

# WORDS IN SEASON.

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

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## SOME THOUGHTS FOR PLAIN FOLK.—III.

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### OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM.

IN pursuance of our subject: whilst plain folk, it will readily be admitted, cannot enter into the merits of criticisms based on words and phrases in a language they do not understand, viz., the Hebrew, in which the law was written, are they to accept without hesitation what critics so confidently assert about the compilation of the Pentateuch? Now, without in the least denying the value of ripe scholarship, or of critical acumen, both of which, in their place, are most serviceable, we think that even plain folk have within their reach some means of testing the conclusions now urged as to the authorship of what are commonly called the five books of Moses. Deuteronomy, as we have already stated, is assigned to the age of Manasseh; the priestly code was not formed till the days of Ezekiel; and the Mosaic authorship cannot be predicated of any book of the law.

Of course, then, any writers or students of the Word, living after these dates and not far removed from them, would be acquainted with these supposed facts, and their language would be in accord with them. We propose in the present paper to see what light Ezra, Nehemiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel can throw on the question. To the two former we first turn. Both of them lived after the exile, and played no mean part in the history of their nation. The former was a ready scribe in the law of Moses (Ezra vii. 6); the latter was a man of intelligence, education, and position, being the cupbearer of Artaxerxes Longemane, King of Persia, and also the Tirshatha by the King's appointment over the returned remnant in the land (Neh. viii. 9). Both of them were eminently pious men.

Now, in the book of Ezra, and again in that of

Nehemiah, we read of the law as the book of Moses (Ezra vi. 18 ; Neh. xiii. 1). In Ezra that designation occurs in connection with the regulations as to the different services of the Priests and of the Levites in the ritual appointed for the worship of God. This reference in Ezra necessarily, then, takes us back to those books of the Pentateuch in which such regulations are found ; whilst the reference in Neh. xiii. 1 turns us to Deut. xxiii. 3-5, where alone the disability of an Ammonite or a Moabite to enter the congregation of the Lord is authoritatively declared. There was, then, in the days of these godly Jews, one of whom was a priest, a book of the existence of which both they and the people were aware, and called the *book* of Moses, and containing the *law* of Moses (Neh. viii. 1). In that, evidently, were found the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, the two former of which treat of the relative duties of the priests and Levites. We may, then, fairly ask—would all that volume have been regarded by them as the *book* of Moses if the Mosaic authorship of Genesis to Numbers could not be sustained, and that of Deuteronomy had unquestionably to be given up ? Were they all in the dark on this most important matter ?

Ezra, as we have said, was a priest, and a ready scribe in the law of Moses. Assuming that the critics are correct as to the time of its compilation, could we suppose that he was wholly ignorant of the assumed fact that Deuteronomy was composed in the reign of Manasseh according to some critics, or in that of King Josiah according to others ? Was he in the dark about the formation of the so-called priestly code, which is assigned to a period at, or subsequent to that of the prophet Ezekiel, and, therefore, not far from Ezra's own epoch ? Could the fathers of Israel at the date to which Ezra vi. 18 refers, viz., the sixth year of Darius the Persian, have been in the dark as to the recent formation of that code ? With

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Jeshua and Zerubbabel, who were still alive, there returned, it should be remembered, some from Babylon who had been personally acquainted with the appearance of Solomon's Temple (Ezra iii. 12). In the lifetime, then, of these last the priestly code, we are given to understand, must have been formulated. Were such ignorant of that? If this modern theory is correct, some of the congregation must surely have been aware of the recent increase of the volume of the law. How, then, could the Pentateuch, a good part of which is composed of the so-called priestly code, have been styled at that time with any consistency—the *book* of Moses?

Who, at that time, we may fairly ask, discerned the supposed composite character of the volume? If none did, how can we be sure that any living upwards of twenty centuries later can really discern it now? If the composite character and gradual formation of the book of the law was known then—and it is difficult to conceive, if the critics are right, that it was not—plain folk will think that it was something approaching to the nature of a fraud to style the volume the *book* of Moses, one large part of which was known to be compiled in the days of Manasseh, and another good slice of it only formulated during or after the Babylonish exile. Were Jeshua, Zerubbabel, Haggai, and Zechariah all in a conspiracy to deceive the people? For what else could we call such conduct? Or were they all in ignorance of the manner and time of the compilation of that volume, which in their eyes was God's law to them all? Who can believe that? We, then, can virtually interrogate men who lived at or near the time when the sacred book of the law was at last, we are told, completed; but we find no hint in confirmation of that theory in the Scriptures of truth, and no statements of any of these men confirm the conclusions of the so-called higher criticism.

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Will it be objected that Ezra vi. 18 was never penned by him, but written by some one, name and date unknown, years after that ready scribe in the law of his God was gathered to his fathers? What, then, shall we make of certain chapters in Nehemiah, which tell us something of Ezra's acts when in life? We refer to chapters viii., ix., and x. In what light did Ezra and Nehemiah and the people of their day regard the volume of the law? Now, at whatever date it may be said that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were written, whether by themselves or by some unknown individual many years later, we must at least believe, till the contrary is demonstrated, that the work contains reliable history, and not mere fables. Turning, then, to Nehemiah viii. 1, we learn that the people spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring "the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel." As that it was read publicly by him, and hearkened to by the people. It was for them "the book of Moses" (xiii. 1); "the book of the law of God" (viii. 8); "the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses" (viii. 14), in which were the precepts, statutes, and laws made known "by the hand of Moses" (ix. 13, 14). It was "God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God" (x. 29). This was the common belief of the whole congregation at Jerusalem with Ezra and Nehemiah in their midst.

This is confirmed by the evident attention paid by the people to Ezra, as he read to them on the first day of the seventh month—the feast of trumpets (viii. 1-12). Nor would one reading suffice. For on the next day the chief of the fathers of all the people were gathered together to understand the words of the law (viii. 13). Then they learnt the prescribed way of keeping the approaching feast of Tabernacles, as detailed in Leviticus xxiii. 39-42.

But here we may be told, that these verses in Leviticus are really compiled from two sources, partly

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from the priestly code (P), and partly from the laws of holiness (H); and combined, in all probability, by a compiler who lived subsequent to the formation of them both. If that is the case, that law, as we read it, must have been of very recent compilation when Ezra recited it that day, yet the narrative tells us that the command to dwell in booths had dropped into abeyance subsequent to the days of Joshua, whilst it clearly intimates that it was observed in his day (Neh. viii. 17). A difficulty here arises for plain folk. If those verses of Levit. xxiii. are really so comparatively modern, as the critics would assure us, how did Joshua and those with him come to observe a command which was only formulated in the law centuries after his death?

Difficulty after difficulty confronts us as we look into the composite formation of the book. And again we have to ask how it was that such was unknown to Ezra and his contemporaries? Clearly it was unknown, if Neh. ix. is a truthful exponent of the language of the people in solemn confession to God, when led by the Levites on the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month, on hearing the law again read. For where and how do they give us to understand that Israel received the law? They got it not in Egypt, but in the wilderness, and that by the hand of Moses (Neh. ix. 13, 14). Was the revelation there vouchsafed just a nucleus round which other laws should cluster? Not a hint of that did the Levites give. No suggestion of that kind do we read of as made. The nation's history is rehearsed, their entrance into the land being stated (22-25); then their disobedience when in it is recounted, and their consequent punishment is acknowledged (26-32), but not a word of any expansion of the law in years subsequent to the time of Moses. God's law they had broken, and prophets were raised up (26), and for what? To

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be the channels of fresh legal enactments, and to re-edit and expand the original legislation to suit more recent times! No. Prophets were raised up to testify against the people, and to bring them back if possible to the law (26-29). Then there must have been the law already given, and also known, when those prophets ministered.

But the priestly code (P), not formulated till the days of Ezekiel, or later, is this what we are to accept? If such was the case, that prophet, one would think, would have known something about it. With some of that code he was probably acquainted, so it is said. We would rather think that in all that was said to be comprised in it he, as a priest, was versed, though not as a code distinct from or to be marked off from the rest of the law. And we base our conviction for this on the way that he writes of the Mosaic law.

In the seventh year of his captivity, transported as he had been to the river Chebar, when Jehoiachin went a captive to Babylon, certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord, and sat before the son of Buzi to await the divine answer. It came, recounting Israel's ways from the days of Egypt downwards. How had God cared for them? He had taken them up in Egypt, wholly undeserving of His favour, brought them out of it, rebellious though they already were, and led them into the wilderness (Ezek. xx. 5-10). Now something new on the part of God is detailed. Statutes and judgments He gave them, "which if a man do he shall even live in them" (11). To the Mosaic revelation the prophet undoubtedly refers. Did the people obey it? In the wilderness they were disobedient; in the land they rebelled and departed from God's law (13-28). Were they waiting for the full development of the law, of which but a nucleus had been given them in the wilderness? Ezekiel says nothing of that. *The only legislation for the nation's guidance that he spake of was that given in the wilderness, and, as we know, by the hand of*

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*Moses.* He mentions that legislation in verse 11, and no other. He refers to it frequently (see verses 13, 16, 19, 21, 24) as in force throughout the wilderness life, and also when the people possessed the land. But of any expansion of it, of any re-editing of it, of any J., E., JE., P., H., or Deuteronomist he gives no hint. He mentions no revelation of statutes or judgments subsequent to those given in the wilderness. The law, he would teach us, was complete then. He was speaking to men, too, who must have known something of the past. Why did no one interpose and tell him of J., E., P., H., &c.? Why did not he, a priest, intimate that the priestly code, as it is called (P), was only lately formulated? Not a word of that. The legislation in the wilderness he speaks of, but nothing later. Was he ignorant of the labours of those unknown individuals, J., E., JE., P., H.? Assuming that they ever existed, are we, in this nineteenth century, to pity his ignorance, or to believe what he believed as the veritable teaching of God?\*

Then Daniel is another witness to the belief which was current during the exile. For him the law was "the law of Moses; the servant of God" (Dan. ix. 11), and in that were found the "oath" and the "curse" under which the people, he confessed, had come. Now Deut. iv. 26, 27; xxviii. 15-68; xxix. 27, are special portions of the law which treat of that curse; for in Deuteronomy, and not in Leviticus xxvi. the curses are mentioned. Did the captive prophet forget the ministry of the prophets when the people were in the land? By no means. He mentions that ministry. He fully recognised it, but as distinct from the law of Moses (Dan. ix. 10). The prophets set the laws before the people. The law, however, was the law of Moses (11, 13), and existed anterior to the institution of the prophets. Daniel knows of no other law; no legislator but Moses does he mention.

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\* Would any think that verse 25 may refer to some expansion of the law? We believe the prophet here refers to that character of dealing on the part of God, of which Stephen speaks in Acts vii. 42.

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Throughout the Old Testament, then, the testimony is uniform that the law was given by Moses, and given in the wilderness, and no expansion of it, or re-editing of it, ever hinted at during all the centuries between Moses and Malachi; and the people were supposed, age after age, to have in their midst, as extant, the law of Moses, given by God to him, and written in his life in a book for the abiding instruction of the nation. Where is it now?

What the Lord declared, we have seen that Joshua in his day confessed. Throughout the monarchy the Pentateuch was viewed as complete. Those who lived during the exile, and after it, confirm the common belief, and attest that they knew of no re-editing of it to suit more recent times. In this, the common belief of Christendom, and of Judaism likewise, plain folk may rest, despite the assertion unhesitatingly made, that Deuteronomy exhibits such contradictions to the rest of the Pentateuch that a later hand than that of Moses must have certainly compiled it. C. E. S.

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SOLEMNITY OF DISOWNING THE LORD'S  
AUTHORITY.

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"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die."

COVETING universal dominion, and usurpation of authority over creatures, due only to Him who created them, got for that fallen one judgment as pronounced above, though title of prince was his, and such lapse of time transpires ere the Seed of the woman bruise the serpent's head, yet eventually the promise made will get faithful fulfilment. He is not slack, as some account delay. Here is shown that the fallen angels were not delegated by Him to occupy places as heads of systems, either in this world—the scene of man's sin—or that which is unseen to us (but not unknown); for



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those angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Angelic power is manifest at times: angels could put forth their hand and pull Lot into the house; could smite with blindness and destroy Sodom by the direction of the Lord. Hananiah, Michael, and Azariah, with Daniel, knew what power had been put forth for their preservation. He who was tempted heard—"He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee to keep Thee in all Thy ways." "An angel appeared unto Him from heaven strengthening Him," tells of service and subjection on the part of such as are useful to Him.

Even Satan has to render service when an apostle delivers one to him for destruction of the flesh. Heb. i. gives what is further, and so conclusively shows Him to have worship from all the angels of God. Rev. v. is a view of their innumerable company, with other created beings, giving glory to the Worthy One. Creation celebrates allegiance to no stranger when she utters her notes: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Universal is the "Amen" of living creatures and those once fallen beneath them, who fall down and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever. Our apostle says: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath *not seen*, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head." Yet when John *saw*, he fell down to worship before the angel, who said, "See thou do it not;" taking his place humbly as fellow-servant, and along with prophets and such as keep the sayings of this book. "Worship God" is the plain direction.

The prince of this world got his unenviable position by guile, subtlety, and falsehood. And who can tell

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better than He who met him, how elaborately he had fortified his position? for darkness covered this scene, and creatures of God, yea, God here, speaking in general terms, had no recognition. What generalship! what strategy!! as those under the prince of this world carry out his plans who suggest that murder shall precede possession of inheritance wrongly held.

Oh! fatal way of covering up guilt, of rendering accounts to rightful heir—how awful this kind of recognition. “This is the heir, let us kill Him, that the inheritance be ours.” If unexpressed, it was the language of the heart of those who were the ready tools of Satan, the father of lies. And this vessel ready for use, this instrument prepared, we find the most favoured of God's creatures—chief priests—which should normally speak of nearness to God, and pharisees would remind us of at least outward order and orthodoxy; but, alas, how far from Him. Hate to the full, not in its incipency, is shown. Murder is as readily suggested, and as speedily enacted, as words and acts convey. Many are still running in the way of Cain, but the awful lake of fire is hid from their eyes under the well-sounding term of Christian socialism, and an enthusiasm thrown into their greed for position and possession which they assume it unrighteous for others to hold, yet not for them. This was Balaam's fatal error. And now that it is known and felt that the whole scene advances on these lines of unrighteousness, we must conclude that considerable slumbering has been done while ministers of unrighteousness have prevailed upon the mass bearing the Christian name to embrace and avow anti-Christian principles (2 Cor. xi. 14, 15 ; 2 Pet. ii. 1-3).

A pungent thought for thinkers is given of our God, salutary when the energetic mind and will of man is in unhealthy exercise: “Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that *thou* shalt escape the judgment of God?” (Rom. ii. 3).

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How marvellous to contemplate One bowing under judgment, when that guile, subtlety, and falsehood were so elaborated upon those who were servants of sin, under Satan, in the darkness of this world, so that common acclamation is made for Barabbas (one after their own heart), and crucify Him! crucify Him! is emphatic proof and testimony of His rejection.

Christ crucified! Marvellous spectacle!! Death, yea, shameful death, and more judgment as well. How fully has man, under Satan, expressed his heart toward Him. But a certain stronghold has to be taken in His weakness and apparent defeat, and Heb. ii. makes known to our adoring hearts deliverance wrought and Deliverer known: "That through death He might destroy 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." His empty tomb, God's Holy One not suffered to see corruption, but we seeing Him crowned with glory and honour, give us a wondrous title to shout, "His be the Victor's Name!" Matchless triumph!

There is that, too, which is peculiarly precious to Christ and in all grace; mystery made known is mystery no more. Christ also has loved the assembly, and delivered Himself up for it, in order that He might sanctify it, purifying it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present the assembly to Himself glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things, but that it might be holy and blameless. It is He who nourishes and cherishes members of His body. There is to be no usurpation here, as Timothy was instructed. That which is owned of Him and ordered according to the perfection of His wisdom and the magnitude of His love is seen in its character of dependence, supplicating for kings and those in dignity; for how much is spoken of man in that chapter to Timothy. Woman has her place there in that assembly as learner, and man is seen in the attitude of lifting up pious hands, supplicating,

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interceding, praying. But learning in silence, in quietness, as mark of true subjection, is the part of holy women. The covered woman in 1 Cor. xi. shows, again, that God has made a difference; and, lest the foregoing should leave too much to be inferred, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." "I am jealous over you" (Corinthians), says one to whom was made known the mystery, "with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

No amount of outer covering, royal garbs decked with gold, precious stones and pearls, glorifying self and living luxuriously, saying in heart I sit a queen—this will never make her one, or those that shape after the counterfeit, however pleasing to the flesh to live in royal state, to be in unholy alliance with subordinate wicked powers on the earth. Scripture, which cannot be broken, says, "Suffer with—reign with. If we deny, He also will deny us; if we believe not, He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself." But there are those He can find still of the Simeon and Anna type, who abide in the temple, though generally deserted, as in our day, unless for purpose so foreign to our blessed God. In His day things had to be taken hence, for present gain was that which attracted most, yet after He spake openly to the world, taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret had He said nothing.

The blessed Lord deliver from pretension and assumption. "Hear the Church!" What usurpation is marked here. Self-exaltation leads not to self-abasement, and His woe is already pronounced upon the world because of offences—they come from thence. What heed we should take to what we hear, for the Spirit speaks still to the Churches, and speaks in grace

## COMMUNION.

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of repentance available, and warns of His future ways, judgment to sweep and clear the way for Him.

Another usurper, in the person of a man, is seen in 2 Thess. ii., but there His own are taught to desert the temple, and not abide. May our God, who is a consuming fire, give us to ponder His Word. What imposture! what awful blasphemy! that man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. But, God be praised, He would not have us shaken in mind or be troubled. The man of sin is placed, with all workers of unrighteousness, in the lake of fire. The Sinless Man is enthroned, in all things having pre-eminence. "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

In meantime, may our hearts follow whither He has gone. This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God. The Son of Thy right hand, our blessed God!—W. B.

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 COMMUNION.
 

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OH, Jesus, risen, blest One,  
 How sweet to know Thy Name!  
 How sweet it is to rest on  
 The brightness of Thy fame!

How sweet for us to cherish  
 Bright, loving thoughts of Thee,  
 Since naught can e'er diminish  
 Thy love and sympathy!

How sweet, blest Lord and Master,  
 To own Thy hand of love,  
 That, through this world's disaster,  
 Leads to the home above!

*Nassau, Bahamas.*

H. C. C.

## HELD BY THE WORD.

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THERE is nothing more sorrowful to behold than that which has now become characteristic of Christians—looseness respecting the Word. It would seem, from the spirit now abroad, that we are to rule it, not it to rule us; that our conduct is to be measured and governed, not by that precious Word, but by individual conscience; and to thus act is claimed as a right. At the same time it is loudly voiced that the Word is held and looked to, forgetful of the fact that the proof that such is done is that *we are held by the Word*. It is not enough to hold it, but what is wanted is *so* to hold it that it holds us; and it is only when such is the case that it has its proper place, and exerts its authoritative influence over us.

Looking back over Old Testament times we think of Balaam. "And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah my God to do less or more" (Num. xxii. 18). Professedly he held the Word, but was very far from being held by it, for instantly God places Balaam where he could act of himself, and without shifting the responsibility off upon Him, he is up and away with the Princes of Moab, thereby incurring the anger of God; and thus (though God had, as it were, by His words, "If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them," given him permission so to do) very plainly showing us what would have given Him joy and delight.

Then in New Testament times, as a contrast to this, we can ponder over the actions of those twelve disciples who walked with the Master. How delightful the contemplation when we see some of them attracted by the Word as presented in the Person of Christ. Some, we say, for notably one was not thus drawn; and how different the end of this one from that of the others. All displayed their weakness, but

## HELD BY THE WORD.

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the last act of this one towards his Master was to betray Him. He had been, with the others, truly "round the Word," but was not held. When this blessed Master was being anointed unto burial, and that by a poor devoted woman, Judas was the one who grumbled. Why? The answer proclaims his character, and shows us that where he had been, and what he had heard, had wrought no effect in his heart. "He was a thief, and carried the bag." Self was first, though he sought to hide it beneath consideration for the poor (a characteristic of Him who was "the Word"). The others had their testing times and failures, but at the end were found faithful and real. We can, as it were, stand by, and hear them declare to Him, "By this we believe;" and hear Him answer, "Do ye now believe?" They professed to know, and to hold, what He had said; but, when the test was applied, His words were not (for the moment) held. Self-confidence was the cause; but, when they recalled those words, and comprehended their meaning, then was the "being held" by them made manifest. We see the same thing in an individual, Peter, who, also led astray by self-confidence, only required the eye of the Lord to meet his, ere his conscience was touched, and all the Lord's words brought to mind. That same power which attracted at the first now drew him again.

As another example, let us contrast "Demas greeteth you" (Col. iv. 14) with "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Tim. iv. 10). Sad it is to view the contrast; but yet we want it to speak to us in its own voice. Demas had been the Apostle's fellow-labourer; holding the Word, but yet, alas! was not held by it. The fading, fleeting, toys, and the beggarly elements of this world, soon wrapped him round; and the peerless One, of whom the Word spake, and who was "the Word," with all the blessing associated with Him, was left for other things. What an exchange, and at what a cost! it is, we again repeat, to know the Word, and to be

to be held by it. But how common such instances are to-day. Plenty of outward show and pretension with regard to the Word ; but when it comes to having every action weighed and ordered by that Word (which is the proof of really knowing it, and being held by it), then it is considered by many to be old-fashioned, out-of-date, and narrow so to submit to it ; by others unnecessary, as superior spiritual knowledge carries them *beyond* the Word !

But, however, if it have its proper place, then will whatsoever we do pass in review before it, and be searched by its light. And it is only by our thus possessing the Word that we can reach the hearts of those we are surrounded with, and speak with that power which the Word-kept heart is alone capable of doing, and so hushing the dissentient voice raised against Christianity on account of inconsistent walk ; for, if held by the Word, consistency must and will be the result. Some saints wonder, as they see others smarting under the lash of ungraciousness, that such do not seek to get away from it. Do you ask why they do not ? The answer is—the truth holds them.

Thus it should be with each one : where we are we should be by the Word of God. We may have to put up with much that is ungracious ; much that is trying ; and may have to face many difficulties (almost necessarily so in these days), but *placed* there by the Word, that same Word *keeps* us there. There may be the slip, and the growing weary for the moment, but, like Peter, and unlike Balaam—who would haste forward in a wrong path in spite of everything—a look is sufficient to pierce the very heart and recall us.

What grace on the part of our God that it is so ; and what humility is necessary on ours lest we get ~~swollen~~ up, and attribute the standing fast to some-  
~~thing~~ of ourselves. "We must possess Christianity ~~corrected~~," and then will our every way be pervaded ~~by the~~ obedience of Christ ; and this present world ~~shall be~~ something that shall be an attraction for these



## PRAYER.

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poor hearts of ours. May it be given us to realise that, if we "keep ourselves," it is because we are kept, for then shall we magnify the grace that gave the Word, and seek to be so conformed to it that He may be enabled to say to us, "Thou hast kept My word," and so be displaying Him and glorifying God thereby, whilst treading the wilderness path. H. F.

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 PRAYER.
 

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IN the neighbourhood of Christiansfeld, in Schleswig-Holstein, most of the fields and meadows are enclosed by hedges. One of these fields having been much used as a thoroughfare, the owner resolved to put a stop to it, even by force, if necessary. Arming himself one evening with a stout cudgel, he took up a concealed position under a hedge, determined to make an example of the first trespasser he could catch.

In the same quarter there lived at that time a venerable preacher and disciple of the Lord named Fruhauf, noted for his piety and zeal in his Master's service, and his longing desire for the conversion of sinners.

The farmer had not lain long concealed when the gate opened and Fruhauf stepped into the beautiful meadow. The rural stillness of the scene seemed to impress him, and he uttered these words: "O thou loving Father in heaven, bless the owner of this beautiful estate. Manifest towards him the drawings of the Father to Thy Son Jesus Christ our Saviour, that he may believe that Thy Son has, by dying upon the cross, obtained even for him the forgiveness of his sins. Ah, yes, dear Saviour, let him at once, through the power of Thy expiatory death, be brought into Thy kingdom of joy, that he, with us Thy redeemed ones, may unite in praising Thee!"

Not one word escaped the listening farmer as he lay there in ambush. He knew not what to do; the weapon fell from his hand, and almost involuntarily he dropped upon his knees, and remained for a long time in that position, the tears rolling down his cheeks. He looked around for the stranger, intending to hasten after him, but he was gone—the meadows were as silent and solitary as the grave. Lost in deep thankfulness, he sought his home.

His wife, who knew the purpose with which he had gone out, said, “Now, have you caught anyone?”

“Ah, dear wife, only think! there was only one, but he *caught me!*” “But how so?” asked the wife. “Thou canst defend thyself!” “Yes, yes; but he was stronger than I, for he had quite different weapons. Only think! one went into my meadow in order to offer for me the most heartfelt prayer I ever heard! There it seized me between its fists, and threw me down before God, and convinced me that I am a great sinner! To-morrow I will go to the pastor in Christiansfeld, and ask him if he knows who that aged man is that went into our meadow; and thou shalt go with me.”

When they went he was not more astonished than Fruhauf himself was to see before him the man for whom he had been praying the evening previously. “That is the man of God himself,” whispered the farmer to his wife; “he it was that prayed for me!” The pastor then learnt from the man what effect the Lord had led him to experience from that prayer which he had overheard.

The farmer was thoroughly awakened, and upon his wife, also, the circumstance had a salutary effect, so that eventually, by listening to the Word, they were both turned to Him in whom alone is help and redemption from eternal perdition; and, through faith in His precious blood, entered into everlasting life.—*Extract.*

## “PHEBE, OUR SISTER.”

*Romans* xvi. 1.

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THE sun is sparkling on the waves of the island-dotted Ægean Sea, purpling the distant hills, glittering on the snows of Parnes, and gleaming on the white columns of the temple at Athens. The harbour is filled with craft of all sizes—corn-ships of Alexandria and the Black Sea, pleasure and fishing boats. There lies a small vessel destined for Crete; it will also carry passengers bound for Rome, who, re-embarking at Crete, and sailing along the beautiful Mediterranean, past the green isle of Sicily, will after many days land on the fair shores of Italia.

A little party at the port of Corinth are bidding tearful farewells. The central figure of the group is a woman, who presently embarks on the Cretan ship. The anchor is let, and, with sails set and the rowers at their oars, she starts on their journey. While ever her friends can be seen, the lonely passenger stands watching with straining eyes. Athens' temple-crowned hill fades, and the far-away coast-line of Greece disappears—all vanishing in the blue distance.

*A woman on a journey*—a perilous journey, and to Rome, where the monster Nero is reigning, and where already has sounded the cry, “Death to the Christians!” Who is she? See her sitting under the shadow of the ship's square sail. She draws a letter from her robe—a circular letter, so we shall do no harm in looking over her shoulder. In after days it was read by the holy Polycarp, the martyred Ignatius, the cultured Justin, and the learned Clement; and in still later times by—*ourselves!* The Epistle to the Romans.

*The traveller's name* was *Phebe*, meaning *The sunny one*. Going down a monotonous road in a London suburb one day, the red letter-pillar was noticed to be the only bright spot amid the winter's

gloom. Afterwards there was a note in the daily papers on the gloomy aspect of the streets, and suggesting that we have not only red pillars, but red umbrellas and waterproofs. But if all Christians wore bright faces, there would be no need for these red objects. Here is an extract on this very subject from the letter Phebe carried: "Now the God of hope fill you with all *joy* and peace in believing."

*The traveller's description.* This we also get from the letter she carries—*Saint*. The people to whom she was going were to receive her as saints, she being one too. "Called to be saints" is the description of Christians given in her letter. A saint is one who is separated, sanctified. Now-a-days the word is chiefly used in reference to God's children who have been called home, or, alas, in derision. We each should remember that this is the name every Christian bears, and we should so glorify it that none dare sneer at it. Saintliness is to be gained equally well in the crowd as in the cloister. In China they have kitchen gods; in England we need kitchen saints and household saints. *Sister*—"Whosoever shall do the will of My Father . . . the same is My brother and sister." Obedience is the root of divine relationship. It is nice to think of a well-dressed woman with money in her purse being our sister, but, if we are saints, we shall regard with deeper interest the tie of sisterhood which binds us to every believing woman. *Servant*—This is the same word in the original as is translated in other places "deacon." And as servant, deaconess, her work was recognised by the church at Cenchrea, of which she was a member. Paul, who wrote the letter she carried, called himself "a servant of Jesus Christ." *Succourer*—This was the form her service took. A changer of sorrow into joy. If her enemy was hungry, she fed him. Self-denial also was included in the succour she gave. If wine made her brother to offend, she took none;

## "PHEBE, OUR SISTER."

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pleasing not herself, but bearing the infirmities of the weak.

*Questions asked of the traveller.* This is the age of interviewing. Perhaps some of us would like to ask Sister Phebe a question or two. "You were once, sister, a heathen woman—a follower of the immoral Greek worship of the false gods. How do you account for this great change which has come over you?" Turning to her treasured letter, we can fancy that she gives each of her answers from its pages. "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."

"What induces you, Sister Phebe, to take this journey and to do this work?" "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?"

"But are you not afraid?" "We glory in tribulations. All things work together for good to them that love God. If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."


"But are you not often discouraged by non-success and fault-finding?" "*Patient* continuance in well doing. Whose praise is not of men, but of God."

*Critical remarks about Sister Phebe.* If the Master did not escape criticism, we are sure Sister Phebe will not. Some, perhaps, may say with regard to her, "Well, but she was a woman of leisure—probably a widow—and had no difficulty in finding time to do Christian work. I am a very busy woman, and can find no time for entering into any definite service." No doubt Phebe was a widow, or we think Paul would not have countenanced such a journey in those immoral days, for fear of bringing reproach upon the name of Christian. But how comes it about that it is the busiest woman that serves Christ most? What we want is to have the

*will* to work, the faculty of arranging our work in a business-like way, and the art of combining our work with Christian service. As illustrations of the latter, we may instance the distributing of bills concerning meetings, or leaflets accompanied with a word, as we take the baby out for a walk, and inviting lonely young people to tea instead of the friend who is able to return our hospitality.

Another criticism may be, "She was a rich woman, or she would never have been able to pay her passage-money. I am poor." Do not be quite sure that Sister Phebe was rich; she may have been very poor, and have had her passage-money paid by aid of a collection. But supposing she was rich, that of itself did not make her willing to serve. Giving forms but a small part, though an important part, of the service God asks from us.

"But," says another, "Sister Phebe was no doubt a woman of strong nerves. I am very shy and nervous." Yes, we know many Christian women are, but there is one line in Phebe's letter you have perhaps not noticed: "Yield yourselves unto God." Following this advice, such women have become strong to serve, proving the truth of one of the closing lines of the letter: "Him that is of power to stablish you."

*Sister Phebe's secret.* The secret that made her brave, that made her enthusiastic to serve, that made her wise to see ways of service, was all contained in the one word *love*. The love that prompted the Jewish women to cluster close round the cross, to gather early at the tomb, to spread the joyful tidings of a risen Lord, had touched her heart. Dare any of us say, "I cannot serve"?—*Mrs. Skinner.* 

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"FAULTLESS before the presence of His glory" (Jude 24). The Greek word signifies both without *blemish* and without *blame*. What a transcendent, soul-thrilling prospect!

## AS TO MEETINGS.

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1. Seek to be present at every opportunity, fulfilling the command, "not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together," and "owe no man anything." Those who do attend have their hands weakened by the indifference of those who only "come when they *feel* like it," and, alas, the result is, feel less and less like it. "This is the will of God," our coming together, and if truly following our Lord Jesus we shall delight to do it. Next to conscientiously "being there regularly" is—

2. Go in the *right spirit*; prepare your heart for a blessing by waiting on the Lord. He will not disappoint the heart that can say to Him, "Lord, I desire to go because it is pleasing to Thee ; grant me to be in the true attitude before Thee of dependence and obedience, that I may both honour Thee, and, receiving a blessing, myself be a blessing to others."

3. Then go in *due season*. Think of it as an appointment with the Lord and your brethren to be there at the set hour, remembering His own example, "*when the hour was come* He sat down and the twelve apostles with Him." He who created time observed it in the assembly of His saints.

4. Take whatever part you believe the Lord leads to. Do not hold back for feeling dull. Cast yourself upon Him who is very pitiful and full of tender mercy. He will not despise a lame sacrifice for thanksgiving, though He could not accept it for atonement. Bring what you have, and rejoice in the fact that

"To all our prayers and praises  
Christ adds His sweet perfume,  
And love the censer raises  
These odours to consume."

5. Sing as best you can ; first as making melody in your heart to the Lord, and next as believing it is

right in His sight to help in this way also. We make the meetings in one sense ourselves, and if once the thought finds an entrance, "It is vain to serve God, Behold what a weariness is it!" Satan has gained a victory.

6. Be ready to speak "five words," to teach others also. Give just the verse that helped you. He who shares his good has more left, as the lad who gave his five loaves to Jesus. Mention the difficulty that besets you; it may lead to help, under God, from others. "Give and it shall be given you."

7. Aim to speak to the stranger a kindly word. Ye were such, and "Ye know the heart of a stranger." Better offer a smile and an invitation back with a little tract than the curt "Are you saved?" and to tell such they are on their way to hell if not sure of it. We are fellow men and fellow sinners as well as "saints of God," and let this fact impress us in addressing others. If any come to a meeting not specially suitable, a word of explanation may bring them back to one that is more so. Above all, seek to be "prepared, furnished and ready to every good work."

B. C. G.

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## FRAGMENTS.

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"HAVING, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." That is my title. Now the exhortation is, that you are to enjoy your title. To enjoy is to obey. The first duty you owe to God is to enjoy what He has made you, and what He has given you. "Let us draw near." Use your privilege, as we say. It is the first grand duty of faith, and I am bold to say it is the most acceptable. —J. G. B.

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JOHN XIII.—The Lord was going up to heaven: how would He do this service up there? "If I do not do it," He says, "you will never be able to be up



there with Me." He takes the form of a servant ; then Peter says to Him, " Thou shalt never wash my feet." If He did not wash them clean enough, as to water merely—not blood here—they could not have a part with Him. He must make them fit for the place He was going to be in. I am going to be with Him, and before Him, and things here do not suit me, and the more so because the blood has given me a title to be in God's presence. The character of this holiness is, that we can be with Christ when He is gone to God. There must be a cleanness such as could suit the presence and the house of God.—J. N. D.

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EXTRACT FROM A LETTER, FEB., 1839.—“ . . . Oh, when we come to die, and our sins are brought to our remembrance, and we feel we are going to stand before the God we have sinned against, how dreadful would our state be but for the blood which Jesus carried into heaven, and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat on which God sits, so that the blood of His own Son is before Him — atoning blood ; blood that answers all the accusations. . . . God looks on that blood, and He is satisfied. . . . I sincerely pray that the sense of the value of Christ's blood in God's eyes may give you an assurance that it far outweighs all your sins, and that you may trust for the saving of your soul wholly to its all-prevailing power with God.

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ENOCH was a fine character. The *family man* in Genesis, with sons and daughters ; the *prophet* in Jude ; the *man of faith and hope* in Hebrews. “ He had this testimony, that he pleased God ” would not suggest that he had his breaks-down like the rest. Was it not Archbishop Leighton, when someone (his sister, I think) was saying how difficult, if not impossible, to be a consistent Christian with family cares and trials, was answered by him with quoting Enoch, who walked with God, and yet had sons and daughters ? One has taken up the thought that he must have been

very much alone in his family. Unless all of them had died before the flood, they must have been involved in it, except his great-grandson and family, of course.

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## FELLOWSHIP.

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IF we really seek the blessing of souls, *we shall guard with more carefulness, not with less, the entrance into fellowship.* We shall see that it be "holy and true," as He is with whom all fellowship is first of all to be. Careless reception is the cause of abundant trouble, and may be of general decline. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Men cannot walk together, except they are agreed. When trial comes, those that have never been firm of purpose, never, perhaps, convinced of the divine warrant for the position they have taken, scatter and flee from it with reckless haste, carrying with them, wherever they go, an evil report of what they have turned their backs upon. Such persons are, generally speaking, outside of any hope of recovery, and often develop into the bitter enemies of the truth.

We are incurring a great responsibility if we press or encourage people to take a position for which they are not ready; in which, therefore, they act without faith. It is just in principle what the apostle warns us of, the danger of leading others without an exercised conscience, to imitate a faith that is not their own.\* "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." No wonder there are wrecks all along the track of a movement for which this is so constantly required, and in which so many are endeavouring to walk without it. Ought we not to remember that it is the Holy and the True that is seeking fellowship with us? and that nothing but what answers to this character can abide the test that will surely come? F. W. G.

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\* That which cost them little to acquire, with little compunction they sacrifice.—ED.

## INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

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CLEOPATRA said to Marcus Antonius that it was not for him to be fishing for gudgeons, but for towns and cities, forts and castles; so is it not for the godly to be trading for transitory trash, but for eternal life, for glory and for immortality.—*Spencer*.

A MARINE DIVER having donned his diving suit, closed his helmet with its glass eye pieces, and descended to the floor of the sea. The effect of the glass and the water together is to magnify submerged objects, and, as he reached the bottom, what seemed like a large sheet of paper met his eyes, and the words PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD stared him in the face. The effect was wonderful. He did not wait for a more favourable time or place, for God had spoken to his soul in those five words. Then and there he knelt down and found salvation in Christ. In such a place did God meet and save the diver; and any unsaved reader of these words may be saved just wherever he is if he will by faith trust the Lord Jesus as his Saviour.

"YET A LITTLE WHILE, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." God will speak the word, and Christ will rise up to fetch us directly that all His business here is despatched. Stand, then, on the edge of thy nest, pluming thy wings for flight!

I KINGS XIII. 24: "A lion met him by the way and slew him." It was a sin unto death to put an angel's or a brother's word against His word "who cannot lie." He had rejected the word of the Lord, and the sequel is full of warning. ✓

NOTHING wounds us more than the opposition and condemnation of true brethren. Yet this is the royal way. Christ was judged and deserted by all, and Paul found all in Asia turned away from him. "The servant is not greater than his Lord."

MAN. What a chimera is he! What a confused chaos! What a contradiction! A professed judge of all things in the universe, and yet himself a feeble worm of the earth! The greatest depository and guardian of truth, and yet a mere huddle of uncertainty! the glory and the scandal of the universe!—*Pascal*.

GOD'S EYE.—A man having entered his neighbour's field to steal corn asked his little boy, whom he had taken with him, to hold the bag while he made sure they were not observed. When afterwards he began his guilty work, the little fellow said, "Father, you forgot to look somewhere else." "Which way, child?" said the frightened man. "You forgot to look up to the sky to see if God was noticing you." The reproof did its work, the man left the corn untouched, and never afterwards forgot what his child had taught him about God's eye. Dr. Todd relates that Lafayette, the friend of Washington, was once shut up in a gloomy prison, and the door of his cell had a small hole cut in it. At that hole a soldier was placed day and night to watch him. All he could see was the soldier's *eye*, but that eye was always there! Day and night, every moment, whenever he looked towards it, he always saw that relentless *eye*. Oh! he says, it was dreadful! There was no escape, no hiding, no possible concealment from that all-penetrating eye which was for ever watching him. How much more dreadful and unavoidable is the eye of God upon the sinner!

ABRAM signifies "a high father;" Abraham, the wider signification, "a father of a multitude of nations."

MILLIONS of years may have occupied the indefinite period between "the beginning," in which God created the heaven and the earth, and the evening, or commencement, of the first day of the Mosaic narrative. —*Dr. Buckland.*

DAYS OF CREATION.—The correct translation, "evening was, and morning was, day one," makes it clear that throughout the periods thus described there were evenings and mornings, the natural result of the revolution of the earth on its axis, and that the period which is styled "a day" represents a series of days and nights. —*McCausland.*

A PIOUS OLD SLAVE in Virginia being asked why he was always so *sunny-hearted*, replied, "Ah, massa, I always lays flat down on de *promises*, an' den I pray straight up to my heabenly Father." Humble, happy soul ! he was not the first who has eased an aching head and a heavy heart by laying it upon God's pillows, and risen up strengthened by reposing on the unchangeable love of God. Spiritually that man was a Cræsus ; for his soul's wealth was in the currency of heaven, every promise he took to the mercy-seat was found to be better than gold and more precious than rubies.

THE LAUGHTER of Abraham and Sarah. The former was from *wonder* and joy ; the latter from *doubtfulness* and joy. The angel reproved her because, though that laughter was from joy, it was not of full faith ; afterwards she was confirmed in faith also (Genesis xxi. 6). —*Augustine.*

GOD HAVING done a thing, so soon as we know that *He* hath done it, there is no room left to dispute its equity.

SIN ; use it as it would use you ; spare it not, for it will not spare you ; its very nature is to murder and destroy ; treat it, then, as your murderer, and allow it no quarter. O thou that are tempted this day to sin against God, flee from sin as you would from a deadly serpent. Far more deadly is that old serpent the devil than any cobra di capella.

ISAAC had never been so precious to his father had he not been recovered from death, as miraculously restored as given ! Abraham had never been so blessed in his seed had he not neglected Isaac for God. The only way to find comfort in an earthly thing is to surrender it in a believing carelessness into the hands of God. I know not whether that word, "my father," did not strike Abraham as deep as the knife of Abraham could have stricken his son, but faith forbad relenting. —*Bishop Hall.*

INFLUENCE OVER CHILDREN.—The mother of a family having an infidel husband, who made jest of religion, nevertheless brought them all up in the fear of the Lord. Asked how she preserved them from the influence of their father, she replied : "Because to the authority of a *father* I do not oppose that of the *mother*, but that of *God*. My children have always seen the Bible upon my table, and this has always been allowed to speak, rather than I. Did they propose a question, commit a fault, or perform a good action, I opened the Bible, and the Bible answered, reprovèd, or encouraged them. The constant reading of the Scriptures has wrought the prodigy which surprises you. God is faithful to His word."

LAURA BRIDGMAN could neither *hear*, *see*, nor *speak*, yet she learned, in spite of the absence of these faculties, that she was a sinner and Christ her accepted Saviour.

## INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

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JOHN WESLEY, when dying, wished to write, but his right hand had forgot its cunning, and the pen of that once ready writer refused to move. "I will write for you," said one. "What shall I say?" "Nothing, but that *God is with us!*" Raising his failing voice in tones of holy triumph, he repeated the heart-reviving words, "*God is with us.*" The best of all is, God is with us. Farewell! Farewell!"—and he calmly fell asleep.

WE CANNOT be lonely if God be with us, or want if He provide for us, or err if He guide us, or perish if He preserve us. All this and much more will He do for those who put their trust in Him. By how much His favour is better than life, by so much His being with us and keeping us is better than food and raiment.

WHAT A SOLEMN and striking admonition to youth is that inscribed on the dial at All Souls', Oxford—*perunt et imputantur*—the hours perish and are laid to our charge: for time, like life, can never be recalled.

SHEEP AND GOATS (Matt. xxv. 32, 33).—The colour of sheep in Eastern countries is generally *white*, that of goats *black*.

A QUIVERFUL of children (Ps. cxxvii. 3, 4).—The Rev. Moses Browne had *twelve*. On one remarking that he had just as many as Jacob, "Yes," said he, "and I have Jacob's God to provide for them."

JEALOUSY.—Of all the passions, jealousy is that which exacts the hardest service and pays the bitterest wages.—*Colton*.

THE FLIGHT OF JACOB (Gen. xxxi. 22) occurred 2266 A.M., 610 years after the flood, when Isaac was 157 and Jacob was 97 years old.

DUTIES are ours; events are God's. This relieves our burden greatly, and thus we can securely lay down our heads and close our eyes.

WHEN a pump is frequently used we get water at the first stroke, because the water is high in the pipe; but if it is little used the water gets low, and much pumping is needed ere the water comes. So is it with prayer. If we are instant in it, every little circumstance awakens a disposition to it, desire and words are always ready; but if we neglect it, prayer is difficult, because the water has become low.—*Felix Neff*.

THE UNACKNOWLEDGED Spirit of God.—Much reflection on the spiritual condition of our churches has led us to the conclusion that what we most urgently need is to recover the great doctrine of the Personality and Mission of the Holy Spirit.—*Methodist Times*.

THE INVISIBLE.—The Lord has ways of wearing us from the visible and tangible, that we may live in the invisible and real. God blows out our candles and makes us find our light in Him, to prepare us for that scene in which they need no candle, for the glory of God is their light; and where, strange to tell, they have no temples, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple thereof. O that God would gradually lift our hearts above all the outward, above all the visible, and bring us more into the inward and unseen! If you do not know anything about this, ask the Lord to teach you this riddle; and if you do know it, ask Him to keep you to the life and walk of faith, never quitting it for the way of sight and feeling.

LIFE.—Many say it is a solemn thing to die; but bethink you all and bethink you well, it is a more solemn thing to live.

"EDUCATION without religion will surround us with educated devils."—*Late Duke of Wellington*.

THE SCRIPTURES.—(1) The Lord observes them obediently, ordering His life and character and behaviour by them and according to them. (2) He uses them as His weapons of war or shield of defence when assailed by the tempter or by His enemies. (3) He avers and avows their divine authority and indestructible character, every jot and tittle thereof. (4) He treats them as authoritative and conclusive when He teaches His disciples or reasons with gainsayers. (5) He fulfils them (John xix. 28, 30). We may add that quotations are found from every part of the Old Testament in every part of the New. They are found in Matthew and on to Revelation, and are taken from Genesis to Malachi. Thus are the whole Scriptures closely and fully interwoven together. If Moses be insulted, Paul feels it; if Daniel or Zechariah be questioned, John and Peter will resent it. The shortest piece in the whole volume (Psalm cxvii.) is heard in the conclusion of the finest and most elaborate and most weighty argument we find in it (Romans xv. 10); and the book of Proverbs, dealing with common, practical, everyday life, is honoured by being made as rich and blessed a witness to the Christ of God in His mysterious glories as we get in any part of the whole Scriptures (Prov. viii.): Yea, "Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy Name." Nor does it speak of Him only; it discloses transactions in the past eternity, as it also reveals somewhat of the coming eternity. Yea, the book itself is a greater miracle than any which it records. In the person of the Son, and in the person of the Holy Ghost, God has *sealed* what once He *wrote*. In Scripture, from beginning to end, we are in the light of God. The light is one, though it may be that of the patriarchal dawn, of the Levitical or Mosaic morning, of the prophetic forenoon, of the gospel meridian or noontide, and then of the Apocalyptic evening hour, with its shadows, just before the solemn night of judgment which is to precede the second morning—the morning of millennial glory.

FREE WILL.—An acute remark is made by Mr. Illingworth in his Bampton Lectures, where he treats of the freedom of the human will. Against the assumption of those who deny it he sets this universal experience, that sin is followed by remorse; and why should they have remorse if they have not acted as free agents? It "still stares us in the face, overshadowing our hearts with sadness, and driving its countless victims into madness, suicide, despair, and awful forebodings of the after world. Men would have exorcised it if they could. But they cannot. And remorse is only a darker name for man's conviction of his own free will."

THE HOLY GHOST.—The fulness of the Spirit is the birthright of every believer. God wants us to be living *this* side of Pentecost, not the *other* side.

ALONE.—There are times when we *may* be alone; times when we *ought* to be alone; and a time when we *must* be alone.

WHAT is your name? Your age? How is your health? Where do you live? Are you rich or poor? These are important matters, but they are of no moment compared with this question, *Where are your sins?* Other questions are for a day; this is for eternity.

SIN is a leprosy, sin is a paralysis, sin is a consumption, sin is a pollution, sin is death. Give it a fair chance, and it will swamp you, body, mind, and soul, for ever.

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*(Daniel v.)*

To witness to the unity of God against the polytheism of the heathen the people of Israel was especially called. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi. 4) was the testimony which they should have maintained. Instead of that, they learnt and practised the various forms of idolatry rife around them. Driven out of their land in consequence, and all observance of their sacrificial ritual for a time made to cease by the overthrow of the Temple, was the knowledge of God to fade away because Israel had failed to uphold it? It might appear to men as if such would be the case, since the avowed worshippers of idols, first the Assyrians and then the Babylonians, had deported the tribes without let or hindrance to countries in which the conquerors were pleased to settle them.

But, as with the capture of the ark by the Philistines, so with the Babylonish captivity, God, we may say it with reverence, used the occasion to show Himself to be God, and to make the conquerors sensible of it, however much they triumphed over their captives. Of this the book of Daniel (ii.-vi.) is a striking witness, as the wisdom of man, the power of man, the pride of man, the impiety of man, and the apostasy of man are each, in this order, dealt with in the chapters just enumerated. God thereby maintained His own glory, and witnessed of it, though Israel had proved unfaithful.

To turn now to Belshazzar's feast (Dan. v.), what instruction is there in the narrative for men in all ages! Belshazzar was the last king of that dynasty of absolute monarchs set up by God in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. Great and glorious, though short lived, was that kingdom, which enjoyed universal empire. For seventy years only was it to hold captive the Jews (Jer. xxv. 11, 12), and to enjoy a supremacy

unknown in the world's history since the fall, being, as we learn, the head of gold (Dan. ii. 37, 38). For many a year now had the vessels of the house of God in Jerusalem been in the keeping of the King of Babylon, and with no sign of displeasure on the part of the God of heaven, though Nebuchadnezzar had placed them in his temple at Babylon (2 Chron. xxxvi. 7). For God had allowed that.

When the ark was taken captive, and placed in the house of Dagon, God's authority and supremacy over idols was vindicated at once. Not so in connection with the sacred vessels. In time, like the ark, they would be returned, and revert to their consecrated use. Years, however, were to pass ere that was to come about, and the Babylonian king, meanwhile, was virtually their custodian. Had God ceased to care for His own glory, that those vessels could be left in peace in the treasure-house of an idol? Openly was it now to be manifested that God did care for His glory, and that the vessels, of old dedicated to His service, must not be used with impunity for common purposes. (Impiety was to receive an awful check, and the perpetrator of it to be visited with irrevocable punishment.)

Belshazzar, in the pride of his heart, and probably when heated with wine, had called for the vessels of Solomon's Temple to grace his feast. The vessels were brought. God permitted it. Wine was poured into them, and was drunk by the uncircumcised company, who praised their idols, and thus insulted the God of heaven (Dan. v. 3, 4). All went on merrily. No earthquake shook the building. No thunder pealed in crashing sound throughout the vault of heaven. The scene within the banqueting house must have been brilliant indeed. The king presided; a thousand of his lords were his guests; his wives and concubines also graced the feast. Surely we may say that all that regal wealth could do to make it attractive, impressive, and successful



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had been brought into requisition that day. And never before had such vessels as those of Jehovah's sanctuary been seen on the table of a heathen monarch. Was God oblivious of such dishonour done to Him? He knows all that goes on upon earth. He may be patient, but He is not unconcerned. The fool may say in his heart there is no God. But the fool in that psalm comes to learn that there is one (Ps. xiv. 1, 5). Men may say, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" (Ps. lxxiii. 11). Awfully, at times, has such a question been answered.

Before the flood they were eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage—enjoying life and thinking to perpetuate it. God was not in all their thoughts. What a rude shaking up they must have got when the flood came and took them all away! In Sodom and Gomorrah they were enjoying life, and engaged in business and in agricultural pursuits. The fire and brimstone descended, and enveloped them all—an awful answer to the thought that God is unconcerned about that which takes place here below. So will it be in a coming day, when men will have shut out, as far as they can, all recognition of God from this earth (Luke xvii. 30). So was it with Belshazzar, who had made the feast, little thinking of the public way in which God would, ere nightfall, show Himself to be God.

Drinking wine and praising the gods of gold and silver, of brass, of iron, and of stone, utterly regardless of the future, or of any danger from without the broad-walled city of Babylon, the king saw, and apparently was the first to see, the fingers of a man's hand tracing characters on the wall before him. God thus quietly, but not the less surely, broke in on the scene. The true God would show that He was not unconcerned at the impiety openly displayed in that banqueting house. Whence came that mysterious, unlooked-for hand? What did that writing signify?

Belshazzar knew not. But at once for him, if only for him, that brilliant scene was changed. The glitter of that night's feast faded away into nothingness. The praises of the Babylonian gods ceased as far as the king was concerned. All joy was darkened. The wine in the cup was left undrunk. For he trembled: "His thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another" (v. 6). Truly a graphic description from an eye-witness, or at least from a contemporary. No longer then could the monarch enjoy the festival, or feast his eyes on that scene, rarely equalled, we may well believe, in the history of the world. No cloud had been expected to dim its brightness. High festival was being kept, but without a thought of God, or fear of the city's capture by the besieging hosts outside. Yet a dark cloud overshadowed that hall and its occupants, for a man's hand was seen tracing mysterious characters on the wall.

God was now speaking, and speaking in a manner that enforced attention on the part of Belshazzar. One to whom the king was a stranger had a message for that impious monarch. He had a right to speak as He did, for Belshazzar was His creature. Agitated and alarmed, the king cried aloud for the enchanters, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. That writing he must have read, and the meaning of the communication he must understand. He was now thoroughly aroused. What was the glittering scene around him? What was the wine to him? What was the assemblage of his thousand lords, with his wives and concubines, so long as those mysterious letters remained on the wall and their meaning undeciphered?

God, we say, was now speaking, and when He speaks the creature He addresses cannot but attend. God does speak at times, and none can hinder Him. It may be, as men think, at opportune or inopportune moments. He, however, chooses His time, and is sovereign, in the selection of the means. He speaks

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to His creatures. He has a right, we repeat, to address them, whether they be His true servants and worshippers, or the votaries of idols. Herein He stands alone as the One living and true God. The votaries of idols may affirm and believe that their supposed tutelary deity has addressed them. Such was the case with Assyrian and Babylonian monarchs. But whoever heard of any such addressing those who did not professedly honour them? How different is it with God! For all are His creatures, and at times He makes that manifest. It was so on this occasion. Belshazzar, who owned Him not, who knew Him not, and who was at that very time praising the gods of gold, and silver, and brass, and wood, and stone, was to receive a message that evening from the God of heaven—a message which brooked no delay. For that he was now prepared, having been terrified and awe-stricken by the sight of that hand, and of the letters traced by it on the wall.

But who could read the divine communication? and, further, who could interpret it? The enchanters, the Chaldeans, the soothsayers all here failed the king. All the learning of those classes was at fault as they gazed on the wall. Would the king, then, become indifferent about it? Would he let himself be persuaded that it was a matter of no concern, or be induced to believe that it was the imagination of a disordered brain overcome with wine? Ah, no. There were the letters. They faced him. He had seen, too, the hand that traced them. He must be told what they meant. Nothing less than a plain, unvarnished interpretation would satisfy him. But where was the man to furnish him with that?

Two important facts we have already pointed out, viz., 1st, that God is not indifferent to that which takes place upon earth; and, 2nd, that, when He speaks to a creature, that creature's attention He can arrest, whether it profits by the communication or not. Two more important facts this history of the feast

will elucidate, viz., God's faithfulness to His word, and the responsibility of His creatures consequent on that which they know.

And first, as to God's faithfulness to His word.

Times are fixed by God, and He does not overstep them. The hour comes, and He strikes. Not once only, or twice, has that been verified in the past. The time drew nigh for the Babylonian empire to terminate. Its duration under the head of gold had been limited to seventy years (Jer. xxv. 11). The last day of those seventy years had come, and ere dawn on the morrow they would have run out. Hence the announcement of the Medo-Persian empire, destined to succeed the Babylonian. That night, therefore, formed an important epoch in the world's history. The sun of the first of the four empires of Dan. vii. was just setting. The sun of the second of them was about to appear above the horizon. The head of gold (Dan. ii. 37, 38) would pass away for ever, and the breast of silver of the great image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream would come into prominence.

Of old God had fixed the limit of His forbearance with the antediluvian world (Gen. vi. 3). When the years had run out, the flood came. He has appointed a day in the still future "in 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. 31). When that day arrives, in the course of time, hidden though the knowledge of it is now in the Father's mind, God will certainly do what He has said. Judgment, and that in righteousness, must come on the world as surely as it overtook Belshazzar on that eventful night. A solemn thought this gives us in the retrospect and in the prospect. God appoints a time, and, when that time arrives, He acts. A delay, a reprieve will not then be granted. Belshazzar may very probably have never heard of

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Jeremiah's prophecy (xxv. 11, 12). His ignorance of it, however, did not change the divine mind, nor even delay the carrying out of the divine purpose. Hence it was that the finger of a man's hand appeared, and wrote on the wall as to the certainty and near fulfilment of God's unalterable intentions.

Honours, adornment, and advancement, even to be the third\* ruler in the kingdom, that is to say, to be next to Belshazzar himself—these, offered by the king, had failed to procure any interpretation of the characters before him. All the Chaldeans, &c. seemed honest on this occasion. No one pretended to decipher that which was beyond his ken. But this fact did not lessen the king's trouble, nor diminish the astonishment of his lords. God was indeed working. It was not magic, it was not imposture—it was a real, an intelligible, an important, yea, an urgent message. But who could understand and interpret it? One only in all the city could do it—a stranger to all that scene of revelry, and unnumbered among the thousand lords.

Daniel, spoken for by the queen-mother, was summoned to unravel the mystery. A stranger to Belshazzar, yet well known to Nebuchadnezzar, his progenitor, the prophet, the servant of God, the neglected minister and faithful servant of the great king the founder of the kingdom, an exile, too, from the land of his birth for seventy years, speaks now—speaks with authority. The honours proffered he valued very lightly. What could the position of the third ruler in the kingdom be to one who knew that the kingdom was well-nigh ended? He spoke, then,

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\* Cuneiform inscriptions have cleared up the mystery of the *third* ruler in the kingdom. Belshazzar's father, Nabonidus, was king; Belshazzar, his son, was associated with him. Hence no one could rise beyond being the third ruler, for Belshazzar was the second. Then, again, those same inscriptions have preserved the fact of Belshazzar's identity, and whose son he was. Josephus, the only profane historian who mentions him, seems to have confused him with his father, Nabonidus.

not to gain favour with Belshazzar, nor to wear a scarlet robe with a gold chain round his neck. He spoke as the minister, the prophet of God, charged with a message to Belshazzar of the gravest import. MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, the aged prophet read as he looked at the letters on the wall. *Numbered, weighed, and dividings*—so the words meant. Now Daniel supplies the key, and all was plain: “God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” From the words themselves, little intelligible meaning would be extracted. What was numbered? what was weighed? what was divided? But Daniel, as we have said, taught of God, supplied the key, and before all—the lords, the wives and concubines—announced the impending judgment on the terror-stricken king.

Who in that hall would have dared thus to speak to an autocrat? With God before him the prophet was bold, and in this most public manner charged the king, before all the great ones of his court, with having failed to glorify the God of heaven.

Here, then, the fourth fact comes into prominence, viz., the responsibility of the creature to glorify God. True, Belshazzar knew nothing of the law of Moses, and very likely had never heard of a divine written revelation. That, however, did not excuse him. Ignorance of the law was no valid reason for not glorifying God. Moreover, he was not condemned for not acting on that which he knew not, but for not acting in accordance with what he knew. The creature's responsibility is measured by what it knows. And though there is a testimony to God in the works of creation, which leaves an idolater really without excuse (Rom. i. 19), Belshazzar had more than that. The history of God's dealing with Nebuchadnezzar he was acquainted with, but had not profited by it. Could he have desecrated the sacred

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vessels had he read that history aright? Could he have drunk wine out of them, praising all the while the idols of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know, if that which Nebuchadnezzar had put on record in the most public manner (Dan. iv. 1-3) had been learnt by him—that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will? (iv. 32). But all that had been lost on him; and the God in whose hands his breath was, and whose were all his ways, he had not glorified. True, how awfully true, was that. And the king had to hear it.

The prophet ceased to speak. He had fulfilled his mission. Fearlessly and faithfully had he discharged his duty. Yet no word of comfort came from him, nor hope of a reprieve if Belshazzar repented. Did the king repent? There is no trace of it. His royal promise he fulfilled to Daniel, but of any humbling of himself before God history is silent, and all that we know of him is that he went that night into that other world, where regrets are of no avail, and where changes have no place. His first and his last meeting with Daniel took place in that hall. For the first time, probably, and for the last time on earth, he heard the truth about himself.

Was God unrighteous in thus dealing with him? Who could say that? Belshazzar had not glorified Him. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me," saith God (Ps. l. 23). Belshazzar had praised the idols, the vanities of the heathen instead, and God, then, was glorified in dealing with him judicially. And that unhappy king is a warning to all responsible creatures, lest to others it should be said, as to him, at the close of their earthly career, "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, thou hast not glorified."

Belshazzar, we have remarked, had no offer of mercy presented to him. Thank God, that is not the case in the present dispensation. Mercy, full and

free, plenary pardon, and everlasting salvation God now proclaims. None who have heard that message can free themselves from responsibility if they despise, trifle with, or refuse it. Now is the opportunity to glorify God, who gave His Son for us, ere the day of grace for the individual for ever pass away, and God then be glorified in dealing with that one in judgment (Ezek. xxxviii. 23). C. E. S.

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## JOSHUA.

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IN the Book of Joshua we read the history of Israel in taking possession of the land of Canaan, so far as that was carried out. In the Book of Numbers we follow the same people in their toilsome journey through the wilderness: a journey more toilsome through their own unbelief, but in which a faithful and compassionate God accompanied them all the way, and led them, though by a path of chastening, when they would not go up at once by the path of faith. Their clothes waxed not old, nor did their feet swell, those forty years.

Both these parts of their history, remark, were after their redemption out of Egypt.

I would trace the principles on which the path and service of faith, as represented by the history of Joshua, can be securely and successfully trod.

Let my reader specially remark, that the conflicts which are recorded in the Book of Joshua are not only after redemption out of Egypt, but after crossing the Jordan. Now Jordan is generally taken for a figure of *death*, and Canaan of *heaven*; and I do not doubt justly. But how comes it that all is fighting after it, and that the man who appears to Joshua comes as captain of the Lord's host? *War* characterises Israel's state after entering into Canaan; their *journey*, only through the wilderness. This remarkable feature in the history of those events, which "happened unto them for ensamples [types], and are written for



our admonition on whom the ends of the world are come," calls us to enquire what the connection of these events is, and how the passage through death and entrance into heaven leads to a state of conflict and war.

The New Testament makes very plain the solution of this apparent difficulty. It teaches not only that Christ is dead and risen again for us, but that as united to Him by receiving the Spirit, we have died and are risen with Him. "Ye are dead [or have died], and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). "He hath quickened us together with Him, and raised us up together" (Eph. ii.). Thus the Christian himself is viewed as having himself passed through death and as being risen again, because Christ who is his life has died and is risen. "If ye be dead with Christ," says Paul (Col. ii.). "If ye then be risen with Christ" (Col. iii.). In this sense we are viewed as having passed through Jordan. We have died, and are risen, and have entered into the heavenly places. Hence we have our conflicts there; for the Canaanite and the Perrizzite are yet in the land. So Paul—"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places." He is here referring to Joshua and Israel, who had to contend with flesh and blood—we with *spiritual* enemies. Thus the Christian is looked at as having died and as being risen with Christ, and called upon to possess the land—to realise the blessings given by the power of the Holy Ghost, whether apprehending and enjoying the unsearchable riches of Christ, or rescuing from the power of Satan those who are led captive by him.

Before I turn to the practical principles I have referred to, let me draw my reader's attention to the effect of having thus passed the Jordan.

First, there is, and thus only, the reckoning of death, death to the flesh, entire death to the world; Israel was not *circumcised* in the wilderness: Israel

*was* now circumcised, and the reproach of Egypt rolled away. To this, as the place of self-judgment, Israel returned after all their victories. But there was another point: they ate of the old corn of the land, and the manna ceased. The manna is Christ as come down and humbled—Christ for the need of the wilderness. The old corn belongs to the heavenly land—Christ in His heavenly glory. This is all ours before any combat—before a wall has fallen or an enemy is conquered. We possess all the heavenly blessing by a divine title. Then, “the man with the drawn sword”—Christ in spirit—comes to lead us to conflict, but to certain victory if we walk under His leading.

This leads us to the principles on which victory is to be obtained in the conflict in which we are engaged. All is promised from the river Euphrates to the great sea. But then comes the question of taking possession. We must actively take possession of it to enjoy it. “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you.” Nothing can be simpler. You have only to take possession. But that you must do. So with us. Large possessions are before us. All the unsearchable riches of Christ are ours. But there must be the diligent occupation of the heart with these things in order to possess them. Let the reader be assured that there is a large and rich field before him, all that God has given him in Christ, to delight in; and he has received the divine nature (for I speak of saints) to delight in these things.

But here conflict comes in, because these spiritual enemies would hinder us in realising, in a pure and undistracted heart, what the Lord calls *our own things*; as the things of this world He calls *another man's*. But these conflicts, though useful for exercise and the experience of God's faithfulness, are no hindrance to our taking possession; but, while testing our own state, only show how God is with us.

Were the falling of the walls of Jericho and the victories of Joshua a hindrance? No.

Holiness and looking to God, in a word, separation of heart to God, were required when the captain of the Lord's host came up to meet Joshua. He was to take his shoes off, as much as Moses before God in "the bush." [The Lord in our midst, for conflicts, is as holy in nature as the Lord in redemption.] Hence, as is known, when there was an Achan in the camp God would not go out with them. ✓ But, when there is uprightness of heart, the word is this: "There shall not a man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." What a comfort and strength is this! No difficulty is anything. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" I cannot think of, or meet with, a difficulty which for a moment stops my course. I have to be careful for *nothing*, and, making my requests known to God, in the midst of conflict, *God's* peace keeps *my* heart. And this never fails. "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." Not only God does not forsake us, but He does not fail us in the strength, grace, wisdom, needed so as to give firmness and power. In nothing does He fail us. He is always with us; and with us for, and in, the conflict. The Lord will make war with Amalek; but in Israel it is *God's* war. Thus divine strength and power with us, in faithful goodness, is the first and blessed groundwork for our hearts in the conflict.

It leads to another principle: confiding faith, courage. "Be strong and of a good courage." God calls us to confidence and strength of heart in His strength, for we shall succeed in the work He has given us. This, too, is blessing. Take courage, for you shall do the work. Why not, if the work be His and He be with us?

But this has a special bearing worthy of all note. You shall divide the land—"only be thou strong and very courageous;" no drawing back, no being terrified, shrinking before the power of the enemy.

"In nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." Satan is there, but if there we have a free courage; God is there, witness of ruin to Satan's instruments, of sure salvation to those who have God with them. / There is no question (though we are grasshoppers, and our enemies giants, and the walls up to heaven), if *God* be there. Of what consequence was the height of a wall, if it fell at the blast of a ram's horn? What matter that the sea is rough, if Christ be there to make us walk on it? What good its being smooth, if He be not there? Now mark what courage is shown in, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do all the law which Moses, My servant, commanded thee!"

We need courage to obey. It seems folly. The world is against us. There seems no sense, often, in the prescriptions of the word of God. Our own fleshly ease is interested in not being so particular. The path is different from all the world. It supposes a *living* God, who acts and notices all things, to whom we belong and whose will is everything to us. Of this the world knows nothing. To do God's will and simply obey His word requires courage in the face of the world, courage with our own hearts. To this we are called. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do all that the Lord has commanded us. It is the courage of faith which looks to God. This is the way of prospering in the conflict. God's strength is employed in helping us *in* the path of God's will, not *out* of it. Then no matter where we go, what the difficulties, how long the journey seems, He makes our way prosperous: "Whithersoever thou goest."

This leads to another and natural consequence, but one of great importance, because it not only informs us of the will of God, but keeps us in His presence, and familiar with the ideas, thoughts, ways, hopes, the whole manner of our God. "This book of the

law shall not depart out of thy mouth ; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein, for thus shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success " (compare Psalm i.). This meditation of God's word, of course, makes us know His will. But it does a great deal more. It gives the habitual delight of the heart to be in what God reveals, in what He delights in. We acquire His (that is, the true but divine) way of thinking of things ; not the side of the vain show of this world. Our own hearts are formed by and in this divine and blessed apprehension of things. Oh what a light it is, and how does the vanity of this world appear what it is ! " Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." " For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Besides, the soul is kept subject to God in meditating His word : an immense point morally. Nor is this all. It secures the communications of His grace. " I have called you friends, for whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." Owning the word of God is owning God in this world as He has spoken. But I must pass on.

The next ground the Lord gives is, " Have not I commanded thee?" Nothing gives greater confidence than this. " We ought to obey God," says Peter. If I am even going right, but do not surely know that I am doing God's will, the least difficulty casts all into doubt, and all my courage is destroyed. When I know that I am doing God's will, difficulties are no matter. I meet them on the road. But for obedience to God's will, God's power is there and the heart, knowing that it is doing God's will, has no distrust. Uprightness would fear if it were self-will, but uprightness fears nothing, hesitates in nothing, when it knows it is doing God's will. It can appeal to any one if *that* ought not to be done. " Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage."

And then we have therewith the positive assurance, "The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

A further principle is brought out in the case of the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh. It is given to us in these divine wars to combat for others. This is an immense privilege. I have to combat to possess more and more of the unsearchable riches of Christ, to realise more of His life and of the knowledge of Him, to have the vineyards as well as the oliveyards of Canaan, and the old corn of the land; in a word, to possess what is given me in Christ. But it is given to us to combat in every way for God's people also. Paul (2 Cor. i. 11) was dependent on the poor praying saints, it might be on some poor bed-ridden widow, for the gifts by which he carried on his active warfare in the Lord's field. He himself was labouring unceasingly, both in prayer and the ministry of the word, to put God's people in possession of their privileges. This is an immense privilege. Not only we are saved, blessed, made partakers of glory, joy in God; but God is pleased to make us partners, co-workers under Him in His own divine privilege of love and of blessing. This is grace indeed! Surely we must know it to be able, as its objects, to witness it; but God's love in us flows forth in love to make it known to others.

Note another thing. If we are doing God's will and work we may reckon on Him for all that is dear to us and in which we are interested. We could not keep it without God were present. He can keep it without us if we are doing His will and service in love. The two-and-a-half tribes could leave their little ones and all that they had behind, to go armed to the war to help their brethren. No doubt, no fear, no hesitation! Such is the path of faith. It counts on God in the path of obedience to His known will. He has divine wisdom for every step, and divine power. Both are in Christ. We cannot know wis-

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dom perfectly, nor see the end or the bearing of many things. But He who has given us the word does, and we are guided in the word according to that perfect knowledge. J. N. D.

## EPHESIANS II.

IF in the first chapter we have the height and the magnitude of our blessing in Christ, we have here the divine method and means whereby we are introduced thereto. The Holy Ghost having revealed God's eternal counsels for the glory of His Son, and brought in our association with Him; divine power (which is to us-ward who believe) having exalted Christ to God's right hand, He now turns to what and where man is by nature and by practice, and shows how we are brought out of that condition and brought into God's *new creation*. Be it noted that "in Christ" and the kindred terms—"in Him," "in whom," "in Himself," &c.—constitute the key-note of the epistle; because new creation, with which these terms are allied, is the blessed subject which the apostle was unfolding to the saints at Ephesus.

No greater evidence, no more marked expression of fallen nature and a ruined creation, can the eyes of God behold than a sinner in his sins. "Dead in trespasses and sins"—walking according to the course of this world and according to Satan, its prince—tell of man *at his worst*; and what follows, we may reverently say, shows God *at His best*: God acting for and from Himself in the rich plenitude of His grace, the motive of it all being found in verse 4—because He "is rich in mercy," and "for His great love wherewith He loved us." Therein was the spring and source of divine action, because He was "rich in mercy;" and, therefore, He wrought, because He loved us with that "great love." These constitute the "bed rock," so to speak, of new creation—mercy and love! In the Adamic creation God wrought for His own glory, but

we hear nothing of mercy and love in connection therewith ; but when its irretrievable ruin had been made manifest, and man's incorrigibility had been displayed beyond question—when the ground had thus been cleared for a new display of Godhead glory—these beneficent attributes of the divine character became the foundation of that new and surpassing glory. [It is a sinner only who is an object of mercy.]

Also in the earlier creation God made man of the dust of the earth, in the energy of His will and by the skill of his hand ; but in this He takes not merely inert matter, but that which was evil and corrupt, and, moreover, was satanically energised and controlled. And with this so debased and baneful element He so works that His mercy and His love shall find their suited display now, and “the exceeding riches of His grace” its equally-suited display “in the ages to come.” Surely this was worthy of God : the picking up those who were slaves of sin and Satan—“fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath”—and making of them a new creation.

Now we come to the way in which this mighty and this blessed work is accomplished. First, we have “quickened together with Christ,” for if “dead in sins” there must needs be first of all the putting forth of life-giving energy. God only can give life, and until there is life what is there ? Life in salvation is the free gift of God—a sovereign act of divine grace towards one dead in trespasses and sins. Life in resurrection is an equally sovereign act of grace towards one who is dead with Christ, as it is written, “If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him” (2 Tim. ii. 11). But here we read, “Hath raised us up together.” In the reckoning of faith, which is the reckoning of God, we are no more quickened together with Christ than we are raised up together ; and, to go a step further, we are no more raised up together than are we seated together in the heavenlies. These



things are equally true, and are all of God ; and if of God, they must be altogether of grace. This the apostle urges upon the saints again and again. Thus we have grace in the 5th, in the 7th, and in the 8th verses. Mercy, love, and grace constitute the three-fold cord that bind us to the new creation. In the last of these verses we read, " By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God." And it is added, " Not of works, lest any man should boast." Only *saved* ones constitute the intelligent beings of the new creation ; not the fallen or the unfallen, but *the saved*, each and every one a trophy of divine grace ; nor that only, but each and every one through the exercise of a divinely-given faith. It is not by being " born of the flesh," nor is it by " walking over the ground," as it were, but by an exercised heart—faith working in the soul, and that faith imparted as a sovereign act of God. " For," says the apostle, " we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them " (verse 10).

Blessed, most truly, and soul-cheering, most surely, is this ! Fashioned by God's mighty hand are we, and in Christ Jesus by Him created ! Not to break down in failure and evil works, foreseen and permitted of God, as did Adam and Eve, but " unto good works," foreseen and *ordained* by Him, that we should walk in them. In reading such a verse, how forcibly does memory recall the same apostle's word in 2 Cor. v. 17, 18 : " All things are become new. And all things are of God."

Again does the Holy Ghost, by the apostle, remind these Ephesian saints from whence they sprung, as we also are reminded ; " Gentiles in the flesh," " Uncircumcision," " Without Christ," " Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." How humbling to the natural mind to read these terrible records of what and where man

is apart from God's intervention in grace ; but only so much the more should our hearts rise in adoration and praise to Him who has stooped down to so deep a depth to lift out of it the "children of wrath," that He might associate them with Himself in present union and eternal glory.

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### FAITH, NOT SIGHT.

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THE external course of events tells us nothing of what is really going on—that is, inside it all. If the external plannings of men or Satan further God's plans they succeed, if not, they come to nothing but what is really going on is still inside them all. Thus they would not take Jesus on the Feast day, so as not to have an uproar, but He was to be the Paschal Lamb, and therefore He *is* taken. The Jews would have often taken Him, but His hour was not yet come ; when it was, they take Him—their wicked plans succeed. When the heartless superstition of the Jews had the malefactor's legs broken, what was really doing in one of the cases was sending the man into Paradise.

To the outward eye, what happened to Job were raids of Arabs and Chaldeans—ordinary predatory raids, and a violent storm blowing down the house ; Satan was in it all, and behind him God arranging the purifying of Job's heart and our instruction in all ages.

The political plans of Augustus, as to the census of the Empire, brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus, and then it was not carried out for nine years, when Cyrenius was Governor.

All we have to do is to discern God's will, and have by faith the courage to do it. [All His strength is power to carry us forward.] It may seem all to turn out ill, or be a cross—it may be so, but we shall have the result of God's counsels and blessing by the way.

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Man succeeded in crucifying Jesus because, however wicked the act on their part, it was just carrying out God's plans. He knew His Father's will—sought only to glorify His Name—had faithful obedience to act upon it, though to man's eye it was the ruin of everything, every religious hope even ; and so it was in man and in flesh, but the birthplace of all counsels in glory, of that new thing in man wherein He will be glorified for ever, that wherein He was glorified in all He is essentially. The outside was wicked men's success, the end too of pious men's hopes, the inside what all blessing that ever was, or could be really and permanently, is entirely founded upon, and that wherein alone God is fully glorified. Christ learned and did His Father's will ; Satan's power and man's wickedness were there, triumphed as nowhere else. It was the foundation of all true and eternal blessing.

J. N. D.

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“PUT OFF THY SHOES FROM OFF THY FEET.”—We do well to remember this at all times. In the preaching of the gospel it is most important. We present the love of God in all its fulness ; the grace and tender mercy awaiting the returning sinner ; the alluring and bountiful table spread for the hungry ;—but let us never forget that the sinner is a rebel against the divine majesty, a trifier on the borders of eternity. Will not this put a check upon natural levity, and the flippant manner sometimes seen in presenting the gospel ? Will not the preacher the rather feel himself in the presence of One who says, “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet” ? We believe that gospel preaching of this character will result in far deeper work than is now common. Let not grace, mercy, and love be ignored ; nor the joy that fills the soul and flows out be checked ;—these cannot be in excess if along with them is carried and presented the sense of the righteousness, holiness, and majesty of God.

## JOTTINGS ON JOSHUA.

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So full and varied in its teachings is our "Holy Bible" that were many to write on any given part, each guided of the Holy Spirit, yet might they give as many distinct lines of truth, none "crossing the bows" of another in the boundless sea of inspiration.

Note some points here where all is richly typical of Christ Himself.

1. First, the fact of Moses' death as clearing the way for Joshua's further ministry, how plainly is it Christ as "the *apostle* of our profession" ending His course of faithfulness to God here—the *foundation* of all blessing, both now and for ever.

2. Joshua presents Christ in His present position on high as "the *Captain* of our salvation," to lead us into the heavenly possession.

3. The land, too, is Christ—as our *inheritance*, "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"—our present and everlasting portion.

4. "Every place" trodden upon and thus made good to them suggests "that the *life* also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh," or the practical possession of our portion in Him.

5. "None shall stand before thee"—the *strength* of Christ giving victory over all the powers of evil. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." He is not only "my light and my salvation," but "the *strength* of my life" (Ps. xxvii. 1), and "hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind."

The exhortation "Be strong and of a good courage" is *fourfold*, viz.:

1. "Thou shalt divide the *land*" (i. 6). God's promise in Christ is "yea and amen," so the inheritance is sure.

2. According to the *law*" (i. 7). The path of obedience is that of good success, however unlike it

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may at present seem, for the day of issues lies ahead.

3. "*The Lord* is with thee" (i. 9). His presence ensures victory in all the way, wherever relied upon, and brings to self-judgment whenever it is not so.

4. "*The rebel* put to death" (i. 18). The power that blesses and leads on those in allegiance and subjection to God's will none the less judges those who refuse to be so. Thus God's judgment of evil is a ground for encouragement to faith.

Thus, in this preface to the book, we have Christ as our Apostle, Captain, Portion, Life, Power, Charter, and Food.

How rich is our possession, who possess *Him*—verily a land wherein is bread without scarceness, and no lack of any good thing. May we enter into and enjoy it more fully.

B. C. G.

## INDEPENDENCY.

REAL independency is not of God, but always and everywhere acts against Him. It is to make the members of the same body say to each other, "we have no need of you," and to deny the unity of the Spirit which should pervade the body. The more we lament and refuse the sectarianism which exists, the more are we compelled, and shall rejoice to own the body of Christ wherever possible. And this circle of fellowship, while it is not "the body," furnishes us with the means of owning this in a truthful and holy way, so far as the state of ruin in which the Church exists permits it to be done. With love to all Christ's own,—with an open door for the reception of all according to the conditions of truth and holiness,—such a circle is not sectarian, but a protest against it, while the meeting that refuses connection with it is sectarian in fullest reality.

And this is what is meant by the "*ground*" of the one body. It is as different as possible from any

claim to *be* the one body, and does not in the least imply any sectarian conditions of intelligence in order to communion. The maintenance of a common discipline is in no wise sectarian, but *part* (and an essential part) *of that communion itself*: absolutely necessary if the holiness of God be the same thing wherever it is found, and not a thing for the "two or three" anywhere to trifle with as they list.

Independency, in setting aside the practical unity of the Church of God, sets aside a main guard of holiness itself. It makes this no object of common care; it does not seek common exercise about it. It releases from the sense of responsibility as to the house of God: it is my own house I keep clean and after my own fashion! And this real laxity as to the people of God at large (but which is so consoling to an unexercised conscience, that it is the great charm undoubtedly to multitudes to-day) naturally has the effect of lowering one's estimate of holiness altogether, and so prevents my own house being kept really clean.

One's voice may be little heard in a day like this; but I would do what I can to press upon the people of the Lord first of all their Master's claim. I press that this independency, little as one may imagine it, little as many may care to entertain it even as a question, means ultimately shipwreck to the truth of Christ, because it means independency of *Him*. One may find in it plenty of associates, for it makes little demand upon one, and gives the kind of liberty which is so coveted to-day. The authority of Christ is not in it. It may support itself by the help of other names—names in repute as Christians too—and be in honour. It cannot have the commendation which Philadelphia, spite of its "little power," finds from her gracious Lord:—

"THOU HAST KEPT MY WORD, AND HAST NOT  
DENIED MY NAME."

F. W. G.

## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

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DURBAN, NATAL, 7/12/95.

MY DEAR——,—Durban is a very fine town, with broad, clean streets, and a lovely, clear atmosphere, very hot and very moist. There are an immense number of natives (Zulus) in the town who only speak their own language, so that as soon as I can speak to them I shall have any amount of work to do even here, without leaving the town. It strikes one as very strange at first to see all these natives, and especially the women who come in from the kraals, in their native costume. One realises that one is indeed in the midst of heathenism. What a privilege to have such a wonderful gospel, to be able to tell the people here of a Saviour who can save them not only from hell in the future, but from the power of sin now. And yet, on the other hand, here we are in the devil's kingdom, and, in the eyes of *man*, our fight looks absurdly hopeless. When we weigh ourselves against the devil and heathendom we are indeed lighter than vanity; but, praise God, when we take the Lord Jesus with us, the other pan soon kicks the beam. Victory is then ours, because it is His. Praise God for a victory in our own hearts first, and then in the devil's kingdom.

E. J.

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A HEATHEN MAN AND A PUBLICAN.

DEAR BROTHER.—Without being dogmatic, for we are all learners, I am happy to give you my view of Matt. xviii., the portion referred to.

The case, so far as discipline is concerned, appears to me to begin at verse 15 and concludes at verse 18.

It begins as a personal thing, and the grieved one has to act personally; then—if need be—with one or two more; and after that—if need be—the case is to be told to the assembly.

Should the aggressor be still contumacious, so far as the aggrieved person is concerned he is to him thenceforth as a heathen man and a publican ; *i.e.*, he has forfeited his title to Church privileges.

But as it is not the duty of the injured brother to *formulate* this, but it *is* the duty of the assembly, it is added, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"—corporate action.

The injured one has Scriptural authority to disown the injurer according to the 17th verse, but that becomes authoritative and effective when the assembly acts agreeably with the 18th verse.

Hoping this will help you, with love in the Lord,—  
Affectionately yours,

W. R.

*Jan. 3rd, 1896.*

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THE universal tradition of the ancient Church that St. Matthew's Gospel (or, at least, the materials out of which it was arranged) was written in Hebrew for the use of the Jews of Palestine, is a strong incidental proof that the words and teaching of Christ were conceived in the same language, that is, in the Syro-Chaldaic, into which the purer Hebrew had degenerated. It is, moreover, impossible that the words of Christ which are given in that dialect by the evangelists, as "*Ephphatha*," "*Talitha cumi*," "*Acel-dama*," "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*," should be mere fragments, foreign and obsolete words mounted in a Greek setting. It would certainly greatly injure the ideal beauty which the words of our Lord derive from their belief that they were originally clothed in the sacred language of His nation, if we could conceive them as uttered in a foreign tongue, and in the language of an idolatrous people, from whom His country had suffered so much. "Greece was the object of the hatred of the Jews, on account of the sufferings they had endured at her hands, and the indignities she had inflicted on their sanctuaries."



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**TIMES OF THE GENTILES.**—Hy. Varley, in *Morning Star*, No. 1, Jan., 1894, says :  $1,260 \times 2 = 2,520$  years. “The sceptre passed from Israel and Judah for a period of 2,520 years.” “The times of the Gentiles began close to, if not in, the year 605 B.C.” “They were to cover seven prophetic periods of years. A prophetic year, according to Jewish measurement of time, is 360 years. Multiply  $360 \times 7$ , and the total is 2,520—Israel’s past history. Add 1,894 to 605 B.C., and the total of the times of the Gentiles shown to have been exhausted is 2,499.”—Dr. Bullinger, in same issue, says : “The times of the Gentiles are believed by Preterist students of prophecy to be 2,520 years. According to Daniel ii. they began with the kingdom of Babylon, 625 B.C. Babylon was part of the Assyrian Empire. Sometimes its kings lived at Nineveh and sometimes at Babylon. One of its generals, Nabopolassar, and his son, Nebuchadnezzar, having been sent to Babylon to put down an insurrection (B.C. 627), they put that one down and made another for themselves, and from that moment Babylon commenced to exist as a separate kingdom, B.C. 625. We don’t know exactly how many years were occupied separately by Babylon, Medo-Persia, and by Greece, but we know how many were occupied by the three together. At the battle of Actium, 31 B.C., Rome entered on its possession of Jerusalem. If we take 31 from 625, it leaves 594. That is one of the great eclipse figures. How many years did Rome occupy Jerusalem? That is also a very significant figure. Rome held Jerusalem from 31 B.C. to the year when driven out by the Mohammedan conquest, which was undoubtedly A.D. 636, showing that it was exactly 666 years—a significant coincidence ! This, added to the former 594 = 1,260 years—the first half of the times of the Gentiles and the commencement of the last half. If the last half began in 636, add 1,260, and you have 1896 as the date for the ending of the times of the Gentiles. We cannot be quite sure of the dates immediately before and after Christ ; and, moreover, it was at the end of 636 A.D., or at the beginning of 637 A.D., that Jerusalem was taken by the Turks, so that there may be a margin of a few months.”

**EPITAPH of Mary Hibbert, 1818 :—**

I fear not death, mark well the reason why :

He that believes in Christ shall never die.

From Ripon Church—

Learn to know Christ. Thou need’st no more obtain ;

Not knowing Him, all knowledge else is vain.

I WAS making a little plaything for baby, her bright eyes eagerly watching every movement of my fingers. Every now and then she would put out her little hands to grasp it, she was so anxious to have it. But I said : “No, baby, it isn’t finished ; soon mother will give it to you,” and so, putting her hand confidently on my knee, and nestling to me as close as possible, still keeping her eyes on my face, she commenced to sing in her way to pass the time away. *It came to my heart as a sweet lesson.* We are all of us waiting for the answer to some prayer, something we want from our Father. Now while we wait let us keep our eyes and our hearts on Him, and, if the answer tarry, sing praises to our Lord while we wait. Yes, even all the long journey through this wilderness while we wait for our beloved Lord to come, let *our hearts* sing, for “the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

## NOTHING LIKE TRYING.

Life, after all, is a kindly affair ;  
 And never is stupid if really worth living.  
 Striving and working don't drive away care,  
     Try *giving*.

Scowling and growling will make a man old ;  
 Money and fame at the best are beguiling ;  
 Don't be suspicious, and selfish, and scold,  
     Try *smiling*.

Happiness stands near every man's gate,  
 Why should you think you will find her elsewhere ?  
 Never was greater mistake than to hate,  
     Try *loving*.

LUKE gives us Mary's pedigree, and she is brought into special prominence. The Talmud attests that Heli was her father (Luke iii. 23).

OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM.—Professor A. H. Sayce asserts that the conclusions so constantly urged by the professors of the "Higher Criticism" are extravagant and vicious, and that archæology confirms the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch. First : The "Higher Criticism" asserts that there was no writing in Israel before the age of Samuel. Archæology proves that the Israelites must have known how to read and write before their settlement in Canaan. Second : A study of the literature handed down to us by the Babylonians and Assyrians tells strongly against the disintegration theory. Third : Narratives which the "Higher Criticism" pronounced to be the unmistakable figments of tradition are being shown by archæological study to be historical, after all. Year by year, almost month by month, fresh discoveries are being made, all in favour of the old, rather than the new, teaching. Professor Sayce maintains that the belief that Moses wrote the Pentateuch involves considerably fewer difficulties than the contrary opinion.—*Contemporary Review*.

A HINDOO priest took a Biblewoman into his house, requesting her to read the Bible to his wife and explain it ; then on her leaving he requested to buy one. When asked why he, a Hindu teacher, allowed a Christian teacher into his house, the reply was : "The Hindu religion is tottering, sooner or later it must fall ; fifty years hence the religion of India will be Christian. You are saturating our land with it." He bought a Bible.

No doubt it is a fine thing for a man to walk forty miles a day, but that does not make him a saint. There is no virtue in being sickly ; but neither, so far as I can see, is it the highest attribute of piety to have the digestion of an ostrich, or the lungs of a race-horse. Many a fool has had muscles of iron, and nerves of steel, and I imagine that it is possible to be a member of the Alpine Club and yet to break all the commandments.—*The late Dr. R. W. Dale*.

"GOD'S SEED will come to God's harvest."—*Saml. Rutherford, 1661*.

"THE LOVE OF CHRIST is a love which is above all our wretchednesses, but which adapts itself to all our wretchednesses, and which is not repelled nor chilled by any of these wretchednesses."—*J. N. D.*

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WHAT must I do to be lost? What a startling question! Reader, did you ever seriously consider it? How surprising that there should be any difference of judgment about it? yet there is. And why? Because people do not listen to what God has to say. They take their own thoughts and venture to have an opinion of their own, forgetting that God says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts" (Isaiah lv. 8). Our only safety, then, is in accepting what God says in His Word. We shall see from Scripture that there is only *one thing* to do to ensure being lost for ever. It is a very simple, but a very solemn and dreadful thing. It is wrapt up in the word—NEGLECT. "How shall we escape if we *neglect* so great salvation?"

THE AGONY of remorse is betrayed with a dreadful faithfulness by the unhappy Lord Byron:—

The mind that broods o'er guilty woes  
Is like the scorpion girt by fire;  
In circle narrowing as it glows  
The flames around their captive close  
Till, inly searched by thousand throes,  
And maddening in her ire,  
One sad and sole relief she knows,  
The sting she nourished for her foes,  
Whose venom never yet was vain,  
Gives but one pang and cures all pain,  
And darts into her desperate brain.  
So do the dark in soul expire,  
Or live like scorpion girt by fire.  
So writhes the mind remorse has riven,  
Unfit for earth, undoomed for heaven;  
Darkness above, despair beneath,  
Around it flame, within it death!

THE TOMB in which our sins are buried is the monument of the eternal favour of our God.—*J. N. D.*

GOD'S JUSTICE is perfect towards all men. His sentence upon Adam was an exhibition of His justice. It was, therefore, immutable; and, as the Scripture tells us that He "cannot lie," or "deny Himself," His justice made the death of Christ necessary for man's redemption. Thus God preserved the honour of His truth, not by changing the sentence against sin, but by laying the punishment upon His Son, who willingly undertook to bear the burden as our Surety. For before men can be adopted by God as His sons, they must have been redeemed from all iniquity, that His image may be restored by the instrumentality of the Holy Ghost. They must have a new nature; indeed, they become "partakers of the Divine nature." Relationship to Christ in the flesh did not confer the new nature; for "neither did His brethren believe on Him." Contrary natures cannot unite. By nature men are united to Satan; for Adam gave up his understanding and will to him, entailing the subjugation upon his posterity, so that he now works in them as of his own nature, and "children of wrath." Men can have nothing to do with the Lord Jesus without bearing His image. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy." But when they are removed from Satan's kingdom into Christ's their nature is changed, and they serve Him.—*English Churchman.*

IT IS EVER God's way to produce a sense of need in the soul, and then to meet it. The one is the *seeking*, and the other the *saving* act of His grace. Joseph's storehouses were full of corn, but the supply was not afforded until the "cry for bread" was heard !

IT IS CURIOUS and interesting to note how the Christian faith, which has been so often attacked and given out as effete and dead, seems to have the power of acquiring the very ground on which her enemies have fought an apparently triumphant battle against her. Voltaire's house is now used by the Geneva Bible Society as a repository for Bibles. Our own Bible Society's house in Earl Street, Blackfriars, stands on the site where, in 1378, the Council met to forbid Wycliffe circulating portions of Holy Scripture, and where he uttered those memorable words, "The truth shall prevail ;" and the Religious Tract Society's premises are built on the spot where Bibles were publicly burnt at Paul's Cross. In the great Council Chamber at Florence, where that great reformer Savonarola was condemned to be burnt alive at the stake, stands a noble statue of him, with these words inscribed on its base—"Dopo 384 Anni, Italia redenta."

"WE SEE JESUS."—In the course of our Lord's journey on earth we see Him in the following ways :—(1) As the *born* One, holy, meeting God's mind in the nature or human material ; (2) as the *circumcised* One, perfect under the law, meeting God's mind in it ; (3) as the *baptised* One, meeting God's mind in dispensational order and righteousness ; (4) as the *anointed* One, meeting God's mind as His image and representative ; (5) as the *obedient* One, doing always those things that pleased the Father ; (6) as the *devoted* One, meeting God's mind in all things, and in laying down His life ; (7) as the *risen* One, sealed with God's approval in victory for sinners. Nothing unworthy of God was in the Man Christ Jesus, His person, experience, or ways.

EVIL IN THE CHURCH.—To be indifferent to this is to be guilty of high treason against God. It is taking advantage of His love to deny His holiness, despising and dishonouring Him before all.

MY FELLOWSHIP with the Father is my taste of the delight He has in the Only begotten Son.

THE NAIL (Isaiah xxii. 23, 24).—There is one Nail fastened in a sure place, and there the flagons hang, and the cups too. Oh, says one of the little cups, I am so little and so black, suppose I should drop. The flagon says, I am so heavy, so weighty, suppose I should drop. One cup says, Oh, if I felt like that golden cup I should never fear falling. And the gold cup answers, It is not my being a gold cup keeps me, but it is *all by the Nail* ! If the Nail comes down, we all go ! gold cup or pewter cup ; but so long as the Nail remains the cups all hang safely.

GOD : THE FATHER AND THE SON.—Open the veil into eternity, and the mysterious existence of God is revealed. In John, the majesty of the two Persons ; in Proverbs, the delights and joys of the two Persons of the Godhead. From all eternity the Father and the Son co-existed, and the corresponding relationship existed and was enjoyed by both. But, in time, the Son entered into that relationship as Man (see Luke i. 35), into the divine and eternal relationship of Son with the Father. But He was the only-begotten Son in eternity ; and that only-begotten Son became God's gift to the world (John iii. 16).

## FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY FOR AN EVIL DAY.—*Jude* 20-25.

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THERE is no epistle perhaps more solemn than this of Jude in its denunciation of the tide of corruption which the Holy Ghost saw was about to overwhelm Christendom. There is none that puts more strikingly, though in few words, its salient, religious features, the dishonour done to God by it, and its sure doom at the coming of our Lord. But it is remarkable that even where the Holy Ghost launches out into so painful though necessary a theme, He could not do so without, first of all, opening the epistle with a very sweet and simple declaration of our blessing in Christ, and closing it with a peculiarly triumphant one. Thus, you see, nothing can be more false than the notion that, because evil abounds, therefore love, or holiness, or faith, or desire for the glory of God, are to grow one whit colder or feebler. It may be so. It is the natural tendency, but it has not the warrant of the Spirit of God. And, on the contrary, I am sure that this very Scripture shows that the Holy Ghost would have the children of God animated to even greater earnestness, because of the sense of the evil that surrounded them.

And striking it is, too, that if there is one passage which more than any other insists upon what is due to God by His saints at such a time, it is the epistle of Jude. Where else is the faith called "our most holy faith"? Peter, in one of his epistles which describes mockers, &c., speaks: "Them that have obtained like precious faith with us." It was not a thing that could be despised; only unbelief and enmity to God could so treat it; but where there was danger of giving way to evil, and thinking that things were in such a state that they could not be helped or hindered; so far from that, after the Holy Ghost has portrayed all the features of the evil things done in

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the Name of Christ—"Ye, beloved," He says, instead of giving way to these evils and dangers—"Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."✓ That is, He encourages the saints in the conviction that there is not a single thing that is bound up with the moral glory of God and the blessing of His people which we have not still, just as surely as ever. And the truth is, that times of great outward blessing are not the most searching and sifting for the state of the saints. It is easy to be a prophet among prophets✓ easy to be happy among people that overflow with blessing✓ easy to speak about Christ among those who love Him✓ but it is when the difficulties come in, when the trial, the loss, the temptations and seductions of Satan increase—then is the time for testing whether the heart prefers Christ to everything else.✓ *is true.*

A sweet thing that we get here is, how persons can be happy in a state of evil around them. [There is no reason why we should not be thoroughly happy in the Lord, spite of abounding evil.] I do not mean that there is not sorrow too—and assuredly that sorrow will be more felt the more happy a soul is; but [there are no circumstances that can exist in the state of Christendom when the saints may not build themselves up on their most holy faith.] Ye, beloved, is language which supposes that there is community of feeling and affection and desire—no doubt of sorrow and confession also; but they are not disheartened; they do not say, like some of old, "There is no hope; we are delivered to do all these abominations;" but here is a looking straight up out of the church to God and to His Son; and the consequence is, all is bright there. On the contrary, when great grace was upon all, there was a danger of their looking down upon all, and being occupied with the fruits of grace in themselves. It is always so in a time of

## FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

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great outward blessing ; and therefore it is not then we see the most real fruits of faith and separation to God. The depth of power, if I may so say, is lost in the breadth and extent of it ; but the Holy Ghost's mercy comes out in a season of difficulty.

This is exceedingly cheering. For when things do not go on as we desire, you will find where faith is feeble that there is apt to be a complaining and murmuring spirit, &c. Such things ought not to be. When evil is increasing, these sounds of discontent will never help a soul out of its low estate ; for instead of dwelling upon it, and murmuring about it, and perhaps even reflecting upon God and upon His children, there would be the spreading of it out before God, and the seeking out of those that are gone astray. Were this the case, I am sure that the blessing and power of God would be there in a way we have little conception of. There we all fail. But, then, what is the failing of all to a certain extent may be the fault of some in a very high degree ; and therefore it is important that we should watch against this snare—that we should compare our spirit with that which the Holy Ghost urges upon the saints. He turns, after all has come out—and let us remember that He feels evil according to the full character of divine holiness—yet He calmly turns and says, “ But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith.” I want you to know these things, but not to be cast down and despairing because of the sense of all the evil, but to look up. Is your faith less holy ? Are you to relax, and say, We must lower our standard ? On the contrary, I believe that instead of declension being the time for being less careful, it is rather one for greater diligence and more careful watching, lest there should be anything profane, anything unholy, or any root of bitterness springing up. V. G.

“ But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost.”  
*He* was not gone ; He was still their power of looking

up to God in intercession and prayer. "Keep yourselves in the love of God." There was God, not only in His special affection towards His people, but in the activity of love that goes out to others, and this for the purpose of strengthening the saints of God in His love towards others; not only in their loving God, but in God's loving them, and others too. For here it seems to be, in the largest sense, the love of God. Of course, it means God's loving us; but it includes also the blessed fact that no matter what the state of evil may be, as long as the Lord leaves His Church here, there is room for this energy of love to others.

"Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." That is, He looks at the accomplishment of the whole thing in glory, when, through the mercy of God, eternal life will have its crown. It is not merely the hope, but it is mercy. Even in connection with His coming again in glory, it is all mercy; and I am entitled to look upon it as mercy, even in such a state of things. *V. G.*

If this, then, be so, I can understand that He should now instruct us how to deal with cases of evil around us. "Of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." Some might say, there is partiality, *that* is never right; yet God calls upon us to make a difference: but we must take care that we do not make differences in order to please ourselves, but because we believe that God would have us do it. Nothing more calls for an exercised conscience than this. ] Saints very often have a common routine, a rule for dealing with everybody: but this is not God's way. There are numbers of circumstances, principles, states of souls, that have to be weighed and acted upon in the various cases that come before the saints of God. ✓ There may be hardly two persons that would have to be dealt with alike; and there is the blessedness and importance of having the word of God for our guide, and not a mere rule which must be always acted upon



exactly alike. We have not got a human canon, but a divine word ; and one that establishes the very thing that the flesh does not like. Of course, it would be easier to have one routine ; it saves trouble : but it is not of the Spirit of God, who exercises the people of God in every case, whether of recognising Christians or owning the work of God. There may be some cases where the work of God is most evident—others where it is not so. Nothing could be more foolish than to put it on the same ground.

Again, if it is a question of evil, we ought to make a difference. There may be two cases that seem very much the same ; but examine them closely, and you will find all the difference in the world between them. That is the true way of looking at all these matters ; not as a mere question of habit, or of our way of doing things ; but how do the word of God and the principles of God's own mind bear upon these different things ?

All this requires spirituality and waiting upon God. This is the truth of the matter. Nothing is more easy than to get into a certain settled plan—very rigid in one way, or lax in the other ; whereas the Lord would never have us to be either, but to have an exercised soul, and a conscience informed by the word of God, looking at each case according to its own peculiar features and circumstances. “Of some have compassion, making a difference ; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.” It is remarkable that in both cases it is the activity of divine love seeking the deliverance of that which had got into evil. The Holy Ghost is not telling us here how to deal with a case where there is no hope, but where there is less or more evil. He supposes that these saints were building themselves up on their most holy faith, and that this was not all they were doing. They are thinking of those who are in an evil state, who have gone back ; and this is their object—to have them with God, and so thoroughly right. This is not

always the case with our souls. Supposing you take a person who, perhaps, has dishonoured the Lord ; do we not feel so much the disgrace done to us as to be rather glad to get rid of him ? If it be one who has been disagreeable in his manners, and not pleasant in his conversation, perhaps great patience and forbearance have been shewn towards him by the saints, and then something occurs which gives them a ground for dealing with him. The danger is, that the poor soul may be left to himself, and left, perhaps, as far as we are concerned, for ever. That is not what we have here : “ Of some have compassion, making a difference ; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.” Here there is much greater anxiety of soul expressed ; but still it is always the thought of saving—of tenderness in one case, and earnest effort in the other. The person himself might not thank you for acting towards him with so much vigour, but still it is the way of love, though with it the strongest feeling as to the evil itself—“ hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” Love is intolerant of evil, and the clean contrary of indifference.

But the wind up of all is blessed. Although there are these apparent triumphs of Satan, professing Christians going on from bad to worse, and then overwhelming divine vengeance to the end, to others occupied with divine love there comes the crowning word of joy, “ Unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever.” Could there be a more comforting word when not an outward blot defaced the church ? And this is evidently given for special profit when we are, as it were, upon the point of meeting the Saviour from heaven ; for Jude goes up to that point, and even foreshows the judgment which shall follow.

J. N. D.

## GOD SEES; GOD HEARS; GOD REMEMBERS.

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PRECIOUS in the eyes of God are His people. In all ages has this been true. To all ages will it be unchanging.

Yet what buffetings have many of them at times experienced. What crying injustice have some been called upon to endure. Their rights trampled upon, their goods spoiled (Heb. x. 34), their bodies tortured, and they treated as the filth and offscouring of the world. Poor, defenceless creatures at such times have they seemed; tossed about like shuttlecocks, unable, or unwilling, to resist with the arm of flesh the attacks, even unto death, of malicious and designing foes.

But were they, are they such defenceless creatures as ungodly people may have deemed them? True, they may have suffered, and, as we have said, even unto death. But death does not end the controversy, whatever men in their folly may think. Of this the martyred ones under the altar in the fifth seal (Rev. vi. 10) are an example. They certainly will not regard death as the last word in their matter; for they will cry for vengeance on their persecutors, and will be answered with an intimation which fully confirms their expectation.

Then the great whore of Rev. xvii. 6 John saw drunk with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. But he heard next of her impending doom, and the call to heaven and to the saints and apostles and prophets to rejoice, for God will avenge them on her (Rev. xviii. 20; xix. 2). She had been instrumental in their death, but they, victims of her hostility to God, will be displayed in heaven, when she shall have passed away from this scene amid manifestations of joy on the part of all creatures on high.

So of the Thessalonian saints. Here they experienced the bitter enmity of Jews and of Gentiles, evidenced by the fierce and long persecutions of which

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they were the objects. Rest, however, unbroken rest for ever and ever is to be their lot, whilst divine vengeance will be the awful portion of their impenitent persecutors. Temporal death in no case settles the controversy. What is after it is the important question.

God *has* a care for His people ; His eye *is* on them. In patriarchal days He showed it, as He addressed those who might injure them, saying, " Touch not Mine anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm " (Psalm cv. 15). At times He restrains men's hands. At times He suffers them to manifest what they are, evidenced by their treatment of His people. Although He may bear long with such, let it be remembered that He is not indifferent to the cry of His suffering ones. " The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry " (Ps. xxxiv. 15). Dangerous, then, it must ever be to afflict any of God's people, because they are such. A course like that, though for a time it may seem to prosper, must, sooner or later, end disastrously to its pursuers. God is not ignorant of that which takes place upon earth, nor is He unconcerned about it. *He sees; He hears; He remembers.*

The Israelites in the days of Rameses II. and of his son Menephtah, were ground down by cruel bondage, and rigorous, exacting slavery. Years passed without relief. Rameses II., the Pharaoh of the oppression, terminated his long reign in peace, and had an honourable burial. And his body having been embalmed, and recently discovered, we in this nineteenth century have become acquainted with the features of the man, whose presence and, it may be, whose form made many to tremble as they stood before him. From his iron grasp, and from his merciless policy, the Israelites could never get free. His son, Menephtah—the Pharaoh of the Exodus—succeeded him, and the condition of the Hebrews was no better. They cried to God, but no answer came. And their soul within them became depressed by anguish of spirit and cruel bondage (Ex. vi. 9). For eighty years and more had that gone on,

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The heavens over them seemed as brass, which their prayers could not penetrate. Their cry, they might think, was shut out from God. But was it? Had He forgotten them? At the back of the wilderness of Sinai it was first learnt that He had not been an indifferent spectator all those to them deeply trying and harassing years. To Moses, who was well acquainted with their oppression, though in himself powerless to alleviate it, He made that known. "I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians," &c. (Ex. iii. 7, 8). God had *seen* it all along. All their hard service He had noticed. Why, then, the long delay? How many must have passed away without one ray of light or dawn of hope arising for the enslaved people. Why the delay? The time fixed in the divine counsels (Gen. xv. 13-16) was only now arising. Hence He had not previously spoken, nor intimated His cognisance of their condition.

But all was known to Him. All had been witnessed by Him. Each lash of the taskmaster's whip, as it fell on the back of an Israelite, God had witnessed. The cry of the suffering one He had heard. Now Israel should know that, and the proud Pharaoh of the Exodus should learn that God cares for His people. Blow after blow, visitation after visitation, overtook the Egyptians, culminating in the death in every house in Egypt of a first-born son, and thus delaying the pursuit of the Israelites, since the Egyptians were occupied in burying their dead (Num. xxxiii. 3, 4). What Pharaoh had never thought, what Israel had not believed was true, God *saw* the affliction of His people, and would deliver them.

Next, if God *sees*, He also *hears*. There is another trial to which His people may be exposed. To endure oppression is hard indeed. To bear reproaches and revilings is no light trial either. The tongue can

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wound as well as the hand smite. And are there not times when the wounds inflicted by the tongue are longer of healing than bruises on the body? Is God indifferent to such trials of His people? He surely is not. Nor, in the end, are those guilty of them, if remaining impenitent, suffered to forget it. Reproaches and revilings of God's people are no light offences in His eyes.

Of this, Zephaniah ii. 8, 9 gives us proof: "I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached My people, and magnified themselves against their border." Dark days they were for Israel. Earthly power was against them. Josiah had become a vassal of the King of Assyria. The professed and once victorious people of God were subject to a foreign yoke. What triumph for nations around them! What an opportunity for exultation on the part of the children of Lot! As deserted by their God the votaries of Chemosh and Milcom might view them, and as objects on which scorn and reproaches might be poured out without restraint. But were they utterly rejected? Had God cast them off for ever? The reproaches of Moab and the revilings of Ammon in years long past will be remembered against those nations in the future. For, when Israel shall be restored to their land, and shall again enjoy in peace the proof of its renewed fertility, Moab will be finally "as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, the breeding of nettles and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation, the residue of My people shall spoil them, and the remnant of My people shall possess them." God was silent in the past when Moab reproached, and when Ammon reviled. But He *heard*, and in a coming day will answer, and that in no sparing manner.

In another way God's people may suffer. Open and determined opposition to their progress may be displayed. Israel found that at Rephidim. Amalek there came and fought with them (Exodus xvii.).

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Through the intercession of the mediator Israel were victorious, though the fight was hotly contested. God, however, never forgot Amalek's unprovoked opposition. Centuries later, He told Samuel to commission Saul to smite them, and to utterly destroy all that they had, sparing them not, but slaying man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. And why that wholesale destruction, extending to the women and infants and sucklings? "I remember," said God, "that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt" (1 Sam. xv. 2, 3). All the actors in that encounter at Rephidim had long passed away; even Moses, Aaron, Hur, Joshua, the Israelitish warriors, as well as the Amalekite host. Very likely, too, the descendants of these last had forgotten all about the battle with Israel near Sinai. The conflict had taken place four centuries before God addressed to His servant Samuel the words we have just quoted. God, however, had not forgotten it. "I remember," He said. Would any say, Why rake up bygones? The answer is at hand. Israel were God's people. He cared for them as such. Amalek must, therefore, be punished. And the time in God's counsels for that had arrived, so the son of Kish was commissioned to destroy them.

What a blessed thing it is to be numbered amongst God's people! Trials, troubles, persecutions, oppositions, they may experience; fruit in each case that we have quoted of man's hostility to God or His people, and not of His people's folly. But there will be an end to them. What a solemn thing it is for any to oppress, revile, or oppose them! I have *seen*, I have *heard*, I *remember*, are three short statements pregnant with meaning for those who will read them aright. Let tried, oppressed, or harassed ones take comfort and wait. Let persecutors, oppressors, revilers take care, "God forgetteth not the cry of the humble" (Psalm ix. 12).

C. E. S.

## A SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE.

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THE vast importance of having the Scriptures in the language of the natives will be seen when we look on the scattered towns and hamlets which stud the interior of Africa over which one language, with slight variations, is spoken as far as the Equator. When taught to read, they have in their hands the means not only of recovering them from their natural darkness, but of keeping the lamp of life burning, even amidst comparatively desert gloom.

In one of our early journeys we came to a heathen village on the Orange River, between Namaqualand and the Griqua country. We had travelled far, and were hungry, thirsty, and fatigued. From the fear of being exposed to lions we remained at the village for the night. The villagers rather roughly directed us to halt at a distance. We asked water, but they would not supply it. I offered the three or four remaining buttons on my jacket for a little milk; this also was refused. We had the prospect of another hungry night at a distance from water, though within sight of the river. We found it difficult to reconcile ourselves to our lot, for, in addition to repeated rebuffs, the manner of the villagers excited suspicion.

When twilight drew on, a woman approached from the height beyond which the village lay. She bore on her head a bundle of wood, and had a vessel of milk in her hand. The latter, without opening her lips, she handed to us, laid down the wood, and returned to the village. A second time she approached, with a cooking vessel on her head, and a leg of mutton in one hand, and water in the other. She sat down without saying a word, prepared the fire, and put on the meat. We asked her again and again who she was. She remained silent till affectionately entreated to give us a reason for such unlooked-for kindness to strangers. The solitary tear stole down her sable



## SKETCHES FROM THE EAST.

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cheek, when she replied, "I love Him whose servants you are, and surely it is my duty to give you a cup of cold water in His Name. My heart is full, therefore I cannot speak the joy I feel to see you in this out-of-the-world place."

On learning a little of her history, and that she was a solitary light burning in a dark place, I asked her how she kept up the life of God in her soul in the entire absence of the communion of saints. She drew from her bosom a copy of the Dutch New Testament, which she had received from Mr. Helm when in his school some years previous, before she had been compelled by her connections to retire to her present seclusion. "This," she said, "is the fountain whence I drink; this is the oil which makes my lamp burn." I looked on the precious relic, printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the reader may conceive how I felt, and my believing companions with me, when we met with this disciple, and mingled our sympathies and prayers together at the throne of our heavenly Father. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men.—*Missionary Labours in Southern Africa, by Robert Moffat.*

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SKETCHES FROM THE EAST.

## A CHINESE PREACHER OF CHRIST.

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REMARKABLE in many ways was the work commenced by one of my men, who is distinguished by the fervour with which he preaches the Gospel. To save men is the greatest ambition of his life, and very successful has he been during the years he has been in the Bible Society's service. One evening a few years ago, he reached a large village that lay nestling in a huge ravine at the foot of a range of hills. It was a populous one, and contained about 3,000 people. It was a place of evil fame, however, for its numbers gave it power over the weaker clans around, and many of its

people were thieves and robbers, that preyed without restraint upon their weaker neighbours. A crowd soon gathered to see the strangers, and amongst them was a man who was destined one day to become a valiant preacher of the Gospel. He was in the prime of life, being thirty-six years of age. As a heathen he had obtained such a reputation for goodness and for filial piety, that the scholars of the region had petitioned the authorities to allow him the privilege of having a tablet put up in a conspicuous place in his house, with the inscription, "Filial Son." This was considered a great honour, as it is granted only to such as have distinguished themselves, not only as loving sons, but also as virtuous citizens.

Hardly had the colporteur got into his address, which was an explanation of John iii. 16, when the man pushed his way up to him and stood spell-bound, as he listened to what was to him a veritable revelation, viz., that God was anxious to save sinners. At the close of it he bought fifty Gospels, and distributed them amongst the audience, and he also offered the colporteur a dollar to be expended in the gratuitous distribution of the Scriptures, and he, at the same time, wished him to accept some money for his own expenses, which, however, was refused, to his great surprise, for he remarked that the Buddhist priests never acted in this way: they took all they could get, and came back again for more.

He now invited the colporteur into his own house, which was a large one, and there he begged him to continue his explanations—this he did for two hours, to an audience of about forty. After supper he took him up to a private room, and there far into the night the great doctrines of Christianity were expounded to this anxious soul. He was taught how to pray, so that he would know how to do so after the colporteur left him.

Next day, when the latter was about to proceed on his journey, Hung-tek besought him to stay with him,

promising to support him and to pay all his expenses. This, of course, he could not do, so he left him with many exhortations to read the Bible and carry out the teaching he had received from him. He eagerly agreed to do so, and most faithfully was his promise kept; for at once he put away his idols, and for three years, with nothing but his Bible and the memory of that night's teaching, he tried as far as his light would permit him to worship God. At the end of that time he had a dream, in which he was told that if he were a saved man he would be the means of saving many others. Deeply impressed by this, he travelled away to the county-city to see if he could learn more of the truth there. To his joy he found there were Christians in it, and upon his story being told, a preacher was sent back with him to his own village.

A place was fixed up as a preaching hall, and in the course of a few months there were more than forty professed believers, twenty-five of whom, after a course of instruction, were baptised. All these had been previously more or less influenced by Hung-tek before the preacher arrived.

This great success aroused opposition, especially as the number of disciples began to increase. The scholars wrote to him, and threatened to have his tablet withdrawn if he did not renounce his Christianity. Instead of answering by letter, he visited those who had written to him, and told his story so naturally and with such power, and rehearsed what God had done for him with such effect, that the threats were not carried out. Then a fierce persecution arose in his own village, and he and his family were dispossessed of all they had and driven out of the place.

The Christians, seeing that he refused to appeal to the mandarin for protection, entered a complaint on his behalf. When the case came on, Hung-tek was summoned, but he refused to answer any of the questions that the judge put to him with regard to his

persecution. Kneeling before him, his tears flowed plentifully, and the mandarin, at a loss to understand his position, dismissed the summons. When they got out of court his friends remonstrated with him for his conduct, but he soon silenced them all by declaring that he was willing to lose all that he had if only the people of his village could be saved. The enemy, moved by this generous conduct, after a time restored him his property, and allowed him to come back and reside in his house.

The above story may seem exaggerated, as at first it did to me. In order to verify it, I wrote to the foreign missionary who is in charge of the district where Hung-tek lives. His reply was as follows:—“The man you refer to, since the persecution that happened to him, has given his time and strength more and more to the spread of the Gospel. I have opened three prosperous classes within a year that are largely due to his work, which is without salary. Other places have asked for pastors, but I have not yet been able to supply them. He preaches everywhere. He is almost sure to win some one to Christ if he stays in an inn over Sunday. He meets men on the road and joins himself to them, and they invite him to their village, and soon a number believe. He will talk to a little company by the roadside, and in a short time they will begin to weep. He is a man of remarkable humility; I have never seen his superior as a Christ-like character. He not only gets many to listen to the Gospel, but hundreds to *accept* it. Your colporteur, who was the means of bringing him to Christ, was with us at our district conference and told the story. It made a profound impression.” This evidence is decisive and most satisfactory, and must be most gratifying to the Bible Society and its supporters.—*J. Macgowan.*

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GOD'S SPEAKING is His willing, and His willing is His doing!—*Bishop Hall.*

## THE JOYS OF CHRIST.

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WE ought to think of the joys of Christ as well as His sorrows. Nothing shows where a man's heart is, and what it is, more than when oppressed, distressed, and full of sorrow, where his heart finds its joy, and if it does find a joy unreachd by the sorrow.

We see these joys in Christ—a secret comfort in the midst of His sorrow. He had meat to eat which man knew not of. Besides His communion with His Father, there was this working of love to us. Paradise shone in upon His heart in comforting the poor thief. “Go in peace” refreshed His spirit in the house of the Pharisee. “She hath done it for My burial” justified Mary against the reproach of selfish man. “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” was His joy in the sense of the heartless rejection to which the wickedness of man subjected Him. How blessed to the heart, besides learning where His joy was, to think that He found it in the working out of His love to us. UN.

It is lovely to see how the Lord does not merely show a resignation under trial produced by an effort which makes Him bow, and yet be absorbed by it as we often are, but such a perfection of obedience and acceptance of His Father's will, that He rises altogether above it, so as to be quite free to be in the fulness of it, and express just what grace would do—or, if needed, truth also—in that which was presented to Him. Thus, when led to the Cross, to the women He says, “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children: for the days come,” &c. Then on speaking on the cross for Israel, He says, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” This was the very one and only ground which could be good for Israel—the Holy Ghost answered to it in Peter's sermon; and Paul refers to the principle. Then to the thief on the cross He says, “To-day shalt thou be with Me in

Paradise." There was the full present effect of His work and salvation. Now how perfectly calm, as if He had only to teach in peace from heaven, is all this, and in perfect appropriateness in each case, which divine clearness could give ; and how wide the scope of instruction !

The judgment of Jerusalem—the ground on which the Jews might be forgiven in virtue of the Cross—the full present blessing in virtue of the Cross, short of resurrection not yet accomplished. The whole scope of truth was here. Thus if we quietly do that which is given, and trust God in the peaceful answer to what is brought before us, what widespread power of truth comes in!—J. N. D., *from "Notes and Comments," March, 1885.*

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## LIVING TO SELF OR TO CHRIST?

(2 Cor. v. 14-16.)

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THE thought uppermost in my mind in reading these verses is just as simple as it is of all importance, and that is, beloved brethren, *what* are we living for? a weighty question, I need not say, and it is of moment to our souls that we should not shrink from answering it, and that we should answer it in the fear of God. Verse 15 was peculiarly before me—"He died for all, that they which live," that is, the believers, &c. All were dead, believers and unbelievers alike; all were ruined men before God; and the death of Christ is the proof of the condition of every soul naturally; that is, all are lost, all lifeless toward God; that even the Son of God, who is everlasting life, should need to suffer—should find no portion but death in this world, is the proof that there was no life in it. Everything lay so irretrievably in death, that for Him to die is the only door of deliverance out of it. And "He died for all." It is not said that all should live, though undoubtedly there was life in Him adequate for every

soul—life everlasting in Christ ; but then, in fact, no soul did, none would, receive Him, not one. Grace, therefore, has wrought, and given some, not all, to receive Him. And therefore it is added, “He died for all, that they which live,” that is, they who do believe in Him and have life therefore—“that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” Now there is never a question day by day that arises, but what brings out one of these two things, that is, whether we are living to ourselves or to Him “who died for us and rose again.” And have I not to own the sad truth, how constantly we have to rebuke our souls?

How often, not to say in general, the first impulse of the heart is to take that view of everything which would minister to our own pleasure, or gratification, or importance? What is this but living to ourselves? When any question comes before us—when anything, either in the way of an evil to be avoided, a loss to be shunned, or something to be gained, some object that comes before us, is it not our tendency to look how it will bear upon us, and to give it that turn which will be for our profit or advantage in some way or another? I do not say always personally: it may be for our family, for our children, looking onward to the future, or at the present. Now, we are always wrong when we do this. God would not have us to neglect the real good of those dear to us and dependent on us; but the question is, whether we trust ourselves or Christ. Are we adequate judges of what is best for our children?

Are we the least biased and the wisest to decide on that which would be for, not the passing profit, but the good which endures for ever? It comes to a very simple issue. We have two natures—one which is always grasping for something that will please and exalt itself, and another which, by the grace of God, is willing to suffer for Christ, and clings to what is of Christ. But, as the Apostle says elsewhere, not that which is spiritual was first, but the natural, and after-

ward the spiritual. So it is precisely in our practical experience. The thought that is apt promptly to arise when there is trial and difficulty is the simply natural one, how to get out of it—not, how am I to glorify God in it, and turn it to the praise of Christ?

Then, again, if there is any prospect of improving circumstances, this is the first thought—that which is natural. Ought we not to be upon our watch-tower with respect to this? Should we not have it as a settled thing for our hearts, this is my danger? We may not all be tried in the same way; for that which would be a gratification to one might not be so to another. But there is one sad thing in which we all agree—we have a nature that likes self, and seeks to gratify it, and we have, hence, a tendency to indulge that nature as the first thought of the heart. But let Christ only come before our souls—let us bethink ourselves of Him when either trouble or pleasure comes before us, and what then? That which is natural fades away. We judge it. We say, That is a thing which brings no glory to Christ, and what are we here for? Let us remember that God has done everything to fit us for His presence. He has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

There is no doubt of that: it remains untouched. But the practical question for our souls is, whether our hearts, knowing the perfect goodness of our God and Father towards us, enter into this great thought, that He now sets Christ, dead and risen, before us, in order that, in the presence of the angels as well as of men, yea, in His own presence, there may be the wonderful spectacle of beings who once lived for nothing but self, here, by the very image of Christ before their souls, lifted above self altogether.

May we bring this to bear upon whatever may be the circumstances through which we pass day by day! It is the main thing for the walk of every saint. There are other great things for the Church; but they are so much the greater as they are built upon Christ, the



## A CONVERTED COREAN.

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object of each individual that composes the assembly. Let us not deceive ourselves as to that. [No position can ever make amends for failure in the habitual thought of the heart.] May we search and see whether we are living to ourselves, or to Him who died for us and rose again.—*Bible Treasury*, May, 1862.

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A CONVERTED Corean in Japan pleaded for a missionary for his land, and Dr. Allen went. The Corean courtiers said "he came from heaven," as his treatment saved their prince's life. Then 3,000 copies of the Scriptures were circulated. New Year's Eve, 1885, ten missionaries met to pray. Soon a Corean saw on a table "the blessed tidings of Luke and Matthew," and concealed them in his loose sleeves. Soon he returned, saying, "Oh, it is good," and they knew God had heard. They had prayed for at least 20 souls. In July the first came, and ere the year out the score were given. Books did the work under God. Women are degraded, and shut in living tombs till the final one. Let us remember Corea with 15 millions, and only 61 missionaries all told!

An army may tell how far it has advanced and a merchant sum up his status, but not so missions; they are waves that carry forces to shores not yet touched, and awaken echoes to sound into eternity. They are seed sowings for a harvest, not according to the calendar, but the *end of the age*. In 1884 the M. E. Church began in Corea, and now have 16 workers in three cities, preaching in eight different places.

Our brother W. J. McKenzie, whom we knew and loved, first received "assurance" at our meetings, and enjoyed the good things of God with us. Truths learned then perhaps shaped his course later, for when the Presbyterians declined sending him to Corea, he said, "I will go trusting in God." His work was blest there, and now he rests on high. ✓

## LAW AND GRACE : CONTRASTS.

<i>In the Old Testament.</i>	<i>In the New Testament.</i>
The Lord looked down to see if any did seek Him. Ps. xiv. 2.	He came down to seek them. Luke xix. 10.
A lamb for the shepherd. Gen. iv. 4.	The Shepherd for the lambs. John x. 11.
Shoes off. Ex. iii. 5.	Shoes on. Luke xv. 22.
All the men of the city slain. (Shechem or Sychar.) Gen. xxxiv. 20, 25.	The men of the same city brought to Jesus. John iv. 28, 30.
First question from God : Where art thou ? Gen. iii. 9.	First question in New Testa- ment : Where is He ? Matt. ii. 2.
What is this that thou (man) hast done ? Gen. iii. 13.	What hast Thou (Christ) done ? John xviii. 35.
God's first command : Thou shalt not eat. Gen. ii. 17.	His last : Whosoever will, let him take. Rev. xxii. 17.
God's first utterance to man : . . . Thou shalt <i>surely</i> die. Gen. ii. 17.	His last : <i>Surely</i> I come quickly. Rev. xxii. 20.
Man's first utterance to God : I was afraid . . . I hid myself. Gen. iii. 10.	Man's last : Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Rev. xxii. 20.

## SINAI AND CALVARY.

For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth  
the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory (2 Cor. iii. 9).

THE Law is God's unchanging word,  
"This do, and thou shalt live" ;  
But no relaxing sound is heard,  
No sin can it forgive.  
"The soul that sinneth, it shall die,"  
None can that word efface ;  
But Mercy whispers, standing by,  
"Behold the Throne of Grace !"

## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

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Jesus, the Lamb for sinners slain,  
 That Law of God obeyed,  
 And brought to us eternal gain,  
 For all our debt He paid.  
 Whate'er of glory there may be  
 That still on Sinai dwells,  
 On Calvary's cross alone we see  
 The glory that excels.

*Liverpool.*

CANON BURBIDGE.

## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

E—, 14TH JANUARY, 1896.

MY DEAR BROTHER,— . . . . After prayer we got an exceedingly helpful and instructive address from Mr. P.— His subject was Moses' song in Deut. xxxii. and Paul's address to the elders from Ephesus (Acts xx). I felt truly thankful to the Lord for guiding to truths that are so much needed in connection with the path marked out for saints in the Word amid all the existing weakness and confusion of this evil day. He touched upon having the conscience right with God, and not subjecting it to any man, whatever the consequences—referring in illustration of this to those thrown into the burning fiery furnace and Daniel cast into the den of lions.

Then he referred to Church truth, and the necessity of getting hold of Scriptural principles and adhering to them—ever embracing in our hearts all the people of God, while at the same time refusing to go one step with any in a path not according to the Word, which would be encouraging insubjection to God.

Then he spoke of what ever characterised a true servant of God, or of Christ, as seen in the Apostle and his walk among the saints—gathering to Christ, God's centre. What the Apostle told them would come in among them was scatterers of the flock,

gathering round themselves, and that was drawing away from God's centre. He spoke also of seeking ever to make God's interests our objects—not ourselves, nor looking at things as they affected ourselves merely, and how in these Ephesian elders this comes out. Their sorrow was they would see Paul's face no more—not apparently this as it would affect God's interests, but as it would affect themselves. I think everyone felt that the word was with power, and combined deep solemnity with encouragement and instruction—in short, “words in season.”

J. S. F.

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#### SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS.

DEAR —, I cannot tell you how grieved I am that you should have fallen under the pernicious influence of those who are “desiring to be teachers of the law ; understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm” (1 Tim. i. 7). The only effect of it can be to wither spiritual life, and bring your soul into bondage “to the weak and beggarly elements” (Gal. iv. 9), from which even a Jew is delivered when he believes on the Lord Jesus. Why should you and I, who were by nature poor sinners of the Gentiles, and therefore never under the law, put our necks into a yoke which neither the Lord's Jewish disciples nor the fathers were able to bear? (Acts xv. 10). Anything more fatuous I cannot conceive, for even common sense forbids the folly of it! Scripture condemns those who “say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie” (Rev. iii. 9). Again, and again, and again, it affirms that we are *not* under the law.

To keep the Sabbath (the seventh day) as a legal observance is definitely to put yourself by an overt act on the ground of a religion of ordinances, which the epistle to the Galatians was written to forbid. Now this is a dishonour to God's word, making it of none effect. It is a dishonour to Christ, and to the glorious

truth that we have died and are risen with Him. And it is a dishonour to the Holy Ghost, for it is distinctly said, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under law" (Gal. v. 18).

But, says the editor of the publication you send me, "we do not teach, nor believe, that Christians are under the law." If, then, we are not under the law, on what ground does he urge us to keep the Sabbath? The law, and only the law, says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Is there any other instruction, or precept, or command to keep the Sabbath found in God's word except in the law? None whatever. If, then, we are not under the law, the command does not apply to us.

Now mark this wicked sophistry—"the Apostle says that those who are not under the law *do not sin*." The Apostle says nothing whatever of the kind; not a word does the Apostle say affording any pretext for such a totally false statement. But not only so, the Apostle says the very opposite; the Gentiles never had the law, but see how their sins are described in Romans i. 21-32. To say that "those who are not under the law do not sin" is to deny that the Gentiles sinned. But God says, "*all* have sinned," and because of sin "death reigned from Adam to Moses" (Romans v. 12-14). "As many as have sinned without law shall perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (Romans ii. 12). But mark the sophistry resorted to, to escape the Scriptural statement that we are not under the law, but under grace. He says, "The man, therefore, who is not under the law is the man who keeps the law." Could there possibly be a more barefaced reasoning away of Scripture? Would any truthful man affirm that because he was not a criminal (or law-breaker), therefore he was not under the laws of his country? The question has only to be asked to expose its absurdity!

But, says he, "Christians are under grace." Let,

then, this Judaizing teacher be consistent. He argues that those who keep the law are for that reason not under the law. Then it is self-evident, by the same process of reasoning, that those who fulfil, or act upon the principles of grace, are not under grace! Yet Scripture says *we are* under grace. And will this Judaizing teacher be pleased to tell us if we are neither under law nor under grace, whether his Magazine is not a patent indication and evidence of what the Lord spoke of—the blind leading the blind, which results in both falling into the ditch! God sent His Son to redeem them who were under the law. If that means that they fulfilled the law, *what need was there for redemption?*

He says further, “the fact that Jesus kept the Sabbath—is the strongest reason why Christians should keep it also.” Does he know (and let it reverently be spoken) that the Lord Jesus was not a Christian, while we are Christians; but a Jew, and we are not Jews? His example *in that which was essentially Jewish* was no example for Gentiles. To be consistent, he should also affirm that we ought to be circumcised, keep the passover, &c., &c. Such questions as to the Gentiles were settled, once for all, in the council of Acts xv., but for some the record of it appears to have been given in vain! Is any Sabbath observance demanded there?

I don't know which is the most conspicuous, the ignorance or the self-sufficiency of the writer referred to. But this is clear to me, that his tenets constitute a bold attack upon the essential features of Christianity, and I pray God in His grace to preserve you from it. Much more I might say, but I content myself with enclosing a paper on which I have transcribed the teaching of Paul and Peter, James and John, on this subject; and over the weighty words which the Spirit of God has given us through them, I ask you to *prayerfully ponder*.—Affectionately yours in the Lord,

W. R.

THE WORLD'S lament over us when the Lord has caught us up from the earth. How strange this is: those Christians we despised are all gone, like the swallows in autumn. Not one of them can be found on earth! How we laughed and hated their gathering together! What fools we thought them because they would fly higher; as they said, their Lord was coming to take them. They spoke of their heavenly calling, and would have nothing to do with our earthly societies and politics. We scorned them because they would not join our various schemes for the improvement of man. We hated the thought that we were not to glory save in the Cross of Christ. They gathered together, poor little despised companies, and told of the coming Saviour to those around. No one saw them go, but they are gone! And now the world's wild, fierce, wintry blasts are blowing. Where is all our boasted wisdom? Peace is taken from the earth. All that we hear on every side is, that men are killing one another. Famine and pestilence, sword, hunger, and death all around. Woe, woe to us, the winter of this world is come. Ah! we rejected the word of God, but now the Christians are gone and the great day of His wrath is come!

THE LORD'S COMING.—It is not he loves the coming of the Lord who asserts that it is near; or he who asserts that it is not near; but he rather who, whether it be near or afar off, waits for it in the sincerity of faith, the firmness of hope, and the ardour of love.—*Augustine*.

THE LORD was always the same, whether by night or by day! On the Mount of Olives praying: in the Temple teaching: in the midst of sorrow comforting: or where sickness, healing. Every act declares Him to be One who lives for others. He has a joy in God man cannot understand; a care for man that only God could show. You never find Him acting for Himself. If hungry in the wilderness He works no miracle to supply His own need, but if others are hungering around Him the compassions of His heart flow forth and He feeds them by thousands.

THE NAMES OF GOD.—To the patriarch He was "God Almighty," when they were strangers and pilgrims. To Abraham He was also "I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward" (Gen. xv). To Israel He had given promises, and He takes the name of "Jehovah." Then in Revelation He speaks of Himself as the One "who is, and who was, and who is to come" (Rev. i. 8). Then there is the name "Most High" and "I AM." All these are, in a sense, connected with this world. But to the Church He is what you never find from Ps. i. to Ps. cl., "Father." The Father sent the Son that "we might live through Him" (1 John iv. 9). The Name "Almighty" did not carry eternal life. "Jehovah" fulfilled promises, but the giving of eternal life was connected with the Father. "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John i. 2).

MISS FLETCHER, of Glasgow, tells us that in Gibraltar she found a man with match in hand standing at the entrance of the tunnel that leads to the neutral ground. If an insurrection should break out, he could, in an instant, light the train and blow the tunnel up; and to ensure alertness, this sentinel is relieved every two hours. Oh, if we were only as watchful in spiritual things! "What I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH" (Mark xiii. 37).

THE SINNER who makes no profession of righteousness may be said to be clothed with *filthy garments* (Zech. iii. 3), but the false professor with much worse, FILTHY RAGS (Is. lxiv. 6). And remember, these are his very best works, most charitable deeds, earnest zeal, profound religious exercises, and even Scriptural observance of the ordinances. All, all ARE FILTHY RAGS when it is a question of being clothed before God. And who would think of appearing in God's presence with such?

SEVEN WORDS OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS.—1. —“Father, forgive them” (Luke xxiii. 34). 2. —“To-day shalt thou be with Me” (Luke xxiii. 43). 3. —“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me” (Matt. xxvii. 46). 4. —“Woman, behold thy Son” (John xix. 26). 5. —“I thirst” (John xix. 28). 6. —“It is finished” (John xix. 30). 7. —“Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit” (Luke xxiii. 46).

AN IMPORTANT BABYLONIAN INSCRIPTION.—In the year 1884 the trustees of the British Museum acquired a number of tablets inscribed in the ancient Babylonian language. One of these, and probably the most interesting of the series, has just been deciphered and published. The tablet is of unbaked clay, measuring  $6\frac{1}{8}$  in. by  $7\frac{3}{4}$  in., and is inscribed on both sides with an account of Babylonian affairs immediately following the year B.C. 747. The inscription begins by giving us some information concerning a revolt which broke out in Borsippa in about 746 B.C., and ends with the accession of Shamash-shum-ukin, a foster brother of Assur-hani-pul, in 667 B.C. The tablet is of the greatest importance to Bible students, as it throws great light on and confirms the statements made in 2 Kings xix. 37. It appears, from what the inscription tells us, that about the year 730 B.C. a revolt broke out in Elam, a tributary province of Assyria, and that a certain Hallusu, King of Elam, invaded Babylon and carried away many of the statues of the gods. Not satisfied with this insulting treatment of Babylonian deities, the Elamite monarch actually had the audacity to place one Nergal-uzeszib upon the Babylonian throne, and thus defied his Assyrian master. This latter act could not be passed by the Assyrians in silence, and accordingly Sennacherib, at the head of a large army, marched to Elam and captured Halusu, the rebel, at a place called Niffer. After this campaign we have the most important part of the inscription—namely, the native account of the murder of Sennacherib and the accession of Esarhaddon. In 2 Kings xix. 37, we have the account of Sennacherib's death given thus:—“And as he (Sennacherib) was worshipping in the house of Nisroch, his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, smote him with the sword. . . . And Esarhaddon, his son, reigned in his stead.” Now, in the recently-discovered fragment we have this account borne out almost word for word. In col. 3, line 34, we read, “In the month Tobit (January-February), day 20, Sennacherib, King of Assyria, his son in a revolt killed him. . . . In the month Adar (March-April), day 18, Esarhaddon, his son, in the land of Assyria upon the throne sat.” The close connection between the Biblical and native accounts will at once be seen; and it is interesting to note that the Scripture gives us the names of the two sons who were responsible for the death of their father, and the inscription furnishes us with the date *to the day* when this took place. We have, therefore, in this newly-discovered fragment one more proof of the general historical accuracy of Biblical history.



THE MERCY of God is "great" (Num. xiv. 18; Psa. lvii. 10; lxxxvi. 13; ciii. 11; cxlv. 8); "abundant" (1 Pet. i. 3); "plenteous" (Psa. lxxxvi. 5, 15; ciii. 8); "multiplied" (Psa. v. 7; lxix. 13); "rich" (Eph. ii. 4); "tender" (Psa. xxv. 6; ciii. 4); "sure" (Isa. lv. 3; Acts xiii. 34); "enduring" (Psa. cxxxvi. 1; cxxxviii. 8); and "everlasting" (Psa. c. 5; ciii. 17).

NO DIRECTION to leave any of the Seven Churches, says some one. There is no individual direction to do anything in them but to *listen*. What I get in them is what Christ will do, and I don't want to be spued out of Christ's mouth. *Do you?*

SEVEN NEW THINGS.—A new way (Heb. x. 20); a new creation (2 Cor. v. 17); new mercies (Lam. iii. 23); a new song (Ps. xxxiii. 3; xl. 3); a new commandment (John xiii. 34); a new man (Eph. iv. 24); a new lump (1 Cor. v. 7).—*B. C. G.*

THE TABERNACLE.—The people to whom it was given were (1) chosen of God—Deut. vii. 6, 7; (2) sheltered by blood—Ex. xii.; (3) redeemed by power—Ex. xv. 13; (4) brought to God—Ex. xix. 4. The materials were: gold, 2400 lbs.; silver, 6400 lbs.; brass, about the same; cloths of blue, purple, scarlet, linen; goats' hair covering for the tent; rams' skins, dyed red; badger or seals' skins; wood, shittim or acacia, of the desert; olive oil for the light; sweet spices, for anointing and incense; precious stones for the High Priest's dress; cords for the boards and posts. It was set up on the first day of the first month of the second year after they were sheltered by the blood. Then Moses anoints it, and finally God accepts it by the cloud of glory filling and resting on it (Ex. xl. 2, 9, 10, 35).—*D. L.*

FROM 2 Cor. v. 7 we learn that "*sight*," not faith, from 2 Cor. xii. 4 that "*hearing*," and from Rev. vi. 10 that *speech* and *rest* are all ascribed to the *spirit apart from the body*, and are thus known in the intermediate state.

"THE LORD JESUS CHRIST" may be a somewhat long title to use whenever we refer to our Saviour and Lord, but there is a tremendous loss if we leave out the first words. No unconverted man was ever yet heard to use the full phrase; the idea of the Lordship of Christ is outside his comprehension or desire. How different it is, or ought to be, with the humble, adoring believer!

THE BOY AND THE LIGHT.—A little boy walked with his father at night through the country and carried the lantern. The black silence made him shiver, and he said: "Father, I am afraid, for the light reaches a very little way." His father said: "True, my boy, but if you will walk on, the light will shine to the end of your journey." There is night time as well as day time in Christian experience. Not always do the rays of God's providence illuminate the horizon; there are times, as well, when God gives His followers only enough light to enable them to take the next step. But that is all that is needed. Of one thing we may be sure—*that light will never go out*. If we walk on, it will shine to the end of our journey.

"UNDER whose preaching were you converted?" "Under nobody's preaching, but under my mother's practising." What a tribute to a consecrated motherhood was the young man's answer! How very near to Christ must that mother have lived!

"YOU HAVE few comforts here," was said to a poor Mexican, as we entered his poorly furnished room. "I have just three comforts," was his reply. "I have three short prayers; one to Mary, one to Jesus, and one to Joseph, and if anything troubles me I repeat one of them." "Do you ever read the Bible?" "Oh! I cannot read, and my uncle, who was a sacristan, said there is a new Bible that is very bad." This poor soul, in darkness for nearly sixty years, uncared for by the priest, for he had no money, listened attentively to the message of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus, and, we trust, for his eternal blessing. But the fruit of Rome's teaching was three short prayers, and two of them addressed to those who could not hear nor answer!

WHEN we are convinced of this saying, "God never separates His hand from His mouth"—meaning, He is never unlike Himself, but His power follows up His word, and thus He fulfils what He declares—this becomes a sure and firm foundation for our faith.—*John Calvin* (1560).

GOD'S POWER AND LOVE:—

The *power* that shapes the fairy shell  
Beneath the lonely sea,  
And brings it safely through the swell,  
Will also care for thee.

The *love* that paints the ocean bloom  
Where only God can see,  
And lifts it from the awful gloom,  
Hath heaven in store for thee.

The *hand* that guards the sea bird's nest,  
And leads her through the foam,  
Will soothe the trusting heart to rest,  
And guide it safely home.

The *eye* that fathoms boundless deeps,  
Where ocean currents roll,  
Sees every varying mood that sweeps  
The secret of thy soul.

SWEET HOMES.—The happiest, sweetest, tenderest homes are not those where there has been no sorrow, but those which have been overshadowed with grief, and where Christ's comfort was accepted. The very memory of the sorrow is a gentle benediction that broods ever over the household, like the silence that comes after prayer. There is a blessing sent from God in every burden of sorrow. In one of the battles of the Crimea a cannon-ball struck inside a fort, gashing the earth and sadly marring the garden beauty of the place; but from the ugly chasm there burst forth a spring of water, which flowed on thereafter, a living fountain. So the strokes of sorrow gash our hearts, but they open for us fountains of blessing and new life.

THE LEADING RELIGIONS are represented by the following figures:—Protestant Christians, 200,000,000; Roman Catholic Christians, 195,000,000; Greek Catholic Christians, 105,000,000; total Christians, 500,000,000. Jews, 8,000,000; Mohammedans, 180,000,000; Heathens, 812,000,000; total non-Christians, 1,000,000,000.

## THE HEAVENLY DWELLING PLACE AND THE EARTHLY PILGRIMAGE.

*Psalm lxxxiv.*

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IN this Psalm we have two different states—the enjoyed and, for us, heavenly privileges of a saint, and the experience of mercies by the way, and thus the lessons of God's faithfulness in them. These may be united, but very often are found separated. For a soul may know the experiences, without deep rest and the consciousness of heavenly joy—the heart's peace in the presence of God and in God Himself. It is evident that this is what our souls would desire above all things, if we are now practically with God ; that is, to be with Him according to the height of His own thoughts and goodness, and the display He has given not only of His grace, but also of the place in which He has put us apart from all circumstances and experiences, that we may be able to enjoy Him to the uttermost. Now I am persuaded that this kind of enjoyment of God is comparatively rare, even among the beloved ones of His family ; and that the continual tendency of our hearts is to be content with just that measure of knowledge of God which hinders our souls from getting into trouble, anxiety, and questions of one kind or another. And this comes of the wretched selfishness of our hearts, and the disposition there is in us to enjoy present things—so far, at least, as our consciences can in any wise permit without damaging our confidence in God. Need I say that a soul born of God resents such a principle as this, and that no soul that is entangled by it thoroughly weighs and judges it—understands it in its real import? For there are many specious pretexts which the enemy uses to hinder souls and keep them back. He does not, of course, permit, much less desire, that one should understand what he is seeking ; but his object with the saint is, that, in one way and measure or another, he

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may hinder the triumph of our souls and the present glory of God in association with His people.

Let us, then, just look briefly at the twofold picture herein afforded. In an Israelite, the two things could not be together ; but the Christian's peculiarity is, what was necessarily separated in others, we are entitled to enjoy—knowing what they had to learn in detail here and there. There are two blessings, or two classes of men said to be blest here. The first are those that abide in Jehovah's house: "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house." Then the effect is immediate and inseparable, and most glorifying to God: "They will be still praising Thee." It is the spirit of worship. You have hearts near enough to God to be above the depression or the elation created by present changes. Around that house there might be bitterness, sorrow, deep dishonour ; for the struggle of the enemy is always most keen in the neighbourhood of God's glory. But they are in His presence ; and what matters it then if Satan rage, and rage ever so near them ? They know that they are near Him to whom Satan and all that Satan can do is but a little thing—that they are in the presence of Him who loves them and controls all things. True moral elevation is theirs and spiritual power ; for God is their measure of judgment and their rest ; and this is only the more appreciated because of the boisterous waves and tempests that Satan may be permitted to excite.

And they have the consciousness of this, those that are thus near to Him. They are those dwelling in His house, and they are still praising Him ! It could not be otherwise. If I am so near to God that His glory fills my eye and my heart, I may know all other things outside, but this is the object that attracts my soul, and keeps me in peace, and gives me power to praise. "They will be still praising Thee." "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts." It is no question now of Israel and of their tabernacles. The soul that has entered into the presence of God

regards it less as the tabernacles of the people than of *God*, even Jehovah Himself. "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord."

But the courts are not enough, though they might be near; for he adds, "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." He wanted more than His courts—"the living God; even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God." So far from being content with the outer circle, when once the desire to be near God is in the soul, the desire rises to "the living God." How near can I get to Him? Thine altars—taking in both golden and brazen altars—intercession and acceptance. My heart, he says, is longing to be there: "Even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God." In the parenthetical word, which comes in so beautifully, the thought is this. The sparrow may be despised ("Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?"), but let them be ever so common and contemned of man, yet are they cared for by our heavenly Father. Yes, the sparrow has found an house; and the swallow, restlessly as she may be upon the wing, yet that restless bird has found a nest where she may lay her young. And where is our house and our nest? O how blessed is the answer! In nearness to Himself, where His glory dwells—"Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God." This is true of every saint of God. It is their full, eternal portion before Him.

But I am not speaking of it now in the point of view of a fact that grace has given to every Christian, but in a practical way. What I aim at is that our souls enter into it and respond to such grace, and find our deep joy in the place which God has given us, in His beloved Son, near to Himself. There are, however, practical trials for each; and hence we find the second part of this Psalm, where the way is looked at rather than rest and enjoyment in God's presence.

People often make their deepest blessings the resource

of their souls in sorrow, rather than their present home. Is it not so with many of us? Do we not put aside the thought of being so near to God? Do we not wait for it as that which we trust will be our place by and by in heaven? But how is it now? Is it our present pavilion? Is it that to which we turn as the needle to the pole habitually? It may be quivering under the pressure of outward circumstances, but there it surely turns. And is it to Christ Jesus that our souls turn habitually? Is it in the consciousness that we are brought into God's presence and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, put 'here as our present home, that we walk through this world? Is this the experience of our hearts? But few of God's children could answer with simplicity and assurance of heart, that it is so with them—that there their souls habitually dwell. They may be able to say, It is my desire ; but what is the actual state of the heart?

Though there may be at times some bright gleams, yet is not praise rather the exception than the habit? It may be that we only know what praise is when we meet together on the Lord's day, or when we manifestly bow in worship. But is the tone of thanksgiving, the spirit of adoration that which characterises our souls throughout each day? Or is not the power of praise, alas! the rare thing, and the trial of circumstances upon us, and the consciousness of failure, that which prevails? We have, as it were, to put on the garment of praise, instead of standing ever clothed with it. I do desire this for myself as for all the children of God, knowing how blessed it is, though but little entered into. Assuredly it is the sweetest place, and the secret of real power.

I do not allude now to the power which manifested itself in testifying to others (this is, no doubt, important in its place); but there is no power so blessed as the happy, peaceful, calm enjoyment of the presence of God. There is nothing that so wears through all the storms, and difficulties, and trials of persons and

## THE HEAVENLY DWELLING PLACE.

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things here. The Lord grant that we may know it well: for if we are happy in our own souls, we make happy—we excite a spirit of praise in others. If our hearts, on the contrary, are always dull, and we are occupied with enemies, evils, and disappointments, thence follows a querulous weakness in ourselves, and we become rather the means of enfeebling souls, and filling Christ's members with that which is the reflection of our own weakness, instead of evidencing the strength which is in Christ. The later verses, then, give us the Israelite on his way—he cannot be parted from the land. There are all sorts of difficulties in the way; but if God has called a soul to go there, He does not fail. There is the rain, too, that fills the pools—refreshment, ever and anon, which God graciously vouchsafes. Therefore “they go from strength to strength,” God mercifully sustaining and guiding. “Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.”

But the characteristic feature that appears now is prayer, not praise. It is blessed really to pray. It is a true sign of new life, as we see in the case of Saul of Tarsus, “Behold, he prayeth.” The renewed soul cannot but bring its weakness and difficulties before God. But though we must not pray less, we should praise more. Not that we should not feel our weakness and the valley of Baca, but we are called to far, far more, every one of us; and it would be a poor thing to have a title to some blessing if it were not an enjoyed and appropriated title; if it was like a mere parchment deed, shut up in a strong box, instead of a flowing and tasted spring of delights. And how deep is, then, the joy! What we find in the early verses is rather the result of this. It is not the conflict, but the soul's rest in the presence of God, which we must not defer till we get to heaven.

May our hearts turn there to the enjoyment of God Himself, even while we are here in this world. We shall feel the difficulties, but it will be as those that are above them. It will not be an easy path to the

flesh : but felt as all may be, there is something better than being occupied with the sorrows and hindrances of the way, and this is joying in God Himself. Hence, while the trials are experienced, yet we may and should have such repose in God about them all, that while we feel everything, we should seem as if we felt nothing. That is what was realised by the apostle Paul—"many tears," yet "none of these things move me." Did he know the truth of Rom. v. 3 experimentally as an apostle? Nay, but as a spiritual man. Other apostles may not have known it as he did.

The triumph of faith is not connected with any particular place or office, but flows from the soul's appreciation of God's own grace in Christ Jesus. We know that even an apostle will be in hell; and to many who have wrought miracles and cast out devils in His name the Lord will say, "I never knew you." Let us not suppose that the practical power which can give us to know our place with God depends on any state of the Church, or any special circumstances or position. These things have nothing to do with it; belonging, as it does, to the power of the Holy Ghost, who gives us to enjoy Christ. The soul that enjoys Him thoroughly will be most in God's presence, and most praising Him; and there too, I am persuaded, will be most power of practical holiness. God makes us happy in Christ; what is the effect? Holiness. The soul is attracted to walk with God above the world; and without this there is no enjoyment, no praising Him. All is vexation of spirit—all is dark, weak, and wretched.

These two things, then, should coalesce in the Christian. We are wrong if we take the passage through the valley of Baca now to be so exclusively our place as to exclude the rest and joy in God which are ours in His own presence. Blessed, surely, is the man that trusts God in both these conditions. But where the confidence now is simple, intelligent, and full, it will not be merely touching the circumstances



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of trial, but the heart near God, dwelling in God, and God in us, and still praising Him !

The Lord grant that if we know the one, we may enter into the still greater blessing of the other, more fully than ever, through Christ Jesus !—*Bible Treasury*, Sept., 1863.

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A SUPPLIANT AT THE FEET OF JESUS.

*Luke v. 12-15.*

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THE Gospels and the Epistles form, as we all know, the great bulk of New Testament revelation. We need the latter, and as Christians we learn to value them as exponents of doctrinal teaching. Therein we learn about our full standing before God on the ground of the accepted Sacrifice. Therein, too, the full Gospel is set forth, the ministry of Christ is unfolded, and the way to meet errors subversive of true Christian teaching is in no way dimly delineated. Apostolic teaching is clear, definite, and full. Surely the more that anyone grows in Christian intelligence, the more will he value the Epistles, which before his conversion may have appeared devoid of interest, and wanting in attractiveness.

In the Gospels, however, there is an attraction which the unconverted may experience. The wonders wrought, the confounding and silencing of opponents, the story of the Incarnation, and the history of the Cross, these, in measure, have arrested even men of the world ; furnishing subjects for the painter's art, and providing themes on which gifted orators may descant. Emotions and natural feelings may be stirred by the stories of the Gospels, yet the effect of all that be but transient.

For the Christian, however, the Gospel history has a voice of deeper tone. It tells him of his Lord, and of his Saviour ; reminds him of the reality of the humilia-

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tion of the Son of God ; and testifies to the grace in the heart of Christ, and the wonderful love of God. It furnishes him, too, with the only perfect Example from which he should learn, and assures him from its records of the grace on which he can count, and of the sympathy ever ready to be extended to him. The Gospels are not for him fields just to provide subjects to please an artistic eye, nor just to stir the emotions. They speak to the heart and to the conscience.

To one most interesting incident in the Lord's life we would now turn—a meeting between Him and a leper. Three evangelists record it (Matt. viii. 2-4 ; Mark i. 40-45 ; Luke v. 12-15). It was evidently a very striking miracle, and, as far as we know, the first healing of a leper by the Lord. Other afflicted people had previously at Capernaum got blessing, demons were cast out, paralysed people were healed, and fever in the case of Peter's wife's mother was rebuked (Mark i. 21-34). But never a word by Mark on the close of that Sabbath day of a leper being healed.

A leper healed ! Never since the days of Naaman the Syrian had the sacred record chronicled such a favour. Far from being uncommon in Israel was that terrible malady. Many lepers there were in the land in the days of Elisha, the Lord declared, yet none of them were cleansed. Those four leprous men at the gate of Samaria (2 Kings vii.) were bearers of good news to the besieged people within, yet of none of them do we learn that they were permitted to rejoice in cleansing from their malady. Often, indeed, must the law for the leper's exclusion from his family, his friends, and all others (Levit. xiii.) have been acted upon. But where and when were the regulations respecting his restoration to his place in the congregation brought into exercise ? Of course, Naaman was not required to conform to them. He was a Gentile, and therefore not under the law. That fourteenth

## A SUPPLIANT AT THE FEET OF JESUS. 99

chapter of Leviticus was nothing to him, though it betokened for the Israelite that the dreadful disease might be healed. But who in Israel could boast of being illustrations of it till the Lord appeared? One can fancy a leper of old, acquainted with the law for those who were cleansed, grasping clearly the possibility of such a favour; his own experience, however, that of his cotemporaries, as well as of his ancestors, being unable to furnish *any precedent* since the days of Moses to give him hope in his case.

No wonder, then, that the first instance of such a favour on the part of the Lord has found a place in the three Gospels. Each writer, however, introduces it according to the plan he was pursuing. Matthew relates it in connection with other miracles, to exhibit the Master's service to poor creatures afflicted in various ways, ere illustrating the way that men treated the Lord. Mark apparently introduces it in its chronological order. Luke relates it after the miracle of the miraculous draught of fishes, and before the healing of the palsied man let down on his couch through the roof, pointing out thereby truth about the person of Christ. He was the Creator, so could summon the fish to Peter's net. He was Jehovah, so of His own will, and by His own power, He cleansed the leper. He was also Son of Man: as such He had authority on earth to forgive sins, and He proved it. Creator, Jehovah, Son of Man! This was the One walking about here among His creatures. To exhibit, then, a sample of His miraculous powers, Matthew relates the incident; to show who He was, Luke also relates it; and, as marking the time of its occurrence, Mark tells us of it.

But where did the miracle take place? What, too, was the name of the leper? These facts, known of course then, have been passed over by each narrator. What matters, we may say, where it took place? What matters the name of the individual? The grace he shared in, and the readiness of the Lord to cleanse

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him, these are the important matters, and they are sufficiently attested. "A threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccles. iv. 12).

A leper, and that one "full of leprosy," who would interest himself in such a loathsome object? To meet a leper was to shun him, to give him plenty of room, carefully guarding against contact with his person, whilst the subject of that awful infliction was to have his clothes rent, his head bare, his upper lip covered, and to utter that pitiful cry, "Unclean, unclean." An outcast from his fellows, unfit to associate with any but lepers like himself, such was the physical and social condition of one with the hand of God thus upon him. Who, we ask again, would interest himself in such an object? Lepers were cleansed by the Lord, as He told the messenger of John (Matt. xi. 5), yet we have, we believe, no instance on record of any friend interceding for one so smitten. No one interceded for the man in this history before us. No one interceded for the ten lepers of Luke xvii. 12-18. The paralytic man was brought by his friends to the notice of Christ. Of interest manifested on behalf of sick ones for which His healing power was entreated, the anxiety of the centurion for his servant, and that of Jairus for his daughter, are examples (Luke vii. 1-10; viii. 41-56). Petitions, too, in favour of demoniacs we have on record: witness that father supplicating for his only son (Luke ix. 37-42), and the Syro-phœnician woman on the coast of Tyre and Sidon (Matt. xv. 21-28), who, taking no rebuff, interceded successfully for her daughter. But lepers, it would seem, were left to speak for themselves. No one took up their case.

Were they, as outcasts from their families and their homes, not to share in the activity of divine grace then displaying itself in works of almighty power? If none would espouse their cause, they must do it themselves. That this leper did, and those ten likewise. They drew the Lord's attention to themselves, and that solitary one fell on his face before Him, an object of

## A SUPPLIANT AT THE FEET OF JESUS. 101

pity indeed. But would He, who was healing the sick and casting out devils, care for a loathsome leper? Let this one man make proof by presenting in person his petition: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." A confession of need on his part, but of power on the Lord's part. "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." Few, but touching words. Cleansing he wanted, and nowhere else could he go to get it. Few, we have said, were his words—much speaking was not needed. Evidently that leper's petition made an impression on those who heard it, since the evangelists agree for the most part as to the words he uttered on that occasion.

To Whom was he speaking, introducing himself as he did? The men of Nazareth would have said, if asked, why, that is the carpenter's son, whom we have known from his early years. Scribes of Jerusalem might have said, He is working miracles by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Did Beelzebub ever heal the sick? But who was He? A man certainly, with no form, nor comeliness, nor beauty that men should desire Him (Is. liii. 2). He belonged not to the Sanhedrin; the Pharisees would not follow Him; the scribes did not believe in Him. A man to heal a leper by His own power, who had ever heard of that? Elisha did not venture in his own name to heal Naaman the Syrian. A man healing a leper by His own power! what precedent could be quoted for that?

Interesting it is to see people divinely taught. The penitent thief discerned that the One crucified by his side had a kingdom, and would surely come in it. No miracle was wrought before that thief's eyes; but taught, we must admit, of God, he knew something about the Lord for which he was indebted to no priest nor scribe versed in the law. The woman who was a sinner knew something about Him, also, of which Simon the Pharisee was ignorant. Blind people and the Syro-phœnician woman owned Him as the Son of

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David. And here this poor leper was confident of the Lord's power, if only He would exercise it.

A moment of suspense there may have been, yet scarcely a moment. The appeal was heard, received, and attended to ; compassion was extended to him, and a hand touched him. The Lord, the Lord of Glory touched the leper, and healed him. Nor was it a touch in silence. He would have him and any present know of His willingness to heal. "I will: be thou clean," was His reply. And immediately the leprosy departed from him (Luke v. 13).

Henceforth it would be known, and surely by the leper's proclamation of his cleansing it was known, that none were too vile or too loathsome for the Lord to notice, or to compassionate, and even to touch. A thought for that day. A thought, too, for this day. None too bad, too hopeless in their condition, to come to Him.

But more, and this is an encouragement for souls : there is no need of an intermediary, no need of anyone to take us by the hand to bring us to the notice of Christ, no need for anyone to entreat acceptance for us. No apostle brought that leper to the Lord, nor did Mary the Virgin, His mother, ask for him. The leper had no friend, no introducer, no intercessor. He needed none. Abject misery and helplessness, prostrate before almighty power, can draw out for the individual the sympathy and the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Helper of the helpless, Commiserator of the afflicted, Healer of those looked on by men as incurable, such He was then. Such He can be still. Yet let us ever remember that leper's proviso : "If Thou *wilt*." Then it may be in the still hour of night, when we are unconscious in sleep, that He will work in beneficent power, and fill the heart with thanksgiving and praise in the morning.

C. E. S.

## WITH THE MASTER IN MATTHEW XXIV. AND XXV.

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WE are now about to look at a very serious portion. When we reach Matt. xxiv., we have done with the testing of Israel. I mean that, if we discern the structure of Matthew's gospel, we shall find that the Lord is conducting a very elaborate testing of Israel. He first proposes Himself to them as the Bethlehemite of Micah, then as the Light from Zabulon and Naphthali, and lastly, riding on an ass, He proposes Himself as King to the daughters of Zion.

So that all through His life, read in one great light, He is testing the state of the daughters of Zion. John, in his gospel, draws the conclusion, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." How beautiful it is to trace the Lord Jesus in such a ministry! He was the patient Tiller of the vineyard to see if, at the eleventh hour, He could get any fruit; but when we come to chap. xxiii. the testing is over, and He gets on the great judgment throne, and pronounces their guilt and the judgment that attaches to their guilt.

Just as a judge, He sums up the evidence and pronounces the verdict. Then He turns His back upon them, saying, "Ye shall not see Me henceforth, until the day wherein ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." There is great exactness in all this, and unless we apprehend it we are not in a position to meditate on the 24th and 25th chapters—"When shall these things be?" &c.

The Lord pronounces a solemn prophecy that fills the 24th and 25th chapters. Marking characteristically the judgment of Israel, He begins to answer the query of the disciples in the 4th verse, and He carries the first part of His reply down to the 14th verse, and details the story of what shall be before the end comes, which He calls the beginning of sorrows. Having

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reached that point in the 15th verse, He anticipates the story of this Israel who is now the subject; and, mark, the Church is not here. It was a stranger to Christ's thought while He was talking of Israel. He was invited to speak of the temple and the end of the age, and to that He applies Himself. In the 15th verse He begins to speak of Antichrist, the abominable desolater who shall come. The moment that takes place (it will not be till the Church has gone from the scene) He begins to instruct His disciples how they are to act. This is the great tribulation of which Daniel, Jeremiah, and the Revelation speak. Down to the 28th verse He is telling them how to behave themselves, and in the 28th the judgment is executed. That is the rider on the white horse of the 19th of Revelation and His armies. They come down to execute judgment on the carcass. The Lord here is represented under the figure of an eagle coming down for its prey. Here, in the 29th, He shows the action of judgment; and, oh, what verses the 29th and 30th are! what a solemnity the judgment of God is! Our spirits should be in strict sympathy with these different things.

In the 31st verse, the judgment being executed, we get a mere glance of the kingdom that is to follow; because judgment never closes the scene—it only purges the vessel to be filled with glory. Having left the 31st verse, we have, in one sense, left the prophetic part of these chapters to take up a moral parenthesis.

I find this style constantly in the Book of God. The prophet Isaiah, when relating historical facts, constantly turns to look at the operation of the Spirit, and that is the style of the parenthesis we are looking at from xxiv. 42 to xxv. 30. Here the Lord is morally talking to our souls, and telling us that we ought to sustain the beautiful characters, *watchers* and *workers*, while He is absent. He turns aside to give a look to each of us, for all this moral teaching attaches to our very selves, or to the Jewish remnant



## WITH THE MASTER IN MATT. XXIV. AND XXV. 105

by-and-by. Ah, watchers and workers, we are not set together merely to pick up knowledge, but to quicken and animate one another's souls.

These watchers and waiters and workers are here represented by the wise virgins and the faithful servants; and I am going to observe carefully here, no communication I get from the Lord puts me right into the kingdom. He stops short of everything like a detail of the kingdom. He gathers His elect to constitute the kingdom, but we do not see them in it. Nor do we follow the wise virgins inside the door, nor the servant into the joy of his Lord; nor are we told what the marriage supper is.

The moral of this is deep and exquisite, because it tells us what the moral material is that goes into the kingdom, and what it is that is kept out. The moral atmosphere of the kingdom is what I am introduced to alone. Love, devotion, and obedience characterised the wise virgins and faithful servants. Oh, how unspeakably blessed to go into a place that teems with love to Christ and desire for His service! The scenery of the place is nothing compared with this beauty to our souls.

Having turned aside thus to address our hearts and consciences, Jesus turns back at the 31st verse, and resumes the prophetic current of His thoughts: but even here we are not properly in the kingdom. It is a scene just at the opening of it, where the Lord, ascending or assuming the throne of His glory, calls the living nations before Him to judgment. Now we have nothing to say to that. Here is no resurrection scene. It is not the great white throne, but it is the Lord Jesus, when He has assumed the throne of His millennial glory, coming to enquire how the living nations have treated His messengers, how the nations have treated those Jews who have gone out with the everlasting Gospel. The settlement of that question is given in the parable of the sheep and the goats; and let me add one thing, the moral feature of this one is

just as beautiful as the others. The element that gets into the kingdom is not selfishness, but those go in who had loving, gracious care of His poor people. So we find the Lord bringing us to the borders of the kingdom, and showing us the characters of our companions there in the wise virgins and faithful servants, and now in the sheep, those who sympathised in the day of distress with the people of an unmanifested Jesus.

The Lord keep us near Him in these thoughts, for they are holy and deeply beautiful. Oh! that we may give our hearts to Jesus' cause, our hands to Jesus' work, and our sympathies to Jesus' people.—  
Amen. ANON.

## ONESIMUS—THE RUNAWAY SLAVE.

BLESSED be God salvation comes to all classes and conditions of men, and presents itself for their acceptance. All need it. All are heartily welcome to it. All must perish without it (Mark xvi. 16). Being *God's* salvation, it is the display of what He is in the activities of His grace, and cannot, therefore, be limited to any particular class or race of men. It is "unto all" (Rom. iii. 22). Kings or subjects, masters or slaves—all equally need it, all are equally welcome to it. "There is no difference . . . for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him" (Rom. x. 12).

In this short epistle of Paul to Philemon we have a wonderful picture of that marvellous grace. A volume condensed—a *multum in parvo*—a history of a life in a breath. The slave's escape—his arrest—his conviction—his conversion—his consecration—and his restoration to his master. A mighty, marvellous triumph of the grace of God. We can only say, as we view it: What a God! What a salvation! What grace!

"Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"

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Onesimus was a slave. His name is said to mean "profitable—useful." His conduct, however, belied his name, and proved him to be but a *profitless* and *useless* object. What a picture of a sinner we have here ; yea, perhaps of the reader of these lines. You only need to read Psalm xiv. to see how true it is of the whole human family, and surely *you* cannot leave yourself out as an exception. It is evident that Onesimus could brook the restraints of his master's service no longer, and so made his escape. Is the picture not exact ? He ran away ! ran away from his master, and proved the truth of verse 11 : "Which in *time past* was to thee *unprofitable*." Like Adam—and like Jonah—and like the reader—he ran away. Is it not true, my friend, you have run away, and are still keeping away from God, who has paramount claims over you ?

He turned his steps towards Rome, in all probability to hide himself the more effectually from his master among the multitudes who flocked into that godless, imperial city, and lived in idleness, sensuality, and crime. And where have you got to, poor, unsaved soul ? Adam hid *behind* the trees ; Jonah ran off to Tarshish ; Zaccheus hid *in* the tree ; the prodigal went into a *far country*. You, too, have some little hiding-place away from God. Remember, it is useless. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him ? saith the Lord" (Jeremiah xxiii. 24). How accurate the picture of the sinner. Away from God—"a fugitive and a vagabond," like Cain ; "hateful and hating one another ;" loving "darkness rather than light ;" "sensual, having not the Spirit ;" hating God above all others, and denying His authority over you ; like Pharaoh, saying, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him ?" The last person in the world Onesimus would wish to meet was his master ; and the last person you wish to meet is God. Is it not so ? Ah, that tells its tale as to how things stand between you !

But *how* was he *arrested* ? By *whom* was he

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arrested? you ask. Not by the police, as we say to-day. Not by a company of horse or foot surrounding him, and handing him back to Philemon in irons to suffer for his sin. No! not in that way! There was One whose eye rested on him; who knew all his profitless and useless past; who had seen his escape; followed him in his hiding and sin in Rome—One who loved him, pitied him, cared for him, and intended to bless him. His *past* was sad and sinful; his *present* was to be bright and useful; while his *future* would be eternal and blissful. It was God who arrested him.

How did He do it? We are not told *how*. Paul was a prisoner at the time, and in all probability did not preach publicly in the market or place of public resort. We know, however, that "he ceased not to preach and teach" in his own hired house (Acts xxviii. 30, 31). We know, too, that Onesimus and he met, and a message from God through Paul, the prisoner of the Lord, reached the conscience of Onesimus, the runaway slave, and arrested and convicted him. Like Babylon, he was "*found*, and also *caught*" (Jer. l. 24), and though he had run away from Philemon, he had fallen into the hands of God: not, however, in the day of judgment, but in the day of grace.

Reader, have you ever found yourself "*caught*," *arrested*, and *convicted*? What an awfully real thing it is. No wonder the brain reels sometimes, and the mind loses its balance, as has been the case in some instances, when a glimpse is given of self in all its sinfulness and unfitness for God, and the terrible end of such a state and course is seen. O, Christ-less soul! what an eternal calamity if you should never be *found* and *caught* till the judgment day! No escape then! Sin's *work* you have done, and sin's *wages* you must then accept. O that you might know Christ and salvation, rather than be *found* and *caught*, and *damned* hereafter.

Details as to his conversion have not been vouchsafed to us, but Paul could say of him, "Whom I have

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begotten in my bonds" (verse 10). A new life had been given to Onesimus—eternal life. It was not a question of *reformation*—a mere turning over a new leaf. Oh how many foolishly try that, as though *that* would satisfy God. No, a *new birth* (John iii. 3) had taken place—a new life had been implanted in his soul. God had given to the poor slave eternal life (John v. 11). Has He given it to you? It is His *gift* to *any* who will *receive* it (Rom. vi. 23). Will *you* receive it?

Observe, too, that while a new life is given, and surely that is blessed, yet the past is not lost sight of, nor its guilt made light of. Righteousness could never make light of sin—never! And Paul does not lose sight of the master's claims, or the slave's sins. In all probability, Onesimus was *a thief* as well as a run-away. May be, he ran away because he had stolen his master's goods; and Paul says to Philemon, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on my account . . . I will repay it" (verses 18, 19). Is this not a beautiful picture of grace? Is it not just what that precious Saviour has done for poor sinners?

Blessed be His peerless Name for ever! It was *He* who said to God, for us, "Put that to My account; I will repay it." All *our* sins. All! Not a few! All our sins were borne by Him in His own body on the tree (1 Peter ii. 24). All the awful judgment fell upon His holy head, and He exhausted it. What more do you require? Can you not believe Him, trust Him, and sing with us who are believers—

"The chains are snapt, the bonds of sin are broken,  
And I am free;  
O let the triumphs of His grace be spoken,  
Who died for me."

Then there is even more than that. Paul wrote a letter, and sent Onesimus back to his master as the bearer of the letter, in which he claims for the slave the same reception he himself would receive. Here, again, we see "grace upon grace." It is not mere

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satisfaction for wrong done—"the riches of grace"—but the reception of the person, and hence the display of "the glory of His grace" (Eph. i. 6, 7). So Paul says: "If thou count me, therefore, a partner, *receive him as myself*" (verse 17). And this is the way of grace with a penitent, believing sinner. A new life is given him, sins are all atoned for and blotted out for ever, and the person is accepted before God according to the infinite value of that sacrifice, as seen and valued by God Himself—and a right royal, God-like welcome given to the returning sinner. He is received as Christ Himself; yea, he can say, "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17). Loved with the same love (John xvii. 23). Like the prodigal in Luke xv.—*kissed, robed, and feasted*. What a reception! What a welcome! What a portion! Nor does the reception of the sinner end here. We are received now as Christ, and presently we shall be received into the Father's house in bodies of glory like His own, the crowning of the wondrous story of grace.

Then, again, Onesimus became a useful servant to Paul in the gospel. He evidently gave himself over as a slave to the Lord, to serve as He pleased—the service of love. But Paul would not keep him without Philemon's consent, so he wisely and righteously sent him back to his master. Is not this the effect of the grace of God when apprehended? Surely it is; and though we sold ourselves to sin and Satan and became their servants, when God comes in and saves and delivers, we naturally yield ourselves to Him as His servant, to obey Him, to serve Him, to render to Him the willing service of a devoted heart, a fully consecrated life.

Dear, unsaved soul, let all this wonderful grace of God be your portion. Do not reject it. Do not, I beseech you, continue in your Christ-less and downward course. "The end of those things is *death*;" and after death *the judgment*; and after that *the lake of fire*.

Beware! Let the message of grace and love win your

"JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING."

III

heart. Think of all the sorrows and the awful death of God's beloved Son on the cross, and know that it was for *sinner*s He died. Not for the *good*, but for the *bad*. He invites you to trust Him, and says, "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John vi. 47). May God use this paper to *find you, bring you, and bless you*.

*New Zealand.*

W. EASTON.

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"JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING."

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O BLESSED Lord, when wilt Thou come?  
Fain would we see Thy face!  
When wilt Thou take us to Thy home  
And glorify Thy grace?

Yet now by faith we antedate  
The spoils of victory given,  
And, filled with joy, anticipate  
The blessedness of heaven!

Adorèd Lord, our hearts beat fast;  
Do call us hence away:  
God's cloudless morn shall break at last,  
The Church's bridal day!

The marriage of the Lamb shall fill  
The vault of heaven with bliss;  
His wife shall then His bosom thrill,  
Adorned with righteousness!

O morn of morns! O day of days!  
To our enraptured heart  
Our Bridegroom seen in glory's blaze  
Shall rapture new impart.

Eternal themes of heavenly praise  
Shall every tongue employ,  
And everlasting transports raise  
Of everlasting joy!

"THERE IS NO POWER BUT OF GOD;  
THE POWERS THAT BE ARE ORDAINED  
OF GOD."

(*Romans* xiii. 1.)

THIS is one of those ancient utterances of more value than the revenue of the world. In the past, how many a conscience has been preserved by obedience to such God-given testimony. How fully delivered from conflict with the highest form of civil power, or most retiring delegated authority of king's subordinates, would the humble, God-fearing one be who meekly bowed to "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." But you may be crushed, it might be said, if you assert this truth to heathen monarchs, who give no allegiance to the living and true God; and some might press this as a sufficient diplomatic reason so as to preserve one's life in domains over which strangers to God hold sway. But Joseph, Moses, Esther, Daniel, our blessed Lord, Paul, Peter, and others living in the days of tyrannical rulers show the groundlessness of these fears. The above Scripture was penned when rulers had not outwardly even owned "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," or were taught to observe all things which He commanded.

That kings and rulers are upheld and owned by Him is fully attested by being referred to as the ordinance, and they ministers of God. And, mark well, when He was delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, the guilt of a people was shown who were in recognised relation to God, so that He sought them—overtures were made to them, repentance offered—yet they crucified Him; and Pilate, in his questionings, was surprised at the silence of Him who appeared powerless—such silence as perfect as His speech. "Knowest Thou not," had been said, "that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?" Jesus answered, "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given



“THERE IS NO POWER BUT OF GOD.” 113

thee from above: therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.” To this add another testimony: an attempt made to bring about conflict between our blessed Lord and Cæsar was answered by the more fully owning that Cæsar should have his things rendered to him and God have His.

We are living in times of sorrow, when, for the most part, that which professedly stands for Christ on earth has merged into material which politicians use; hence we hear of outcries against powers in this land and abroad, coming from men bearing the name of Christian. Do not these cries affect us, because of His dishonour, more deeply than the cries of poor victims who fall a prey through the capricious racial hatred of their pagan lords? Is it surprising that confusion and bloodshed, revolution and insurrection are known as common things, which disturb from centre to circumference the various nations of the earth? A cry, at times, of “Peace, peace,” is heard, which none can believe in while all are more or less energetically toiling in strengthening ranks, adding to those who bear arms, busy inventing and manufacturing engines that work destruction and death. For the Christian, no carnal weapon ought to be found in his or her hand, or word to be heard proceeding from his or her mouth against foe or enemy. Evil is to be overcome by good—hungry enemies to be fed. Our warfare is not against flesh and blood, neither can we have citizenship here and a share in the politics of this world, and show indisputable title to inheritance with Christ of that which fadeth not away, or that we seek a city whose founder is God. How can there be pilgrimage and strangership, if at home in the affairs of the State? Ruth shows us a beautiful character of one who clave not to country and kindred; but, notwithstanding the failure of God’s ancient people, she left all; and her utterance to one who had gone out full and returned empty was, “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” Rahab received

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the spies, took care of them, identified herself with them—no mixed motives: she believed and attested it in the very fullest way, and perished not with them that believed not. How honourably mentioned are those in the gospels testifying to God's grace. Is not the unheeded exhortation in 1 Tim. ii. an answer in part, at least, to what we find abroad; *i.e.*, near by us, insubjection, revolution, and confusion—farther abroad, blood-shedding, plunder, rioting, and more barbarous unrest; the same things going on here, only not so noticeable because of general absence of blood of victims freely flowing.

"I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." Here is His revealed will for men professing to fear Him. Godly women would get an object lesson if this were still the true attitude taken; but my readers may truly say 2 Tim. iii. is nearer the picture that constantly presents itself. Yea, Jude comes nearer still; and though generally all forsake and give up Christ in favour of the world, for His elect the word holds good that man, dependent man, is to preserve until the close that attitude which our blessed God will answer to. In James we see a people who had no resources in the world—no clubs, trade societies, or insurances against loss—educated to suffer afflictions; but how sublime, then, was an open ear to their cries, and that ear that of the Lord. Our blessed God grant that we may not be drawn into unholy breathings against any poor, undone creatures who speak great swelling words, and as we pray for all saints, all men, especially for kings and those in authority, we shall be preserved from becoming tools in the hands of politicians and their agents.

What grace that what is positive is found in the Word: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal

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life !” Here, if anywhere, we get Christendom’s doom, yet no rejoicing over the downfall, but we look steadily on to be ushered into a scene of life ; no breathings of threatening ; but of some have compassion, others save with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Titus iii. also gives perfect counsel for our guidance in the matter of our civil relations : “ Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost ; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour ; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law ; for they are unprofitable and vain.”

“ A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver,” hence may each desire to prophecy—speak as the oracle of God, and seek in love to edify that which is dear to the heart of Christ ; speaking truth to our neighbour, remembering that love works no ill. “ Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any : even as Christ forgave you, so also do

ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." Alas, we reap the fruit of our way! His hand is upon us in love for humbling. How well to own our many trespasses that He might turn the sorrows of the night into joy as we contemplate the Morning Star. The morning cometh. Yea, the Spirit and the Bride say "Come." In meantime may afflictions be sanctified to us, and still richer, fuller praise shall be His. W. B.

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### THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

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HE is worthy; oh, how worthy! How supremely His beauty eclipses that of all others! What joy to think of Jesus being our portion: the very Jesus who stopped the bier at Nain, and turned the widow's grief into gladness, and her sorrow into singing; who let the woman wash His feet; who could say, "Tell Peter," after he had denied Him with oaths; the One who, in the transcending perfection of His grace, could think of poor needy ones, taking up their cause and bearing the judgment due to them. Is He changed? Can His loveliness cease to fascinate and fill the soul? Can His glory become dim, or know aught of decay? Can His smile lose one ray of its sweetness, or His words their joy-inspiring power? Can His preciousness to us lessen? His love for us ever falter or grow weary? Oh, how confidently we can put the challenge, knowing in our hearts He is the Faithful One and True, and having promised He will perform, for He gave Himself for us. Is He not the brightness of the glory—the source of beauty and blessing? and, oh, wondrous, precious truth, the Bridegroom with whom His Church is soon to have the adoring intimacy as His Bride for ever; expecting now with this blessed expectancy, that He shall come Himself, and with His own arm of power freshly mould our dust, or change our vile bodies like unto His own. \* \*

—*Extract from a letter, 1880.*

## INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

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A KING once made a certain law, the penalty to the transgressor of it being the loss of both eyes. His own son was the first to break it, was tried, found guilty, and sentenced. The day of execution arrived; the executioner brought the boy into his father's presence and put out one eye, when his father said, "Stop; take one of mine." It was done. The penalty was fully met, and the boy was free to go with the loss of one eye. That father loved his son, and bore part of his penalty. God loved the world, and sent His beloved Son to DIE FOR and to meet the whole penalty for all who accept Him as their Saviour. Yes! eternal praises to His most precious name. He met ALL THE PENALTY—drained the cup of divine wrath to its very dregs—the sword of divine justice pierced His heart—the righteous judgments of that throne burst upon Him in all their fury. And now He is risen out of it all, and seated upon the very throne that once poured the judgments that were our due UPON HIM. There in that peerless face, once marred and smitten, now shines all the GLORY OF GOD.

THE BECHUANAS are directed by the position of certain stars in the heavens that the time has arrived in the revolving year when they may commence their labours of the field. The Pleiades they call *Selemela*, which may be translated Cultivator. Thus, when this constellation assumes a certain position in the heavens, it is the signal to commence cultivating their fields and gardens. This notion prevails in almost all the nations of the interior of Africa with which we are acquainted, and forcibly illustrates the interrogation, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?" (Spring).—*Moffatt's Labours in S. Africa.*

PATIENCE.—Have patience, there will come a time  
When these dull ears shall hear aright  
Strains that out-ring earth's drowsy chime  
As heaven outshines the taper's light!

INFLUENCE.—There is one gift which God has bestowed that carries with it the heaviest responsibility it is possible for us to possess, namely, the subtle power of influencing others. Consciously at times, unconsciously at other times, this strange but constant moral force is exerting an irresistible power upon those with whom we each of us come in contact. And even when life is ended, when the spirit hath returned to God who gave it, the trace of that influence remains and even deepens, like the brilliant sunset light of an evening, in the hearts and lives of those who survive.

"ETERNAL" means age-lasting. From this deniers of eternal punishment have sought to establish that the word means a limited, not an unlimited, period. A few Scriptures will shew the impossibility of such a rendering. The same word rendered "eternal" damnation (Mark iii. 29), "eternal" judgment (Hebrews vi. 2), "everlasting" fire (Matt. xviii. 8), "everlasting" punishment (Matt. xxv. 46), is applied to "eternal" life (John iii. 15, 16), "eternal" weight of glory (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18), a house "eternal" in the heavens (2 Cor. v. 1), "eternal" salvation (Heb. v. 9), "eternal" redemption (Heb. ix. 12), "eternal" inheritance (Heb. ix. 15). The King "eternal" in 1 Tim. i. 17 is the King "*of the ages.*" So that if we deny the eternity of judgment and punishment, we must likewise deny the eternity of life, salvation, redemption, glory, and our inheritance, yea, of the very being of God Himself!

THE STUDY OF NATURE.—It is a bad sign when Christians turn from this. “The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.” It all speaks of God, not merely giving proofs of His existence, His eternal power and Godhead (Rom. i. 20), but furnishing in countless ways an exhibition of His character as well. He whose “tender mercies” (seen in the varied and bounteous provision for the needs of His creatures) “are over all His works,” is a God *tender* and merciful! He who has painted with tints of loveliness earth and sea and sky, must be Himself infinitely beautiful—“the King in His beauty!” The very variety and lavish superabundance of all things in nature suggest the infinite fulness of God. Under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and in subjection to the Spirit of God, let the Christian astronomer sweep the heavens with his telescope—he will learn of the infinite God; let the Christian biologist, under the same guidance, search with his microscope into the most hidden recesses of nature, and he will find the same God. He will be seen in the analyses of chemistry and in the laws of physics. He fills all things, and His truth is everywhere one; it is a reflection of Him who has revealed Himself only in our Lord Jesus Christ.

SHOW me a person who never confesses, and you will show me one who never really prays. A dear servant of the Lord once said, “One bit of contrition is worth more in God’s sight than all London filled with miracles.” “To that man will I look, even to him who is of a broken and contrite heart, and trembleth at My word” (Isaiah lxvi. 2).

GOD is a God of patience; but, though God’s patience is lasting, it is *not everlasting!*

THE CHURCH is the body of Christ, He the Head. It is indwelt by the Holy Ghost. It is, therefore, One. By the Spirit we are not only members of Christ’s body, but our bodies are members of Christ, and we, as saints, are members one of another. The One body is practically manifested by our endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit. The Church is One, not only in life but in organism, possession of gifts, testimony, and discipline. We cannot shirk these responsibilities, do what we will. We cannot isolate ourselves as individuals, nor localise ourselves as assemblies. We are responsible to hold the truth, and seek to exhibit it, of the One body and the One Spirit. May our God keep us from attempting any other path because seeming more easy. It is only God’s path for His saints which is “the right way.”

I HAVE been asked (alas for the askers!), Are you infallible? Are you going to lord it over the consciences of others? My answer is simple: I walk with God, and *judge myself*; right onward where the Word carries me. ’Tis replied, How do you know you are right? I answer: While walking in dependence upon God alone to shew me His mind, that I may do it—do you think He will be unfaithful to His Word and to Himself (John vii. 17)? And as to the consciences of others, I lord it over no soul. Let *each walk with God*; but only let each remember, that if my walk is with God, alas for him who is not in the same pathway, be he before me or behind me. There is no holiness in communion and no real “communion of saints” apart from this solitary walk with God—of the saints individually. The restless disquietude of many convinces me that *they* are not walking with God, however active in service they may be.

A COMPARISON.—John i. 42, And he brought him to Jesus ; Rev. v. 1, 8-14, And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped. The beginning (John i. 42), how simple ! The end (Rev. v.), how glorious ! God was *with Jacob* (Gen. xxviii. 15) ; Enoch was *with God* (Gen. v. 22 and 24). How great the difference !

“WHAT WAS IT led you to become a Christian ?” “A half-pound pressure for five minutes on my coat-button,” was the reply given to this question, and the gentleman who made it went on to explain that, as he was leaving his office, his lawyer gently laid hold of his client’s button, kindly asked him about his soul, and commended Christ to him. This word in season was used of the Holy Ghost to his conversion.

THE WORD OF GOD.—To the soul fresh in its spirituality, the Word of God—and, oh ! how can it be otherwise ?—has more sweetness in its least statements (for they come from God) than in any indulgence whatever of the mental powers.—*J. N. D.*

MISSIONS TO THE HEATHEN.—The working of the heathen mine belongs to the whole Church, and not to the missionaries alone. The difficulty, the peril, the toil, are theirs ; the responsibility of caring for them, of sending them needed reinforcements, of not letting them lose heart, is ours. To evangelise the heathen is work we *must* do ; to have a fine building, a good organ, an accomplished choir, a popular and eloquent ministry, is not a part of our commission. Some of the achievements of English Christianity, which are lauded in the daily papers as splendid triumphs, may possibly appear more like splendid sins when looked at in the light of our duty to the heathen ! The tide of missionary zeal is rising, but there is yet very much to be desired.

ON THE RECENT DEPARTURE from Figueras of a thousand Spanish soldiers for Cuba, there was a distribution among them of one thousand pocket Testaments. Two Christian maid-servants and the son of Pastor Rodriguez undertook the task, and, meeting with a good reception from officers and men, had it nearly completed before the priests awoke to action. Every effort was made by the emissaries of Rome to induce the soldiers to throw away or give up the Testaments, but for the most part in vain. An officer, who was watching from his carriage window, called out indignantly to the priests, “If either of you dare to come here and molest my men I will knock you down. I know your game !” Unabashed, they went to another compartment, shouting, “A penny for a book ; who will sell ?” “Not I, for one,” replied a soldier ; “I would not think of selling what has been given to me as a present.” “Nor I,” said another ; “if you offered a hundred dollars I would not part with so kind a gift for you to destroy. I intend always to keep it as my last recuerdo (souvenir) of Figueras.” A comrade from the Castle, who had come to say “good-bye,” was standing next to the priest, when he gave the order to “throw away the book.” One soldier only obeyed, and, as the Testament fell to the ground, our friend from the fortress snapped it up, saying, “Thou shalt not escape,” and, putting it into his pocket, walked off with his prize. The next day he was seen reading it in the canteen, surrounded by comrades all eager to see the book which had been condemned by the priests. Prayer is desired that the many thousands of Testaments and tracts distributed amongst these and other soldiers may be blessed to many who never had the Word of God in their hand before.

IN THE Church of God, where all true believers are of the household, there are divinely-appointed rulers, and their work is to minister to the need of the household. As the COMING OF OUR LORD draws nigh, there is a special *blessedness* to such. If, when He comes, they shall be found dealing out the needed portion of food to His household, the King "shall make them rulers over *all* His goods." Pastors, teachers, *episcopoi* of the Church of God, watchers over souls, true caretakers of the flock of God, the time is short, the Chief Shepherd is near to come. How are we doing our work? Do we watch over the souls committed to us "as they that must give account"?

A SERVANT of God tells how he was once visiting at a farmhouse on the edge of an Ayrshire moor, and the farmer's wife informed him that they were reading through the Book of Proverbs at family worship, and that the servant-girl said to her one day, "I dinna like yon buik; it kens ower muckle aboot folk." No better testimony could be given to the searching element that pervades the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The human heart is laid bare in its evil, and selfishness, and wrong.

WHERE IS YOUR TREASURE?—Mrs. G. was visiting an aged friend of her father. The two old men felt a deep interest in each other. Mr. G. had been one of those who run after the world and overtake it. All that it can give he had—but nothing beyond. He it was who enquired of Mrs. G. about his aged friend, whom he knew to be in circumstances of far less external comfort than himself. As he listened to the story of his patience in suffering and affliction, and of the cheerfulness with which he looked forward to the future, Mr. G.'s conscience applied the unexpressed reproach to himself, and he exclaimed, "Yes, yes; you wonder I cannot be quiet and happy, too. But think of the difference: he is going to his treasure, while I, I must leave mine."

TRUST Him when dark doubts assail thee;  
Trust Him when thy strength is small;  
Trust Him when to simply trust Him  
Seems the hardest thing of all!  
Trust Him, then, through storm and sunshine,  
All thy care upon Him cast;  
Till the storm of life be over,  
And thy trusting days are past.

EGYPT was a great power before Israel was a nation. It gleams out of a remote antiquity with a splendour that cannot be denied; but the splendour is a prehistoric memory, separated from authentic chronology by a gulf which nothing but the Bible can span. All we know of it is that it existed before Moses, and perished about the close of the Old Testament. With the first page of secular history ancient Egypt is already dead. The Pharaohs have become a tradition; the temples and altars are shrouded in mystery; the fleets and armies have disappeared; the people are reduced to inexorable servitude.—*Canon Trevor*.

GOSHEN.—It lay along the Nile, east of the Delta, and was the part of Egypt nearest Palestine, and its best province.

JOSEPH.—The issue of Joseph by his two sons amounted, in the time of Moses, to 85,200, a number surpassing that of any of the other tribes.—*Num.* xxvi. 34-37.



## LUKE XXIII. 1-23.

THE Lord was alike incomprehensible both as to His Deity and Manhood, except by the light of the Scriptures which reveal Him. "The whole multitude of them arose, and led Him unto Pilate"—fulfilling that word against themselves, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?" His death is a thing determined on by them, and accepted by Him, but pre-arranged by One above, who is infinite in counsel and marvellous in working! It is from that unseen, but well-known power, which can make the wrath of man to praise Him, that Jesus accepts this appointed path, which with wicked hands they make for His feet. Awful as this hour was between God and men, when His own favoured people, who had the light by which to discover this veiled Messiah (come to them as the son of Abraham and the son of David, yet in truth the Son of God), they will not lift the veil that makes Him known to faith, but take the place of accusers and betrayers. Acting from the darkness and enmity that work within their own hearts, and lending themselves to Satan as his willing servants, how will he lead them, and where, except into the same path with himself, and turn them into liars and murderers even as he was one "from the beginning."

This is now their way, and with quickened steps "they began to accuse Him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King."

This forsaken One is the centre of a little circle who pledged themselves to go with Him, and keep Him company should His pathway lead out into the perfectness of a prison, or to death. Even that little circle of shining ones is gone down in obscurity, and the centre alone is left to go higher, and gain its intimacies and form its fellowships above in the light where God dwells. But the Lord was not only to

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suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes ; He must be delivered unto the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and put to death ; and this was now before Him and them. The rough-handed men—the hard-hearted men—the foul-mouthed men—men who are rude in speech and rougher in act, are all on their way to make Him a centre, but a centre for their wickedness and violence. They may pluck off the hair, or spit upon Him, or strike Him with the palms of their hands, or mock Him, or make Him the song of the drunkard, without a word of rebuke or reproof. Their liberty may take a license to run itself out into licentiousness, so that anyone wicked enough may do anything or everything to the Man who had not His fellow. Refuse Him as God's centre they would, and as the appointed Man, before whom every knee shall bow ; but make Him a centre for themselves they will, and after their way and manner. Object and centre they made Him, out to the lifting Him up on the cross, that even in His death and sufferings every eye that would might rest upon Him, and satiate itself.

Their malignity, which could not exhaust itself while He lived, can spend itself afresh by reviling Him in His death ; they can yet shoot out the lip, and wag their heads as they pass by, and say, " If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." In their cruel spite they can mock at God, by bowing the knee to Jesus in derision, and hail Him as " King of the Jews." Yea, the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, " He saved others ; Himself He cannot save." If the Jews had wearied themselves out, and exhausted their ingenuity against Him, they could yet hand Jesus over to the soldiery, that they might make sport for them after another pattern.

The scarlet robe, the reed in His hand, and the crown of thorns were new insults ; added to which, the soldiers can do what these insignia of mock royalty could not fully express ; they can take the reed out of

His hand into their own, and smite Him on the head with it, conferring dignity by means of this insult, and verifying to Him the prophecy of Micah, "They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek."

But it is heart-breaking to particularise further. The whole world was let loose upon Jesus, on this "One Man," this Son of Man and Son of God, as He had avowed; on whom hung all their hopes of present blessing, if they can own Him and believe on Him: and if not, He will nevertheless make Himself the One upon whom all hopes of future blessing shall depend, and declare the promised mercies sure to them only by His resurrection and their redemption.

How powerless is Satan when discovered in the unfading light of God's own counsels; and how impotent is man as his instrument. Do what they may, apart or together, they can but make "the Nail" on which all the glory of God and the blessing of the creation hangs the surer, by driving Him into the sure place where Christ now is in His own pre-eminence and fulness.

Likewise as to outward and daily mercies, which come from the Saviour-God morning and night, or by the month or year, be they in spring-time or summer, in the autumn or winter, these and more all hang upon the One Man—refused and rejected by the world, it is true, and He the channel, too, by whom they flow. No, let those talk of the regularity of the seasons who may, and they *are* regular; or others speak of the laws of nature as they please; there is One Man in heaven now, the Son of Man, this Son of God, on whom all depends, for any and all created blessing of every kind has been forfeited over and over again, and man's life forfeited by the cross, which stands as a witness against all: like the pillar of salt did in the days of Lot. However forgotten and out of mind the pillar of salt and the cross may be, both to the world and to Sodom, there is but One Man and One Name, with whom any and all *right* to

created blessing belongs ; and so Paul teaches us :  
 “ For there is One God, and One Mediator between God  
 and men, *the Man* Christ Jesus.”

All natural blessings hang upon that One Man, “ who  
 gave Himself a ransom for all ; ” and if we think of  
 creation blessings, this is their order from God to men :  
 on account of and through this One Man, and *Him*  
*only!*

It is well in passing to state *this*, that all may see  
 Christ to be not only the channel of outward and  
 created blessing, but beyond this fact, to own *Him* as  
 the one only link between God and men *for* outward  
 and created blessing, just as the redeemed ones gladly  
 and thankfully acknowledge Him as their life and  
 righteousness—their “ all and in all.” It is this Jesus-  
 Messiah, the Son of Man and the Son of God, the  
*then* link, and the only *one*, between Jehovah and Israel  
 for all blessing upon the nation and the land, that the  
 chief priests and the scribes and the elders have led  
 away to Pilate ; and what can the Roman governor  
 understand of the Sonship and Manhood of *this*  
 Christ ?

But behold how they accommodate their accusa-  
 tions, so as to come within the range of Gentile laws !

“ And they began to accuse Him, saying, We found this  
 fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give  
 tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ a  
 King.” They have dropped the two grand subjects  
 upon which they condemned Him in their council,  
 and have reduced their complaints to paying tribute  
 to Cæsar and assuming kingship. And Pilate said  
 unto Him, “ Art Thou the King of the Jews ? And He  
 answered him and said, Thou sayest it. Then said  
 Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no  
 fault in this man.” How could *he* take up the rights  
 of God, which were fully in question, between the  
 nation of Israel and Christ ? Those rights were  
 centred in Jesus, and must be made yea and amen in  
 the Messiah to that people, for the glory of God, and

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for Christ, and for the whole world. All this hung upon the Son of Man as the Son of God, and upon this hour! The rights of Jehovah to do for Israel what He had done, from the day that He took them by the hand and brought them out of Egypt into Immanuel's land, had been made good by Almighty power at the Red Sea, and in Jordan. Moreover, beyond His destroying power against the Egyptians at the beginning, and against the Canaanites at their settlement by Joshua, they had learned, and rejoiced in, Jehovah's rights to bless His heritage and exalt them above all the nations of the earth.

Has He surrendered these rights, because they have forfeited them by disobedience? Nay, He has yet further proved this right by punishing the people, and using their enemies as His rod. Why were they at that moment paying tribute to the great Gentile power, instead of paying their tithes and bringing in the firstfruits of all their increase to the house of the Lord in Jerusalem? Why had they any errand to Pilate at that hour, and such an one as this? As a Roman governor, and theirs, he was in his own place a rebuke to them; and their pleadings before him, that he should exercise Cæsar's power, was their condemnation—and tenfold more their shame and guilt as they begged its use against their own Messiah, who was "the Man of God's right hand" in their midst! He had told them so, and had proved it by wonders and miracles, as they well knew; but if they would not take hold of Him as "the power of God" for their deliverance from every yoke, they should see the Son of Man "hereafter" on the right hand of Jehovah. They had anew surrendered the claims of God to them, as "His battle-axe" in the day of His controversy with the nations, by accusing the Messiah of blasphemy in their own council, and delivering over the power of God into the hand of the enemy; yea, putting Jesus by treachery and falsehood under the sword of Cæsar.

Jesus had even falsified their charge as to paying tribute, by settling the rights of Cæsar upon the penny-piece (which He did not possess, but which they brought to Him for the purpose). "Render," He said, "unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things which are God's." The publicans among them would take care of the tribute money ✓ but who cared for the things of God, and the in-gathering of His people? ✓ Jesus had come on behalf of the rights of God, seeking for fruit from the fig-tree, and finding none; but the one aim of Satan has been the forgetfulness, and then the surrender, of the rights of God to man, and man's relation to God. He broke this link of relationship in Eden, and then in Canaan, and now again between themselves and Jesus-Messiah; but, blessed be God, though the devil has broken all these up as he thought, by heading this great insurrection against God, and His anointed Christ, and putting Him to death—His resurrection on the third day proved that Satan had only taken "away the first" that God "might establish the second"! The great enemy of God and of man has been outwitted at the cross, and by means of that very death which seemed outwardly to have put Jesus within his reach—as indeed He said, when passing into the closing scenes of His life, and finding Satan as the tempter for the last time; "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." We may with profit recall that the devil had offered Jesus "the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," on His entrance upon His ministry and service to God below, and then left Him for a season, finding that the blandishments of this world were powerless to such an One. At the fitting season for the tempter to renew his attack he heads the betrayers, and enters into the heart of Judas; for how else could man, fallen as he was, fall to such a depth as led Jesus to say to Judas, "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Jesus took the cup from His Father's hand according to "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge,"

whoever and whatever the means and agencies were which would be employed ; and thus in the full experience of Gethsemane, and Satan's part in it, He says, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness," when death and the grave were His path.

The unreadiness of Pilate to act as a link in the murderous chain by condemning Jesus gave an opportunity to His accusers to put pressure on the governor. "And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." And this only opened a temporary door of relief to Pilate, who, when he heard of Galilee, asked whether the man were a Galilæan? "And as soon as he knew that He belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time." No one but God could act in justice and judgment at such an hour as this, when righteousness was arraigned in the presence of wickedness, and this wickedness growing fierce, because it had no ground upon which to consummate its will.

If God had acted on behalf of the righteous One, it must have been against the whole world, beginning with the high priest and the chief rulers, who were the first to condemn this Son of Man and Son of God. He had interfered by the destroying deluge upon a lesser matter than the crucifixion of His Son, "whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished," and Noah (saved out of the wreck) became through its means "heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Would God do the same again, and maintain His justice by the overthrow of Satan and the world of the ungodly, and deliver His Son ; yea, take Him out as Noah, and declare this One Man, as He is carried away, to be worthy of the highest place, where God dwells? Nay, for all in heaven knew this right well, and bowed their faces as they worshipped Him, before He veiled Himself in manhood and left the heaven of heavens. It was *this* world which did not

know Him, or the Father who sent Him, as He said : "They have not known the Father, nor Me." No, thank God, His path is not to be justified as an Heir of righteousness (by faith He could not be, like Noah was) by the destruction of the world ; but, as the Son of Man and Son of God, His pathway is being laid down by Pilate and Herod, and all the people as co-workers together ; a path through death and resurrection, by which He will reach His justification as "the Author of eternal salvation" and the Saviour of the very world that killed Him.

He passed through their midst when, at the first, they led Him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built ; and now, at the last, He turns His back upon their cities and upon men in the flesh, having purchased the world and them by the blood of redemption, which they drew forth. Yea, these new titles and rights of Christ as "the Heir of the world" are accredited and proclaimed to every creature under heaven, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead by the glory of the Father. "He hath poured contempt upon princes, and looseneth the girdle of the strong," we may well say who read, and learn the Son of Man's justification by God and heirship as the righteous One, not by the deluge and the world that perished, but by the blood of the Lamb and accomplished redemption, through which the feasts of Jehovah with Israel shall yet be celebrated upon the earth in their appointed seasons, and holiness be upon the bells of the horses. [These were the counsels of God and of His Son, whatever the council chamber of the chief priests in Jerusalem may determine.] What can they, or Pilate do, with innocence and righteousness before them, when God refuses to interpose, and the Victim lies passive and dumb before its shearers ?

They pass Jesus out of one jurisdiction into another, glad of the opportunity and thankful for the excuse. "And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad :



for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him ; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him."

Men, in whose hands lay the sentence of death, have now got Jesus between them, and they are reduced to two : the first, glad of an available pretext to pass Him on ; and the second, "exceeding glad" to see Him, as an object of curiosity. Where could justice be in two such men ? and more than this, for judgment was demanded, and instantly, because "the Jews' preparation day was at hand," and the Sabbath drew nigh ! Extremes have met already, as we have noticed ; but now the extremest things of which a man is capable by his prejudices and passions are developing, as they speak and act towards Jesus ; fulfilling what Simeon had said to Mary, "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." The enmity, even to fierceness, of the chief priests, intent upon His blood, and now the empty-hearted and frivolous deputy wishful to see Him, and more still if He would perform a miracle, give us the scale upon which the thoughts of many hearts were then graduated.

Nor is there any great difference between Simeon's days and these, save that the colours are not so distinct, but, as this modern world would say, better shaded off, even down to neutrality. Simeon had the Child in his arms, and sang forth His praises and virtues ; Anna, the prophetess, spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Israel ; certain Greeks came to Philip, and said to him, "Sir, we would see Jesus" ; a woman that was a sinner had washed His feet with tears, and wiped them with her hair ; another had anointed Him with precious ointment for the day of His burying, and He had justified her over the face of the whole world ; Judas had betrayed Him with a kiss, and the chief priests and

rulers had covenanted to give him money for doing it; Pila'e was glad to get rid of Him, and Herod exceedingly glad to receive Him, that he might gratify his vanity and curiosity. Notwithstanding these variations and contradictions upon Simeon's scale of the born Child, the same test was applied by Jesus to Peter, in the days of His ministry: "What think ye of Christ?" and "Whom do ye say that I am?" and the Holy Ghost, by Paul, shuts the door upon all that are unsteady in voice and neutral in heart by affirming, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha!"

Individually, we may tarry awhile to see whereabout our mark is, upon this graduated scale, as to the worthiness of Christ, and the way in which the heart knows Him and treasures Him up! What could Jesus say in the face of such a man as this deputy? Herod speaks of necessity, and did ask and question Him in many words; but Jesus answered Him nothing. Also, the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him; but their own passion and violence betrayed them to Herod, as much as his frivolity exposed him to them. However, something must need be done to Jesus, so "Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate." But every accusation is powerless, and the derision of these "men of war" is cowardice when shewn against a "Lamb led to the slaughter." The gorgeous robe in which they arrayed Him, and then sent Him back to Pilate, was infamy upon themselves, and in this they stood clothed and confronted in the presence of Jesus.

Pass Him on where they may—from the common hall to the council chamber, from one jurisdiction to another, from Pilate to Herod, or from Herod back again to Pilate—nothing worthy of blame can they attach to Him. The only product of such iniquity as this was, that on "the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at

enmity between themselves." They shook hands over the cross of Christ, as partners in His condemnation and death ; for, indeed, this is the issue and only alternative between the whole world and the righteous Judge of it who sitteth in the heavens, and between every individual in it and Jesus.

It must be, since the cross, either partnership with Herod and Pilate and all the people in the refusal of Christ, or else partakers with the rejected One against the rulers of the world, who did it and cast Him out ; yea, more, justifying God through faith in Christ our Saviour, who has placed Him at His right hand above, and crowned Him with glory and honour, having put all judgment into His hand, because He is Son of Man.

It was at the cross of Christ that good and evil, love and hatred, light and darkness, confronted each other, but in their immeasurable contrariety and distance—distance which none on earth but Jesus could estimate or explain to His disciples ; for, in fact, what could His coming into the world be but a new unfolding of the heart of God in grace, and the test and opportunity for the thoughts of all other hearts to be revealed ?

Indeed, the blessed Lord had raised this standard as between sin and God and the world's hate, when He said, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin ; but now they have no cloke for their sin." Nor could this of itself measure the enormity and height of this new sin ; for Jesus adds, "He that hateth Me hateth My Father also." The secrets of all hearts are morally laid bare, as they never could have been before such a test as the Saviour, Christ, and Lord had lived in their very midst, and gone about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him. And so He taught when He said, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin ; but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." Nevertheless, Jesus had His own way of interpreting this twofold hatred, as, in truth, He

did everything else, as it came to pass, from a higher power than their enmity: "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated Me without a cause." Jesus shines morally in the light of His own perfections, as He thus submits Himself to their "hour, and the power of darkness."  
J. E. B.

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## ATONEMENT.

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THE atonement is laid as the great central ground of all God's ways in righteousness. God is perfect love to us there—He is love; but then, where no hiding, excusing, or patience with sin because of weakness was in question, when One who could bear it was made sin, all God was, in His necessary antagonism, horror of, judgment against sin, went out against sin, as such, in Him who was able to bear it. God being glorified—purpose, government, as the chastening or death of His children, can all come out and have their place.

The worth of that according to which righteousness is obtained, is such that the purpose of God righteously unites us to Christ, and gives a place where He is in glory as like and with Him—we are children, holy and without blame before Him in love. He gives to the Jews a place on earth, and deals with them for the display of His government down here; so with us as His children—God deals with us in chastisement and discipline, but all this supposes righteousness and non-imputation. There could be no government without this—God's forbearance before the Cross was justified by this.

It is evident there are two kinds of righteousness—justice as against evil, and adequate appreciation and even recompense of good. "Vengeance is Mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord," is a different thing from "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, His coun-

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tenance beholds the upright ;" though both are abstractly the just estimate of good and evil.

As regards the former, and the controversy we have had, when God has the character of a Judge my adversaries are all wrong, because God's righteousness as Judge is in Scripture connected with blood, as in Rom. iii. ; so in the Passover. But as to the principle, no man could ever plead a part in the second dealing of righteousness save Christ Himself for "all have sinned ;" Christ, even as a Man down here, could be accepted as perfectly agreeable to God. But then Christianity, and even Judaism in its figures, goes a great deal further—for grace reigns through righteousness, and sinners were to be justified or accounted righteous.

To be justice, in the common sense of the word, it must be the just estimate of conduct itself, or adequate satisfaction for the fault : thus, a man serves me in a thing, renders due service, I am just in recognising this, I own him in the place wherein he stands ; if he owes me money and another pays it, or has done a wrong and another repairs it, he is also clear. In the case of material service, another's doing a man's duty may suffice, though, if the service be owed by the man, I am not bound to accept it ; still, in material service, if the service only be due, and the man not in responsible relationship to me, I may be justly satisfied. ✓ But in relationships and moral right and wrong this is not so. ✓ I cannot accept another's doing what my son owes me and be satisfied with my son ; righteousness here requires the duty to be fulfilled, or is not satisfied ; to be atoned for and put away as guilt can be rightly, because the guilt is owned, but not a doing the work or duty so that there should be no guilt. The latter weakens the personal obligation, sets it aside ; the former owns and atones for it. *all V. G.*

But in Christianity there is more, for God is to be displayed, grace is to reign, and man to be brought to

God Himself. Hence the measure is God's glory and in itself unveiled, not man's duty : of this anon. But any attempt to meet responsibility in relationship by another's fulfilling the claims tends to destroy the sense of guilt in it, and is morally heinous,—if another has done my duty, and it is as if I have done it, or better, the claim satisfied, then I have done it as to justice, and I am not guilty.

If it does not meet the case thus, the idea turns what is due into a material debt and destroys the moral nature of failure—becomes doing, not conduct. I ask if another's doing my child's duty would in any way affect the relationship of my child to me?

This I see in the figures—reconciliation must have an altar and blood-shedding ; wrongs may be repaired toward man or toward God, and so it was ordained under the law, but in questions of obedience and relationship not so. There is guilt, and atonement must come in ; omission or commission is all one here. Do I fail in worship to God—can another worship for me ? ~~No~~ Now all our questions with God are questions of obedience and relationship. But then, according to the principles I have noticed before, though all be done according to the glory of God, for indeed it is one act—the death of Christ—yet the application of the work to man is different ; the brazen altar met man's sin coming as such—the mercy seat was introduction into the presence of God. It was a golden throne ; it was judgment against sin, and righteousness to enter into His presence. So Christ—He was both—He made propitiation for our sins ; He is our righteousness in the presence of God in virtue of His sacrifice in which God was perfectly glorified. There is the firmness of God's judgment against sin, and perfect access to Him in light and glory. But then note, it is in either case grace—God acting sovereignly for Himself, and hence all must have the value of that. Our very forgiveness is God's righteousness : “We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

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Hence God shows His righteousness in forgiving—is righteous and justifies, according to this, the believer. God's righteousness is upon all that believe. But we do not think of repaying God now—nor may we now—"If thou hast sinned what doest thou unto Him?"

The blood of Christ, *i.e.*, the moral power and meaning of His blood-shedding, is the absolute perfection of the divine nature in connection with sin, as putting it away—it leaves no blot, no stain, nothing contrary to its holiness. It maintains, speaks of, tells out that holiness, and yet not alone simply, but perfect love in it. It is the acting of God in the perfection of His own nature that is Love; for the spring of God's activity is love because it is His nature—what He is in purpose, will, what shews His nature—but it maintains what is necessary to it, *i.e.*, holiness, and this at the cost of the perfect devotedness of Christ to it to both, *i.e.*, to God, and that was perfection in its place too. But Godhead is perfectly, fully revealed, and, indeed, in nothing else; it is known, Christ knew it, others in some measure, but here it is all displayed, not in what God does in power, *i.e.*, what He produces, but what He is and does in His own nature in the display of Himself. It is an exhaustless theme, as such a display of God, as such alone could be, must be. The Cross of Christ is the centre, as to what is displayed, of all glory—the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him; all the details only bring it out, but into these I do not enter—it is the great thought I desire to dwell in, I should not say "on," though that in mercy and grace and privilege too.—*Notes and Comments, March, 1885.*

J. N. D.

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FACTS which are recorded only by Matthew—The visit of the Magi; the flight into Egypt; the slaughter of the babes; the dream of Pilate's wife; the resurrection of many saints; and the bribing of the Roman guard.

## THE ALTAR OR THE TABLE—WHICH?

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IN all ages God has prescribed the way in which He will be worshipped. Proper indeed, and necessary is this. For who would draw nigh to a superior on earth without ascertaining in what way he should be approached? How much more is that requisite when it is a creature turning to its God? Hence the thought that men may worship God as they think fit, should be banished from the mind of any one who has harboured it. For God, on the very earliest occasion that arose, or could have arisen, settled that question for all time. Now, were it simply a creature approaching its Creator, it would be fitting for that creature to learn in what way it should venture to draw nigh. But when it is a *fallen* creature, and one who has sinned against God, that would come before Him, it is for the High and Holy One to make known on what ground He can permit such an one to worship Him.

At the very threshold of this question, it comes out, through divine revelation, that none born in sin can approach God acceptably save on the ground of a sacrifice. Outside the garden of Eden, and when Abel was still alive, this matter was definitely decided, as God "had respect to Abel and to his offering, but to Cain and to his offering He had not respect" (Gen. iv. 4, 5). Very possibly Cain had toiled much to bring of the fruit of the ground; and we can quite believe that he brought of the best that he had raised, the finest produce that by manual labour he had succeeded in producing. But in vain. Neither the labour of his hands nor the fruit of the sweat of his brow was on that occasion acceptable unto the Lord.

Further, we must believe, that by some divine intimation it had previously been made known to both the brothers on what terms they would be accepted. For, 1st, Abel, we learn (Heb. xi. 4), "by faith offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by



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which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." *By faith* he offered, which implies, we presume, a previous intimation about it from the Lord. And 2nd, Cain, when his offering was rejected, ventured not the excuse that he was in ignorance of the mind of God in this matter. So we take it that divine revelation had been in exercise in some way ere the two brothers presented, the one the fruit of the ground, the other the firstlings of his flock with the fat thereof.

Of course, living, as we do, subsequent to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Ghost, we understand why Cain's offering was rejected and why Abel's could be accepted. In the former there was no recognition of the only ground on which one born in sin could approach a holy God. It spoke not of death, the death of a victim on behalf of the offerer; and we can add, it foreshadowed not the death of *the* Victim, by which alone sin can be put away (Heb. ix. 26).

So then, and for centuries later, the only right way, till redemption was effected, for anyone to approach God was by bringing a sacrifice to the altar. At the altar the worshipper stood, slew his victim, and prepared it for the fire. At the altar Abel had stood, and had learnt of his acceptance in connection with his offering. At the altar Noah and his family had stood, and received the blessing of the Almighty (Gen. ix. 1-3). At the altar the sinner under the law could stand, and for certain sins be assured of divine forgiveness, as promised by the God of Israel (Lev. iv.). For fifteen centuries Israel knew and owned that such was the way of worship appointed for them. At the brazen altar they stood. But that altar was in the court, not in the sanctuary. The court, but not beyond it, the Israelite who was not of the tribe of Levi could enter. There, at the brazen altar, was the limit of his personal approach to God, the God of Israel. Standing there with his sacrifice, it

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was symbolised by the latter what was the way of approach to God ; but only standing there, and never crossing the threshold of the sanctuary, he had to feel that he could not in person enter the divine presence. His place of worship at the altar told, indeed, of grace on the part of his God, but it never could bring him nigh to the One whom he worshipped.

So will it be in millennial times, when sacrifices shall again be placed on God's altar, and the Mosaic ritual, now for centuries in abeyance, shall be afresh observed in accordance with the mind of God. The earthly people will bring their sacrifices to God's altar in the court, but they will never enter the sanctuary (Ezek. xlv. 1-9). The one who has his place at the altar is *necessarily* at a distance from the divine presence. For the altar was not the mercy-seat. And this last was barred under the law to all but the high priest on the day of atonement.

Now the ark, with the mercy-seat for its lid, was the symbol of the divine presence. There God dwelt between the Cherubim. And David in his day discerned the great difference between standing at the altar, or being where the ark for a time rested in the tent in Jerusalem which the king had prepared. And he evidently understood, and showed, by the arrangement that he was empowered to make, that he discerned likewise the different character of service that fitted the one from that which was proper for the other. This was quite new. The law did not prescribe it, nor had the law provided for it. But the king, taught of God, made arrangement accordingly. The ark was in Jerusalem. The altar was at Gibeon. Before the ark David kept Asaph and his brethren, Levites skilled in the service of song to minister there continually as every day's work required ; whilst to Gibeon he sent all the priests to officiate at the altar, with Heman and Jeduthun to praise the Lord as well (1 Chron. xvi. 37-42). No sacrifices were offered up before the ark. No altar

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was erected there for daily use. God's presence was now in Jerusalem, seeing the ark was there. What need then there to shadow forth by sacrifices the way of approach to God? He was there. The incongruity of sacrificing before the ark we can all see, and acknowledge that David was indeed divinely guided in what he did.

This point then comes out clearly, that when *in* the presence of God sacrifices are not required, though none of us could ever approach Him save on the ground of a sacrifice. And now passing from the Old Testament to the New, we read of an institution in connection with worship never heard of before. We refer of course to the *Lord's Table*, at which Christians partake of His supper. Privileged to take our place there, guests at the Lord's Table, we meet to show Christ's death till He come. This, it will be remembered, was instituted in the upper room in Jerusalem by the Lord Himself, and so of course has a sanction for its observance in no respect less than that of the Mosaic ritual; but certainly in that room there was no altar, nor the semblance of one. The altar was in the court of the Temple. The upper room was somewhere in the Holy City, its exact locality probably unknown, though tradition has not failed to fix it, but as yet on ground not really authenticated. At the Table the twelve were gathered, and the Lord instituted then and there His supper. He gave them of the bread, and handed to them the cup—the one to be continually a memorial of His body given for us, and the other that of His blood shed for us.

Henceforth for Christians there was the *Table* round which they gathered, whilst the Jews continued to approach the *altar*. The Christians feasted, the Jews sacrificed. The former were giving thanks in spirit in the Holiest for the one perfect and all-sufficient sacrifice having been offered up and accepted; so they ate of the bread and drank of the cup in remembrance of the Lord's death. The latter were con-

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stantly symbolising by their sacrifices the way of approach to God, yet never getting even in spirit into His immediate presence. So, again, there would be witnessed after the lapse of centuries a service of thanksgiving and praise on the one hand, and a service of sacrifice on the other. Both were now carried on in Jerusalem. The former was entered into by those who were in spirit in the presence of God in the Holiest, having entered through the veil, the flesh of Christ; and were conscious, too, of the presence of the Lord Jesus in their midst. The latter was carried on by those at the altar, who thereby proclaimed the need of sacrifices and the shedding of blood in order to approach God, whilst confessing by the repetition of their sacrifices that they knew not that the way into the Holiest was now opened for any to draw nigh. Those at the altar might be looking for it; but those at the Table were enjoying the privilege of it, and that by divine appointment. Would the Jew plead divine appointment for the Mosaic ritual and his attendance at the altar? The Christians could speak of divine commands for the service carried on at the Table (Luke xxii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 23-25).

To bring an offering to the altar was incumbent on those who approached it. They went there to offer sacrifices. To give thanks for the sacrifice once for all offered up on their behalf was the purpose of those gathering round the Table. The sacred character of service, as taught them by the Lord, was essentially one of thanksgiving, or eucharistic. And they were at the Table in the remembrance that their place of worship was that in which no altar was ever found; for, to speak in accordance with the figure of the Tabernacle, they confronted the mercy-seat. To be at an altar was a confession that the individual had no access into the Holiest; to be at the Table was a clear acknowledgment that his place was no longer at the altar.

Shall we call the Lord's Table an altar? Scripture

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certainly does not. If we do so call it we confound things that differ. The court of the Tabernacle was not the Holiest, the altar was not the mercy-seat. But here some may ask—1st, Is not the altar called a Table? 2nd, Have not we Christians an altar? Let us look into these matters, taking them up in order.

First: The incense altar is called the Table of Jehovah (see Ezek. xli. 22 ; xliv. 16), and Malachi calls the brazen altar the same (Mal. i. 7, 12). The Table of Jehovah, however, and the Table of the Lord Jesus, are not to be confounded. The altars in the Temple were called the Table of Jehovah because, as Mal. i. 12 intimates, the God of Israel had there His portion. What was consumed on the altars was wholly for Him. We can quite understand, then, why they could each be called Jehovah's Table. But no priest ever made the altar a Table at which he could eat. A partaker of the altar he was, but his portion was consumed elsewhere. For any to have viewed the altar in the light of the Table of the Lord Jesus Christ, at which we can sit, would, in the priest's eyes, have been something akin to sacrilege. The Table of Jehovah was one thing; the Table of the Lord Jesus is quite another. To the Table of Jehovah the offerer brought his sacrifice; we gather round the Lord's Table, where we, not the Lord Jesus, have our portion, and where He is, as it were, the Host, we being the guests, and to which we bring no offering for sacrifice.

Then, as to an altar, we have one, as Heb. xiii. 10 declares. What use are we to make of it? To sacrifice on it? or to offer sacrifices there, bloody or unbloody? No. We *eat* of that which has been offered upon it. We eat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought into the Holiest. Of that offering, debarred to the priests under the law, it is our privilege to partake. Our altar, then, is the cross on which the Lord was crucified. And as under the law the body of the sin offering, whose blood had been brought into the holy place, was carried away from the altar and eaten else-

where, so we have to follow our sin offering, as it were, in order to partake of it elsewhere than at the altar. And the Hebrews learnt that they were to go to it outside the gate; in other words, the partaking of the blessed results of the death of Christ took them away from Judaism. They had to turn their backs on the Temple and on the city, and to follow the sin offering without the gate, there to feed on it. This is the teaching of Hebrews xiii. 10.

Where, then, do we worship? At the altar? or at the Table? If at the *altar*, we are not and cannot get into the immediate presence of our God. If at the *Table*, we own that we are before Him on the ground of that sacrifice, by virtue of which the veil has been rent, and we are privileged to enter the holiest with boldness by the death of Christ.

My reader, where dost thou take thy place? At the altar? or at the Table? Which? It cannot be at both. C. E. S.

## IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?

1. Do we personally wait on the Lord and keep His way, as "the godly He has set apart for Himself," that we put no blot on that worthy Name we bear, either in our business or our home?

2. Do we order our houses to the glory of God, having His altar there, and realising that as His priests we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices?

3. Do we realise that "as members one of another" we are to keep the faith and be true to the testimony of our Lord?

4. Do we *each* feel in "coming together" that it is *our* meeting, that we make it what it is by our interest or indifference, warmth or coldness, good or bad state, and that the Spirit of God thus feels the beat of our hearts?

5. Do we regard the meetings as appointments

## IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?

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sacredly to be kept, if health and necessities of life permit?

6. Or do we stay away and blame others that things are low, that meetings are dull and lifeless, "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," when we owe it to God and to our brethren to be there? If away, let us pray one for another that we may be healed, and in the restoring of our own joy, soon get back to say, "Come and hear what the Lord hath done for my soul."

7. Do we visit one another, especially if any are absent, as "having the same care one for another," remembering those sick and in adversity, and others needing our sympathy?

8. Do we seek to be "blessed" of the Lord as peace-makers, instead of widening breaches and adding fuel to the fire by "taking sides"?

9. Do we follow with our prayers, counsel, and ministry those gone from us that they may be faithful?

10. Do we depend unduly on those the Lord used in blessing to us, instead of realising that the Church as having the Holy Spirit and the Word is self-sustaining, able to edify itself, and has nourishment ministered by joints and bands?

11. Do we believe that God hath ordained that they which preach the Gospel shall live of it, and see that nothing be lacking unto them, giving regularly as we are able to its support?

12. Do we support the ministry of others (written or otherwise) as far as able, doing what we can to get the word that came with blessing to us, out to others?

13. Do we recognise the ministry of the Word as God's blessing by attending the meetings ourselves and trying to get others to do so?

Whether or not these are in any measure the causes of so little steadfastness in the faith with many, "let us search and try our ways and turn again unto the Lord." There is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared, and there is blessed healing in His holy Word.

B. C. G.

## THE STONE—I *Peter* ii.

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LET us read from the 3rd verse to the 9th verse.

This mystery of the Stone occupies the whole Book of God. We find it in Genesis, Psalms, Prophets, Epistles, and Apocalypse. A mystery is a divine revelation. I will just remind you of the passages.

Jacob's words to Joseph in Gen. xlix. 24 begins the great subject: the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel. The moment he was looking at the sorrows and glories of Joseph, the Holy Spirit takes him in a kind of rapture to look at Christ as reflected in Joseph. We see here the quarry out of which the Stone was found, the sorrows and glories of Joseph. This mighty rock was formed in the death and resurrection of Christ. In the prophet Isaiah we see the Stone again taken up (xxviii. 16): "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious corner Stone, a sure foundation." Now there is no sure foundation that is not tried. The true Stone was tried to the uttermost, and glorified to the uttermost.

When Isaiah takes Him up, he goes beyond Jacob. Jacob had spoken of Him as a Stone; Isaiah tells us additionally that the Stone is a tried one, and that this tried Stone is laid down as a sure foundation—(mark, laid down in death and burial). Now, what did Zion do with the Stone? Why, when it was laid down they disallowed it. This the Lord tells us in Matt. xxi., when He quoted the 118th Psalm. So David tells us something, too, of this wonderful Stone. Yes, it was rejected by the builders, and the Lord quotes *that*, and says in effect, "Here I am, and you reject Me."

What did God do with this disallowed Stone? Why, He took Him up and exalted Him to the highest heavens; and that is the meaning of His being the "Head-stone of the corner." Psalm cxviii. anticipates this, and Peter speaks of it in Acts iv., and there we see the Stone at this very moment.

Oh, praise the Lord for His Word and Spirit to guide



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us into all truth. How blessed and delightful an operation it is on the Spirit's part to be throwing out these precious things, and on ours to be picking them up, one by one, and discovering the Lord's secret in them all concerning this Stone. Oh, how wonderfully exact the Book of God is! God is not afraid of showing His perfect mind thus in parts. No fear of mistakes; therefore I need not (as in man's word) to look back to see that He had made no mistake. No, these scattered rays from the unerring mind at last shine as the noonday sun in divine glory and brightness. It is as if the Spirit had written a treatise on the subject.

So we have travelled with the Stone from the quarry where it was found in death and resurrection (it would have been nothing without that), until God takes the same rejected Stone and sets Him in the highest place of dignity in heaven.

And what is God doing with this Stone now? Having been rejected by Zion, He is offering Him to all the world as a Stone of foundation. He is offered to you and me and all who will accept Him for life and salvation; and Peter comes to tell us what He will be to us if we receive Him.

First, he tells us two things about ourselves. We shall become living stones, as Christ is; precious stones, as He is: "Unto you who believe He is the preciousness." He communicates His preciousness to us as well as His life. We become living stones and precious stones.

When we turn to the Apocalypse, we find these precious stones glittering in the New Jerusalem, a reiteration of Isaiah's prophecy (lv. 11-12). So I see Christ first formed in the quarry of death and resurrection; secondly, offered as a foundation; thirdly, rejected by Zion; fourthly, seated in the highest heavens by God; fifthly, offered for life and salvation to every poor sinner's acceptance; and sixthly, what He will be to those who accept Him—even this, He will impute His life and impart His glory; He will

make them pearls, rubies, emeralds, and jasper. Mark this: "jasper" corner-stone in breastplate; and Rev. xxi. 19, first foundation was jasper. 18, building of the wall, jasper. 11, city's light like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone. 1, foundation stones of wall, light of city, connected with this one stone, jasper.

But now, what of those who still reject Him? Why, simply this: He will fall upon them from His elevation and grind them to powder. The blessed God offers Him now to sustain us for eternity. Rejecters say, "We won't have this Man to reign over us." Well then, God says, "If you won't, you must meet Him from His place at the head of the corner, from whence He will grind you to powder." Thus it is, the stone not only crushes the unbelieving sinner, but it smites the nations. Daniel tells us, He will fall in the day of wrath (the wrath of the Lamb) on the whole image. This is not individual, but national judgment. The Stone is to become a great mountain, and with its glory fill the whole earth.

Now, can you find any defect in the whole story? You have carried it on from the quarry to its character of mountain kingdom to fill the whole earth, and you are carried with it. Every individual has to do with the Stone in preciousness or crushing, builded thereon or crushed thereby.

I must say a few words before closing on the chapter before us. The Peter of Matt. xvi. re-appears here. In the 16th of Matt. he owns the person of the Lord Jesus; it was given him of the Father to own Christ as Head of Life. The moment he acknowledged Him as such, Christ said, "On this rock I will build My Church." Peter now, as it were, went beyond his Master. Christ did not say what He would do with His Church, but Peter goes on to tell us that we are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, "to offer up spiritual sacrifices."

Oh! how exquisite it is to see the Holy Ghost's

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light advancing on the Lord Jesus! The time had not yet come for letting out all these divine secrets: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Peter, by the Holy Ghost, advances beyond the Son's teaching, and tells here in glowing language what the Lord will do with His house.

There is another thing we find that Peter stumbled at in Matt. xvi.: he made a beautiful confession, but he could not understand the disallowance. The Lord said, "They will cast Me aside." Peter replies at once, "Oh, no, Lord, that be far from Thee. Would we allow them to do such a thing?" The Lord replies, "Get thee behind Me, Satan."

Now, that same Peter, who with decision and strength denied that his Lord should ever be rejected, delights in the thought of the disallowed Stone, and with decision and strength takes Him up as such, and teaches us, we shall never build aright on Him if we do not build on Him as a disallowed Stone.

Peter addresses us in the beginning as strangers and pilgrims. Now, in the hortatory part, he cannot look at us in any character that he does not tell us to have a subject spirit. This is the very quality that suits strangers. If I am a king in my kingdom, I may exercise authority in my dominions; but if I am a cast-out stranger, the temper most suitable to me is subjection all my life through.

Put the stranger in company with what relationship you please, the Spirit of God expects this spirit of subjection, as James challenges a spirit of poverty and patience. Thus we mistake Christianity in its moral qualities, some of us at least. We play the part of hero, when we should play the part of a girded servant!

Christendom has mistaken Christianity, and I boldly say, if I do not understand dispensational truth I shall never build aright on the foundation stone. Lo, here it begins, "Abstain from fleshly lusts," and isn't that a spirit of control? See then to the subjection.

ANON.

ANGLICANISM.—“The doctrines of the Catholic Church, which had been rejected and condemned as blasphemous, superstitious, and fond inventions, have been reconsidered and taken back (by the Church of England), one by one, until the 39 articles have been banished and buried as a rule of faith. The real Presence, the sacrifice of the Mass offered for the living and the dead, sometimes even in token, not infrequent reservation of the Sacrament, regular auricular confession, extreme unction, purgatory, prayers for the dead, devotions to our Lady, to her immaculate conception, the use of her rosary, and the invocation of saints, are doctrines *taught* and *accepted* with a *growing desire* and *relish* in the Church of England. A celibate clergy the institution of monks and nuns under vows, retreats for the clergy, missions for the people, fasting and other penitential exercises, candles, lamps, incense, crucifixes, images of the Blessed Virgin, saints held in honour, stations of the cross, cassocks, Roman collars, birettas, copes, vestments, mitres, croziers, the adoption of ornate Catholic ritual, and now recently an elaborate display of the whole ceremonial of the Catholic pontifical. All this speaks of a change and a movement towards the Church which would have appeared absolutely incredible at the beginning of the century. . . . We desire nothing so ardently as the reconciliation of England to the Apostolic See, and would do everything to attain this end; but the first condition of reunion must be the acceptance by all of whatsoever the Church teaches and has defined in all matters of doctrine, with admission that His Holiness the Pope has divine authority to teach and govern the whole Church.”—*Cardinal Vaughan*.

“A BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME.”—It could not have been said that He was in the likeness of flesh, any more than that He was in the likeness of God; for this would have denied the truth of His humanity and of His deity. “The Word *was* God,” and “the Word *was made* flesh.” The one was and is His eternal glory; the other, what He deigned to become in time, and will not give up for evermore. But it could also be said and is, that He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh; which, so far as it goes, proves that He had not the reality of sinful flesh, but only the *likeness* of it. Otherwise, He could not have been made sin—a sacrifice for sin on the cross.

IT IS A HAPPY THING to be a Christian, we feel bound to say; but, when we are alone, do our hearts say, “It is a wilderness, a land not sown” (Jer. ii. 2)? If it be so with you, do not rest until the Lord Himself satisfies your soul; for you should delight yourself in Him. Lot *saw* a well-watered plain and city, and then dwelt in it on the earth, and consequently was in the midst of a scene of judgment; while Abraham sought a city *out of sight*, and he enjoyed the blessing and comfort of having God with him wherever he went. When the soul is low down, like a ship in the shallows, it is in danger of shoals and sandbanks; but when the tide is up, sandbanks are nothing, because the ship is lifted up above them all. Thus, when the soul is happy in Christ, it will go on in peace, independent of all the trials it may meet with from fellow-saints.

WE SHALL be able to tell Paul by and by how glad we are he was in the Roman dungeons; otherwise we had never had his blessed epistles.

## INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

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CHASTENING.—There are three ways in which we may be affected by it :—1, We may “despise” it—this leads to hardness. 2, “Faint” under it, giving up in despair, which is equally bad. 3, Be “exercised” by it, thus bringing God in, which results in reaping the peaceable fruit of righteousness. The duck, the hen, and the robin, under the pelting rain, illustrate this. The duck despises it, the hen droops under it, the robin gets under a hedge *and sings*. “Faith *can sing* through days of sorrow.” Only as we learn death here in *everything* is the heart truly set free, to rise and rest with Christ in glory.

WE WERE by nature children of wrath, and by practice children of disobedience. We ARE by new birth children of God, and by grace children of light.

TRUST HIM.—Behind our life the Weaver stands,  
And works His wondrous will ;  
We leave it in His all-wise hands,  
And trust His perfect skill.  
Should mystery enshroud His plan,  
And our short sight be dim,  
We will not seek the whole to scan,  
But leave each thread with Him.

—Charlotte Murray.

PRAYER (*Eph. vi. 19*).—

1. The time for it—praying *always*.
2. The kinds of prayer—*prayer* and *supplication*.
3. The inward principle—in the *Spirit*.
4. The guard needed—*watching* thereunto.
5. The constancy needed—with all *perseverance*.
6. For whom to pray—for *all saints*.

PRAYER aims at a mark, and knows what it is after. The model prayers of Scripture are short and right to the mark. Rowland Hill said “short ejaculatory prayer reaches heaven before the devil can get a shot at it.”

LIFE.—In its transitoriness and uncertainty the natural life of man is compared in Scripture to everything that is unsubstantial and of brief duration : to grass—flourishing in the morning, cut down in the evening ; to a vapour—a puff of smoke or steam ; to a tale that is told. Such is life in a state of nature. But when the body dies the soul does not die ; for death does not involve the suspension of existence. St. Paul’s description of his spiritual life, after his conversion, is found in his Epistle to the Galatians. “I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” The absence of this spiritual life means spiritual death—a living death ! A living body with a dead spirit is an awful thought, yet how common a thing it is ! Being born without spiritual life, a man has to be quickened by Christ before he can be said to live unto God.—*English Churchman*.

ONE who rejected verbal inspiration having remarked that he could not believe that Sodom was destroyed by fire from heaven (*Gen. xix. 24*), a Christian (to whom it was said) replied, “Oh ! don’t you ? Well, you have only to look at *Luke xvii. 29*, and you will see that *the Lord believed it*.”

## 150 INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

## DEATH UNTO SIN.—

1. We *are* dead to sin, as being “in Christ” who died—*fact*.
2. We are to *reckon* ourselves “dead unto sin” and “alive unto God”—*faith*.
3. We are to *yield* ourselves unto God as alive from the dead—*experience*.

THE SIZE OF THE UNIVERSE.—It has been estimated that a cannon ball moving with a velocity of 500 miles an hour, travelling in the direction of the nearest fixed star, would not reach it in less than 4,500,000 years; and yet there are stars in the heavens and visible through telescopes that would require a cannon ball moving with the same velocity at least 500,000,000 years to reach them. It was said by the elder Herschell that it would require light travelling at the rate of 185,000 miles a second two millions of years to come to the earth from the remotest luminous vapours within reach of his 40-foot telescope, and yet, whatever may have been the efforts of astronomers to bring the starry heavens as a whole into view, even with the most powerful reflectors, they have so far proved to be futile. Hence, to any sober mind, the universe must seem for ever to be and to remain immeasurable, incalculable, and incomprehensible! And while we may be able to weigh and measure suns and systems within range of our telescopes, there are others so far away and so far beyond our powers of vision, and our powers of calculation, that even our present supposed great knowledge of the sidereal heavens would dwindle into the thinnest of mental vapouries.—*W. H. Lamaster, in “Popular Astronomy” (U.S.).*

USELESS FOREBODINGS.—What a vast proportion of our lives is spent in anxious and useless forebodings concerning the future—either our own or that of our dear ones! Present joys, present blessings slip by, and we miss half their sweet flavour, and all for want of faith in Him who provides for the tiniest insect in the sunbeam. Oh, when shall we, the children of God, learn the sweet trust in Him that our children teach us—we, who are so mutable, so faulty, so irritable, so unjust; and He, Who is so watchful, so pitiful, so loving, so forgiving? Why cannot we, slipping our hand into His each day, walk trustingly over that day’s appointed path, thorny or flowery, crooked or straight, knowing that evening will bring us sleep, peace, and home.

HOW MEN SHOULD LIVE.—Men deceive themselves if they suppose that a few expressions of sorrow at the close of life will make amends for a lifetime of carelessness about God and His will. If they would die in the Lord, they must live in the Lord. Life is made up not only of words and deeds, but there is the inner condition to be taken into account—all the springs of action as God sees them: are these alive unto God, or are they still dead in sin? The transforming power of the Holy Spirit must have taken possession of the whole man, and have infused new life into every faculty, before he can be said to walk with God.—*English Churchman.*

THE QUEEN OF MADAGASCAR, being at war with the saloons in her kingdom, was approached by the saloon-keepers, whose business she had suppressed, and asked for *compensation*. She answered: “Compensate those whom you have wronged, and I will pay the balance.” This was worthy of a Christian queen.

## “COME” AND “GO.”

*Matt. xxviii.*

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IT was the end of the Sabbath day. A terrible deed had been committed the previous day. The Son of God had stood before Pilate, the Roman governor, and the chief priests, scribes, and elders had persuaded the excited mob to clamour for the release of Barabbas and the death of Jesus ; and the timid, time-serving governor, more apprehensive of the loss of the friendship of Cæsar than of the frown of the Almighty, had delivered Jesus “to their will,” and they had “with wicked hands” taken and murdered Him ! There is a day fast approaching when the actors in that mock-judgment scene will change places, and Pilate will stand before Jesus—when righteous judgment will be given, and the impenitent governor, and all who have taken sides against Jesus, will find themselves prisoners for eternity in “the lake of fire” (Rev. xx.). The cry of that maddened crowd that day was, “His blood be on us and on our children !” Awful cry ! still ringing in heaven’s ears, and awaiting its terrible, terrible answer in the day of retribution, when God “maketh inquisition for blood” (Ps. ix. 12).

Then they “prepared to keep the Sabbath !” What an awful mockery and insult to God ! Keeping the Sabbath with hands stained with innocent blood ! Their victim lying in the grave, and they keeping “a high day” (Jno. xix. 21). Is it not about the most shocking, heartless, and hypocritical spectacle the world ever saw ? A lot of fanatical, religious hypocrites and murderers keeping the Sabbath day after getting rid, for the time being, of “God manifest in the flesh.” This is man’s side of that dark and dreadful tragedy. Is there another side ? you ask. Most surely there is. Let us look at it for a moment.

On that cross, when Jesus was hanging there suspended between heaven and earth—after men had done their worst and could do no more—“an horror

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of great darkness" fell upon the holy Sufferer—a darkness that might be felt—and the soul of the "Holy One of God" entered into, and felt in all its intensity and bitterness, the righteous judgment of a sin-hating God. "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" was the broken-hearted utterance of the blessed Redeemer as He felt its awful weight.

Tread softly and with unshod feet—the place is "holy ground." The subject is the holiest of themes.

With holy reverence let us enquire, "What meaneth the noise of this great shout?" "What meaneth this—this 'loud voice?'" Listen! "God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). O marvellous words! Reader, drink them in! They will be life, peace, joy, and blessing to you here, and everlasting glory hereafter. "*God made Him to be sin.*" But He was holy—harmless—spotless! Quite true—perfectly, blessedly true; but we were not. *We* were unholy, hateful, and defiled creatures, and "God made Him to be *sin for us!*"

"The holy One who knew no sin,  
God made Him sin for us;  
The Saviour died our souls to win,  
Upon that shameful cross."

Repeat the story o'er and o'er: "God made Him to be *sin for us.*" It was an act of God. *He* did it; *He made* the Saviour to be sin for us. Jesus willingly submitted to do God's will, and "Jehovah laid on Him," in that solemn moment, "the iniquities of us all" (Isaiah liii. 6). Yes! not only were the believer's sins all borne then and there, but the very nature in us which produces those sins was condemned in the death of God's beloved Son when He was "made sin for us." The whole sin-question, root and branch, has been raised and settled by Jesus in that solemn hour that stands alone in its solitary awfulness in the history of this world. So blessedly and perfectly has



that sin-question in its totality (not merely *sin* in us, or our *sins*) been settled, and God in all His holy nature and character glorified, that to call a believer's title to glory in question would be to question the perfection and permanency of that gloriously finished work, as well as cast a doubt upon the glory of the Person whose work it is. That last cry of His—"It is finished"—ringing throughout heaven's vaults, to the delight of the countless host of angelic beings, and still echoing through earth for the joy and eternal blessing of sinful men, and also to the eternal confusion of Satan and all his hosts, tells out the blessed news that the Person and His work—and its results to all who believe—are *perfect* and *eternal*. The unearthly and inconceivable brilliance of "the *great white throne*" when set (Rev. xx.) will never be able to show the slightest spot or stain on him who has fled to Christ and been washed in His most precious blood—"It cleanseth from *all sin*" (1 John i. 7)—while the impenitent and unbelieving sinner, exposed by its light, will stand in black and appalling contrast in his eternally fixed state of guilt and moral distance from God, and be *glad*—if one dare use such a word in such a connection—to be cast away from the terrible gaze of Him who sitteth upon that throne. The crowning act of man's wickedness in murdering God's Son was the opportunity taken by God to display the exceeding riches of His grace; and the very blood shed by man in his wickedness is that which cleanseth him from the awful penalty incurred in shedding it—yea, from "*all sin*." What marvellous, magnificent, God-like grace! Well may we say, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. v. 20).

It was "the end of the Sabbath." The grey dawn of the morning of the first day of the week was just beginning to show itself on the hill tops around Jerusalem, when a few women might be seen wending their way to the sepulchre where they had seen the body of Jesus laid (Mark xv. 47). It was twilight;

but, blessed be God, it was the twilight that leads to the full blaze of sunlight—not the evening twilight, that fades into the inky darkness of midnight. God had a surprise in store for those faithful women whose love led them, though ignorantly, to seek Jesus in such a place and at such an hour. An angel from heaven was sent to anticipate their difficulty and roll away the stone. They had wondered how that difficulty would be overcome; and God in His grace was before them, and they found the stone already rolled away, for it was very great (Mark xvi. 3, 4). Nor ought we to forget that God is the same to-day, and delights to surprise His saints with proofs of His love and goodness.

The angel, then, was sent to calm their fears and give them a glad *surprise*—a blessed *assurance*—a glorious *privilege* (verses 5, 6, 7). "Come, see!"

They were not invited to a funeral, and to see the dead laid *in* the grave; they were invited to the grave to see that the dead had come *out*! It was a resurrection scene. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." What a surprise to them! What an assurance, too, of the faithfulness of the One whom they sought, and whose words they afterwards remembered (Luke xxiv. 8). He said He would rise again, and they saw He had fulfilled His word. And what a privilege was then given them to be allowed to carry the message to His disciples! "Go quickly, and tell His disciples," &c. The message was an important one. "The King's business requires haste." They had obeyed the word, "*Come, see*;" now they were to obey the other word, "*Go quickly, and tell*." Not merely "Go," but "*Go quickly*."

Beloved, this is the glorious privilege of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God—(1) To look into an empty tomb; (2) to know and behold a risen Christ; (3) to go forth carrying the good news to everyone who will hear.

Then see how beautifully these things are put

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together in Matt. xxviii. Come and see—Go and tell—“Go *quickly*, and tell,” &c. And they departed *quickly* . . . and did *run* to bring the disciples word.” Then Jesus met them, as they obeyed—He always meets and blesses those who obey God’s Word—and He repeated the message, “Go, tell My brethren.” “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, . . . and when they saw Him they worshipped Him.”

Again we hear the word “Go” from the lips of Him who was risen, and had *all* power in heaven and in earth given to Him. Observe, it was “*all power* ;” and “Go, and teach *all nations*” . . . “teaching them to observe *all things* ;” . . . and “Lo, I am with you *always*.” What wonderful things to tell ! what wonderful power to enable them to tell them ! what wonderful company to be in while telling them !

May we each and all enjoy more of His company—realise more of His power—and be able to tell out His message in a fuller, freer, and happier way, and see it crowned with success in the salvation of sinners and the sanctification of saints.

*New Zealand.*

W. EASTON.

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 LUKE XXIII. 24—XXIV. 6.
 

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“So when they had bound Him, they led Him away, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor ;” and in their onward path to procure the condemnation of Jesus, they one and all convict and condemn each other by their last confessions of blood-guiltiness and shame ! What could Judas do with the thirty pieces of silver, but bring them back to the chief priests and elders, and cast them down in the temple, saying, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood” ? What could they say in their heartlessness to him but this—“What is that to us ? see thou to that” ? And he departed, and went and hanged himself. In their turn, what could the priests do with this price of blood, but buy the potter’s field to bury

strangers in ? and how could this dark plot of ground be known ever afterward but "the field of blood" ? So after this manner the priests and Judas perpetuated their shame.

Another opportunity is given us to own the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God by reading these acts and deeds as a verification of "the words spoken by Jeremy the prophet," that thus it should be. But neither Judas by his self-destruction, nor the chief priests and elders with the potter's field, can suffice to declare the sense of blood-guiltiness that yet rested heavily on other consciences, which held the power to shed it. So when Pilate "was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent to him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just Man : for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him." It was hard for Judas to tell what to do with "the price of Him that was betrayed," and as hard for the priests to appropriate anew the thirty pieces of silver, "whom they of the children of Israel did value ;" but harder still for them to tell how they could afterwards take counsel together to get rid of such an One as Jesus, when He was in their hands.

"And when He was accused of the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto Him, Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee ? And He answered him to never a word ; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly," though Jesus had declared in reply to Pilate His rights and titles as "King of the Jews," in which the children of Israel were denying Him ; for "he knew that for envy they had delivered Him."

In this outer circle of the Roman governor, "*truth* has fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter" ; so dropping down upon a custom at the Passover feast, Pilate offers to release unto them a notable prisoner, or Jesus, which is called Christ. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. And the governor

said, "Why, what evil hath He done? But they cried out the more, Let Him be crucified." The blood-guiltiness of the nation is now before Pilate; and when he saw that he could prevail nothing, "he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just Person: see ye to it."

Thus Pilate, in his turn, as having life and death in his power, writes the sentence of blood-shedding upon the multitude and their leaders by washing his own hands, just as Judas attempted to condone or repudiate the awful sin of a traitor and betrayer at the beginning.

Pilate, therefore, willing to release Jesus unto them, demanded the third time what evil He had done, saying, "I will therefore chastise Him, and let Him go." And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that He might be crucified, adding (as in Matthew), "His blood be on us, and on our children." And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed; so Pilate delivered Jesus to their will, and released unto them him whom they had desired, who for sedition and murder was cast into prison. The world had long ago broken loose from God, and the end of all flesh had come up before Him in righteous judgment, on account of the violence and corruption which the deluge swept over. But at the Cross, and by the crucifixion of Christ thereon, sin had exceeded itself in every previous outbreak by this organised rebellion against God, headed by Satan, by which the Lord Jesus Christ had been by wicked hands crucified and slain. Nevertheless, if the evil of the human heart, and its enmity against Christ, the Anointed One, has broken through all bounds, and sunk men in the depths of darkness and woe, the goodness and virtue which dwelt in Jesus—supreme goodness and grace—rose to its own height, and was seen in its own glory before God at such an hour by unbounded confidence and unswerving obedience to the Father's will.

The Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of prophecy, had

long before described these wondrous goings forth of the Incarnate One ; and now that Jesus has come in flesh and blood to die, what could His path be from day to day ? and in what character of greatness could He tread it, but as the Fulfiller of all Scripture ? How He loved to open the book of the prophet, and to find the place where it was written, " The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach," at the beginning of His public ministry, in Luke iv. And now that He is coming to its close, how will He love, in the privacy of His own soul, to recall the words, " 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." And further, as the obedient and dependent One, it was written, " He wakeneth morning by morning ; He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned."

In this double character of prophecy by Isaiah was this Scripture fulfilled to their ears and before their eyes, when Jesus turned to the people and the women that were following and lamenting Him, and said to them, " Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare." Again, as having the ear open for Himself, and the tongue of the learned for those around, He alone could interpret to them their fearful position before God in righteousness above, and the impending judgments, when He will make inquisition for blood—the blood of His Son, their Messiah, the King of Israel. " Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us ; and to the hills, Cover us." And darker and deeper still, He overcasts these last days of their apocalyptic history by adding, " For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ?"

Faithful to them, in their unfaithfulness to Him, and walking along upon the high places, which were appointed Him in the Scriptures from everlasting by

the "I Am," Jesus gives Himself up into the hands of the wicked, that they may take their place, and fulfil these Scriptures in condemning Him. "And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left." Where the anointed eye can follow on, in company with Him whose ears were open morning by morning, and who had the tongue of the learned, with what delight do we find the place where it is written, "I was not rebellious, neither turned away back; I gave My back to the smiters, . . . for the Lord God will help Me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." But He who could descend into these depths to seek and secure the majesty and glory of God against sin, and Satan, and death, and the grave, by the precious pathway of His sufferings and propitiatory sacrifice, had already given out His heart by intercession on behalf of those who were in their last act of enmity, taking away His life.

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." How blessed is it, and what a relief, to be with One who is so unlike to all besides, and so unlike ourselves too; and better still to know that one heart of love which rose above and beyond itself, up through the clamour and hate of His betrayers and murderers, to find its only resting-place and home in the bosom it had ever occupied, and to say, "Father, forgive them!" In spirit He is far above them, and out of their reach, yet are they uppermost in His thoughts; while they down below "parted His raiment, and cast lots" for the coat which was without a seam. "The rulers also with the people derided Him, saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the chosen of God."

The soldiers likewise mocked Him, saying, "If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself;" and a

superscription was written over Him, in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew—"This is the King of the Jews." Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done, is the divine interpretation brought from the heavens by the Pentecostal Spirit, and the record of the sovereign power of God, which makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and restrains the remainder thereof. Under the heavens, and upon this earth, the world has done its worst, and emptied itself by the crucifixion of Christ of the One chief treasure which God had to give.

Nevertheless, the love of God has found a way for itself by the Cross through which to make known the riches of His grace for His eternal glory. God must and will be God in the supremacy of His wisdom and power and love, above and by means of the fall of man, over sin and Satan, just as Jesus accomplished our redemption by His own blood, and found the way of life through death and the grave in the light and glory of His triumphant resurrection.

What a victory has been wrought by the foreknowledge of God! and in what sovereign power too, that the Cross of Christ, which was the outlet of the world's hatred against God and the Anointed One, should be turned round so as to become the inlet of God's unbounded love to His betrayers and murderers, beginning at Jerusalem. The song of the drunkard He had been in His lifetime; and now, in His death, He was numbered with the transgressors. "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God? . . . but this Man hath done nothing amiss." The remorseful traitor had condemned the elders and rulers by bringing back the thirty pieces of silver, and throwing them down in the temple; and now the repentant thief on the cross, in



the article of death, condemns the living world around him in confessing the title and rights of Jesus as the King of the Jews, by saying, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." They might further mock Him, as they did, by the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, and the reed in His hand, and by bowing the knee in derision, but Jesus accepted His justification from the mouth of this malefactor, and said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." In His humiliation His judgment was taken away, and who shall declare His generation, for His life is taken from the earth.

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour; for even nature itself, by such an interval of darkness, casts its condemnation upon those on whom it refuses to shine while perpetrating such an act of blood-guiltiness. Moreover, the sun does homage to the rights of the rejected and crucified Lord, and was darkened to declare its condemnation of the world beneath. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain.

The world and its rulers have done their worst. And Jesus, knowing all things that should come to pass respecting Himself, interprets these acts and deeds according to God, and connecting all with the Will which He came to do, and to complete it cried with a loud voice, and said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said this, He gave up the ghost." Who could find out or make such a path as this, and at its close commend His spirit into the hand of His Father, but Jesus, the Son of God, in the consciousness of His own perfect obedience and devotedness, by finishing the work that was given Him to do? What suited act could there be from the holiest, where God dwells, but that He should rend the veil from the top to the bottom as a token that He could no longer be hid inside it, and that a new and living way was consecrated for us to enter in through the veil—that is to say, His flesh?

But another voice yet remains at the Cross in condemnation of the world's sin, and in justification of the Messiah's righteousness. "Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous Man." Moreover, the people which came together to that sight, "smote their breasts, and returned. And all His acquaintance, and the women that followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things."

"And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just, . . . who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus."

For it was not only written by the prophet that He was numbered with the transgressors, but that He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death. So Joseph took the body down and wrapped it in fine linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. All was new in His life, for it was Jesus who lived—all was new in His death, for it was Jesus who died—all was new in the grave, for it was Jesus who lay there, and was buried, but could not be holden of death. Again, as to His life, Jesus said: No man taketh it from Me; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again: this commandment have I received of My Father. Again, touching Himself, He cried with a loud voice, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." As to the verification of Scripture, Jesus said, "The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him;" and yet, as touching responsibility, He added, "but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born." How could it be otherwise, we may well ask, since everything took another character, and possessed another signification, which related to Him: "Never man spake like this Man"; and again, "If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing";

"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The sweet psalmist of Israel had long ago sung: "Wilt Thou show wonders to the dead ! shall the dead arise and praise Thee ? Shall Thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave, or Thy faithfulness in destruction ? Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark ! and Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness ?"

"And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." And the women "returned, and prepared spices and ointments ; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." Precious it is to observe the living and loving affection of Joseph of Arimathea and these women for the body of Jesus, in contrast with the enmity of those all around, who had just put Him to death. Nor is this all, for the guilty nation had never kept such a Passover as this one, for Jesus had been led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. The veritable Paschal-lamb sacrificed and slain, and His blood shed for the remission of sins, and ultimately for the redemption of the nation of Israel, who were on that Sabbath day keeping the feast upon the sepulchre, so to speak, where they had laid Him, under the eye of Jehovah. The solemn mockery of the priests, and elders, and the people completes itself in the outward formation of the Passover feast ; yet, if so, it was at this self-same feast that the divine reality of propitiation before God was laid in the precious blood of the Lamb, foreordained before the foundation of the world, and by that efficacious work which had been committed to Jesus, and which He had completed by His sacrifice and death, as witnessed by the grave underneath their feet where they laid Him.

The blackest of all crimes rests upon that favoured nation, and the foulest of all blots ; but that God who makes a path for Himself, that the vulture's eye hath not seen nor the lion trodden, brings eternal redemption out of the jaws of death and judgment, and the glory of resurrection through the open door of the

sepulchre. He had been transfigured beyond the brightness of the sun, when at the Holy Mount in the days of His flesh ; but now He is covered with the glory of salvation, as He comes forth " the last Adam " in the power of resurrection, having overcome sin, and death, and Satan, and the grave, and left them all behind for ever, as for Himself, or for God, or for His saints. Yea, it was the glory of the Father, by which He was raised from the dead, and led forth in His new names and titles of Deliverer, Kinsman, Redeemer, Substitute, and Saviour, by which He acquired His rights, as the appointed Heir of all things, to the authorities, principalities, and powers, and dominions which He had originally created and made.

In the midst of supernatural causes and effects such as these, which could only find their range upon this new basis of redemption, or room for their exercise and display by the power of resurrection, what were the disciples to say or do, who had only known their Messiah and themselves according to the flesh ? How touching to read their natural thoughts, and to observe the way they were attracted, and what they thought best suited for the dead body of Jesus their Lord.

" Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them." But a mighty power had been there before them, to inaugurate this wonder of wonders, the resurrection of Christ from among the dead. " And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus." None on earth could help them in their dilemma ; but the heavens, and He who dwelleth in them, ever faithful and compassionate to the poor of the flock, when the heart is true and the object right, however misdirected the activities of love may be, sends help to them in their perplexity ; for " behold, two men stood by them in shining garments," and said, " Why seek ye the living among the dead ? He is not here, but is risen."

J. E. B.

## "ANOTHER GOSPEL."

*"Nearly the last words of a beloved servant of God directed us to John's writings, and it is remarkable that the first error that came to light afterwards was that every one born anew had eternal life." . . . "What next? 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' You have changed your man now. Not only have you got out of death, but you have changed your man. It is a great thing to get hold of this. If I were to state the Gospel in a few words I should say: It is that the Man who has glorified God on earth has displaced the man who had offended against God. The great thought of the Gospel is a person, a Man who supersedes all others." —"Truth for the Time," being notes of last Quemerford Meeting.*

When one reads language like this as the accredited utterance of one who was for many years recognised as an able servant of Christ, one standing forth publicly as a teacher in the Church of God, and one who by not a few is still regarded as an authority in the things of God and a capable exponent of the Word, what can we do but hide our heads for very shame that the Lord is so wounded in the house of His friends?

Yet a warning note seems to be called for, if haply God will save some at least of His people from being carried away with this new gospel. What is the Holy Ghost's commentary on similar departures from the truth? Let the reader himself peruse it in Gal. i. 6-9.

But let us be well assured that *this is* indeed "another gospel," such as Paul condemned.

We are told that a beloved servant of God in his nearly last words directed us to John's writings, and it is remarkable that the first error that came to light afterwards was that every one born anew had eternal life! *We* should have said, it is remarkable that the first error that came to light afterwards was the *denial* of this. Needed indeed was it that the one referred to should direct attention to John's writings, seeing

that so soon after this a denial should be given of that which John's writings emphatically express and enforce. To what clearer Scripture for Gospel truth can we turn than to John iii.? *What says it?* "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Will it be maintained that by the one who enters the kingdom of God another person is contemplated than the one who "believeth in Him"? And if not, is it not palpable that the one born of water and of the Spirit has eternal life. Yet in the very teeth of these plainest of Scriptures in *John's writings*, we find self-congratulation at having escaped the error of believing "that every one born anew had eternal life," and a covert suggestion that it was in view of such error (?) that the beloved servant of God referred to had given the direction named. What is, it may be asked, the being born anew, but the having eternal life? Born anew is born with a new life, clearly. What is that new life? If the believer passes from death unto life when born of God, what is that new life? Is it not eternal life? John, at least, to whom we are directed, says that it is. "He that believeth" (and everyone "born anew" believeth) "hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (iii. 36). John knows none of these refinements which emasculate and attenuate the plain words of God, to the shame of those who resort to them!

Again, in chap. vi. 24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment); but is passed from death unto life." Is not this as clear and conclusive as it is emphatic? He that heareth the word, and believeth

on the One whose word it is—nothing more than this, and which always indicates the one “born anew”—hath everlasting or eternal life. Again we say John knows nothing of this modern gospel, based as it is on a departure from the plain and positive word of God ; judgment and wrath attaching to him that believeth not ; passing from death unto life—everlasting life—characterising him that believeth. There is no middle class hinted at ; one who is a believer is “born anew” ; one who is “born anew” is a believer. To argue otherwise is to make a distinction without a difference.

Therefore, we say, that as there are for us but the two lives, the natural and the spiritual, that which is derived from the first man Adam and that which is of the second Man and last Adam, he that is “born anew,” that is born of God, *has* eternal life, and the first paragraph at the head of this paper is “another gospel” on which God has pronounced an awful sentence.

Let us proceed to what follows, passing over the barely reverent expression, “you have changed your man,” more fit as it is for a political agitator than for one who has the Lord before him. A definition of the Gospel is given us, viz., “the Man who has glorified God on earth has displaced the man who had offended against God. The great thought of the Gospel is a person, a Man who supersedes all others.” Is not this only Incarnation? a bloodless Gospel in which is no sacrifice. Wherein, here, is the Cross? Reconciliation, substitution, propitiation, every element of atonement *wanting*! What Gospel is this for a sinful man? Imagine, in the case of the Philippian jailer, in reply to his earnest, anxious enquiry, What must I do to be saved? Paul and Silas saying—the Man who glorified God has displaced the man who had offended Him ; for it is affirmed that *this* is the Gospel, stated in a few words! A gospel of Incarnation, or displacement, or supersession—call it what you will—is “another gospel which is not another,” but

one which will never bring peace to a guilty conscience, nor righteously justify the ungodly.

Here we pause ; and as our object is not to incriminate the evil doctrine, so much as to put our readers on their guard, we will only add that a spurious gospel is always (intentionally we will not in this case believe) an attack upon *Christ*. It inevitably dishonours, if it does not assail, either His person or His work. Therefore is it that the strongest condemnation found in the New Testament is directed against him who preaches "another gospel."

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### THE BLOOD OF THE PASSOVER.

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IT seems that the sprinkling on the door-posts was only in Egypt, for when they entered the land they were to eat the Passover wherever the sanctuary was, so could not of course sprinkle the blood on the door-posts of their houses. That act, then, was confined to Egypt when God was passing through the land.

At the sanctuary the lamb was killed, the priest sprinkled the blood, presenting it there to God. This last was a priestly act; the killing of the lamb was not. From Hezekiah's day it seems that the Levites killed for the people ; perhaps that began in his day, owing to the exceptional circumstances mentioned (2 Chron. xxx. 17). At the institution of the passover there were no other offerings mentioned ; at the feast of unleavened bread, closely connected with it, there were certain appointed (Numb. xxviii. 16-24). Probably it is to these that reference is made at Josiah's passover.

Now the Jews cannot have the lamb, for they have no altar on which to sprinkle the blood and no sanctuary to which they can go. In the millenium they will observe the feast again, looking back to Calvary surely, having learnt (Isaiah liii. 5-6) what they owe to that death.

C. E. S.



## FRAGMENTARY REMARKS.

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I BELIEVE that the churches have been merged in the mass of ecclesiastical popular hierarchism and lost ; but I believe also that the visible church, as it is called, has been merged there too.

Still there is a difference, because churches were the administrative form, while the church, as a body on the earth, was the vital unity.

What I felt from the beginning, and began with, was this : the Holy Ghost remains, and, therefore, the essential principle of unity with this presence ; for (the fact is all we are now concerned in) *wherever* "two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

When this is really sought, there will certainly be blessing by His presence ; we have found it so, most sweetly and graciously, who have met separately.

When there is an attempt at displaying the position and the unity, there will always be a muddle and a failure : God will not take such a place with us.

We must get into the place of His mind, to get His strength. That is now the failure of the church ; but there He will be with us.

I have always said this. I know it has troubled some, even those I especially love ; but I am sure it is the Lord's mind. I have said : *We are the witnesses of the weakness and low estate of the church.*

We are not stronger nor better than others (Dissenters, &c.), but we own our bad and low state, and *therefore* can find blessing. I do not limit what the blessed Spirit can do for us in this low estate, but I take the place *where* He can do it. . . .

I only, therefore, so far seek the original standing of the church as to believe, that wherever two or three are gathered in His name, Christ will be, and that the Spirit of God is necessarily the only source of power, and that which He does will be blessing through the Lordship of Christ. These provide for all

times. If more be attempted now, it will be only confusion. . . .

But there a most important point comes in:—I cannot supply the lack by human arrangement or wisdom; I must be dependent. . . . I would always own what is of God's Spirit in any. The *rule* seems to me here very simple.

I do not doubt that dispensed power is disorganised; but the Holy Ghost is always competent to act in the circumstances God's people are in. The secret is, not to pretend to get beyond it. Life and divine power are always there; and I use the members I have, with full confession that I am in an imperfect state.

We must remember that the body must exist, though not in a united state; and so, even locally. I can then, therefore, own their gifts, and the like, and get my warrant in two or three united for the blessing promised to that.

Then, if gifts exist, they cannot be exercised but as members of the body, because they are such, not by outward union, but by the vital power of the Head through the Holy Ghost.

"Visible body," I suspect, misleads us a little. Clearly the corporate operation is in the actual living body down here on earth, but there it is the members must act; so that I do not think it makes a difficulty.

I believe if we were to act on 1 Cor. xii. 14 farther than power exists to verify it, we should make a mistake.

But then the existence of the body, whatever its scattered condition, necessarily continues; because it depends on the existence of the Head, and its union with it. In this the Holy Ghost is necessarily supreme.

The body exists in virtue of there being one Holy Ghost. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;"/ indeed this is the very point which is denied here

Then Christ necessarily nourishes and cherishes us as His own flesh, as members of His body ; and this goes on "till we all come," &c. (Eph. iv.). Hence, I apprehend we cannot deny the body and its unity (whatever its unfaithfulness and condition), and (so far as the Holy Ghost is owned) His operation in it, without denying the divine title of the Holy Ghost, and the care and headship of Christ over the church.

Here I get, not a question of the church's conduct, but of Christ's ; and the truth of the Holy Ghost being on earth, and His title when there ; and yet the owning of Christ's lordship. And this is how far I own others.

If a minister has gifts in the Establishment, I own it as through the Spirit, Christ begetting the members of, or nourishing, His body. But I cannot go along with what it is mixed up with, because it is not of the body nor of the Spirit. I cannot touch the unclean ; I am to separate the precious from the vile. *Correct*

But I cannot give up Eph. iv. while I own the faithfulness of Christ. Now if we meet (yea, and when we do meet), all I look for is that this principle should be owned, because it is owning the Holy Ghost Himself, and that to me is everything.

We meet and worship ; and at this time, we who have separated meet in different rooms, that we may in the truest and simplest way, in our weakness, *worship*. Then whatever the Holy Ghost may give to any one, He is supreme, to feed us with—perhaps nothing in the way of speaking—and it must be in the unity of the body.

If you were here, you could be in the unity of the body as one of ourselves. This Satan cannot destroy, because it is connected with Christ's title and power.

If men set up to imitate the administration of the body, it will be popery or dissent at once.

And this is what I see of the visibility of the body ; it connects itself with this infinitely important principle, the presence and action of the Holy Ghost on earth.

It is not merely a saved thing in the counsels of God, but a living thing animated down here by its union with the Head, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in it. It is a real, actual thing, the Holy Ghost acting down here. If two are faithful in this, they will be blessed in it.

If they said, "We are the body," not owning all the members (in whatever condition), they would morally cease to be of it. I own them, but in nothing their condition. The principle is all-important.

Christ has attached, therefore, its practical operation to "two or three;" and owns them by His presence. He has provided for its maintenance. Thus, in all states of ruin, it cannot cease till He ceases to be Head, and the Holy Spirit to be the Guide and the Comforter sent down. ✓

God sanctioned the setting up of Saul; He never did the departure from the Holy Ghost. The "two or three" take definitely the place of the temple, which was the locality of God's presence, as a principle of union. That is what makes all the difference. Hence, in the division of Israel, the righteous sought the temple as a point of unity, and David is to us here Christ by the Holy Ghost.

On the other hand, church government, save as the Spirit is always power, cannot be acted on.

I suspect many brethren have had expectations, which never led me out, and which perplexed their minds when they were not met in practice. I never felt my testimony, for example, to be the ability of the Holy Ghost to rule a visible body. This I do not doubt; but I doubt its proper application now as a matter of testimony. It does not become us.

My confidence is in the certainty of God's blessing, and maintaining us, if we take the place we are really in. *That place is one of the general ruin of the dispensation.* Still, I believe God has provided for the maintenance of its general principle (save persecution), that is, the gathering of a remnant into the comfort of

united love by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, so that Christ could sing praises there.

All the rest is a ministry to form, sustain, &c. Amongst other things, government may have its place; but it is well to remember that, in general, government regards evil, and, therefore, is outside the positive blessing, and has the lowest object in the church.

Moreover, though there be a gift of government in general, government is of a different order from gift. Gift serves ministers; hardly government. These may be united, as in apostolic energy. Elders were rather the governments, but they were not gifts.

It is especially the order of the governmental part, which, I believe, has failed, and that we are to get on without, at least in a formal way. But I do not believe that God has, therefore, not provided for such a state of things.

I believe "brethren" a good deal got practically out of their place, and the consciousness of it, and found their weakness: and the Lord is now teaching them. For my part, when I found all in ruin around me, my comfort was, that where two or three were gathered together in Christ's name, there He would be. It was not government or anything else I sought. Now, I do believe that God is faithful, and able to maintain the blessing.

I believe the great buildings and great bodies have been a mistake: indeed, I always did. Further, I believe now (although it were always true in practice), the needed dealing with evil must be by the conscience in grace. So Paul ever dealt, though he had the resource of a positive commission. And I believe that two or three together, or a larger number, with some having the gift of wisdom in grace, can, in finding the mind of the Lord, act in discipline; and this, with pastoral care, is the main-spring of holding the saints together, in Matthew xviii. This agreeing together is referred to as the sign of the Spirit's power.

I do not doubt that some may be capable of

informing the consciences of others. ✓ But the conscience of the body is that which is ever to be acted upon and set right. ✓ This is the character of all healthful action of this kind, though there may be a resource in present apostolic power, which, where evil has entered, may be wanting ; but it cannot annul "where two or three agree, it shall be done."

So that I see not the smallest need of submission to Popery ; (*i.e., carnal unity by authority in the flesh*), nor of standing alone ; because God has provided for a gathering of saints together, founded on grace, and held by the operation of the Spirit, which, no doubt, may fail for want of grace, but which, in every remaining gift, has its scope ; in which Christ's presence and the operation of the Spirit is manifested, but must be maintained, on the ground of the condition the church really is in, or it would issue in a sect arranged by man, with a few new ideas. ✓

Where God is trusted in the place, and for the place, we are in, and we are content to find Him infallibly present with us, there, I am sure, He is sufficient and faithful to meet our wants.

If there be one needed wiser than any of the gathered ones in a place, they will humbly feel their need, and God will send some one as needed, if He sees it the fit means. *encouraging*

There is no remedy for want of grace but the sovereign goodness that leads to confession. ✓ If we set up our altar, it will serve for walls (Ezra iii. 3). The visibility God will take care of, as He always did, the faith of the body will be spoken of, and the unity in love manifest the power of the Holy Ghost in the body.

I have no doubt of God's raising up for need all that need requires in the place where He has set us in understanding. ✓ If we think to set up the church, again I would say, God forbid. ✓ I had rather be near the end, to live and to die for it in service where it is as dear to God : that is my desire and life. ✓ J. N. D.

THE RENT VEIL.—*Hebrews.*

“IT will be found there is more contrast than comparison. The veil is compared, but then closing the entrance to the sanctuary, now rent and a new and living way into it. . . . The veil concealed God. The high priest went in once a year to make reconciliation—no one else. . . . The writer, with a heart full of the truth and of the importance of that truth, teaches the value and the extent of the sacrifice of Christ. . . . These three results are presented—first, the opened way into the sanctuary was manifested (*i.e.*, access to God Himself, where He is); second, the purification of the *conscience*; third, an eternal redemption.

“One feels the immense importance, the inestimable value, of the first. The veil is rent, every obstacle removed, the believer admitted into God’s own presence has constant access to Himself, immediate access to the place where He is, in the light. What complete salvation, what blessedness, what security! For how could we have access to God in the light, if everything that would separate us from Him were not entirely taken away? But here it is the precious and perfect result which is revealed to us, and formally proved in chapter x. as a right that we possess, that access to God Himself is entirely and freely open to us. . . . We go in perfect liberty to God, where His holiness dwells, and where nothing that is contrary to Him can be admitted. What happiness! What perfect grace! What a glorious result, supreme and complete! Could anything better be desired, remembering, too, that it is our dwelling-place? This is our position in the presence of God, through the entrance of Christ into the sanctuary. . . . We can use this access to God in full liberty and joy, presenting ourselves before Him who has so loved us. . . . He has opened an access for us even now to God in the light, having cleansed our conscience

once for all—for He dwells on high continuously—that we may enter in and that we may serve God here below. . . . It is all important thoroughly to understand that it is into the presence of God that we enter ; and that at all times, and by virtue of a sacrifice and of blood which never lose their value. The worshipper under the former tabernacle did not come into the presence of God ; he stayed outside the unrent veil. He sinned—a sacrifice was offered ; he sinned again—a sacrifice was offered. Now the veil is rent. We are always in the presence of God without a veil. Happen what may, He always sees us.

*“But we are there now by virtue of a sacrifice which has put sin away, which has accomplished the purification of our sins. I should not be in the presence of God in the sanctuary, if I had not been purified according to the purity of God, and by God. . . . There is the efficacy of the work itself. What is this efficacy? What is the result for us of His work? Access to God in the light without a veil, sin being entirely put away. Marvellous position for us! We have not to wait for a day of judgment (assuredly coming as it is), nor to seek for means of approach to God. We are in His presence. . . . Thus all liberty is ours to enter into the holy place (all boldness) by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, i.e., His flesh, that veil rent for us, to admit us without spot into the presence of God Himself, who is there revealed. For that which rent the veil in order to admit us has likewise put away the sin which shut us out.”—Synopsis of the Books of the Bible by J. N. Darby. —Hebrews.*

*Will it be credited that it is now denied (Notes of last Quemerford meeting) that the veil is rent in Hebrews? And what is even more incredible is that this departure from the truth is bolstered up by the assertion that beloved Mr. Darby again and again said that the veil was not rent in Hebrews. The only answer we can make to this is to present the truth of God*



## THE SCENERY OF HEAVEN.

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*taught in his writings, as we do in the above extracts, at the same time earnestly cautioning our readers not to follow "cunningly devised fables."*

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## THE SCENERY OF HEAVEN.

No fairer, brighter, sweeter spot\* mine eyes have ever seen,  
But, oh ! the Father's house above is lovelier far, I ween ;  
Its beauties we shall soon explore, its joys with Christ shall  
taste,  
Compared with which earth's grandest scene is but a barren  
waste.

Close, then, mine eyes to earth's fair show, which ne'er can  
stay the heart,  
Faith finds its joys 'mid scenes in which with Jesus we have  
part—  
Our home above, the home of Christ, the Father's house on  
high,  
Where not a cloud of sorrow falls, nor heard is sob or sigh !  
His love has there for us prepared a place where joys  
abound,  
Where all His glories He displays to all His saints around ;  
My soul, adore the sovereign grace which such a portion's  
given  
For us to share with Christ our Lord, when He returns from  
heaven !

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A CORRECTION.—On page 141, last line but one, for  
"whose blood had been brought," read "whose blood  
had *not* been brought."

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SIR JOHN HERSCHEL tells that, when sweeping the  
heavens with his telescope the brilliant Sirius suddenly  
burst on his view, he nearly fainted. Who then could  
behold God !

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\*Bellagio, Lake Como.

"THEN SANG DEBORAH."—The difficulties which are so often found disappear when we observe that the inspired writer expressly states that it is *Deborah's* song, and gives no hint that the song itself was inspired, though, of course, the *record* of it is. The whole book is authentic and inspired by God, but many of the persons whose words are there were untruthful speakers, and what they said was often false and in no way sanctioned by the Holy Ghost, though their utterances are *recorded*. Or they may have been good men who said things, wise or unwise, to which, however, we must be careful not to give the same authority as we give to the inspired Scripture in which it is contained. This is no new doctrine, but what I suppose all hold who keep the orthodox views of inspiration, but who do not forget that when, for instance, Judas Iscariot or Satan is speaking. We are not to take what *they say* as inspired, though the record of what they said *is* inspired. It will not do, then, to say Scripture says this or that when it only records that such a person said it. We hear people, for instance, assert that the Bible says "Stolen waters are sweet," when the fact is that so far from that, the Scripture says that a wicked woman said it! "All that a man hath will he give for his life" is not Scripture (Job ii. 4), for Scripture records that Satan said it, and history proves the falsity of the statement. Jael did a great service to Israel, but if her action is praised, this does not necessarily imply that the mode of carrying it out was approved. It was wholly treacherous. Had she taken a more straightforward course, with faith in God, she would have been equally successful. The same may be said as to Rahab. This principle is most important in understanding such Scriptures as are here referred to.

IT IS ALL a blunder to suppose that the reality of the Incarnation involves the condition of either Adam fallen or Adam unfallen. I deny the alternative, which depends on the profound mistake of shutting us up to the condition of the first Adam, utterly ignoring the glorious contrast of the second Man and last Adam. The assumption that if Christ took neither unfallen nor fallen humanity, He had not man's nature at all, ignores the truth, "A body hast Thou prepared Me," and again, "that holy thing."

HYMNS.—Josiah Conder, author of that incomparable worship hymn, "Thou art the everlasting Word," wrote as follows in the preface of a collection of hymns made by him sixty years ago: "The editor cannot close these prefatory remarks without adverting to the pleasing demonstration which such a collection as this exhibits, of the essential and indestructible unity of the Church of Christ, and of the unison of sentiment which, notwithstanding our unhappy ecclesiastical differences, characterises the *devotional creed* of all denominations 'holding THE HEAD.' It has been said that Ridley and Hooper, who quarrelled about vestments, agreed at the stake. We live in happier times, when Protestant Christians, who differ about more important matters, can still agree in their hymns of prayer and songs of praise. The productions of Bishops Ken and Heber, of Wesley and Toplady, of Doddridge and Hart, Cowper and Newton, Fawcett and Beddome—Episcopal clergymen, Moravians, Wesleyan Methodists, Independents, and Baptists—combining in this metrical service, prove that 'by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body,' and that there actually exists throughout that body 'a communion of saints.'"

## INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

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**SECRET FAULTS.**—One day a boat-builder, busy at his work, lost his hammer. Nowhere could he find it. He soon afterwards finished the boat, and felt convinced that he had left his hammer inside its bottom. But he did not trouble to undo that part of his work. The fisherman made many voyages in the boat, never dreaming of danger, but one day his wife watched in vain for his return, for the noise of the water had always prevented his hearing the noise of the hammer as the boat rocked on the deep. But when the tide cast the boat on shore it was found that by its constant friction the hammer had worn a hole in the bottom. The sea found an entrance into the little vessel, and death carried off the fisherman.

**THE WORK OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY.**—Through the agency of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Bible in the German language has had a circulation of upwards of seventeen million copies. The same society secured a circulation of twelve million copies of the Bible in French; over five million copies in Chinese; over five millions in Russian; over three-and-a-half millions in Italian; nearly three-and-a-half millions in Swedish; nearly three millions in Danish; and over two millions in the Dutch language. Nearly 400,000 copies have been issued in Arabic, over a million and a half have come forth in Bengali, over three-quarters of a million in Czech, about a million-and-a-quarter in Hebrew, over a million in Magyar, over 300,000 in Lettish, over 560,000 in Malagasi, over 616,000 in Malayalam, 600,000 in Marathi, and over a million in Telugu. At the beginning of this century, the Bible was only accessible to one-fifth of the world's population, while now it may be read by nine-tenths of the people of the globe. There are now more than 200 million copies of the Bible in circulation in 330 different languages.

**THE HEAVENLY CALLING.**—It is the eternal world, where God is seen face to face, whose atmosphere is God's outstreaming glory, whence the Son of God came when He laid aside the glory which He had before the founding of the world, and whither He returned after He had completed the purification of our sins on the cross. There our life is hid with Christ in God; there is our spirit's home. Every presentation of Christianity, however dazzling, which bears an earthly character, does not correspond to its nature.

**HIGHER CRITICISM, SO-CALLED** —“If any one can show from the voluminous writings of Higher Criticism the least manifestation of concern for the salvation of souls, or the attempt to convince men of their sins and their need; or the setting forth of the blood of Christ as the price paid for redemption; or the necessity of new birth by the Holy Spirit; or advice to the Christian how to live; or a word of comfort to the bereaved, or of hope to the sorrowing; or assurance of eternal life, and a blessed resurrection, and a glorious immortality to the dying—he is entitled to a good reward.”

**ECCENTRICITY.**—As Keith Falconer said, “We must not fear to be eccentric, for eccentricity is being out of centre as to the world, that we may be adjusted to another centre, of which the world knows nothing.”

**ALL REPOSE** for our hearts is found in Christ. Are you tired of the world, weary of the desert of sin, of strife? Well then, look to Christ, where only is rest, perfect rest for both conscience and heart.

## 180 INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

TRUTHFULNESS. — We find whole systems of casuistry developed whose aim seems to be to go as near the edge of untruthfulness as possible, if not beyond it, in religion. But the New Testament sweeps the entire idea of the *pious fraud* away with this short thunder-peal, "Their doom is just." It will hear of no holiness that leaves out truthfulness; no word, no deed, no habit that, even with the purest purpose, belies the God of reality and veracity.—*H. C. G. Moule.*

SOCIALISM that comes from above made the believer say after Pentecost, "Naught that I have is my own." Socialism that comes from beneath causes a man to say to his neighbour, "Naught that thou hast is thine own." A vast difference.

THE PASSOVER was the memorial of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, but the Lord's Supper not only commemorates a great deliverance, but is a memorial of the love of our Deliverer. "This do in remembrance of Me" surely indicates that it should be done; but while these words supply a motive, they do not establish an ordinance.

IN ROMANS we are looked at not as risen with Christ, but justified, and Christ our life, as men living in natural life down here, only Christ our life in it—in Him before God, not in the flesh. For faith the flesh is gone in death, and Christ is come in as life. The Christian is always looked at as born again, forgiven and sealed. Only those who are such are really Christians. To grow in the knowledge of Christ is their life and their privilege. To make everything of Him and nothing of ourselves is the secret both of happiness and of progress.

SATAN's object with the Christian is that he should be as little of a Christian as possible.

VERBAL INSPIRATION.—We are only sure of the truth when we retain the very language in which God has revealed it.

WHEN the Apostles' fragile bark struggled with the billows dark,  
On the stormy Galilee, Thou did'st walk upon the sea!  
And when they beheld Thy form, safe they glided through the storm;  
So when we behold Thy face, glory then shall crown Thy grace!

THE BREASTPLATE OF THE HIGH PRIEST.—The order of the names thereon was according to *divine sovereignty*; the chains, rings, and ouches being of gold shows that the very binding of these names over the heart of the High Priest was according to *divine righteousness*, and so the *divine security* of the believer is on the ground of God's claims being fully met by the work of His Son, the heavenly One, typified in the lace of blue.

A MURDERER sat in his cell. "You are condemned to die," said a visitor,— "how can you stand before God with all your unforgiven sins on your soul?" "That's my business," said he; "I want no further conversation with you." A timid, delicate Christian woman longed to speak with him, and, taking some flowers, she went. "Here's a lady wishes to see you," said the jailor. Her courage and voice entirely failed. Not a word could she utter, but, extending the bouquet to the hard-visaged man, she burst into tears. This tapped a long-buried flood of memories of a Christian mother who had wept over him at parting. He cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" God heard the cry, and he received forgiveness and peace. Human sympathy, by the grace of God, touched his heart, and he was led like a little child to Christ.

## IMPULSE.

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AND here a word on what is called "impulse," in passing. I have no love for the word, but rather the contrary ; but I am not frightened by a word either.

If by impulse be meant the real present acting of the Holy Ghost leading saints to speak, and guiding them in speaking, it is surely the only thing of any value or power. If they are not so led by the Holy Ghost, they must be led by something else, which will not be, to say the least, the present acting of the Holy Ghost ; and, therefore, if even very good things be said, it will not be power, for in every sense power belongs to God. We have already seen that organic utterance (if there be any gift which is simply such, *i.e.*, the use of the creature without his mind) is the lowest kind, and the Corinthians are treated as children in understanding for thinking much of it. We have seen real, proper gift identified, in the case of Timothy, with the diligent use of means. And I add here, that the mind using truth, and the Holy Ghost using the mind, are two different things ; for *God is in ONE of them*, but the Holy Ghost's using the mind is gift, properly and truly gift, and stated by the apostle to be the superior kind of gift. Having already spoken of this, I cannot be charged with any wild idea of impulse ; but I do say that the acting of the Holy Ghost in, and by, man, in a member of the body (which is what the apostle calls gift), is what we are to look for by faith, and is the only thing of any real value or power. I admit that the Holy Ghost can, in another's mind, use what is not such. The testimony of Christ printed on a playbill for an oratorio may be used by the Holy Ghost in the reader's mind for conversion ; and the mind's statement of the truth may be used in another's soul by the Holy Ghost for blessing ; but it is not what we are to look for. It is not power in service.—"*On the Spirit's Action in Gift*," June, 1863.

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## EPISTLE OF JUDE.—CHRIST'S LORDSHIP.

THIS is a very terse, but complete and concentrated piece of writing. It is the most condensed prophetic word we have; and here I may remark how fine and fearless the remarks are. The Lord Jesus in Matt. xiii. anticipates the corruption of Christendom in His parables of the mustard seed and leaven. This gives a general notice that e'er the church should be translated corruption would set in. We have the same thought in the story of the unmerciful servant (Matt. xxiv.); in the marriage supper of Matt. xxv. These are all undefined notices of what the apostles specify. In the two epistles of Timothy, the Spirit distinguishes between the *latter* and *last* days. When we come to the prophetical connections in the epistles, we get the general thoughts particularised and analysed.

John speaks openly of the anti-Christ; Peter of mockers and scoffers; Jude gives a complete sketch of the corruptions of Christendom. He concentrates our thoughts on this point—puts nothing else before our eyes. These perfect oracles bespeak their divine original; and it is very desirable to introduce the soul to the moral glories of God's holy word in an age like the present, when slanders are heaped on it, no less than when Jude penned his message. The more our spirits take shelter in the word, the more we shall be able, with Him who sitteth in the heavens, to laugh at the scorers and have them in derision. He who is seated in the sanctuary of the word can laugh at the uncircumcised Philistine.

Jude lies next in order to the Revelation, and ranks next to it as a prophetic writing. When Jude took up his pen to write, as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, his desire was, doubtless, to talk of God and the common salvation, but he was moved to talk of saints (ver. 3), when he looked at the budding corruptions. Yes, he was constrained to talk of them. It was, indeed, inferior work; but we sometimes find in

## EPISTLE OF JUDE.—CHRIST'S LORDSHIP. 183

the church we must come to questions of discipline, and we find it a descent. We would choose rather to talk of God and salvation. However, Jude talks of that which, though distasteful, was needful. There are different services in God's house. There is a difference between doctrine and discipline. It is pleasanter to talk of the former, but we must sometimes descend to the latter. The Holy Ghost does it. Think of God coming down to expose the dirty corners of His habitation, that the rubbish may be swept out, and leaving His own happy place to do the needed work (ver. 3).

Well, we are desired to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, the holy ones. Men have crept in who deny not the *word*, not the *blood*, but the *Lordship* of Christ. This is commonly called Antinomianism, *i. e.*, holding the doctrines of grace with moral relaxation; not denying the blood, but the Lordship. The Spirit defines it better than we do. He calls it "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness."

There are evil prophets here, as in the cases of the 5th, 6th, and 7th verses. These are no novelty in earth's history. It was the same in the days of Noah. It is a nuisance, but no novelty. The Spirit tells of a generation saved out of Egypt, but destroyed in the wilderness. Angels once in heaven are now reserved in chains awaiting judgment. Sodom and Gomorrah suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Surely 'tis no novelty—no, not even in heaven—this evil of corruption. In the antediluvian world, post-diluvian, and in Christendom, each kept a little while in God's hand, but corrupted at once on getting into man's hand; and that judgment must follow this last, even as the others, is the point the Spirit keeps at continually. He tells of corruption, but shows that God cannot be indifferent to it. Did the angels rebel? Judgment followed. Was the antediluvian world apostate? Judgment followed. Consider these things, and you must see

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that judgment must attach to corrupt Christendom as surely as it overtook these examples.

The Apocalypse is the unfolding of the judgment awaiting it, falling from the righteous hand of God on its ripened iniquity (ver. 8). When the land gets into moral relaxation it has taken the reins out of God's hand, and undertaken to manage itself, saying, "Our tongue is our own; who is Lord over us?" This is the licentiousness of the carnal mind, the enemy of the Cross of Christ.

The Spirit strikingly brings forth Michael the archangel as an example of one who would not speak evil of dignities. There is a difference between filthy dreamers and that vile culprit the devil, and yet even to him Michael brought no railing accusation. Now, these filthy dreamers don't deny grace, but they turn it into lasciviousness. They do not and cannot understand grace divinely, but in word they are not departing from the gospel. I mean they are neither Galatian (which is going back to ordinances) nor Judaizing in their tendencies, but they cast off restraint, saying, "Our tongue is our own; who is Lord over us?" They do not deny Christ, but they deny His Lordship. You find their description in Timothy: "Heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures." "Woe unto them," saith the Spirit (ver. 11).

Core, Balaam, and Cain represent apostate Christendom. Cain is the blood-shedder; Balaam loved the wages of iniquity; Core is the scoffer. Cain is the persecutor; Balaam the cold, calculating world-lover, who like Esau would sell a permanent blessing for a mess of pottage; Core finding his pleasure in reviling Jesus, ignoring God's appointed way, and choosing his own.

If the Spirit were writing now, could He do it more accurately? All the corruption is anticipated ("I knew thou would'st deal very treacherously"). Yea! anti-Christ was marked out from Nimrod's day to Herod's. Ah, yes. If Christ had His types from the beginning, so had anti-Christ. Anti-Christ is the true



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Core. Not like Cain, the man of blood, but the man "as God (2 Thess. ii. 4) sits in the temple of God." Where is that temple, beloved? Consider. It is not yet a building of brick and mortar, remember. God says it is not. So where is it? He tells us by His Son and His apostles. Search it out.

The Apocalypse opens out this closing form of apostacy speaking of the beast. Peter and Jude speak of mockers, scoffers—the Revelation to John specifies the beast, and describes his acts and character, shewing the world wondering after him, until he falls by the sword of the Rider upon the white horse.

Let us go on now to the 12th and 13th verses. The Spirit ranges heaven and earth and sea to find comparisons for the apostacy, and in each He combines that which is of God with that which is of man. There, for example, is a cloud, intended of God for man's blessing, but there is no water in it. There is the feast of charity, that is of God; but there is a spot in it which is of man. There is a tree, meant of God to afford comfort and shelter, sometimes fruit, but it is without fruit. It is described as "twice dead" (look to Revelation, where two deaths are mentioned). Then there are waves of the sea, meant of God for refreshing and strengthening, but these are foaming out their own shame. Then there are the stars, set by God for guidance, but these are wandering stars, leading astray. Eloquent figures; awful facts. There is good and evil in each: a spot in the feast; no fruit on the tree; no water in the cloud; and all this is no novelty. No, it was all looked at from the outset, was to be expected, was no novelty, was prophesied by Enoch so early as the seventh from Adam (ver. 14). He spake of the end from the beginning. It was all under God's eye. Isn't that a comfort to His people? Doesn't it sustain their souls to find their every condition anticipated? God knows our history and our end, and if He has to suffer our manners forty years in the wilderness, He will have

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His kingdom at the end, and we shall share it, and find it was worth waiting for. We may have our forty years' trials. God knows it, and He knows that it ends in His kingdom and ours. He will preserve us to that inheritance. He has it *reserved* for us, and He *keeps* us for it, as Peter so consolingly tells us.

Jude now turns to happier themes, and says (as it were), "Do not let this consolation fail you." God knew it all long ago (ver. 17). If you know the oracles of God, you can never be perplexed; troubled you may be, but never confounded. Sadness and sorrow may overtake you, but surprise never. Our precious Jesus met with such moments, and moments of wondering admiration, but He never was perplexed; neither need you be. When the centurion came with his confession, Jesus said: "I have not found so great faith; no, not in Israel." Was this too weighty for Jesus? Your spirit may be held in admiring wonder, but never confounded. Remember, you are told there shall be mockers, who by walking in their own ungodly lusts have gone beyond the bounds of the church of God. They have left it by becoming sensual. If we are carnal, our communion with God is gone—gone with God, and also gone with each other.

The moment I indulge a carnal thought I have lost communion. I may recover myself immediately (glory be to the blood), but sensuality puts me outside the circle of the church, where Jesus is Centre. To keep yourselves in—not your faith merely—but in your most holy faith (ver. 20); not your orthodox creed, but the holiness of it; "looking for the mercy." Yes, it is a great mercy to be kept in the midst of such horrid scenes. Elsewhere the Spirit says "grace and peace." Here He adds mercy, because of the state of Christendom.

As to the ensnared ones (ver. 22), have compassion on them "as poor foolish children." As to the ensnarers, "save with fear; pull them out of the fire" (ver. 23), as the angel entered into Sodom and laid hold on Lot.

The epistle ends with the doxology. Thus it is the Spirit is constrained to take up this subject of corruption ; to look at the filth collected by these dreamers, and clear out, when He would rather talk of heaven, and the common salvation, and coming glory. You have clearly seen that corruption is no new thing. Nor is its judgment. When the Spirit has shown you this, and the various forms corruption assumes, He inculcates holiness, desires you to be in conscious joy, looking for the mercy to guide through such trying, trying scenes.

May God give us this conscious joy, and keep us looking and watching for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Amen, amen, and amen.

J. E. B.

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### THE LORD JESUS IN COMPANY WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

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WE are aware by how many different ways our fellow-disciples try us and grieve us ; and, no doubt, we do them. We see, or fancy we see, some bad quality in them, and find it hard to bear it, or to go on in further company with them. It has occurred to me that we may observe that just in these same ways the mind and heart of Jesus were tried and grieved by His disciples in the days of His flesh ; and yet He went on with them, we know, as I need not add, "Not overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good"—the evil that was in *them*, with the good that was in *Himself*. I would mention some of these wrong things in them that must have grieved Him, and the influence of which, upon our own thoughts and feelings towards others, we well understand and continually experience.

*Vanity* in another tries us—an air of self-satisfaction, or the esteeming of ourselves, and the putting of ourselves forth to admiration. The Lord was tried by this spirit in His disciples. The mother betrayed it,

and His kinsfolk (John ii. vii.). Peter was thus self-confident when he said, though all should be offended yet he would not ; and all of them were guilty of this when they contended who should be the greatest, and also when they forbade those who followed not with themselves.

*Ill-temper* is a very fretful thing ; it so interferes with us. Martha tried the Lord with it when she complained to Him of her sister ; and so did the apostles when they urged Him to send away the multitude, just because their privacy and repast had been intruded upon (Mark vi.).

Any show of a *covetous*, grudging spirit is very hateful to us. Jesus must have discerned this (and therefore have had to bear with it) on such occasions as Matt. xiv. 17 ; xv. 33.

*Unkindness*, whether towards ourselves or to others, is very irritating. Peter's enquiry in Matt. xviii. 21 covered, I believe, what the Lord must have seen to be the workings of an unkind and malevolent temper ; as also we see it in Matt. xv. 23.

*Indifference to others*, and carefulness about himself, is very vexing to us also—it is so selfish and cold-hearted. Jesus was tried by enough of it in His disciples. He asked them to watch with Him, but He found them sleeping ; He spake of His death, but they were thinking of their place and honours in the kingdom ; He spake of leaving them, but none of them asked, "Whither goest Thou?" and in the ship it was of their *own* safety they thought. These were instances of cold indifference.

*Ignorance* is apt to try us, and make us impatient. Whoever found more of it in those He was continually teaching than the Lord? Some of the plainest lessons they had not learned ; and when He spake *spiritually* or mystically to them, they listened to Him as *in the letter*—they were asking explications of the simplest parables.

*Unspirituality of mind* in fellow-disciples is a trial

to us. How much of this amongst His people was the Lord continually suffering! and He was always light in discovering it. We often, through vanity or self-esteem, mistake mere nonconformity with ourselves for it.

These are among the ways in which the disciples must have tried the mind of their Divine Master; and these are some of the tempers and characteristics which to this hour try and fret us in our brethren. It may be thought that the instances here adduced are but faint and minute expressions of these different wrong tempers. That may be. But we must remember how pure and perfect was the mind of Jesus, and then we shall know that though the instance was faint, and the occasion a small one, *yet His finer sensibility gave it more than the importance of the greatest occasion.*

And comforting, let me say, it is to see the Lord going before us in such trials as these. But if He have gone before us in the *trials themselves*, He has also left us an example of a *series of victories* over them, and in these victories He has told us to follow His steps; for not only in His ways with His *adversaries*, but in His ways with His *disciples*, is He our pattern. If, in not answering reviling with reviling, nor wrongs with threatenings, He is an example to us, so also in His *going on* still with His disciples, in spite of naughty outbreaks and many shortcomings among them. For if we have returned to Him as "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls," in *all* things as the One who is a pattern to us—how we should carry ourselves to all, adversaries or brethren (1 Peter ii. 21-25)! And He, as I said, was never overcome of evil that was in another, but ever overcame it by the good that was in Himself (Rom. xii. 21).

Thus did He suffer from His disciples, and thus did He conquer. How ready are our selfish hearts to plead our right to part company, if another do not please us. But this was not Jesus. The pride, the

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indifference, the ill-temper, and the low, unspiritual mind which the disciples were continually betraying, did not tempt Him to take distance from them. For at the end of their walk together, He is *nearer to them than ever* (John xiv., xvi). He did not *part company* with them because they gave Him so much exercise of heart, and were continually drawing upon Him. He warned and instructed them; He rebuked and condemned them; but never gave them up. Blessed, perfect Master! Lover of our souls at all cost! (1 John ii. 6).  
J. G. B.

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"THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS SHALL COME."—*Haggai* ii. 7.

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DESIRE of nations *then*, but our Desire *e'en now*;  
We wait Thy glory, blessed Lord, Centre of glory Thou!  
The Bride can ne'er her "sweet home" find  
Till earthly scenes are left behind!

Desire of nations, yes, but not such sweet desire  
As that with which our Bridegroom doth these hearts of  
ours inspire;  
The morning Star attracts our eyes  
E'er Israel's righteous Sun shall rise!

Desire of nations, ah!—we shall His glories view,  
The glory of the One they pierced, the Holy and the True!  
When we are with and like Him there  
His glories we shall see and share!

Desire of nations, true—but not till power hath wrought  
To cleanse the scene in righteousness that glory might be  
brought;  
Then shall the Bridegroom and the Bride  
Be seen together glorified!

Desire of nations, oh!—that He were this *e'en now*,  
Alas! the world refuses Him, still crowns with thorns His  
brow!  
Yet doth His grace abound and flow  
To all around, to all below!

## THE OPPORTUNITY IN TIMES OF FAILURE.

TIMES of general failure are anything but exhilarating. The current setting strongly along the down grade, true souls are apt to be disheartened. What can I do? it may be said. I have no eloquence to sway a multitude. I cannot by my utterances bow hearts like bulrushes before the wind. Must I go with the stream because I cannot avert it? or sit down with folded hands lamenting the decadence, and waiting for some general movement to oppose it? For that one might wait, and never witness it. No; there is a path for the godly and true-hearted in such circumstances. There is an opportunity; a grand one, indeed. Let them make use of it.

In the wilderness, under the shadow of Mount Sinai, the people who had so recently witnessed Jehovah's power against Egypt at the Red Sea, and had proved His care for them in the manna, and in the water from the smitten rock, that people had grievously dishonoured Him. A calf was made to worship as their god. To think of it! On all the gods of Egypt had the Lord so recently executed judgment. Did the sacred bull escape? Their God like to a creature, and that one of the lower animals! What folly can men fall into. The movement was a popular one, Aaron even being drawn into it, till Moses re-appeared, and the Levites at the lawgiver's command took God's side against the transgressors. But more. God dishonoured in the camp, Moses took the tent,\* we presume his own, and pitched it without the camp, far off from the camp, and called it the Tent (not Tabernacle) of meeting (Exod. xxxiii. 7). His act, and the significance of it, we can all understand. God the Holy One had been grossly insulted in the camp by the

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\* The reader will bear in mind that as yet *the* Tabernacle had not been reared up. Some, as the Revised Version, would understand this verse to describe Moses' general practice. The Targums of Onkelos, and that of Jerusalem, with the Septuagint and the Vulgate, support the thought of the Authorised Version.

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molten calf. How could He, therefore, remain in their midst without consuming them? Hence their ornaments the people must strip off. Turned to an unholy use, as the earrings had been, all their ornaments must now be put aside, and, it would seem, for ever, according to the original; "*from* Mount Horeb" being the language of the lawgiver, and not "*by* Mount Horeb," as the Authorised Version represents it (xxxiii. 6). Further, the presence of the Lord would be now outside the camp. How gracious was this! He did not forsake them; but He could not be in the midst of them. Moses understood that, so he pitched his tent far off from the camp, and called it the Tent of meeting.

Now came the opportunity. To have stemmed the tide in the camp, when the calf was produced by Aaron, would have been clearly impossible. The people, the mass were delighted with it, and forthwith Aaron proclaimed a festival in honour of it (xxxii. 4-6). Aaron made the calf. The people hailed it as their god. But then came the opportunity for the true-hearted to show themselves. And they took it. For the Tent of meeting now pitched outside the camp, and far from it, every one who sought the Lord went out to it. God, through Moses, gave them the opportunity. They used it. Every one that sought the Lord, we read (xxxiii. 7). This was not a popular movement. The mass remained in the camp. It was not what might even be called a minority movement. It was an individual movement. Singly, doubtless, at first, the exodus began. Never did it attain to large dimensions. Had any waited for that, they would have waited in vain. In units, or perhaps in twos and threes, they went out. Their friends might talk against them. Their acquaintances might ridicule them. What singular people! Peculiar indeed! Thinking themselves better than others! These and kindred observations they might hear as they wended their way. But nothing



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moved them ; neither frowns, nor scoffs, nor jeers, nor taunts. One object animated all of them : they sought the Lord. He was not in the camp. They must go out to the place where His presence could be found. His presence they desired. With nothing short of being where that was could they be content.

Were those left in the camp professedly hostile to God and to Moses? No. They looked after Moses from their tent doors, as they saw him go out to the Tent of meeting. They bowed, too, at their several tent doors when they saw the cloudy pillar descend, and talk with Moses outside the camp (8-10). The cloud of glory might well make all bow. By-and-by, at the presence of the glory of the Lord, men will bow. None of these, however, stirred one step to be where God's presence was manifested ; none of them moved a yard to seek the Lord. His presence was not desired. Him they did not seek.

Who had the divine approval that day? A question easy enough to answer.

Who have the approval of posterity? We all know. Those who stopped not for some one to lead them ; who waited not till the movement should become general and popular. For this, we have remarked, they would have waited, as we see, in vain. But they cared not for jeers or unkind remarks of their fellows, because they feared and sought the Lord. As individuals they went out. Some had to traverse greater distances than others. Observation surely they did not seek, neither did they shun it. In daylight, before all, they went forth, because they sought the Lord. Faithfulness to Him impelled them ; faithfulness, though it might cost them something. They discerned that that was their opportunity ; they used it. Moses did not suggest it to them. Aaron, of course, did not advise them. There are, however, spiritual instincts, and those individuals followed them.

Times of failure appear in every dispensation. Opportunities for faithfulness will never, therefore, be

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wanting. Shall we have the courage and the readiness to avail ourselves of them? This is the question.

In the closing days of the apostle Paul's ministry, failure was manifesting itself. Timothy, who would survive him, was to learn how to conduct himself. A flowing tide of victory, to be borne on the crest of the wave to the shore, was not to be expected. Evil was increasing, coldness was spreading, unsound teaching was boldly rearing its head. Hymenæus and Philetus were teaching that the resurrection was past; spiritualising, it would seem, that important doctrine. Concerning the truth they had erred, and some listening to them had been upset as to their faith. The power of evil was present, and appeared to be gaining sway.

Yet faithfulness was to be manifested, and encouragement is given. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." Their fellows might reproach those desiring to be faithful, and vilify them before others—a common plan of the enemy—but "the Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. ii. 19). How cheering! how stimulating! Then the path for such is plain: "Let everyone that nameth the Name of the Lord" (not Christ) "depart from unrighteousness."

But how? it might be asked. What can I do?—an individual in a crowd—a unit in a company! Clear and distinct is the answer: "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour"—an illustration this is from common life, so like the Master in His way of teaching. Now comes the word of guidance: "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. ii. 20, 21). If a man, or rather any one, writes the apostle. Again, individual faithfulness is inculcated. One may not be able to divert the current of things. Every one has not commanding genius, or the eloquence of an Apollos or a Chrysostom; but every

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one can be faithful. 'Tis true, the purging oneself as directed may bring obloquy on one's head. Be it so ; but let us remember who is the Master whose Name we bear, and to whom we are really accountable. What ? stand alone ? some may say. Be pointed at as singular ? Be defamed ? Be faithful, is the Master's word ; and He would encourage His servants in that. The faithful ones He can use, and surely He will. And these will have true influence, who are used of Him. Nor need they fear being alone on earth, though for a time they may be in that condition *locally*. "With them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" the Master will number them, and put honour on them by using them.

But can it be that Christians may have to tread a path like this in the midst of Christians ? Yes ; it may be so. Paul foresaw the possibility of it. Paul warned Timothy as to it. Paul ministered encouragement in connection with it. To be used of the Master ! What an honour ! How will that be regarded in the future ? An opportunity indeed ! May we know how to avail ourselves of it.

Then if the apostle would encourage saints to be faithful, whatever the trials incident may be, how much more would the Master. The apostle holds out encouragement as to the *present* ; the Lord points the people on to the *future*. A vessel unto honour, fit for present use, writes Paul. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me ; and where I am, there shall also My servant be : if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (John xii. 26), said the Lord.

When He was on earth, people, women ministered to Him of their substance (Luke viii. 2, 3). He would soon leave earth. Such ministry would therefore necessarily cease, but service to Him would be within the reach of all. Individual, however, it might be, and His words plainly intimate that. The servant might find himself doing it somewhat without the companionship of others. That, however, was not to

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damp his energies, or to check his ardour. "If any man serve Me, where I am there shall also My servant be." What favour!—the servant with the Master, and that on high! Further, such an one would be honoured by the Father. He will show His appreciation of anyone now serving His Son by following Him. But again, we would remark, it is "*If any* man," &c.—no thought of a popular movement, or the going forward with a crowd. Are we content to go forth, like those who went outside the camp, to follow the Lord for a little time on earth? What inducements are held out! But, oh! how dull are we surely in heeding them; how slow, how fearful often, is it not the case, in profiting by them!

We have pointed out that we are not to wait for a multitude, nor halt for a leader, but just to do what we can, as we can, and when we can. Times do not generally get better, but the reverse. How Israel's history illustrates this; yet illustrating it tells us also of the faithful service and fearless conduct of some in times of national declension. Nothing of that was forgotten. The record is on high, and the names of just a few are embalmed in the New Testament as encouragement for us that individual faithfulness will be remembered, and meet with its meed of reward. "Time would fail me," we read, "to tell of Gedeon, of Barak, of Samson, of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets" (Heb. xi. 32). Forward in their service each of these went, and God was with them in it, and this was written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are come (1 Cor. x. 11).

To serve, to follow, this is put before us. "If any man" is the word. But how to serve? That is left undefined. The circumstances of those just named were different, yet each found his path in his day. Ours, too, may be different, but let each go forward as opportunity arises: now to be a vessel unto honour; if faithful, by and by to be with the Master; and, oh how wonderful, if faithful here, to be honoured of His Father.

C. E. S.

## “HE WILL GIVE GRACE AND GLORY.”

THE elders were not always a source of comfort to God's ancient people, or safe to follow in apostolic times. We speak now of those really saved, indwelt of the Spirit, and used of Him to care for those who were endangered by vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, teaching things which they ought not, &c. The apostles and prophets did not omit to own at critical times they were men of like passions—absence of pretension was marked, yet no lowering of the authority of God's Word addressed to His creatures by men, owing to His grace. If He please to speak personally, Himself—the holy, harmless, undefiled—to creatures in grace, it is for them to hear and obey the voice of the Son of God and live. If He speak by unlettered men as Peter and John, it is still for those who hear to heed what He in grace addresses, for no Word of His will ever fall to the ground, however failing, before or afterwards, the instruments He uses may appear to have been. The admission of Paul and Barnabas, as well as that which is made mention of Elias, does not weaken in the least that the former were truly by God's will apostles, and Elias a prophet of His, yet they had not permission to attract attention to themselves, because they were allowed to do such marvellous works of healing, &c.

This visit in grace was to notify them that the vanities Gentiles went on with were to be turned from; and not only so, but that God, who made heaven, earth, the sea, and all things that are therein—who had so recently bestowed soundness upon a born cripple in their midst—was visiting and speaking in grace, offering repentance to those who had got so far away that they were without God in the world—religious, it is true, worshipping the host of heaven, but religion without God, or Christ, or Holy Spirit, of what avail but to deceive, and, as Scripture expresses,

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vanity. But mark the terms of the apostle's preaching: "That ye" (men of Lystra, Gentiles, all nations) "should turn from these vanities *unto the living God*, . . . who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." His language is easy to be entreated. When in grace He speaks, no other voice would be welcome, yet how rarely obeyed. In Thessalonica we get: "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; . . . and ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. . . . How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from among the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

An early attempt to subvert souls was made, which led to an inspired history being penned, and still preserved for our edification, admonition, and consolation, open to all to consult, remember, mark, and obey (see Acts xv.).

During the progress of God's work, and the carrying of His Word, the ways of men and kings are recorded. Eli had heard heavy tidings in his day; and if they of his house are found failing, God still raises up whom He wills, and Samuel comes into prominence—that which was too much for aged Eli and the wife of Phinehas, his son. Their lament was for the ark of God which was taken, hearing of which both passed away. But He will not give His glory to another. Jehovah cares for His own glory. Israel failed; Ichabod was the last cry of Phinehas' wife. Glory had departed from Israel; but the possession of the ark of God was no comfort to Israel's foes and conquerors, the Philistines, brought in as it was into the house of Dagon; yet Dagon must fall again and again before the ark of the Lord. The failure of His people, how dishonouring to Him and calamitous to others. Yet He cares for His glory, and would con-

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cern His people with their departure, stirring them to return, heart return, unto the Lord, putting away strange gods—“Prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only : and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” When Samuel was old, he made his sons judges over Israel. His sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, “Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways : now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.” Samuel is grieved. He takes it to the Lord, with the result of showing to us what was involved in such a request. Yet it was allowed—not that He could be pleased at being ruled out—and His people, who had suffered so much, would still adopt the ways of the nations who knew not God. “Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee : for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken Me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now, therefore, hearken unto their voice : howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.” History records the result of such a choice. Nevertheless in grace His Anointed is to be placed with sceptre of righteousness, and His throne is to abide for ever and ever.

Elders in Israel in the days of Samuel but speak that which the people desire. In Christianity much that is similar is brought before us, but fulfilment of promise in raising up a Prophet recognised by few—the woman of Sychar and the man that was born blind, perceived that He was a Prophet. Samuel was rejected, as also the blessed Lord crucified. The people, through the elders, ask a king, not that they

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will have Jehovah to reign over them, and heaven must receive Him until the times of restitution of all things. All His prophets had spoken of His suffering, as well as God having spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets that heaven must receive Him before times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord. Moses had foretold the days, making mention to the fathers—"A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever He shall say unto you," &c. The children of the prophets are appealed to first: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God having raised up His Son (servant) Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Peter was speaking to the people, when interruption takes place by priests, captain of the temple, and Sadducees coming upon them. Our blessed God has none of whom to ask leave to address His Word, when He has been forgotten, and His Word made of none effect by tradition. He speaks here in grace through whom He chose, and as frequently as He is pleased, using forbearance in keeping with His blessed character of merciful pardoning, though ever sin-hating, for He is holy. Yet we find no full, generous heart turning to the living and true God. Even those so privileged were found in hostile array against His faithful witnesses. They summon to their council Peter and John, who are found witnessing against the rulers of the people and elders of Israel, for they had crucified Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom God raised from the dead.

Is the reader indignant at such doings from those who had the oracles of God, to whom were the covenants of promise, of whom was Christ and salvation? Oh! sad recompense for such grace and love, to return



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hate, and show but hardening of heart and stiffening of neck. But let writer and reader remember that His rejection and crucifixion was not the clamour of a class, of a few mistaken, zealous men. For see, something has been written, and more, the writing stands against so many now, for all have not been turned from their wickedness. The servant of God asked, and the servant of God asks still, “Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ.” For of a truth, against Thy holy Servant, Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together. Ah! no, this is no section of God’s creatures in revolt. Here is a universalism appalling to read. Every heart and every hand against the Lord, against His Christ—no voice, no vote, no pitying eye. Is there anywhere a parallel in suffering or in sorrow like His, as He allowed man to show his malice and his hate, which He would overcome by good, with those offers of repentance to guilty, lost, ruined sinners? If One died for all, then were all dead, is another side of the marvellous picture. Man, who was away from God, under Satan, reconciled to God. It is all out and open what Satan was doing with man away from God; now it is all out and open what God was doing for man when he was a sinner. God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. All are not reconciled. Our part is to sound again and again the truth—Christ has died. God’s throne required it. Man’s sin could alone be met by such sacrifice: “Without the shedding of blood, no remission.” One Mediator—the Man. He has a Name; do any enquire for it?—CHRIST JESUS, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Testimony is, and has been, rendered to Him. What have you done with the testimony

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rendered, in humble retirement, it may be, from Christian parents of simple habits, not numbered with the worldly, or by the wayside, given by some of whom He is not ashamed? What of those beseechings, as though God did it Himself, coupled with praying you in Christ's stead, "Be ye reconciled to God?"

Elders in the days of Samuel and in the days of Peter were far away. Paul testified to those of Ephesus that they should speak perverse things. Failures of elders and younger are told; but there is One who cannot fail us, and who would speak to us how to do under so much that is contrary to Him. Elders have their word in 1 Pet. v. 1-4, and we have His Word as to them (Heb. xiii. 7, 17). Accounts have to be given in, and after faithful ministry of the Word by those who watch for souls, it should be with joy, not grief.

We need stirring up at such a time, for it is God's flock that is neglected and gets scattered. Insubjection here means dishonour and disorder. Elders, hear from Him, "Feed the flock of God which is among you." "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you. If an interval comes of failure on the part of those He would in grace use in an orderly, regular way, we are privileged to hear, "I commend you to God and the Word of His grace."

It were blasphemy to state that "the voice of the people is the voice of God" in such a day. To make such bold statement is to assert that they are godly, and have taken forth the precious from the vile, and are as His mouth; that He is taking out a people for His Name, visiting us Gentiles for such a gracious purpose, is most blessed to know. That the heathen

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rage and people imagine vain things is painfully true now ; and that Christ is not welcome at home or abroad is too forcible to be disputed. Still, the servant of the Lord has but One to serve, and to commend Him must needs be free from strife as far as his teachings are concerned, gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, &c. ; though striving against sin, resisting unto blood if need be, and not forgetful of the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children : " My son, despise not thou the chastenings of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him : for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth ! " *He receiveth !* W. B.

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 LETTER OF INTEREST.
 

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BOX 830, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA,  
APRIL 27, 1896.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have been absent in Mexico for a month, and found your kind letter, with its enclosed token of fellowship in the work of the Lord, awaiting me, for which I thank you in His Name for the help thus given in making known the Gospel of our Lord Jesus in the needy Spanish fields.

I have returned home more deeply impressed than ever with the importance of this work, and that the great need of Mexico is a distinct testimony to the Gospel. So many whose sincerity one does not doubt seem neither to have fully believed man's ruin and the perfection of God's remedy, and that leaves even true converts unestablished, and without any power to get on in the things of God. Most of the denominational workers are " Freemasons," and at a conference held in Toluca some months ago with Mr. D. L. Moody, only four or five brought their Bibles, and the speakers had *written essays*.

But I forbear to tell of the sad things I learned of,

and the widespread need which greeted one everywhere was appalling. Almost in every place tracts were received with eagerness, although in some parts there is a great deal of fanaticism. And among the Indians in the "hot country" there is a good deal of jealousy of any interference with their hereditary rights or religion, so that it would need caution to work among them ; but some parts are more accessible than others. Many places a tract can go where a preacher could not venture. But there is a vast open door, and I may say also, an awful indifference to sin and eternity—the natural fruit of Romanism, with its price put on everything.

We were in the city of Mexico during "Semana Santa" (Holy Week). There was not much that was holy about it, unless the throngs going to the churches dressed in their most fashionable attire was holiness. Quantities of grotesque figures, both male and female, in ancient and modern costumes, and of all sizes, were sold in the streets. These represented Judas Iscariot (?), and the largest of them were hung up on Saturday at the crossing of some of the streets, and at 10 a.m., when the bells tolled the signal, they were exploded by means of crackers, with which they were filled.

There were other follies too numerous to mention. I asked some if the sin of Judas was not that he loved money more than Christ, and if there were not plenty who made a trade of religion in Mexico who were just like him. None of those I spoke to denied it, well knowing that it was the character of the priests universally. They are much feared in Mexico still, as they have a good deal of power still, and their intrigues weaken the so-called Liberal Government.

Their crimes are well-known, and cruelties and hard-heartedness. I brought with me two of their minor instruments of torture, called "la disciplina." They are made of links of copper wire, forming a sort of network about 3 inches wide and 6 or 8 long, but the wire so bent as to form a quantity of pointed projec-

tions. These are used in different ways: some are put round the arm of a woman, and the priest squeezes it to produce the amount of necessary pain to atone for the guilt upon them. Others are used by the women to beat themselves over their bare shoulders. Often this is done in a dark church on set occasions, when the priests augment their terror by imitating the shrieks of the souls in purgatory, with mock thunder and lightning. At Guanajuato, we learned of one poor woman who, having wounded herself severely with "la disciplina," the flies laid their eggs in the wounds. She went to the priest complaining of the pain, and was told she would go to hell if she cured it. She died in consequence, her flesh eaten by the maggots. Oh, how Satan has deluded those poor people. The country wants a Martin Luther to boldly denounce the crimes of the priests, and preach Christ crucified and risen to them; but these do not seem to be the days for such, though many are getting a little light, and we can pray God to raise up faithful witnesses. We heard of one place where our papers had been the only instrument in converting some and delivering them from Rome. This was a testimony unsought for, but it was cheering to know of it, in addition to much we have already learned; but wait for the day, both to manifest God's grace in using such feeble means, and one's own failures in the way of presenting the truth.

Whilst the poverty and distress about Zacatecas is heartrending, yet nearer and in the capital there has been great improvement in the condition of the "peons."

Bro. Groh remained at Orizaba, and is working in a part of the city where little or nothing has been done. He seems happy in the new field of work, and I trust God will keep and bless him. He spoke as if he might go on to Central America.

Another dear labourer leaves New Orleans for Honduras early in May, in connection with the Cen-

tral American Mission, with wife and two little girls. They will journey to an inland town, five or six days on mules from the coast. We have sent him, at his request, a good box of tracts, and shall keep up supplies as able. The dear brethren of that mission are sound in the gospel and all the leading truths of Scripture, and it is a comfort to think of their faithful and earnest work, which is making quite an impression on the country in a few years. Two sisters had gone also from San José, Costa Rica, to do what they could in a neighbouring town, where there was persecution for lack of men to go.

Since returning, I have been busy getting the printing work started again, to which I shall have largely to devote my attention, with the local work round Los Angeles, both because of the need of that kind of work, and also that I am not able to bear the changes incident to travelling; and I have suffered much on the journey, and returned home quite sick, but am slowly mending through the Lord's mercy.

This city has been given up to a carnival in imitation of the Spanish for several days of last week, ending with a bull-fight on Sunday! Hardly any seem to protest or keep apart from it, and it is hard to imagine a much worse state of things. A few companies of scattered "brethren" hold on to the truth in a measure, but this poor groaning scene, where sin and Satan have worked such ruin, is rapidly advancing to the end of its course. At least, one can hardly conceive of the indifference getting much worse, whilst the Holy Spirit is still here and the elect church.

But I must close, as it is late. With love to yourself, and all "ours" with you.—Affectionately in Christ,

ROBT. T. GRANT.

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"SEA," in symbolic language (book of Revelation, &c.), represents masses of men moving hither and thither, and not under the settled government of God.

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"THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY"—Our Lord gave a forecast of this all through the dispensation in His messages to the seven churches. What were the Nicolaitanes? People who assumed an ecclesiastical authority, and position, and title which the Spirit of God never gave. What was the synagogue of Satan? Those who said they were Jews, but were not, making a false profession in the midst of God's people. What was the doctrine of Balaam but that which corrupted the Church, as the counsel of Balaam about the Moabitish women corrupted Israel? What did our Lord mean by Jezebel at Thyatira? What but the mystery of iniquity?—Jezebel attired in those things that made her hateful in the sight of God, and yet ruling in the midst of His people. What were the results? Backsliding, even in Ephesus. "Thou hast left thy first love." What in other churches? Formalism: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." What else? Error, apostasy, Laodiceanism. You have the results of this secret working of iniquity side by side with the working of God's Spirit and truth. Ecclesiastical history shows this throughout the Christian era. John says there were already many antichrists. Where did they come from? "They went out from us." Paul says to the elders of Ephesus: I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. But where from? From amongst your own selves. The mystery of iniquity, the working of error, of lawlessness, is in the very midst of the people of God. In a very primary sense, as no other church can do, the Roman Church fulfils the "Mystery, Babylon" of Rev. xvii. But it would be very unfair to say that it is *only* the Church of Rome that is spoken of there. The apostle says (2 Thess. ii. 7), "The mystery of iniquity doth *already* work." But Popery did not commence until 400 years after. And to-day, it is not simply in the Church of Rome, though there in fearful fulness and unblushing effrontery. God help us to be faithful as well as loving! Ritualism is the working of iniquity and the mystery of lawlessness as well as Romanism. And it is flooding the Church of England, to the distress of the godly in her community. Not only so; but it is in Lutheranism. "The Church of Luther! Identify *it* with the mystery of iniquity!" Yes. Lutheranism can persecute truth as bitterly as Rome, and, by its doctrine of sacramental efficacy, corrupts the Word of God. You have it again in the Greek Church. It is unfair, then, to say that Romanism alone answers to the mystery of iniquity. It is in the front, and others bring up the rear; *they are all there*. Everything that sets aside the fitness and the all-sufficiency of Christ's work; everything that mixes virgins, saints, &c. with the mediation of the Lord Jesus; anything which takes honour to man that belongs to God only; anything which corrupts the Word of God and mixes up men's ideas with the teaching of the Holy Ghost—all this is the mystery of iniquity. You will find it in Nonconformist Churches, too. What are all your "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons," entertainments, and other expedients, but trying to rock sinners to sleep, who need rather to be shaken until they tremble, and flee from the wrath to come? What about your modern theology, theories and teachings wholly at variance with the gospel—the true, glorious gospel of God, in and through His dear Son? It is as truly the mystery of iniquity as Rome is. Yes, Nonconformity has it as well as Ecclesiasticism. You find it *everywhere*, working to corrupt, working to deceive!—*Gooch*.

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A LITTLE SICK GIRL when asked the secret of her happiness, said, "I am one of Christ's little lambs, and He has good pasture where I'm feeding; *that* is the secret of it."

SOMEONE HAS SAID—

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight ;  
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

*Answer* : But in the right his life can never be

Whose faith is wrong. This even fools may see !

THE GREAT reward of Christ-like labour is that it begets Christ-like love. When disciples' hands bring us the bread of life and our's dispense it to others, what ties of love, gratitude, mutual interest, and affection are woven by these mutual ministries ! Deal with every soul, however debased, as one who may yet wear Christ's glorious image. Who can picture the joy that awaits the parent and the labourer when, amongst the saved ones around the throne, they behold those of whose salvation they had here no certain knowledge ?

FAITH makes nothing of circumstances. It is not that difficulties are lessened, but that God fills the eye. When we are really in the path of faith we find that only faith can walk in it, but every difficulty becomes an occasion for the display of God's glory.

CHRIST in me involves this, that I must never let a bit of anything but Christ be seen.

SPECIAL JOY and abiding communion must not be confounded. The former is an occasional thing, the latter should be constant, being the only right state.

EXPERIMENTALLY to prove God's grace to be sufficient for us is more precious than the removal of the thorn in the flesh. Were we only weaker we should know what it is to be strengthened with might in the inner man. A difficulty is not an *obstacle* if we are walking *with God*.

MARAH's bitter waters must be tasted when the salt waters of the Red Sea have separated us from Egypt for ever. Put the wood of the tree, the cross of Christ, into our cross, and all will be sweet. "Crucified" is terrible work—crucified *with Christ* is joy and deliverance. Reproach is cruel, but the reproach *of Christ* is greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. *Mer*

THE WORD OF GOD is sharper than any two-edged sword, but it will only cut away what hinders my growth ; and the extent of my confession will be the measure of relief to my soul.

ONE great evidence of my dwelling in Christ is *quietness*. I have my portion elsewhere, and I go on.

"ALL IS WRECK AND RUIN, and all I can do is to sit down like Lot in Sodom." Were I to say this, I should not find Christ uncovering His glory there. But if I say, "This state of things will not do, I must be holy, I must be separate from all that is not in character with Christ," then He could say that that is like Himself, and that if I am not going to forget the Holy One He will not forget me.

THE SECRET of all joy is to know that I have a great work to do ; that is, to live for Christ, and to feel that I have not time for myself. I have time only to live to and to manifest Him down here.

THE FATHER'S love, the Saviour's love is upon you, and you ought to have the joy of the Holy Ghost ever in your heart.



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PRAYERLESS MOTHERS!—A Christian comrade earnestly besought a soldier dying on the battlefield to look to Christ for salvation. "Perhaps even now your dear mother is praying for you," he said. With a smile of contempt, the dying man replied, "*My mother never prayed.*" In a few moments his soul had passed into eternity. Prayerless mothers, how will you answer to God for your own souls and those of your children?

HE tasted "death for *every man.*"—*Heb.* ii. 9.

"If *any man* enter in, he shall be saved."—*John* x. 9.

"*Whosoever* will, let him take the water of life freely."—*Rev.* xxii. 17.

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation to *all men.*"—*Titus* ii. 11.

What a welcome God has for the sinner!

PRAYER.—One once said, "If I knew I was fit for heaven I would never put up another prayer," evidencing how little he knew the true nature of Christian prayer (see *Col.* i. 9-14). Another said, "Often have I prayed, 'Lord, do not let me go, that I perish;' but now I say, 'Lord, let me not let go of Thee to wander, and lose my enjoyment of Thee,' for I have learnt that nothing can ever separate me either from Him or from His love."

"TRIBULATION" comes from *tribulum*, the Roman threshing machine.

"Till from the straw the flail the corn doth beat,  
Until the chaff be purged from the wheat;  
Yea, till the mill the grain in pieces tear,  
The richness of the flour will ne'er appear.  
So, till men's persons great afflictions touch,  
If worth be found, their worth is not so much,  
Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet  
That value which in threshing they may get."

—George Withers.

"Tribulation worketh patience," a subject will. "Patience—experience" of self, the world, and God. "Experience—hope," confidence in God. "Hope maketh not ashamed"—good courage.

THE QUIANT Thomas Fuller says, "Lord, my voice by nature is harsh and untunable, and it is vain to lavish any art to better it. Can my singing of psalms be pleasing to Thy ears, which is unpleasant to my own? Yet, though I cannot chant with the nightingale or chirp with the blackbird, I had rather chatter with the swallow (*Is.* xxxviii. 14), yea, rather croak with the raven, than be altogether silent. Had'st Thou given me a better voice, I would have praised Thee with a better voice. Now what my music wants in sweetness let it have in sense, singing praises with understanding. Yea, Lord, create in me a new heart (therein to make melody), and I will be contented with my old voice, until, in Thy due time, being admitted into the choir of heaven, I have another, more harmonious, bestowed upon me."

BY CHRIST we have peace and divine favour (*Rom.* v. 2). *In* Him, life and new creation blessings (*Rom.* v. 2, vi. 11). *To* Him are we united, as members of His body (*1 Cor.* vi. 17). *Through* Him have we access by one Spirit to the Father (*Eph.* ii. 18).

POSITION determines conduct—"walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" is an example.

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"INSTANT IN PRAYER," being used by Stonewall Jackson one day, his sense of its meaning was required. "I can give you," he said, my idea of it by illustration, if you will allow it, and will not think that I am setting myself up as a model for others. I have so fixed the habit in my mind that I never raise a glass of water to my lips without a moment asking God's blessing. I never seal a letter without putting a word of prayer under the seal. I never take a letter from the post without a brief sending of my thought heavenward. I never change my classes in the section room without a minute's petition on the cadets who come in." "And don't you sometimes forget to do this?" "I think I can scarcely say that I do. The habit has become as fixed almost as breathing."—*Selected.*

JOHN VI., verse 53, a word for *objectors*; verses 54, 55, a word for *seekers*; verses 56-58, a word for *believers*.

"FATHER," implying divine relationship, is mentioned 115 times in the Gospel of John.

THE BIBLE: A TREASURY AND MIRROR.—No case has yet occurred, or ever will, for which there is not a sufficient provision made in this invaluable treasury. Here we may seek (and we shall not seek in vain) wherewith to combat and vanquish every error, to illustrate and confirm every spiritual truth. Here are promises suited to every want, directions adapted to every doubt that can possibly arise. Here is milk for babes, meat for strong men, medicines for the wounded, refreshment for the weary. The general history of all nations and ages, and the particular experience of each private believer, from the beginning to the end of time, are wonderfully comprised in this single volume, so that whoever reads and improves it aright may discover his state, his progress, his temptations, his danger, and his duty, as distinctly and minutely marked out as if the whole had been written for him alone.—*John Newton.*

A SAVIOUR NIGH AT HAND.—Thou mayest seek after honours and not obtain them; thou mayest labour for riches and yet remain poor; thou mayest dote on pleasures and have many sorrows. But our God of His supreme goodness says—Who ever sought Me and found Me not? Who ever desired Me and obtained Me not? Who ever loved Me and missed Me? I am with him that seeks for Me. He hath Me already that wisheth for Me; and he that loveth Me is assured of My love. The way to come to Me is neither long nor difficult.—*Augustine.*

SIR WALTER SCOTT, when he was dying, said to the watcher, "Bring the Book." "What book?" asked Lockhart. The dying man replied, "There is but ONE Book!"

EIGHT PERSONS SAVED IN THE ARK.—What a wonder of mercy is this that I here see! One poor family called out of a world, and as it were eight grains of corn fanned from a whole barn-full of chaff.—*Bishop Hall.*

LIVING in sin is to be dead unto God; dead unto sin is to be alive unto God.

CHRIST'S BIRTH was the nativity of love, His mission was a mission of love, His sermons were words of love, His miracles were wonders of love, His tears were the meltings of love, His dying was the agony of love.—*John Angell James.*

## MAN'S WILL; GOD'S PURPOSES.

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OF only One can it be truly said, "He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased" (Ps. cxv.); and only One could, and can say, "Surely as I have thought so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isa. xiv. 24). And yet how often we see man seeking to thwart the counsels and purposes of this One, not only in the instances given in the divine record, but also in the present day; only to prove, however, the truth of His own words quoted above, and becoming in His hands instruments for the accomplishing of the very purposes they would have hindered or destroyed. This One is Jehovah, who reigns (Ps. xciii.); and it gives peace and restfulness to those who own His authority, banishing their timidity, and establishing their confidence, to know that such is actually true of Him; and especially when, as now, man is highly exalting *himself*, and speaking great swelling words of his power, ability, and mission.

"As I have purposed, so shall it stand," the Lord has said; and in pondering the instances recorded in the word showing this—man seeking to set aside those purposes, but the Lord carrying them out spite of all, and to the furthering of His own glory, but to the confusion of those who have sought to disannul them—we see how He has proved it to be true in the past, and thus giving us comfort and stability, and enabling the fervent heart to exclaim in the midst of outward confusion and evil, "The Lord reigneth."

Turning to Gen. xxv. 23, we read of God saying of Isaac's two sons, "The elder shall serve the younger." In chapter xxvii. we find Isaac bidding his elder son go and get venison for him, and then to come that he might bless him. But with what blessing? "Be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee" (29), was what Isaac had in store for Esau, but what God had in store for Jacob. Which received it? Is there anything, beloved saint, for us in the

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answer to such a question as this? We see here, as in our own case, the sovereign election of God—"For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29)—God doing as it pleaseth Him; and there surely must be much in seeing whether any can, or cannot, upset that which God has said. In the case before us, we can understand Isaac naturally wishing thus to bless his first-born and *favourite* son; but, knowing that, more than likely, he knew what God had said, we can only reverently say he was outdone by God.

And so, for the answer to our question, we have to say, the one received the blessing for whom God had purposed it, and we thus see fulfilled "As I have purposed, so shall it stand." Also, may grace be given us to read another but salutary lesson therein contained for us. Our seeking to carry out our pet schemes will not deter God from fulfilling His own word, and it is to our sorrow when we learn that we have been endeavouring to set aside His will to have something more suited to our merely natural feelings.

For another instance let us turn to Gen. xlv. 5. There we read of one saying: "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life." What called forth these remarks? In chapter xxxvii. 20 we read of Joseph's brethren plotting to get rid of him, and at the same time saying: "We will see what will become of his dreams"—and those dreams spoke of blessing in store for Joseph. If in Isaac we see craftiness working to evade the known purpose of God, we have here men, prompted by jealousy, deliberately setting themselves to destroy what God had settled. Poor foolish, deluded men! as all must be who ever attempt such. Blinded by jealousy, they arrayed themselves against God to stop His purposes, only to become, as has been before remarked, the very means in His hands for the accomplishment of those purposes.

God again triumphant, we are led to reverently exclaim, "Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass." Let us notice that their share in the transaction was not to be forgotten, or unheeded—"That ye sold me hither"—and at the same time God would let His purpose shine out in the midst. What a picture! Man in the front opposing, and God behind working His purposes. God triumphant, we can indeed exclaim, and are also led to ask, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" And, viewing this incident in another light also, as we pass, is there not, beloved, a second lesson for us to learn from it? Is love always the motive of our actings towards others? Is it not to be feared that jealousy and love of our own way is, oftentimes, the motive instead? May we each have the hearing ear.

Then, coming to incidents connected with the life of our Lord Jesus, we are reminded of the word in Isaiah liii. 9: "His grave was appointed with the wicked." So man would have had it, had God permitted; but He, having otherwise appointed, thwarted man in this, for (from John xix. 41, 42) we learn that the Lord was laid in a new sepulchre, "wherein was man never yet laid." Again, in connection with the time when Jesus should be taken, we see man's will and God's purpose clashing, and God triumphant. "Not on the feast day," they say; but God had so determined, and they are led to take God's "Lamb" at His appointed time; and again would we repeat: "As I have purposed, so shall it stand." But to view God triumphant in another way, let us refer to Jonah i. 2, 3, and iii. 3. There God has His purpose, and His instrument to carry out that purpose. Fear overcoming the heart of the servant, he would try to ignore, if possible, the Lord's command. The result we know. And Jonah learns that what the Lord has determined will be carried out, and so we find that "Jonah arose and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord."

In all this we see, then, that by craftiness, jealousy, malice, fear, or aught else, man is utterly unable to turn aside, destroy, or ignore the purposes of God. But what is there here for us ? This, beloved : that the One who thus asserts His sovereignty is the One who is for us, and directs all things for the fulfilling of His will—counsels that have all glory for Himself and blessing for those who are His, in whatsoever relationship they may stand to Him as their ultimate end.

Dark clouds may hover over our heads, but with this assurance before us—that all man's efforts to annul anything decreed by God, or turn Him from His purpose, are as futile as they are foolish, and only end in the display of His majesty and power, and of the weakness and folly of man—we can go on with comforted hearts, resting in peace upon what He has spoken. As in the past, so in the present and future, man can no more thwart God's purposes than he can stay the flight of thought, man's will being no more a block to God's purposes than man's purposes are to God's will. His purposes are all to be accomplished, and His will done. What has He purposed ? In a very comprehensive way we can say He has purposed us for blessing, and no one can stay His hand. No, for though the world (politically) may be in confusion, and (socially) everything may be in disorder, yet in "quietness and confidence" we are to find our strength, for we know that "God's ways are behind the scenes ; but He moves all the scenes which He is behind." We want to learn this and let Him work, and not think much of man's busy movements : *they will accomplish God's.*

" We comprehend Him not ;  
 Yet earth and heaven tell  
 God sits as sov'reign on the throne,  
 And ruleth all things well."

Let us rejoice in this, and still be seeking to occupy the place He has set us in. Realising that He is over

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all, we can be rejoicing ones whilst we are suffering ones, for this is what He wants us to be. "If, when ye do *well*, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (1 Pet. ii. 20). Vindication belongs to Him; but for us it is now, "The kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ" (Rev. i. 9). And entering into this (the patience) we are delivered from seeking any place here below, and are carried on to enjoy in spirit that place which, now known only to faith, we shall occupy with Him by and by. May the quiet and obedient heart be ours.

H. F.

## DEPENDENCE.

O MY Saviour, on Thy breast  
This poor head finds peace and rest;  
Heart and mind can never be  
Fully blest save blest in Thee!

Yet how oft I break away  
From my only hope and stay;  
Some poor object—woe is me—  
For the moment rivals Thee!

Oft forgetful, ne'er forgot,  
With Thyself by grace my lot,  
Though I tremble, stumble, fall,  
Yet art Thou my All in all!

Thy poor sheep may wander wide  
From Thy safely-sheltering side;  
But till night shall change to morn  
Never are Thine eyes withdrawn!

Thus dost Thou Thine own recall,  
Humbly at Thy feet we fall;  
Learning there how blest to be  
Guided, guarded, kept by Thee!

Proving Thy sufficient grace  
Till we see Thee face to face;  
And shall manifestly be  
Wholly, only, blest by Thee!

## SYMBOLS USED IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

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THE simplicity and grandeur of the book of Revelation have been greatly obscured, and its difficulty increased by the constant tendency to literalise its symbols.

The earliest and simplest form of written language consisted chiefly of symbolic figures or hieroglyphics, which represented *ideas*; as letters, at a later period, represented sounds. Thus, a sword or a bow would denote warfare; an olive branch, peace; a chain, captivity; and so on. Language of this kind is forcible, simple, exact, and uniform in its signification.

Any natural object used for the purpose of bringing before the mind another object; any image which embodies an *idea*, or which contains within itself a representation of something else, is termed a symbol; "a grouping together of moral qualities by means of one being or several," by which a complete idea is formed of the thing symbolised. "Thus with the beast (Rev. xiii.) it is hardly possible to understand the symmetrical arrangement of seven heads and ten horns; whereas, we understand easily seven forms of government for the beast, and his power represented by ten kings."

### CHAPTER I.

Verse 1. *Angel*.—The mystical representation of one not actually seen. So used of Jehovah (Matt. xviii. 10; Acts xii. 15).

4. *The seven Spirits*.—The Holy Ghost in His varied operations of governmental power (chap. iv. 5). [Seven is spiritual completeness, the highest indivisible number].

12. *Seven Golden Candlesticks*.—[Lamp-stands.] Responsible vessels of light on earth in their totality.



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13. *Garment down to the Foot*.—Garb of priestly discrimination, not now in service, but judging.

*Golden Girdle*.—Divine righteousness and faithfulness (Is. xi. 5).

14. *White like Wool*.—The divine glory of the Ancient of Days, viewed in that character (Dan. vii. 9).

*Eyes as a Flame of Fire*.—Attribute of searching, intelligent judgment ; judicial discernment.

15. *Feet like fine Brass*.—Righteousness in dealing with man in his responsibility.

*Voice as the sound of many Waters*.—Overwhelming power and majesty (Ezek. i. 24 ; xliii. 2).

16. *Seven stars*.—Completeness of subordinate authority under Christ in light.

*Sharp two-edged sword*.—Searching judgment of the word of God (Is. xlix. 2 ; Heb. iv. 12).

*Countenance as the sun*.—Splendour of supreme authority.

18. *Keys of Death and of Hades*.—Power over death and the departed state.

20. *Angels of the seven Churches*.—The moral representatives of the responsibility of the assemblies. A symbolical representation of the assembly viewed in those responsible in it.

CHAPTER II.

Verse 7. *Tree of Life*.—(See chap. xxii. 2).

9. *Jews*.—Professing Christians who had turned back to hereditary religion (Phil. iii. 2).

10. *Ten Days*.—A determinate period of suffering and persecution.

14. *To eat Idol-sacrifices*.—Association with the false worship of devils in the world (1 Cor. x. 20).

*Fornication*.—Illicit commerce with the world.

17. *Hidden Manna*.—The once humbled and rejected One known in heaven.

*White stone*.—Individual approbation by Christ.

20. *Jezebel*.—Systematic allowance of worldliness, immorality, and idolatry.

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- 23. *Death*.—Apostasy from God.
- 23. *Reins and Hearts*.—Inward affections and thoughts.
- 27. *Rod of Iron*.—Power of the kingdom.
- 28. *Morning Star*.—Harbinger of day; Christ known as such by the saints now before the day comes.

### CHAPTER III.

Verse 5. *Book of Life*.—Register of Christian profession, true or false; but assumed true till proved false (Ex. xxxii. 33; Ps. lxix. 28).

7. *Key*.—Delegated authority. Trust (Is. ix. 6, 7; xxii. 22).

*Jews*.—(See chap. ii. 9).

12. *New Name*.—Mark of supreme authority.

18. *Gold tried in the Fire*.—True and approved righteousness.

*White Raiment*.—Clothing for moral nakedness.

*Nakedness*.—Spiritual destitution.

*Eye salve*.—True spiritual vision.

### CHAPTER IV.

Verse 2. *Throne*.—The royal seat of authority and government.

3. *Jasper and sardine*.—Divine glory visible to man (chap. xxi. 11).

*Rainbow*.—Sign of God's unchanging covenant with the earth in mercy. Post-diluvian relationship (Gen. ix. 13, 14; Ezek. i. 28).

4. *Twenty-four*.—Priestly completeness. The number of the courses of the priesthood in Israel (1 Chron. xxiv. 4). Twice the administrative perfection in man.

*Elders*.—Glorified saints as invested with wisdom and intelligence.

*White Raiment*.—Recognition of righteousness (chap. vi. 11).

*Crowns of Gold*.—Royal dignity.

SYMBOLS USED IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION. 219

5. *Lightnings and Thunderings and Voices*.—Signs of judicial dealing (Ps. xxix. 3, 4).

*Seven Lamps of Fire*.—The consuming power of the Spirit of God in perfect development (Heb. xii. 29 ; chap. i. 4).

6. *Sea of Glass*.—Solid purity, in contrast with the water of the laver (Ex. xxx. 17-21).

*Four Beasts [living creatures]*. — God's attributes in judicial and governmental power on earth. Types of power, firmness, intelligence, and rapidity of execution.

8. *Six Wings*.—Supernatural swiftness (Ezek. i.).

*Full of Eyes*.—Perfect intelligence.

CHAPTER V.

Verse 1. *Seven-sealed Book*.—Revelation of God's counsels and mysteries wholly secret.

6. *A Lamb as it had been slain*.—Messiah in power, but recognised as the same as the suffering Redeemer.

*Seven Horns*.—Perfection of power and exaltation (Deut. xxxiii. 17 ; 1 Sam. ii. 1, 10 ; Ps. lxxv. 10).

*Seven Eyes*.—Perfect intelligence (Zech. iii. 9 ; iv. 10 ; 2 Chron. xvi. 9).

*Seven Spirits*.—The fulness of the perfection in which He will govern the earth (Is. xi. 2).

8. *Harps*.—Choral services of praise (Ps. xcvi. 5).

*Golden Vials*.—Priestly service.

CHAPTER VI.

Verse 2. *White Horse*. — Conquering aggressive power in providential action (Zech. vi.).

*Bow*.—Victorious warfare (Ps. vii. 12, 13).

*Crown*.—Imperial authority.

4. *Red Horse*.—Power with frightful carnage.

*Sword*.—War. Slaughter.

5. *Black Horse*.—Sorrow and mourning.

*Pair of Balances*.—Accuracy in measure because of scarcity (Ezek. iv. 16 ; v. 1, 10, 12 ; xiv. 13).

220 SYMBOLS USED IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

6. *Oil and Wine*.—The luxuries of the rich.
8. *Pale Horse*.—Excessive mortality by sword, famine, and pestilence (Ezek. v. 16, 17 ; xiv. 12-21).
- Fourth part of the Earth*.—A limited portion of the Roman earth.
9. *Under the Altar*.—As having been as sacrifices to God ; their lives offered up.
11. *White Robe*.—Recognition of practical righteousness (chap. xix. 8).
12. *Earthquake*.—Convulsion of the whole structure of society. Darkening and subversion of established authorities.
- Sun black as sackcloth*.—Alienation from God and Satanic darkening of the ruling power.
- Moon as Blood*.—All derived authority in a state of death morally.
13. *Stars fallen from Heaven*.—Open apostasy of subordinate authorities.
14. *Heaven departed as a scroll*.—General convulsion and overthrow of all governmental order.
- Mountains*.—Seats of authority in stability.
- Islands*.—Mercantile seaports as sources of wealth : independent interests (Is. xxiii. 2, 6 ; Jer. xxv. 22 ; Ezek. xxvii. 3, 15).

CHAPTER VII.

- Verse 1. *Winds of the Earth*.—Universal troubles and political tumults. Satanic agencies (Job i. 19 ; Jer. xlix. 36 ; li. 1 ; Dan. vii. 2).
2. *Seal*.—That which marks for preservation (Ezek. ix. 4 ; Hagg. ii. 23 ; 2 Tim. ii. 19).
3. *Earth*.—(See chap. x. 2). Sea (chap. xiii. 1). Trees (chap. viii. 7).
4. *144,000*.—An elect mystical number of Israel sealed for preservation.
9. *White Robes*.—Recognition of righteousness.
- Palm-tree*.—Triumphant joy after a period of suffering ; Millennial rest (Ex. xv. 27 ; Lev. xxiii. 40 ; Num. xxxiii. 9 ; Neh. viii. 15 ; Ezek. xli. 18).

SYMBOLS USED IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION. 221

15. *Temple*.—The place of God's veiled presence.

CHAPTER VIII.

Verse 1. *Silence in Heaven*.—Temporary suspension of judgment.

2. *Trumpets*.—Loud announcements of God's interference (Ex. xix. 16 ; Joel ii. 1).

3. *Another Angel*.—Christ.

*Altar*.—The brazen altar ; the first point of contact between God and man on earth.

*Incense*.—The precious perfume of the graces of Christ.

*Golden Altar*.—Effectual intercession of the great High Priest (Ex. xxx.).

5. *Fire of the Altar*.—Judgment in favour of saints in reply to intercession (Ezek. x. 2).

*Voices and Thunderings and Lightnings and an Earthquake*.—Signs of God's power in the subversion of all established order on the earth.

7. *Hail*.—Sudden and stormy judgment from God (Is. xxviii. 2 ; see chap. xvi. 21).

*Fire*.—Consuming judgment.

*Blood*.—Death morally ; apostasy.

*Third Part*.—The Western Roman earth. [The dragon with seven heads and ten horns drew the *third part* of the stars] (chap. xii. 3, 4).

*Trees*.—Exalted position among men ; human power and pride (Ezek. xxxi. ; Dan. iv.).

*Green Grass*.—Earthly prosperity ; human weakness (Is. xl. 6, 8 ; 1 Pet. i. 24).

*Mountain Burning with Fire*.—A great established power replete with judgment (Jer. li. 25).

*Sea*.—(See chap. xiii. 1).

*Blood*.—(See ver. 7).

9. *Death*.—Public apostasy from God ; the power of Satan (chap. ii. 23).

*Ships*.—Lucrative commerce.

10. *Star, burning as it were a Lamp*.—A fallen and apostate dignitary.

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*Rivers.*—The activity of bodies of people under certain influences.

*Fountains of Waters.*—The source and origin of these influences.

11. *Wormwood.*—The bitterness and misery of apostasy (Jer. ix. 15, 16; xxiii. 15; Lam. iii. 5, 19).

12. *Sun.*—The supreme ruling power (Is. xiii. 9, 10; Ezek. xxxii. 7; Joel iii. 15).

*Moon.*—Derived light; that which reflects the light of the sun in his absence.

*Stars.*—Subordinate authorities.

*Darkness.*—No perception of God's will; strong delusion to believe a lie. [The four trumpets affect all parts of symbolic creation].

### CHAPTER IX.

Verse 1. *Star fallen from Heaven.*—An apostate subordinate power.

*Bottomless Pit [Abyss].*—The place where Satanic evil is shut up and chained (Luke viii. 31; 2 Pet. ii. 4; Rev. xx. 1, 3).

2. *Smoke of a great Furnace.*—Blinding Satanic delusions.

*Sun.*—(See chap. viii. 12).

*Air.*—The medium through which political vitality is communicated to the masses (See chap. xvi. 17). The sphere of Satan's rule (Eph. ii. 2).

3. *Locusts.*—Warlike instruments of Satanic power in the earth, used providentially.

*Scorpion Power.*—Infliction of pain and anguish of heart; mental agony.

5. *Five Months.*—A determinate limited period.

7. *Horses prepared unto Battle.*—(See chap. vi.).

*Crowns of Gold.*—Victorious power affecting divine righteousness.

*Faces as the Faces of Men.*—Masculine energy.

8. *Hair as of Women.*—Subjection to others (1 Cor. xi. 15).

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*Teeth as of Lions.*—Ferocity, cruelty (Ps. lvii. 4 ; Prov. xxx. 14).

9. *Breastplates of Iron.*—Steeled consciences.

*Sound of Chariots, &c.*—Fanatical and rapid warfare.

10. *Stings in their tails.*—The venom of false principles. Poisonous doctrines (Is. ix. 15 ; Ps. cxi. 3).

13. *Golden Altar.*—(See chap. viii. 3).

14. *Euphrates.*—The barrier of the Roman earth.

15. *Hour, Day, Month, and Year.*—A prescribed period.

16. *Two myriads of myriads.* — [200,000,000] Countless swarms of moral locusts.

17. *Breastplates of Fire and Facinth and Brimstone.*—The defensive armour of hell.

*Fire and Smoke and Brimstone.*—Inflicted judgments of a darkening and hellish character.

19. *Tails like serpents, &c.*—Serpent-like influence and mischief (Rom. i. 28 ; 2 Thess. ii. 11).

CHAPTER X.

Verse 1. *Mighty Angel.*—Christ asserting His claim over the earth.

*Cloud.*—Sign of Jehovah's presence (Ex. xiii. 21 ; Is. iv. 5 ; Ezek. x. 4 ; Matt. xvii. 5).

*Rainbow.*—(See chap. iv. 3).

*Sun.*—Supreme sovereign glory (Ps. cxxxvi. 8, 9).

*Feet as Pillars of Fire.*—Firmness of discriminating judgment.

2. *Little Book.*—Open prophetic revelations of circumscribed character.

*Sea.*—(See chap. xiii. 1).

*Earth.*—The ordered scene of God's government.

3. *Seven Thunders.*—The perfection of God's intervention in judgment.

9. *To eat.*—To meditate, digest (Josh. i. 8 ; Ps. cxix. 103).

J. M.

## ON CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

I BELIEVE that there should be much more of simple divine experience in our souls than there is. Some have been rather turned from this by certain abused methods of speaking on Christian experience, arising, I judge, from misapprehension on the subject. "Come, ye that fear God, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul." I might take that passage as expressive of what I understand by *experience*; it is what God has done for our souls. Experiences are the sensible fruit of the Spirit's presence in us, leading us into communion. But conflicts have been confounded with *experience*. This has obscured the subject, I believe. Conflicts are the result of the renewed mind meeting the old lusts—meeting them in any form, whether as occurring to bring in bondage and fear, or as tempting to stir up sin, and thus to blot the conscience. Rom. vii. may be read as a place of conflict. But *experiences* are not *conflicts*. Experiences are the result of the blessed operation and grace of the Holy Ghost upon the renewed mind—awakening its *hopes*, strengthening its *faith*, enlarging its *understanding*, or helping its *intercessions*. Rom. viii. may be read as a place of experience.

This is the difference, I judge, between these two chapters, and accordingly the Holy Ghost is not named as in action in the seventh of Romans; but the parties there are, as I have observed, the *renewed conscience* (of course, I know the fruit of the Spirit) and *the lusts*. The one meeting the other, *conflict*, as the result, is raised between them. But when we meditate on the character of that Spirit who dwells in us, the forms in which He is revealed as acting in our souls, we may then see how much more rich our experiences should be than they are. He is the blessed *living* power within, giving efficacy to what we have in Christ, if not hindered. God is said to have *sealed* us with the Holy Ghost. He has in that way, and by that gift, appropriated us individually to Himself.



But this seal has a large and a glorious character on it, the impressions of which we should KNOW, and *that* is our *experience*. This *Seal*, or *Spirit*, thus given to us is an *unction* (1 John ii.). As such, He is the power and light of all knowledge in us, in the mystery of Christ (Col. ii.). But the Spirit as the *unction* is IN US, to give those materials their *real* and *due* power, that they may not lie as cold, inert masses in the *mere understanding*, but affect us as they should, being so divine and glorious.

The Spirit is also a *witness* (John v.). As such, He is the assurance, and rest, and liberty of faith in us. We have the grounds or materials of the *full assurance of faith* in the person and work of Christ (Heb. x.); but the Holy Ghost is in us as the *witness*, to give these materials their power, so that our souls may indeed enjoy the *rest* and *liberty*, and the *blessed stability of heart* with which such strong ground of confidence in God should fill us.

This Spirit is also an *earnest* (Eph. i.). As such, He is in us *the joy of hope*. We have in our Jesus all that can animate hope, and draw forth the *longings and boundings* of the soul towards the future glories—*promise* and *revelation* largely furnishing this. But the Holy Ghost is in us as an *earnest* to give these *promises* and *revelations* their due attractions, so that they may not merely be looked at, or *understood*, but may lead the heart to gladness, or other affections worthy of the hope of *such inheritance*.

Now, if the Holy Ghost be *in us* in such characters as these, what rich experiences in our souls might we not reckon upon! what strength of faith when the witness is in us! what joy of hope when the earnest is in us! what light and *largeness of knowledge* when the unction is in us! No doubt there is *another kingdom*, the power of which sadly hinders and defiles; but still this kingdom of God, and the presence of the Spirit in such form of life and power, is ALSO A REALITY, and we may count on great things; but it

is but little that we either *know in ourselves*, or generally *see in others*. We want the more due culture of this new kingdom, which is "*righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*." We want the power to *watch and pray*, the power to let the fire kindle by meditation, the power of *simply believing* all the rich and glorious things that are spoken, and the power to refuse the risings of that *rival and other kingdom* in us, which is ever watchful of its own interests.

I have observed before on the difference between conflict and experience. It is, I judge, well to note this: Conflict arises from the *renewed mind* dealing with, or getting into collision with, the lusts of the *old nature* and the power of the enemy. Experience arises from the renewed mind dwelling in its proper element, and dealing with the truth, or the *precious things of Christ*, in the power of the Holy Ghost, who dwells there. Conflict comes from this mind being dragged downward, and out of its due place; experience comes from its being drawn upwards towards its own proper place; and these two chapters to which I referred (Rom. vii. and viii.) give us the divine, though different, provision for these two conditions. "O wretched man that I am!" cries out the renewed or quickened soul under pressure of conflict, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The relief comes through Jesus: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." In its communion, or experiences, the same renewed or quickened soul is conscious of "infirmities"—it knows not how or what to pray for as it ought. The relief comes through the Spirit: "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." This is divine teaching of the greatest comfort. Jesus *ends* the conflict; the Holy Ghost perfects the communion of the poor saint.

And in this eighth of Romans I must suggest one

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other thing ; it shows us the Holy Spirit's presence and grace with the saint in two respects : first, when the saint is strong, being in that communion which the dispensation calls us to, and is crying "Abba, Father," then the Spirit joins in this, and by His testimony ; second, when the saint is weak, unable to conduct the communion in full intelligence or power, not knowing what to pray for as he ought, then the Spirit helps the infirmity, and puts His perfect communion with the mind of God in the place of our imperfect communion (see verses 16, 26, 27). This is the twofold office of the gracious Spirit noticed here ; so that, whether we be *strong* or *weak*, He is for the saint, warranting our confidence, helping our weakness. Oh for simple faith to *know* and *enjoy* His love !

J. G. B.

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 THE TWO SALVATIONS.
 

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RECEIVING the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls ; or our faith, our souls. We have got to the end of our faith, but not to the end of our hope.

There are two salvations. The first is the end of our faith, when we are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The salvation which is the end of our hope is to be revealed in the day of His appearing.

There is a salvation already accomplished, and a salvation yet to be revealed ; but the latter is as sure as the former, seeing it is "ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter i. 5 ; 1 Peter i. 9, 10). Now Paul establishes the conscience in peace and the certainty of "faith." Peter is eminently a nourisher of "hope." Peter opens to the eye of hope the glory to be revealed. Look how well the "girdle" (ver. 13) suits a hoper. Why ? Because the girdle is the symbol of the thing that denies present enjoyment. The girdle and the lamp are the symbols of an expectant. The girdle refuses to let the affections dally with present objects ; the lamp signifies that I

am a traveller along a dark road "till the day dawn." So the first exhortation is, "Gird up the loins of your mind"—your *mind*.

Now, do you and I do that? or do we think we may let the eye and the thought and the mind sport themselves as they please? I'm sure I have no business to be a servant to my thoughts and my imaginations. I may often start at their suggestions, but am I to serve them? No, no; most assuredly not. Then gird up, and hope to the end; not until to-morrow or next day, but till the journey is over, because the object of hope lies the other side of the journey, that is the salvation ready to be revealed.

We are then addressed as in three relationships—as children, as brethren, and as newly born (1 Peter i.). We are to be obedient as children. This refers to the second verse, "Sanctified unto obedience" (or set apart to be obedient), as well as to sprinkling; and what God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Consequently, Peter in this fourteenth verse addresses us in the character he had attached to us in verse second, as "children of obedience," which is the force of the original—*i. e.*, a well-ordered family.

He then says, "If ye call on the Father, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear"—in that fear which becomes children walking in reverential fear and love in their Father's house. As children, we are to walk as knowing we are under discipline, under Lordship. As brethren, we are to love one another—to lay aside those feelings that mar communion and fellowship with each other in the Lord. As newly born, we are in our own persons to lay aside those poisonous ingredients that would hinder the action of the unadulterated milk of the word.

Thus we see our position: as girded watchers, as obedient children, as loving brethren. As newly born, shrink from every thing in opposition to that pure milk by which we are to grow.

J. E. B.

## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

MARCH 27, 1896.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—Your kind letter of March 5th was opened by my dear wife at ———, and the letter alone forwarded to me. I am thankful to the Lord, and to yourself and Mrs. ——— for your fellowship with me in this work—the need of which presses itself more and more upon me.

I am here in the middle of Mexico, about 1,600 miles from home, and being *hors de combat* for a day or two, through a severe cold and sore throat, I take advantage of the opportunity to do some writing.

From sea level to 8,000 feet elevation, and the moist air of the coast to the dry air of this region, is a pretty severe strain, and added to it the dust and alkali of these dry regions, it is no wonder that the body suffers somewhat; yet I am thankful to the Lord that I have been much helped through His mercy, and, beyond what I trust a day or two will remedy, I have experienced much less than I expected.

We are a week and a day from home, having stopped a day or two at ——— on the border, and brother ——— stopped a day at ———, and reached here at 3 a.m. this morning.

We have had some happy service on the way. I preached at ——— and ——— whilst at ———. The Rio Grande separates Mexico from the U.S. there, and three bridges, one of them the R. R., connects the two cities. The missions are small on the Mexican side, and the number gathered to hear the Word did not exceed twenty. There were a few at the door too much afraid to enter, besides those within. On the Texas side there was a good deal better attendance, but there is so little attempt to draw the line between the living and the dead, that great reproach has been brought upon the Name of the Lord. I hope to spend a little further time there on my return. After leaving ———, Bro. ——— stopped off at ———, where he

had an invitation from some he had corresponded with, and reports a good opportunity of visiting some ranches, one of them having several hundred hands, and he distributed a great many tracts. I continued my journey as far as ———, giving away tracts along the road, as did Bro. ———, whenever the train stopped sufficient time. Everywhere the tracts were received gladly. At one place where a number gathered round, one man read aloud the passage printed on the cover of the tract, and quite feelingly said, "Yes, that is indeed good news." But at ———, where the train stopped for supper, I had a fine opportunity, and got quite a good company to preach to. Twice I had to go back to the train to get more tracts, and as they had never seen a Testament, I left with them one I had for my own use. A hot axle-box obliged them to detain the train longer than usual, and it gave me a good opportunity to speak to as interested a company as I have seen. I broke the journey for the night at ——— to get a little rest, and slept in an inn which had been an old convent. I took a lot of tracts to the station, and after speaking to the cargador, who carried my baggage, and a few more, a company soon gathered round, and crowded me to get the tracts, till all were gone. The priest came up, but I suppose thought it best to say nothing. Their power is largely broken; their vices and hard-heartedness and schemes have largely alienated the people from them, and no wonder. Yet women kiss their hands in the streets; men take off their hats as they pass the church doors; but even Romanists will tell you that the viciousness of their lives is what has debased the people so. If anyone thinks well of popery, let them visit Mexico and other parts of the Americas. They teach that only their sacraments avail for salvation, yet will let the poor perish without them, or take the last cent a poor man clothed in rags may have to pay for these worthless rites and superstitions. At ———, one told me of the priest

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requiring a poor man to bring two axes—he was a wood chopper—to pay for the burial of his dead child.

The poverty of the “peons,” especially in some parts, is terrible. Large numbers have but a few rags in which to clothe themselves, and their fragments of clothing serve by night as well as day as their only covering, as they lie down on the hard clay floors to rest. The warmth of the climate helps to mitigate their sufferings, but the struggle to keep body and soul together is terrible.

The worst of all is their ignorance of the way of salvation. I never was so impressed with the ruin and degradation sin and Satan had wrought, than when among the poor people of that place. It is a city of 50,000 souls. Some few zealous workers are there, but the borders of the need is but touched. Would that more had it on their hearts to come to these fields and labour for the Lord. Spanish is not hard to learn, and there is no difficulty in getting at the people with tracts, and conversation with little groups, which is the only way at first. Street preaching is not allowed; but much could be done, which by the blessing of God would be fruit indeed in that day. But how has Satan made man groan through sin, whilst many would blame God for what He has not done, whilst they are unwilling to believe in His mercy, and the grace that has opened heaven through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is wanted here is not so much to get people into buildings to preach to them, though I do not undervalue that, but to get out into the highways and hedges. That was mostly the Master’s way, and so the apostles in the beginning. Now is an opportunity such as may never be again, as it never has been before, among these millions for whom Christ died.

Next week we shall pass on to the capital, I suppose, taking in one or two points, as far as able, on the way, as my desire is to reach all the places we can during my limited absence from home. “Go ye into

all the world " is still His word, whilst waiting on high the Father's time to take His own throne. In the faith of this we can go assured of His unfailing interest even if our poor service fall so short of what suits so glorious a Master.

Yes, dear brother, I am thankful to the Lord for having led me out of the Church of England. It was a step to which His Word impelled, though with little to encourage in it, save that it was to obey Him whose love had ransomed me with such a price, and who alone had a right to mark out my path of service. My first work was among Indians, and perhaps that has been the means of inclining towards these people. Yet I cannot speak of my faith, but of His faithfulness.

But I must close with love in Christ to yourself and Mrs. ———, also to all "ours" with you.—Ever affectionately in the coming One.

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LONDON, JUNE 11, 1896.

Tidings of the Lord's work have come to hand from various parts. Saints are in sorrow and trial in Florida. Peaceful fruit we may trust Him to give where He has already produced heart-searching under His chastening hand. May humility clothe us.

From St. John's, Newfoundland, comes a cheering word of some few gathered to His Name, who look into the Word together four times a week, and are hopeful that our blessed God intends blessing for the colony, for this work of faith (possibly in prayer now) we trust will lead to a reaping and rejoicing time soon, for poor souls there are in much bondage, for whether they range under "Pope," "Conference," or "General," these all use tyranny, and hold poor creatures, through superstitious fears, in a bondage worse than slavery.

Profitable meetings were held in Toronto on May 23rd, 24th, and 25th. God grant that refreshment granted may lead us to press on for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus.



Many meetings are announced for ministry of the Word—may this heart-return and desire for the Word have His blessing—and we all become more settled, restful, and established in the truth. It becomes us to truly tell out to Him our failures, shortcomings, and trespassings. We could desire that a more general expression of brokenness prevailed—but for this more spiritual enlightening may be required.

In this connection, a few lines extracted from “Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Earlier Historical Books” may be in keeping with what has gone before:—“‘Prepare ye hearts unto Jehovah, and serve Him only.’ And Samuel gathers them together, and says, ‘And I will pray for you unto Jehovah. And they gathered together unto Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah.’ This is very instructive. . . . If any of us were asked why it was that the people of God gathered together and poured out water before Jehovah, one might hesitate to say. Are we, therefore, to judge that the act was wrong? Not so. In a broken state of things, whilst holding fast the grand central truths and duties attaching to our relationships, the mere return to that which was originally formed is by no means the truest way of meeting the difficulties which sin brings in.

“On the other hand, we are never free (need one say so?) to take up human inventions; and certainly the act in question was not such an invention. But I repeat that the remedy for a ruined state of things in the Church of God, just as here in Israel, does not consist in going back to each form which existed at the beginning. One looks first and foremost for brokenness of spirit—for the sense of where we have all got to—in the dishonour done to God; then we begin to see more clearly our place of obedience in all that remains. But without the judgment of self and of the Church’s state in the presence of God, nothing

can be right ; whereas, if this be wrought in us, His grace will surely show us from His Word what suits such a state of confusion and weakness. Yet it affords a door to dark and self-willed souls, who adhere to words and appearances, actually flattering themselves as if they alone were right, and censuring those most who are most truly obedient.

“Supposing, for instance, at the present time, the Church of God awakened to feel its long-continued departure from God, what would be the first and natural resource? Why, to set up twelve apostles, and to yearn after tongues and miracles, if not to imitate the circumstances of the Pentecostal Church in the community afterwards. But what would be the spiritual judgment suited to the present state of the Church? Setting up apostles? No such presumptuous dream ; but to sit down ourselves in dust and ashes before God, taking on us the shame and sorrow of the Church reduced to ruin by the sin of those whom God had so deeply favoured.

“Such a taking the sense of ruin upon his soul before him seems to have been expressed in what Samuel did. The pouring out of water before Jehovah was an act, in my judgment, most suitable and appropriate. It was not an effort to patch up appearances, but rather the confession of utter weakness before God. Such, at any rate, we all know is the force of the figure applied in the very next book of Samuel : as water spilt on the ground. It was appropriating the truth of their own condition before God. But was there any lack of confidence in His grace? The very contrary. ‘And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.’ At once Satan bestirs himself, and rouses the Philistines. He, if not they, could not bear to hear of any souls, least of all the people, gathering thus before Jehovah in con-

fession of their sins. It is possible that the Philistines might think Israel's object in gathering was political—a mere mustering for battle, and an effort for independence. But Satan knew better its import, and could not rest ; and of this I am sure, that had they (his Philistine instruments) known the meaning of such an act as that which broke Israel down before God, this would have been something far more terrible for the enemy of Israel than any gathering for martial purposes. There is nothing so alarming to Satan as the people of God humbling themselves in real prayer and confession, where there is also a believing use of His Word. Whatever the difficulty or the distress, there never can be a reason for distrusting God. It is the point of honour that we owe the Lord that, whatever we have to own about ourselves, we should never doubt Him ; whatever failure we may confess, at any rate let our first confession and our constant confidence be Jesus our Lord, ' God over all, blessed for ever.'

“ ‘ And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us.’ This, to my mind, is beautiful. They had begun neither with sin-offering nor with burnt-offering. They had already taken the place of penitence before God as to their sin ; they had solemnly owned their ruin in the water poured out ; and Samuel prayed as they confessed. They were entitled to look to the Lord with assurance that He would appear on their behalf. There is the sign of acceptance now ; as we read that ‘ Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto Jehovah : and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel ; and Jehovah heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to

battle against Israel.' Ah ! how little the foe knew what was preparing for them ! Did they dare to interrupt Israel when that sweet savour was rising up to God for them ? It was no longer a question between Israel and the Philistines, but between Jehovah and the Philistines. 'And Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them ; and they were smitten before Israel.' "

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## EXTRACT.

IT was in Gethsemane that the feet of the Lord Jesus first touched the waters of Jordan. When He led the people into Canaan, He drove back the waters that they might pass over dry-shod. He would not part them for Himself. For Him, the river overflowed its banks, and all its dark waves and billows passed over His holy head. He entered into conflict with the prince of the power of darkness, and the encounter was terrible. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me ; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done." Heaven looked on, and an angel was sent down to strengthen Him. Satan had gained experience by his first defeat in the temptation in the wilderness, and he well knew that on the issue of this conflict hung the salvation or perdition of a ruined world. "My Father, if this cup may not pass from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done." Satan was defeated ; and in the resistless power of weakness the Man of Sorrows went forth, conquering and to conquer, enduring the cross and despising the shame.

Had He been what some have profanely affirmed Him to be—"in His place as man Godward distinct and apart from the glory and attributes which belong only to God"—had this been true, Christ would have lain in the grave to this day, and we should have been yet in our sins.

J. M.

## INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

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DEPLORING the neglect of Scripture exposition in the pulpit, Dr. Harper, of Chicago, says : " Our ministers fail not only to teach the Bible, but also to preach it. The average sermon contains less and less of Biblical material, and more and more of that which comes from outside the Bible. It may be said without fear of sustained contradiction that the membership of our churches is gradually becoming less and less familiar with the contents and teachings of the sacred Scriptures."

RESIGNATION :—

" It is the Lord," should I distrust or contradict His will,  
Who cannot do but what is just, and must be righteous still ?

" It is the Lord " who gives me all, my wealth, my friends, my ease ;  
And of His bounties may recall whatever part He please.

*Matthew Green, 1696-1739.*

PRAYER :—

I know not by what methods rare, but this I know, God answers prayer.  
I know not if the blessing sought will come in just the guise I thought ;  
I leave my prayers with Him alone, whose will is wiser than my own.

*Anon.*

LAURA BRIDGMAN could neither hear, see, nor speak, yet the grace of God made an avenue to her soul, for she learned that she was herself a sinner and Christ her Saviour.

DOWN, DOWN to destruction. Walking one day by himself in a lonely country place near Toulon, the writer observed a balloon floating in the air, which had come out from that town. After some time the wind began to drive it towards the sea. Then he saw that sand was being thrown out, and every attempt made to get the balloon into a higher current of air. The suspense was painful. Would the occupants get down on land, or would they be drowned ? It was terrible to see fellow-creatures going down, down to their doom, without being able to save them ! Down, down they went, alas ! towards the sea, and the next day there was an account in the papers of the drowning of four persons from a balloon. How sad to see people going to destruction, and not have it in one's power to help them ! But there are thousands who are every day perishing in a far worse way, and what are we doing to help them ? What are we doing to save them—to save them from the wrath to come ?

THE PASSOVER NIGHT—a tradition of the Jews.—A Jewish father had one child only about ten years old, and as the first-born, this child must die if the angel's stroke should fall on their dwelling. Had the blood been sprinkled on their door-post ? The father said it had. But the child could not sleep soundly, but awoke several times, and each time asked anxiously if it was all right about the blood. Assured it was, the child endeavoured again to sleep, but could not rest, and a little before midnight awoke in real alarm, desiring to be taken to the door to see the blood. The father took the child, and to his horror found *no* blood there. A servant to whom it had been left had neglected it. The father ran to the blood, and instantly sprinkled it as prescribed. He took the child then and showed the blood there, after which the child slept soundly. Reader, have you the same anxiety to know that you are really sheltered under the blood of Christ ?

“ONE DAY last week, a poor traveller of the Rajpoota caste, coming by this way, slept under a tree. Seeing him lie there, I requested Kirshna to talk to him. After a little conversation, he took him to his house. When the poor man heard of Jesus Christ, and what He had done for sinners, he seemed ravished with the news. He ate with our brethren without hesitation, and next day threw off his poita and mala as useless things, professing faith in the Saviour of sinners, and the day following he yielded up the ghost. Who can tell but the Lord directed the steps of this poor wandering sheep hither, that he might be made acquainted with the Shepherd and Bishop of souls?”—*R. Mardon; Goamatty, 1808.*

SUBSTITUTION.—This is an uncomfortable and unpleasant doctrine at the present time! It is rejected in a wholesale fashion. But, so far as I can see, no sinner can be righteously saved without a Substitute. It is by Jesus Christ, who “once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” “He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” See, too, Isa. liii. 5: “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” There is the doctrine of substitution, and it comes in emphatically; and those who see, and in simple faith accept, that Christ was on the cross for them, have their sins pardoned, because Christ, the Just One, undertook their case, that He, by His death, might set them free, and bring them to God, and present them to Him, redeemed by His precious blood!—*R. Middleton.*

THE RED HEIFER (Numbers xix).—Death itself, in the wisdom of God, becomes the remedy for death, and deliverance from the power of it. In the death of Christ the believer passes out of the region of death—out of the world, is dead to it and it to him, and is no more of it. But here the power of resurrection must be known, in order that we may be practically cleansed from its pollution. For this cleansing running (literally, living) water was to be put into a vessel with the ashes, and a clean person was to sprinkle it upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day. The third day is emphasised as the resurrection day: “If he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.” The Spirit of God is typified by the “living water” (see John iv. 10; vii. 38, 39). He it is who, bringing the soul into the apprehension of association with Christ in resurrection, makes His death effectual in purifying us from the world. Still the man is not really clean until the evening of the seventh day, that is, *ready for the eighth*. The eighth is the beginning of a new week, the entrance into new creation, the sphere into which resurrection brings us, old things passed away, and the new, eternal things our portion.

THESSALONIANS.—Greece had become divided (having been conquered by the Romans under Paulus Emilius) into two provinces, viz., *Achaia*, which comprehended the whole of ancient Greece, and of which Corinth was the capital, and *Macedonia*, of which Philippi and Thessalonica were the chief cities—the latter appears to have been the first place in Europe to receive the gospel.

THE EPISTLE to the Hebrews is not addressed to the Church as such, but to saints individually from among the Jews (not in the aspect of oneness with Christ). Consequently *responsibility* is pressed; continual ifs and warnings are pressed; but simply for that reason, and not as implying doubt.

JAMES.—There were two apostles named James, or Jacob. One the son of Zebedee and brother of John, put to death by Herod (Acts xii.). The other, James the less, or little (Mark xv. 40), son of Alphaeus or Cleopas (Mat. x. 3, Mark iii. 18, Luke xxiv. 10, Acts i. 13, xv. 13). He was a near kinsman of the Lord (Gal. i. 19); was author of the Epistle of James, and was called "the Just."

HEBREWS XI. 33.—Abraham, Moses, and Joshua "subdued kingdoms;" Deborah, Barak, Jephtha, Samuel, and others "wrought righteousness" by judging the people righteously; Barak, Gideon, and David "obtained promises;" Samson, David, and Daniel "stopped the mouths of lions" (verses 37 and 38); Naboth was "stoned" by Ahab, Zechariah by Joash, and Stephen by the infuriated Jews; Isaiah was "sawn asunder" with a wooden saw; Job was "tempted;" Elijah and Elisha (probably) "wandered in sheepskins;" the hundred prophets were concealed by Obadiah in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth (i. Kings xviii. 4).

SATAN, *by name*, appears to be mentioned in the Old Testament only in 1 Chronicles, Job, Psalms, and Zechariah.

THE CHARACTER of a man's conversion often determines his walk and testimony, and these determine his place in the glory.

IN THE HOLY LAND there are now about 100,000 Jews, one half of whom have arrived in the last seven or eight years.

AT THE ENGLISH Universities what do we find to be the prevalent attitude towards religion? Simply, in one word, agnosticism. With sorrow and reluctance it must be confessed that the majority of Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates are without, or at least profess to be without, any religious belief at all. It is sad, it is deplorable, but it is true. There are, of course, many exceptions; there are many who, as undergraduates, not only are not ashamed of religion, but who display even in their undergraduate days a zealous and intelligent Christianity. Exceptions, however, they remain; certainly the greater number are so many Gallios as far as the Church is concerned. Agnosticism is regarded as a hall-mark of intellectuality; it is fine to scoff at ancient beliefs; it is the sign of "culture" to ridicule by cheap jests any allusion to Christianity. To "disbelieve wholly in everything," as the parodist put it, is so easy and yet so certain a path to admiration, that it is no wonder that so many avail themselves of it.

DEATH OF MAZARIN.—The cardinal is no more. He died in the day of success, having got the better of all his enemies. A violent access of gout was followed by an affection of the chest which proved fatal. His sick-room was crowded with courtiers and sycophants, and he was selling sinecures up to the day of his death! His death-bed was like a money-changer's counter! He was passionately fond of *hocca*, the Italian game which he brought into fashion, and which ruined half the young men about the court. The counterpane was scattered with money and playing cards, which were only brushed aside to make room for the last sacraments! *Thus he perished.*

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GEOLOGY attests that man was the last of created beings, and affords conclusive evidence that, as we gather from Scripture, he cannot have occupied the earth longer than 6,000 years.—*Hitchcock*.

GEOLOGICAL evidence gives no trace of man or of his works until we arrive at the superficial accumulations. The fair assumption is that he was not called into being till about the time when in the northern hemisphere the sea and land received their present configuration, and were peopled by existing genera and species.—*D. Page*.

WILLIAM GREENHILL used to say, Christians must always profess godliness and always practise it; their life must be always green, and their fruit always ripe.

IT IS HARD, but it is excellent, to find the right knowledge of when correction is necessary, and when grace doth most avail.—*G. Sidney*.

MORIAH. The name seems clearly to mean *Morijah*, "the vision," or "the manifested of Jehovah." In 2 Chron. iii. 1, Solomon is said to have built the Temple on Mount Moriah, and there is no good reason to doubt that it was on this mount that Abraham was to offer his son.

AT PORT-AU-PRINCE, in the earthquake of 1770, a negro nurse would not desert her charge though the house walls were giving way. Rushing to the bed on which the infant lay, she stretched forth her arms over it, and with her own body prevented the roof falling on the babe, which escaped unharmed at the expense of the life of its noble protectress! This was human love; how much greater is *divine* love!

TRUTH. When Petrarch, the Italian poet, being summoned as a witness, offered in court to take the oath, the judge closed the book, saying, "As to you, Petrarch, your *word* is sufficient."

IT IS OFTEN the lot of even the most quiet and peaceable, that though they avoid striving, they cannot avoid being striven with. In this sense Jeremiah was a man of contention (Jer. xv. 10), and Christ Himself, though the Prince of Peace.—*Henry*.

WE CANNOT be lonely if God be with us. We cannot want if He provide for us. We cannot err if He guide us. We cannot perish if He preserve us. And all this He will do for those whose faith and confidence is in Him.

MATTHEW XII.—The latter part gives the past, present, and future of the Jews, as chap. xiii. gives the same of Christendom.

KEEP your soul-clothes unspotted from the world. Beware of sin stains, also of self-righteous cleansing and patching.

MOUNT HERMON is probably the true Mount of the Transfiguration, inasmuch as our Lord at that time was tarrying with His disciples at Cæsarea Philippi, which lies at its foot. He "bringeth them up into a high mountain apart," the summit of Hermon being 9,150ft. The view from it is superb.

GOD does care to supply all your need, and He will; but He has a plan and method of His own, and in that plan He has ordered everything to satisfy the heart to overflowing. He will supply all the present need of His children, and then give them riches in glory by Christ Jesus for evermore. Is it not enough to fill every heart with praise?

THE SECRET of blessing and progress after a soul has been brought to know and possess Christ, is the being led into communion with the Father and the Son as revealed of the Holy Ghost in the Word.



## THE SOLDIER.

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WE are children of God, and members of the body of Christ.

Speaking generally, these are the two great relationships in which believers are set in the present day. There is another position, however, to which I desire to call attention, and one very needful in the present time, when human opinion is pleading hard for allowance instead of absolute regard and obedience to the will of another, even to Him we profess to own as our Lord.

We have been called to be soldiers (2 Tim. ii. 4), to be *good* soldiers (2 Tim. ii. 3) of Jesus Christ.

A soldier should expect that he may at any time be called to do battle for his king—and a *good* soldier considers as his primary and only duty the will, the directions of his leader. He knows there is no allowance, at any time, for anything but the carrying out of his captain's instructions.

However, in order to present an appearance which will have the approval of his captain in the day of trial, it is requisite that he go through many exercises. He must set his heart on being efficient in his drill—to be quick in executing orders given to him, not only as a single soldier, but in concert with his fellows. All this he will find the value of when the battle begins. In all cases, however, the captain must regulate the movements, and no suggestions from his comrades can be entertained. He may get a command brought to him through a superior or an inferior, but he must be assured that it comes from the proper quarter.

I will not pursue my illustration further, but turn at once to a Scripture where we find many characteristics of a *good* soldier—found in men who gathered to David, the king of Israel, type of David's Lord.

It was in dark days for the Lord's anointed that these "worthies" became good soldiers of their king. "They came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish" (1 Chron. xii. 1).

It is when the battle is over that there is opportunity to notice the valour or good services of those engaged in the strife. These men need not proclaim their own deeds ; they may well let "another praise them." Those mentioned in our chapter "were among the mighty men, helpers of the war."

Well, dear brethren, the contest is going on. (Paul writes to the Philippians that he was set for the defence of the gospel, and they were, with him, partakers of the same grace.) Who will gain the victory is well assured—even He

" Whom Lord of Hosts we call,  
God blessed over all,—  
He'll hold the field triumphant."

What a favour to be found helping in the war! The fight is against the prince of the power of the air and his hosts. His agents are many, and found by us on every hand.

The men of Issachar had understanding of the times, and knew what Israel ought to do (ver. 32).

We, therefore, need to have daily recourse to "the soldier's manual," "the word of God," so that we may be acquainted with the times we are in, and learn what is the will of our Captain for the day in which our lot is cast. Thus we get fitness.

"Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle" (ver. 33), we read they were "expert in war"—they were well equipped for the war—and "they were not of double heart." The good soldier of Jesus Christ needs to have on the whole armour of God.

In the leaders of these men there were no jealousies—no evil speakings ; all their brethren were at their commandment. Love prevailed—love made them devoted to help in the interests of their king. It is essential to one's being a good soldier that he is confident that the cause is a good one—that it will come out right in "the review day." But alas! the soldier of Jesus Christ allows other matters to occupy his

mind and heart instead of the things of Jesus Christ. "Jealousies, envies, and evil speakings which do gender strifes" get root; and how difficult to get these fruits of the flesh removed! Divisions, party strifes, gain the mastery—and we sink down to the level of men in the flesh. We are not fighting the Lord's battles. The sense of the presence of the Lord is lost. What need, then, we all have to watch against such ways.

They could keep rank, too (ver. 38.) This is tedious to learn, but it is of great value. In the church of God we cannot rightly say, "I will go on by myself;" "I am not concerned about others." The Spirit of God is thus grieved and hindered. The democratic spirit which is growing so strong in the world—"the despising of dominion and speaking evil of dignities," which Jude writes of as marking the apostate days of the church—is seen all around, and we need to watch against it for ourselves. Such thoughts must be banished, and "Christ all and in all" be the motto on our banner. We do not mean that there is to be an open hand to all and everything on which Christ is named. We are aware that this is pleaded. We cannot "keep His commandments or His words" in so doing. We read, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John xiv. 21); "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love" (John xv. 10); and "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments" (1 John v. 2). We are called to please Him who hath chosen us to be soldiers. Then, to be good soldiers, we must "keep rank." When this is not done, the enemy gets an advantage which he will not be slow to use, and brings defeat upon us. All are called to watch (Mark xiii. 37; 1 Thess. v. 6).

We read of those who "separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness"—all the attraction was there. David was Jehovah's anointed, and he was mighty in battle.

They were men of the host, "fit for the battle"—they were not babes, that needed milk and tender nursing. They were not afraid of blows—they knew that was to be expected; and they could endure.

They could handle "the shield of faith" on which the fiery darts of the wicked were quenched; the buckler, likewise, was in use by them. They looked after their own condition; they braced themselves up with the truth in order that the enemy might not be able to accuse them truthfully of unholy or unworthy conduct. The apostle Paul looked well to this (1 Cor. iv. 4; ix. 25, 27).

They would not smile when the enemy presented himself. "Their faces were as lions," and at the call of their master they were found "swift as the roes upon the mountains" to do his commandments.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the One who has the claim upon us all. He has done for us what David, the son of Jesse, could never do: He has died for us. He has made a way through that river of death and judgment which would have, but for Him going before us, engulfed us for ever. He is our life. We are in Him and He is in us, and shortly we shall live with Him for ever.

The ranks are sadly broken, and the conditions of the Lord's host such as He would have them, are sadly absent. Thus it has been since the days of Rev. ii. and iii. Some tell us, therefore, that *everything* is gone. But stop, and let us see. Has the Holy Spirit left the church? Has the Word of God changed, and so ceased to be the Word of God? No, is our only answer. God is not gone. He dwells among His people, although sadly hindered in His manifestations. He is the same to-day as yesterday, and will be the same for ever. He remains. Some time ago a child of God was vexed, and stumbled at treatment he received from his brethren. He meditated withdrawing from them on that account. He was asked by another, "What has the Lord done to you? Has *He* injured you, that you think of leaving 'the way' which

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you have owned for many years as being found in His Word?" He got pulled up by the question. He had not thought of the matter in that light; and yet surely it was the proper light to view such a matter in.

May we learn to judge ourselves more truly, and cleave to Him and His Word; and we shall in the midst of our shame be able to sing, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God sitteth on high above the water-floods, above the roaring of many waters." D. S.

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THE MORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF  
HEAVEN.

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THE *air* of a place is more important to us than the *scenery*. If we can get both, the *refined* and tasteful sensibilities will be gratified, and our condition will be the more perfect; but if we must part with either, and do with only one of these, the *air* of the place we dwell in will be far more important to our good and comfort than the *scenery*. So, not only in our converse with places, but with persons also. Their *spirit* will be of greater importance to us than their *attainments*. As brethren, dwelling together, we find this continually. There is more real refreshment from the gracious, humble, and fervent spirit of another than from any communications of intelligent ones, who are not adorned and filled with that mind and spirit.

In like manner, heaven will have both its *atmosphere* and its *scenery*. The place will be instinct and alive with a moral element, as well as furnished with glories; and the former (I speak as a man) will be of greater amount in the aggregate and history of our joy than the latter. There will be a heaven for every sense and faculty—a heaven for the eye, for the ear, and for the heart through all its pulses—a heaven of light for the intelligent powers, and a heaven for the ardour of love for the affections. I have found it well to ponder this a little—to gather some notices here and there in the Scriptures of this precious secret—to put, not

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before the eye, the *glories* of the place (a very blessed thing at times), but before the heart its moral characteristics. Certain passages have just occurred to me, and I will follow them briefly.

## EXODUS XVIII.

This meeting between Jethro and Moses, and their several companies at the Mount of God, was, as we know, a type of the correspondence between the heavenly and earthly families in the days of the kingdom. But what are the moral features impressed upon it? Most willing subjection on the part of Moses—the most hearty sympathy in the joy of Israel on the part of Jethro, with, at the same time, an assumption of the place of dignity without the least reserve, but in full, easy, and conscious title. And how sweet a social scene must be, animated by such principles and affections as these!

## 2 CHRONICLES IX.

The visit of the Queen of the South to King Solomon is properly known to be a type of the intercourse of the royal Jerusalem and the tributary nations in the days of the kingdom. But how unselfish and how ungrudging, how generous and free-hearted was it! How unlike a state of society when we are hateful, and hating one another! Solomon tells her all her questions, and even exceeds her desires; and she takes the place of a debtor and an inferior, with the praises on her lips of the God of Israel, who had given His people such a sovereign; and she goes back to *spread* his fame, instead of to envy it.

## ISAIAH LX.

This chapter is a prophecy of the state of the millennial earth. But, again, it exhibits the fine moral features of that day. The nations delight to do honour to Zion; their treasures are sent up to minister to her joy and her glory, with all the readiness and the glow of a free-will offering; they fly to Zion with their choicest blessings, as doves fly to their windows. How precious will it be to breathe an

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atmosphere of such glowing, unselfish love, after the foul and noxious air of this present state of social life, where principles of envy and malice give such strong characters to all that is around us!

## MATTHEW XVII.

The holy hill was expressive of the earthly and heavenly families in the days of the glory. And what says Peter, breathing the air of the place? "It is good for us to be here: let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." He was happy, divinely happy; and that cured his heart of selfishness. He was willing to labour, and let others even enter into his labours.

## REV. XXI., XXII.

And so in the holy city, the Jerusalem of the heavens. What is the commerce there between the families of God? All is most blessed. The kings bring their glory and honour up to the light of the city. As it were, they delight to do it reverence—to hold it in honour. They do not lightly approach it, but bring their glory *only* up to it. And the city, she dispenses her treasures with an unsparing hand. The leaves of her tree—the shining of her glory—the streams of her river, are at the full and welcome disposal of the nations.

What an ever-refreshing atmosphere all these Scriptures tell us the atmosphere of heaven and of the millennium will be! If we are wearied with our own selfish hearts, and with the spirit that animates the scene around us every day, we may well *long* for such a change of air as these Scriptures promise us. For what refreshment will it be, the repose of the heart in regions and dwellings of love? If the glories of the place be judged desirable and attractive, what, I ask, will this element, this sweet atmosphere of it be? All the low and miserable workings of selfish nature will be gone. It is not that they will be triumphed over, but they will be gone; for "the mind of Christ" will be there to perfection.

J. G. B.

## DAYS OF INTEREST.

*John i. 19—ii. 11.*

GOD was working, and working in Israel in a new way. A man, a priest was ministering, but not at the altar, nor in the temple. He was preaching at times in the wilderness of Judea, at times by the banks of the Jordan, and also in Ænon near to Salim. At different places was he found, and on one or other side of the Jordan as seemed for the time convenient. Much water he required to carry on his mission, the presence or absence of which may have guided him somewhat in his movements. He did no miracle (John x. 41). His word, therefore, received no confirmation from any startling display of divine power. Yet crowds went out to him.

The centre of attraction was now the Baptist, not the temple nor the altar. His address was weighty, yet not naturally attractive. It was not like that of some popular orator who seeks to please the multitude. In no honeyed words did he speak, captivating people by the charm of his manners or by the silvery tones of his voice. He was, however, in earnest, and made all to feel that, and made many in earnest likewise; for he had a message from God, the God of Israel to His earthly people, to prepare them, if possible, for the coming of Christ.

Never before had such an impression been produced by the preaching of one man, not even Jonah excepted. To exhortations in the synagogue people were well accustomed. But no scribe, no synagogue preacher, preached like John the Baptist. "There went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptised of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. iii. 5, 6). So general was this movement, that to save appearances before men, many Pharisees and Sadducees\* came to

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\* It is Matthew the *publican* who has noticed this fact.



be baptised like the rest. Pharisees who thought themselves so good ; Sadducees, the materialists of their day, who denied a resurrection, and by consequence a judgment to come.

What was the secret of this remarkable movement, that a man almost unknown, for he was in the wilderness all his earlier years (Luke i. 80), could by his preaching, and by such a message, insisting as he did upon repentance, gain the ears of so many, and cause multitudes to be in earnest about their souls? God was working, and when He works in power hearts can be bowed like bulrushes, a token surely that He is God, and that those addressed are His creatures, and that they know it.

To this movement who could really be indifferent? It was an event, *the* event of the day, and forced people to notice it. Just one man was preaching, and disciples though he had, he alone was the speaker. To him and him only had this work been entrusted.

But who was this remarkable person? That was a question. So priests and Levites were sent from Jerusalem to Bethany beyond Jordan (John i. 28) to catechise the son of Zacharias about himself and about his mission. Already had the Lord been baptised of John, and the forty days of the temptation must have been almost, if not quite ended, when those sent by the authorities at Jerusalem fulfilled their mission, and received answers from the Baptist. He was not the Christ. He was sent before Him. For himself he was but the voice foretold by Isaiah the prophet (Is. xl. 3). But among them there was One unknown to them, though known now to John, far greater than the Baptist who was attracting such crowds to his baptism ; for the lowly office of unloosing His latchet John was unworthy to perform. With this our account of the first of these days of interest comes to an end. John had borne testimony *about* the Lord. He was shortly to bear direct testimony *to* Him.

The next day came, and John saw the Lord coming

unto him. Now beholding Him weeks after he had baptised Him, he announced the purpose for which He had come, the blessed and final result of His coming, and His special work of baptising with the Holy Ghost. It was the Lamb of God who stood before John, a name, a designation applicable to no one who had preceded the Baptist, and to but One who was to be after him—God's Lamb! There could be but one such. Now this spoke of a sacrifice which God would provide. And the victim was a man. Far-reaching would be the results of His sacrifice. Men would rejoice in blessings flowing from it, creation likewise would be made abidingly glad by it. Yet centuries would elapse ere that of which John testified, the taking away the sin of the world, could be realised and displayed. Upwards of eighteen hundred years have already rolled by, and still upwards of a thousand years more must run, ere the sin of the world will be taken away. A glimpse have we, then, of a distant future.

But another event nearer in fulfilment, like a rock rising up out of the sea, or a tree standing in the midst of an extensive plain, caught, as it were, the Baptist's eye, and he spoke of it. He, the Lamb of God, would baptise with the Holy Ghost. How did John know this? He tells us a revelation was vouchsafed him about it, and a sign by which he should know the Person who would do it. The sign was the descent of the Spirit on a Person, and His remaining on Him. That John saw at the Lord's baptism, and now tells out what he had then seen, and what he understood about it. The Lord was now on the scene: an object, the object to be put before men. This John does.

He had come to John on that second day (29). John saw Him walking on the *third* day (35-42). What passed, if anything, between John and the Lord on the second day is unrevealed. No thought is there either of any communication between them on the

*third* day. Yet John could not keep silence. He saw Jesus walking as he himself was standing with two of his disciples, and he gave utterance to his thoughts as he said, "Behold the Lamb of God." Words these were, spoken probably without thought as to the result. But what the Baptist's testimony on the second day did not do, this on the third day did: it sent two of his disciples, John and Andrew, after the Lord, never to return to John.

At times we have presented to us what we may call a bird's-eye view of prophecy. That was the character of John's utterance on the second day. That, too, was the character of the first prophetic announcement after the fall (Gen. iii. 15), giving a glimpse right on to the end. Useful, of course, such divine communications must ever be. Nevertheless, what attracts the heart is that which meets man's need. So this short utterance on the part of the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God," all that he then said, was the means of beginning a movement which has never yet ended.

Gathering power to Christ began with these few words—just three, if he spoke in Aramaic, as is probable. An eventful day! and the commencement of an eventful work! Ere it closed Peter had been added to the little company, brought by his brother Andrew to Christ. The Baptist's testimony and that of Andrew—these were the means that day.

The fourth day came. Jesus would go forth into Galilee. A new feature now presents itself. The Lord called Philip, and Philip brought Nathanael to Christ (43-51). The gathering this day commenced not by human instrumentality; it began directly from the Lord. All this seems natural, but all was divinely ordered. And now with John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael we must suppose, the Lord went down into Galilee; and on the third day, dating from the last mentioned, which was the fourth in that week, He was present at the marriage feast of Cana, and there began His miracles by providing that wine for the company which failed not in its supply.

These days of interest culminated in that of the feast, when the Lord manifested His glory; and His disciples believed on Him (John ii. 11). To His disciples it must have been a time of delight indeed. They had found the Christ. They had seen, conversed with, and were in the company of Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph. Nathanael learnt that something good would come out of Nazareth, and that he was in the presence of the Son of God, the King of Israel (i. 45, 49).

Now if the actors in those days were interested, shall not the readers of all this in these days be interested likewise? God, with the future always before Him, foreshadows for our instruction things that are to come. Instances of this in Scripture are not so infrequent. And these days we have referred to are an illustration of it, shadowing forth an outline of the divine way of working from the ministry of John the Baptist to the ushering in of the millenium.

The appearance of John was the prelude to the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. It marks, then, a date in the world's history of very great importance. And here in this gospel, at the outset of it, the evangelist was directed to draw attention to these days, unnoticed by any of the other New Testament writers. They begin, as we have remarked above, after the Lord's baptism, but before, we now add, the opening of His ministry at Nazareth recorded by Luke.

Foreshadowings we get at times in the Word, but each has its special feature, so those that come after the earliest are not just repetitions of that which has been recorded. The fillings up of the great picture of God's workings upon earth are so many and various, that each foreshadowing of the future has its special place in the divine revelation. And here what are pointed out in this gospel are the different testimonies

and the character of them till millennial days. First, there was John the Baptist's testimony of Christ and to Christ (John i. 19-34), now wholly of the past. Next that which had gathering power (35-42), commenced by John and carried on by human instrumentality. This continues. It is the testimony to the Lord as the Lamb of God which attracted then, and attracts still, and will whilst the Church is on earth. By and by a new testimony will commence, wholly distinct from that which now goes forward. For, the Church gone, all Christian saints will have disappeared, and God will begin to work afresh. This is foreshadowed by the Lord Himself on the fourth day calling Philip. After that, in due time, will come millennial rest and joy, of which that marriage feast with the water turned into wine is the precursor.

The work of God on earth, from the dawn of New Testament times to the bright days of the millenium, is thus sketched forth as it is nowhere else. The work will go on till the time of rejoicing on earth shall arrive. At present, it is that which characterised the third day of testimony which still exists; and our place in these eventful days, whilst on earth, is in that day—the work of the evangelist, and also of the teacher, being concerned with the truth of the Lamb of God.

Then there will follow after the rapture a new testimony commenced by God, of which the Lord calling Philip, as we have said, is just a foreshadowing. And between the commencement of that time and millennial joy there will intervene the awful work of Satan, and reign of terror of the beast, supported by the false prophet, which will seem to outward eyes to wipe out all remembrance of God from the earth. Does not the pause in the acts of the Lord between His reception of Nathanael and the marriage feast fit in well with that interval of diabolical power, of which Revelation teaches us?

But the close! God never leaves His people un-

certain of the issue. Rest, joy, unending joy, will come, just as the wine made by the Lord never ran out whilst the feast lasted. What a privilege to have our part now in the testimony which goes out, as to the atoning sacrifice of the Lord meeting man's need ! What a prospect before us, which will certainly be made good, of joy everlasting with Him who was the Victim, and who provides also for the joy of His own for ever ! He delights to make His people glad, and He would have them expect it. C. E. S.

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### THE GOSPEL FOR BELIEVERS.

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THERE is, as many must have observed, an imperishable freshness and vitality in the gospel to every spiritual mind ; nor can it be otherwise if the One in whom the gospel is summed up be before our souls. If He occupy our hearts as He should do, and be the object of our affections as He desires to be, nothing will ever dethrone or displace His person and His work. They constitute, together with His resurrection and coming glories, those cardinal features of Christianity of which the Holy Ghost witnesses through the word. These grand elementary truths are what the Spirit of God applies to the conscience and heart of the sinner that eternal life may be received and eternal salvation known. Nor does any subsequent measure of attainment or degree of knowledge either surpass or supersede what God has laid as the immutable foundation of glory to Himself and to His Son, as well as the eternal basis of every bit of blessing that has ever come, or ever will come, to saint and to sinner.

It is thus that every fact concerning Christ has an interest and an importance incomparably beyond those of every other fact that could be adduced.

But there are *certain* facts concerning Him which, by reason of their divinely marked character, eclipse

all else. Let us look at 1 Cor. xv., for there we have the Apostle Paul ministering the gospel to believers ; and let us remember and recall, what is significantly unspoken of here, that God had given His Son, that Christ had come down from heaven's highest elevation to earth's deepest degradation, that He had become a Man, a Servant, and a Sufferer, His holy life as divinely perfect as divinely beautiful, yet as to all these facts the apostle is absolutely reticent, that we may understand that his gospel—Paul's gospel—begins with that all-important fact which, together with its correlative, outweighs all others—*that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*

Great and grand and glorious as those other facts are to which we have referred, and which historically preceded this, we are shut up to the conclusion that the apostle's silence as to them establishes the stupendous importance of this declaration, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures!

Can it be possible, then, that any child of God should allow so mighty a truth to become contracted or attenuated before his soul? And, be it observed, that the Spirit of God caused these words, "*for our sins,*" to be inserted here that the truly vicarious character and sacrificial value of that death might be indelibly imprinted upon our hearts. And will any—even the most advanced saint in the school of God—in the presence of truths like these, say that he has outgrown the gospel? Surely it is impossible! Also, how necessary and how important is every word of Scripture ; for are there not many men to-day who, while ready enough to acknowledge that Christ has lived and Christ has died, have never accepted the fact that He died *for our sins* according to the Scriptures? But the word of God testifies that He bare our sins in His own body on the tree, and thus nothing can ever surpass and nothing can ever supersede the cross of Christ throughout time and eternity.

And then follows the further great truth, *that He*

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*was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.* No words of ours could adequately describe the importance of this as the sequel to what has gone before. If you sever the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from His death you rob it of its peace-giving power to the conscience; that He died for our sins is neither more true nor more important than that He was raised again for our justification. Both the one and the other were according to the Scriptures, as divinely predicted, and the fulfilment of both are in the Scriptures divinely recorded. They constitute the foundations and the fortifications whereon and wherein every saint of God really is, and if this be understood in its significance and in its value to our hearts, there will be few indeed of such saints who will under-estimate the ever-abiding charm and blessedness to the soul of the gospel of our salvation.

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SYMBOLS USED IN THE BOOK OF  
REVELATION.

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CHAPTER XI.

Verse 1. *Temple and Altar measured.*—Preservation and acceptance of true Jewish worshippers.

2. *The Court.*—Outward profession under Gentile oppression.

4. *Two Olive-trees and two Candlesticks.*—God's declared witness to the re-establishment of Israel with royalty and priesthood (Zech. iv.).

7. *Beast.*—(See chap. xiii. 1.)

8. *The great Street of the City.*—Jerusalem.

12. *A great Voice.*—A call from Him who is the resurrection and the life.

13. *Earthquake.*—(See chap. vi. 12.)

*Tenth part of City.*—One of the ten horns or kingdoms.

*Seven Thousand Names of Men.*—The complete organised systems of the earth.



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19. *Temple Opened*.—The public recommencement of God's dealings with the Jews on earth from heaven.

*Ark of the Covenant*.—Sign of God's faithfulness to Israel; the outward link of His connection with His people.

*Lightnings, &c.*—(See chap. viii. 5; xvi. 18.)

CHAPTER XII.

Verse 1. *Woman*.—Israel; the Jewish mother of Christ personified in Jerusalem (Is. ix. 6).

*Clothed with the Sun*.—Israel or Jerusalem invested with supreme authority.

*The Moon under her Feet*.—The whole reflected light of her previous state under her feet.

*Crown of Twelve Stars*.—Complete human authority (compare Gen. xxxvii. 9; Is. lx.).

3. *Red Dragon*.—Satan viewed in connection with earthly power.

*Seven Heads*.—Completeness of power in evil.

*Ten Horns*.—The ideal aggregate of the rulers of the divided Roman empire; incomplete kingly administration. [The Lamb had *seven* horns. *Twelve* is completeness of power in man.]

*Seven Crowns [Diadems]*.—Completeness in forms of power.

4. *Tail of the Dragon*.—Malignant influence through false teaching (Is. ix. 15).

*Third part of the Stars*.—Rulers of the Roman Empire (see chap. viii.).

5. *Man Child*.—Christ.

6. *Wilderness*.—Isolation from the present resources of the civilised earth.

10. *A great Voice*.—Authoritative announcement from heaven by Christ of a great public fact.

14. *Eagles' Wings*.—Means of rapid escape (Matt. xxiv. 16).

15. *Water as a Flood [River]*.—The movements of people under Satanic influence (Ps. xciii. 3, 4).

CHAPTER XIII.

Verse 1. *The Sand of the Sea*.—Position of moral

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separation from the tumultuous movements of the people.

*Beast*.—Revived form of the Roman Empire (Dan. vii.).

*Sea*.—The turbulent mass of unsettled, unreclaimed nations in anarchy and confusion (Is. lvii. 20).

1. *Seven Heads*.—(See chap. xii. 3 ; xvii. 9.)

*Ten Horns*.—(See chap. xii. 3.)

*Ten Crowns [Diadems]*.—Kingly power in an incomplete form.

*Names of Blasphemy*.—Open enmity to God and His Christ.

2. *Leopard*.—Swiftness of conquest ; cruelty (Jer. v. 6 ; Dan. vii. 6 ; Hos. xiii. 7 ; Hab. i. 8).

*Bear*.—Voracity ; tenacity of grasp.

*Lion*.—Ferocity ; strength (Jud. xiv. 8). [The respective characteristic qualities of the Macedonian, the Persian, and the Babylonian Empires.]

3. *Deadly Wound by a Sword*.—Political calamity inflicted by war.

8. *Lamb's Book of Life*.—Register of the elect (chap. iii. 5 ; xx. 12).

11. *Two-horned Beast*.—Imitator of Christ's power as King and Prophet, the same as the false prophet ; the Antichrist (Dan. vii. 8 ; xi. 36 ; 2 Thess. ii.).

*Earth*.—The Roman earth, including those who dwell, or have their portion in it.

16. *Mark in the Right Hand or on the Forehead*.—Public profession or appearance before men.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Verse 1. *144,000*.—The suffering Jewish remnant of the Psalms. Judah and Benjamin. Christ's *brethren* of Matthew xxv. 40 ; Psalm lxix. 26 ; 1 Samuel xxii. 1, 2 ; Daniel iii.

*Name in their Foreheads*.—Open confession of Christ (compare chap. xiii. 16).

2. *Harpers*.—Perhaps the same as those of chapter xv. 2.

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4. *Virgins*.—Those who had kept apart from the idolatries of the great harlot.

8. *Babylon*.—City of Confusion.—(See chap. xvii 5.)

14. *A White Cloud*.—(See chap. x. 1.)

14. *Golden Crown*.—Royal dignity.

15. *Harvest*.—Discriminating judgment (Matt. xxiv. 40, 41).

17. *Vine of the Earth*.—Religious apostasy ; *Jewish* (Is. v. ; Joel iii. 13).

19. *Winepress*.—The fierce, unsparing wrath of God ; unmixed vengeance on the apostate Jews and nations with them (Ps. lxxv. 8 ; lxxxiii. ; Is. xxxiv. ; lxiii. 1, 6 ; Jer. xxv. 15, 16).

20. *16,000 Furlongs [200 miles]*.—Widespread human carnage. [200 miles approximate very nearly to the extent of the land of Canaan.]

CHAPTER XV.

Verse 2. *Sea of Glass*.—Fixed purity ; washing of water by the word no longer needed.

*Mingled with Fire*.—Mark of the great fiery tribulation through which they had passed.

*Harps of God*.—Perfect joy and praise.—(See chap. xiv. 2.)

5. *Temple Opened*.—Judicial testimony to man's guilty state.

6. *Pure and White Linen and Golden Girdles*.—A judgment which required purity and divine righteousness.

7. *Golden Vials [Bowls]*.—The expression of God's wrath against the corruption of the earth.

8. *Smoke from the Glory*.—The solemn darkness in which God is shut up preceding active judgment, so that man cannot find Him (Is. vi. 4).

CHAPTER XVI.

2. *Noisome Sore*.—Moral distemper and misery (Ex. ix. 8, 9 ; Is. i. 6).

3. *Blood as of a Dead Man*.—Final open apostasy and alienation from God.

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4. *Rivers and Fountains of Waters.*—(See chap. viii. 10.) These popular influences became the power of death.

7. *Altar.*—Witness of the blood-shedding of saints (chap. vi. 9).

8. *To Scorch with Fire.*—Intolerable tyranny and persecution.

12. *Euphrates.*—The securing boundary of the Western prophetic power. The commercial prosperity of Babylon.

13. *Three Unclean Spirits like Frogs.*—The open energy and hostility of Satan; the renewed Roman Empire as come up out of the bottomless pit; and Antichrist, a certain analogy with the evil of Cain, Balaam, and Core. [Frogs were regarded by the Greek poets as the proper inhabitants of the Stygian lake.]

16. *Armageddon.*—A mystic name (compare Jud. v. 19, 20).

17. *Air.*—The universal moral influence that acts on man (compare chap. ix. 2).

18. *Voices, Thunders, Lightnings, and Earthquake.*—(See chap. viii. 5.)

19. *The Great City.*—The public confederation of European civilisation; all that was established *within* the Roman Empire.

*The Cities of the Nations.*—All that the nations *outside* of Rome had built up politically. The *other* European centres of social life.

*Babylon.*—(See chap. xvii. 5.)

20. *Islands and Mountains.*—(See chap. vi. 14.)

21. *Hail the Weight of a Talent.*—Rapid and overwhelming incursions of hostile armies (Joel ii. 2, 9; Isaiah xxviii. 2; xxx. 30).

## CHAPTER XVII.

Verse 1. *Waters.*—People under Satanic power and influence (see verse 15).

2. *Fornication.*—(See chap. ii. 14.)

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3. *Wilderness*.—Place of desolation and drought where no springs of God are.

*Woman*.—The great imperial city in her corrupt religious character. Papal Rome.

*Scarlet-coloured Beast*.—Imperial Rome in its blasphemous form.

4. *Purple*.—Imperial raiment. [Combined with scarlet a mixture of heavenly and earthly.]

*Scarlet*.—Human glory and splendour.

*Gold, Precious Stones, and Pearls*.—Affectation of divine righteousness, glory, and beauty.

*Abominations and Filthiness*.—Idolatry and corruption ; prostitution of Christianity.

5. *Babylon*.—The great licentious and idolatrous corruptress of religion ; Western civilisation in its religious aspect (Jer. li. 7).

*Mystery*.—Pretension to truth.

9. *Seven Mountains*.—Forms of government.

These, according to Livy and Tacitus, are

1. Kings

2. Consuls

3. Dictators

4. Decemvirs

5. Military Tribunes

“ Five are fallen.”

6. Imperial.—“ *One is*” administered by Domitian in the time of John.

7. “ And the other is not yet come.” [Fore-shadowed perhaps by the first Napoleon.]

16. *Shall cut her flesh and burn her with fire*.—Wholesale confiscation and appropriation of Church property and benefices by the Imperial Beast.

18. *The Great City*.—Rome (see chap xvi. 19).

CHAPTER XVIII.

Verse 1. *Babylon*.—The serpent’s counterfeit of the true church ; seen here in the last stage of its degradation ; sunk in religious idolatry and worldliness ; intoxicated with draughts from the golden cup of the Great Harlot ; and become the abode of demons.

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9. *Fornication*.—Illicit intercourse between the church and the world.

11. *The Merchants of the Earth*.—Unholy traffickers in the service of the Great Harlot, who enrich themselves by the sale of indulgences in all luxuries and delicacies; and in everything that could minister to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the ostentation of life in a polluted world; embellished and rendered pleasant by the inventions of Cain and his descendants; with the seductions of music and the fine arts; all under the name of Christ and the Cross. A photograph of the Market-place of Babylon is given in verses 11, 12, 13 of this chapter.

23. *Sorceries*.—Satanic deceptions and witchcrafts; intercourse with evil spirits.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Verse 11. *White Horse*.—Divine energy of government in the earth; triumphant imperial power (Ps. xlv. 3, 4).

12. *Eyes as a Flame of Fire*.—(See chap. i. 14.)

*Many Crowns*.—Possession of all titles to sovereignty.

13. *Vesture dipped in blood*.—Character of Christ's display in vengeance.

15. *Sharp Sword*.—(See chap. i. 16.)

## CHAPTER XX.

Verse 1. *Key*.—Power in administrative responsibility to God.

*Bottomless Pit*.—[*Abyss*] (See chap. ix. 1.)

*Chain*.—Hindrance from action.

8. *Gog and Magog*.—Countless hordes from the four quarters of the earth. Repetition on a larger scale of Ezekiel xxxviii.

11. *Great White Throne*.—Sessional judgment, at the end, of the wicked dead now raised.

12. *Book of Life*.—(See chap. iii. 5; xiii. 8.)

14. *Death and Hell* [*Hades*].—The enemies of man personified; and so of the Lord as Saviour,

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wherein body and soul had been held temporarily imprisoned. This is over.

CHAPTER XXI.

Verse 2. *The Holy City, New Jerusalem.* — The bride displayed in glory ; not her dwelling place.

11. *Jasper.* — (See chap. iv. 3.)

12. *Wall.* — Security ; salvation (Is. xxvi. 1 ; lx. 18 ; Zech. ii. 5).

*Twelve Gates.* — Perfect judicial administration. [*Twelve* is administrative perfection in man.] (Gen. xix. 1 ; Deut. xxii. 15 ; Dan. ii. 49 ; Amos v. 15.)

*At the Gates Twelve Angels.* — Providential administration.

*Names of the Twelve Tribes.* — Direct earthly government as in Israel.

14. *Twelve Foundations, and in them the Names of the Twelve Apostles.* — The church apostolically founded by the twelve (Eph. ii. 20).

15. *Golden Reed.* — Measurement by the divine standard.

16. *Four-square.* — Completeness ; the same all ways ; the perfection of a city whose builder and maker is God.

18. *Pure Gold clear as Crystal.* — Purity without spot or blemish.

19. *Precious Stones.* — Rays of divine glory reflected through the bride.

21. *Pearl.* — Christ's estimate of the beauty and comeliness of the bride ; seen externally by men and angels (Matt. xiii. 45, 46).

CHAPTER XXII.

Verse 1. *River of Water of Life.* — Life-giving blessing flowing through the bride, the Lamb's wife.

2. *Tree of Life.* — Food for the heavenly inhabitants ; constant refreshment.

*Leaves of the Tree.* — Blessing to those on earth ; healing for the nations.

264 SYMBOLS USED IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

4. *His Name on the Forehead.*—Perfect reflection of Himself (1 John iii. 2 ; compare chap. xiii. 16).

THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST  
WHICH GOD GAVE UNTO HIM.

Not a chapter throughout this book where Christ is not spoken of, or heard, or seen in action. The following instances, among others, are worthy of notice, and are submitted for consideration :—

Chapter i. 5. A salutation from Himself.

7. His appearing announced.

14. Is seen in the divine glory of the Ancient of days.

17. The First and the Last. The One who

18. Became dead, and lives for evermore.

Chapter ii. and iii. Addresses the seven churches in words of encouragement and warning.

iv. 1. John hears Him saying, “Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.”

v. 6. The slain Lamb in the midst of the throne takes the book ; and—

vi. Opening its seven seals reveals divine counsels and mysteries hitherto wholly secret ; things to be hereafter.

6. A voice in the midst of the four living creatures.

vii. Seals the elect of Israel for preservation through the coming great tribulation, and brings into millennial blessing the great white-robed multitude redeemed from the nations.

viii. 3. Stands at the golden altar, and adds incense to the prayers of His persecuted saints on earth.

ix. 13, 14. Still standing at the golden altar, He speaks from its four horns to the sixth angel.

x. As the Angel of the covenant He lays claim to the earth.

xi. 1, 3. His acceptance of true Jewish worshippers. Empowers His witnesses to prophesy.



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xi. 12. Calls to His slain witnesses, "*Come up hither.*"

15. The kingdom and dominion and glory are given to Him.

[The seventh trumpet and the third woe mark the close of the second half-week, and complete the symbolic history of this first great division of the book.]

xii. 5. His birth and rapture.

7, 9. Casts out Satan.

10. Announces salvation and the kingdom.

xiii. 8. Security for those only whose names are in the book of life of the slain Lamb.

xiv. 1-3. The Lamb on Mount Zion gathers His persecuted Jewish brethren, the suffering remnant of the Psalms.

16. Reaps the harvest of the earth.

xv. 3. The victorious company of martyrs who had passed through the fiery tribulation sing the SONG OF THE LAMB as they stand on the sea of glass.

xvi. 1. A voice out of the temple—(Is this His voice?)

15. Behold, I come as a thief.

xvii. 14. The Lamb shall overcome them.

xviii. 4. A voice from heaven, "Come out of her, My people."

xix. 5. A voice out of the throne, "Praise our God, all ye His servants."

7. The marriage of the Lamb celebrated in heaven.

11, 21. Comes forth as King of kings and Lord of lords. Treads the winepress.

xx. Reigns with His risen saints a thousand years, and finally sits on the great White Throne.

xxi. 3. A loud voice out of the throne.

22. God and the Lamb are the temple.

23. The Lamb is the light and glory of the city.

xxii. 16. "I, Jesus, have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches."

20. "Surely I come quickly, Amen." J. M.

## A FRAGMENT ON WORK.

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LUKE ix. 10: "*And the apostles, when they were returned, told Him all that they had done. And He took them and went aside privately into a desert place.*"

This was natural; they were but missionaries. Note, here is the place of report; the subject matter, "All that they had done." And, indeed, the only safe one. It is a different thing to report one's doings to a holy Judge who has committed work to us, and to an indolent neighbour.

Fruits of grace we may report, to the joy of the church. From work into the wilderness is a good transition, and not to the midst of men. Among them work retires to Christ, if it may be alone, as far as reference goes. Then you will, if it be for you, work well again. If you follow the Lord in it, His work will soon be upon you again, be wholly it. Know when your work is ended, or you will do something besides your work, and miss that which will fit you for the next work that is to come. You can only do God's work, and that is what is given you to do. Seek the Lord's guidance in this, for in ourselves we have anything but sufficiency for these things.

Luke ix. 53: "*And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem.*"

O, strange, ignorant, misguided man! What a reason for rejecting Him! He was rejected for that which He had to set His face firm to do, and that to save the world, for they knew nothing of what He was about. So the saint—if our eye be not to Him, we shall be explaining, and think it hard. We must keep our very faithfulness to ourselves—nothing more important in ministry and conduct; if we act on high principles (and he who acts by faith does) few can understand them. The less that is said, except for the Lord, the better—rather let nothing; yet openness with the saints is good.—*Notes and Comments*, Part 23.  
J. N. D.

THERE are four evils which mark the degenerate state of professing Christians in general—their love of the world ; their love of ease ; their fear of man ; their distrust of God's love. The primitive believers were just the reverse of all this. They despised the world and its flattering allurements ; they took up the cross and denied themselves ; they boldly confessed Christ, and suffered for His sake ; they trusted God for all things, and so took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. And what was the blessed fruit ? They abounded in consolation ; they grew in grace ; they shone as lights in the world ; they felt joy and peace in believing.

HE who has seen the glory of the Lord in Christ Jesus will be sensible of his own unworthiness.

IN the school of Christ, the first lesson of all is *self-denial and humility* ; yea, it is written above the door as the rule of entry or admission : “ Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.”

PERMANENT rest is not to be expected on the road, but at the end of the journey.—*Dillwyn*.

WITHOUT a conflict there is no conquest, and without a conquest no crown.—*Ibid*.

THE words of the Saviour, “ If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight,” must signify to every unprejudiced mind the same as if He had said, “ As My kingdom is not of this world, therefore My servants do not fight.”—*Ibid*.

IF an angel were sent to find the most perfect man, he would probably not find him composing a body of divinity ; but perhaps a cripple in a poor-house, whom the parish wish dead, one humbled before God, with far lower thoughts of himself than others have of him.—*Newton*.

WHEN a Christian goes into the world because he sees it his *call*, yet, while he feels it also his *cross*, it will not hurt him.—*Ibid*.

A CHRISTIAN should never plead spirituality for being a sloven. If he be a shoe-cleaner, he should be the best in the parish.—*Ibid*.

GOD deals with us as we do with our children : he first *speaks*, then gives a gentle *stroke*, at last a *blow*.—*Ibid*.

LOVE is the hardest lesson in Christianity ; but, for that reason, it should be most our care to learn it. “ *Difficilis quæ pulchra*.”—*Penn*.

IFIND, daily, that I may as well endeavour to take up the waters of the ocean with my pen as to comprehend, spiritually, in the smallest degree, any of the “ deep things of God ” without His teaching, who “ searcheth all things.”—*Charles*.

THERE is nothing worth living for but to advance the Lord's work.—*Ibid*.

WHAT do they not lose who are strangers to serious meditation on the wonders and beauties of created nature ? How gloriously the God of creation shines in His works ! Not a tree, nor leaf, nor flower, not a bird nor insect, but proclaims in glowing language, “ God made me ! ”—*Richmond*.

“ HE went about doing good : ” this is the pattern for every Christian. He is a counterfeit one who does not strive to imitate it.—*Venn*.

PHARISEES.—To do good purely to be gazed at and talked of and applauded ; this was the character of the Pharisees, whose vices were real, and whose virtues were imaginary. They could only expect their reward where they sought it, that is, from men.—*Tortin*.

THE OLDEST coin of which we read is in Gen. xxiii. 16—400 shekels of silver, *current money with the merchant*. The earliest coins were stamped with the figure of an ox or a sheep. Jacob bought a parcel of a field for 100 pieces of money. The original Hebrew is *kesitoth*, which signifies lambs, with the figure of which the metal was doubtless stamped.—*Maurice*.

PROVIDENCE.—A few drops of water prostrated Napoleon, said Victor Hugo. He meant that there having been rain overnight the battle of Waterloo was not begun until 11 a.m., for Napoleon could not move his artillery over the heavy mud-plain until near noon, and that five hours' delay turned the fate of Europe, enabling Blucher to arrive with his allies just when the forces of Wellington were all but defeated.

THE JUDAS TREE.—We have heard of a singular tree which forcibly illustrates the deceitfulness of sin. It is called the Judas tree. The blossoms appear before the leaves, and they are of brilliant crimson. The flaming beauty of the flowers attracts innumerable insects, and the wandering bee is drawn to it to gather honey. But every bee that alights upon the blossoms imbibes a fatal opiate, and drops from among the crimson flowers dead to the earth, which is strewn with the victims of the fatal fascinations of this tree.—*Dr. Cuyler*.

MY MOTHER, when I was a little child, used to bid me kneel beside her, and placed her hand upon my head while she prayed. When she died, and I was left much to myself, like others I was inclined to evil passions, but often felt myself checked and drawn back by the remembrance of that soft hand on my head. When as a young man I travelled in foreign lands, I was exposed to many a temptation, and should have yielded, but that God used the memory of that hand upon my head. I seemed to feel its pressure as in the days of my infancy, and there came with it a voice to my heart—a voice that must be obeyed—"Oh, do not this wickedness, my son, nor sin against thy God."

EVEN in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon.—*Lord Bacon*.

HELIOPOLIS.—Six or seven miles from Cairo, the eye lights on the spot where stood that On or Heliopolis, the far-famed city of the sun, the daughter of whose high priest became the wife of Joseph. Some traces of the temple still remain. There is a pool of water, with a few willows weeping over it—that pool was the spring or fountain of the sun. There is a solitary obelisk rising amid ruins, and this and another, the base of which alone remains, confronted the ancient temple of On. And there it has stood for well-nigh 4,000 years! It was there when Abraham came down into Egypt to escape the famine that desolated Canaan. It may have been beneath its shadow that Joseph first beheld his future wife, Asenath. Often must Moses have stood beside it. Herodotus makes mention of its existence; so that it was already old before any other history than that which the Bible contains had yet been written. It has survived the dynasties of the Pharaohs, the Ptolemies and the Cæsars, and bids fair to survive that of the Mohammeds too.—*Dr. Buchanan*.

Joys are our wings, sorrows are our spurs.

MERCY.—A soldier having heard of the dangerous illness of his wife applied for leave of absence, but was refused. He deserted, and was quickly arrested. Tried and found guilty, he was brought before his commanding officer to receive sentence. He entered the tent, saluted, and stood perfectly unmoved while the officer read his fearful doom—"To be shot to death with musketry on the next Friday." Not a muscle of his face twitched, not a limb quivered. "I deserve it, sir," he replied respectfully; "I deserted from my flag. Is that all, sir?" "No," replied the officer, "I have something else for you;" and, taking another paper, he read aloud the doomed man's pardon. The undaunted spirit which severity had failed to move was completely broken down. He dropped to the ground, shaking, sobbing, and overcome; and, being restored to his regiment, proved himself grateful for the mercy shown him, and was soon promoted.

A MOTHER'S MEMORY.—"What do you remember about your dear mother, my boys?" said I to my little bereaved nephews. "Oh! everything." "But what in particular?" "Oh, this, uncle—that there never was a day since we can remember in which she did not take us to her room and pray with us, unless she was ill in bed." Never did that sister seem so dear to me as when I heard this.

INFLUENCE OF FORGIVENESS.—A mischievous sailor having upset the apple basket of an old coloured woman was heartily enjoying a laugh at her expense. What was his surprise when she quietly picked up the fruit without any resentment in her manner, and giving him a dignified look of mingled sorrow, kindness, and pity, said, "God forgive you, my son, as I do!" That touched a tender chord in the heart of the rude Jack tar. He felt ashamed, self-condemned, and repentant. The tear started in his eye; he felt that he *must* make some reparation. So, heartily confessing his error, and forcing some "loose change" upon the wondering old black woman, he exclaimed, "God bless you, kind mother! I'll never do so again."

DIVINE SYMPATHY.—"I know their sorrows" (Ex. iii. 7). There are many sensitive fibres of the soul that the best and tenderest *human* sympathy cannot touch. But the Prince of sufferers, He who led the way in the path of sorrow, "knoweth our frame." When crushing bereavement lies like ice on the heart, when the dearest earthly friend cannot enter into the peculiarities of our grief, Jesus can, Jesus does. He who once bore my *sins*, carried also my *sorrows*. The eyes of Him who is now on the throne were once dim with weeping. I can recall in all my afflictions that "He was afflicted;" in all my tears, that "Jesus wept."—*Macduff*.

THE SUN by the action of heat makes wax moist and mud dry, softening the one while hardening the other, by the same operation producing opposite results; thus from the long-suffering of God some are moved while others are only hardened.—*Theoderet*.

ALL (*i.e.*, some of all kinds).—Exodus ix., verse 6 is said to be contradicted by verse 20; but nothing is more common among writers, sacred and profane, than the use of *all* not in an *absolute*, but a *relative* or *comparative* sense, as implying *many*—some of all sorts.—*Carpenter*.

"THE FLAX was bolled" (Ex. ix. 31)—*i.e.*, in blossom, having ball-like seed vessels on it.

IDOLATRY is one of the most unconquerable of all the corrupt propensities of the human soul. Miracles had scarcely ceased, the apostles were scarcely cold in their graves, before idolatrous forms were superinduced upon the pure spirituality of Christianity.—*J. B. Walker.*

NAPOLEON AT THE RED SEA.—Actuated by rationalism, and desirous to contradict the miracle by proving it was conformable to ordinary laws of nature, he one day waited for the ebb tide, and made an attempt to follow what he supposed were the footsteps of Moses in passing the creek. But he managed the matter in a way more resembling the failure of the Egyptians than the success of the Israelites. The tide came up regardless of him and his staff, and it was with great difficulty that any of them were saved.—*Dr. Aiton.*

QUAILS.—The words “two cubits high” (Num. xi. 31) *may* mean that they were beaten downward by the “wind from the Lord” to within about 3ft. off the ground, and, being faint with struggling against the wind, were thus easily caught.

SINAI AND HOREB.—Scripture uniformly preserves the distinction by using *on* Sinai and *in* Horeb. The preposition *upon* is frequently used in reference to Horeb, but not once as to Sinai, showing that Sinai was the mountain, while Horeb was the whole district in which Sinai stood.—*Bonar.*

HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.—This command being repeated by a little boy, he was asked to explain it. He replied, almost in a whisper, “Yesterday I showed a stranger over the mountain. The sharp stones cut my feet. The gentleman saw they were bleeding, and gave me money to buy some shoes; but I gave it to my mother, for she had no shoes either, and I thought I could go barefoot better than she.”

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.—A fine young man, a Caffre, having stolen a horse, was rejoicing in his success when he was suddenly struck with these words. Drawing himself up, he said, “What is this? I have frequently heard these words, but never felt as I do now. This must be the word of God!” He took the horse back, and returned a true penitent. He bought European clothing, went to hear the Word preached, and is now adorning his Christian profession.

ONLY ONE SIN.—Had a man but one sin he would be a bondsman of hell. One little hole will sink a ship. The stab of a penknife to the heart will as effectually destroy a man as all the daggers that killed Cæsar in the senate house. The soul will be strangled with one cord of vanity as well as with all the cart-ropes of iniquity. One dram of poison will dispatch a man, and one reigning sin will bring him to endless misery.—*R. Bolton.*

IN EASTERN language, “yesterday and the day before” signify time *past*; “to-day and to-morrow” time to *come* (Ex. viii. 14; Jos. iv. 6; also xxii. 24, margin).

THE LORD Jesus Christ as perfect God is present *everywhere*, and as glorified Man can be present *anywhere*. The younger Pliny, writing about Christians to the Emperor Trajan in 107 A.D., says: “They are wont to meet together on a stated day before it is light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as God.”

NO PART of the Bible could be spared. It is by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God we live.

## THE SEVEN PARABLES OF MATTHEW XIII.

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### I.

By direct teaching, by miracles, and by parables, the Lord instructed when upon earth. This is made very plain in the Gospel of Matthew, nor is it unnoticed by Mark and Luke. But Matthew, by the plan he pursues, brings this out most clearly. Direct teaching we have in the sermon on the mount, in chapters v.-vii. Miracles have a prominent place in chapters viii., ix. Then parabolic teaching comes in chapter xiii., to be resumed from time to time till we end the reading of chapter xxv.

To such a manner of instruction the Jews were no strangers. Teachers among them before the Lord's incarnation had resorted to it. But why the Lord, who had commenced with direct teaching, subsequently adopted this form became a matter of inquiry by the twelve. In each of the three gospels mentioned above the parable of the sower heads the list; and in each of them the Lord's reason for adopting this form of teaching is stated, elucidated by the question from the disciples, recorded only by the son of Alphæus, "Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?" (Matt. xiii. 10). The question asked indicated the new departure in the Lord's way of ministry. His disciples, perceiving this, asked Him about it.\*

He had spoken often in synagogues, and had taught in His house, as we believe it was, in Capernaum (Mark ii. 1). Gracious words had proceeded from His mouth (Luke iv. 22) in the synagogue at Nazareth. His word was with power, we learn, at Capernaum (Luke iv. 32). He went about, too,

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\* In the Gospel of John true parabolic teaching is never found. Direct teaching characterises his narrative, save where (as in x. 1-6) allegorical teaching appears. The son of Zebedee never uses the term *parable*, though the word he employed has been so translated.

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preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. iv. 23); and the crowds which had heard Him on the mount "were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. vii. 28, 29). The change, then, to parabolic from direct teaching might well arrest attention, and draw forth from the disciples that question to which we have referred.

He spoke for spiritual profit, and not to please or to astonish His hearers; hence, whilst direct teaching would place all who heard it under responsibility, the Lord would test people to manifest what they were. Now, this His parabolic instruction definitely did. Did they desire to learn, then they would come and ask. This the twelve did, and others with them (Mark iv. 10). To all such He willingly explained.

But, alas! the mass remained indifferent, fulfilling the words of Isaiah, as Matthew alone has recorded (xiii. 14, 15)—in keeping, this, with the dispensational character of his gospel. He who spake as never man spake was there. People heard Him; they gathered in crowds around Him. Yet their hearts were waxed gross, their ears were dull of hearing, and their eyes they had closed. How was this known? He spoke in parables. They heard, they understood not, and had no desire to know!

We have said that the parable of the sower appears in the three gospels named above. Now, it is introduced in each in harmony with the plan of the writer. Mark gives it in chapter iv. of his gospel as part of the instruction for the twelve ere sending them forth to preach. Chosen for apostles in chapter iii. 14, they are not sent out till vi. 7. All that comes between was evidently to furnish them with intelligence as to the character of things in their day. By parables, then, were they taught, and by miracles were they to learn what it was that God was doing, and on what principle it was that blessing could now be enjoyed, viz., faith—illustrated by the woman who came behind



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the Lord to touch the hem of His garment, and by Jairus, the synagogue ruler, who came on behalf of his sick and only daughter.

Then turning to Luke, we meet with the parable in chapter viii. of his gospel in which characteristic features of the kingdom are set forth. And by this parable it is indicated how the kingdom of God would be advanced. Neither by natural birth nor by the power of the sword could it be extended. The Jews might boast of being sons of the kingdom, as descended from Abraham after the flesh ; but all in vain. By nothing save by the word of God taking root in the heart would it be forwarded.

Next, reading the parable in Matthew's gospel, we observe that it is introduced comparatively later than in either of the other two. In Mark, it is found in the *fourth* chapter ; in Luke, it appears in the *eighth* chapter ; in Matthew, we meet not with it till the *thirteenth* chapter. Now this is quite in keeping with the dispensational character of his gospel. A few words on this may help.

The Lord, returning from the forty days' temptation in the wilderness, afterwards left Nazareth and went to dwell in Capernaum (Matt. iv.). Why He left the former city Luke (iv.) has alone informed us. The evangelist Matthew contents himself with locating the Lord's dwelling-place in Galilee, at Capernaum, which thenceforth became His own city (Matt. ix. 1), as Nazareth was His own country (Matt. xiii. 54 ; Mark vi. 1). Then follows just a brief summary of features of His ministry in Matt. iv. 25, 26. He was teaching and preaching, and also healing the sick and casting out demons.

Developing these lines of ministry, and taking them up in the order mentioned, we have the sermon on the mount in chapters v.-vii., showing what He taught, and then miracles of healing narrated in detail, with the casting out of demons in chapters viii., ix. Thus presenting Himself as ministering in every way to

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man's need, caring for the soul and relieving the body, how would the religious teachers regard Him? The scribes, with the Pharisees, rejected Him (ix. 3, 11, 34). The Lord then sent out the twelve to labour for Him (x.). He was now the rejected One. So on the cities where He had laboured He passed judgment, showing, too, the indifference of that generation manifested by their strictures on the Baptist and on Himself (xi.). Following that, the state of the nation was passed in review (xii.). Where, then, was fruitfulness? The Gentiles, of course, were sunk in idolatry; and the nation of Israel, as such, had refused Him. Hence the ground was cleared for a new work to commence on the part of God. This work was sketched out by the parable of the sower. It is in this order of thought that Matthew introduces parabolic teaching.

Here we may remind the reader that there are parables and parables, for some are designated as similitudes of the kingdom, and some are not. And whether styled similitudes of the kingdom of the heavens, as in Matthew, or of the kingdom of God, as in Mark and Luke, they all refer to a time when the Lord, the King, would be absent from earth. In conformity with this, the parable of the sower is not a similitude of the kingdom, though the other six are. And the reader may the more readily seize this point if he refers to Matt. xxi. 13—xxii. 14. In this portion we have two parables—the former that of the husbandmen, the latter that of the marriage feast for the king's son. The former parable is not one of the kingdom, for it stops with the Lord's death at the hands of the Jews. The second—that of the marriage feast—is, because it describes that which would go on upon earth after the Lord's departure from it.

We have said that the six parables in Matthew xiii. which follow that of the sower are similitudes of the kingdom. Other parables in Matthew are so designated, as the unforgiving servant (Matt. xviii. 23-35),

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the householder hiring labourers to work in his vineyard (xx. 1-16), the marriage feast for the king's son (xxii. 2-14), and that of the ten virgins (xxv. 1-13), but the parable of the talents (xxv. 14-30) is not a similitude of the kingdom.

Mark gives us but two parables of the kingdom—one in chapter iv. 26-29, the other in verses 30-32 of that same chapter. Luke, likewise, has but two similitudes of the kingdom. Both of them are met with in chapter xiii., and the one is that of the grain of mustard seed, the other that of the leaven—the same as Matthew has put on record.

The importance and place in the Scripture record of the parables of the kingdom will be readily perceived if we remember the outline of Old Testament predictions, viz., foretelling the sufferings of Christ and the glories which should follow (1 Pet. i. 11). Then, too, prophecy of old was concerned with the future history of Israel, and described their coming time of trouble as well as their final deliverance—subjects both of which are still future.

But on the long interval between the humiliation and death of the Lord and the day of Israel's great trouble, which last must precede His return in power, prophecy, we may say, throws but little light. Hence the parables of the kingdom were called for if God's people were to be taught about this interval. And it is plain, we add, that till the kingdom existed upon earth such parables would have been out of season. But now with them we are furnished with an outline of the character of things that would be on earth connected with the work of God, between Pentecost and the Lord's return to reign. Prophetic, then, they were when delivered, supplementing the ministry of Old Testament prophets by the special ministry peculiar to the Lord Jesus Christ. For whilst salvation began to be spoken by Him, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him, the parables of the kingdom were all given by Him,

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forming part, as they did, of His special oral ministry.

Understanding, then, as we hope the reader does, the place of these parables in the outline of the then future connected with God's work upon earth, the Lord's words in Matthew xiii. 52 will be found full of meaning: "Therefore every scribe instructed in the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." The old things are the teaching found in the Old Testament; the new things are the revelations communicated by the parables. Needful, again we would say, was this line of instruction for disciples. Without it they would have been deficient in teaching as to the character of things down here in their day.

Let us gather something of the connected teaching of these parables. Beginning with the parable of the tares and the wheat, we are taught that God would be working here for blessing and fruitfulness, and that the enemy would then begin to counterwork, to mar, if possible, the gracious purposes of the Most High. Next, by the parable of the mustard seed, and also by that of the leaven, we see how the kingdom in all this time would appear to outward eyes. After that, by the hidden treasure and by the pearl of great price, we understand that there would be on earth what was precious to the Lord, though not openly displayed; and further, that He would find amongst men an object of delight for His eye and His heart. He knows the value of the hidden treasure. He discerns, and is satisfied with, the beauty of the one pearl. And lastly, this thirteenth chapter of Matthew teaches us that there would be a work carried on to get together God's saints, discriminating between them and the impenitent, which last class will be dealt with by and by in judgment. So far, then, we have a revelation about the work of God on earth, with the enemy at work in the first of them, and the fishermen drawing

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the net in the last of them, and between these, descriptions of the light in which the kingdom would present itself to men—the world, as well as the special objects of the Lord's desire, which He discerns, and which as man He has given up all to possess.

Other parables of the kingdom give teaching which concern individuals. First, we have inculcated the practice of forgiving others because we are forgiven, since this dispensation is pre-eminently one of grace. Next follows an illustration of the divine principle of apportioning rewards to labourers, for all believers were to be servants. To work, therefore, becomes each one—working for the reward, as the Master pleases to accord it. Further, the work of grace in this dispensation would extend beyond the bounds of Judaism even to Gentiles. To Israelites the invitation would go out, and to Gentiles as well. It behoved each to see how they treated it, not refusing it, nor declining the wedding garment. In each case the failure would bring on the individual certain and irrevocable disaster. After this, and the last of the series in Matthew's gospel, comes that of the ten virgins, insisting on the certainty of the Lord's return and the importance of being ready to meet Him.

There remains just one other similitude of the kingdom, differing from any met with in Matthew's gospel. It is found in Mark iv., and it explains why the Lord's return could be expected. For He has gone away and has left the field already sown, and will not come back to earth till the time of harvest. Things new these parables opened out. How much is there in them! How orderly is their arrangement! What a lack there would have been had such teaching been withheld!

In future papers we hope to look at the parables in Matthew xiii. more in detail. Here, then, we pause for the present.

C. E. S.

## FROM JERICHO TO JERUSALEM.

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IN these last days of degenerate Christianity, it is profitable to turn aside from the busy crowd, and accompany the Man of sorrows in some of His weary walks through a world that knew Him not.

In the last week but one of His earthly mission, He took the twelve *apart*, saying to them, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on : and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death : and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things : and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken" (Luke xviii. 31, 34).

Thus the Lord told out His tale of sorrow and humiliation to those from whom He might have expected sympathy ; but He found none. While He spake of His sufferings, which they could not understand, they thought only of their own exaltation in the kingdom, which they thought would immediately appear, and of the high places they expected to occupy there.

Passing through Galilee and Samaria, He came to the coasts of Judea, by the farther side of Jordan, on His way to Jericho. Among the women which followed Him from Galilee was Salome, the mother of James and John, who, in her ambition to see her two sons occupying the most exalted positions in the coming kingdom, had privately conferred with them on the subject, and they had agreed together to ask the Lord that He would grant their request, to sit one on His right hand and the other on His left hand in the glory. He reminded them that in His kingdom the least would be the greatest, and many that were first would be the last. When the ten heard this request, they were moved with indignation against

James and John, for they also were looking for the same high distinction, and had oft-times contended among themselves which of them should be accounted the greatest.

As He entered Jericho great multitudes followed Him, but no joyful demonstrations greeted Him as He passed through the crowded streets. Cold, apathetic indifference seemed to characterise the place. No lepers came to be cleansed, no sick to be healed.

There was, however, one exception to this indifference, in the person of a chief of the publicans. This man, in his earnest desire to see Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, ran before and climbed into a tree near where He was to pass. This was the first and only sign of any interest in Himself, and He did not let it pass unnoticed. It was the sixth day of the week ; and in the house of this earnest and simple-minded publican He determined to spend His last earthly Sabbath. "Zacchæus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house." Zacchæus came down and received Him joyfully, and that day salvation was brought to his house.

Earthly Sabbaths brought no rest to the One who came to seek and to save that which was lost ; but in this dead city none cared for salvation. His thoughts would naturally revert to His first visit to the plains of Jericho ; when, after having led His people out of Egypt, through the sea, through the wilderness, bearing them on eagles' wings, He drove back the waters of Jordan, and brought them into the promised land on the spot where He was now staying. Here He met His servant Joshua, and, with a drawn sword in His hand, appeared as Captain of the hosts of Jehovah, saying to him, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. And Joshua did so" (Josh. v. 13). At His presence the massive walls of Jericho fell down flat before Him ; the inhabitants of the land fainted because of Him.

“What ailed thee, O sea, that thou fleddest?  
 Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?  
 Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams;  
 And ye little hills like lambs?  
 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of Jehovah,  
 At the presence of the God of Jacob;  
 Who turned the rock into a standing water,  
 The flint into a fountain of waters.”—Ps. cxiv.

In the house of Zacchæus we now view this same mighty One in humiliation, and weakness, and sorrow. This strange combination of majesty and lowliness, of omnipotence and weakness, of omniscience and simplicity, of divinity and humanity confounds our highest thought, and in His presence our souls are prostrate before Him, in the conviction that He is none other than the great Eternal Jehovah manifested in flesh, a mystery beyond all human thought. God had made Himself visible in the person of the Man Christ Jesus, and was seen of angels. “He that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me.” We need to be continually on the watch-tower as Christ’s sentinels, lest we be turned aside by the profane controversies of vain men, who are undermining these grand foundation truths, and deceiving even the elect.

All that had been written by the prophets concerning the sufferings of Christ, foretold by Himself, would now set themselves in long array before Him; each claiming for itself a full accomplishment of all that had been predicted. He was prepared to meet them all; ready to give His back to the smiters, His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and His face to shame and spitting. But this was not all; the sword of justice must fall. “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against THE MAN THAT IS MY FELLOW, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered” (Zech. xiii. 7).

The Sabbath being past, He resumed His journey, and as they departed from this city of the dead, where He had done no mighty works, two blind men who



sat by the highway side begging cried, "Thou son of David, have mercy on us." This cry touched His heart. He had compassion on them, touched their eyes, and they received sight. One of these was probably Bartimæus, being the chief speaker (Mark x. 46). The Lord had been previously hailed as the son of David by a blind man to whom He gave sight as He drew near to Jericho (Luke xviii. 35; Mark x. 41). There was faith and healing outside the city, but within none cared for Him. His voice had not been heard in its streets, nor does it appear that there was a synagogue in the place. Into one house alone had salvation entered.

He then stedfastly set His face to go up to Jerusalem. And the twelve, and certain women that followed Him from Galilee, were also in the way; "and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And He took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto Him" (Mark x. 32). And He went before, ascending up to Jerusalem, a wearisome walk of about seventeen miles.

In adoring wonder we follow the Paschal Lamb on His way to give Himself up, and accomplish the great work which, in due time, should take away the sin of the world; and having cast Satan, death, and hades into the lake of fire, deliver up to God that which had so long been in the hands of the usurper.

That day Jesus came to Bethany, six days before the Passover (Jno. xii. 1). There, in company with Lazarus, we leave Him to meditate on all that He had foretold about His sufferings by the mouth of His holy prophets; all of which would be fulfilled before the close of the sixth day, finding His first earthly resting-place in the tomb.

J. M.

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"THE COMMON people heard Him gladly" implies that the higher classes cared but little for His ministry.

## CONQUERORS.

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WHEN we look a little at the different agents of evil and of delusions exhibited in the book of Revelation, we wonder how any soul will escape. And then, when we remember that though these agents have not yet been manifested, yet that the energies which are to animate and use them are already abroad and in action, and all working now in mystery, if not in revealed forms, we stand amazed at the sight we thus get of the conflict in which we are engaged.

There will be "the dragon" and his "great wrath," the "beast" and his "false prophet," the "frogs," "Babylon," "the kings of the earth," and "the whole world wondering after the beast."

What tremendous agents in the work of delusion, darkness, and blood! What strong temptations and what appalling difficulties will then beset the path of the wayfaring saints! Who will stand? Who will find safe conduct through this array of hindrances? Who will discover the path of life and light amid all this thickening and overwhelming darkness?

And yet, with each feature of this terrible scene, with each member of this great system of subtlety and strength, in the mystery or spirit of it, we have now to do; though, of course, some part of it may be more in real activity than others. But it is our duty still, and always, to recognise the dragon and his wrath, the beast and the frogs, Babylon, the kings of the earth, and the world deluded into infidel or idolatrous wonder and worship—to recognise each and all of these in the mystery, or in the hidden energy of their working. The "lawless one" is to be revealed, but it is "the mystery of lawlessness" that is now working (see 2 Thess. ii., Greek).

The field of conflict thus spread out is serious indeed. But, as this same book unfolds to us, we have at the same time to recognise the better region, that is, the heavenly, where we get other objects altogether, and all, I may say, *for us*.

The prophet of God in Patmos passes, in vision, with great ease and rapidity from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth. The two regions are alternately before him, and he sees the action in each. But the passage is made with ease and with speed. He was "in the Spirit" (chap. i. 10). And we know that the Spirit was as a chariot to convey the prophets of old, either really or in vision, hither and thither (see 1 Kings xviii. 12 ; Ezek. iii. 12 ; Acts viii. 29).

In chapters iv., v., he is in sight of heaven. So at the opening of the seals in chapter vi., passing, however, at once to see the results of those opened seals on earth ; so again in chapter viii., we find him in vision of both the regions ; and, in like manner, I may say, throughout. He hears the music and the conferences in heaven, the rapture and the hopes there ; and then again he is amid the infidel pride, the confusion, and all the workings of apostate principles, which are giving character to the scene on earth. He passes from the exulting marriage feast in heaven to the terrible judgment of the Rider on the white horse on all the confederated iniquity of the earth. We see something of this in the opening of Job. There we are, in vision, both in heaven and on earth, as in the twinkling of an eye. So at the time of Stephen's martyrdom. How near to each other are the two regions (that of sight and that of faith, or of earth and of heaven), though so different, presented to us ! (Acts vii.).

Is it not the business of the soul thus to act still ? There are two regions—that of faith and that of sight ; and the soul should pass rapidly and frequently into the region of faith. Had Job thus visited heaven, and heard and seen the action there, he would have been ready for the trials and sorrows which awaited him on earth. Little one knows of it, indeed, but the soul covets the power to follow John in the Revelation, passing, as we see, easily and speedily from earth to heaven, and back again, and always prepared,

I may say, without amazement, for the shifting scenery.

But beside this, for the encouragement of our hearts, I observe two victories achieved in the progress of this book—one over the accuser (chap. xii. 11), and another over the beast (chap. xv. 2).

The accuser was defeated by a certain army of martyrs, and the weapons of their victorious struggle are hung up before us; for we are told they conquered by “the blood of the Lamb,” by “the word of their testimony,” and “they loved not their lives unto the death.” These had been their armour in conflict with the accuser.

If he went up, as in Job's case, to the presence of God with charges against them, they met him there with “the blood of the Lamb.” They pleaded the sacrifice of God's own Lamb, according to God's own testimony respecting it. And to the charge that “skin for skin, all that a man has will he give for his life,” they rendered up their lives to death in answer.

They surpassed Job's measure. He pleaded “the blood of the Lamb” (see Job xix. 25), but he failed in the devotedness of a martyr, and was not prepared for the place of death. Here was their victory, and such and such the weapons which accomplished it. Heaven could employ itself in celebrating this victory. Was Jesus standing when Stephen was martyred? Easy then for heaven to be engaged in rehearsing with joy these conquests of this martyr-band.

But again, we have another victory celebrated in chapter xv. It had been obtained over the beast, as the other had been gained over the accuser. The conquerors here are like Israel on the Red Sea in Exodus xv. And just as in that song of Israel, so here in this song of triumph, we learn the character of the previous truth, and how it was the conquerors conquered.

Moses and the congregation rehearse the fact that a victory had been won. But more than that, they

rehearse how it had been won. They sing of the horse and his rider being thrown into the sea; of Jehovah, as a man of war, casting His enemies into the mighty waters, of the depths covering the foe. And they let it be known that Israel themselves had not fought, but that Jehovah had made the battle all His own. Thus the style of the victory, its instrument and strength, is published in this song, as well as the fact of victory. And I judge in like manner so does the song in Revelation xv.

All the world had wondered after the beast, and their wonder led to worship—or it was itself worship (chapter xiii.). His power appeared to be so great, his history so marvellous, that all the world wondered and worshipped, except (as I may say) this conquering band who paid their lives as the price of their faith in God and fidelity to Jesus. I doubt not that “the great exhibitions” of the day are designed of Satan to practise the world in this idolatrous admiration of man, so that they may be the more prepared for the beast when he appears in all his fascination. The saint should retire from these things to Jesus.

But the song, as I have said, utters, as I judge, the weapons they had used in that day of battle. And they were these. These martyrs were admiring and worshipping “the Lord God Almighty,” while the world around them were admiring and worshipping the beast. The world was wondering at the greatness of the beast and the marvellousness of his history; but they were standing in the holy adoring admiration of the Lord and the marvellousness of His works (see Rev. xv. 3). And while all beside were fearing the beast who could and would kill their bodies, they lived in the fear of God only, giving heed to the angel’s voice which had spoken of His coming judgment (see chapters xiv. 7; xv. 4).

Thus this fine but short song tells of the manner of the victory, or the weapons which had accomplished it, as that song of Israel at the Red Sea had done

before. I might notice a difference in the battles, though the songs are the same. That on the Red Sea was fought alone by Jehovah for Israel ; this with the beast was fought by the Lord in His saints.

But further. I might extend this thought as to victories in the book of Revelation, and say, generally, that from beginning to end it is the book of victories. It contemplates corruption or apostacy—evil in the church and in the larger scene outside ; or first among the candlesticks, and then in the earth or world.

But corruption, or apostasy, occasions struggle or conflict on the part of saints ; and, accordingly, the saints in this book are addressed or contemplated as conquerors—such as have been in conflict because of corruption, and have come off in victory.

They are formally regarded in this character in this book. Thus it is as conquerors they are addressed by the Spirit in each of the letters to the churches. "He that overcometh" is the language in each of them, because in each church there is contemplated a struggle or conflict, by reason of corruption within or danger and enmity without (chaps. ii., iii.).

And I suggest that the crowns of chapter xv. are more formally the crowns of victors than of kings (see chap. iii. 11), as though we saw the "overcomers" of the previous chapter enthroned in chapter iv. We may say that, in divine reckoning, there is scarcely a difference ; for the kingdom is taken by those who have been in the conflict before (see Luke xxii. 28, 29 ; Matt. xx. 28 ; 1 Cor. ix. 25 ; 2 Tim. ii. 12). The Lord had gained a succession of victories in the days of His flesh over Satan (Matt. iv.), over the world (John xvi. 33), over sin and its judgment (Matt. xxvii. 51), over death and the grave (John xx. 6, 7). This earth has been the scene of these victories, the gospel publishes them, faith accepts them.

So in the very next scene (chap. v.) the Lord Jesus is recognised as a conqueror. In that character He takes the book. The word "prevailed" is the common

word for "overcome"—"the Lion hath overcome." Then, in the progress of the book, we see two victories celebrated in heaven, one obtained over the accuser (chap. xii.) and another over the beast (chap. xv.), as I have before noticed. Then, on the earth, we see victory achieved, victory over the closing concentrated enmity and apostate strength and pride of the whole world (chap. xvii. 14, or xix. 11-21).

And further still ; for I ask, Is not the first resurrection contemplated as a resurrection of conquerors ? Is it not a reign of conquerors which we see in chapter xx. 4 ? And so for ever for the inheritance of all things, after this is in the hands of conquerors (chap. xxi. 7). Can I ask my own soul what measure or character of victory marks my course ? Can I enquire of myself, Do I know what conflict is because of corruption, and what the victory of separation from it ?

The more we are conquerors, the more are we morally fit to be readers of the book of Revelation. John, I may say, was a conqueror in the first chapter, for he was a martyr or confessor in the Isle of Patmos, "brother and companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," and in that character he gets the revelation communicated to him. And I suggest again that it comes to him from a conqueror, because it comes to him from "Jesus Christ" in the character (among others) of the "faithful Witness," the character in which He overcame the world (see 1 Tim. vi. 13 ; see also John xvi. 33 ; Rev. iii. 21). Indeed, the four leading ideas in the book seem to be corruption, conflict, victory, and kingdom, the judgment of God being in exercise throughout.

The book assumes, so to speak, that those who have tasted the grace of the Saviour should stand in the rejection of the Saviour. This may give a character to the book which will be somewhat strong for our timid hearts ; but it is fitting that the volume of God should close with such a chapter, if I may so call it, because the blessing of the creature was not

the only business in creation, neither is it in redemption. His own glory was proposed as well as His creatures' good. And it is His glory to judge a reprobate, unrepentant world, and His people glorify Him by taking part with Him in that judgment; and they judge it now in weakness by gainsaying the course of it, even at the hazard of goods, liberties, and lives, as they will by and by judge it in power, when seated on their thrones in the regeneration.

The volume then closes as it began, for His own glory, of course in a different way (*i.e.*, in the judgment of all the apostate principles of the world in their ripened condition). And the saints are rightly expected to be on His side in that action. This is their place and character in this book. The present is an age of easy profession, and the martyr strength and devotedness which are found in this book is not the common element. O for faith and love to reach it!—to be on the side of a rejected Jesus against the world!

But more than this: the book contemplates the saints as heirs as well as conquerors. The expectation and the desire of getting the earth into possession and under dominion occupy the mind of Christ and of the saints throughout. Properly or necessarily so, because the sealed book is the book of the inheritance, and that book rules the action from thence onward to the end. And I ask, Is not the attitude of the saints quite different now from what it is in the Apocalypse? They are now "waiting for the Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i.); in the Apocalypse they are waiting to reign over the earth (*i.e.*, now they are on earth, but then they are in heaven).

In the opening of the prophetic part in chapter iv., we see the rainbow, the sign of the earth's security, round the throne in heaven. And the One who sits on the throne is clothed in His glory as Creator, for whose pleasure all things were created. We are thus, in spirit, in Genesis i.



In chapter v., the book of the inheritance of the earth passes into the hand of the Lamb, and all rejoice. We are thus, in spirit, in Genesis ii., where the Lord God Himself and all the creatures owned the dominion of Adam ; the Lord God by conferring it, the creatures by submitting to it. Judgments under the seals and under the trumpets, the necessary precursors of the kingdom, then take their course ; and in chapter x. the Lord Jesus, as the mighty Angel, triumphs in the now approaching moment of inheritance and dominion over earth and sea ; and in chapter xi., the saints in heaven do the same.

The voice heard in heaven in chapter xii., and the song of the victor-harpers in chapter xv., alike utter joy over the prospect of the kingdom. "Now is come the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ," says the voice in heaven. "All nations shall come and worship before Thee," the harpers sing.

Then in chapter xix. the joy in heaven is this, that she that corrupted the earth has been judged ; and the voice there (as of many waters and mighty thunderings) utters, "Alleluia ! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." And the action which makes the earth the Lord's property takes place.

In chapter xx., the first resurrection is spoken of as being for the very purpose of bringing in or manifesting the kingdom. Speaking of the risen ones, the prophet says, "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

And how does the book close ? Not with a description of the church in the hidden places of heaven, as the Father's house, but with a sight of the church in the manifested heavens, the place of power or government, up to the light of which the kings will bring their glory and honour, and forth from which will go the waters of the river and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations. And this is such a view of the heavenly places as suits the earth in the days of the kingdom ; and of the servants of God and of

the Lamb who are there, it is said at the close, "And they shall reign for ever and ever." It is the book of the kingdom rather than of the church. The church's heavenly destiny is assured, as in chapter iv., but the kingdom at the close is reached through judgments.—*Bible Witness and Review*, Vol. 2, 1878.

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## THE NEW SONG.

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ALL is now mischief and disturbance; but all is ripening that revolted and apostate material, through the judgment of which the Lord is to take the kingdom. "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted."

It is as Conqueror the Lord is to take His kingdom by and by, or enter His second Sabbath. Of old, the Sabbath was the rest of one who had laboured; but the coming Sabbath will be the rest of One who has fought a fight and won the day. This "rest that remaineth" will, therefore, be entered by a rougher and more difficult path than the former; for it is to be reached through the afflictions and conflicts which sin has occasioned, and through the judgment of iniquity.

The Lord God of old entered into His rest or Sabbath as Creator. He had gone through the work of six days, and on the seventh He rested, and was refreshed.

The Sabbath, we know, has been disturbed and lost through man's sin; but we also know of a coming Sabbath, "a rest that remaineth," as we read.

The Creator has rested: His works were finished from the foundation of the world (Heb. iv.); but I may say, that is all. In other characters of gracious action God has not yet rested. As the Father, as the Christ, in the person of the Holy Ghost, and as the Lord of Israel and of the whole earth, God has still to reach His rest. The rest is one that "remaineth," we may say, as much for Him as for His people; for He still

works in love and in power, and they still toil against sin and the world and the enemy (see John v. 17 ; Eph. iv.).

We might ask, then, in what character will it be entered, or by whom? And all Scripture replies, By conquerors. David making way for Solomon is the type of this. Solomon was the peaceful—a name which implies not abstract, or mere rest, but rest after conflict or war. It bespeaks triumphant rest ; something more than cessation of labour.

So the Lord enters the kingdom as “ Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle ; ” as one fresh in victory, “ with dyed garments ” (see Psalm xxiv., xlv., xlvii., xciii. ; Isaiah ix., lxiii. ; Rev. xix.).

Christ as Conqueror is, however, known in different scenes and seasons, and in different forms and manners, before He enters the kingdom.

As soon as He gave up the ghost, the victory of His death was owned in heaven, earth, and hell ; for *the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the rocks were split, and the graves were broken up.*

As He entered the heavens, He was received and sat down as Conqueror. He was at once acknowledged there as fresh from His conflict and conquest here. As the One who had overcome He sat down with the Father on His throne. We therefore now, in spirit, can sing a new song, or a conqueror’s song.

When His saints rise to meet Him, they will, in their own persons, display His victory—the victory He has achieved for them. Their ascending and responsive shout will utter it—“ Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ ” (1 Cor. xv.).

In these different seasons and forms the triumph of Christ is celebrated before He enters the kingdom. And animating and happy truth this is—Jesus ascended on high as a conqueror. But never, till Jesus ascended, had heaven known a conqueror. A distant report of His victory had reached it, I may

say, when the temple veil was rent ; but never had heaven been the place of a conqueror till the Lord returned there. The Lord God in His glories had been there, the Lord God as Creator and Ruler also, and the angels that excel in strength had waited there. Some who kept not their first estate there may have been cast down, and others have sung at the foundations of the earth being laid ; but never had the presence of a conqueror adorned and gladdened it till Jesus ascended. But then it was so. He had then destroyed him that had the power of death ; He had led captivity captive ; He had made a show of principalities ; He had overcome the world ; He had, as the true Samson, borne the hostile gates to the top of the hill. The grave-clothes had been left in the empty sepulchre as the spoils of war and trophies of conquest. And thus, as conqueror, Jesus ascended.

Heaven had already known the living God, but never till then the living God in victory ; and our ascension after Him will only, in other terms, tell of triumph, and be another display of a host of conquerors. Then, at the end, when the kingdom is entered, it will be entered (as we have already said) by a Conqueror after His day of battle and war of deliverance out of the hands of enemies. The kingdom thus reared upon the ruin of the enemy will be an immovable one.

Now, according to all this, is, I believe, the "new song" of which we read in Scripture ; for the songs there are conquerors' songs, and they are so many rehearsals, so to speak, of the kingdom's song. Such was that of Moses and the congregation on the banks of the Red Sea ; such was Deborah's ; such were the utterances, if they may be called songs, of Hannah and of Mary ; and such is to be the song of Revelation xv. in its season—the harpers in heaven standing there in victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.

This gives a "new" theme for singing or gladness, and hence "the new song." The old song, sung by

the morning stars over the foundations of the earth, was not a conqueror's song, a song celebrating a divine victory either for the redemption or avenging of God's chosen. There was no theme of victory then, for no battle had been fought and won. But sin has since entered. A great counter-force has been in action, and the Lord has had to go forth as "a man of war," the God of battles; and, therefore, at the end a new song, with a new theme or burden, must be awakened to celebrate Him in this new action or character of glory. The song of Moses was a conqueror's song, and so the song of the Lamb. "O sing unto Jehovah a new song, for He hath done marvellous things; His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory." The song over creation must give place in compass and melody to the song over the triumphs of Jesus. The first "corner stone" was laid by the Creator, and angels sang (Job xxxviii. 6); the second is brought in in victory, and Israel shouts (Psalm cxviii.; Zech. iv.).

What new honours, we may adoringly and thankfully say, are preparing for Him through our history, and what new joys for heaven! For His victories have been for us; accomplishing, as I observed, our deliverance and vindication in the face of our enemies. The glory of those victories is His, the fruit of them ours.

Christ does not appear as a conqueror in what He does with God for us as our ransom, or re-purchaser by the value of His blood. In all that action He suffers instead of conquers; but He is Conqueror as against the enemy, redeeming us from him or avenging us on him.

And it is a joyous thought that the Lord is to enter His coming kingdom as a conqueror, taking the throne of Solomon the peaceful, after the wars and victories of David. But this joy implies scenes of a tremendous character. Triumph of itself is a bright idea, but it is full of recollections of fields of battle

and scenes of bloodshed. And so with the Lord Jesus. The joy of seeing Him in triumph and the power of His kingdom is bright and gladdening, but "the winepress" has first to be "trodden."

And still more—though that is solemn—the treading of the winepress, or the execution of divine judgment, speaks of previous corruption or of the ripening of the "vine of the earth." If the Lord in judgment have to tread the winepress, the winepress has first to be filled.

And where are we, at this moment, actually standing? Not in the possession of the immovable kingdom; not in the sight of the triumph that is to usher it forth, or in the audience of the new song which is to accompany that triumph; not in the vision of the field of Bozrah, and the garments dyed with blood, the day of divine judgment which leads to the triumph; but in a certain stage of the ripening of the vine of Sodom which is soon to be cast into the winepress, or to meet the judgment of the Lord.

There we stand, and the moment is solemn. Every day, like the heat of summer, is but maturing and mellowing the grapes of gall, or the clusters of Gomorrah. Our prospects are thus strange, awful, and glorious beyond thought. We look for the increasing growth of evil, for the winepress of the wrath of God to receive and judge it, and then for the triumph and the kingdom of Jesus. For such things we look, as far as our eye is turned, to the earth; but "we stand at the head of two ways." Enoch stood there before.

He looked down the way of the earth, and there he saw the maturing of ungodliness, and the Lord with ten thousand of His saints coming to execute judgment; but he himself was borne upward the way of the heavens (Jude 14; Heb. xi. 5). The new song was sung by Jesus after His resurrection (Psalm xi. 3); it will be sung by the saints after their resurrection or ascension to heaven (Rev. v. 9); and then it will be sung by Israel in the kingdom, which is their resurrection (Psalm xcvi. 1).—*Bible Witness and Review*, Vol. 2, 1878.

## A HOLY WOMAN.

Anna "departed not from the Temple."—*Luke* ii. 37.

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How loud the rebuke of these words in a day when men "despise authority," "seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's," "turn their ears away from the truth, unto fables," and exalt fine music and cultured speakers above "worship in spirit and in truth!"

The Churches of England and Rome rightly exalt worship, but alas! only to corrupt it from its simplicity by a separate priesthood from that of *all* believers, utterly unknown to the New Testament. How is it, then, brethren? Does the moral blight of "the *minister*" shut out the edifying of the church by what "every joint supplieth;" or of "the *priest*" who offers the sacraments (heathen or Jewish though it be) shut out the general priesthood of all God's saints; which destroys the true spirit of worship? The reformed Epis. Church have in creed "the common priesthood of *all* believers," but explain that they do not act upon it for "the sake of *order*," as though God's truth put into practice were disorder. Serious statement! But how with those who reject on principle a "one man ministry," and own the Spirit, "dividing to whom *He will*," and that all may prophesy, and all should worship? Do we leave the opening and closing of meetings, the giving of thanks, and ministry generally to one or two, and think ourselves humble when we are disobedient to God's call, or too dulled in soul to hear it? Little wonder, then, if some are overburdened with more than their share, and others also wilting away with gifts unused, so that some feel, "Behold, what a weariness is it!" Let us "awake and put on strength!" How shall we? First confess that we have made dull the meetings by our folly, and then complained or left them because they were so. Then let us do better, as Anna did.

## LETTER OF INTEREST.

1. Cleave to the testimony of our Lord even in a day of failure. 2. Take our share in its responsibilities, and thus enjoy its holy privileges. 3. Be faithful to the meetings, taking part whether in holy silence, or by hymn, prayer, or the "five words" that edify, and thus depart "not from the temple." Anna owned God's authority, and loved the place where His honour dwelt; she was an obedient soul, and a worshipper, and how great her reward! She came in for a sight of our Lord, then "gave thanks," and "spoke of Him." Such is in store for all such still! One has well said, "What is needed now is a few Hannahs and Annas to raise the tone of worship amongst us." B. C. G.

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 LETTER OF INTEREST.
 

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A——, 1896.

DEAR ———.—The following incident in the service of a child of God is worthy of record, and should be useful to us to-day. It was communicated to me by one of the parties many years ago.

The servant I refer to had gone to a town in one of the Midland counties for work among some of the Lord's people.

It had been intimated that he would preach the Word, and the brother with whom he lodged wishing to help him, as he thought, to what would be needful for his audience, told him that the company he would meet was in a very unhappy state, and that he should give them "a good dressing down." "I will do nothing of the kind," was the reply.

The subject the speaker chose was John xvii., and so ministered Christ that they all went home humbled at their state.

How little is such service abroad to-day! May those who would serve the Master study Him and His ways.—Yours in Him,



A LADY, visiting a Convalescent, was leaving somewhat hastily to catch a train, when she saw a man in the hall whom she did not like to pass without a word, so asked, "Have you peace with God?" He looked astonished, and gave no reply; but the Holy Ghost used it to pierce his conscience, and the next time she went the man accosted her with, "Do you not remember me? I have been watching for you to come ever since. I think I am losing my reason. You asked me if I had peace with God. I have not; but oh! I long to have it." What a cause for thanksgiving to God, the God of all grace, to see one on the verge of eternal ruin awakened to his true state, and how blessed to point such to Him who made peace by the blood of His cross. Poor S., hungry for the bread of life, did not play with it, as so many do, but fed thereon that he might live for ever. Weeks afterwards, when she stood by his dying bed, he said, "I have wished for you that you might see *the work has stood*, that I have proved the value of the precious blood of Christ, that I have peace with God—peace which all my pain and misery cannot touch, for it is founded on the eternal redemption that is in Christ Jesus. I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine; I am ready to depart and be with Him. And now my one desire is gratified, that I might see your face once more, and tell you *the work stood*." A few months after, the same lady was spoken to in another hospital as follows: "Oh, do you not remember S., the man the Lord brought to Himself through your words at the Home long ago? I am his daughter. For three years I have been here, and day by day I besought the Lord to reveal Himself to my father. He gave me my request, and then took him to Himself. Now I have no more to pray for, only to praise."—R. B.

A YOUNG MIDSHIPMAN suffered cruel persecution from his associates because he persisted in praying to God. The captain learned of the injuries inflicted on him, and asked for the names of the aggressors. The godly youth declined to name them. They were so impressed by such kindness that they persecuted him no more, and some of them began to pray for themselves. How happy those whose hearts are taught of God!

SPARROWS.—"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" (Matt. x.). "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?" (Luke xii.). One is thrown into the bargain. Well, even the *odd* sparrow cannot fall to the ground without the Father's knowledge and consent—"Not one is forgotten before God." The God who calls the starry host by number, and weighs this and other globes in His hand, knows also the odd sparrow thrown into the bargain. He does not say, Consider the eagle, the king of birds, or the nightingale, or the peacock; but, Consider the raven, with its poor croak, and the little sparrow, which has neither melody in its note nor beauty in its plumage. Do you sometimes feel that you are the biggest fool on earth? It takes a good deal of common or uncommon sense to feel like that. Yet don't say, "God cannot do anything with me." He loves to work by odd sparrows if they will only put themselves in His hands. Such an one may find his house in God's altar! (Ps. lxxxiv. 3).—*Arch. Brown.*

HAIRS OF THE HEAD.—In a full head of hairs there are about 140,000 hairs, and God misses one which I do *not* myself. God's perfect knowledge is our comfort and our security.

FATHER.—This little word, conceived effectually in the heart, surpasseth all the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and the most eloquent rhetoricians that were ever in the world.—*Luther*.

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON said to a young gentleman who visited him upon his death-bed, "Young man, attend to the voice of one who has possessed a certain degree of fame in the world, and who will shortly appear before his Maker : *Read the Bible every day of your life.*"

HAVE you no words? Ah! think again,  
Words flow apace when you complain,  
And fill your fellow creature's ear  
With the sad tale of care and fear.  
Were half the breath thus vainly spent  
To heaven in supplication sent,  
Your cheerful song would oftener be—  
Hear what *the Lord hath done for me.*

FOR INSTRUCTIONS as to the place and responsibilities of

Husbands, see Eph. v. 25-28; Col. iii. 19; 1 Pet. iii. 7.

Wives, see Eph. v. 22, 23; Col. iii. 18; 1 Pet. iii. 1-6; Tit. ii. 4, 5.

Fathers, see Eph. vi. 4; Col. iii. 21.

Children, see Eph. vi. 1-3; Col. iii. 20.

Masters, see Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1.

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Servants, see Eph. vi. 5; Tit. ii. 9; Col. iii. 22; 1 Pet. ii. 18; 1 Tim.

"IN some way or other the Lord will provide ;

It may not be my way,

It may not be thy way,

But yet, in His own way,

*The Lord will provide.*"

DECLENSION.—There was a time when, like Simon Peter, we were ready to forsake all and follow Christ. We cared little for money, or comfort, or social opinion. We only wanted to do right, to live nobly, to follow high thoughts, to fulfil the plan of the heavenly life. We rejoiced in our poverty, our social isolation, our detachment from the world; for we had a food the world knew not of, and our hearts were warmed with divine ardours, and our ears heard a divine voice. It is all over now—we have gone a-fishing! We have come to think that those days of ideal-worship were very foolish, the mere green sickness of youth. We think pityingly of what we were then, but God pities us for what *we are now*; for we have gone a-fishing, have left the pursuit of moral excellence, the faith in Christ, the joy of doing God's will we once knew, and are fishing in the Devil's turbid pool for such golden baubles as he can give us—a little luxury, a little praise of men, a little vain and empty pleasure! Idealists? No; we are that no longer. We have discovered that that way leads to the cross, and we tread it no more. The great moral movements sweep past us, and heroes and martyrs are still among us, but we scarcely know it. For us that divine passion for the ideal, that intoxicating enthusiasm, is long since over, and we are content to go with the great multitude, many of whom know not Christ nor care for His words, His hopes, His sacrifice! Ah! believe me, the utmost tragedy of life is not in suffering the cross, but escaping it. To die upon a cross for an ideal is divine; to forget the ideal and live is infamy indeed.—*Quiver*.

MATTHEW XVIII. 20.—“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” Are we too bold in suggesting that this presence of the Lord Jesus in the midst of His saints, which is the highest privilege of Christianity, cannot be found at “the celebration of the Holy Eucharist,” which is the highest act of worship in the Church of England? It is, indeed, in the nature of things impossible; for the function, so far from being an expression of believers “gathered together,” is a public avowal that there are two distinct classes, clergy and laity, to be *rigidly separated*. The clergy (who are now self-styled “officiating priests”) move about in priestly robes within a reserved and sacred enclosure (the “holy of holies,” as it were), not meant to be trodden by the laity, who are relegated to the area of the building, and are prevented from approaching the table (now, alas, known as “the altar”), and are therefore precluded from approaching the bread and the wine (now, alas, termed the “perpetual offering” and the “unbloody sacrifice,” which terms are irreconcilable with “the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”). What, then, have we here displayed but the exercise of a pure sacerdotalism, compounded from Judaism, which is for all who believe now obsolete, having been divinely superseded (and therefore termed “the Jew’s religion”), and Romanism, which is Christianity in a state of festering corruption? And how suitably does this hierarchical display follow the solemn reading of the ten commandments, a virtual re-enactment of laws which belong to a religion of dead works, repealed now (even for the Jewish believer), and which to Gentile believers never had an application. Remark, too, what an ornate and luxuriously-furnished enclosure is the chancel, the court of the vested priests, the floor elevated two or three steps above the body of “the church.” From this it is usually railed off, and thus distinctly separated, by a palisade, before which the worshippers, approaching in relays, are required to kneel. Over this barrier they receive the “consecrated” bread and wine—not passing it one to another, as Scripture would suggest and fellowship require, but each individually receiving it in the attitude of a suppliant from the hand of “the celebrant”—that is, only by the intervention of a “sacrificing priest”! And from what source is this priesthood derived, if it be not from an economy (Judaism) on which God has written Ichabod? The only alternative is that of idolatrous paganism, for we shall search Scripture in vain to find the slightest trace of a dominant and official priesthood in Christianity proper. Who does not recognise, then, what a travesty is this before us of that scene in the upper room at Jerusalem where the disciples came together to break bread? For the believers here referred to *not* being “gathered together,” but separated by class distinctions which God has neither ordained nor sanctioned, and occupying separate areas in which they are arbitrarily and unscripturally kept apart, it ought to be evident that, if the Lord is in the midst of the laity, He is not in the midst of the clergy, the hierarchy, for they are not “gathered together” with their fellow-believers, but have separated themselves by a “middle wall of partition,” which has been erected by a humanly-appointed as distinguished from a divinely-called priesthood. But if it be claimed that the Lord is in the midst of these “ministering priests,” then is it evident that the laity are shut out from His presence by human arrangements which derive no authority from the written Word of God.

## 300 INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

GOD could part with His Son, but not with His truth. Had the former been withheld, the latter would have been sacrificed.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN FRANCE.—The other day, at an inn crowded with people, a curé could find no more serious accusation to bring against the Protestants than to say to a colporteur that Protestants never go to the priest to confess. “But, Mr. le Curé,” replied the colporteur, “can you mention a single instance in the whole Bible of a man who confessed to another man?” The curé, after reflecting, acknowledged that he knew of none. “I can,” rejoined the colporteur, “and will show it to you;” upon which he opened at the 27th chapter of St. Matthew, and read aloud how Judas, impelled by remorse, went to the chief priests and said to them: “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent,” and he departed and hanged himself. The curé could find nothing to say, and the colporteur sold several Testaments.

AN ABBÉ, on recently sending in his resignation to his bishop, wrote to him: “I am leaving the Church of Rome, not through the gate of scepticism or unbelief, but because I have come to see in Jesus Christ my sole Saviour and my sole Mediator. I have the profound conviction that the pure gospel can alone save the modern world, and that the Church of Rome cannot, without committing suicide, give the gospel to the people.”

ONE can have no idea of what is preached in certain Roman Catholic pulpits. In the chapel of St. Quay, in the department of the Côtes du Nord, on Sunday, 18th August, 1895, the preacher thus endeavoured to impress on his hearers the importance of well employing the time at our disposal: “Suppose, my brethren, that a lost soul, plunged for eternity in the flames of hell, should obtain from God the unexpected favour of once more spending fifteen minutes upon earth. That unique, that supreme quarter-of-an-hour, what use will the miserable man make of it? Be sure he will make haste to perform those deeds of charity by which we are justified and sanctified. And, further, he will also inflict upon himself some of those tortures, inexpressibly cruel, by which sins are expiated.” *Thus the blind lead the blind!*

“THERE ARE lots of things I do not understand, but I *believe* them. I do not know anything about higher mathematics, but I believe in them. I do not understand astronomy, but I believe in astronomy. You unbeliever in the Word of God, can you tell me why the same kind of food turns into flesh, fish, hair, feathers, hoofs, finger-nails, according as it is eaten by one animal or another?” You cannot understand these things, yet you believe them! Why do you not believe that which God has spoken? “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

MEN who neglect Christ, and try to win heaven through moralities, are like sailors at sea in a storm, some pulling at the bowsprit, and some at the main mast, but all neglecting the helm!

THE PYRAMIDS are very broad at the bottom, where they touch the ground, but grow narrower as they approach the sky. Are not many men much the same?

A MAN in the right, with God on his side, outweighs all majorities, for God is in Himself multitudinous.

## THE HOME AT BETHANY.

*Matt. xxvi. 1-16.*

IT was a wonderful six days that the Lord spent at Bethany. The beginning was His entry into Jerusalem as King and Jehovah, according to the testimony of Zechariah, on an ass—the meek and lowly, though true Messiah of Israel. Then, how marvellously all passed in review before Him, the Judge of quick and dead, even when they thought only of judging, condemning, and perplexing Him. But, in fact, He, though never for a moment abandoning His own place of humiliation, though always and only the faithful Witness, pronounces divine judgment on every class that crossed His path—chief priests, elders, scribes, lawyers, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, all were confounded, one after another. Next, in chap. xxiii., the nation was judged, but its restoration was predicted, when it should be prepared in heart to welcome the rejected Messiah. Closely connected therewith is the prophetic strain in chaps. xxiv., xxv., in which the Lord instructs the disciples, or faithful remnant, touching the intervening circumstances, and, above all, touching the effect of His coming on the Jews, on the Christians, and on the Gentiles at large.

Now, when this is finished, and the time of His entire and final rejection is at hand, He finds a home for a little season at Bethany. It is most sweet to follow the Lord into that momentary retreat of love, where His heart, straightened though it ever was until the Cross in a world which understood it not and refused it, enjoys the answer which itself had produced.

The opening of the chapter shows us how calmly the Lord awaited the judgment which was about to fall on Him, and how simply He announced it to the disciples: “Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.” If He had judged all according to God, and finished all His sayings in these respects, He is

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ready to be judged and to suffer to the uttermost, fulfilling His own love according to divine counsels.

They "consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill Him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." How little they knew that all was known to Jesus, and that what they muttered in the darkness was spoken by Him in the light, with the openness of One who came for this very end! He communicates with His friends about His crucifixion: they, His enemies, plot about it with each other. It was all ordered beforehand of God, who has a long look out, and accomplishes a great deal with a little. We, looking at the beginning of things, may think they are all going wrong when they seem to be adverse. The happy way is to trust in the Lord, and to believe He is guiding. But we must abdicate our own wisdom for this. *Faith* alone gives the perspective of what God does: to human understanding all looks crooked.

How laborious wickedness is, and what pains men must take about it (ver. 3-5)! With what ease Jesus had spoken and acted, let the circumstances be ever so heart-breaking to Himself!

There is often great difficulty felt by His people in turning from one thing to another of a different character. The truth is, we need to be *nothing*, which is the secret of this power. Jesus was always ready for everything. He was of quick understanding in the fear of Jehovah. Divinely perfect, He was also thoroughly human. In us, that which is immediately from God must be given, if we would be kept from the inroads of our own character in each case. The Lord could one moment expose the Pharisees and their temptations, the next moment take up young children in His arms and bless them. And again, we repeat, it is very striking to see how, when events are closing in around Him, He finds, as it were, a *home*. If the world is completely against Him, He can take rest for His spirit with this family of Bethany. He lets

His heart out in accepting what is done unto Him. How perfectly *human* is the Lord here! He delights in accepting all their kind thoughtfulness and love.

Throughout His course, there had always been tension of service. Save in communion with His Father, when was He, for an instant, unbent? He found not so much as time to eat. When He wanted sleep at another time, it must be in a boat. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Here, however, it is not the same thing. For a brief season He has a kind of home. He takes the kindness which the heart can give, and likes it.

And let us mark how the heart that is entirely devoted to Jesus gets into the right place, and does the right thing (ver. 6, 7). There may not have been intelligence in this woman, of what she was going to do, but her feeling seems to have been that she was about to lose Jesus, and that she must spend all she had most precious upon Him there. There is an instinct of affection, that finds its expression when wanted. "Me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on My body, she did it for My burial." *Jesus* interprets it. She broke the alabaster box. It was really of no use; but sanctified affection *is* of use. Disciples might say, to what purpose is this waste? and talk about giving the money to the poor; but whatever is spent on Jesus, God delights in. And Jesus accepts the affection, and is conscious that He should be the object. "Why trouble ye the woman, for she hath wrought a good work *upon Me*?" &c. There is nothing so acceptable to God in the saint as knowing the person of Jesus, and appreciating Him in love. If in service we anticipated the mind of the Lord, how we might help one another! and how graciously He reckons! For ignorant as the woman was, the Lord speaks as if she had known about His death and burial, as He did Himself. And He rewards accordingly.

It was just so that He said to the disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me." He owned their devotedness at a heavenly value, though, in fact, it was *He* who had deigned to continue with them. Rom. viii. 26-27 is in character with this love, and most encouraging for us.

"Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." She did everything, as it were, in that one act. So, in one sense, Paul did more during the two years of his imprisonment than in all the rest of his ministry. The great thing is to cultivate that kind of devotedness to Christ which makes Him the one object. It was thus the woman acted, and got Christ's approval. It is not an easy thing to be satisfied with His approval, and nothing else; but this it is which strengthens the soul, and puts it on seeking His direction.

But in the next verses (14-16) what a contrast of darkness with light! The little picture we were looking at is soon gone. How thoroughly a passing scene, and now how changed! Judas thought he could deliver up Christ to whom he liked, but he could not; nor could the band, with their officers and weapons, take Him. "They went backward and fell to the ground." *He* gave *Himself* up, or they could never have taken Him. And what was Judas's estimate of Jesus? "What will ye give me," &c. "And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him." Alas! Judas the instrument of the enemy's malice, as the woman was of the love of the Spirit, now that that most solemn hour approached, when the full truth of man, of Satan, and of God Himself was disclosed in the cross of Jesus.—*Bible Treasury*, Nov., 1858.



## THE LORD'S NEAR RETURN.

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TO wait for the Son of God from heaven, in the daily expectation of His return, is the proper attitude of the church while here on earth. But of this return, when He shall come to translate His saints from earth to heaven, no signs are given. *"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas."*

That solemn sign has been given. The Son of man, who shed His blood for sinners, after lying in the grave three days and three nights, was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and after forty days, ascended into heaven in sight of the eleven apostles. "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 10, 11).

From that hour believers were left to wait, not for death, but for His promised return. Nevertheless, to this rule there were two exceptions; the Lord would forewarn His saints of the dangers to which they would be exposed in the closing days of the church, and to this end it was revealed to Peter and Paul that they would fall asleep previous to the Lord's coming.

Paul taking leave of the Ephesian elders, said, "I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts xx. 29); and again, "In the last days perilous times shall come;" and again, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" (2 Tim. iii. 1 and iv. 3). Peter also, "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me;" and "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?" &c.

(2 Pet. i. 14 and iii. 3). John, the last of the apostles, writes: "Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye have heard that the antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour" (1 John ii. 18).

The epistle of Jude is simply a picture of the great house as it actually existed before the departure of the apostles (2 Tim. ii. 20). Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was the first of the prophets, and his first prophetic announcement, a thousand years before the flood, was, "Behold the Lord cometh, with myriads of His saints, to execute judgment upon all," &c. But this prophecy was not recorded in Genesis, and in the wisdom of God it was kept back until the false, professing church had reached the corrupt condition described in Jude's epistle, to which Enoch's prophecy had special reference: he "prophesied OF THESE"; and not until the first century of the Christian era was this prophecy sounded out. If Jude could take up his inspired pen to write a second epistle, what would he say now, standing as we do on the threshold of the two thousandth year of the great house?

In the order of the New Testament, Jude is the last of the apostolic writers. The next epistles are from Christ Himself in Rev. ii.-iii., in which he gives the successive phases of the church from Ephesus to Laodicea. More than sixty years ago the church of God was aroused by a midnight cry, "Behold the Bridegroom! Go ye out to meet Him." Many responded to the call, and trimmed their lamps.

About the same time the Spirit of God called attention, in a remarkable way, to a Scripture which had been practically lost sight of since the days of the apostles: "Where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). Simultaneously, in different parts of the world, earnest Christians acted on this promise, and found rich blessing. National establishments and denominations were shaken to their centre. In real

power, the Lord manifested Himself to His saints as He did not to the world. Christians became simple in their lives and habits ; putting off their ornaments ; and in separation from the world, bore witness that they were not of it. Little now remains of the original blessing. The world has come in, and where does the Lord find the conditions on which the promised blessing depended ? He requires obedience, and does not find it ; He will have His lordship to be recognised, and He finds other lords there. He remains the same, and the Scripture cannot be broken ; but many who once realised the blessing of Matt. xviii. 20, now satisfy themselves with being gathered to the bare formula, and claim to be on the orthodox ground of gathering.

Those who should have borne witness to weakness and ruin, now boast of strength, gifts, and numbers ; have their own centres, and gather to their own committees. It is better honestly to admit the failure, than try to conceal results that are visible to all. "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel" (Hos. xiii. 1). The Philadelphians were an unpretentious and despised people, with but a little strength, but the Lord honoured and encouraged them to "hold fast." One alone remains faithful ; He cannot deny Himself. He has opened a door which none can shut.

Passing events remind us that the end is not far off. The Jews are returning in large numbers to the land of their fathers—the first movement of the kind since the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Anarchy, the outcome of democracy, is rampant everywhere, in open defiance of God and man—" *Vox populi vox Dei* " ! Earthquakes in divers places have within the last few years been ominously frequent. In the recent visitation of this kind at Japan, twenty-seven thousand souls lost their lives, according to the Government returns. Three thousand five hundred persons were hurried into eternity in the great crush

at Moscow. The blood of over one hundred thousand Armenian professing Christians, brutally murdered by the fanatical followers of Mahomet, lies at the door of the Turkish Government. This Eastern question seems likely to precipitate the final European crisis. But there is One who has prepared His throne in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all, and who holds the destiny of nations in His hand.

Pride and idolatry were the ruin of ancient Babylon (Dan. iv. 29-30). The handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's palace alarmed, but did not humble, the monarch (v. 20-31). That night the city was taken, and Belshazzar, the last of the Chaldean kings, was slain in his impious revelry. Similar corruption led to the decline and extinction of the Roman empire, soon to be revived by the Imperial Beast which will ascend out of the bottomless pit. For his reception, the world is now fully prepared. Embellishments, amusements, telegraphs, telephones, scientific inventions of almost magic import, have trained a Christless Christendom for accepting the miracles with which he will astonish and bewitch them, to welcome him as the restorer of order, and accept his fatal mark (Rev. xiii. 13-15, and xvi. 13, 14). It is said that there are now in America and Europe twenty-one millions of spiritualists, who hold intercourse with familiar spirits, or demons, and regard it as worship of an elevated kind. This delusion is comfortably lodged in the temple of the great mystic Babylon, the modern offshoot of the ancient city. Her idolatries far exceed those of ancient Babylon, and have corrupted all Christendom with her abominations. The handwriting on the walls of Rome may still be read in large letters in Rev. xvii. and xviii., but the GREAT HARLOT is neither alarmed nor humbled. "In one hour shall her judgment come." "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

"THE TIME IS AT HAND, AND THE EFFECT OF EVERY VISION."  
J. M.

## THE TRANSLATION OF ELIJAH.

2 *Kings* i., ii.

WE might read these two chapters in connection with this event, though it is only in the second of them we have it recorded.

Ahaziah, of the house of Omri, and the successor of his father, Ahab, on the throne of Israel, appears before us here, as in deep apostacy from the God of Israel. He was sick—and in his sickness he seeks to a god of the nations ; and being withstood because of this by a servant of the God of Israel, he sends officers to take him.

This was a full expression of apostacy. And, accordingly, his death is to be read as condign, specific judgment. It was a *judicial* death, and so was that of his captains and their fifties, who had entered into the spirit of their master, and were the representatives and executors of his iniquity.\* This was all in righteousness. The king of Israel had perfected sin, and judgment was executed upon him.

In Luke ix. this is referred to. When the Lord Jesus was refused entrance into a Samaritan village, His disciples would fain have acted the part of Elijah upon Ahaziah's captains, but the Lord forbade them.

They did not know what spirit they were of ; that is they did not discern the time ; they did not understand the Lord and His business in this world. They mistook the dispensation, and would have treated it as a time of *judgment*. It was in *intelligence*—in that light which distinguishes things that differ—that they were wanting. Their *affections* were right ; their purpose and design will be answered in due season, when the day of vengeance comes. So that it was not in affection that they erred, but in dispensational knowledge ; and, thus, in true holiness, or in the

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\*The third company of fifty may be received as a repentant remnant saved in the day of judgment.

holiness of the truth. Their Lord had come to save, not to kill. He was here among men to bless them, not to judge them.

This is important, for it tells us, as many other witnesses do, that true holiness is *conduct according to light or truth*, according to the way and place of God at the given time. ✓ "Everything is beautiful in its season." ✓ That which is holy, in divine seasonableness, is unholy when found elsewhere. This may surely instruct us ; but the scene in chapter i. has but little relief in it. We are in the next place, however, introduced to a very different thing (chap. ii.). We are encouraged to enter upon it with the brightest expectations, being set on the eve of the translation of Elijah : for the time, we are told, had come "when the Lord would take up Elijah to heaven by a whirlwind." But there is much incidental instruction here.

At an earlier moment, Elisha had forfeited, as I may express it, the mantle of his master. He had not proved himself to be fully up to the possession of it ; his heart had not been thoroughly single, and from that moment to the time of this chapter we had not seen him in company with his master (see 1 Kings xix. 19-21). This subjects him to a fresh proof ; and Elijah himself and the sons of the prophets are made the instruments for conducting the process under the hand of God. Elijah tells him again and again to go back, as he himself was pursuing the stages of his journey from Gilgal to the eastern side of the Jordan. And the sons of the prophets, whether at Bethel or at Jericho, came forth again and again to exercise his spirit, and try the earnestness and stability of his faith, by casting a shadow across his path, and thus bring his soul into perplexity and doubt.

This is a common case. The Lord, at times, with some of His choicest servants, will enter upon severe processes of purifying. He purges the vessels of His house, that they may be fitted for the Master's use.

## THE TRANSLATION OF ELIJAH.

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And in doing this He will use different instruments, as He pleases, in His wisdom. It may be the direct action of His own Word and Spirit ; it may be more immediately through His saints, or through the people of the world. Here He exercises Elisha by the word of Elijah--His own Word, I may say, expressed through His prophet. He will prove, after this manner, by the patient, successive stages of a long journey, whether Elisha's heart were indeed now freed (as once it had not been) from the entanglements of mere human influences, from the honey of home and kindred associations. And He also allows him to be exercised by the ways of those who were not in his elevation, a generation of saints who were not standing in the light and certainty of his own spirit, and who, therefore, by their communications, were well fitted to cast a shadow across his path, or introduce some perplexity into his soul. But he stands these tests, and pursues his way in full and close company with his master, the prophet of God, who was about to be translated to heaven. He has his answers ready, whether for Elijah or for the sons of the prophets ; and we find him calm, decided, patient, undistracted all along the way from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, from Jericho to Jordan, and then across the river, to wherever, in short (for he knew not the way any more than Abraham of old), Elijah, that is, the hand of God, the God of glory, might be pleased to call him or to draw him. Surely this was recovery. There was no longer a going back to kiss father or mother, but a single heart that made the Lord and His presence its place, the Lord and His pleasure its business.

The sons of the prophets at length retire. They stand to view afar off, while Elijah, with a stroke of his mantle, divides the waters of Jordan, making a passage for himself (and for Elisha, too, if he should have courage to follow on in such a wondrous, perilous path) to cross the river. And he does so. Then

Elijah himself also closes the severe and heated trial through which he had been putting his friend and minister. For when they together reach the opposite side of the river, he says to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee." For every testing time shall end ; every process for purging shall have its measure. Men's iniquities against the Lord shall close in the judgment of righteousness ; God's discipline of His saints shall close in the possession of glory. Elijah yields ; and Elisha has to write his own story for the future. "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee."

This reminds me of Solomon in 2 Chron. i. ; for after he had approved himself as taking his throne in a right spirit, God appears to him and says to him, "Ask what I shall give thee." And Elisha's answer to Elijah is as Solomon's answer to God. Solomon does not ask for the life of his enemies, nor for riches and honours for himself, but for wisdom to execute the service appointed him over the Lord's people. So Elisha here simply replies to Elijah, "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

This was beautiful. This was aiming high ; this was purposing great things ; this was asking as for the right hand and the left hand place in the kingdom. "Are ye able to drink of My cup, and to be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?" we might say, would be the spirit of the answer. And Elijah accordingly says to him, "Thou hast asked a hard thing ; nevertheless, if thou see me, when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee ; but if not, it shall not be so."

The single eye is the secret of pure spiritual energy. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." These were the terms then, and these are the terms now. It is not a question of life, but of strength in the spirit. Elisha must stand it—and through grace he does. They still go on together, he and Elijah ; and as they walk, they talk. But all the



time the eyes of Elisha were open. His heart was upon the word of his master. He had hid the promise there ; and though he may be still passing on, there is no distraction ; and so with us it ought to be. We may take up one circumstance after another, and converse with them too, like Elisha here ; but what is the heart affecting ? where is the eye directed ? Is it, like this dear man's, in the right place ? The walk and the talk, the circumstances of the journey, had not disturbed his spirit nor diverted his eye ; so that at the moment when the horses and chariot appeared, and Elijah was about to be carried up to heaven, Elisha's eye was upon them. He saw his ascending master, and got the mantle. This is certainly beautiful—to be walking and talking still, still occupied with the circumstances around us, but all the time the eye kept towards the object which God had proposed to it. It is like Abraham again, whose ear was so attuned to the voice of the Lord that the moment that voice called him, he had only to say, "Here am I."

Elisha at once used what he so prized. He took up the mantle of his master, and with it, after the manner of his master, divided the waters of the Jordan, and returned to Jericho. Here, however, I would pause to notice a matter. It is in the Name of the Lord God of his ascended master, and not in that master's own name, that Elisha does this. This is so ; but this is not so in the case of the apostles and their ascended Master. Peter preaches that it was his ascended Lord who sent down the Spirit, that it was His Name which carried salvation with it, that it was in His Name in which sinners were to be baptized for the remission of sins ; that it was His Name which had made the lame to walk (Acts ii -v.). The Name of Jesus of Nazareth is to them what the Name, not of Elijah, but of the Lord God of Elijah, was to Elisha.

And further. The ascending Lord needed not a convoy, as did the prophet. He who had, afore His

death, said of Himself and of His body, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," now, after His resurrection, "not needing" (as another has expressed it) "the cleansing of that fiery baptism, nor requiring a commissioned chariot to bear Him up, did, in the far sublimer calmness of His own indwelling power, rise from the earth, and with His human body pass into the heavenly places."

This is so; and this way of distinguishing the Lord Jesus is to be seen elsewhere. As when Joshua commands the sun and the moon to stand still, much is made of it, and that day is declared to have had none like it; but when the Lord Jesus did like things, things which showed His sovereignty over the forces and the course of nature, it is treated as no wonder at all (Joshua x.). But then, as to the great fact of this chapter (the translation of Elijah), it has, I believe, its own place and character. In my sight (may I so speak?) it stands in company with the translation of Enoch in *patriarchal* days, and with the death and burial of Moses on Mount Pisgah, in the stricter days of Israel and *the law*. It took place in the later times of *the prophets*, as we know.

In the progress of other ages or dispensations, earlier times and seasons, times of the fathers, of Moses and the prophets, it has been the way of the wisdom of God to give forth certain notices of His future purposes. The coming kingdom, when the Son of man shall take His lordship, and the Son of David His throne, has been the subject not only of prophecy, but of types and shadows. There have been historic pledges of it, and the faint foreshadowing of it in certain distinguished eras in the course of Old Testament times. But so also as to the deeper mysteries of the call of the Gentiles and of the heavenly calling, yea, indeed, of the mystery of the Church. And so, too, of the glorified "children of the resurrection." And I read the story of Enoch in the days of Genesis; the story of Moses with the

Lord on Mount Pisgah ; and this story of the translation of Elijah in the later days of the prophets, as witnessing that mystery in three distinct successive eras in the Old Testament times. Moses and Elijah, as we know, appear in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. The shadowy pledges which God gave by them of old, were then, in the days of the Gospel, redeemed and substantiated. Moses represents the dead and risen portion of the glorified saints ; Enoch and Elijah those who shall still be alive, and those translated in the day of 1 Cor. xv., or at " the coming of Christ." This has its deep interest for us.

Soon after this, the sons of the prophets betray the low, uncertain state of their souls. They are saints, but not in Elisha's elevation ; and they propose to search for his master, though they reverently acknowledge him. They, as it were, go to the empty sepulchre, and have to return rebuked and confounded. " Why seek ye the living among the dead ? " Why search on the mountain or in the valleys for one that has gone to heaven ? But the grace that is to be seen (and some of us have good reason to appreciate it) in thus delineating various measures and different elevations among the people of God, may be deeply and thankfully owned by us. " Some thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold."

The lessons of this Scripture are surely various, and each of them is healthful for the soul. " Thy testimonies are wonderful : therefore doth my soul keep them. The entrance of Thy words giveth light ; it giveth understanding to the simple " (Ps. cxix. 129, 130).—*Bible Treasury*, October, 1862.

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" As the Passion advances, its amazing contrasts grow in affecting interest. The Deliverer in bonds ; the Judge attainted ; the Prince of Glory scorned ; the Holy One condemned for sin ; the Son of God as a blasphemer ; the Resurrection and the Life sentenced to die ; the High Priest for ever, condemned by the high priest of that one year."

## THE PARADISE OF GOD.

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WHAT will it be to fall asleep  
 Upon the Saviour's breast—  
 No more to sigh, no more to weep,  
 But soar to heavenly rest?

What will it be with Him to be  
 Who all the victory won,  
 Who vanquished death and hell for me,  
 God's blest, eternal Son?

What will it be to enter on  
 Th' unbroken, heavenly rest—  
 All earthly toil and service done,  
 With Christ for ever blest?

What will it be to there recall  
 With Him the path He trod,  
 Yea, from His mouth to hear it fall—  
 His work for us and God?

What will it be in hope to rest  
 Within God's paradise—  
 The heart without a care opprest,  
 Without a tear the eyes?

What will it be, without alloy,  
 With Him to sweetly dwell  
 On coming glory, coming joy,  
 Of which His lips will tell?

What will it be with Him above  
 In full, eternal peace,  
 To drink the river of His love—  
 Communion ne'er to cease?

Ah! what indeed? Can pen portray,  
 Can tongue describe such bliss?  
 To be with Him in that sweet way—  
 Be with Him where He is!

## THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON AND THE DAY OF THE LORD.

THE hour draws nigh, the appointed time—  
 “that day” shall dawn at length, (Zech. xiv. 6.)  
 Apollyon’s gathered hosts appear, the flower of  
 pagan strength— (Rev. ix. 11.)  
 “Ho! comrades of the nations, come! your  
 banners join to ours!” (Rev. xvi. 14.)  
 And thus that bold resistless host to Salem’s  
 city pours. (Zech. xiv. 3.)

Both heaven and earth they now defy—when  
 was an army seen  
 Like Armageddon’s dread array?—ten million  
 weapons keen; (Rev. xvi. 16.)  
 From north and south, from east and west, the  
 warriors of the earth (Zech. xii. 3.)  
 O’erflow the land—the “pleasant land”—which  
 gave the Saviour birth.

Around that ancient citadel, in all their proud  
 display  
 Of kings and captains world-renowned, the  
 massed battalions sway; (Rev. xvi. 14.)  
 Behold the earth in rebel arms against the  
 Christ of God! (Rev. xix. 19.)  
 Behold the day, so long foretold, of battle and  
 of blood! (Joel iii. 9.)

Weep, weep, O Judah’s daughter; weep,  
 Messiahless, forlorn, (Joel ii. 1.)  
 Drink to the dregs the cup of wrath, with guilty  
 anguish torn; (Isa. li. 17.)  
 While he who lately ratified thy covenant of  
 years (Dan. ix. 27.)  
 Now leads the army of thy foes—his name its  
 banner bears. (Dan. viii. 25.)

The trump to battle echoes far! the shock of  
 hell’s attack! (Joel ii. 10.)

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The onward, unresisted rush ! the fire, the loot,  
the sack ! (Zech. xiv. 2.)

Hark to the shout of triumph loud that makes  
the heav'ns ring !

It penetrates the upper sky and shall an  
answer bring !

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For lo ! the moment is at hand when Antichrist  
must yield :

The heavenly portals open wide—KING JESUS (Rev. xix. 14.)  
takes the field !

Look upward ! see His soldier-saints, white- (Rev. xix. 19.)  
robed, on horses white

Like lightning's flash from heav'n descend,  
Immanuel's foes to fight ! (2 Thess. ii. 8.)

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The voice of arms is silent now ! the onward  
march is stay'd !

Each warrior drops his rebel blade ; each heart  
is sore afraid !

One moment heavenward they gaze, that sight  
of sights to see,

Then—earthward fall in sudden doom, and  
meet eternity ! (Zech. xiv. 12.)

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Hark to the Voice now heard on high, while  
earth, amazed, is still ; (Joel iii. 16.)

See, see the heavenly warriors haste His bidding  
to fulfil :

The beast, the prophet, taken, hurled to ever-  
lasting night— (Rev. xix. 20.)

Immanuel, King o'er all the earth, is Victor in  
the fight ! (Zech. xiv. 9.)

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Cry out and shout, O Zion, shout ! Messiahless  
no more, (Isa. xxv. 9.)

Acclaim the Advent of your King—He whom  
ye slew before ; (Zech. xii. 10.)

Lift up, lift up His standard high ! prepare,  
prepare His way ! (Isa. lxii. 10.)

He comes to reign in righteousness, He brings  
Millennial day ! (Isa. xxxii. 1.)

FRANK COCKREM.

## THE PREMIER'S PLOT AND HOW IT ENDED.

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THE book of Esther, as many may know, is one of the targets at which Satan has been firing his heavy guns of "higher criticism." It is looked upon by many as a queer book, and they wonder how it got into the canon of Scripture, and question its right to be there. In fact, the heavy firing against such a little book makes one think, and rightly so, that there is a something in that short and intensely interesting history which Satan very much dislikes; and so it is, as we shall see. But, like a well-built fort, it has hitherto withstood all his fire, and we believe it will continue to withstand all the battering he can give it. We bless God for the book of Esther, with its profitable and seasonable lessons. It is manifestly a part of God's Book; and though the *name* of God is not once mentioned from its commencement to its close, the *hand* of God is seen in every part of it. His providential care over and deliverance of His people in the hour of their great peril, with the utter confusion and defeat of their enemies, is so plainly seen that it almost seems to speak aloud and say, Ah, that's the reason why Satan so much dislikes it. Craft, cruelty, and crime are all met and overthrown, and the enemy is hanged on his own gallows. It is a striking picture of Satan's history and doom. With the critics and their infidel artillery, however, we need not trouble ourselves. Rather let us look at some of its most important lessons, which we do well to learn.

Look for a moment at this great man, Haman. He was prime minister and confidant of the greatest monarch of the day. Suddenly he springs into prominence before us, exalted to the highest place of dignity and power by the king. Why, we know not. As suddenly is he deposed; the reason has been told us. An Amalekite by birth, and doomed to destruction as the cruel and malicious enemy of God's people

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(Exod. xvii.), no true-hearted Jew would ever dream of bowing to or reverencing such an one, hence "Mordecai bowed not nor did him reverence" (chap. iii. 2). His brief history is a marvellous exemplification of that text, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. xvi. 18).

Though on the flood-tide of popularity and kingly favour, there was a sore in Haman's heart, and each time he passed in or out the palace gates he felt stung to the very quick as that statue-like, that unbending, unyielding Jew refused to bow or reverence him. His pride could not brook such a slight from a Jew, and a mere porter at the gate. My reader, we do well to remember that human greatness does never bring unmingled happiness. It brings great responsibilities with a long train of cares, sorrows and trials, but true happiness never! No, never! To find *that*, man must find his God, and be reconciled to Him "by the death of His Son" (Rom. v. 10); then, and then only, will he know and enjoy it. Beware, then, of seeking it elsewhere and otherwise; it will only end in eternal disaster.

What a picture we have in this man of Satan. We might almost say—we see Satan personified. His intense hatred, his cruel and bloodthirsty resolve to annihilate the whole of the Jews in the realms of the king, with his lies and his scheme to enrich the king's treasury in order to wreak vengeance for his wounded pride on these poor unsuspecting people, all stamp him as an unscrupulous monster—a very personification of Satan himself! But he had left God out of his reckoning when he made his plot. God was not in all his thoughts; He who "taketh the wise in their own craftiness" (1 Cor. iii. 9), and without whose counsel "purposes are disappointed" (Prov. xv. 22). Alas, how many have done the same thing since that day to their own utter confusion, and in spite of the warning beacon.

It is deeply interesting, and beautiful too, to see



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how God was behind the scenes that Satan was so shifting about ; how He permitted Vashti to be deposed, and Esther crowned Queen in her place, and Mordecai to save the king's life yet go unrewarded till Haman had reached the pinnacle of his pride and sin, and prepared the gallows for him ; how He then gave the king a sleepless night, and a desire to hear the records read, which resulted in Mordecai's exaltation, and Haman's confusion and subsequent death on the scaffold he had raised for his intended victim ; while the *letters of life* were sent out post-haste to counteract the *letters of death* which had been previously dispatched. All this, I repeat, is beautiful, and suited to the times and to the circumstances ; but it also reveals principles that operate to-day as truly as they did in that day.

Beloved, let us take courage ! God is still behind all the shifting scenes of to-day, and above all the pride and wickedness of the human heart. "He that sitteth in the heavens" quietly watches, and permits in His unerring wisdom the scene to be moved, and, amid all the confusion and strife through human policy in its plottings and schemings, He still overrules the scene-shifters and their work for His own glory and the accomplishment of His eternal purposes, at the same time chastening individuals, companies, or nations in His government, and securing the greatest good and the fullest blessing for His beloved people.

Yea, so perfect and complete is the action of His providence, even to the smallest details, that not even a sparrow can fall on the ground without His permission and notice. What comfort and cheer is this, whether for an individual saint with his own, or his family, or business cares and trials ; or as we look out on the perplexing questions and strifes of the day in almost every land, as man's will asserts itself and clamours to be obeyed, and "Vox populi vox dei" becomes more and more *apparently* true. It is cheering. And amid all this confusion—this huge Babel—faith knows, faith

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enjoys, and faith can say, God cares for the sparrows and the flowers, feeding and clothing both, can I doubt that He cares for me! If God cared for His own in Esther's day, and not only saved them from destruction, but lifted them into prominence and blessing, how much more will He care for His own in this day; made "His own" at infinite cost; redeemed by blood—the blood of Christ; sealed by His Spirit; and destined to be for ever in His house, with and like His beloved Son in glorified bodies, the sharers of His throne and glory. O for more quiet confidence in Himself, to give that heart-rest in this restless scene, assured that

"God sits as Sovereign on the throne,  
And ruleth all things well."

On the other hand, as it was with Haman, the Persian premier, and his sons, so will it be by-and-by with Satan and his own. As surely as Haman and his ten sons shared the same fate, and hung on the same gallows, so surely will Satan and all who are his, deceived and led by him, and satisfied to have it so, share the same awful doom in the lake of fire, while God's people will triumph and enjoy everlasting blessing. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. viii. 31) we may well exclaim even now. God's people may have to suffer in the meantime, and wait patiently while sinful pride rears its head, and seems to prosper and come to the full, but it is only "a little while, and the wicked shall not be, yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be" (Ps. xxxvii. 10). How very solemn! Like the Persian premier, men may plot and scheme and fight against God, but utter confusion, certain defeat will be the result. How much better, infinitely better, to believe His written letter which He sends far and wide, based on the death and resurrection of His Son—a message from heaven itself—a letter that gives the fullest assurance to all who read and believe it:—"These

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things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may *know* that ye *have* eternal life" (John v. 13). Then let these words sink into our hearts: "Be patient brethren." "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37). May this encourage us to be faithful, prayerful, watchful, careful. God is still God, and cares for His own, and will prove it to their eternal joy and the utter confusion of their enemies.

*New Zealand.*

W. EASTON.

## GODHEAD GLORY.

1 *Tim.* i. 12-17 ; vi. 13-16.

SCRIPTURE may be broadly divided into three great subjects: the nature and being of God, the government of God, and the purposes of God. John is specially occupied with revelation of God Himself. Old Testament: certain attributes of God are revealed, but not Himself. New Testament: God Himself revealed—"God was manifest in the flesh." When we speak of God, we speak of what is absolute; all else is relative. "I am" is absolute being. "In the beginning *was* the Word" is absolute; "all things *were made* by Him" is relative. In Old Testament, He abode in the thick darkness. In the New, He is known through the Spirit to all whose consciences are perfected by the blood of Christ. All creation will pass away, heavens rolled up like a scroll; "but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail"—*essential, absolute* Godhead! Once there was nothing but God—before all ages, the inconceivable, immeasurable eternity! Angel, principality, or power, there was none—only God! Love and light—absolute love and absolute light!

The throne of God is universal (see Ps. ciii. 19). The earth is so small, it is invisible to the most distant stars (see also Ps. xciii. 1). The moment

there is anything to rule over, He must reign. If one spot could be subtracted from the authority of the throne, there a rival throne might be set up. Everything comes under His power—the vast universe in all its unexplored, enormous, soul-prostrating extent, the thought of the immensity of which makes the head turn. Light takes eight minutes to travel from the sun to the earth (95 millions of miles), that of the nearest fixed star  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years, while from the pole-star it takes 25 years, travelling at 200,000 miles a second. From other stars, hundreds, even thousands of years, so they say.

But the very remotest orb is connected with the throne of God. Then come down to little things, as in 1 Tim. i. 12-17, an individual soul pouring out an apostrophe of praise to God. The last thing we hear of Paul preaching is the kingdom of God (Acts xxviii. 31), and the last thing we read of his desiring is to be preserved to the heavenly kingdom (2 Tim. iv. 18; see also 1 Tim. vi. 13-16). In Rom. xiv. 11; Col. i. 18; Eph. iv. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 9-10, xv. 23-28, Christ will first act as a warrior, putting down all authority, &c.; and when this is perfectly done, He Himself *as Man*, having delivered up the kingdom, becomes subject unto God, Himself the everlasting expression of perfect subjection. It will be a beautiful sight!

It will not interfere with His headship of the Church, nor with the divine rights of Christ; subjection will descend from the Son as Man to the lowest orders. His throne as Son of God in proper, divine glory "is for ever and ever" (Heb. i. 8). In Timothy, he speaks of the King. He held a commission from Him, and he charges Timothy to keep his commission. There are no non-commissioned officers in the kingdom of God. The Lord Himself was a pattern in this. Before Pontius Pilate He witnessed a good confession: "This commission have I received of My Father." And as to Paul, whatever Nero, the lion, might do,

he was quite sure that God would preserve him to His heavenly kingdom. "To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Timothy iv. 17, 18).—*Unrevised Notes of a Lecture.*

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## THE RELIGION OF CHINA.

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THE current opinion ridiculing China's folly is superficial. China has much wisdom, and, what is still better, China understands and appreciates the highest questions, for which the Gospel alone contains the true solutions. Only wait for the hour which God in His providence has set for this people and empire.

This hour is approaching. Some years ago the people of a certain Chinese village were re-modelling their temple into a school-house. For this purpose they removed the image of their idol, and hoped with the silver which they had confidently expected to find in the heart of the idol to pay the cost of the structure. Instead of silver they found the heart filled with tin!

This is too little known in Europe, that for centuries the educated men of China have found in their idols only tin, and not silver. Nowhere in the world are the educated classes so thoroughly materialistic, or at least atheistic, as is the case in China. The classical commentators of the Sung dynasty during the last seven centuries so thoroughly undermined the faith of the educated sections of China's population in regard to everything divine, that this faith has been thoroughly bankrupted. That which is called "religion" in China is in reality a chaos, such as has but rarely been found in the history of human thought and life, and this can be understood only in connection with the complete decay of the Chinese type of civilisation.

The religious forms and moral systems of Taoism, Buddhism, or Confucianism have been compared to three serpents. The first serpent, Buddhism, swallowed up Taoism except the head. Then Taoism swallowed

up Confucianism, the third serpent, all but the head, and this serpent, with an immense jaw, found the tail of the first serpent and swallowed up this serpent entire with the exception of the head ; so that in the end only the three heads were visible, and the three religions, as the Chinese philosophers are accustomed to claim with considerable pride, became one. But what a lamentably miserable religious life this religion produces ! Thousands of Chinese families at the end of each year dash honey and sugar on the lips of their kitchen household gods, so that these, in their yearly trips to the heavenly regions, may make a favourable report of the conduct of the family during the twelve months. Examples could be multiplied almost endlessly to show that the modern religious culture of China is a mere ceremonial service, and a trade affair in which the Chinaman gets the good portion and the god the poor. China is suffering from religious bankruptcy, and yet from this abyss of despair comes the cry to the representatives of Western Christian civilisation for help as powerfully as it came to the Apostle Paul at Troas, from Macedonia.—*Christliche Welt (Leipzig)*.

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PSALM XIX. 7-11.

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THE law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul ;  
 The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple ;  
 The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart ;  
 The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the  
 eyes ;  
 The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever ;  
 The judgments of Jehovah are truth ; they are righteous  
 altogether :  
 They are more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold ;  
 Sweeter also than honey and the dropping of the honeycomb.  
 Moreover, by them is Thy servant enlightened ;  
 In keeping them there is *great reward*.

AFRICA.—Twenty years ago, to use the words of Mr. Stanley, in April, 1891, “England held sway over but 330,000 miles. To-day her power extends over two and three-quarter millions of miles. Four hundred European officers are engaged in Western Africa, 200 in Eastern Africa, and in South-Eastern Africa there are as many more. They have flotillas of steamers on the lakes now; even railways are running towards the spot where I found David Livingstone. Africa is six times larger than the continent of Europe. I saw, sixteen years ago, that the inhabitants themselves would never be able to bring their land to the state of civilisation which it ought to be brought to, and when speaking for the first time to a powerful chief, I felt like St. Augustine when he landed in Britain and told King Ethelbert of the truths he might find in the Gospel. There are now fifty missionary stations in Africa sowing the seeds to which David Livingstone gave his life, and I doubt not that there are children listening to me who will live to hear the good news that there are millions of Central Africans who have learned that stirring anthem, “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will to men.”—*From “The Story of Africa.”*

NOTHING BUT MONEY.—The ruling passion remains to the last; and as we live so, in nine cases out of ten, we die. The hands of a rich old man who was dying moved about with nervous restlessness—opening, shutting, clutching the bed-clothes. “What is the matter?” asked the physician, turning to the old man’s son; “why is he so uneasy?”—“I know,” was the reply, “what it is. Every night, before he went to sleep, he liked to feel and handle some of his bank-notes.” The youth slipped a ten-pound note into his father’s hand; feeling, handling, and crumpling this, *he died*. Could anything show more clearly the poverty of those who in their last hour have only pounds, shillings, and pence, and none at all of the riches of Christ? How well it would have been for this poor dying man if, instead of having only a ten-pound note to handle, he could have heard in his inmost soul the words of the Saviour to His troubled disciples: “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me, and see!”

CHRIST’S manhood is as real as His Godhead. Yet, on the one hand, there is no dual personality, nor, on the other, is His manhood merged in His Godhead by fusion of identity. There is but one Person who is both God—really and truly God in Nature and Being and Person, and who is Man—really and truly Man in Nature and Being and Person.—“*Philaletes.*”

PHIL. III. 10.—Paul desires to have that which Christ can give, His cup and His baptism; and to leave to the Father that which Christ left to Him, the disposal of places in the kingdom. He does not desire, like John and James, the right and left hand, that is, a good place for *himself*. He desires Christ, he would win Christ. He does not follow tremblingly, as the disciples did in that chapter (Mark x.); he desires to suffer—not, that is, for the sake of suffering, but to have part in the sufferings of Christ. Instead, therefore, of going away like the young man in the same chapter, because he had much that could profit the flesh, instead of clinging like him to the law for his righteousness, he renounces that righteousness, and all that he had he counted but as dung.—*J. N. D.*

EPH. IV.—Truth displays the real relation of all things with each other in connection with the centre of all things, which is God revealed now in Christ. Love is that which God is in the midst of all this. Now Christ, as the light, put everything precisely in its place—man, Satan, sin, righteousness, holiness, all things, and that in every detail, and in connection with God. And Christ was love, the expression of the love of God in the midst of all this. And this is our pattern; and our pattern as having overcome, and, as having ascended into heaven, our Head, to which we are united as the members of His body.—*J. N. D.*

REVELATION enriches us with truths which Reason never could have discovered, but which, being given, Reason can accept without loss of dignity or remission of responsibility. To me the Bible is a divine revelation—a revelation of God, Providence, Sin, Atonement, Faith, Immortality. The Bible is not a book containing a revelation; it is a revelation. We assume an immense responsibility in claiming that any book is a final and authoritative standard in faith and morals. We place the Book itself in an awful position. We separate it from all other books; we make sceptical criticism a profane offence, and devout obedience an essential element of spiritual character. The mind has simply to receive, the will has simply to obey, the heart has simply to trust. The Book is to us verily as God Himself. Are we, in nineteenth century light, to stand by such a position, or to abandon it? Is the Bible still to stand alone, and to demand the obeisance of all other books? There is only one Book in the world which can prove the inspiration of the Bible, and that is the Bible itself. Let the Bible speak for itself. When inquirers come with their questions, objections, and difficulties, insist, as a condition of conference, that the Book itself be read through and through from end to end, until the inquirer is thoroughly acquainted with its contents. That reading will do its own work. That reading has made me an unquestioning and grateful believer in the plenary inspiration, the divine authority, and the infinite sufficiency of Holy Scripture; and, therefore, I can the more earnestly and definitely encourage others to impose upon themselves the sacred task. I now know that the Bible is inspired. It addresses itself to every aspect and every necessity of my nature; it is my own biography. I never know how great a Book it is until I try to do without it: then the heart aches; then the eyes are put out with the great tears of grief; then the house is no home of mine; then life sinks under an infinite load of weariness. I know well all the criticisms which this kind of confession never fails to evoke; if I knew less of them I would make more of them, but knowing them well, in all their scope and meaning, I will no longer allow them to rob the heart of its most sacred joys.”—*Dr. Parker.*

IF ROMANISM is not Paganism, what is it? Even in the United States it spares no trouble in order to keep its adherents in darkness and superstition. A few weeks ago, a French Roman Catholic woman, near Springfield, Mass., fell sick, and sent for a priest, who ordered her to buy small paper pictures of the Virgin Mary, about an inch long, and told her to *eat them* if she wished to recover. The woman being a fervent Romanist obeyed. She is now deeply interested in reading a New Testament given to her husband. Thank God!



## INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

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GOD OUR FATHER being approached through Christ Jesus pardons like a mother, who kisses the offence into everlasting forgetfulness, but this He could only do because of the blessed work of the cross, which has given Him a righteous title to act in grace towards the vilest of sinners who come to Him by Christ.

"BE DILIGENT."—Let us serve our God *to-day*, serve Him with the *whole heart*, and serve Him with *joyfulness*, and both present blessing and future reward is assured to us. How is it, brethren, that in many houses no helpful periodicals are taken or sent forth? Many neglect the meetings; the weather, roads, clothes, or other circumstances furnish them excuses; and many more neither minister the word of God's grace nor support those who do. And what wait they for? The "*to-morrow*," which is not theirs, either in their *feeling* more like it, or being better *able* to do, or other fair delusions. What shall the end be of it? As surely, God says, as we "sow the wind, shall we reap the whirlwind," and if we "set out these strange slips the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow." Let us awake, then, to sow the good seed, and beside *all* waters, for such God calls "BLESSED."—*B. C. G.*

TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO one of the most devoted of the northern ministers, Rev. Patrick Simpson, of Stirling, was on his death-bed, and in the early morning his brother, with the Geneva Bible before him, read the tender words,—"*Christ is to me, bothe in life and in death, advantage.*" The dying man reverently moved his head—"that," he said, "was a true sentence to me once before: my father spake that when he was dying." The words of the Old Version do not occur in our present one; we find instead, "*For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*"

I AM the Lord thy God. When Rev. Eb. Erskine was dying, a friend asked him what he was now doing with his soul. "I am doing with it," said he, "what I did forty years ago; I am resting on that word, 'I am the Lord thy God;' and on this I mean to die." Turning to his daughter, who was reading his sermon on that text, he said, "O woman, that is the best sermon I ever preached," and most probably it was the best to his soul; shortly after he expired. Happy indeed is the man whose God is the Lord.

IMPIETY.—He was a middle-aged man and was crossing the Green Mountains in Vermont. Having stopped at the only dwelling of man in a distance of more than twenty miles, during a heavy snowstorm, he was kindly invited to tarry for the night, but he declared that he would go forward to his home, and that the Almighty was not able to prevent him. From the mountain valley where he had rested he travelled in a howling tempest over one ridge, and only one more intervened between him and his family. Notwithstanding the snow was five or six feet deep, he kept on and got within a few yards of the last summit, from whence he could have looked down upon his dwelling. But he never reached it. He was found dead, partly supported by the trunk of a tree; his body bent forward, and his ghastly intent features told the stubbornness of his purpose to overpass the remaining eminence. The Almighty had prevented him—the currents of his life's blood were frozen. For more than thirty years that tree bore the hieroglyphics of death as a warning to travellers.

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WHAT IS the use of learning and talent in a minister if he have not grace? He is only a learned hater of God, a talented servant of the devil, an accomplished child of wrath, an amiable heir of hell. An unconverted minister! What a life-long hypocrisy! Pretending to tell others the road to heaven, and not knowing it himself! Oh, the meanness of it, the shabbiness of it, the dishonesty of it! It would be nobler far to break stones on the roadside.—*Rev. W. J. Patton.*

HONESTY.—The Christian complains that his honesty interferes with his success in business. My brother, does God reward honour, integrity, and high principle with this world's coin? Consider the price your unscrupulous competitor pays for his success! His advertisements are deceptive, he treats his workpeople tyrannically, his inferior articles are palmed off upon his customers. Sow that man's seed, and you will reap his harvest. Cheat, lie, and be unscrupulous, and you *may* succeed. But if the price is too dear for you to pay, do not begrudge him his harvest. Yours is a clear conscience, a pure mind, rectitude within and without. You would not, you could not, change places.

DIVINE CULTURE.—When God will educate a man, He compels him to learn bitter lessons. He sends him to school to the necessities rather than to the graces, that by knowing all suffering he may know also the eternal consolations.—*Celia Burleigh.*

PROSPERITY.—“What is the value of this estate?” asked one gentleman of another. “I don't know,” was the reply, “but I know what it cost its late owner.” “How much,” was asked. The reply was, “HIS SOUL.” A solemn pause followed, and then an explanation. He was the son of a pious man, and himself a professor. He became partner in a mercantile house, gave more and more attention to business, and less and less to the things of the Lord. He grew wealthy and miserly, saying on his death-bed, *My prosperity has been my ruin.*

WITHOUT Thy presence, earth gives no refection; without Thy presence, sea affords no treasure;  
Without Thy presence, air's a rank infection; without Thy presence, heaven itself no pleasure;  
If not possessed, if not enjoyed in Thee, what's earth, or sea, or air, or heaven to me?  
In having all things, and not Thee, what have I? Not having Thee, what have my labours got?  
Let me enjoy but Thee, what further crave I? And having Thee alone, what have I not?  
I wish not sea nor land, nor would I be possessed of heaven, if unpossessed with Thee!—*Quarles.*

I SAW my brother wither'd on the bier—

Sorrowing, I saw him laid in dust to rest;

In two short months I came and dropt a tear,

And saw a blade of grass upon his breast.

Can God so clothe the grass, and shall not He

Who gave the word, omnipotent to save,

Re-clothe the dead, and set the captive free,

To live for ever, ransom'd from the grave?

He can, He will; away, away with grief!

“Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief.”—*M. Lunn.*

## EVOLUTION.

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THE "Church of England" occupies so important a position in the religious profession of this country that one cannot but be deeply concerned on seeing that its trend at the present time is of a terribly perilous character, being unmistakably in the direction of avowed materialism and agnosticism. May God in His mercy arrest this tendency, that those who are truly His own in the Establishment may be preserved from the apostate condition of things which He has forewarned us of, and which is now seen to be rapidly approaching. These observations arise from a perusal of the "Official Report," issued this week, of the Church Congress held at Shrewsbury in October last, the papers and speeches in which have been revised by the speakers.\* The first subject considered was "*The Bearing of the Theory of Evolution on Christian Doctrine*," the Bishop of Hereford being in the chair; and the introductory paper that of Archdeacon Wilson, Vicar of Rochdale. The former made these statements:—

"The name of Charles Darwin is one of the greatest names among the great in England." . . . "We are beginning to feel that the thoughts of such a man tend to bring us nearer to the true light in God." . . . "And more and more my belief is that as time goes on it will be found that he was ordained as one of those door-keepers in the vast temple of the universe who open to us new vistas, every one of them leading to the throne of God."

In the Archdeacon's paper we read:—

"The theory of evolution correlates, I suppose, the greatest quantity of knowledge, and has effected the greatest transformation of thought that the world has witnessed. It is the contribution of this century towards the progressive mastery of the idea of the Creator as displayed in nature. We ought, therefore, of course, to welcome it. Theology, if it is living, must be progressive. It is the application of all, as it becomes known, to the elucidation of the relation of man to God, and to the bringing of man to a closer approximation to the highest we can conceive."

These extracts will suffice to show the exalted position given by these dignitaries to Darwin, and the attitude they occupy (and, alas! so far as we can judge, the Church of

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\* Bemrose & Sons, Limited, London and Derby.

England generally) towards his theory of evolution. But we now proceed to register in these pages the *admissions* made by the Archdeacon, in spite of which he is a strong theistic evolutionist :—

“In the first place, it has made it, at first sight, more difficult to attribute personality to God. Any theory of evolution which is not dogmatically materialistic or agnostic assumes the universal immanence of God as mind and will in nature. This is the religion of the theistic evolutionist. Evolution thus deanthropomorphises God, and therefore comes perilously near depersonalising Him. Evolution seems at first to divest the God of the evolutionist of everything that he can love, of every definable or imaginable relation to the individual soul. God seems lost in the dim infinity of law which science has revealed.”

There is not a word here from which we dissent. It is all lamentably and deplorably true. One only wonders how any child of God (which we are not entitled to deny him to be) can come publicly forward as the champion of theistic evolutionism, when at the outset he has to formulate such damaging admissions as these. But, alas ! there are worse to follow :—

“This, then, is the first effect of the theory of evolution on doctrine ; it makes our thought of God more difficult.” . . . . “In our thought of the personality of God, however, lies, I suspect, the problem which will tax the next age. For ourselves, we have to acquiesce in an imperfect solution. We must be far remote, as yet, from perfect knowledge. If, indeed, as the theistic theory of evolution declares, nature is the inchoate self-expression of God, we must be still in early stages of that expression.” . . . . “We cannot grasp the personality of God and His love and Fatherhood when we are thinking of all nature as the expression of His living and acting will.”

We had thought that the Lord Jesus Christ was the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person. Is it credible or to be tolerated that a clergyman should suggest that we must be in early stages of the self-expression of God, and that this should be said in the presence of numbers of his brethren without one word of protest? But what are the fair and honest conclusions as to the theistic evolutionist that we must needs draw from these avowals? (1) That he finds his thought of God more difficult ; (2) that he denies to God the character, qualities, and attributes which we speak of in man as exercises, feelings, and affections ; (3) that he has arrived perilously near to denying His personality, but is unabashed ; (4) that this personality of God is a *problem*, and the next age will

have to solve it; (5) that as His personality, love, and Fatherhood cannot be grasped while we think of all nature as the expression of His living and acting will, the theistic evolutionist who thus thinks surrenders (for the time being, at least) his grasp of God's personality, God's love, and God's Fatherhood! So far as to God.

Next as to creation :—

“It is no part of the doctrine of the Church—it is a comparatively modern theory of the naturalists, rashly accepted by the theologians of two centuries ago—that man is a special and underived species. No doubt it is to some of us still a novel and even a repulsive thought, that man may be physically related, however remotely, to other animals. But to those who have looked the thought in the face it appears in a different light. We are what we are, whatever our origin may have been. I can imagine no sublimer conception of the nature or the dignity of man, than that which sees all nature as the self-manifestation of God rising into self-consciousness in man. Of course, in all continuity there is a difficulty—at what point do consciousness, reason, conscience, soul, begin? But there is no more difficulty in this question as applied to the evolution of the myriad forms of life, than as applied to the myriad increments of the individual from the microscopic embryo. Christian doctrine can adopt the evolutionary view of creation of man; it is pledged to no other.”

This is *all* that the Archdeacon says on the special creation of man. It will be seen that he solves this question to his own satisfaction. Darwinism finds no place for any special creation of man; neither, therefore, can he. His concern is to reconcile Darwinism with the tenets of his own sect; and having, as he considers, succeeded in that, it is enough! But whose servant is he? Has he no concern? can he find no place for what his Master has said on the subject? Is there not a word to be said, not a thought to be given to this? It concerns us but little that what his “church” is said to have “rashly accepted” two centuries ago it now unblushingly contradicts, but it does concern us exceedingly that God should have taken pains in His Word to give us a singularly emphatic and circumstantial account of the distinctly special creation of man (Gen. i. 26) as the result of no processes of nature whatever, but of divine counsels, giving him, by the fiat of His own will, dominion over the earth and earthly creatures, and adding, “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them” (ver. 27). Then in Gen. ii. we have an even more circumstantial account of

man's creation—breathing into him the breath of life, &c. ; and, moreover, the distinct and separate account of the formation of Eve from the rib taken out of Adam's side—all which is treated by the learned Archdeacon with silence, if not with contempt ! He asks the question :—

“At what point do consciousness, reason, conscience, soul, begin ?” and he follows this by saying, “But there is no more difficulty in this question as applied to the evolution of the myriad forms of life, than as applied to the myriad increments of the individual from the microscopic embryo.”

We reply, there is no force whatever in this, for the increments he speaks of are all physical and are inherent in (that is, inseparable from) the embryo, but consciousness, reason, conscience, soul are of quite another character, and are imparted by God.

Then we come to this most important enquiry—

“What is the bearing of the theory of evolution on the Christian doctrine of sin ?”

The answer given is :—

“I think the popular view of sin as connected with a definite fall of the head of the race is considerably affected. Man fell, according to science, when he first became conscious of the conflict of freedom and conscience. To the evolutionist sin is not an innovation, but is the survival, or misuse, of habits and tendencies that were incidental to an earlier stage in development, whether of the individual or the race, and were not originally sinful, but were actually useful. Their sinfulness lies in their anachronism : in their resistance to the evolutionary and divine force that makes for moral development and righteousness. Sin is the violation of a man's higher nature which he finds within, parallel to a lower nature.” . . . “The organism of society, in its collective conscience, under the law of evolution, is advancing slowly towards righteousness, and condemns first as sin and then as crime, actions which it once tolerated or approved. The survival of these actions is sin. Now this conflict of freedom and conscience is precisely what is related as ‘The Fall,’ *sub specie historiae*. It tells of the fall of a creature from unconscious innocence to conscious guilt, expressing itself in hiding from the presence of God. But this fall from innocence was in another sense a rise to a higher grade of being. It is in this sense that the theory of evolution teaches us to interpret the story of the Fall. It gives a deeper meaning to the truth that sin is lawlessness.”

One plainly sees that the deeper these divines plunge into the vortex of evolutionism, the further are they carried from the Pisgah heights of divine truth. There is a reference at the close of what I have just quoted to “what

is related as the Fall ” and to “the story of the Fall.” Let any one read the opening verses of Genesis iii., where God gives a clear and cogent account of the Fall, and then say what he thinks of the daring assertion that sin was *not an innovation*, but an anachronism, a survival of useful habits and tendencies incidental to an earlier stage in development ! Could anything be more flagrantly in the teeth of the plain statements of the Word of God ? And not only does the Archdeacon contradict the inspired account given by Moses, but he equally contradicts what the Spirit of God says by Paul (Rom. v. 12)—“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Is the Word of God, both Old Testament and New, become as idle tales to us ? Let evolutionists answer. Perilously near have they got to God as an unknown quantity, and to the Word of God as a book with which the grossest liberties can be taken ! If sin be no innovation, but a survival of the habits and tendencies of an earlier stage of development, what becomes of human responsibility, and what becomes of eternal judgment ? Is it for the survival of habits and tendencies originally un sinful and actually useful, but now anachronistic, that God punishes men with an eternity in the lake of fire, which is the second death ? Let the evolutionist answer.

But not only does the “automatic process in nature” which results in “natural selection” and “continuity” find the innovation of sin inadmissible as a fact, it equally refuses to accept that Redemption was an innovation ! It adopts the language of the scoffers, of whom Peter writes by saying, “All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,” *except* in such modifications as have resulted from the operation of natural laws, “the survival of the fittest,” &c. Thus Redemption, and even the body of the Lord Jesus, as we shall find later on, are *squared* to this theory.

“The theory of evolution is indeed fatal to certain quasi-mythological doctrines of the Atonement which once prevailed, but it is in harmony with their spirit. It has become impossible to regard redemption as an afterthought, as a plan devised by a resourceful Creator, in Miltonic fashion, to meet an emergency. It has become impossible to the evolutionist to retain what was once the ordinary view of the super-

natural as an interference with the natural, as an interposition from another sphere. Such dualism is repugnant to him."

In this last sentence we see that, without their being mentioned, miracles are finally repudiated by the evolutionist as no longer possible of belief. But he further says:—

"To the evolutionist, again, all progress being the result of struggle and sacrifice, the Atonement is God's identification of Himself with the human race in that ceaseless struggle, manifested especially in the supreme sacrifice of the sinless Christ, but also in all human life lived in the spirit of Christ. This identification is the Atonement, the reconciliation: and in it the evolutionist, not less than the theologian, finds new hope and power, a release from sin, a real forgiveness and redemption. For in this Incarnation, this identification by God of His very self in the struggle of man, we have the pledge of ultimate victory."  
 . . . . "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. This doctrine is natural to the theistic evolutionist."  
 . . . . "Thought is being transformed by scientific method, and, along with thought, theology must change in form on some such lines as these."

Here we have the gross error of Swedenborgianism, connecting Atonement with the Incarnation instead of with the sacrificial and vicarious work of the Lord Jesus on the Cross, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18); "That He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

How totally incongruous with the testimony of the Spirit of God by Peter and by Paul are these lame attempts to reconcile the claims of evolutionism with the simple and soul-saving statements of the Word of God. But, alas! in these crude and crawling efforts to make Christianity fit in with evolution, there is scarcely so much as a reference to the Word of God, or to the cross of Christ, or to salvation by faith, or to any other of the verities on which our souls rest for eternity. Nature worship and the operation of natural laws *have taken the place of divine revelation*. Atonement is reduced to Incarnation, and Incarnation made the sequence of natural laws. All progress being the result of struggle and sacrifice, Christ is identified with this, and thus the Cross of Calvary is the outcome of this progression, which is the Atonement, the reconciliation, and in it is found "new hope and power, a release from sin, a real forgiveness and redemption"! Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ have no place in this evolutionary theology, this new gospel, which is a perversion



of the gospel of Christ. May souls be preserved from the fatal error of trusting for eternal life to a theology which Unitarians can happily accept, and which Infidels can easily adopt. So far from admitting that the theory of evolution is, as the Archdeacon avows in conclusion, "a very wholesome and much needed study for us along with our theology," we rise from his exposition of it with the sad and solemn conviction that it ruthlessly robs us of many, if not of all, the foundation truths of holy Scripture.

The Archdeacon was followed by the Rev. Dr. Bonney, Professor of Geology, University College, London; Hon. Canon of Manchester. The Professor starts by affirming that

"Evolution, properly speaking, is no more a theory than gravitation, attraction, polarisation, and the like."

Defining what evolution is, he says :—

"Darwin sums up his arguments: 'These elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent on each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by the laws acting around us.' He concludes, 'Thus from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one,' " &c.

Professor Bonney's comment on this is :—

"Our choice lies between evolution and the process called 'special creation,' for I am not aware of any third explanation of the facts worthy of serious consideration. Special creation at one time undoubtedly held the field. It was in accordance with the words of the Bible, and thus was supposed to have received a divine sanction."

Yes, there is a choice, and it is between evolution and special creation, between the "Origin of Species" and the Bible, between Professor Darwin and God; and who can regard without dismay that these pledged defenders of the faith have ranged themselves on the sinister side of each of these antitheses, not only unrestrained by God and His Word, but unrestrained by their own "Thirty-nine Articles"? The Professor proceeds :—

"But serious difficulties were quickly discovered" (in believing "special creation" and "the words of the Bible") "when geology passed from the stage of crude hypothesis to that of inductive science. So long as men assumed that the life history of the earth had been

divided into a number of chapters, that, from time to time, an epoch of catastrophe had swept all living creatures from its surface, and that each of these general destructions had been followed by a fresh exertion of creative force, those difficulties were not felt; but when once it was ascertained that the convulsions were imaginary, and the continuity of life was unbroken from the earliest ages, it became obvious that the hypothesis, to say the least, stood in need of very important modifications. It was no longer possible to insist on understanding the words of Scripture in a strictly literal sense," &c.

Scripture makes one pregnant remark that seems of little account with these learned divines, "*Through faith* we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God." Do any wish to understand? let them approach the subject *through faith*, and let them not leave out "by the Word of God." We are under no necessity of imagining a series of epochs of catastrophe or general destructions. We take our stand on God's Word, and on that only. It is a dishonour to Him to ask for or accept any support to what He has said. Now we read in Isaiah xlv. 18, "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain;" or more correctly, not as waste, a chaos (see Gen. i. 2). Thus God distinctly says that the earth was *formed* and *made* and *established*, and, therefore, *not* a chaos.

In the first verse in the Bible we read of this, *not* of a chaos, but of God's original creation of the heavens and the earth, and, so far as the earth is concerned, within the compass of that verse is contained what we term the whole of the early geologic periods, a world teeming with vegetable and animal life to which all fossil organic remains belong. But in the second verse we do read of a chaos: "*The earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.*" Between, then, these two verses a radical change—call it a catastrophe if you will—had taken place. Over the chaos thus formed God's Spirit brooded, and out of that chaos God formed the Adamic creation with which only the earlier chapters of the book of Genesis are occupied, save the first verse, as already pointed out. Thus, while learned men are floundering in difficulties, the simple child of God finds no difficulty in accepting literally God's own account of the present creation, formed in six literal days of 24 hours, as Exodus xx. 10, 11 unanswerably affirms. In spite, therefore, of Charles Darwin and Professor Bonney, we may

affirm that with *men of faith* "special creation" holds the field to-day as much as it ever did, and those who hold the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture call for no quarter from science and its devotees. We have no desire to take "refuge in the hypothesis of special creation." It is no hypothesis to us, but an established truth, and this it is simply and solely because it is God's account of His own work. "A believer in evolution," he says, "may be a disbeliever in God." We sorrowfully agree with him. Does he not also agree with us that a believer in God may be an unbeliever in evolution? There are other things, viz., life and immortality, which the Professor lays violent hands upon. These I purposely exclude here, and pass on to Canon Gore's statements. He alleges that evolution

"changes our natural way of thinking about God's revelation of Himself. It makes it harder for us to think of revealed truth as a detached and definite body of propositions of equal value given within a certain area of time and space," &c. . . . "It modifies our way of thinking about eschatology, or 'the doctrine of the last things.' There are two ways of thinking about the result of human lives. You may think of men as receiving beyond the grave rewards or punishments, given from outside by the Divine Judge; or you may think of each human life as perpetually occupied in fashioning its own character, and thus also, according to inevitable law, its own ultimate destiny."

Canon Gore being a decided evolutionist, we need scarcely say what form his conclusions assume:—

"Whatever is to be our state hereafter, we are quite sure it will only be the natural outgrowth of what we are or are making ourselves."

God's word, it is true, says "they were judged every man according to their works" by Him who sits upon the great white throne. It says *nothing* about men fashioning their own character, and thus, according to inevitable law, their own ultimate destiny, and it says *nothing* of our eternal condition being the "natural outgrowth of what we are," &c. But what God's Word says finds no place in the argument; it has become so hard to think of revealed truth in the old-fashioned way, since evolution has opened our eyes and modified our thoughts! And

"it will not be dislodged,"

he tells us, avowing that it has become

"an established principle of theological knowledge."

One shudders at seeing to what an extent these Church of England dignitaries are prepared to relinquish divine truth in every respect in which it is not amenable to this modern theory of evolution, now exalted by them into "an established principle of theological knowledge." Hitherto, we had believed that theology meant something about God. It cannot be *that* any longer, for evolution, which is an established principle of it, makes our thought of God more difficult, says Canon Wilson; and, says Professor Bonney, an evolutionist may be a disbeliever in God; and again, says he, "The being and nature of God are matters with which science cannot deal, to which her tests and methods do not apply;"

and yet, throughout these papers, we find the nature and being of God unhesitatingly subjected to this evolutionary analysis, and we are asked to form our estimate of Him by the light of this newly "established principle of theological knowledge." Alas, when the blind lead the blind how few escape the ditch! Having listened to a Bishop, an Archdeacon, a Canon, and a Professor, turn we now to the address of the Secretary to *the Christian Evidence Society*. Surely *he* will enter his protest against the unsoundness of his brethren, and extricate them from the errors to which they are committed. Alas, while saying much that is good, he makes no protest against the evil to which he had listened; moreover, he appears to shut out from God's method of working all isolated action, whether in Providence, miracles, or answers to prayer; "special creations" and "special providences" being only held by those who, in his estimation, have but the common and defective conception of God! He adds what is perhaps the saddest sentence uttered, to which I have already made allusion. It is this:

"Even the 'Lord from heaven' was pleased to enshrine Himself in a 'body' 'prepared' through a long human ancestry."

Is it not sad beyond expression, that from this slavish devotion to a nineteenth century delusion, *even the body of our Lord Jesus Christ is not exempted?* Does not the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society know (he who quotes Greek so learnedly) that in the Scripture to which he refers there is not the remotest allusion to the Lord's ancestry, and thus his words "through a long human ancestry" are an unwarrantable and profane *gloss* upon Scripture to serve and

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sustain, at whatever cost, the theory of evolution? Nor does he stop there, for he subjects God Himself to the process of His own alleged laws! He quotes approvingly these words of the late John Addington Symonds—

“The fundamental conception which underlies the evolutionary method of thought is that all things in the universe exist in process.”

Yet he says:—

“Thus, as the final end of that divine process which science calls ‘Evolution,’ ‘God shall be all in all’ (1 Cor. xv. 28).” And we are encouraged to expect, in His operations, “a ceaseless process by which the universe would develop into a higher and yet higher state . . . involving possibly an almost infinity of travail (Rom. viii. 19-23) . . . to issue one day, not in the running down of an exhausted machine, but in the culmination of a perfected and universal membership, till through the very *transcendence* of His love, He shall, by His Son and through His Spirit, become wholly *immanent*.”

Where, I ask, is there room in this harangue for the righteous, holy judgment of God, and for the eternal punishment of the wicked? Is it not an almost open avowal of the evil doctrine of Universalism? And do we not plainly see here also what the *New York Nation* refers to as an ignorant and undignified scurrying after undeveloped or pseudo-science in order to press it into the service of theology?

Notwithstanding all we have here reviewed, the Bishop of London (now Archbishop-designate of Canterbury), who opened the discussion which followed, affirmed that “the writers were very guarded;” the Rev. J. A. Betts, organizing secretary of the Church House, that what they had heard had given them nobler ideas of God’s method of working; and the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Denman, that Professor Darwin had given a subscription to the cause of missionary work.

The Rev. T. A. Lacey contended as follows:—

“The saints whom Christians venerate are those who have most perfectly realised this exaltation of their manhood” (a mystic continuation of the Incarnation in those who are redeemed), “who in the regeneration are to sit on thrones beside the throne of God, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And if they are thus taken up into the glory of God, how can it be an abnormal, unnatural development for Christians to render them a worship short only of divine?” . . . “May we not say that even this is but a part of that process by which the Christian Church lays hold of all that is naturally good in Paganism, and sanctifies?” &c.

Thus we have a plain hint that the "development" of this "process" will ere long, if it have not already, land its devotees in Mariolatry and the *worship of saints* and images.

The Bishop of Rochester thought every one present must have been

"struck with the absence of anything like panic or apprehension with regard to evolution" !

He remarked that they were happy and contented, and even thankful, when a short time ago their tone would have been entirely different ! He said :—

"I suppose that what evolution has done has been to give a strength and articulateness to the voice of nature, and an imposing and impressive character to the influence of nature over our thoughts, such as is beyond the experience of any other time."

He asks whether evolution has not *mediated*, "with such a mediation as never was before, between the voices of nature and what we call revelation ?"

"Nature itself," he says, "has brought us up to Christ, has prepared us in many ways for Him and His gospel of immortality, and He is—shall we be bold to say it?—in a deep sense part of nature" (we deplore that we should have to sully our pages with such *profanity*), "and her last voice."

He had been asked if nothing could be said on the question of *prayer*, and he adds,

"Do not say, 'Does prayer look congenial to the world of the imperfectly developed animal, or of the undeveloped man?' but be trustful of your own highest instincts, believing that you have behind you the whole Word of God in evolution."

Thus ends the Bishop of Rochester !

The Rev. T. B. Water had evidently serious apprehensions as to the bearing of this question on

"sin in our own hearts," and in respect to "a leader of evil in the spiritual world against whom we have to fight ;"

but he has his own evolutionary theory which he applies to Satan,

"the being who himself had been evolved ;"

and he adds :—

"I cannot help thinking that science itself would teach us that, at the great climax of man's being of which I have spoken, a change took place in the spiritual balance of man himself—a change which, by the law of nature, would be passed on to his children—and so his children would be involved in that which our Church calls original sin."

But why this should be learnt from science, and not from Scripture, he says not. The chairman (Bishop of Hereford) then closed the discussion by affirming that

“We, our own life and personality, are in the process of development,” like the chambered nautilus, advancing from chamber to chamber in its ever-expanding life. But whether this is what the Word of God presents to us or not, neither he nor his hearers seemed to be at all concerned to inquire. There is, however, one statement of Archdeacon Wilson of which I am here reminded, and which is *solemnly true* :

“This is a subject,” he said, “on which the final word has not been spoken, and cannot yet be spoken.”

True, indeed, for it will be spoken by Him whose word, alas, is so little valued to-day, and indifference to which is but thinly veiled in the *ex cathedra* utterances of these learned divines. It will surely be spoken by Him “in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ” (Rom. ii. 16).

May the Lord preserve His own from the rapidly-advancing tide of apostasy so plainly indicated at this Conference. Evolution is but a theory after all, and, even were it scientifically established, its range is physical and not spiritual, and, therefore, it can have nothing to say or to do with the nature of God, or with our present and eternal relations to Him. For these things we have His own precious and impregnable Word, and where God has spoken, *is it not enough?* “It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nought the understanding of the prudent. . . . That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. . . . The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. i., ii.). Has not He said, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings ; for they will increase unto more ungodliness : and their word will eat as doth a *canker*” ? (2 Tim. ii. 15-17). Again we say, may the Lord preserve His own from this festering evolutionary gangrene which, unless arrested, will drive its votaries into materialism or agnosticism !

## THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

*(Matthew xiii. 1-23.)*

FROM the house in Capernaum which had been thronged by a multitude gathered around Him, and outside of which had stood His mother, His brothers, and His sisters too (as Mark possibly wrote), desiring to speak with Him, the Lord went forth to the seaside, and there sat down. Crowds were now collected, as Matthew, who must have been present, has informed us.\* Popularity seemed to await Him; for wherever He was, whether in the house or in the open-air, people gathered to Him.

To those who opposed Him this must have been vexatious. To His friends, as Mark informs us, it was so extraordinary that they looked on Him as beside Himself, and would fain have laid hold on Him (Mark iii. 21). To awakened souls, on the other hand, attracted by His teaching, and receiving blessing therefrom, it must have been a matter of rejoicing that so many had come within the sound of that which had won their hearts, and had constrained them to become disciples in truth.

What were the expectations of these latter as to the future of this remarkable movement is by no one recorded. In what light, however, He viewed it, who was the centre of attraction, and to whom the crowds converged, the parable of the sower can leave none of us in doubt. He was not mistaken as to men. He knew what was in man (John ii. 25); yet willing to teach, if any would listen, and desirous to afford all the company an opportunity of hearing, He left His seat on the shore of the lake, and went on board a vessel, the better to face and to address the mass of

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\*Crowds, or "great multitudes," so the R. V. Whence they were drawn, Luke viii. 4 tells us: "They were gathered out of every city." Matthew, the eye witness, is therefore justified in writing "great multitudes." But when collected together on the shore he views them all as one company, writing then of "the whole multitude" (xiii. 2).



human beings which stood there confronting Him. A sight indeed it must have been ; and we who know who He was—the only begotten Son of God—must ever marvel at His infinite condescension in sitting in a boat that He might speak to creatures on the shore, who were illustrations of His handiwork and of His upholding power.

Now speaking in parables, He commenced with that of the sower, with which every reader of the New Testament is familiar. The multitude heard His words, and apparently in silence, no voice being raised in argumentative obstruction. Yet how few of those who heard desired to understand ; and still fewer must have been the number which had any real conception of the Person who addressed them. “He spake many things unto them in parables” (Matt. xiii. 3). Nowhere, however, are we told that all His parabolic teaching that day was recorded in the pages of inspiration. Certainly neither Matthew, nor Mark, nor Luke profess to give all ; and though Matthew’s account is the fullest, there was a parable recorded by Mark which the son of Alphæus has not given to his readers. All, then, that He spake may not have been preserved, though all that we needed the Spirit of God has graciously put on record.

On one point the evangelists are agreed, viz., that the Lord began with the parable of the sower. The fitness of this as the introduction to such teaching we may all perceive. Sowing, of course, is a common operation in nature, with which His hearers must have been familiar. As season after season came round they would witness it. What, however, was new was the unfolding by this parable that God was now working in a way analogous to that of a husbandman in his field. Important was it that all should understand this ; so, as Mark informs us, the Lord began by asking for the attention of each one in that vast crowd, prefacing what He would say by one word, “Hearken.”

Then, proceeding, He depicted the sower at work,

which for the purpose of His instruction, and doubtless in character with the common practice of the day, would be described as scattering the seed broadcast. The sower's part was to disperse abroad good seed. The result of his sowing would depend on the nature of the ground, &c. on which it fell. His part was to see that the seed was good, and would germinate under favourable conditions, so as to produce an abundant crop. But after the seed had left his hand, the fruit of his labour, *i.e.*, the yield, would depend on a variety of circumstance over which, to sustain the similitude, the sower would have no control.

On the wayside, on stony ground, among thorns, and on good ground the seed fell, but with varying results. That on the wayside, from the hardened nature of the surface, never took root at all ; and, as Luke teaches, was trodden under foot, thus becoming a prey to the birds, ever ready to pounce on any thing which they could get. That on the stony ground sprung up, showing that the seed had vitality ; but the lack of any depth of earth made the young plant quickly to wither under the heat of an eastern noon-day sun. That which fell among thorns also germinated, but the thorns sprung up and choked it ; it brought forth, therefore, no fruit. Three portions of the seed proved barren of results. What was the use of sowing if no fruit came of it ? But all the seed was not wasted ; for some was fruitful, even that which fell on good ground, and yielded some thirty fold, some sixty fold, and some a hundred fold. The seed in all cases was the same ; it had vitality, and three-fourths of it could and did germinate ; but only in the fourth portion sown was there real fruit produced.

So far the parable, addressed to all who had ears to hear (ver. 9), as the three evangelists are careful to notice.

What was this about ? some might ask. With the operation of sowing we are all familiar. With the disappointment of the husbandman we are not un-

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acquainted. There is nothing new or wonderful in all this. But it was a parable, and so intended to teach a lesson, which concerned all to whom it was addressed; and that was, in the first instance, the multitude which stood on the shore. In the first instance, we say, because clearly by the closing words—"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"—its instruction and its application were not to be limited to that day or to that generation.

To hear the parable, however, was one thing; to understand it was quite another; and no one of the audience, it appears, caught the deep meaning of it as the words fell from the lips of the Lord. No one in all that crowd, not excepting the disciples, could say, I have of myself found it out. Important was and is the parable; and its real interpretation is a matter of general concern. Yet, whilst the three evangelists have each given the interpretation, so that no one reading but one account of it should have to say, oh, that one would interpret it, we learn that it was only when the Lord was alone with the twelve and some others—and for this last information we are indebted to Mark (iv. 10)—that the request was made to Him for an explanation. The multitude had heard it; they did not understand it; they cared not to know what was intended. They could leave the shore, and leave Him, without being informed as to it. Thus they vindicated the principle which here actuated Him—to speak in parables, thereby testing the sincerity of each one to receive the instruction that He offered.

Some, however, did want to understand, and would not leave Him without the interpretation. The crowd might disperse. They remained, and richly were they rewarded. Willingly and fully did the Lord unfold it. Now these learnt something of the character of the times in which they were living. God was working, and working in a new way. He was working in grace, and not in power as of old. He was working because of man's moral condition; and did He not thus work,

no one could now be blessed. Of old He had wrought in power, effecting the deliverance of Israel from the thralldom of the Egyptians. Then, it was the emancipation of a nation from slavery ; now, it was the question of producing fruitfulness for God. *A nation's* deliverance had been effected at the Red Sea. The *individual's* fruitfulness for God was the matter now to be determined ; so He sat by the Sea of Galilee.

The moral ruin caused by the fall was to be remembered, and acknowledged by men, and the grace of God to meet them in their fallen condition was by this parable set forth ; and the sower at work would illustrate it. The sower spreads abroad the seed, because without that there would be no crop. He does not sow where a crop is growing. He sows where there is none ; and the fact of his sowing the seed is an open declaration, on his part, that he knows there is no crop in the ground.

Now, sitting in the boat, the Lord wanted all to understand what God was doing by Him ; and, indeed, we may say what HE was doing. He was there to sow the seed, and the seed was the Word of the kingdom, Matthew tells us (xiii. 19), because that is the subject of the divine communication. The seed is the Word of God, writes Luke (viii. 11), telling us whose word it really is. God, then, was speaking to men, sowing the seed in their hearts, that there might be fruitfulness produced in them, which otherwise there never could be. God had compassion on men, and sent His Son as the Sower of the seed. The need for His coming, and the grace of it, were thus made apparent. But who responded to this grace ?

Now of the four classes mentioned, all heard the word, as the three evangelists are careful to note. So the different classes indicated had equal opportunity. The word had reached them. They had heard it (Matt. xiii. 19, 20, 22, 23 ; Mark iv. 15, 16, 18, 20 ; Luke viii. 12, 13, 14, and 15). Further, the Word was sown in the *heart* even of the wayside hearer (Matt.

xiii. 19 ; Mark iv. 15 ; Luke 12). None, then, who have been the subjects of this operation on the part of God will be able in a coming day to deny their responsibility in connection with it. But how have they responded to it? God speaks, and puts the seed—the Word in the heart. No power in the universe can hinder that. At this point, however, the creature's responsibility comes in. What does he do with the Word of God? How does he treat it? This is the first question raised, and raised by the wayside hearer; though settled also as far as he is concerned; and as far as the parable goes, settled for ever. For that active enemy, the evil one of Matthew, Satan of Mark, and the devil of Luke, like the birds of the air ever on the watch, catcheth away the seed sown in the individual's heart. The enemy could not hinder the Word, the seed, from falling into the heart. God took care of that. He could, however, snatch it away, and that "immediately," writes Mark (iv. 15), lest, as his brother evangelist, Luke, has recorded, such an one "should believe and be saved" (viii. 12). Why it can be taken away Matthew teaches—the individual did not understand it (xiii. 19). Of the readiness of the devil to act, Mark reminds us; whilst Luke tells what it is the enemy dreads, viz., the individual believing and being saved.

What a disclosure have we here of an agency unseen by us. But He who sat in the boat was alive to it, and to the disciples and other inquirers revealed it. There is one ever on the watch to thwart, if possible, God's purposes of grace to those in need of salvation. For the devil, and he knows it well, there is no grace in store; for men there is, if they will receive it, and the Lord was there to tell them of it. The veil, then, is thus lifted—God working, men rejecting, and the devil taking away the seed sown in the heart. What powers at work! God and the devil; and man encouraging the latter!

The second class mentioned, the stony ground

hearers, with joy receive the Word. But joy in the heart, without a work in the conscience, is a bad sign. To rejoice when salvation is apprehended, after the ploughing up of the conscience, argues well for the person. To rejoice without real conscience work wrought by the Spirit of God by the Word, will not tend to fruit-bearing, and, if trouble arises, such an one will not stand. So the withered plant which had sprung up without depth of earth, for which no one would care, was just the illustration in the eyes of God, and is now to be in the eyes of men, of one who hears the Word, receives it with joy, but soon falls away.

The third class of hearers are fruitless from the evils allowed to grow up within them. Cares of life, deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful. Crowds, then, might follow the Lord; the common people might hear Him gladly; the young ruler might run to Him with his apparently urgent question; and yet, which of them all would be true and abiding subjects of divine grace?

Now who such are is a question answered for us, as the Lord proceeds to characterise them. But here we must read the Lord's description of them in all three gospels to get it. Study of the Word is not time and labour thrown away. Matthew tells us that for fruitfulness understanding of the Word is requisite (xiii. 23); Mark adds to this, that the individual must receive it (iv. 20); and Luke supplements what the others have written by the words "and keep it" (viii. 15). *Understanding* the Word, *receiving* it, and *keeping* it; these are essential requisites for fruitfulness. Then fruitfulness of a high order may be obtained. Of this both Matthew and Mark remind us, Luke only saying what the others do not, that "they bring forth fruit with patience" (viii. 15). Then the reader should remark that the gradation given in Matthew is reversed in Mark, and surely not without reason. For,

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Matthew's Gospel being eminently dispensational in character, would indicate decline in fruitfulness. How has this been the case, as we contrast the apostolic age with ours! Mark's gospel, on the other hand, presenting the Lord as the Teacher, indicates, by the order he has given us, what increase there may be by hearkening to divine teaching. So he begins with thirty-fold and rises up to a hundred-fold. Is that possible? In natural operations very great would that increase be. We read that Isaac did reap that (Gen. xxvi. 12)—a large return indeed, and apparently considered so in that age. Who besides him could tell of such success? But what in nature is rarely secured, grace working in an individual may effect.

Of grace does the parable speak—divine grace, and of God's desire to get fruit from those who naturally could not produce any. The seed must be sown in the field, ere a crop of any value could be looked for. The Word of God must be sown in the heart by the Lord, if a responsible creature of Adam's race is to become in any measure fruitful. Now fruitfulness is within the reach of all who hear the Word. As in the parable, the seed was good, its germinating power was unquestionable; only the soil on which it fell hindered or furthered its fruitfulness. So with men, with all of us who hear the Word of God. Responsibility is incurred in hearing it. How far is fruitfulness resulting from it? An important question for each one. All, then, are to understand about God's way of working then and now.

But another, and that an important point, is illustrated by this parable. Often have sanguine evangelists reckoned up their converts after some stirring address. Feelings, emotions have been aroused; but that is not enough. This parable would teach caution in this matter. Of the four classes, only one was really fruitful, though of the second, as well as of the third, hopefulness as to them might for a time have been felt. The over sanguine labourer would

have reckoned these two classes amongst the really converted ; yet abiding work was never really in them.

It is not at the moment of hearing the Word that we can always predicate a real work in the soul. Time is needed to test it, for we cannot read hearts. The Lord, on the other hand, knew what was in man. Yet He would labour, knowing all the while that many who heard did not understand, and would not bring forth fruit unto perfection.

Let the labourer, then, take care that he sows only good seed—the Word of God. As to results, the measure of the yield, it is in the future these will be accurately ascertained. Our part is to work, thankful for any encouragement which God affords us ; but as the work is His, not ours, the converts are His, not ours. So let each one, remembering this, abstain from rashly reckoning up results, lest he be put to shame, and his boasting be seen to be hollow and unfounded.

C. E. S.

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### THE ASCENSION.

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THY sufferings ended, Risen Lord,  
 Ascend Thy Father's throne ;  
 Assume, O Man of Nazareth,  
 Thy royal robe and crown !  
 Thy face once marred, now like the sun  
 Glows with the Godhead's might ;  
 The seamless robe of Deity  
 Wraps Thee in dazzling light !  
 The winepress trodden, enter Thou  
 Through heaven's eternal arch ;  
 Earth's ransomed millions follow Thee  
 In Thy triumphal march !  
 In lines of light the endless train  
 Fill heaven, and chant and sing ;  
 O Man of sorrows, it is Thou  
 Who now art glory's King !

MRS. MERRILL E. GATES.



**EVOLUTION.**—It is highly important that there should be no mistake about the author of “The Origin of Species” and his opinions. Darwin has himself said :—“I gradually came to disbelieve in Christianity as a divine revelation” ; “I do not believe that any revelation has ever been made.” The foreign followers of Darwin say :—“Darwin’s theory turns the Creator out of doors, and leaves no room for the agency of such a Being” (Vögt). “The evolution theory is perfectly irreconcilable with the idea of a personal Almighty Creator” (Büchner). Darwin attacks Christian truth, inasmuch as he contradicts the opening page of Holy Scripture. The Bible tells us that God made all the vegetable creation “after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth” ; that God made all the animal creation, “every living creature,” “after their kind,” and “blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply” ; that, finally, God made man “in His own image, in the image of God created He him”—thus rendering possible the Incarnation of the Redeemer (Gen. i. 11, 21, 22, 27). “Christian truth bids us look upward and onward to the God-man ; Darwin points backward and downward to the man-beast. He has even had the effrontery to write : “Man is descended from a hairy quadruped, furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in its habits.” The revered and renowned Professor Sedgwick penned a long letter of remonstrance, and that eminent man of science, Sir John Herschel, gave Darwin’s theory its right name—“The Law of Higgledy Piggledy.” It seems impossible not to agree with *The Edinburgh Review* : “Darwin’s influence has been more hostile to Theism (and, therefore, necessarily to ‘Christian truth’) than that of any other writer since the foundation of Christianity itself. He repudiated creation, abjured design, and enthroned unreason as the Lord of the Universe. He violated the deepest instincts of humanity, and opened a door to atheism.” “That Darwin should have swayed opinion for thirty years is a reproach to the age ; but the system has had its day, and men are rising up who will destroy it.”—*H. Heber Evans*.

I HEARD of a wife, a godly woman, who for twenty years had been persecuted by a brutal husband—a husband so excessively bad that her faith at last failed her, and she ceased to believe that he would ever be converted ; but all this while she was more kind to him than ever. One night, at twelve o’clock, in a drunken debauch, he told his friends he had such a wife as no other man had ; and if they would go home with him, he would knock her up, and she should get a supper for them, in order to try her temper. They came, and the supper was very soon ready, consisting of such things as she had prepared as well and as rapidly as the occasion would allow ; and she waited at the table with as much cheerfulness as if the feast had been held at the proper time. She did not utter a word of complaint. At last, one of the company, more sober than the rest, asked how it was she could always be so kind to such a husband. Seeing that her conduct had made some little impression, she ventured to say to him, “I have done all I can to bring my husband to God, and I fear he will never be saved, and therefore his portion must be in hell for ever ; I will therefore make him as happy as I can while he is *here*, for he has nothing to expect hereafter.”

ROMAN CATHOLICISM UP TO DATE.—The Rev. H. Gildea, C.C. at Burton Port, Ireland, said :—“The priests of the new law are empowered not alone to offer sacrifices, but to remit directly the sins of all men. Thus in the new dispensation a two-fold power is imparted to the priest—power over the natural body of Christ, and power over the members of the church. Such are the powers which Christ confided, first to His apostles, and then to their successors in the ministry. The rulers of this earth issue commands, and thousands obey ; but a far greater power is given to the priest of God. Every day, in the sacrifice of the mass, he can say to the Son of God, ‘Come down from heaven,’ and immediately Christ obeys. At the bidding of a mere creature the great King of heaven and earth, He whose majesty fills all places, leaves His throne at the right hand of God, and comes and meekly rests on our altars, within the little chalice, or in the gold ciborium. What earthly power can vie with this, or, might I add, what heavenly power either? The angels, indeed, see our Lord face to face ; but then they are not permitted to hold Him in their hands, or to control His movements. Besides the power which the priest has over the body of our Lord, he possesses another, if possible, a greater power still, and one which almost seems to make him omnipotent. The rulers of this world have power to open and close the prison gates of earth, but the priest can open and close the gates of heaven and hell. An earthly judge can restore the innocent alone to freedom, but the priest can give that blessing even to the guilty. Take a poor sinner, whose soul is weighed down with the accumulated sins of many years, and see to whom must he have recourse if he seeks for mercy. Is it to the angels in heaven? Is it to his guardian angel ; to St. Michael, the prince of the heavenly hosts ; to Mary, the mother of God? The angels, indeed, may keep away the evil spirits which surround this poor child of Adam. Mary may pray for him. But neither the angels nor Mary can remove one single sin from off his soul. Who can do this for him? The priest of God. He can rescue the sinner from hell, and make him worthy to be received into heaven. Go, therefore, where you will, to heaven or through this earth, you will find only one created being who can forgive the sinner, and that being is the Catholic priest. Thus we see that the priest is raised beyond the brightest spirits which God has created, or ever will create, and that to him are given powers which have been denied to the mother of God and to the angels in heaven. To the priest, next to God, we are indebted for our spiritual life. It is through his ministry we become members of the church in the sacrament of Baptism. Through his ministry we are healed of our spiritual maladies in the Sacrament of Penance, fed with the bread of eternal life of the Blessed Eucharist, and finally comforted and prepared for death by Extreme Unction. It is from him we learn the first lessons of religion, and whatever else prompts us to honour God in this life, and leads us to His eternal enjoyment in the next. In one word, he is, as it were, the great channel through which all the helps and means of salvation are conveyed to our souls. He stands in your midst—not merely to preach the Gospel, to administer the sacraments, and to offer sacrifice ; but he stands in your midst to guard your interests, to defend your rights, and to give you consolation in all your sorrows. Need we, then, be

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astounded that Almighty God commands us to honour and obey His priests, and that He should say to them, 'He who hears you hears Me'?" The reader will observe that the priest is here represented—not as the servant of Christ Jesus the Lord, but rather as having Him within his power; in fact, *under his control*. It is *not* Christ who saves, but *the priest*. At length, it seems, the priest, whose function it is to save the people, is himself only saved with difficulty. For, referring to the lamented Father Walker, the speaker said:—"We sincerely hope he is happy, but our hope must always be seasoned with a salutary fear. It may be possible that he, whose loss we mourn to-day, may for a venial imperfection, or some temporal punishment, be suffering in the flames of purgatory. It may be that at this very moment he is crying aloud to you, 'Have pity on me; have pity on me, at least you, my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me.' In your charity, in gratitude for his past services, I ask you to pray for the happy repose of his soul."—*Extracted*.

CHICAGO.—"Here we shall refer only to what we know as being carried on within the circle of Protestant and evangelical churches, confessing, as we do so, that it is a shame even to speak of the things done by them in public. Nevertheless, we must look at the unseemly catalogue: Performers brought from the opera or from the theatre to regale the ears of the church with some flighty song or artistic musical display! A star violinist, dressed in the style of his profession, preparing the way for the sermon by a brilliant and fantastic solo! A curtain drawn across the pulpit platform on a week-night, footlights and scenery brought from the playhouse, and a drama enacted by the young people of the church, ending with a dance by the gaily-dressed children; a comic reader filling the pulpit on Monday evening, delivering a caricature sermon, amid the hand-clapping and laughter of the Christians present! These are but a few acts in the comedy which the god of this world is performing weekly in our church assemblies! Taken with the dramatic readings, literary entertainments, amateur theatricals, fairs, frolics, festivals, and lotteries, the story is enough to make the angels blush, and to give fresh occasion for an apostle's tears, while he utters the solemn verdict: 'For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.'"

AFTER an hour's climb, we reached the hamlet of San Francisco de los rios, in Central America, where a Jamaican was constructing a bridge for the Government. He had been reached by Mr. McConnell's meetings, and had arranged a service for us among the natives up there. The place where we took dinner was an adobe hut with tile roof. Over a side table was a picture of Joseph holding Jesus in his arms, and above that a printed prayer, framed. To whom? To God? No! To the Lord Jesus? No! To Mary? No! To Joseph? *Yes. Think of it!* It is in Spanish, of course, and in most reverential language: "Oh, Joseph, illustrious and charitable, intercede with thy holy spouse, Mary, the mother of God, to forgive us," &c. It is horrible to think of such blasphemy and darkness. May the Lord help us to give the Gospel to these deluded people.

INTERPOSE anything between your soul and Christ, and your Philadelphia becomes Laodicea, your strength is gone from you, and you are become weak, like any ordinary mortal. Some of you do not know the depths of Satan. But, being solemnly warned of your peril, if mischief overtake you, you cannot plead ignorance. Satan has his eye specially upon you, for the purpose of interposing the world between your soul and Christ. He cares not how little, or in what form. If you knew how little will answer his purpose, you would be alarmed. It is not by that which is gross or shameful; such is the *development*, not the *beginning* of evil. It is not by anything glaring that he seeks to ruin you, but by seemingly harmless things—things that would not shock or offend any one as things go, and yet these constitute the deadly and insidious poison, designed to ruin your testimony, and withdraw you from Christ. Do you ask what are the alarming symptoms, and where are they seen? The question does but show that the opiate is at work. Brothers and sisters, you are being infected with the spirit of the world. Your dress, your manner, your talk, your lack of spirituality, betrays it. There is a dead weight, a restraint, a want of power, that reveals itself when gathered together as plainly as if your hearts were visibly displayed and their thoughts publicly read. A form of godliness, without power, is beginning to be seen among *you*, as plainly as in Christendom generally. As surely as you tamper with the world, so surely will you drift away to its level. This is in the nature of things. It must be so, and the privileged place you occupy only exposes you to greater condemnation. It must be Christ *or* the world. It cannot be—ought not to be—Christ *and* the world. God's grace in drawing you out of the world in your *ignorance* is one thing, but God will never sanction your prostituting His grace, and playing fast and loose. To say, Lord, Lord, while you do not the things that He bids, is to say, I go, sir, as he said who went not. Beloved, I am persuaded better things of you, and I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will bless Him for these few faithful words. Nothing can be more glorious than the position you are called to occupy in these closing days. Saints have stood in the breach, have watched through weary days and nights these many years, and you only wait for the trumpet of victory to take possession of the glorious inheritance. Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours, and yet, forsooth, you are lowering your dignity to the level of the poor potsherds of the earth, who only wait for the rod of the Victor (and yours too) to be dashed into pieces. Oh, awake from your lethargy; slumber no longer—put away your idols and false gods, wash your garments, and get you to Bethel, where you will find God to be better than ever you knew Him, even in your best days. Let your prayers mingle with those of other saints at the prayer-meetings—they never were more needed. Neglect no opportunity of gathering up instruction from that Word which alone can keep you from the paths of the destroyer, and let your life be the evidence of the truth gathered at the reading-meeting. If you want occupation, with a glorious reward from a beloved Master, ask that Master to set you to work for Him; you will never regret it, either in this world or in that which is to come. The day of the apostasy is hastening on with rapid strides, and He is at the doors to snatch His own away before the impending judgment falls!