that we are already brought into by God's own act, as the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Here let it be noted, parenthetically, that Scripture gives no support to the thought that Christ's practical righteousness in His holy, blameless life on earth, than which nothing down here was ever so divinely perfect in moral beauty, is accredited to our account for justification. That He magnified the law, and put honour upon it in His own person, is fully admitted; but nothing found in Scripture gives countenance to the mistaken notion that this was imputed to us; in other words, to the theological dogma of "imputed righteousness." The Scriptural doctrine of righteousness imputed signifies, if Scripture alone is to determine, simply and solely that we are accounted to be righteous apart from law-keeping as to the principle of it (Rom. iii. 21), and apart from works of any kind practically (Rom. iv. 5). It is our judicial standing, which is signified by this imputation of righteousness, and upon this ground alone, that "we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. iv. 24); the character of it being, not that law-keeping (which was never really required of Gentiles), or other good works done by Christ, are put to our account, which would be to make the life of Christ a vicarious thing, and thus utterly to disturb and distort His relations to God—but that, as to sin and death and judgment, "as He *is*" (the glorified Man in the presence of God), "so *are* we in this world." This is the Scriptural doctrine of the imputation of righteousness, and beautifully exhibits the divine character of our justification.

Further, let us inquire, (5) What is it by which we are justified? Rom. iv. 25 teaches that Jesus our Lord was raised for our justifying; chap. v. 1, that we are justified on the principle of faith; and, verse 9, that we are justified in the power of His blood. Each of these verses helps us to gather up an answer. In its intrinsic character our justification is according to the value of the blood of Christ to God; by that alone are we justified *Godward*; and according to its priceless worth is the character of our acceptance and standing in His holy presence. But looked at *manward*, it is by faith; *i.e.*, we get it on that principle and not on the principle of works. And practically we are not, and cannot be, justified until faith has been exercised by us. Thus we read in the peculiarly incisive language of chap. iv. 5, "To him that worketh not, but *believeth* on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Accordingly Abraham, undistinguished for works but pre-eminent for his faith, is presented as the pattern of a justified man. Again, it is in direct connection with resurrection—the resurrection of Christ. He was raised, we read, for our justification; and unless we have part in His resurrection we are not justified. God is our Justifier, and the risen Christ in His presence is our representative in justification, the expression of that state of ever-subsisting accomplished righteousness in which we are set as God's justified ones in virtue of His death (2 Cor. v. 21).

Lastly, let us ask, (6) What are the results of it? The verses we were just now looking at supply the final answer. First, our sins (offences) are all gone; for the One who was thus raised had been delivered for them; *i.e.*, on account of them and for their putting away, and He having been raised up they can no longer have a place before the God who has righteously dealt with them, that He might be just, and yet have the joy of being Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Second, having been justified, we have peace

with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace is eternally established between us and Himself! Third, "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." The first has to do with the *past*, for my sins were blotted out by His blood; the next with the *present*, for it is now that I have peace with God; and the last with the *future*, for the wrath is the wrath to come; and I am assured, on divine testimony, that I am so cleared before God, and so accepted and established in love, that I am entitled to "have boldness in the day of judgment" (1 John iv. 17).

How wonderful in every point of view is our justification before God! The Lord give us a truly Scriptural apprehension of it, "to the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He hath made us *accepted in the Beloved.*"

"WITH MY SONG WILL I PRAISE HIM."

"Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Cor. i. 7.

Everlasting glory be,
Christ our Saviour, unto Thee;
Everlasting praise be giv'n
Now on earth as soon in heav'n.

"Thou art worthy," oft we sing,
Grateful tribute thus we bring;
Sweet it is to raise the voice,
While before Thee we rejoice.

High would we exalt Thy name,
Wide would we Thy grace proclaim;
Trace Thy footsteps here below
As we to the glory go.

While we wait Thy face to see,
More and more would like Thee be,
For our hearts within us burn,
Counting on Thy sure return.

Thou art coming, well we know,
Thou art coming, we would show;
Soon Thy shout shall call us hence,
Far above the things of sense.

Saviour, come, our hearts exclaim;
Come I will, Thy words proclaim:
We shall see Thee face to face,
When Thy glory crowns Thy grace!

Hosannas, then, shall fill the skies,
Hosannas everywhere arise;
And all creation shall prolong
Its universal, happy song.

Do not hide your face from any difficulty. Look at it in the face, but see it in the light of the face of Christ.

"DOWN-GRADE."

READ those newspapers which represent the Broad School of Dissent, and ask yourself, How much farther could they go? What doctrine remains to be abandoned? What other truth to be the object of contempt? A new religion has been initiated, which is no more Christianity than chalk is cheese; and this religion, being destitute of moral honesty, palms itself off as the old faith with slight improvements, and on this plea usurps pulpits which were erected for gospel preaching. The atonement is scouted, the inspiration of Scripture is derided, the Holy Spirit is degraded into an influence, the punishment of sin is turned into fiction, and the resurrection into a myth, and yet these enemies of our faith expect us to call them brethren, and maintain a confederacy with them!

Too many ministers are toying with the deadly cobra of "another gospel," in the form of "modern thought." As a consequence, their congregations are thinning: the more spiritual of their members join the "Brethren," or some other company of "believers unattached;" while the more wealthy, and show-loving, with some of unquestionable devoutness, go off to the Church of England.

The case is mournful. Certain ministers are making infidels. Avowed atheists are not a tenth as dangerous as those preachers who scatter doubt and stab at faith. A plain man told us the other day that two ministers had derided him because he thought we should pray for rain. A gracious woman bemoaned in my presence that a precious promise in Isaiah which had comforted her had been declared by her minister to be uninspired. It is a common thing to hear working-men excuse their wickedness by the statement that there is no hell, "the parson says so." But we need not prolong our mention of painful facts. Germany was made unbelieving by her preachers, and England is following in her track. Attendance at

places of worship is declining, and reverence for holy things is vanishing; and we solemnly believe this to be largely attributable to the scepticism which has flashed from the pulpit and spread among the people. Possibly the men who uttered the doubt never intended it to go so far; but none the less they have done the ill, and cannot undo it.

A student from a certain college preached to a congregation such a sermon that the deacon said to him in the vestry, "Sir, do you believe in the Holy Ghost?" The youth replied, "I suppose I do." To which the deacon answered, "I suppose you do *not*, or you would not have insulted us with such false doctrine." A little plain speaking would do a world of good just now. These gentlemen desire to be let alone. They want no noise raised. Of course thieves hate watch-dogs, and love darkness. It is time that somebody should spring his rattle, and call attention to the way in which God is being robbed of His glory, and man of his hope.

It now becomes a serious question how far those who abide by the faith once delivered to the saints should fraternize with those who have turned aside to another gospel. Christian love has its claims, and divisions are to be shunned as grievous evils; but how far are we justified in being in confederacy with those who are departing from the truth? It is a difficult question to answer so as to keep the balance of the duties. For the present it behoves believers to be cautious, lest they lend their support and countenance to the betrayers of the Lord. It is one thing to overleap all boundaries of denominational restriction for the truth's sake: this we hope all godly men will do more and more. It is quite another policy which would urge us to subordinate the maintenance of truth to denominational prosperity and unity. Numbers of easy-minded people wink at error so long as it is committed by a clever man and a good-natured brother, who has so many fine points about him. Let

each believer judge for himself; but, for our part, we have put on a few fresh bolts to our door, and we have given orders to keep the chain up; for under colour of begging the friendship of the servant, there are those about who aim at robbing THE MASTER.

We fear it is hopeless ever to form a society which can keep out men base enough to profess one thing and believe another; but it might be possible to make an informal alliance among all who hold the Christianity of their fathers. Little as they might be able to do, they could at least protest, and as far as possible free themselves of that complicity which will be involved in a conspiracy of silence. If for a while the evangelicals are doomed to go down, let them die fighting, and in the full assurance that their gospel will have a resurrection when the inventions of "modern thought" shall be burned up with fire unquenchable.—*C. H. Spurgeon, in "Sword and Trowel."*

LETTERS OF COMMENDATION.

"AND when he (Apollos) was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him."—Acts xviii. 27.

"As also the high-priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren."—Acts xxii. 5.

"And they said unto him (Paul), we neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee."—Acts xxviii. 21.

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also."—Rom. xvi. 1, 2.

“Now, if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also.”—1 Cor. xvi. 10.

“Need we, as some, epistles of commendation to you, or of commendation from you?”—2 Cor. iii. 1.

“Whether as regards Titus, [he is] my companion and fellow-labourer on your behalf, or our brethren, [they are] deputed messengers of assemblies, Christ’s glory. Shew therefore to them, before the assemblies, the proof of your love, and of our boasting about you.”—2 Cor. viii. 23, 24.

“But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose.”—Eph. vi. 21, 22.

“Receive him [Epaphroditus] therefore in the Lord with all gladness: and hold such in reputation.”—Phil. ii. 29.

“Marcus, sister’s son to Barnabas; (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him.)”—Col. iv. 10.

“I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: who in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me; whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him that is mine own bowels.”—Philemon x. 12. J. M.

THE WORD OF GOD.

A garden of delights
Is Thy sweet word;
And day by day I find
It sweeter, Lord;
For there are healing herbs,
And sweetest balm
To soothe all wounds of mine
With blessed calm.

From flower to flower I fly,
Like honey bee,
And rifle nectared sweets,
There stored for me;
And there, Thy manna falls
From day to day;
My food, my solace, Lord,
My strength and stay.

Extracted.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

RYDE, —, 1858.

DEAR —, I shall begin with "The Song of Songs," the first chapter of which a few of us read together this evening after tea at the house of a brother, and in which I would note one or two points. I shall merely indicate what I have found, which you will have yourself to go and see.

It is only what we glean for ourselves in Scripture that will abide with us. If we are in the habit of saying, "Give us of your oil," most surely "our lamps will go out;" but every Scripture in which we have found Jesus for ourselves will be like a "golden pipe," conveying a perennial stream of holy oil from the fountain to our gladdened spirits. Then we can say, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God," &c.; and as in the fifty-second Psalm, we can challenge all the power of the enemy, in all its subtilty and seeming prosperity, and say, God will root thee out of the land of the living, because he makes not "God his strength;" and add, "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever." What holy triumph there is there, and that against Antichrist! So in the eleventh Psalm, "In the Lord put I my trust." That settles everything.

One thing I would note is this, that whilst in the beginning of the Song at least, the bride sings most of it, yet it is the Song of Solomon. He made it for her to sing. What grace there is here! To put words of endearment and love in our cold hearts toward Himself, and words of such affection! But the truth is, in the Song Christ is awakening the affections of His bride, by the most endearing titles, and then putting words in her mouth by which to express them.

We should be afraid of such intimacy, as if it were not for us—too much to be dreamt of—but He brings

us into the atmosphere of His own affections, and so surrounds us with them, aye, and clothes us with His own comeliness as love ever does its objects, so that we forget ourselves as the bride here, in the joy of His presence.

The name of Jesus is very sweet, but it is when the Spirit pours forth the precious ointment (chap. i. 3) that the affections are attracted towards Him. Paul alludes to this verse, I think, in 2 Cor. iii. 14, in which we have a burst of holy exultation on the mere mention of Titus, who brought him the good news of the blessed fruits of his first letter to the Corinthians. Thus the very effort of the enemy to upset the saint, and hinder Christ's glory, turned in the hands of God into an occasion of signal triumph, so that the sweet savour of the knowledge of His Christ was made manifest by Him through Paul in every place; and in this Paul was satisfied, if Christ was but magnified, no matter how, whether by life or by death.

Moreover, Paul shared in the triumph, for the force of the verse is, "Who leadeth us about in triumph in Christ." So that if we are only bound up in this bundle with Christ, we are sure of triumphs even now, for God is making manifest the savour of His knowledge in every place. Thus our joy can never fail, if it is found in the glory of Jesus. That is the grand purpose of God—now in a hidden way, by and by before all worlds.

Here also, we see the importance of having the end in view, if there is to be any steady running of the race; and not that alone, but the kisses of His mouth day by day (ver. 2).

In verse 4 of the Song, there is a well-known, but often practically forgotten truth, viz., that it is by the drawing of Christ Himself that we run after Him. The flesh profiteth *nothing*. How slow to learn that it will never follow Christ or please God—indeed, cannot. It is only in the power of the Spirit that we run after Him. If we only remembered that we are

dead, and that our springs are in Him, what rest it would give! Then it would be God on whom all the responsibility would devolve, and we should see that the pathway in which He leads is one in which only He can walk. As to this remark, the Psalm of triumph, "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?" God was then making a way for His chosen, lighting up the path of death with the glory of His presence, so that the sea fled at His rebuke.

I think the blackness of ver. 5 is that from persecution, as explained in ver. 6, and not that of nature. It is the external appearance in the eyes of those who know not the thoughts of the Lord; but comely she was in His sight, "all glorious within"—even now in her blackness, as she will then be in all her gold and glorious array. For she had lien among the pots, but soon He will call her forth from her lurking-place, and then His dove will be resplendent with glory, her wings with silver and her feathers bright with yellow gold. "Now are we the sons of God;" "therefore the world knoweth us not."

And here I would remark, that the Bride in the Song is without doubt the earthly bride of Psalm xlv. and of Isaiah—now "not beloved," and afar off. But the Church, the heavenly Bride, meantime enters into the affections and joys here portrayed, inasmuch as the relationship is the same in both cases, though the sphere and circumstances of the consummation be different.

God grant us the bride's desire to be ever with her beloved (ver. 7), and to remember that He is found by the shepherd's tents, the footsteps of the flock marking the way.

J. R.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF THE SON OF GOD SHED WITHOUT THE GATES OF JERUSALEM FOR THE REDEMPTION OF LOST AND UNDONE SINNERS.

(By that eminent divine, Mr. John Hayward, 1697, 7th edition).

WHEN the Lord Jesus was teaching and preaching on earth, all His doctrine was holy, just, and good ; milk for the weak, meat for the strong, medicine for the sick ; not too deep for the simple, nor too shallow for the wise, but as a ford wherein the lamb may wade and the elephant swim.

When our Saviour begun His passion in the garden of Gethsemane, He was accompanied with those three disciples who, not long before, had seen His glorious transfiguration upon Mount Tabor, to the end that, seeing so great a change, they might be sensible both of the greatness of God's love and of His severity. O Treasure of heaven ! O Light and Life of the world ! How was His glory obscured ! His strength abated ! His courage appalled ! insomuch that He did acknowledge to His disciples that His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death.

Sure never was any garden thus watered, never ground thus wet. Adam might moisten the earth with the sweat of his brows, but never was it moistened but at that time with a bloody sweat. It was not then the executioners did torment Him with whips, they did not then press a crown of thorns upon His head ; it was not the nails nor the spear that then did pierce Him, but it was our offences ; for then were *represented* to Him sins past and to come, which to Him who bears so great a love and zeal to the honour of His Father, could not but be an unspeakable sorrow and trouble.

Then, also, was presented to Him the most terrible sight in the world, the great fury of Him before whose majesty even when He is not moved to wrath the angels cover their faces, the mountains sweat, the earth trembleth, the sea flieth ; before Whom, if He

appear as Judge, no creature can stand ; and verily if the wrath of God against one sinner for one sin be termed *Unquenchable fire, A worm that dieth not, Wailing and gnashing of teeth*, what words can the wisdom of men devise to represent the *terribleness* of that judgment that was against Him who was to drink off the whole cup of wrath ? And if He had left one drop, if He had not drank up the very dregs, we had not been excused from eternal damnation. He took this cup of wrath, which had no mixture of mercy in it. He did lay upon our shoulders a light burden and a sweet yoke ; but we have laid on Him an unmerciful load, which none but Himself was able to bear. No element is heavy in its proper place ; and therefore, as one that diveth into the water feeleth not the weight of the water which is above, so he that is plunged in the depth of his sins has no sense how heavy they are, because sin is there in its natural place. But sin on our Saviour was out of its proper place and above its sphere, and therefore lay the more grievously upon Him.

Thine eyes, holy Father, were fixed upon the cross, without which Thy justice couldst not be satisfied nor appeased. Thou hadst before ordained that death, which was a curse belonging to sin, must also be the punishment of Thy Son ; that the devil that prevailed by a tree should also be by a tree subdued. May we in all things be made conformable to Thy will, and may we both safely and sweetly pass from the society we have with Thee here by grace to the society which the saints enjoy with Thee in glory.

O the love of the Lord Jesus was great when He came to redeem those that were lost ! Being sold at the price of thirty pieces of silver, as no means is thought bad enough to bring Him to His death, so to undervalue the Lord of all creatures, as not many beasts are sold at so base a price ! sold to such cruel merchants as desire no profit by Him but His life, the traitor, Judas, came unto Him, attended with a bloody

band: and how willing our Saviour was to embrace His passion did appear by His voluntary presenting Himself to them, and in that He turned not away His face from this barbarous beast that came to kiss Him. Our Saviour did not only permit *Judas* to kiss Him, but He did also smite his obstinate heart with this soft speech, "Friend, wherefore comest thou? dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" for if he could have said, without despair, with holy David, "I have sinned," he should presently have heard, "I have forgiven." If our Saviour had kissed *Judas*, he should never have despaired or destroyed himself, for His kisses inspire life; and therefore the Spouse beginneth the most excellent canticle with these words (Cant. i. 2): "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth." 1 John iv. 10: It is He that hath loved us first. Ephes. i. 4: It is He that hath chosen us, and not we Him. Or if *Judas* had kissed Him as the Psalmist speaks of (Psalm ii. 12), "Kiss the Son lest He be angry;" that is, if with sincerity of soul he had rendered Him that faith and homage that is due to Him, it had gone well with him; but because he was like one of those whom the prophet speaks of (Isa. xxix.), This people draw near Me with their mouths, but their hearts are far from Me; because he came with a treacherous hypocrisy, this kiss could draw no virtue from Him, but turned to his condemnation. O cursed cruelty—cursed because obstinate, cruel because unjust—which neither the power of a miracle was able to astonish, nor the kindness of a benefit could any way appease. But they proceeded, notwithstanding, to lay sacrilegious hands upon Him, as upon a malefactor, to bind His holy hands (which had wrought so many miracles among them) with rough and knotty cords, His disciples either forsaking of Him or falling off from Him, and to lead Him away in a more opprobrious manner than the ark of the testimony was taken and carried away by the uncircumcised Philistines. Poor and miserable Jews, whom do you thus

hale away? Against whom have you taken up arms? Your prisoner hath made you captives; He whom you have bound with cords hath chained you with fetters of iron; He hath been to you as a bait, or a hook that taketh the takers. Never was force so unfortunately applied; never was prey so impossible to be held, for He soon got out of your hands. You came with torches and lanthorns to apprehend the Sun of Truth, but you would not see His glorious light, therefore you remain the blindest people in the world.

But what folly is this, O ye Jews: how far is it beyond all folly, to carry Him with bands of men that went of His own accord? Into whose brain could it sink, that He would break away that went voluntarily Himself? He that hath power to give life unto the dead, could He not have kept Himself in life? He that delivered others from devils, could He not have delivered Himself from you? Assure yourselves such was His infinite charity, wherewith He goeth to the cross to meet wrath and redeem, that you should have more to do to keep Him in life than you have to carry Him to His death. He had not redeemed us if His death had been forced upon Him; if His sacrifice had not been voluntary it had not been satisfactory; we could not have been saved by His obedience unto death, if He had not died of His own accord; and therefore His Father having given and He accepted of the sentence of death, He used no means to escape; for He was not driven by force, but drawn to it by His obedience to His Father and love to us. There is no man that fears death but he whom death is able to kill. But death had no such power over the Son of God, for He did voluntarily lay down His soul, even when He would Himself. O senseless Jews! He that was to bury so many figures, to fulfil so many prophecies, to accomplish so great a business for the whole world, to what end should He run from you?

By all this you may see what base abuse was offered

to the Son of God. Certainly, if it had not been the will of His Father and of Himself, it had been better that mankind should have rotted in their own corruption, than that infinite Virtue, perfect Felicity, the true Glory, the eternal Word and Wisdom of the Father, should be so basely and vilely abused by those sons of *Belial*. But since it was His pleasure, because by this way He would manifest His love, it is our part to accept it with thankful hearts, and with reverence both to love, honour, and praise Him for the same.—
Extract.

THE BLOOD OF ATONEMENT.—*Num.* xix. 4.

IN the sevenfold sprinkling of the blood of the red heifer, before the tabernacle of the congregation, we have a figure of the perfect *presentation of the blood of Christ to God*, as the only ground of the *meeting place* between God and the conscience. The number "seven," as has frequently been observed, is expressive of perfection; and in the figure before us, we see the perfection attaching to the death of Christ, as an atonement for sin, PRESENTED TO and ACCEPTED BY God. All rests upon this ground. The blood has been shed, and presented to a holy God, as a perfect atonement for sin. This, when simply received by faith, must relieve the conscience from all sense of guilt. There is nothing before God but the perfection of the atoning work of Christ. Sin has been judged, and put away. It has been completely obliterated by the precious blood of Christ. To believe this is to enter into perfect repose of conscience.

Christian reader, anxious enquirer, does it not seem strange that, when the word of God presents to our view Christ seated at the right hand of God, in virtue of accomplished atonement, we should be, virtually, in no wise better off than those who had merely a human priest standing daily ministering, and offering the same round of sacrifices? We have a divine Priest

who has sat down for ever. They had a merely human priest, who could never, in his official capacity, sit down at all ; and are we, then, in the state of the mind, in the apprehension of the soul, in the actual condition of the conscience, in no respect better off than they? Can it be possible that, with a perfect work to rest upon, our souls should never know perfect rest? The Holy Ghost, as we have seen in these numerous quotations taken from the epistle to the Hebrews, has left nothing unsaid to satisfy our souls as to the question of the complete putting away of sin by the precious blood of Christ. Why, then, should you not this moment enjoy full, settled peace of conscience? Has the blood of Jesus done nothing more for you than the blood of a bullock did for a Jewish worshipper?

It may, however, be that the reader is ready to say, in reply to all that we have been urging upon him, "I do not, in the least, doubt the efficacy of the blood of Jesus. I believe it cleanseth from all sin. I believe, most thoroughly, that all who simply put their trust in that blood are perfectly safe, and will be eternally happy. My difficulty does not lie here at all. What troubles me is not the efficacy of the blood, in which I fully believe, but *my own personal interest in that blood*, of which I have no satisfactory evidence. This is the secret of all my trouble. The doctrine of the blood is as clear as a sunbeam, but the question of *my* interest therein is involved in hopeless obscurity."

Now, if this be at all the embodiment of the reader's feelings on this momentous point, it only proves the necessity of his deeply pondering Numbers xix. 4. There he will see that the true basis of all purification is found in this, that the blood of atonement has been *presented to God*. Atonement is not made up of the blood of Jesus and our interest in that blood, but of the blood alone ; as we read in Leviticus xvii., "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." This is a most precious truth, but one little understood. It

is of all importance that the really anxious soul should have a clear view of the subject of atonement. It is so natural to us all to be occupied with our thoughts and feelings about the blood of Christ, rather than with that blood itself, and with God's thoughts respecting it. If the blood has been perfectly *presented to God*, if He has accepted it, if He has glorified Himself in the putting away of sin, then what remains for the divinely-exercised conscience but to find perfect repose in that which has met all the claims of God, harmonised His attributes, glorified His character, and laid the foundations of that marvellous platform whereon a sin-hating God and a poor sin-destroyed sinner can meet? Why introduce the question of my interest in the blood of Christ, as though that work were not complete without aught of mine, call it what you will, my interest, my feelings, my experience, my appreciation, my appropriation, my anything? Why not rest in Christ alone? This would be really having an interest in Him. But the very moment the heart gets occupied with the question of its own interest—the moment the eye is taken off that divine object which the word of God and the Holy Ghost present—then spiritual darkness and perplexity must ensue, and the soul, instead of rejoicing in the perfection of the work of Christ, is tormented by looking at its own poor, imperfect feelings.

But, it may be still urged, must we not have an interest in the blood? Must we not appropriate, must we not apply that precious sacrifice to our own souls? We repeat, and press it with much earnestness upon the exercised reader, if only you heartily believe that the blood has been presented to, and accepted by, God—if you believe that God is satisfied as to sin, that the perfect record of Christ's atoning work has been laid, with His own hand, upon the throne of God—then have you, in very deed, a deep, personal, and eternal interest in the blood. This, truly, is to apply, appreciate, and appropriate the sacrifice of the

Son of God—to know its perfect efficacy for your own soul. Depend upon it, beloved friend, the devil is seeking to cast dust in your eyes, to darken, perplex, and confound your soul, by leading you to dwell upon your own imperfect apprehension, rather than upon *the sevenfold sprinkling of the blood of atonement before the true tabernacle of the congregation.*—From *Things New and Old*, vol. 1864.

SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS.

IN vain would we combine the service of God and Mammon; our expediency and lukewarmness are alike seen and abhorred of Him who has said: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.”

We go *half* measures in holy things, and offer a divided service and a heart filled with our own desires; accordingly, we reap as we sow—we have a *little* light, a *little* love, and a troubled spirit, that cannot trust God even with providing us bread for the morrow.

There is perfect peace where there is a perfect surrender of the *will* to God; when we can say with truth: “Not my will, but Thine be done.” Eager desires after earthly objects, *be they what they may*, produce a moral paralysis towards the things of God—so true it is we cannot serve two masters; in *one* or *other* we live and move and have our being.

The more we lose our *selfish* interest in divine things, the more we look to and supplicate for the Body of Christ—the more will our own grace increase, the more shall we rise up into the fulness of Christ.

While we sigh and cry for the abominations that are committed, we must beware of hard thoughts and unholy indignation; but, like Jesus, pray: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Happy are they who can say “Thy will be done,” and *wish* it done even though it be contrary to their own.

The Spirit of God in us puts forth the heart of Christ in strong crying and tears for the low estate of His body. This is a cup of bitterness from which we, who would share in the fellowship of His sufferings, must not turn away.

What is our hope? Is it not the coming of our Lord from heaven? Is it not to reign as kings and priests with Him for ever? Seeing that we look for so great a glory, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy preparedness for the glory to which we are hastening?

As Jesus wept over the inevitable destruction of the city that was about to slay Him, so should His people weep for Babylon. Many went out of Jerusalem, ere its destruction, through the teaching and intercession of Christ, and many will come out of Babylon through that of His Church, if she be faithful to her Lord.—

Extracted.

MERCY.

MERCY is an attribute

As high as justice ; an essential part
 Of His unbounded goodness whose divine
 Impression, form, and image man should bear :
 And (methinks) man should love to imitate
 His mercy ; since the only countenance
 Of justice were destruction, if the sweet
 And loviug favour of His mercy did
 Not mediate between it and our weakness.

Cyril Tourneur.

IT is one thing to be safe in the ark on the Ararat of God, and another thing for Christ to dwell in the heart by faith. Oh, what a quantity of care goes out when Christ is there ! If Christ is the Master of the house, and *dwelling* in it, He does not let the dust and the cobwebs accumulate, but He fills it altogether ; and should a sudden start come to the heart, there will be found not fear, but Christ.—J. N. D.

LIGHT AND MOMENTARY AFFLICTION.

2 Cor. iv. 16—v. 4.

“LIGHT affliction,” oh ! how needful
 From our Father’s loving hand !
 He who gives it gives assurance
 It shall work a happy end.
 Dry the tear, then ; hush the sobbing,
 Bow the head, but lift the eye ;
 Faith ’mid unseen things descrying
 What a “weight” of glory’s coming,
 Owns it is “far more exceeding,”
 And with rapture looks on high !

But “a moment” its enduring,
 This its term by His decree ;
 Life itself a passing vapour,
 What’s its little while to thee ?
 Dry the tear and hush the sobbing,
 Bow the head, but lift the eye ;
 Faith, the unseen things when reck’ning,
 Waits “eternal” glory hasting,
 Knows it is “far more exceeding,”
 And with rapture looks on high !

Is the “earthly house” dissolving ?
 Does the “outward man” decay ?
 Yet the “inward” is renewing
 By His hand from day to day :
 Dry the tear, then ; hush the sobbing,
 Faint not, for the Lord is nigh ;
 Faith will sing in spite of groaning,
 Knows she has of God a building,
 Patient waits her Lord’s returning,
 And with rapture looks on high !

Many of the clergy say, “Sermons, sermons are our business ;” many an evangelist goes further, saying, “Souls, souls are mine ;” but Paul would have said, “Mine is *Christ*.” “We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish.”

OBJECTIVE TEACHING, ILLUSTRATED BY HOSEA.

HOSEA, as he is commonly called (his real name being Hoshea), was not by any means the earliest of the minor prophets, yet he stands in the sacred canon at the head of them, their several writings being arranged for the most part in a moral rather than in a chronological order. By that is meant, that their place in the volume is determined chiefly by the subjects of which they treat, instead of by the time at which they lived.

Commencing with the days of Jeroboam II., the king of Israel, and reaching on to that of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for a century or more there was a period of marked prophetic activity in the land, which resulted in great additions to the Scriptures of truth. During that time, Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah, we are told, severally wrote.

It was a time too, politically speaking (I refer now to the reign of Jeroboam II. in Israel, and to those of Uzziah and Jotham in Judah), of the revival of power in both kingdoms. Jeroboam II. restored the coast of Israel, from the entering of Hamath, in the north, unto the sea of the plain, *i.e.*, the Dead Sea (2 Kings xiv. 25). Uzziah restored Elath, on the Gulf of Akaba, to Judah. "He went forth," too, "and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines. And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gur-baal, and the Mehunims. And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly" (2 Chron. xxvi. 6-8). Of Jotham we read: "He fought with the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them. And the children of Ammon gave him the same year an hundred talents of silver, and ten thou-

sand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. So much did the children of Ammon pay unto him, both the second year, and the third. So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God" (2 Chron. xxvii. 5, 6).

Such prosperity in war; the bounds of Israel extended again to their proper northern limits (Num. xxxiv. 2-9); and the authority of Judah again owned on the Gulf of Akaba, and by the Philistines and the Ammonites; were political prosperity and greatness again to be enjoyed by God's earthly people? Appearances might seem to favour such an expectation. But the prophets of those days—Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah—were effectually to dispel any such dream, for they set forth the coming judgment, but coupled with the announcement of restoration to blessing in the future. Such blessing, however, by a people who have grievously failed, can only be righteously enjoyed consequent on real restoration of heart to God, evidenced by true confession of their ways. How this last will be brought about it is the province of Hosea especially to make clear. To this let us turn.

The book divides itself into three distinct parts. The first (chapp. i.-iii.) gives us the prophetic announcement of Israel's public rejection by God as His people, and of their restoration to divine favour, owned afresh, and finally as His people in the latter days.

The second part (chapp. iv.-x.) furnishes us, *firstly*, with the heavy indictment brought against them in the prophet's day (iv.-viii.); and *secondly*, with the announcement of certain judgment (ix., x.), richly indeed deserved, as the opening sentences of chap. iv. make plain: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and stealing, and killing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood" (iv. 1, 2). Could the heathen be worse in their

ways than that? They were not so guilty, for they had not the law given to them by God. How low had God's people sunk in iniquity! Was there any wickedness, or known form of idolatry practised by the heathen, to which Israel remained strangers? Reading 2 Kings xvii. 7-19 and other passages, it is difficult to suppose there was, for idolatrous rites of all kinds seem to have been patronised, from the worship of the sun to the licentious rites connected with the worship of Ashtaroth. How callous, too, had they become; for, called as Israel were to return to the Lord their God, in chap. vi. 1-3, who had already chastised them, we read not of any response to that gracious invitation. Estrangement of heart on Israel's part was pronounced and deep-seated. How should that be removed? A ministry dealing in objective truth was required for this.

Hence the importance and great interest to us of the third and concluding part of the prophecy of Hosea (chapp. xi.-xiv.), furnishing, as it does, the very ministry suited to effect it. How helpful for all is this, as we remember that the One who speaks to the people, and therefore ministers what is needed, is God Himself, though He does it, as we see, through the instrumentality of the prophet.

He begins with a reminder to the nation of its infancy, and what He had done for it then (xi.). He goes on to recall His dealings with Jacob (xii.) He assures them He will save them, though they have turned away from Him (xiii.); and then promises to them a gracious reception, when they shall have confessed their sins (xiv.). Let us look into this a little.

God begins with speaking of His love. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt" (xi. 1). What had they done to induce God to espouse their cause against the Egyptians? Nothing. How had they requited His love? "As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven

images" (v. 2). What a return for His love, who, knowing the end from the beginning, knew what they were, and all they should do! Why, then, did He love them? Deut. vii. 7, 8 furnishes us with a definite and beautiful answer. He loved them, because He loved them; or, to express it in the language of New Testament revelation, He loved them, because He is love (1 John iv. 8). That turns us to what God is, and can do, irrespective of the creature's deserts. And, since He is unchanging in His nature, it tells those who have failed on what it is that they can count. And it is God Himself who reminds such of it, to win back to Himself, if possible, hearts for long estranged from Him; for we must remember it is of restoring grace that the prophet treats.

God begins, then, with His love—a love manifested, when the objects of it had not deserved it; a love which never grows cold, how little soever it may have been requited. So He speaks again: "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms." As a nurse holds up a little child by its arms to teach it to walk, taking step by step with it, so Jehovah ministered thus to His people. Remembering that it is the Almighty who thus acted, was it not wonderful goodness on His part? He, who by His word called creation into existence, stooped, as it were, in all the tenderness and patience of a nurse to minister to His people. What an idea is here presented of Jehovah's service to His creatures, better to be understood than expatiated upon! Who but God would have thus acted? Now, what was the result? "They knew not that I healed them." Did He leave them, thus insensible as they were of His goodness? He has answered the question: "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them." Could no display of divine goodness touch them? It appeared not. "My people," God, who still speaks, declares, "are bent to backsliding from Me; though

they called them to the most High" (or, perhaps better, to Him who is on high), "none at all will exalt Him."

As for a response, there was none. "My people," God said. He owned them as His, though they would none of Him (Psalm lxxxi. 11). One question, and one only, then remained. They had given up God; would He give them up? That question He here answers, and surely all will own in a most touching way: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not enter into the city." The mention of Admah and Zeboim, the cities destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah, shows in what light God viewed the ways of Israel. What arrested the sword of judgment, that it should not alight on that sinful people to cut them off for ever? God's heart! God's repentings! He is God, and not man, therefore He changes not (Num. xxiii. 19). Is there not something most attractive in listening to God weighing the matter, as it were, by Himself, and then announcing the conclusion to which He had come, and the reason for it. He is God, and not man, so He changes not in that which He has purposed. He must, He will bless them, and their hearts He will recover to Himself. "They shall walk after the Lord; He shall roar like a lion: when He shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west. They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord" (xi. 10, 11). He could not give them up.

Beginning thus with what He is, and with the reminder of His love shown in Egypt, the Lord next (in chap. xii.) takes them back to the days of Jacob,

and to what He did for that patriarch. Chronologically Jacob's history precedes that of the Exodus; but the moral order here followed is perfect. God begins with that which is the sheet anchor for His people, viz., what He is as revealed in His ways in grace, ere He retraces for their instruction His dealings with one who had often so grievously failed, as Jacob surely had. For what He is, and therefore why He can act in grace, is a matter of primary importance for those who have sinned, and really precedes any dealings in goodness with those who have failed. That first set forth, encouragement for such may then be derived from His dealings with saints in other days. So to Jacob's history are we next turned, the history of one who had no special proof of divine goodness personally vouchsafed him, till he had showed himself up as utterly unworthy of the slightest consideration.

Of three things does that remind us, viz., of God's sovereignty exercised in the election of that patriarch, of His goodness, and of His grace. His *sovereignty* was shown in choosing Jacob before his birth, and, as Isaac expressed it, that peoples should serve him, and nations bow down to him, the lord over his brethren, who should receive homage from his mother's children (Gen. xxvii. 29). Of that, the incident mentioned by the prophet, his taking his brother by the heel in the womb, was a foreshadowing. Next God's *goodness* was displayed, in allowing Jacob to have power with Him at Peniel, and there to prevail. And His *grace* was conspicuously manifested in finding* Jacob in Bethel; "and there," writes the prophet, "He spoke with us." Twice in Jacob's life was he at Bethel. On each occasion God appeared unto him (Gen. xxxv. 1). On the first, it was to Jacob, an exile from his home, because of the deceit he had practised on his father. On the second, it was to Jacob, now become two

* It is a question whether God or Jacob is the nominative to the verb "found." The context must decide.

bands (Gen. xxxii. 10), who, with his wives, his children, his flocks, and his herds, all tokens of Jehovah's goodness, returned to Bethel at the express command of God (Gen. xxxv.), but after manifesting a dilatoriness about it which ill became him. Such had God, then, shown Himself to be to Jacob, who could boast of nothing earned by his own goodness. It was all of grace; wholly undeserved. Israel, too, served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep. God was blessing him whilst he was suffering because of his sin.

What encouragement for the people, when they shall see how they have failed; for love manifested in election will never fail those who are the objects of it. Thank God it is so. Jacob's history shows that, and the history of every saint only further illustrates it. Israel's past history attests it. "By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved" (Hos. xii. 13). Their future, as sketched out by the son of Beer, will abundantly confirm it; for God will still be their God, and will never cease to stand in that relation to them. Of this, too, He will speak. "I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no God but Me; for there is no Saviour beside Me" (xiii. 4). Who, conscious of grievous failure, and, it may be, of wilful departure from God, could hope for any favour from Him unless assured of the unchangeableness of divine love? Now, He against whom we have sinned must do that. And this is just what He does. How touchingly does He do it to Israel. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help" (or, as Revised Version gives it, "It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against Me, against thy help"). Does death seem imminent, and the national hope in danger of extinction? Again God speaks: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, where are (rather than, I will be) thy plagues? O grave, where is thy destruction? repentance shall be hid from Mine eyes."

How graciously does God act towards us, telling us of His love, and of His interest in us. The Lord's ministry to the seven churches witnesses of this, analogous, in some respects, to His ministry to His earthly people by the prophet Hosea. And what must Paul have felt, when alone in the prison at Jerusalem, as the Lord stood by him that night to encourage him?

What a ministry of reconciliation all this of Hosea will prove itself to be! And all the more will the power and the grace of it be apparent, as we contrast the indifference of the people in Hosea's day who heard his words, with the repentance brought about by it in the remnant of the future. The stony heart will then be removed (Ezek. xxxvi. 26), the proud spirit humbled, and a full confession will flow forth, a confession which will meet with an overflowing response from their God. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel" (xiv. 4, 5). Such is our God, and such will He show Himself to be. A divine ministry of reconciliation will, as we learn in chap. xiv., accomplish the desired end. Estrangement of heart will be removed, the effect of the attractive power of objective truth. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein" (xiv. 9). C. E. S.

"The ends of the world have come upon us, and the judgment of the world (morally, not its execution, of course) took place in the cross. As to 'Adamic,' it is a mere human word, and, if understood, it is all that is needed. Our first business is to get at what God means in Scripture in His *own* account of it, and then at our own language, which is often right as our meaning, but partially so, and can be taken otherwise. . . . Scripture is always right; we partially and imperfectly."—J. N. D.

PAUL GERHARDT ALONE WITH GOD.

(A Word of Comfort in a day of Trial.)

SOME years ago there was a great preacher in Germany, Paul Gerhardt. He was an earnest Christian man, and loved to preach the Lord Jesus. But the ruler of that part of the country—the Elector of Brandenburg—did not like such preaching, so he sent word to this minister that he must either give it up or leave the country. Paul Gerhardt replied “That it would be very hard for him to leave his country and his friends, and go with his family among strangers, where they would have nothing to live on; but as for preaching anything else than what the Bible taught him, he would rather die than do that.” So he had to go into banishment with his family.

At the end of their first day’s journey they came to a wood, and rested for the night at a little inn there. The little children were crying with hunger and clinging to their mother, but she had no food and no money. She had tried to keep up all day, but now she began to cry too. This gave Paul Gerhardt a very heavy heart. He left his family and went alone into the dark wood to pray. It was a time of great trouble to him, and there was no one to whom he could go for help but to God.

While he was thus alone praying, it seemed to him as if an angel had come and whispered: “*Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass*” (Psalm xxxvii. 5). This gave him great comfort. “Yes,” he said to himself, “though I am banished from my home and friends, and do not know where to take my wife and children for a shelter, yet God, *my God*, sees me in this dark wood. He knows all about us. Now is the time to trust Him. He will show me through; He will ‘bring it to pass.’”

He was so happy in thinking on this text, and so

thankful to God for giving it, that he walked up and down under the trees and made some verses on it. Each verse begins with two or three words of the text, so that, when you have read through the hymn, you get the whole text. Perhaps you would like to read the verses before we finish the story. Here they are:—

*Commit thy way, O weeper—
The cares that fret thy soul—
To thine Almighty Keeper,
Who makes the world to roll.*

*Unto the Lord, who quieteth
The wind, and cloud, and sea ;
Oh, doubt not He provideth
A footpath, too, for thee.*

*Trust also, for 'tis useless
To murmur and forbode ;
Th' Almighty arm is doubtless
Full strong to bear thy load.*

*In Him hide all thy sorrow,
And bid thy fears good night ;
He'll make a glorious morrow
To crown thy head with light.*

*And He shall bring it near thee,
The good thou long hast sought ;
Though now it seems to fly thee,
Thou shalt, ere long, be brought*

*To pass from grief to gladness,
From night to clearest day ;
When doubts and fears and sadness
Shall all have passed away.*

When he had finished making these verses, he went into the house. He told his wife about the sweet text that had come into his mind, and repeated to her the verses he had made upon it. She soon dried up her tears, and began to be as cheerful and trustful as her husband. The children were in bed and asleep. The husband and wife knelt down together and prayed, and resolved to "commit their way unto the Lord," and leave it for Him to "bring to pass" as He saw fit. Then after writing down his sweet verses, they went to bed.

Before they had fallen asleep, a great noise was heard at the door of the inn. It seemed as though some important person was knocking there. When the landlord opened the door, a man on horseback was standing before it. He said, in a loud voice—

"I am a messenger. I come from Duke Christian of Meresburg, and I am trying to find a minister named Paul Gerhardt, who has just been banished from Brandenburg. Do you know whether he has passed this way?"

"Paul Gerhardt?" said the landlord, "why, yes, he

is in this house ; but he has just gone to bed. I can't disturb him now."

"But you must," said the messenger ; "I have a very important letter for him from the duke ; let me see him at once." So the landlord told Gerhardt, who came down to see the messenger, from whom he received a large, sealed letter ; and to his great joy, read in it that the good Duke Christian had heard of the intended banishment of himself and family, and had written to him saying, "Come into my country, Paul Gerhardt, and you shall have a house, and home, and plenty to live on, and liberty to preach the gospel just as much as you please."

Then the good minister went up and told his wife, and they praised God for His love ; and the next morning started off with glad hearts and cheerful feet to their new home.—*Selected.*

CHEER FOR THE SORROWING SAINT.

CHILD of God and heir of glory,
 Haste thee on thy pilgrim way,
 Christ Himself the prize before thee
 Through the bright eternal day ;
 Soon His coming
 Shall thy sorrows chase away !

Here, alas, are tears and sadness ;
There, Himself shall fill thy gaze ;
 In that scene of endless gladness
 Thou shalt trace His finished ways,
 And, adoring,
 Chant His full, untiring praise !

In the sunshine of His glory,
 Earthly shadows fled for aye,
 Oft shalt thou recount the story
 Of His grace along the way,
 Where His presence
 Beams in everlasting day !

THE LOVE WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE.

HAST thou not tasted, hast thou not known that His love is better than wine? Hast thou not smelt the savour of His precious ointments, for which the virgins love Him? This, this is He who is altogether lovely. And while I write my heart doth burn, my soul is on fire, I am sick of love. Dear soul, come near and look upon His face and see whether thou canst choose but love Him. Fall upon Him, embrace Him, give Him thy dearest, choicest love: all is too little for Him. Let 'faith' and love kiss Him: you shall be no more bold than welcome. Fix thine eyes again and again upon Him, and look upon His lovely, sweet, and royal face till thou art taken with this beautiful Person, who hath not His fellow upon the earth, His equal among the angels. Come near; still contemplate His excellency, review each part, and thou wilt find Him to be made up of love. Wind thy affections about Him, bind thy soul to Him with the cords of love: thus shalt thou find a new life to animate thy soul; thou shalt then feel a new warmth to melt thy heart; a divine fire, a flame of heavenly love. Dwell in this love, and thou shalt dwell in God, and God in thee. But now, methinks, I see you almost in tears because you feel not such workings of love towards God. Weep on still, for love hath tears as well as grief, and tears of love shall be kept in His bottle as well as they; yea, they shall be as precious jewels and as excellent ornaments. Hast thou felt such meltings of loving grief? Know that they are no other than the streams of Christ's love flowing to you and through you, and from you to Him again. And thus is Christ delighted in beholding of His own beauties in His spouse.—*John Janeway, who fell asleep, 1657.*

“Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

THE CONTENTMENT OF SORROW.

“ The ‘ Man of Sorrows ’
Is more to us than all His miracles.”

WHEN the great Father, in His everlasting watch, paces His daily and nightly rounds, and through these lower mansions of His gathers in the offered desires of His children, *where*, think you, does He hear the tones of deepest love, and see on the uplifted face the light of the most heartfelt gratitude? Not where His gifts are most profuse, but where they seem most meagre. Not where the suppliant's worship glides from the cushion of luxury, through lips satiated with plenty and rounded by health. Not within the hall of successful ambition, or even the dwellings of unbroken domestic peace; but where the outcast, flying from persecution, kneels in the evening upon the rock whereon he sleeps; at the fresh grave where, as the earth is opened, heaven, in answer, opens too; by the pillow of the wasted sufferer, where the sunken eye, denied sleep, converses with the Lord Himself. Genial, almost to miracle, is the soil of sorrow; wherein the smallest seed of love, timely falling, becometh a tree, in whose foliage the birds of blessed song lodge, and sing unceasingly. And the doubts of God's goodness, whence are they? Rarely from the weary and overburdened, from those broken in the practical service of grief and toil; but from theoretic students, at ease in their closets of meditation, treated, themselves, most gently by that legislation of the universe which they criticise with a melancholy so profound.

It was said of a holy man, “ He was a master in the science of suffering.”

There is nothing degrading in the humblest and the hardest fate; nothing much nobler in this world than a meek, true soul, struggling against the narrow bounds of the sphere assigned it, and faithful to cherish

the light of God in the inglorious darkness of a bitter lot.—*James Martineau.*

MORTAL, if life smile on thee, and thou find
 All to thy mind,
 Think Who did once from heaven to earth descend,
 Thee to befriend ;
 So shalt thou dare forego, at His dear call,
 Thy best, thy all.

“ Oh, Father ! not my will, but Thine be done,”
 So spake the Son.
 Be this *our* charm, mellowing earth’s ruder noise
 Of griefs and joys,
 That we may cling for ever to Thy breast
 In perfect rest.

GOD does nothing in vain ; God does nothing without reason.—*Christopherson.*

VESSELS OF GOD.

THERE is a common saying, “ It is better to wear out than to rust out.” This better thing was not Isaac’s ; he rusts out. And *such* was the natural close of *such* a life—a vessel marred on the wheel, a vessel laid aside as not fit for the Master’s use, or at least not fit for it any longer. Abraham had not been such an one. All the distinguishing features of the “ stranger here,” all the proper fruit of that energy that quickened him at the outset, was borne in him and by him to the very end. His leaf did not wither ; he brought forth fruit in old age. So was it with Moses, with David, and with Paul. They die with their harness on, at the plough or in the battle. Mistakes, and more than mistakes, they made by the way, but they were never laid aside. Moses is counselling the camp near the banks of Jordan ; David is ordering the conditions of the kingdom, and putting it (in its beauty and strength) into the hands of Solomon ; Paul has

his armour on, his loins girded. When the time of their departure was at hand, the Master found them, as in Luke xii., "so doing." But thus was it not with Isaac. He was laid aside. For forty long years we know nothing of him; he had been, as it were, decaying away and wasting. The vessel was rusting, until it rusted out. But Solomon's is a still worse case. He lives to defile himself, sad and terrible to tell it. This was not a saint laid aside as Isaac, or a saint left to recover himself like Jacob, under holy discipline for seventeen years in Egypt at the close of his life, yielding fruit meet for recovery; but "it came to pass when Solomon *was old*, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods;" and this has made the writing over his name, the tablet to his memory, equivocal and hard to be deciphered to this day. These lessons give us to see in the house of God (1), Vessels fit for use, and kept in use even to the end, as Abraham, David, and Paul; (2), Vessels laid aside to rust out rather than to wear out, as Isaac; (3), Vessels whose best service it is to get themselves clean again, as Jacob; and (4), Vessels whose dishonour it is at the end of their service to contract some fresh defilement, as Solomon.

J. G. B.

To obey a word of God is good; but to obey it in the joy of an exercised heart, and in the light and intelligence of a mind that has entered into the divine sense of that word, is better.

There is never entire calmness, absence of all haste and distraction, where we are not conscious that our *strength is equal to our business*, whatever it may be. Nor is there, when we are not equally conscious of *integrity or righteousness in that business*. The consciousness of both strength and righteousness is needed to fit the hand to do a deed, or the foot to take a step with entire ease. This ease marks all the ways of God.—J. G. B.

THE HOPE OF GLORY.

IT is not for nothing that it is said, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i. 27). I will be content with no pledge of heaven but Christ Himself; for Christ possessed by faith here is young heaven and glory in the bud. Should not we young bairns long and look for the expiring of our minority? It were good to be daily begging love-gifts and favours to keep the taste of heaven in our mouth until supper time. I know it is far afternoon, and nigh the marriage supper of the Lamb; the table is covered already. O well-beloved, run, run fast! O fair day, when wilt thou dawn? O shadows, flee away! Absence from Christ is pain, but hope that maketh not ashamed swalloweth it up. It is not unkindness that keepeth us so long asunder. Unworthy as I am of His love, whether I will or not He will be kind to me.

My desire is, that my Lord would give me broader and deeper thoughts to feed myself with, wondering at His love; I would I could weigh it, but I have no balance for it. What remaineth, then, but that my debt to the love of Christ be unpaid for all eternity? All that are in heaven are overcome with His love as well as I: we must be all bankrupts together, and the blessing of that houseful or heavenful of bankrupts shall rest for ever upon Him. O, if this land and nation would come and stand beside His inconceivable and glorious perfections, and look in, and love, and wonder, and adore! Would to God that I could bring in many lovers to Christ's house! But this nation hath forsaken the fountain of living waters! Woe, woe will be to this land, because of the day of the Lord's fierce anger, that is so fast coming.—*Samuel Rutherford.*

In Abraham was illustrated *election*; in Isaac, *sonship*, or the adoption of the elect one; in Jacob, *discipline* of the adopted one; and in Joseph, *heirship*.

"TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST."

PHILIPPIANS i. 21.

THE mind of the Spirit for you and me to-day is, that we should be channels for the flowing forth of the eternal life that is in Christ, in the midst of the world. He would have a stream flowing forth from us, telling of the God who is its source, and of the Christ who supplies it.

For what does Christ show that all He possesses is ours? Merely that we should be saved? No! He might then have waited till the eleventh hour before He had called us. No! He wants the eternal life to be told out in a world where Satan is master, so that He can point angels, and principalities, and powers to the Church, to learn in us the manifold riches of God's grace. As children of the Father's house, who have known the bosom of the Father, who are like the feet of the glorious Head in heaven, let me ask you if the character of the Head is seen in you? Are you seeking to make the wilderness resound, not merely with the name of the Lord Jesus, but with lives conformed to His character, and to the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven? God has His wishes for His saints, and shall not my heart respond to His desires? See to what an extent Paul carried this. To some it seems a strange thing to press the life of Christ on people; but what would you give for a beautiful watch without hands? And what is a saint if not shewing forth Christ? or a vine if it bear no grapes?

The apostle would say, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." What was Paul about when he wrote that word? He felt that He was for Christ, and for Christ only, whether in life or in death. He could say, "I have only one object—Christ; and I have only one desire—that Christ should be magnified in my body." If, therefore, they had beheaded Paul, would he have lost anything? No! Christ would have been magnified in his body still. What a striking testimony was that

in Cesar's court! A Roman knew how to face death as a display of courage, but to go forward to it in the thought that death was gain, because there was a Jesus who had been crucified between two thieves, who was the joy of a man's heart, a Roman could *not* have understood. Let me ask you—since you have known Christ, Christ's heart, Christ Himself your treasure, your life, Christ everything that God could give you—has your thought been, "To me to live is Christ, and to die gain"? It is our privilege while passing through this scene. And how it glorifies the meanest life if Christ is magnified in it! And how does it change death, if to die is gain, Christ being magnified in it? That is what a life of communion with God gives to a man. Ennobled by God most truly. The life of Christ flowing out through me, I am like the hands of a clock through which the movement of the works within shows itself. Is that bondage? Is it legality for Christ to say, "Your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, and I expect you to show it"? If this is bondage, would to God there were ten thousand times more of it.

G. V. W.

The great tower of Babel in the plains of Shinar would have been the boast of a Nimrod, but Abraham would have turned from it to weep; just as the merchants of the earth bewail that which the heavens rejoice over (Rev. xviii.).—J. G. B.

THE HEART.—The heart of a man is a short word—a small substance, scarce enough to give a kite a meal, yet great in capacity—yea, so indefinite in desire, that the round globe of the world cannot fill the three corners of it. When it desires more, and cries, "Give, give!" I will set it over to the infinite good, where the more it hath it may desire more, and find more to be desired.—*Bishop Hall*.

THESE Old Testament scriptures often bring God before us in a way wonderfully interesting and full of blessing. For God is God wheresoever we find Him ; and whether He speak of Himself or His people, there is precious truth to be studied and precious instruction to be gathered. In this chapter He speaks of both. The prophet makes, by the Spirit of God, his last appeal to backsliding but beloved Ephraim. They were a fallen people. As the last verse of the chapter states, "The ways of the Lord are *right*." Happy had it been for them had they duly estimated the perfection of Jehovah's ways with them ; then, surely, with purpose of heart would they have walked therein, and earned the title of "the just," as the prophet says, "The just shall walk in them." And then, too, would they have proved what Solomon wrote, that "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

But the contrary had been their case, as said the prophet, "The transgressors shall fall therein." The ways put before them were the good ways of the Lord, but they had stumbled and fallen, being "transgressors." Now, in the first verse, the Lord by the mouth of the prophet seeks to instruct them, and to recall them to Himself. Very pitiful is He, and of tender mercy. Therefore was He patient with His people, and would cause them to know the true state of the case ; yea, He would have them to learn that He yet waited for them. And if He have to speak of their iniquity, He would precede it with so loving an appeal as should convince them that He was Jehovah Rophi, the Healer and Restorer of His covenant people. In what passionate language does the prophet appeal to them, "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God ; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." It is well to observe here how the thoughts of God are the very converse of the thoughts of men.

Because a man is a sinner he gets away from God. It was so when Adam and Eve, the guilty pair of paradise, hid themselves. Yet do we not well to remember it were more pardonable in them than in their posterity, seeing they had neither experience nor revelation to inform them how a holy God could or would meet a guilty sinner? But Israel, and how much more we, had known by many a token and many a testimony that God is good, and is gracious, and is long-suffering, and is of great mercy. Did they but desire, not to say deserve, His favour, how ready was He to bestow it! Did they seek restoration to the light of His countenance, how accessible was He to the heart that sought Him out! But here He seeks them out by the prophet, and prays them to return unto Him.

Nor will He leave them in doubt as to how they could do this. "Take with you words," says He, "and turn unto the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips." He prescribes the very method of a full recovery, a recovery so complete and so blessed that they should be established before Him to His own glory as His happy worshippers. (1) They were to own their iniquity, for in appealing to Him to take it away they must necessarily confess it. (2) They were to cast themselves then upon His grace—"receive us graciously;" and then (3) they would render to Him the calves of their lips in the communion of happy worship. A worshipper is the *antithesis of a sinner*; the latter dishonours God and robs Him of His glory; the former delights to honour Him, and to render to Him that glory and worship and praise which is His due, that inexhaustible obligation which throughout eternity we shall ever own but never liquidate.

There follows (ver. 3) the repudiation of men and of idols; no arm of flesh and no work of men's hands shall any longer displace the One in whom "the

fatherless findeth mercy." Oh! how blessedly true was this for Israel. They had been aliens from God, disowning their parentage, taking a place akin to that of the orphan nations around them and amongst whom they had been scattered. Homeless, fatherless, Ephraim must come back to Him, for only thus could they discover the One in whom "the fatherless findeth mercy."

Now we hear of what a *reception* would be theirs. Jehovah Himself speaks in the language of the prophet, and what are His first words? When there has been long estrangement how eminently important are the first words on each side. He had Himself prescribed, as we found in verse 2, what their first words should be to Him, and now He tells us His first words for them. "I will heal their backslidings; I will love them freely, for Mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel." What precious words, beloved, are these! How they disclose what was in God's heart even for such a people! I will *heal* them; I will *love* them; I will *bedew* them! And how He goes beyond even what He had given them title to plead for. Take away all iniquity, they were to say. I will heal them, He responds. Receive us graciously, they should plead. I will love them freely, He answers. So will we render the calves of our lips, they would attest. I will be as the dew unto Israel, is the gracious offer of the kisses of His lips when they turn unto Him.

We are next told of how, under such auspices, Israel should revive, and blossom, and bud. Varied and beautiful is the imagery divinely used to portray Jehovah's delight in His restored people. The mountains of Israel bementled with the white flowering lilies picture her beauty to His eye. The mighty forest of Lebanon provides, in the vigour of the roots of her trees and her wide spreading foliage, the figure of strength, and majesty, and dignity. The olive, the corn, and the vine express the fruitfulness of the

nation for Jehovah which should at length be witnessed, while the wine of Lebanon should be an ever-fragrant perfume, figuring the people in their pleasantness and acceptability to Him.

And now, says Ephraim, what have I to do any more with idols? I have *heard Him* and *observed Him!* Whatever, my reader, be you saint or sinner, stands in the place which the Lord ought to fill, is an idol. And when, through grace, He gets enthroned in our hearts, the idols fall, and you exclaim with Ephraim when restored, "What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard Him, and observed Him." And it is added, "I am like a green fir tree." Ephraim does not here compare himself boastfully with any of the magnificent cedars of Lebanon, but modestly says, "I am like a green fir tree." Yet even for that it is well to recognise, it is not of us; for the Spirit of God furnishes the needed word from Jehovah, "From Me is thy fruit found." Be our fruit but that of the cones of a fir-tree, yet even fruit of so small a value is not from us but *from Him*, affording us the Old Testament way of enforcing what the apostle more clearly teaches in 1 Cor. i. 31, "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

The divine principles here enunciated by the prophet set forth with great beauty how God also meets and blesses the sinner—the principles of the Gospel. Man is a fallen being; moreover, he has fallen by *his own* iniquity. How can God meet him? He must learn and he must confess his iniquity. He must turn to the Lord—in other words, be converted. How shall he approach God? With words—words of confession, calling upon His name that the burden of sin may be removed. Counting upon His grace, too; for grace alone is the way of getting blessing to the soul: "by grace are ye saved." And when this is known in all its fulness, the sinner becomes a worshipper. The lips that were first filled with confession are now filled

with worship, rendering to God the sacrifice of praise continually, giving thanks to His name.

What further? The lesson of "no confidence in the flesh", and yet again this lesson, "My little children, keep yourselves from idols."

Then come forth God's blessed assurances of His grace and mercy to His suppliants. It is when His word is received, and rested on by faith that peace comes to the exercised conscience and rest to the weary heart. It is when we hear His loving voice as that of a Saviour-God, saying, I will heal them, and I will love them freely, that once for all we know on the authority of His own word that His "anger is turned away," and thenceforth it is our privilege to "dwell under His shadow."

Again, how blessed to learn that God delights in those whom in His grace He has brought to Himself. Their beauty attracts His eye; their fruitfulness gladdens His heart; their fragrance is a sweet savour of the sacrifice of Christ; from Him is their fruit found. Indeed, what have we that we have not received? For all things are of God.

May every reader of these pages enjoy the heartfelt blessedness of God's delight in those whom He has made trophies of His grace for ever. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them?"

The Church will have her joy in Christ, but Christ will have His greater joy in the Church. The strongest pulse of gladness that is to beat for eternity will be in the bosom of the Lord.

Jerusalem was all this—the house of the Father, the palace of the King, and the temple of the God of Israel; for Israel were His children, His people, and His worshippers. And yet again at Jerusalem shall be His family mansion, His palace, and His temple.—
J. G. B.

AN EXTRACT ON SERVICE.

CONNECT your service with nothing but God—not with any particular set of persons. You may be comforted by fellowship, and your heart refreshed; but you must work by your own individual faith and energy, without leaning on any one whatever; for if you do, you cannot be a faithful servant. Service must ever be measured by faith, and one's own communion with God. Saul even may be a prophet when he gets among the prophets, but David was always the same—in the cave or anywhere. Whilst the choicest blessings given me here are in fellowship, yet a man's service must flow from personal communion, else there will be weakness. If I have the word of wisdom, I must use it for the saint who may seek my counsel. It is "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." But also, "Let every one prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

There is no single place grace brings us into but is a place of temptation, and that we cannot escape, though we shall be helped through. In every age, the blessing has been from individual agency, and the moment it has ceased to be this, it has declined into the world. 'Tis humbling, but it makes us feel that all comes immediately from God. The tendency of association is to make us lean upon one another.

When there are great arrangements for carrying on work, there is not the recognition of this inherent blessing, which "tarrieth not for the sons of men." I don't tarry for man, if I have faith in God; I act upon the strength of that. Let a man act as the Lord leads him.

The Spirit of God is not to be fettered by man. All power arises from the direct authoritative energy of the Holy Ghost in the individual. Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii.) were sent forth by the Holy Ghost, recommended to the grace of God by the Church at

Antioch ; but they had no communication with it till they returned, but then there was the joyful concurrence of love in the service that had been performed. He that had talents went and traded. Paul says, "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Where there is a desire to act accompanied by real energy, a man will rise up and walk, but if he cannot do this the energy is not there, and the attempt to move is only restlessness and weakness. Love for Jesus sets one to work ; I know no other way.

"THE THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY
BE DONE."—*Rev.* xxii. 6.

IN John xii., the Lord gives a rapid outline of all the things He had to do to break the power of Satan, and bring those who were dead in sin into blessedness ; in chap. xiii., shows how He would care for and guard His people in their walk down here, washing their feet ; and in chap. xiv., how He would return to claim and take His people home to the Father's house. And in this portion we have the Lord using the hope of His coming to tell upon the hearts of His servants down here, and shewing what is the position of people who are His servants in this world, as the test to decide who are His and who are not.

In this book, from the first chapter to the last, we are shewn how the Lord is turning all to His praise. It was an optical outline of everything put before John at Patmos to be written for His people, and that is what I take to be "sayings of this book." All these things were shewn to John as things that were *speedily* to be done, and then "Behold, I come quickly," and "Blessed is he that keepeth," &c. The Lord saying, "I shall speedily come ; and you have got to familiarise yourself with the truth, and to hold fast the things in this book."

His eyes see everything, from first to last. Ver. 10.

“Seal not,” &c. This book was not to be a sealed book, as was Daniel, but to be opened out, not only to the servants who labour through the night, but to *all men*.

Ver. 11. “He that is unjust.” This applies not to heathen, but to people who say, “We profess to be in the house of God” (*i.e.*, Christendom). At this time the long-suffering of God is waiting, but the bearing of this word is very different on the two classes. Think of those who profess Christianity saying, “Who is Lord over us?” Nominal Christians don’t think of being under solemn responsibility to Him to whom they will have to give an account—responsibility for being in the house, though as if outside in walk and life. I ask any nominal Christian whether, whilst you don’t give way to any gross sin, you count yourself responsible to live to Him whose name you bear? Your answer will be, “No, I don’t believe He thinks about it.” People do say so; they don’t believe that Christ has a claim over that which professes to be His in the light, and so it goes on altogether offensive to the Lord’s mind. What would be the effect on it if the Lord were to rise up and come to-night? Where would be those who make the highest pretensions in the house? Where will the Pope; where will the wise and mighty in the places of rule and authority in the house appear when He comes? He says, “This book is unsealed, that all in the house may know that they are in the light, where My eye judges, and where I know everything; and what will My coming be to them?”

Important to get inside the gates, “for without are dogs,” &c. (ver. 15).

John fell down at the angel’s feet (ver. 8), and would have done him homage, shewing the effect of a word brought home to him out of the glory by a heavenly messenger. This place where John was, and where we are, was coming to judgment—a place where there were people with soiled habits and unjust ways, doers

of good and doers of evil. It is a solemn thought that we are in the house of light, and know what are the Lord's thoughts about it. When the word comes, "Behold, I come quickly," what is the answer from the servant? Do you say, "I am not driven to wait and watch for Him by the trial of circumstances, but because I love this Master, and His name bares my heart, and puts me in the place of worship?" But what would it be if to-morrow, at the Stock Exchange or in the House of Lords, the voice were to come, "Behold, I come quickly," would that word be received with exultant joy by the Christian world? And to you who profess to be not of the world, are your consciences clear that there would not be a question as to what your hearts are attuned to? Can you say, He knows that the one effort of your soul has been to keep yourself unspotted from the world? Could you say, "Lord, Thou knowest how I have been trying to keep my robes white—to get rid of every mark of filthiness?" Are you doing this? If so, I can say you find the difficulty of keeping yourself unspotted as you pass through in the midst of a people who won't be glad to see the Lord.

We find "I come quickly," three times in this chapter. The third (verse 20) differs from the others. It is not the calling of the attention of the servants to "Behold, I come!" but the ratifying of a word, "Yea, surely, I come quickly."

1st. When speaking of glory to a servant absorbed in business, He calls his attention, "Behold, I come." *Mark it.*

2nd. When speaking to a mixed multitude (ver. 11)—Ought there to have been a mixed multitude in Israel? Ought there to be a mixed multitude in the house of God to-day?—He says, "Behold, I come quickly, and My reward," &c.

Then, 3rd. To saints—"I, Jesus, have sent Mine angel."

I am sure that little word, "I am the root and off-

spring of David," proves that what the Lord set up at Pentecost was not to be the final fountain of blessing opened for earth. If He is the root of David, He has got to do certain things in connection with that. If He went up as the root of David, there was shut up in His person that which made a needs-be to say He would come. He will come as the Lion of the tribe of Judah to gather Israel for blessing, and that when the *quasi* Church on earth is set aside altogether. The Church is not to be the final stream of blessing, and the more He works now the less will intelligent people think that the Church is to go on. He gave armfuls of blessing in Israel just before Israel was set aside. All the blessing I hear of tells me, in a two-fold way, that He has got a short time, and He is working to bring in souls before He comes to take us to heaven. Israel was God's great witness of His governmental power on earth. It always will be so under Christ. He will not only be the root, but the fountain out of which all blessing is to come for a people on earth.

Then next, "The bright and morning Star." How Christians have forgotten the widow's place, watching through the night for her absent Lord. The Lord cheers them by saying, "The night is far spent." Why is it night? Because the Lord is away. You cannot call it day now. There will be day when He shall appear as Sun of Righteousness, but it is not daytime to those who love Him. John's heart had to feel it was night. "I am the bright and morning Star," that which ushers in the day. Just before morning it is seen in the heavens. It is connected with the Lord's heavenly glory, not earthly. When He stands on the earth it will be earthly glory. To us He is "the bright and morning Star," the One we are longing for. The night is a trying time—a time when we have continually *to watch*, because our robes are so easily spotted by intercourse with men down here.

"The bright and morning Star" is an entirely new

glory. There were hearts bound to Him when down here, that traced Him up into heaven, and ever since a people's eyes have looked for, and their hearts have been expecting Him. "The bright and morning Star" is a title of glory connected with the hearts of His people. Let me ask, Do you know Christ as "the bright and morning Star?" Can you say you are in a position, and the actings of your minds are what I could desire you to have as those who know that you are waiting, and have certainly seen this name as a name dear to your hearts, and a name that led you into looking for it. If any knew the comet that appeared a few years ago was to be seen, they would remember how many watched for it. When a child, I should have sat up at night to see it, and I might do it now if a comet appeared, though not my habit to be star-gazing every night. But I know this world is very dark, and all my comfort is waiting for that Star. The secret has been revealed to me that Christ *is* "the bright and morning Star," and the only sign to be seen in heaven is *Himself* as "the bright and morning Star;" and I am practically waiting for Him. Many may say, "I know Him as 'the bright and morning Star,' but I am not looking out for Him." Ah! such will be taken by surprise. Before the Sun rises, and before the light of day, Christ will come and take us up to heaven. Blessed for those who can say, "I have watched through the night to get the first glimpse of Him. I feel my heart attached to His person; and I live in practical watchfulness, because I have so connected all my blessedness with the person of that Lord, that I cannot help being constantly on the look out to get the first glimpse of Him as He descends from the heavens into the air."

In chap. v., directly He takes the book, a chorus of praise rises up to the Lamb in the midst of the throne. He undertakes to be the link between His people down here and God.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." The Holy

Ghost counted it His glory to say, Come. The Holy Ghost came down to pick up souls, and for the sending of servants to the right places. He knows what is the right place of service for each one ; He is God. He gave Paul the right place. He is come down whilst Christ is absent, as One who holds the place for another. He is the other Comforter, and He is the great power for everything in the assembly. Believers are sealed with the Holy Ghost. He reveals and speaks of the glory to come. The Bride is the vessel in which the closest relationship of the Lord Jesus is formed. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." And why should not the Bride say, Come? Can I say that Christ is going to present me as part of the Church without spot to Himself, and yet say, I don't wish Him to come? What! the Bride not wish the Bridegroom to come, and poor sinners washed in His blood be content to be down here without Him? Would Rebecca have liked to have turned back? No ; God had given her a heart to give up land, kindred, and everything for Isaac. She could not count herself the bride, and not desire to see him. And if there *is* a people down here waiting, knowing that Christ Himself is coming to take up the Church, they *must* be longing for Him to come, otherwise they don't know the position of the Bride and Spirit saying "Come."

The moment the fulness of the Lord's grace comes to the heart of any poor sinner, it reveals why He left the place of blessing to come down on earth to be made a curse, and that He is gone back to the throne of God, but is coming down again to take us up ; and there I get my rest in everything, because I know He is coming. In man's mind, one thought drives out another, and the worldly are so occupied with the things of the world that there is no room nor time for eternal things. But a child of God has got the affections of Christ in his soul, and can only turn from being occupied with Christ in heaven to be occupied with whatever the Lord is occupied with down here.

Ver. 17. "Let him that heareth," &c. This is a challenge to persons who say they believe, to try themselves about the coming. If you know persons in uncertainty about themselves, and you say, "Do you know that Christ is soon coming, and could you say, Come?" it would tell you where such persons are. A young man in D—— had the hymn, "Lord Jesus, come," put into his hand to sing, and he closed up the book directly, saying, if it were so it would be destruction. That is the force of this; if you who hear cannot say, Come, you are to strive to have power given to you to do so.

Next, "Let him that is athirst come." When the light of a returning Lord breaks in on the soul, how many a want breaks in that the heart never knew before. Suppose you knew that the Lord were coming to-morrow, would there not be a thousand thoughts of need in your mind; even if you knew He was now at the door would there not be a need? a looking to see if there were anything that would satisfy this sense of parchedness—this sense of wanting that which this word brings before the soul before the need is felt; a word that tells needy ones they can come to this Rock smitten for the waters to flow, and flow for ever, to meet every need.

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." How impossible, this fountain being opened in heaven, that there should be any doubt as to the divine willingness to satisfy the thirsting soul. This gushing stream tells of the readiness of Him from whom it flows to fill.

Let him come and take freely, without money, without price. What would you give to God? He will have you take it for nought, because He is God. Let Him have the glory. The hardest task possible for man is to let God be God, and Christ be Christ, and to be content to be nothing but a channel digged to receive His grace. Nature cannot endure *receiving*, it must *give*.

The 20th verse is most sweet to me. There is exquisite beauty in that word, "Surely, I come quickly," being immediately interpreted by the Spirit and the Bride, and answered in language known to faith, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The Lord saying—"Surely, I am coming. Is there a people continually stretching forth their necks to see Me; a people in readiness because the one great thing occupying them is My coming? Do you invite Me to come? Do you bid Me come? Then surely I come quickly."

How the very duties of a servant interfere often with the bright burning of love in the heart; but he knows a heart where it is burning brightly. He does not forget His promise to Peter and the others (John xiv.). As soon as the last vessels of mercy are gathered in, that promise is to be fulfilled. It burns brightly in *His* heart to come. And is there nothing in that thought to refresh my heart? If the light only burns flickeringly in my heart, there is ever in His the thought of coming quickly. The heart of the individual believer gets its power in the hope being ever present of His coming. It was a searching word to John and to us. Could you say, "Even so, come, Lord"? Has He heard you in solitude breathing, in a whisper, "Come, Lord?" We have to judge our whole course down here in the light of His coming. To all I would say, "In life and ways are you like people who wait for their Lord?"

Like the Thessalonians, occupied by that one thing, can we honestly say, "If Thou, Lord Jesus, hast Thine heart set on coming to gather Thy people home, the sooner the better for us." May we have fellowship with this love of His, with this One now occupied with watching His people down here, the One we know as "the bright and morning Star," the One who is quickly coming to fetch His saints to put them inside the Father's house, His heart never satisfied till they are there.

G. V. W.

FROM AN OLD NOTE BOOK.

SAW this morning that the flesh ever seeks to hide what it is, even from oneself: for instance, its failings. Then Satan comes in to bring guilt on the conscience by pressing on us the conviction of that being us, whilst hiding and putting out of sight Christ and His grace: putting out of sight that *all is of grace*. It is the shrinking from being poor and failing in self as to present practical consciousness. There is always this if confidence in flesh has not been broken; and Christ as all (and this as of grace), and a joy and delight, is forgotten.

Deliverance is found in looking the accusation straight in the face, and bowing to it, and even amplifying—and this we can do through grace.

But whilst thus owning wherein we have sinned and what we are proving ourselves to be, using it all as a means and occasion of fresh glorying and boasting in Christ (who loved us, being such, even to the death, and who has made us *His own* now through *redemption*: His own to purge and cleanse us: to restore our souls: to befriend us against all accusations and enemies whatever)—we are *one with Him*. We live of and on Him, and this too as *new creatures*. In newness of life we are linked up with Him our Head, and He is on our side against our flesh and all the subtlety by which our enemy would seek to seduce us to gratify it. Moreover, we have the Spirit as power in us for work and communion.

The important thing is to keep clear and distinct, 1st, that the ground and title of every blessing is *grace*: 2nd, that grace has actually brought us into *a settled and eternal relationship* with God and with Christ; with God as a Father, with Christ as of His body: and this through death and resurrection, in which Christ met our whole case as responsible ones of the first Adam race, and so left God free to act

towards us according to His precious thoughts of love—pure, positive thoughts, undetermined by *our past* or our present, but the spontaneous forth-flowing of what He is—Love—in Christ. Thoughts which had us as their object before the world was; necessarily *before sin*, and yet which recognised the fact of sin in its whole extent even to death and condemnation, and this too by the very judgment of God against it, but which found in Christ the means of their accomplishment notwithstanding, and this to the glory and praise of God and of His grace. The incoming of sin but shewed that God was above it and its author the devil, and that He would have a Man *the centre* not now of an earthly system merely, but of all things *in heaven and on earth*. For the Son became man, and through and in Him God triumphs over the work of the enemy, and we poor sinners, the victims of sin, the wretched proofs of the bitterness of being away from God, are taken up by God to demonstrate how *He* has triumphed gloriously and made for Himself a name in Christ Jesus.

God is *against our sins*, and He only—the cross shows it. But then He is *for us* at the same time; Satan being indeed *against us*, while pretending to be against our sins. He wants to destroy confidence in God as being perfect love to us. How? By turning our eye within, and making us to judge of God by conscience. Now there is a measure of truth in this, for God does hate sin, and He will never justify it. Satan ignores Christ, and aims to put Him and the whole work of redemption—beginning, middle, and end—out of our sight, so as to cast us back on ourselves as responsible creatures, having to do with God as the judge of sin. How false all this is! God has already loved us *when we were sinners*. He has pardoned us, and He is Himself our justifier, challenging all to question it if they dare (Rom. viii. 33). This He can do, because He *has* dealt with the sin in Christ. Let us also remember that we are *in*

Christ before God, and that of God, and Christ is on high making intercession for us.

How all this judges legal thoughts and Satanic temptations! Christ is not above to *accuse* us when we sin; He is there to plead *for us*. Satan is the accuser, but he will not prevail.

When Christ came, it was not to condemn, although we then were in our sins. Now that we are reconciled by His death, and in Him, nothing can separate us from His love.

J. R.

THE DOWRY OF THE BRIDE.

'Tis Christ to live, 'tis gain to die,
 And glory with the Lord
 Awaits the Church of God on high,
 According to His word.

Far, far be unbelieving fear,
 His promise standeth sure;
 The Holy Ghost, the Comforter,
 Will keep the Bride secure.

Sorrows may come, no doubt they will,
 And trials not a few;
 But He who is her Saviour still,
 He, He will bring her through.

He will not let her tarry here
 One single needless hour;
 The Bride to Him 's supremely dear,
 Kept by His love and pow'r.

His watchful *eye* unceasing views
 Her tread His path below,
 In which He sweetly cheers His spouse
 As only she can know.

His tender *heart* for ever burns
 With love that knows no let,
 That constant to its object turns,
 Nor ever can forget.

His *bosom* yields a resting-place
 When wearied and opprest ;
 And oh ! what calm repose is found
 When pillow'd on His breast.

His *hand* so firmly grasps His sheep,
 That none can pluck away
 Those whom the Shepherd's care doth keep,
 Unslumb'ring night and day.

His *grace*, His *love* adorn the Bride,
 His *peace*, His *joy* she shares ;
 Jewels more rare than Isaac gave
 Christ on His spouse confers.

His *glory*, too, awaits her now ;
 A virgin chaste is she ;
 A royal *crown* shall deck her brow
 When she Himself shall see.

Then shall His *beauty* all be her's,
 In bliss without alloy ;
 The very thought her spirit stirs
 With never-ending joy.

The Lord Himself from heaven shall come
 To meet her in the air,
 And take her to her destined home,
 His *throne* with her to share.

"A little while" He's left her here
 To test her faith and love ;
 But, sure, His heart like her's expects
 The *marriage scene* above !

In men let no man glory then,
 But glory in the Lord :
 Life, death, things present, things to come,
 All giv'n us in the Word.

For we are Christ's, and Christ is God's,
 What can we want besides ?
 Old things are past, all things are new,
 And all are made the Bride's.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

DEAR D——, Flesh will not, and cannot, follow Christ. We must, therefore, daily reckon ourselves dead to it, and never listen to its voice. In 1 Cor. ix. 27, we find Paul engaged in this conflict, well knowing that only by *self-restraint in all things* could he be victorious. And just as one who ran in the games or who fought in the amphitheatre to obtain a corruptible crown inured himself to toil and hardship that he might win, even so must it be with us. I find it myself every day. Every day do I see that flesh, and my flesh, is evil and only evil, and the only power of victory is in making no compromise whatever with it, but inwardly seeking thorough consecration to God and His Christ. There is no blaze or bluster in such a case. It is a death or life struggle, and so the Lord puts it in Luke xiv. We must count the cost; and if we do, we shall know that only by *hating our life in this world* can we join the noble band who are seeking to follow a rejected and dishonoured Lord.

O, what holy enthusiasm, quiet and deep, yet fervent, should possess us as the loyal subjects of a crucified but now glorified Lord. Those who came to David in his exile were entirely for him, and had left all to be with him and to share his fortunes. "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse; peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers; for thy God helpeth thee" (1 Chron. xii. 18). And that other band had faces like lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains. Alas! where is this enthusiasm? We see it in Paul, and to it he encourages his son Timothy in the midst of everything that was in wreck around. May we, dearest ——, covet a portion of this spirit, and hold our ground whereto we have attained, losing nothing, but making advance. The whole thing must go *inside before God*. Outward victory is always in pro-

portion to the inward, or if, indeed, the inward does not keep pace, there will be a fall.

What led me to this train of musing was partly the reading of Nehemiah vi., "I am doing a great work." O, how his soul put value on the glory of building a wall in Jerusalem! It was the consciousness of having *God's will in hand*, and unmingled delight in it, that saved him from the snares. God saved him through his attachment to Zion. "They shall prosper that love thee." I find that diligence in the things of God is a great prevention of temptation; and in order to it, that having the word in some one form or another ever in my heart, whatever my hands are about, is very helpful. For instance, in bed before rising, it may be, if I am concerned that the precious name of Jesus be glorified this day in myself and in the family; and that whatever may occur, instead of bringing out flesh that it may bring out Christ and the sweet and sweetening savour of His grace, what a help it will be, and how thankful at the end if in anything we have been made a comfort and a blessing.

We are brought to know God and His dear Son thus intimately for ourselves, in order that we may be the channels of the blessedness that is in God to those who are yet in the misery of the far country, and who are thus strangers to it all.

My chief concern for you all is, that in your individual ways Christ may be manifest one towards another. It is far more difficult to manifest uniformly the tenderness and unselfishness of Jesus in our relationships than anywhere else; but all godliness and power begin there.

J. R.

Dear —, I am glad to see that God is exercising you in heart and conscience, for indeed it is only so that Christ replaces self—which is so subtle—only so that we get into the truth. It is not pleasant to find that after we thought ourselves to be good Christians—and it may be, in our folly, better than others—God

is showing us all that is in our heart, and making us to say, "Behold, I am vile," and casting us over afresh, aye, and in a more absolute way than ever, on His wondrous mercy in Jesus: but oh, it is good, it is sanctifying, it brings us into the power of eternal things; flesh is seen to be flesh, and what is more, we see our own beloved selves to be flesh in the presence of a holy God. But oh, how lovely is He then in our eyes, how we hide ourselves in Him, how we join with Paul in saying, "That I may be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, the *righteousness which is of God* by faith." And that is Christ Himself for us before God; now as righteousness, as He was for us on the cross as sin.

But whilst that is blessed and precious, it is as a stepping-stone to what is beyond. Not that we ever leave it, or the sense of being the chief of sinners; but then we get into the presence of God in Christ as risen with Him—all the old and its shame left behind us, and we a new creation in Him before God; His workmanship for His own glory and joy, and for the display of the loveliness of His Christ to us, and in us; and not display merely, but through it the enjoyment of it, so that Christ becomes to us what He is to Him in our poor measure. Everything else passes out of our sight, and Jesus, Jesus only, occupies the heart and eye.

Oh, with what weanedness of spirit do we sit at His feet now with Mary, what undistracted listening to His voice, what a heaven in being near Him—just near Him, without saying one word, or needing to hear one, but only to be near that blessed One, and to lean our head upon or hide it in His bosom! What will heaven be, when we see Him *and are like Him*? not merely outwardly, but then fully inwardly—He filling us, and He only.

Well, this it is that draws out the heart again with Paul in saying, "That I may know Him," and that

now ; and know Him to *be Him*, as he goes on in effect to say ; for you want to be what you love and adore. That, indeed, is the order and character of the divine life in us—ever, ever tending to Christ : never feeling it has attained, because of the infinitude of blessing before it ; but for that very reason, ever, ever reaching forth after it : never hungering and never thirsting, because in the presence of such blessedness ; and yet ever hungering and ever thirsting for that very reason.

Dear —, what a portion is ours ! But, alas ! how we grovel on in this region of the shadow of death, instead of in the living enjoyment of Christ, *i.e.*, so satisfied with blessedness as to be going nimbly toward Him, pushing aside the briars which would entangle, and not letting our feet sink in the “morass of evil” through which we have to pass.

Love feeds on love. The dove found no *rest* for the sole of its foot except in the ark ; so may we be in the world, as not of it, and as having nothing in common with it, but as strangers in it because He was—all the nourishment and comfort of our souls drawn from Him above. But to be there we need two things : to have our wills broken, so as not to be doing or desiring our own will or way in any thing, but the will of God, and that blessed pathway in which He leads us by His eye in understanding. “The secret of the Lord is with them that *fear Him*,” &c. And another thing is, we must have our hearts shown to themselves, not merely as assenting to the doctrine of what we are, but in the presence of God judging ourselves to be then and there as in ourselves only flesh, so as to be cast over absolutely on Christ as our righteousness before Him. Then we get into liberty ; and then the heart goes out towards, and after, and with this blessed One, who is our *life* as well as our righteousness, and the object and sustenance of our life too, and its guide and rule in this wilderness of sin and confusion.

But oh, how sweet to have left all that *we were* behind in the cross (or on it, if you please—Gal. ii.), and as alive from the dead in a new life, the precious gift of our God and Father, and which Christ Himself is! to go onward with Him in this path of doing God's will—this way of holiness—this path "which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen"—this King's highway, in which we have nothing to do but to please Him and go forward. "What is that to thee? *Follow thou Me.*"

Dearest —, it is such a joy to me to know that your heart goes along with this, God's end and portion for us as His here; and if you feel that you are weak, and that you cannot trust yourself, that too is preparation for it, and casts you over on Him as our resource against ourselves. Indeed, it is through conflict inwardly that alone we can walk in this way; but then it is self-judgment in the presence of the God who has redeemed us, and who by it is making us partakers of *His* holiness; and if conflict inwardly, it is power and peace outwardly, and liberty and blessing. We are then delivered from self, so as to be the sharers and vessels of Christ's unselfish and blessed affections to a poor world, and of His joyous and delighting affection in the blessed of His Father. We get Christ's eyes then, and seek not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to lay down our lives for the brethren. Ah, who dreams of so doing? J. R.

HERESY.

It is the constant thing to-day—our relationship is tossed aside at choice. What a precious thing it is that our gracious God and Lord abide faithful, or where should we be? It is not corporate action that Titus iii. 10 calls for, but it calls for my personal action towards such an one on the very ground that he takes a Christian place within. It in no way refers to assembly discipline. The use of the word heresy by many to-day is in antagonism to Scripture. Scrip-

ture shows heresies brought in, and warns the saints, but it never says, either cut the holder off, or cut yourselves off from them. The whole idea is foreign to Scripture. Titus iii. 10 does require me to avoid the person who adopts or brings the heresy, calling him a heretic, but that is just because he *is* inside, not outside. 2 Peter ii. teaches that the Lord knoweth how to deal with them, and in no way requires discipline on them from the assembly. E. C. P.

CRUCIFIED TO THE WORLD.

IT can never be true that we are crucified to the world unless the heart is in constant communion with the cross of Christ. The cross comes in in everything, as a matter of daily experience. How is one to pass into the old age of a Christian? How find one's self laid aside, no longer with any energy? Surely only by the cross. How can we meet difficulties with a word, and be kept in perfect quietness? Only by the cross. How can we keep under such flesh as ours? Does the "old man" ever get to be better? Not a bit! but you must learn to be able to carry the cross, saying of everything that is evil, "I have nothing to do with that, because my Lord was crucified on account of it." G. V. W.

If we knew more of Christ's sympathies, the children of God might have more for one another. If full of sorrow yourself, go and sympathize with another, and your own will be gone.

The people of God should wait with the girdle and the lamp, which are the beautiful standing symbols of their calling, till the Lord appears: that is, with minds girt up unto holy separation from present things, and with hearts brightened up with the desire and expectation of coming things.—J. G. B.