

"WORDS OF TRUTH,"

EccL. xii. 10.

THE ENTRANCE OF THY WORDS GIVETH LIGHT; IT GIVETH UNDERSTANDING
UNTO THE SIMPLE."—Ps. cxix.

VOL. VII.

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WORDS OF TRUTH.

GOD'S KING.

A SERIES.—No. 1.

DIVINE COUNSELS ABOUT HIM.

PSALM ii.

THERE are two great lines of truth in the sacred writings, which, for distinction's sake, may be called *Church* truth and *Kingdom* truth. The first is only met with in the New Testament; the second is found throughout the Bible. The former tells us of God's counsels about the Lord Jesus Christ, and about His Body, which is also His Bride; the latter announces God's settled determination about the government of this world by the man of His choice. With both the incarnation and the cross are intimately connected. As man, the Lord Jesus Christ is head of the Church, but only after His resurrection and ascension was the Body formed. (Ephes. i. 22, 23.) As man, too, all government of this world will be placed in His hand whom God has raised up from the dead. Thus, the two great features of the first Adam's history before the fall will be found reproduced in the last Adam, the possession of a Bride, and the sovereign authority over the earth. The first Adam, untried and unfallen, possessed the one and exercised the other; the last Adam, tried in every way possible, and proved to be obedient to God's word, will rejoice in the former, and wield with an iron rod the latter.

As man, according to Ps. viii., will the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God, blessed for evermore (Rom. ix. 5), take the kingdom and rule. As to His divine essence, He is God; as to His person, He is the Son of God; and as to His natures, He is both divine and human. As God, He now sits where none but God could, on the Father's throne. (Rev. iii. 21.) As Son of man He will sit on His own throne. He occupies now His place on the former. He will by and by occupy His place on the latter. About this it is that our psalm speaks.

When Adam first trod upon this earth no will was known upon it but God's, every creature obeyed Him; for, acknowledging the authority of man (Gen. ii. 19, 20), placed over them by God, they bowed to the Creator's will. When the Lord entered the world God's authority was for the most part ignored, and will one day be openly defied. (Rev. xvii. 14.) Between God's counsels and the world's desires there is now a wide divergence, as this psalm, in which we are introduced to both of them, makes plain. All appears in turmoil on earth, so different from that quiet scene in Eden, where each animal passed in review before Adam, and God's creatures received their several names from the immortal being formed to rule over this earth. Here, on the contrary, we have the heathen raging, people imagining a vain thing, nationalities and races alike disturbed, and rulers of all grades disquieted, at the thought of subjection to God's will. Man, created in the image of God, is found rising up against His authority. What a picture does this present of the insubordination of those who ought, from their place upon earth, to have set an example to the whole universe of unhesitating obedience to the Creator's arrangements! Centuries have rolled by since Adam and Eve were in the garden, and each one tells its own tale of God's goodness and mercy to His creatures, and of His unremitting thoughtfulness for all that they require. Doing good, giving rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling men's hearts with food and gladness, is the simple recital of the Creator's beneficence (Acts xiv. 17), and yet commotion is witnessed upon earth in opposition to the development of His counsels. With different aims for the most part, divided generally by jealousies and conflicting interests, on one point nations can unite, to ward off one issue they can deliberate together. What is it that binds them in one common accord—what common danger do they wish to avert? "They take counsel against Jehovah, and against His Messiah. Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." God's word strips off all disguise, and exposes in its nakedness the wickedness of their design. Jehovah and His anointed, the Christ, are on the one side, and the powers of the world are arrayed upon the other. It is this which can so deeply stir hearts, and bind by the ties of common interests both nationalities and dynasties.

Will they succeed in their efforts? The psalm answers

the question; but, answering it before ever the struggle began, makes manifest God's foreknowledge, as well as His unalterable intention. The confederacy could not be formed till God's counsels had begun to develop themselves, but the plans of men are here foretold to warn the world to be wise in time. On earth there may be disturbance—above all is calm. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord (Adonai) shall have them in derision." What a contrast does this present to the impotent rage of God's rebellious creatures. He sits in heaven, and laughs at it. The settled determination of the Almighty can no more be overturned than the throne of God itself. He sits, whilst below Him men are in commotion. The term used suggests the immutability of His counsels; so that, if men cannot restrain His actions, they must bend before the might of His power (v. 5).

We are turned, then, from the council chamber of men to hear what God thinks of it all. He laughs them to scorn; for what can might, intelligence, wit, or combination effect, if opposed to God's settled purpose? Men plot and counter-plot, often the sport of circumstances, never really the controllers of them, and He who sits on the throne on high laughs at the machinations of mortals. Could the Creator be diverted from His long-prepared plan by the rage and opposition of men He would not be God, and we could put no confidence in His word. But He is God, therefore His purpose is unchangeable. He is Jehovah, therefore His word is unalterable, and on it we can plant our feet, conscious of the stability of our ground. So, to all men's projects about the government of this world, God has but one answer, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Whatever else may pass away, this word of our God shall stand for ever, a comfort to His people, that neither time nor the world's opposition can produce even a modification of His word.

Observe the language, "My king," "My holy hill." God appoints the king, and He has a place on earth from which He will never be dislodged. Little thought of by many is that hill of Zion, so long covered with ruins and the remains of former grandeur, but it is God's holy hill still, and He here claims it for Himself. God, then, whom men will at a future day attempt to exclude from His own world, has a place on earth which He calls His own, and a king who shall one day be firmly seated thereon. Should not

this arrest attention and arouse enquiry? Are men satisfied with the present arrangement of things upon earth? Clearly God is not satisfied, for what room is there in the partition of earth by man for the king to have a place, whom God here calls His own? Originally, God set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the children of Israel. (Deut. xxxii. 8.) Then there was room on earth among the nations for His anointed one to reign. What room is there now in man's arrangements for such an event? Men have parcelled out the world as far as they could, have created counterpoises in the preponderance of influence on the one side, and provided checks against any encroachments on the other, but where have they left room for Him to come in, who must and shall reign? The world goes on without Him, and as the opening verse of the psalm shows, desires nothing better than His prolonged absence—willing to put up with anything rather than to have Him present. What does the reader think of this? 'Tis true, we cannot alter the existing arrangements of nations, for that is not work to which God's people are called. To obey the powers that be is our plain duty, where God's claims do not conflict with human enactments; but, in proportion as we enter into God's thoughts, we must look forward for a brighter day to dawn, and the advent in power of the Lord Jesus Christ to take place. Nothing short of this, as regards the government of this world, will correspond to God's mind; nothing short of it should we desire.

For whom, then, are we to wait? Who is God's chosen king? Let the psalm reply—nor the psalm simply, but a speaker who is now introduced in it, the king Himself, who tells us about His person, the extent of His dominion, the manner of its acquisition, and the character of His rule—disclosing what no mortal ear heard—the Father's communication to the Son, when He entered this world as the Virgin's child.

"I will declare the decree: Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee." Of birth in time, not of eternal generation, these words undoubtedly speak; and, whilst making this one out as distinct from all angelic beings (Heb. i. 5), they direct attention to one only out of all the myriads of men who have lived and died upon earth, the long-promised Messiah, to whose advent in humiliation the Apostle Paul directly applies them

(Acts xiii. 33). The promise to the fathers was fulfilled when God raised up (*ἀναστήσας*) Jesus. But does not this refer, it may be asked, to His resurrection rather than to His birth? Clearly not. For when the former is treated of, the Apostle defines it thus: "Concerning that He raised Him up from the dead," and quotes another scripture with reference to that truth, from Isa. lv. 3. The fact is, verse 33 is concerned with the Lord's presence on earth, and verse 34 clears up what would otherwise be an unanswerable objection, how, if He was the Messiah, He should have passed through death. Predicted as God's Son, as well as the Virgin's child, how could these statements be harmonised? His miraculous conception explains them. Born of the Virgin He truly was, but conceived of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore, as the angel Gabriel announced to Mary—"That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke i. 35). It is in this sense, born in time, really a man, but God's Son, that the Father's words are to be understood. And though all believers are born of the Spirit, and to be sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty is their title and position likewise, yet of none but Jesus was it, and will it ever be true, that existence as man upon earth is due to conception by the Holy Ghost. Thus distinguished from all angels, because He is God's Son—distinguished too, from all men, because conceived of the Holy Ghost in His mother's womb, we are turned from all who have appeared in the world to One alone as answering the description of God's king. The King Himself it is who speaks, and points out what is peculiar to His person.

Born a man, His position in relation to men is only what could have been expected. On the day of His birth Jehovah addressed Him, and promised Him the dominion over all the human race. "Ask of Me, and I shall give the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." He must be more than man to have had this communication then made to Him; but as man, born into this world, He is here addressed. All belongs to God, and He promises to bestow it on his Son. What title to earthly possessions can equal this—the free grant from the One who possesses it! The devil offered Him afterwards the kingdoms of the world—not knowing surely that already had it been promised Him by the only One who could fulfil His word. Unconditional, too, is the promise, which certainly will be

made good. How this tells of the perfectness of the Lord Jesus Christ! Adam, before he was tried, filled the place of head on earth. He fell, and lost it. The inheritance was promised to the Lord, to be bestowed on Him whenever He shall ask for it. Here there is no room for any change in God's plans. When the Lord asks, He shall have all this; for though, as a man untried, He received the promise, in Him there was, there could be no failure. How God here manifests His delight in this One, called by Him, "My Son!" A dominion, wider in extent than ever David or Solomon acquired, is His by free grant from the Lord Jehovah, His Father. Dreams of universal sovereignty men have before now indulged in. Attempts to reduce and to retain in subjection large portions of the earth under one sceptre have been made, and for a time have proved successful; but to none besides His Son has God promised the dominion of the whole earth. All nations, peoples, and languages shall indeed, in the fullest sense, do obeisance to Him; and, differing from all empires that have arisen, His will never pass away. The uttermost parts of the earth, too, are to be His possessions. Regions yet unexplored by civilized men—portions of the world as yet almost blanks on our maps—will be included within the limits of His rule; for no frontiers with which men are familiar, as mountains, seas, or rivers, will mark the boundaries of His kingdom, since the confines of the earth alone will limit His possessions on this globe.

The title and extent of His dominion being declared, the character of His rule is next set forth. As He received the authority from His Father, so by Him is the manner of His kingdom determined. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." One thing, then, is clear, when He wields the sceptre none will be able to resist the might of His arm. God has given all nations to Him to reduce them to subjection. To resist successfully His authority will be impossible, for the rod of iron will prove itself too strong for the vaunted power of man. To effect a compromise with Him, or to preserve a position independent of Him, will be out of the question, for, as a potter's vessel is helpless in the hands of its destroyer, so will human might be powerless in the presence of God's chosen King. Complete subjection to Him, as the absolute arbiter of their destinies, will be the only condition on which

men will live under His rule. No bonds of love, no silken cords of affection will be the connecting link between Him and the nations on earth. The breaking them with a rod of iron tells of their antagonistic spirit; the dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel indicates, that the exercise of power is the only means of keeping in check the otherwise unbridled will of fallen and unconverted men. What a change all this will introduce from what is now manifested about the Lord Jesus Christ! Ignorance and unconcern about Him now characterise the world; then He will be known and obeyed, however unwillingly, wherever man shall be upon this globe of ours.

God's purpose about Christ thus unequivocally declared, what remains but to exhort men to submit to the authority of the Lord Jesus. Kings and rulers, at the beginning of the psalm, are depicted as taking counsel together against Him. Kings and judges, at the close, are exhorted to obey Him; for to obey God, they must bow before His Son. Professed subjection to God, apart from submission to Christ, is mere pretension, which will not be accepted for a moment. To serve Jehovah with fear, and to rejoice with trembling, to kiss the Son lest He be angry, and they perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little, these are the injunctions given them; for life under His rule, with the retention of place and dignity on earth, is all that is here offered to them. Life, be it observed, not salvation, is the portion held out to them. But, though the question of salvation is not raised with these kings and judges, there is a little sentence which is pregnant with meaning—"Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." This suggests the existence of a class different from those just spoken of—God's saints, who have put confidence in God's King. Saints on earth, when He shall reign, who will have passed through trials for His sake, will witness that this is true. Saints in heaven will likewise attest the faithfulness of God to His word. And we know, ere the day of Christ's triumph dawns, that this is so, as we receive with unhesitating confidence the simple statements of the Word.—Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him now; blessed will they be for ever with Him on His throne, beholding His glory, and sharing in the inheritance. (John xvii. 24; Ephes. i. 10-14; Rev. iii. 21.)

But why has He not yet asked for and received the king-

dom? Why this delay between God's promise and His petition for its fulfilment? The answer we know, and what answer have we to give. He waits to be gracious. He waits till the number of the saints, who are to reign with Him, shall be complete. The dominion is His. The promise of Jehovah to Him makes that clear, and His present place at the Father's right hand manifests that the one who was on the cross, the suffering Messiah, is also the one who will appear as the triumphant Messiah; and we know, for He has told us, that He will not be alone on His throne. All who overcome now shall have a place with Him then. In the psalm, which gives the earthly aspect of the kingdom, He recounts God's promise to Him. In Rev. ii. 26, 27, which tells about the heavenly aspect, He gives promises to His own, and lets them know that they shall rule as He will, and the extent of His dominion over all nations shall be theirs likewise; for what God is now doing is this—by the preaching of the gospel of His grace—to gather out souls from the world to be companions of His Son when on His own throne.

Why, then, need attention be drawn to this psalm? Because the struggle has begun. Acts iv. 24-28 lets us into this secret, and acquaints us with the first actors in the business. Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. From that day to this the struggle has continued; for just two sides, and two only can there be—neutrality in such a matter is only disguised opposition—for he that is not with Christ is against Him. Yet the issue of the conflict is not doubtful. Christ shall reign, and as all Pharaoh's people had to kiss Joseph (Gen. xli. 40, *margin*), so all allowed to live, when he reigns, must kiss the Son. God's determination is plain. He has announced it beforehand, but has not told us when He will make it good. But as surely as Joseph, whom his brethern put out of their sight, became lord of Egypt, so all God's counsels about his Son Jesus shall infallibly be accomplished. Successfully to resist Christ's authority then will be hopeless, for power arrayed against Him must only end in the complete discomfiture of His opponents. (Rev. xvii. 14, xix. 19-21.) But now is the time for proving the truth of the closing sentence of the psalm, to trust in Him, and to be blessed for evermore.

COMMUNION OF THE HEART WITH GOD.

EPH. iii. 14-21.

IF we turn to the first chapter, we shall find that Paul's prayer there rolls on a different name from this. There it is not the "Father," but the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory;" and it is not the moral character of God Himself that we find there, but certain wondrous things come forth from God. The hope of His calling is the first; the marvellous future of the saint, called by the Father of glory to be in that glory, which He gives as the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then there is "His inheritance in the saints." As of old, He is not going to give up His land. He commands that it should never be sold, for it is His inheritance; so He, the Father of glory, will not give up His inheritance in the saints.

The third thing in the Apostle's prayer is, that we may know the exceeding greatness of His power, which He put forth, as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, in raising Him from the dead, as the Head of a body, composed of poor sinners, and then setting Him, and us in Him, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

But all these glorious things, while they come forth from God—for it is *His* calling, *His* inheritance, the exceeding greatness of *His* power—are not a display of God Himself.

The prayer in our chapter is concerning intimacy with Himself, as the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is communion; not thoughts of glory, but present communion with the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Then I am carried along, like a little vessel in a mighty stream, by the mighty power in my soul of the love of Christ.

Is Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith? If you look at verse 17, it does not speak of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in your hearts, or whether, as saints, your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. These are true of all believers. It would be unbelief to ask for the Spirit of Christ, or that my body might become the temple of the Holy Ghost; but Christ dwelling in the heart is the practical experience of a Christian in a close walk with God. I ask then, does Christ thus dwell in your hearts? You may be in great trouble and trial, just as a poor afflicted saint on a sick bed might be deeply tried by circumstances, and I might go and ask

about those circumstances. I might say—Well, what about your daily bread? Is the Lord supplying your need? And if the heart were full of Christ, the answer would be—Oh, do not talk about my troubles; talk about Christ. If Christ were dwelling in the heart, He would be the first thing to come forth from the soul.

Another Christian, who might talk of having the Spirit of Christ, and his body being the temple of the Holy Ghost, when I came to hear a little of the workings of the inner life, I might hear of nothing but worldliness, because Christ was not dwelling in the heart *by faith*. Is your soul so undimmed, is the new nature so free and bright, so kept turned up to heaven, that Christ in heaven is seen reflected in your heart? Now, if we are honest with ourselves, what answer can we give to this dwelling of Christ by faith in the heart?

I am sure, for myself I can say, I desire earnestly and continually to bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that He would grant this unto me; and unless you can say, Christ does indeed dwell in my heart, I would say, I desire earnestly to bow my knees for you also; that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ would grant this to you.

In verse 16 we see the way that Christ dwells in the heart. It is by the mighty operation of the Spirit, strengthening the new nature in which He dwells, and the heart is lifted up to the Father to grant this operation of the Spirit in us.

It is very blessed to dwell on those words, "According to the riches of His glory;" it brings before the soul all the Father's delight in *our* Lord Jesus Christ. What are the riches of the glory of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? In that name I have a volume which contains the whole display of the moral glory of God, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a plea then to use, in asking for Christ to dwell in our hearts! Cannot I say to Him—Art Thou not the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ? Art not Thou the Father of *our* Lord Jesus Christ? Is it not Thy will that we should be Christ-bearers through the world—that Christ should dwell in our hearts! He is *our* Lord Jesus Christ; and is it not pleasing, is it not according to the riches of the glory of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that this Son of His love should dwell in the hearts of all His children? Surely, there is something in this plea that just suits us in all our need. Cannot I say, I am sure He would have me

full of this love of Christ? I am sure it is according to the riches of His glory that Christ should dwell in my heart? I am sure that He, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will hear such a prayer, and will give the answer according to the display of that glory.

In the end of verse 17 practical hindrances are removed by our being rooted and grounded in love. Till we are thus appropriating all the love ourselves, we shall be quite unable to comprehend with all saints, the breadth, depth, length, and height, or to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Take, then, first, the soundings of this love of God for your own soul, and see how far it is appropriated by you.

If we are thus rooted and grounded in love, we can meet every obstacle, and Satan himself, who will take good care not to let us go on without trying to shake our confidence in this love, he will say—Ah! what a poor, pitiful thing you are to talk of being rooted and grounded in this love. Yes, Satan, I am a poor, pitiful thing indeed; but the very pitifulness of my case shews forth the purity of the love of God to one like me.

Then this love will be tested by Christians. We shall find much in them which does not at all respond to it, much to lead us naturally to grow cold towards them; but if rooted and grounded in the love of God, we shall not look at them in their inconsistencies, or in their rewarding one, as they did Paul, who said, the more abundantly he loved, the less he was loved. We shall only look at them as children of the Father, and according to the delight He has towards them as the Father of their Lord Jesus Christ. Then, as regards the world, we must expect from it hatred for our love. We must look for nothing but unthankfulness from that which knows not God, but if we are rooted and grounded in love we shall not think of what it returns, but of the exceeding sweetness of our being the beams of God's compassion to it.

If you would walk as one rooted and grounded in this love, you must draw it fresh from God every morning. You cannot store it up. It must be *fresh*. Live, then, in constant communion with the God of love, not fretting yourself either because of your own evil, or because of evil doers; for when a soul frets itself about anything whatever, it is not in communion with God.

Verse 18 has often suggested the question concerning the breadth, length, depth, and height. The question has been

asked—Of what? Some have answered, of the love of Christ, but this is not said, and we have the love of Christ as a distinct thing in the next verse. This question—Breadth, length, depth, height—of what? reveals the condition of the soul of the enquirer. Suppose I ask—Of what? You could fairly reply by asking—Are you there? Are you really conning the mystery of which this chapter speaks—of the Son of God filling all things as the Head of a body—God manifest in the flesh—of the mystery of a Christ in glory displaying the manifold wisdom of God—of the Christ of God descending into the lower parts of the earth, and then ascending up, far above all heavens, that He might fill all things; and you are asking—The depth and height of what? Surely, in fairness, it may be replied—If you ask such a question, is your soul really in communion with this wondrous revelation of the mystery which once was hidden from ages and generations, but now is no mystery at all, God having revealed it by His Spirit? Now, if my mind is occupied therewith, I shall see breadth, length, depth, and height in every direction.

Take the simplest question, the putting away of sin. David measured God's mercy and the putting away of sin by the distance of the heavens from the earth, of the east from the west. Is that all? Oh, then it is a very little way! I can look down to that depth when the Christ of God bore my sins and cried,—“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” and then I can look up to that throne of glory and see the Christ of God set far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and I can say—So great is His mercy, and so far hath He removed our transgressions from us. Again, a Jew would say—“He hath cast all my sins behind His back.” I can say—So far from casting them behind His back, they were all brought to the light when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and now, in the light of the glory of God, the Lord of glory bears in His person the marks of their having been for ever put away—so complete is the triumph of God over the guilt which was upon me.

But, besides this scanning of the length, breadth, depth, and height, there is the knowledge of the love of Christ. It is precious to know the compassion of Christ to a poor sinner, and when we get on a little further, His loving sympathy for us as our High Priest; but the love of Christ

mentioned here is in connection with the Father's name. It is the love of Christ to the Father's children. He loves them because He sees His Father's name upon them—because they are His Father's choice and His Father's gift. Do I know the love of Christ to my soul in this manner? Do you? This is what the Holy Spirit delights in showing us. He has not only taken possession of you as His temple, but He is going to deck that temple to please Himself. He will have no idols there. He says, Christ shall be honoured there. All the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be known there. Christ's affection is in the soul who is in communion. This ought to be the history of your experience, past and present. Not like the case of a dying Christian, who, when I asked her if she had joy, said—No, none at all. It is all bright up there. I see Christ is everything for me. I have an answer to all I am in Him; but when I look within, all is in a mist. I have been walking badly, and I cannot have joy down here. Surely this is not a happy state to be in, though it shows the marvellous love of God, in keeping her soul alive in Christ, and in her being able to say—All is bright above, though all is in a mist within. But how different from this to have Christ dwelling in the heart—to have a present life with God—just as the unconverted man has a present life with the world! So for you and me really now to enjoy a life with the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost, scanning the breadth, length, height, and depth of the mystery, and having the Christ of heaven dwelling in my heart, and revealing to me His love. It is thus the Holy Ghost delights to keep us; not by continually checking and rebuking; not by drying up the sinew of the thigh, as with Jacob, causing us to halt; or saving us as by fire, burning the city over our heads, as with Lot; but by the mighty savour of the love of Christ filling our souls!

THE MOUNTAIN TOPS.

KNOWING, as we do, how much *the place* has often to do with the truths unfolded in Scripture, it cannot be without interest to observe some of the scenes that *the tops of the mountains* have witnessed, both in former times and in the later days of New Testament revelation.

How blessed, for example, to take one's place on Ararat's summit at the moment when the force of the waves of judgment was abated, and the ark, with its precious freight, is at length able to rest in safety; and the dove can be sent forth to return with its olive branch, to tell of peace and happiness once more; and then to learn, by means of this wondrous scene, the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and its blessed results to those who make Him their ark of refuge.

Dear reader, can you say this portion is mine, and I can see that every billow of the judgment that was rightly due to me has rolled over the head of that precious One that came to be my ark of safety, and now in resurrection He has borne me up and placed me beyond the reach of condemnation? I can look back and say, the time of wrath is over, and the time of peace and happiness has come? The Holy Ghost bears witness to me of this? And I can now erect my altar and send up the incense of praise into my Father's ears; whilst His bow in the cloud tells me of security as eternal as Himself? Surely it is well to ponder this ere we pass on to the not less interesting scene of Genesis xxii.

The time had come for Abraham's faith to be tested, and God demands his only son from him. How beautiful to see the un murmuring, unselfish surrender of his all to the will of God—his patient journey, his simple faith, and Isaac's willing obedience to, and childlike acquiescence in, his father's will. One scarce knows which to admire most—the simple trust of Abraham, or the docile willingness of Isaac. We know the story, how, when given up to God, the respite came, and henceforth Isaac is a resurrection child. But how much more precious does this scene become when we regard it as a truthful picture of God's willing surrender of His only begotten Son, and that blessed One's unshrinking submission to His Father's will. From the eternal God no demand was made, but He surrendered him unasked. On the eternal Son no hands were laid, but He came to do His Father's will. Not three days alone, but three and thirty years did their journey last, and then to find no respite from the stroke of judgment. Not the less painful for the one to inflict than for the other to endure. But love sustained both Father and Son, and together they return to us as witnesses that eternal happiness is theirs who own the Lamb of God's providing.

If we have in any measure apprehended the meaning of the mountain scenes already glanced at, we shall not be afraid to go with Moses to the top of Sinai (Exodus xix.), and hear the blessed revelations God had to make to him. He was beyond the reach of the voices and thunderings and lightnings that made the people tremble. He was with God and in His presence at perfect ease. How blessed, then, to hear type after type unfolding the glories and excellencies of Jesus, and to learn in the light the shadows that certainly, though dimly, point to Him that was yet to come. Was there a slave whose devotedness was such that, when his period of service was completed, would not go out free, but in love to his master, wife, and children, remained a slave for ever? Jesus was the one alluded to. For our sakes He took a servant's place; and in perfect love, His earthly service over, devotes Himself to our cause though absent from us; and when He comes again, will not even then remit the patient exercises of His heart in our behalf. (John xiii., Luke xii).

The ark, too, has its tale to tell of the glory of His person; the manifestation of the Godhead; the One in whom all fulness pleased to dwell; where mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other; while the table of shewbread and candlestick speak respectively of the glories of His perfect humanity in connection with His people, and the light He ever bears on their behalf during the time even of their grossest darkness. Not less do the tabernacle and veil tell of His glories as God manifest in flesh, whether seen as Messiah, Son of man, or Son of God, or in all the varied graces ever displayed in Him; while Aaron's clothing and appointment not less plainly unfold to us a Priesthood of a higher and a heavenly order; and the incense altar and the laver of brass likewise speak of Him who ever liveth and maketh intercession for us, and while He does so, sanctifies us by the washing of water by the word. Surely this is a blessed mountain scene, and one that well repays a visit of less brief duration than that we have just accorded to it.

Let us pass on now to another place and stand with Balaam and Balak on the high places of Baal, (Numbers xxiii., xxiv.) and hear what God has to say concerning the people of His choice. Peacefully they were resting in their tents below while God and Satan were waging war con-

cerning them above. Satan had failed to hinder their departure from Egypt, and now he will not suffer them to enter the land without a contest ; but, as is ever the case, his opposition only tends to bring out more fully the counsels of God's grace on their behalf. Separated unto God were they, beyond the reach of Satan's power, taken out from the masses of the human family, to be a peculiar people, an holy nation unto Jehovah. Perverse had they been in all their ways and abundant in their transgressions, but a God of perfect love can yet refrain from beholding iniquity in Jacob or perverseness in Israel. Beautiful to Him likewise were they, as seen in their pilgrim character, grouped in all the perfect order of His own arrangement ; and possessed of hopes of which the world knew nothing, no less than the coming of Him, whose sceptre should rule the universe until all enemies were subdued under His feet. How blessedly does this fourfold prophecy concerning Israel suggest to us our own position in the sight of God. The special subjects of Satan's hostility, but the peculiar objects of the Father's care. We, too, are a people separated unto Him ; chosen in the Son of His love before the world's foundation. He can see us from the heights of His own counsels and maintain our cause accordingly. Of us, too, is it said, " Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect, it is God that justifieth, Who is He that condemneth ? " for " Whom He did predestinate, them He also called ; and whom He called, them He also justified." Our standing is not less certain than our calling, and this, blessed be God, not by our works, but because of the purpose of Him that calleth. Then, too, we have our beauty and order in His sight—accepted in the beloved—the expression to principalities, and powers in heavenly places of the manifold wisdom of God, we are seen as the Epistle of Christ—known and read of all men ; and this, until the promise dear to every one of us is fulfilled, and the hope of our hearts, the bright and morning star appears to change our mourning into gladness, and the tears of midnight into the day-beams of His own presence. Surely the " top of the rocks," the " high places of Baal " are well deserving our attention, whether as unfolding the privileges of the ancient people of God, or as revealing in figure our own more favoured heavenly calling.

Let us pass on to another and a different scene. The

days of Israel's prosperity have passed away. Moses and Joshua, David and Solomon, have gone to their rest, and the people's testimony had been less and less apparent for the Lord, though His love for them had in nowise lessened: and though Ahab's wickedness exceeded that of all his predecessors, still the Lord had preserved a witness in the person of Elijah. And now the moment had come (1 Kings xviii.) to test the people's faithfulness, and Elijah stood alone as the representative for God on Carmel's summit in antagonism to the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 that eat at Jezebel's table. What a scene it is! Like Moses on a former occasion (Exodus xxxii.) he thought only of Jehovah's glory. Having gained strength "in the sanctuary," he is calm and confident when "in the sea," and before all Israel he rebuilds, and according to the due order, the ruined altar of the Lord; and a blessed answer did his faith receive, for Jehovah maintains the honour of His name, and the sacrifice is burnt to ashes, and once more the people bow their hearts in the presence of the display of the Lord's majesty. Surely this picture, too, may bring before our minds what God expects of us in the present day. It is true, alas, that collective order has been displaced by admixture with the world and consequent failure in testimony, but only the more brightly to display the tender mercy of God in the faithfulness of the twos and threes that He has gathered around the person of His Son. They, too, have learned that the secret of power without the camp must come from constancy within the veil, and thus, too, their strength in God, they are not afraid to confront the masses that swell the ranks of a profession that is fast ripening into open apostacy. They, too, can own no altar but the Lord, and no circle of unity but that of the One body joined by the One Spirit; and they also have found out the truth of the Lord's faithfulness, and know not merely that their sacrifices are acceptable, but that Jesus, according to His word, is in their midst; and, thus encouraged, they stand their ground as in the place of testimony for Him until He comes again to bring them to Himself in glory.

But not only is the Old Testament rich in mountain scenes of varied interest and instruction, but the New likewise contains its own unfoldings of everything that feeds the soul and fills the heart. Take for example the transfiguration scene in the holy mount. What can be alike more beautiful and

instructive than this? No longer types and shadows are before us, and saints and holy men of old are the principal actors in the scene, but *Christ Himself*. God manifest in flesh is now the central figure in the picture. Clothed in robes of kingly beauty, white and glistening, the sun itself is the only light that can be found wherewith to compare His glory. He is seen as the world will yet behold Him when He reigns in triumph as the Son of Man. Neither is He alone; for talking with Him, also glorified, are seen two heavenly saints, whose history indicates to us that they typify those who will share His heavenly glories. One had passed through death to be with Christ, the other was translated straight from earth to heaven, and now they are seen in company with Jesus to foreshadow the vast company of heavenly citizens that, when He comes, will together rise to meet and reign with Him (1 Thes. iv. 15-17). Peter and his fellows, too, beholding but not sharing the glory, with equal certainty depict to us the earthly company who will behold though not enter into the happiness of their more privileged forerunners. No wonder, with their Jewish instincts, they trembled as the well-known cloud was entered by the Lord and His companions—a blessed indication to us of how we shall not merely *share* His glory as Son of Man, but be privileged also to *behold* His glory as the eternal Son of God (John xvii. 22-24). While until He comes we have the Father's voice to tell us that His beloved Son (and not Moses and Elias) is the One whose person is to fix our eye and whose word is to attract our ears, and thus secure our obedience.

(To be continued.)

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"S."—What is the meaning of Col. iii. 10? What is "renewed in knowledge"? What kind of "knowledge"? Compare Eph. iv. 24.

A.—Our language does not admit of the fine distinctions of that employed by the Spirit of God in Scripture. In Ephesians iv. you find the "new man" is expressed by a totally different word from that used in Col. iii. 10. French has its "*nouveau*" and "*neuf*," as perhaps other languages. The Greek has "*καὶνός*" (*kainos*), and "*νέος*" (*neos*). In English we have but one word for all. Yet when we say, "That is quite a new fashion," we mean one that has never appeared before. When we say, "That is new fruit," "new wine," we mean that it is new of the sort, but that it has often been before; as, fruit of this year, &c.

Now, Ephesians speaks of the former; a "new man," which is not Adam in innocence, nor Adam righteous by the law, but a totally new

sort of man, which had not been before at all : as we read, "Created in righteousness and true holiness" (or "holiness of truth"). This word "new" is used for the "*new bottles*" (Matt. ix., Luke v.), into which the new wine must be put, &c. The way in which the Lord will drink the wine cup "*new*," or *anew* in His Father's kingdom—i.e., in a new and heretofore unrivalled manner of heavenly joy (Matt. xxvi). So "*a new commandment I give unto you*" (John xiii). "*A new creation*" (2 Cor. v). "*Behold, I make all things new*," and "*I beheld a new heaven and a new earth*," &c. (Rev. xxi). Special care is taken when the thing is *totally new*, and appears for the first time, that this word (*καὶνός*) is used.

Not so the "*new*" of Col. iii. 10 ; for there we have not the new man as to his genus, but the putting on *practically* the new man (because we have absolutely put him on, by the death and resurrection of Jesus), i.e., the practical life in which we live here below. Yet even while this is the case, the word "renewed" is made up of the *first new* (*τὸν ἀνακαινοβύμενον*), so that while the practice of the new man is the great thought, care is taken to show that it is that of a totally new sort of man which we have put on.

In short, the two words are characteristic of the Epistles in which they are found. In Eph. iv. it is a "*new man*" in contrast to the old and all that went before. In Col. iii. it is the practical new life in which we live, though care is taken to show by the word "renewed" that it is an entirely new thing ; first formed of God, and then constantly renewed into His likeness by the practical judgment of evil within, and God's nature taking its place in us more fully, by this putting off the old man and his deeds, and our deepening in the knowledge of Him as light and love.

The word "knowledge" (*ἐπίγνωσις*), too, is very striking here. It is not the same as that used for "knowledge" (*γνώσις*) in other parts of Scripture. It means full personal knowledge ; that by which I recognise a person, as I say "I know that man," as one I have met before. It is knowledge meditated upon and known *subjectively* in the soul. See Col. i. 9, where the same word is used for the knowledge of His will, and in v. 19, where you find it used for "growing by the *true* knowledge of God," as the passage should read.

There is a fine example of the use of these two words in 2 Peter i. 5 and 8. He desires (v. 5) that we may add "*to virtue knowledge*," &c. (*γνώσις*), and in v. 9, that thus we shall not be barren in the knowledge, or full knowledge (*ἐπίγνωσις*), of our Lord Jesus Christ. The former was the knowledge received, as *objectively* presented to the soul ; the latter was the same knowledge meditated upon and known *subjectively*. This is one of the beautiful touches of God's hand in Scripture through the pen and heart of an uneducated fisherman of Galilee !

I do not pretend to give a critical exposition in noting these words, but to present what has interested me as so characteristic as to their use in Scripture.

Q.—"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." What death was meant ?

A.—Physical death of the body. The margin reads, "dying thou shalt die." "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by

sin," &c. The seeds of death of the body were laid in the man when the condition was broken, through which he held his blessings from God. His physical condition became subject to death, which eventually feeds upon him. This goes no further than the body. "After this, the judgment," was not yet spoken, though always true. The only thing that goes beyond government of God in this world in Gen. iii. is the sentence, "So he drove out the man." This exclusion from the presence of God and all good went farther a long way. Total exclusion from His presence for ever we find in the description of those shut out from God and the sphere and blessing in Rev. xxii. 15, "For without are dogs," &c. Such find their place in "the lake of fire which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. xxi. 8).

Q.—Why was the serpent (Num. xxi.) made of brass? What brass? There was none then. What may be the teaching of it, whatever it may be?

A.—It is "copper" or native brass: not what we term the latter, which is a mere alloy of copper and zinc of considerably little comparative value compared with copper.

I think we learn its typical import from the symbolic meaning of copper (brass), as used in making the brazen altar and the like. While gold symbolizes the righteousness of God, brass is typical of that righteousness in which God deals with man as a responsible being. Thus in a "*serpent*" we have portrayed the subtilty of sin—Christ was made "sin for us" (2 Cor. v. 21), and "of brass," Christ bearing the responsibility of man in judgment, as lifted up on the cross. The mercy seat was gold.

Q.—What is the "Reproach of Egypt" being rolled away, in its typical application to Christians?

A.—They are heavenly men, and it is a reproach to such that the ways of Egypt (man in nature and under Satan's power), out of which they have been taken by redemption, should be seen in them. In Jordan (typically considered) we have our being dead and risen with Christ, and introduced into heavenly places in Him. Circumcision then followed (Jos. v.): it never was done in the wilderness. There, we may walk in grace and faithfulness, but the moment we are "heavenly," another thing comes in. Thus it should be plainly seen that we are dead and risen with Christ, and that we bear the marks of our heavenly citizenship, every trace of Egyptian bondage having been clean rolled away.

Suppose you see one who is a Christian running after the world, and the fashions and follies of the town: Well, you say, you may be dead and risen with Christ, but you had better go to Gilgal and have that reproach to His name rolled away by the practical putting to death of your members.

FRAGMENT.

Eve was not lord of the creation: nor was she of the creation of which Adam was lord.

THE RIVER OF GOD.

AMIDST all the yearly convocations, and offerings, and ceremonies of the Jews, there were three great annual feasts of a special character (Deut. xvi). The *Passover*, that which brought to their remembrance their deliverance from Egypt; then fifty days after this was the feast of *Pentecost*, or weeks; then when the corn and the wine were housed and pressed, they kept the feast of *Tabernacles*. The two first have had their fulfilment in the antitype, but the last is yet to come, it has had no antitypical fulfilment as yet.

In 1 Cor. v. 7, we read, "Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast," &c.

Then in Acts ii., "When the day of Pentecost was fully come"; this was the fiftieth day after the resurrection of Christ, when we find the fact of Christ having sent down the Holy Ghost from the Father, as that which characterises Christianity.

In the Passover we see God passing through Egypt in judgment. Those who were sheltered by the blood of the lamb were *safe*, but not yet, in the type, in the position of a *saved* people. A person being merely *safe*, is not what Scripture supposes as being *saved*. Israel had many exercises to pass through before they knew the "salvation of the Lord;" but this salvation brought them completely out of Egypt and put them in a totally new place. There was the constant memorial of the Passover then kept up every year until the true Paschal Lamb comes and dies on the cross, presenting His precious blood to God, and in the cross perfectly establishing God's righteousness against sin, and glorifying God's nature as to sin.

The first thought of Christ is God's glory. He not only made propitiation, but there is another thing—He bore our sins. On the great day of atonement in Israel (Lev. xvi.), we find this made clear in the two goats which were taken; one lot for the Lord, and the other (the scapegoat) for the people. The first goat points to that in Christ's work which perfectly glorified God as to sin, and thus I can preach the gospel "to every creature," telling them the blood of Christ is on the mercy seat, and there is nothing to hinder them coming to God through its worth. On the other goat Aaron laid his hands, and confessed "the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins." This

answers to the other side of Christ's work as bearing the sins of His people. These two thoughts perplex people so much. The Arminian takes up his thoughts from the *first* goat, and speaks of a universal presentation of the gospel, forgetting the positive substitution of Christ for His people's sins. The Calvinist grounds his on the *second* goat, and confines the work of Christ solely to the elect, and leaves out the grand "whosoever" in the breadth of the righteousness of God "unto all." There is a goat for each thought, but *both* thoughts are there, and we must not separate them. God's nature has been glorified. He is free and willing to bless *all*; but on the other hand the substitution of Christ for *His people* is quite true. There is room for the grand comprehensive "whosoever"—anybody—everybody—young or old—through what the first goat represents. But the second shows that "our sins" are put away for ever! The universal presentation of grace, and the election of persons, both find their positive answer, without the negative conclusions which men seek to adduce from them.

In Deut. xvi. 1-7, the Passover was to be eaten with the bread of affliction, "for they came out of Egypt in haste," &c.; each one keeping it in the place where the Lord should choose, and then each turned in the morning and went to his tent alone. It was an individual thing all through; no communion, no gathering together, for in conscience and faith we are alone.

Then fifty days after (vv. 10-12), the feast of Pentecost, in which three marked characteristics are seen. "Thou shalt rejoice" with all within thy gates. Every one's heart was made glad in the common joys of spiritual possession which the Lord had bestowed. Then "thou shalt remember" all that God had done and "do"—the practice becoming this new sphere of blessing and joy.

Then came the feast of Tabernacles, which has had no antitype as yet. It was celebrated after the harvest had been cut down, the chaff cleared away, the corn gathered into the garner, and the vintage was over—the grapes had been gathered and thrown into the wine-press. "Thou shalt keep a solemn feast after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine; . . . because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice." They were to dwell in booths seven days, remembering that they had been strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Evidently the fulfilment of this in the antitype must be preceded by the judgment, figured by the harvest and vintage, common types of preparatory and final judgment at the end of their age, before the glory and kingdom comes. They are noted in Rev. xiv. 14, &c. "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sharp sickle and reap, for the time is come for thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which was in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs" (*cf.* Joel iii).

This shows what must occur before the antitype of the feast of Tabernacles can take place. It is the great feast, typical of millennial glory, after Christ has purged the earth. Then He brings in the full blessing of this poor sin-stained world.

In John vi. we read, "And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh." In chap. vii., the feast of Tabernacles was at hand. The feast of Pentecost is not noticed, for reasons which we shall see. The Jews ("his brethren") wanted the Lord to show Himself to the world at this feast (chap. vii); this He refused. If He had gone up He would first have had to judge the world, and so He went up secretly, and brings in another blessing altogether. His time was "not yet" fully come. It will come by and by. *Now* He testifies against the world, because its deeds are evil; then He will judge it. The harvest and vintage must come before His time, and the true feast of Tabernacles be there.

He brings in instead of this the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost, and believers now become the intermediate witness of the glory of the Son of man.

In chapter vi. He had fed the multitude with the loaves, and they own Him as the Great Prophet that should come into the world; and then they seek to make Him a king. The thought expressed by Christians at times in hymns, of Christ being their prophet, priest, and king, has really no divine meaning. He was, and is, most surely, all these; and as to the exercise of these offices, He *was* the Prophet in His lifetime here, He *is* the Priest, now as gone on high, He *will be* the King in glory by and by. Christians will then be joint-heirs with Him in His glorious reign. Heb. x. 13 shows that He is now "expecting"—not reigning. When He reigns in glory He will have no enemies to put down. All this will be done before He reigns in peace.

Thus the people own Him as the prophet, and seek to make Him a King (John vi. 14, 15). This He refused, and He departs on high into a mountain "to pray," as we find in the other gospels. John does not state this, for He is always seen in John as a divine person. Thus He has gone on high as Priest, first having sent His disciples across the stormy sea of this world; but He withdraws not His eyes from them until He rejoins them, and they are immediately at the shore. All this is a picture of what was then, and now is, going on, and until the close of the present age.

Then in the remaining portion of the chapter He presents Himself as the object of faith meanwhile. He is the bread of God come down from heaven to give life to the world (v. 33, &c.) In the chapter you find three great points discussed. First, His incarnation as the bread of God; next (v. 51, &c.), He must die, and give His flesh and blood to be eaten—appropriated by faith. And lastly, His ascension as Son of man to where He was before (v. 62).

He says, "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever," in contrast to the manna of which they ate and died. Thus He is the passive object of faith, not as in chapter v.—the Son of God, quickening whom He will. Here He is to be fed upon by faith. But man as such could not feed upon Him as the incarnate One; to do so would prove he was still recoverable though he had sinned. Hence He must die, and give His flesh to eat and His blood to drink.

Here let me remark that there is not the shadow of a thought of the Lord's Supper in this chapter. John deals with the realities, not with the figures of them. The other Gospels take up the figures, but not John. This chapter

speaks of the same thing as the Lord's Supper, *i.e.*, His death, but the Supper is not in the chapter. Here the sinner comes and feeds upon Him by faith in His death, and receives eternal life in Him—he leaves all the old thing behind. Note, too, that the Lord calls it the “flesh of the *Son of man*,” &c., that is, of a rejected “*Christ*.”

Then comes another step (*v.* 56), “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.” And “as the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.” That is, he lives *for* this dead and risen One, and *from* Him here; as Jesus did *for* the Father and *from* the Father also. He received life from His death, and now he “lives” by that by which he received life—He lives by Him.

Then (*v.* 62), He ascends up where He was before. He takes manhood to glory. Many of His disciples then went back, and walked no more with Him. They were disappointed in Him. They looked for earthly things and earthly glory, but He was rejected, and had none then to bestow. The Lord turns to those who had the faith that could not do without Him, and says, “Will ye also go away?” Peter answers, “Lor l. to whom shall we go?” He was necessary to that life He had given, and they could not go away! He was the Son of the living God, and had the words of eternal life—more than those of Messiah and an earthly kingdom here. He had chosen “you twelve,” yet one of them was a devil. It is only in John's gospel we find this divine knowledge breaking forth from His glorious person. As in John xii., He could tell of Mary's devoted heart and her secret treasure—secret to all but to His eye. She had treasured up her box of ointment “for his burial.” He could let her know in His quiet blessed way—I knew it all the time! So here He shows that He knew from the first the heart of this poor ruined man.

Now we as Christians are between those two great points—Christ's going up into heaven, and His coming back again to bring in this feast of Tabernacles; and so, meanwhile, He gives (as the exalted One) the Holy Ghost, to witness for Him of complete redemption, and to form His body—to gather together the joint heirs of His glory. During this interval “grace reigns.” Hence the Lord goes up secretly to the feast; and in the last day, that great day of the feast, He stands and cries, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and

drink." This was the eighth day after the seven days of the feast were over, during which time they had dwelt in booths and rejoiced. The eighth day was the link with resurrection and heavenly glory foreshadowed in the feast (*cf.* Lev. xxiii. 36). They say that the Jews drew water from the Pool of Siloam on that day and poured it on the ground in token of the fulness of blessing which they enjoyed. On *this* day the Lord presents Himself as the source of these streams of living water. He calls to the thirsty ones—those who were not satisfied with a hollow ceremony which had not quenched the thirst of their souls—to come to Him and drink. He who believed on this rejected Son of man, "out of his belly" would flow rivers of living water. ("But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.") Then, as in other parts of the chapter, they reason and discuss, but this was not faith. Faith believes in its object; hope desires it, and love enjoys it. True faith is proved by the desires, which is always met by God Himself giving divine light on our pathway here; and God makes Himself chargeable for all that concerns me. How different to these discussions of the people and the Jews.

Now, it is not the unbeliever who is here before the Lord. Such need His quickening power to create the thirst that says, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" It is the gift of the Holy Ghost to the believing one, who is always believing on Christ. This distinct blessing of the Holy Ghost dwelling in and flowing on through the affections and inward thoughts of the believer was never known of old. Up to the time of the sending of the Holy Ghost from heaven, souls were born of God by the power of the Holy Ghost, but no glorified Son of man was there till the Son of God went thus on high. Now, the believing one is the channel of this living water to the wilderness from which He was cast out.

This river is a figure of blessing directed of God to man. God has ever had thoughts of blessing flowing from Himself to the world, but this blessing has as constantly been frustrated by man's sin.

From the Garden of Eden, which God had planted and proposed as the centre of creature good, four rivers flowed forth to bear the riches of such a dispensation to the four quarters of the world. Satan entered the scene, and lusts sprang up in the heart of man, and he was driven out of the

presence of God, and the creature involved in his fall. Hundreds of years passed away, and the corrupted world was washed by the judgment of the waters of the flood. Even the traces and channels of two of these rivers were obliterated (perhaps) by this tide of judgment. But when the channels of the "river of God" are stopped or corrupted, the stream is diverted, but still it must flow from Him who is intent on blessing man. These first streams then were the rivers of paradise, freighted with earthly blessing.

Then God called out Abraham from the idolatrous world, and then his seed from Egypt; and the answer to their cry of thirst in the desert was the streams from the smitten rock. Rivers ran for them in dry places, and they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them—and that rock was Christ. This was their river of blessing until they reached the promised land.

Then God cast out the enemy and settled them there. And in the promises to the house of David the king, those "waters of Shiloah" that ran "softly," and the yearly round of feasts and gatherings to His name in the pleasant land, ran the fresh stream, now of ritual blessing, to recall the thought of Jehovah's presence with His people, and to cheer their hearts as time ran on; "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High."

The channel again corrupts itself in the land of blessing, and when Jesus came into their midst those once-named "feasts of Jehovah" are now only the "feasts of the Jews." He finds no response from the hearts of His people, and again the diverted stream of blessing must find another channel and another character in which to flow. Jesus "ascends up where he was before," and instead of a stream flowing into the desert, and making the wilderness and the solitary place blossom as the rose, the lame man to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing, He leaves the desert as He found it, and turns the living waters of this spiritual stream through the longing desires, the affections of His believing people, who are passing through the parched land of the wilderness—instead then of blessing the wilderness, He blesses him who is in the wilderness—making him a channel of blessing and a testimony to His glory.

Believers, do you thus thirst after Him? In one sense you "never thirst," because of the "living water" which He

has bestowed. But does not your heart long after Him who is gone away? Do you not receive for this thirsting the full satisfying blessing—as cold waters to the thirsty soul—from Him whom your heart thus thirsts after and feeds upon, who is gone away? He will come again, this “Son of man;” He will return as the One whom God has set over all the works of His hands (Ps. viii). Now “we see not yet all things put under him.” He has gone up on high with the title to the whole, securely in His hands, and during His absence He leaves His people to be the channels of blessing here—the living witnesses to an absent and rejected Lord!

Isaiah speaks of the time when the wilderness shall blossom as the rose; when the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; when the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. In that day He will bring the earth under His peaceful sway into full, rich blessing; but now He pours the living streams through the hearts and affections of His saints. Through them the stream flows. The stream will find its way through their affections out to others if they are thirsting after Him who is gone on high. They are thus the channels—pipes—to convey those living streams to others, that they may thirst and taste and drink for themselves. “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

Thus the “River of God” flows on. The course is transferred from earth to heaven, and its channel is the hearts of His believing people. The source never fails. Think of this stream flowing through your hearts—ministering to this evil world—telling of His heart unchanged.

When the day of glory comes, the channel of this stream will not change. The River of God will again flow on earth and from its then centre of blessing. But there is one glory of the terrestrial and another glory of the celestial. An earthly Bride, as well as a heavenly.

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (See Rev.

xxii. 1-5). These verses (with chap. xxi. 9-27), are the description of the celestial and displayed glory of the heavenly Bride, the Lamb's wife. She is seen descending out of heaven from God ; not only the abode of the Lamb, but the Lamb is the light thereof. The saved nations walk in her light, and she is the channel of that heavenly stream of pure water of life to the world in that day. The River of God thus flows through her from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In Ezekiel xlvii. 1-9, we read of the earthly stream too. The restored Jerusalem and the earthly throne will be the spot where the stream of earthly blessing will flow. It deepens as it flows "to the ancles," "to the knees," and to the loins, until it becomes "a river that could not be passed over;" "and every thing shall live whither the river cometh," in that scene of terrestrial glory.

The heavenly stream of the River of God will find its channel through the glorified Church, His witness of heavenly grace; and the earthly stream will issue forth from the city which is the throne of Jehovah and His testimony in that day of earthly justice, so long a strange thing in this earth.

Thus, the true feast of Tabernacles will be kept in unhindered power ; with the blessed "last day," or "eighth day" of heavenly glory. Jehovah will hear the heavens, and the heavens will hear the earth, and the earth will hear the corn and the wine and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel—the seed of God.

Turn now to the scene where all this will have passed away. The millennial glory will have had its accomplishment, but after all, to the soul that knows God, millennial glory is but a poor thing. It is true that "a king shall reign in righteousness": He will first clear the scene of evil, and sway His glorious sceptre from the river to the sea, and from the sea to the ends of the earth. Still this state will not be perfect, and therefore not be fully suited to God, nor to those who are made partakers of the divine nature. It is but power with a high and glorious hand keeping down evil, if it shows its head. For though all are blessed, and all call upon the name of the Lord at its commencement, such is not the case with those who are born during that thousand years. The last outbreak, when Satan is loosed (Rev. xx.) shows its solemn results. The moral separation then takes place

between those who are the Lord's and those who are not. Then comes the judgment of the great white throne, and the lake of fire is the last act of the drama in the scene of *time*.

Eternity then rolls on: the ever present "now" of eternity. A new heavens, and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The first heaven and the first earth have passed away, and there is *no more sea*. There is neither a "River of God," nor a place into which that river may flow. God Himself—the spring of the river, has come down to dwell for ever amongst men. His tabernacle—the church of His eternal purpose, is His dwelling-place still. No more the outflowings of the streams of His blessing—but all eternal rest—the rest of God. "Silent in his love"—He rests, and we rest with Him! And Jesus, the girded Servant, who has made "all things new," displays the Father in the Son for ever!

God shall wipe away all tears. Not a stream of sorrow will be in that scene. The past is forgotten and the traces of the past. He felt it Himself—for who knew as He did—the sorrows of the way? He wept Himself through those human eyes, that told of the heart of God. Then, not only are the tears gone, but God Himself is the wiper of them away! There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, for the former things are passed away. But there is one thing which ever abides—the Son, the Servant still. He came down to save that we might have the blessing. He serves on high that He may secure the blessing; and He will remain the blessed girded One for ever that we may enjoy the blessing.

And He looks now to us to be thirsting ones, telling Him from morning to night that we cannot do without Himself. He must be our object, our energy, our end. We must live for Him and die for Him to all here; we must thirst after Him, and drink ourselves, that we may be the channels of blessing to this evil world. May we learn to walk through it as He walked—to testify against it that its deeds are evil.

FRAGMENT.

THE servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient; in meekness setting to right those that oppose themselves. (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.)

GOD'S KING.—No. II.

WALKING WITH GOD.—Psalms xvi.

THE birth of the King announced in Psalm ii., we have next to trace His footsteps as He walked upon earth as a man. Power to be exercised by Him as God's King seems only natural and right, but a position of lowly dependencies one which man would never have assigned to him. Yet this was the place He took when upon earth, who will one day rule all nations with a rod of iron, for He was to show, what Adam had failed to exhibit—the proper character and position of the lowest in rank of God's intelligent creatures, called by Him, man.

Perfect God and perfect man, whatever be the relative position He occupies, in it He is perfect. As Son of God He would not return to the glory, which He had with the Father before the world was, without His full consent and action (John xvii. 1); for the relationship of Son involves subjection to the Father. Perfect man, though He could say, as God, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up;" when He entered the grave He did not exert His power to rise from it, but God raised Him from the dead. Power over death He had manifested when on earth, yet, He was raised up from it by the glory of the Father. As man, then, on earth, He entered fully into his place, and acted throughout as befits the creature. And this we have traced out to us in the Word, not only in those books which recount His history, but in the Psalms and Prophets, which mark out beforehand the road appointed Him to traverse. Amongst the Psalms which describe Him upon earth, Ps. xvi. must be included. Twice in the Acts do we find it quoted (ii. 25-28; xiii. 35), and both times it is expressly applied to Christ. Peter, taking up the question of David's authorship, points out that he wrote not of himself, but of another. The Psalm is a Psalm of David, but the hope it expresses belongs to a person very different from the youngest son of Jesse. David's sepulchre, existing at that day, proved he did not write of himself. "He is both dead and buried," is all that the apostle could say of him. He died, was buried, and is risen, is the testimony which he bore to Christ. "David speaketh concerning Him," is the language of the Spirit by Peter, with reference to His own words by David. At Antioch, in Pisidia, Paul, addressing a mixed company of Jews and Greeks, and

anticipating the objection that might be raised against the Messiahship of Jesus, because He had died, quoted this Psalm, to show that His resurrection was predicted. David saw corruption, but He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Thus, at Jerusalem, and again at Antioch, it was clearly shown that Ps. xvi. had reference to another than the writer, even to David's Son, who is also David's Lord.

Glancing over it, we may see that only one speaker is introduced throughout it. In Ps. ii. we had three, here we have but one, so he, whose hope it expresses at the close, is the same whose dependence it declares at the beginning ; for, whilst part of the Psalm any saint might take up, whose walk was conformed to the standard it describes, One only has ever been upon earth, who could apply it all to Himself. Enoch and Elijah can tell of a road to heaven, which passes not through the gates of death, but none of God's saints, who have entered death, have passed through it without their bodies being subjected to corruption. For observe, the Psalm speaks not of the state and portion of the unclothed spirit, but of the re-union of body and soul after each should go to their respective places, the former to the grave, the latter to hell, or hades, (*Sheol*). Death, however, is here only in prospect, the walk which preceded it being the subject of the Spirit's description.

Like a lake whose surface is unruffled by the least breath of any disturbing element, reflecting the very colour and calmness of the heavens above it, disclosing, too, beauties in its depths, a bright shining object, at once attractive and soothing, such is the character of our blessed Lord and Master, as brought out to us in this Psalm, in which we mark no trace of the opposition that He met with from men, nor of the unevenness of the road over which He journeyed. With one exception (v. 4,) there is nothing here to intimate the presence on earth of a will, which did not, like His, bow to that of God. It is one, as He walked with God, whose footsteps we have here delineated, and just what we meet with elsewhere in the Word, so useful to us who are often so dull of comprehension, we have but one aspect of the Lord's work upon earth given to us in this Psalm to contemplate. The full picture, with every feature in harmony, we get in the Gospels, whilst different aspects of His life are brought before us in the Old Testament

Scriptures. The principle of His walk, the character of His service, the treatment He experienced, the grace and gentleness which He manifested ; all these, blended together in the Gospels, are described particularly and separately by the Prophets who lived before the cross. So, whilst noting His perfection throughout, we may study for our profit the different features of His character, who is both God and man, our Saviour and our Lord.

(To be continued.)

MOUNTAIN TOPS.

(Concluded from page 18.)

WHAT a different scene is now before us as we ascend the Mount of Olives with the Man of sorrows and His disciples. The Prince of this world driven away and worsted from the temptation in the wilderness, will now appear again, to try and draw through fear of death God's faithful Son from the path that led to victory. Sorrowful, even unto death, amazed and very heavy was He, as He knelt and fell upon His face in prayer, and so great was His agony as He offered up His supplications with strong crying and tears, that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. His disciples might sleep under the weight of their sorrow, but He continued agonizing, whilst still perfectly submissive to His Father's will. Well might He suffer, and because of suffering pray, when thus bereft of earthly comforters, an angel only strengthening Him, while yet in perfect communion with His Father, Satan thrust upon Him all the fearful consequences of the position He had taken as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. The martyrs, and still worse, the victim's sufferings in utter separation from God, rose up before Him in all their fearful intensity, and hence the deep—and the more deep because of His absolute perfectness—exercises of soul He passed through. At length the conflict ceases, the cup is taken from the Father's hand (John xviii. 11), and held fast in faithfulness until the moment came to drain it to the bottom. What scenes of interest are these, and how worthy of our deepest study !

But Calvary, too, demands our notice as Jesus once more is seen the central figure of the landscape. Rejected of men, deserted by His disciples, yet in patient love He treads with unflinching footsteps the lonely road that led to death and judgment. The tears of the sympathizing women ; the

indifference of the populace ; the scorn of those in authority ; the insulting conduct of the brutal soldiery, and the blasphemy of the unrepentant malefactor alike fail to move that One whose perfectness was only more distinctly visible as the pressure from without became the more intense against Him. In calm dependence on His God and Father, though feeling most intensely, and the more intensely because divinely, all that was against him, yet completely superior to it, He can tell the women of their danger ; He can pour out His soul in intercession for His murderers ; He can breathe words of comfort to the dying thief ; He can think of His mother's lonely heart, and entrust her to His loved disciple ; and, then, God's righteous judgment over, can commend His spirit to His Father's care. Truly this, of all the mountain scenes we have glanced at, is one of deepest moment.

But once more the Mount of Olives, so often the blessed Lord's resort while here, and witness to so many occasions of interest, comes before us, as the place whence He ascended to His present place of glory ; and surely here, too, we may pause a little to note what passed at that eventful time. Again and again had He appeared to reassure the hearts of His faltering disciples during the forty days that intervened between His resurrection and His departure to His Father's throne, and now the moment had come for Him to take His leave of them. Then, as ever, was His people's cause His care. Assured they were that His absence should only pave the way for a far higher order of blessing than they had hitherto enjoyed. Henceforth the heavens should be opened to them, and the Holy Ghost should dwell within them, to fill their souls with Him whose person now garnished the heavenlies as He had before adorned the earth. Henceforth Messiah's kingdom should, as to their thoughts, be merged in the far superior glory of the Son of man's dominions, whilst they themselves should take their place as those, and we with them, who form a portion of the mystic man, the body of Christ, the Church of God, the bride. Surely, then, though His departure must cause a blank that His return alone could fill, there was in the measure of blessing accorded in exchange for what they had renounced, far more than enough to compensate for their apparent present loss. A cloud received Him out of their sight, but soon a present Holy Ghost becomes their Comforter

and ours, and fills our souls with the unnumbered glories of the Son of God.

But one more mountain scene I propose to turn to. It is that unfolded in Rev. xxi. 9—xxii. 5, where the bride, the lamb's wife, is seen descending in all her given glory as the Church of God. How beautiful she is, and what a contrast to that which bears her name at present. The title of affection is conferred upon her, and affection towards the One whose blood has cleansed her. Her name is Peace, as with heavenly features, and of God's creation, she is seen descending. His glory is hers, and now no want of singleness of eye obscures her light, but inaccessible to evil, yet with ready welcome to those who can make good their right to enter, she is Christ's epistle, known and read of all men; the display to heavenly principalities and powers of God's manifold wisdom, while the centre of God's government of Israel. Man's building now no more disfigures her, but God's workmen's labours have their place in her foundations, whilst divine proportions answer to divine admeasurement. Eternally glorious, the characteristic features of the new man (Eph. iv. 24) are seen in her ways and throughout her internal structure; whilst from her foundations to her gates the precious stones and pearls bear testimony to the fact that she is *now* God's own reflection (comp. Ezek. xxviii., Ex. xxviii.); and dear as ever to the heart of Christ (Mat. xiii.); and best of all, no temple now obscures the unveiled glory of creations, patriarchs, Israel's God and our Jesus, but they are seen as our centre, and at the same time light and glory. The Holy Spirit, too, is there, issuing forth, in unhindered streams of blessing, while the ever fresh productions of the tree of life take the thoughts away from man's to God's own paradise. Service will then be in blessed contrast to all our efforts now, while the Master's presence, and His open recognition of them, and a share in His dominion will be the eternal portion of all whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. How refreshing to turn away from the weakness and failure everywhere around to such a scene as this, and answer as the Bridegroom tells us, "Surely I come quickly"—"Amen, even so; come, Lord Jesus."

D. T. G.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ON THE TRAINING OF THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS.

DEAR BROTHER,—I have had your letters seeking for help on the extremely interesting and important subject of the training of the children of those who are Christ's—I mean those of true children of God. I feel how poorly I can speak of such a subject; but am encouraged by that grace of which I learn so much every day.

You ask, How should we regard them? As children of wrath even as others? Part of the "world lying in the wicked one" with the wrath of God "abiding on them, etc., etc." And here I think I would most clearly distinguish between a moral state in God's eye, which all are in by nature, as dead in trespasses and sins, and the privileged place or sphere of blessing, in which God regards the "houses" of His people; *i.e.*, all whom God looks upon as attached to the head of that house. That there has always been such a sphere of privilege, certainly from the flood downwards, if not always indeed, is clear to me from Scripture. A sphere of blessing into which God has brought His child, and in which He has surrounded him with wife and children, in order that the light which He has lit-up in the heart of the head of that house may shine out brightly, and carry by His grace the knowledge of God into the hearts of those in the house around him.

All this is different from the *nature* of those thus privileged and outwardly blessed of God. Of course *it* is just the same ruined undone thing as in the rest of mankind around.

But if God regards them *merely* as "children of wrath," He would not say to the Christian parent, "Bring them up in the Lord's discipline and admonition" (as we may read the passage.) And here you must not settle it in your mind, that it is believing children who are before the mind of the Spirit in Eph. vi. 1-4. The Apostle leaves it without defining whether they are or are not, addressing them simply as "children." And He tells the parents to "bring them up" for Him (as Jochebed brought up Moses for Pharaoh's daughter) "in the Lord's nurture and admonition," and surely He does not direct this if He intends to cast them off again.

I think there is much involved in the "Lord's nurture

and admonition." *He* exercises it over and with us; and *we* are to observe a similar course with our children. His tender patience; His persevering love which never wearies, never casts off its object until the end is gained. His faithfulness which never flatters but deals with us, so that we may disallow practically all that savours of our evil nature, and the world from which He has delivered us. This disallowance of the flesh, and of all that savours of the old Adam and his ways on the one side, and complete conformity to the Son of God on the other is His aim, and characterizes His ways of discipline with us that He may be glorified. And as we grow conversant with them as observed towards us whom He has brought to Himself, we learn the sort of dealing we are to pass on to our children, under Him. We must seek to show them whence the tendencies and wills of the flesh spring, and where they end; we must disallow them in our children, as the Lord does in us, seeking to draw their minds and hearts to Jesus, and thus with patient grace and persevering love discipline and admonish them for their good.

I feel too, that now, the family circle is the normal place for the conversion of the child. I am sure that much of what we are told of children's conversions is but the bringing to a definite point what has long been there in the soul. It is most desirable that it should take its definite form in the way of a confession of Christ in the child; but what I fear, is anything in the way of excitement, by which the young, susceptible heart is easily wrought upon, thus forcing into immature development the hardly perceptible pulsations of life in the soul. I believe that in general such cases give a weakly tone to the soul, and in result are often like the too early removal of the shell from the little bird, a feeble state of soul will supervene.

My impression too, is, (and the exception proves the rule,) that the child of the believing, Christian parent will, as a rule, seldom if ever, be able to tell when he was converted, as we speak. It is true that, at the same time, the child or the parent may be able to look back to some moment when the faith and life which had been already in his soul took definite shape, and burst forth into activity and energy. Like the bursting forth into beauty and fragrance of the flower, which has grown up from the little unseen germ, or hardly perceptible bud, until the genial warmth of the sun and the

gentle showers of the rain caused it to open its petals for the first time.

How lovely was the unquestioning faith of Hannah! Her son, the fruit of her prayer, was brought up to Shiloh, not without the offerings of faith too in her own and her husband's hands. At as early an age as his weaning time, ere living faith could work in the soul of the babe, she said to Eli, "Oh, my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto Jehovah. For this child I prayed; and Jehovah hath given my petition which I asked of him: therefore also I have returned, whom I have obtained by petition to Jehovah; as long as he liveth he whom I have obtained by petition, shall be returned to Jehovah." (1 Samuel i. 26-28. *marg.*)

The contrast, too, in the case of Eli's house is solemn and instructive; it illustrates the linking of the saint and his house in the sight of God. "In that day (said the LORD to Samuel) I will perform *against Eli* all things which I have spoken *concerning his house*: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his *sons* made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." (1 Samuel iii. 12, 13.)

Speaking, dear brother, of the conversion of the child of a saint, and noticing that the time of such is but seldom known, if known at all, in the normal state of things, I would cite the case of young Timothy. Brought up "from infancy" (*ἀπὸ βρέφους*) in the knowledge of the holy scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, and trained by a pious believing mother, and perhaps grandmother, of the unfeigned faith of both of whom the aged apostle speaks in a most touching manner (2 Timothy i. 5); the blessed knowledge of the Word of God thus early imbibed into his young and impressible heart, and known as a child may know it too, paved the way for that moment when the life it brought to his soul burst forth into the liberty of grace and knowledge of Christ through the apostle Paul when at Lystra, who names him his "own son in the faith."

Such, I believe, to be a true example of the conversion of the child of believing parents. He has the priceless boon of being in the circle where the name of Jesus is a household word, and the great circumstance and business of the

lives of his parents. His parents feel that they have received him back from the Lord to be brought up under the yoke of Christ from the earliest moments of his existence, and they feel, too, that the One who has directed them to do this will not in vain be trusted in for that quickening of soul which he needs, as all do, that he may live indeed. They bring him up in the faith of Christ, never for a moment casting a doubt across his young and impressible heart that he is not the Lord's. They teach him the way that God forgives and saves through the precious blood of Jesus Christ; they explain how the grace of God is received; they show the little one the awful results of unbelief, and of the rejection of Christ; they explain how real faith is known from the false and hollow profession around; they teach him that obedience and those desires to please the Lord under whose yoke he is brought up, are the true way in which the life of God displays itself in man. And thus by these teachings the conscience is awakened, and when, alas, failures in these things are seen, the necessity and meaning of the confession of sins, and the unburdening of the soul to Christ is pressed and encouraged. The desire, too, to make known to the Lord the wants of the heart for self or others are directed to their proper outflow—prayer: all these things lead the child onward to a confidence in God, and he grows up to Christ, as he does by the food of infancy by which his natural powers have been gradually developed.

While all this training goes on, how a true hearted parent will wait on God in secret, that that sovereign quickening power which belongs to Him alone may be put forth in behalf of his child, who he knows is by nature "dead in trespasses and sins."

You will remark, too, dear brother, that it is in the "nurture (discipline) and admonition of the *Lord*." This implies reverence for and owning the authority of One who is over the child. It does not imply a relationship as "Father" or "Christ;" the co-relatives of which would be "son" or "child" and "member of his body." This is important too; because while none can truly please Him but those who are in relationship with Him, still the word "Lord" does not necessarily and exclusively mean this.

To treat children otherwise than thus, is in my mind to injure their souls, and hinder the work of God's grace as far as we can do it. If a child finds his parent habitually

treating him as outside the pale even of external relationship with God (*cf.* Deut. xiv. 2 with Eph. ii. 3: also 1 Cor. vii. 14.) and hears him praying for him as an unsaved one, he grows up in the thought (which may be true) that this is so. He is led to look at conversion as something to come to him some day perhaps, and perhaps not. Instead of fixing the eye on Christ and wholly away from himself, he turns it inwards, and thus is injured and hindered in soul: thrown back, it may be for a long season, in darkness, which occupation with self must do, while, if dealt with otherwise, he might, through grace, have been enjoying the favour of God which is better than life.

How Moses indignantly refused such a compromise of Satan as that proposed by Pharaoh, (Exod. x.) "Go now ye that are men" with his reply, "We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters," &c., and how often do Christian parents fall into the same wile of the enemy, and separate as to the external ground of blessing, between the parents and the children both in their own minds and the training they give them. Nay! All must be, as with Noah of old, in the same place of blessing. "Come thou and all thy house into the ark," tells this blessed way of God's goodness and mercy. "Thee have I seen righteous before me," tells of the head of the house being blessed in soul; and even his son, who alas, afterwards dishonoured his father, entered with him into the place of safety.

Surely a wise parent will not regard his child as a child of God, ere he sees the signs of a quickened conscience, and the fear of the Lord in him, but he seeks to lead his heart to Christ in practice, conversation, and ways; and thus, dependence on God, thankfulness of heart for His mercies, obedience to His will, is impressed upon his heart, and the faith of a parent will be answered of God in giving living faith to his child. I believe we ought to count on God for our children—every one of them—and where there is true faith in a parent as to this, He who gave it will answer it in making them His own.

There are many lines of thought in connection with this most interesting subject which we might enter upon, and, if the Lord will, we may do so in another letter.

Affectionately yours in Him,

F. G.

LIFE, LOVE, AND LIGHT.

JOHN iii.

EVERY one who has any amount of spiritual intelligence remarks the difference between this and the three preceding Gospels. They present Christ, be it as Son of David, or Messiah, or Servant, or Son of Man, as may suit the individual case, and as such to be received by men; but John speaks of the Light being amongst them, and rejected. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Thus we get the whole state of man judged, grace reigning, no doubt, but flesh judged for rejecting the Light. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." The totally lost state of man is brought out—utterly lost, and yet no matter how vile, the light is come to him, and all are left without excuse. Then we get in the passage which refers to Moses lifting up the serpent—"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Not only is this presentation made that they may escape the righteous wrath of God, but that they may be put into a new condition before Him.

I do not—God forbid that I should—weaken the force of the passage which speaks of coming judgment. This we shall see is inevitable. But I am not here to reproach you who are out of Christ with your sins. I want to show you, as I may be able, what the flesh is, and the impossibility of bettering it. Though one hears a great deal about social reform, it is all false. You cannot better a thing which is hopelessly bad; it is judged, condemned, and you can do nothing with it but confess that it is so.

This Gospel assumes all that is in the other three, and then goes on beyond them—the same truth, of course, but differently presented. John deals with things not suited to the other testimony, equally precious in its own way. It is most important for us while presenting the grace of God in all its fulness to recollect where we are, to get a full consciousness of it. We need this, my brethren; it gives power, and the poor unsaved one needs it too. Now, if I be saved, I am in Christ, not only out of condemnation, but in acceptance before God in Christ, and He in me. But the poor sinner is still in darkness, and "the wrath of God abideth on him." In darkness—this is his condemnation, for light is

come into the world, and he has loved darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. This is the Spirit's testimony of the world, where so much is made of man, and so little of Christ. Christ has been *cast* out, and now He is *left* out !

It is well to see flesh in its true colours : " In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." " Good Master," said one, " There is none good, but one, that is God," replied the perfect One. This is no mere theory, but a terrible fact, that we should know in our hearts. So utterly bad are they that the effect of having the light presented is just to have it rejected, and the rejection of the light is necessarily followed by judgment. What is judgment ? Just the revelation of all the thoughts, words, and works of men which are going on now—every secret thing as well as the more glaring, unless, indeed, the precious blood has washed them all away. But this is another thing. God's terms now with man are not law. He has not, in this dispensation, sent out a rule whereby man is to walk ; but He has sent His light into the world, and He calls man to walk in it. Law was all right in its place, and even now it is useful in convicting man ; but this is not our place, but the light is here, and reveals to us that we cannot stand for one moment in ourselves before it. The light convicts us ; it makes manifest what a man is ; but when we walk in the light as He is in the light—in Christ—of course, what can judgment bring out ? That I am there according to the measure of Christ's perfection—to the perfectness of His finished work. There is no judgment for that. Judgment does come. Solemn truth ! And the apostle says, " If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost " (2 Cor. iv. 3). We are without excuse, for light is come to shew us what we are ; but if, through grace, there be the smallest desire in our hearts to be with God—like Christ—what a mercy that the light is here to reveal the way ! There is no uncertain sound here. God is come down to reveal to us His own mind, what His righteousness required, and the whole thing has been met. He brings down the light of God, and love too ; but we are speaking of light to my soul ; and if we are in earnest, this makes us very thankful. If I reject it, it is another thing, of course. Light, and truth, and love, thank God, not in judgment, but in grace.

Now there are two things spoken of here which I would press upon you, though, perhaps, you think there is no

necessity, the theme is so well known. I allude to being "born again," and the work of Christ. "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." But there is yet another thing connected with these which I think too much overlooked. "Many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did." Now I give those people credit for sincerity. They did believe upon evidence, naturally so; but this was not faith, not being born again. I ask a man, "Do you believe in Christ?" He says, "Of course I do. Sure I have been hearing about Him all my life." Is this faith in Christ? If such a man stood by and saw the dead raised, he too would have believed as those men did; but is that new birth? No wonder that we read, "Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." But we find something more in Nicodemus. So far as the beginning, he was no better, for he says, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles which thou doest except God be with him." But you see Nicodemus feels a need, and he does not go on like the others to their old occupations and forget all about it. No, he comes to Christ to learn more; and this is the way the Spirit ever works. He creates a need, and brings it to the source of blessing. But the moment a man feels this, he has an instinctive knowledge that all will be against him. He is a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, a master in Israel; but this makes matters worse, for he must come to the poor carpenter's son, as he thought, and truly it was so, according to the position the Lord was pleased to take. To the eye of faith, of course, He was "that holy thing," but to the natural eye a carpenter's son. So Nicodemus comes by night; he comes nervously, but he comes. He has a question about appropriation to himself, and he must have it answered; the awakened sense of need must be satisfied.

Tell me, beloved friends, have you no need? I never in all my experience knew even one person who came to Christ without being compelled to do so by a sense of need. Nicodemus comes and applies to Him as a teacher. No, no, says the Lord, I am not going to teach flesh, Nicodemus; it is not a question of teaching yet. You must get another life first; you must be born again; you do not want teaching

until you get life. It was teaching of the highest order, but he had not the spiritual faculties to coalesce with it. Christ meets him by showing the absolute necessity of a new nature, and this on the ground of redemption,—a thing which all Christians profess to believe; but to my mind it is an immense reality. Do not you see what it is? I have nothing—nothing in me which can have to do with God, even as a Christian. There is nothing in myself which can please God. I can only receive from Him. Flesh never ceases to be flesh. I must be born of the Spirit, partaker of the divine nature, born of God, but I must not confound this with responsibility. I am responsible as born of Adam. I have a conscience or power of discerning good from evil. I feel that I do evil and not good. Then I am lost. This evil thing cannot be spared; it must perish. I must be born again; or, as one sometimes says, cut down and grafted. The light and truth of God reveals this to me.

Now this was very new teaching for the Jews—God's chosen ones; but the time had come when they must learn the lesson, that neither Jew nor Gentile can stand before the light of God. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye" (Jews) "must be born again." They were the children of the kingdom; but He comes at the root, not of *dispensational teaching*, but of *nature*. People talk of God's image being restored. All utterly false. A new creation, divine nature, is the thing we need. On this common ground of nature Jew and Gentile both stood alike, and both must be born again. Indeed, so far as this truth goes, Nicodemus, if he had spiritual intelligence, might have known it. As a master in Israel he must have been familiar with the Prophets; and we get this truth clearly brought out in Ezekiel xxxvi. But he did not know it. And now we get the positive testimony of heaven. No man had been in heaven and come down to tell us about it. Paul was there; but utterance on this subject was denied him. But here is One who had been there, in the bosom of the Father, who came down to reveal that Father's heart to us, and who, while speaking there in very manhood to Nicodemus, could say He was in heaven, because divine. So it is now. He keeps us informed by His Spirit concerning what is in heaven.

Here I find the Son of Man, one of us in a certain sense, having been born of woman, and yet so entirely divine as to be still in heaven, and I get the "ye must"—unwillingness

at man's side, and all the love at God's. He shows me here, that I have nothing to do with heaven at all, unless another stands between God and me, or rather between me and God. This I learn from the One on earth, who is in heaven. I may lay hold of this by faith, and come with Christ in my hand, like Abel, and God testifies not to me, but to my gifts, for Christ is their measure. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." What does that mean? That the world had done with Him, and His testimony amongst men was closed. "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the Prince of this world be cast out." Where do I see the perfect judgment of this world? In the putting away of sin, and a man standing out alone, in divine righteousness at the other side.

Now if any was to be saved, it must be through Him—the perfect One. The world cast Him out, it is true; by wicked hands they crucified and slew Him; but we know that they were just the instruments of God's love to put One who could stand it, in the breach for us. It was not the Jewish promises, but the Lamb of God come to bear away the sin of the world. Isaac asks, "Where is the lamb?" Abraham replies, "God will provide himself a lamb." And here we find Him, crucified and slain, or all must be lost; the victim of propitiation provided by God. A man, taking man's place, and drinking the cup of wrath for us, yet this man is God's own Son.

Some persons are ever looking at God as though He were a judge; quite true, so He is. And they look at Christ as if He were all love; quite true, infinite love surely. But while God is a judge, and Christ is love, they leave out that which would make their opinion the truth of God. This well known verse sets the thing right—"For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God gave Him because of His love. Christ came in love, to bear the judgment of sin; for sin was there, and God's righteousness must judge it. Love is there. He gives His Son. Obedience is there in love. He comes to do the Father's will. This is very plain. I learn from it, that because of the righteousness of God, a propitiation must be offered, and I find the Son of Man coming to offer it, responsive to the heart of God; and this Son of Man is Son of God, given by love.

He would not abide alone. He would die, in order to have His brethren with Him. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Thus we get all the wondrous counsels of God brought out. He who dwelt in His bosom, the Son of His love, must suffer alone. The veil is rent, He is forsaken, the disciples leave Him. He who could summon the hosts of heaven, is unattended by one angel minister. The Father withdraws from Him, for He must drink the cup alone, and all because—hear it my friends! "God so loved the world!" God and Christ were one in the eternal counsels, of course, and righteousness and holiness forbid us to be in God's presence, and their love provides a remedy—a means to bring us in. The veil is gone; no hiding in thick darkness now; we are "in the light as he is in the light."

But we get Himself first as lifted up. The altar was not in the camp, nor even in the Holy place, but outside. Any one seeking God must have met the altar before he entered either camp or holy place. The altar first, and then abundant entrance. Now I am in the light, and in coming to God I come in the fulness of His light, and here I learn not judgment, for there is no judgment where I am, but perfect—perfect love, divine love!

Have your souls got the consciousness of your need? To feel your need is a good sign. The Spirit must be at work where need is felt. Now, if so, you learn that He was rejected, and the effect of His having been cast out—slain if you will, was the putting away of your sins for ever! Do you own that you are guilty, and, as such, lost? That in you dwelleth nothing but enmity against God? You have in spirit rejected Him, cast Him out, but God made this the occasion of working a work whereby all, the very vilest, may be brought in divine righteousness into His presence unblameable, by faith in Him whom He raised from the dead, because death could not hold Him. The spotless One is raised for our justification, and now I am reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Then I learn that God always loved me.

The Lord give us to rejoice in the truth that God Himself did the work which brings us into His presence in righteousness. Amen.

COMMUNION OF THE HEART WITH GOD.

EPHESIANS iii. 13-21.

WE have looked at the difference between intercourse with the glory of God, and communion of the soul with God Himself. Communion with God surpasses everything else.

We saw in chap. i., many things displayed by God, and the recording of them brings before our souls things really glorious. What a glorious thing that Saul the persecutor was made a partaker of the call of the Father of glory! What a glorious thing that such an one as I should know what the hope of that calling is for my own soul! God might have called us, and yet never have revealed what was in His mind about that call; but He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence in making known to us the mystery of His will. I can turn to many scriptures and show you plainly what the hope of His calling is. Again, He has revealed to us the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. As He inherited the promised land, and called it His land, and never gave up His claims, so as to us the heavens are to be filled with His glory. We are to be His inheritance in which He will display the riches of His glory. Again, He makes known the exceeding greatness of His power. He displays it in Christ as man in raising Him from the dead, and in setting Him far above all principality and power; and this power is displayed in us too. This is something come out from God—which human nature cannot lay hold of. It knows nothing of being crucified, dead, buried, quickened, raised up, seated in heavenly places in Christ. This it cannot understand. It is beyond the region of man's thoughts—not contrary to nature or reason, but beyond them. It knows nothing of this. It cannot understand that I am identically one with Christ. But God has said so, and faith receives it. When the soul is quickened, it says, I am the very opposite of Christ in everything. Light has shone in, and revealed the contrast; but the light also discovers that I am reckoned by God, crucified, dead, and buried with Christ. There is a connection directly, there is faith in the soul between the death of Christ eighteen hundred years ago and the believer, so that God can say of a Saul of Tarsus, and of sinners like ourselves—dead, buried, raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. The call has come down to

where I am. The glory of the inheritance cheers me in the wilderness. The Man Christ Jesus is found where a Saul was found, dead, and so we are quickened together with Christ.

Now, the second prayer is not concerning things to come forth from God. The prayer turns upon communion. The eye of Paul is up above, not looking at certain things, however glorious, but at the source and fountain whence those glories flow. It is communion with God Himself. The eye fixed upon Christ in heaven, so that He dwells in the heart. The soul rooted and grounded in love, so that it knows the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. The soul is up above, and it is not certain glories, but an object that meets the mind. The Person of Christ is before the eye, with all the display of the Father's love in Him there; and the saint down here tasting His love, being in communion with this love of Christ.

Now, I cannot compare anything with the love of Christ. It is beyond all other blessings. In fact, I have no blessing at all, without I know His love. I am not speaking of our love to Him, though I would to God there was more of it in our hearts. But what a blessed thing to be able to look up into heaven, and to say to the Lord Jesus, "Lord, I am indeed a poor, cold thing. I am ashamed of my want of love, my leanness, my slowness of heart in learning Thy love; but, nevertheless, Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that *Thou lovest me*." What would I like to put in comparison with Christ's love? There is nothing like it. There is nothing so sweet as being able to say to one's soul, "I am loved in heaven;" and this love of Christ not known by a certain description of those He loves, but Christ loves me individually. I know it; and unless we know the love of Christ, we cannot say, it passeth knowledge. If you do not know His love—if it has not been made good to your soul by the Holy Ghost—you cannot say it passeth knowledge. If our hearts are in heaven, we shall know the wellings of this fountain of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall know it perfectly when we are with Him. It will not be any effort then, but now I have to give the lie to sense in learning the love of Christ. We shall see the glory then. Our eye will take in the display of the riches of the inheritance then. But will there be no expression of this love to us then? Oh yes. The love of Christ will be known personally there. The glory will not occupy us like the love.

Now, looking on to the end of verse 19, we shall see the result of knowing this love of Christ, "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." This is a thought of communion. It is not fulness of glory, but the fulness of *God* in the soul.

Christians have often very imperfect thoughts of communion. Their intercourse with God consists often in telling Him their troubles, their needs, their desires. It is all one-sided. All is from themselves. They wait not to receive the fulness of God too. But receiving is more our place than giving. As an instance, there was a clergyman, who was in a low, desponding state, telling out to God all his complaints, and more than once his servant remarked, "Master, had you not better say something of Christ now." It is when we are receiving God's thoughts about His fulness, that we can say, in any sense, we are filled with the fulness of God. In the glory there will be no room for self. We shall be filled with God alone. God will be all in all. Filled unto (as it should be rendered) all the fulness of God. A little vessel filled unto the vast ocean, so that there is within and without the fulness of God. We are poor, leaky vessels; but if we are always in the sea, we shall always be filled unto all the fulness.

I often think what a wondrous thing it is, that I can tell God about the glories and beauties of the Son of His love. Who am I to speak to Him of such an One as His Son? I who was a poor, vile sinner—the chief of sinners! Ah! the answer is—But a son *now*, beloved *now*. It is the grace of God which places us before Him in communion. He would have us occupied with the love of Christ; having fellowship with Him in the thoughts He has about the Son of His love. How little are Christians occupied with Christ in glory! How little there is of the groaning of the Spirit in us after this glory! There is plenty of the realisation of the sorrows of the wilderness, the groanings of the creation, the trials of the way; but how little groaning after the glory, which should fill our souls with unutterable longings after it! Surely we are leaky vessels, letting this love of Christ slip out of our hearts!

This is the eternal fulness of the blessing with which we are inseparably connected. Is that passing through my soul, "Well, God has to do with me"? I do not think God's people enter into this, or think sufficiently of it. God

has taken me up ; and within and without I am filled into all the fulness of God. It is nothing mystical to be filled unto all the fulness of God. It is simple if I realise who the Christ of God is, whose love I know. Surely it is the fulness of God. It is not a mystical thought if I know His loving heart, and who He is, and the taste of His love in my soul. I can say, Lord, I know Thy love, and I count it to be the fulness of God.

In verse 20, we get into entirely another world. Oh, you say, I must stop here. If ever I get to know this love of Christ, and to be filled into all the fulness of God, I shall have all I want. But Paul could not stop, the Spirit led him to say in this verse, I cannot in any way express the thoughts of God about you. Nothing that could be asked or thought, could measure the love of Christ. Christ Himself, when on earth, did not find human language nearly large enough. On the Cross He said, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" but language left untold all that that forsaking was to Him.

The Queen of Sheba found her heart faint within her at the display of Solomon's glory. And when the Holy Ghost brings any part of the love of Christ to our souls, we find a freshness and power which makes us feel as if we had never known it thus before. Paul could not—when writing by the inspiration of God—at all express the Father's love for you, or the love of the Son, or the Spirit's desires for you. Can you express God's desires to bless you? Christians think of their desires for blessing, but forget God's desires for them. After all you ask or think, God is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond it all. But we are not lost in this immensity, for as St. Paul adds, it is "according to the power that worketh in us." We have tasted that which we know not how to express. The power which is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, worketh in us. I can say to such an one as Paul, though I am less than the least of all saints, the same power works in me as in you. The honourable member and the least honourable have the same power working in them. The result of all these blessings is praise. It ends in worship. "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages."

It is not praising God, because of the suitability of Christ to me ; but praising God because of what Jesus Christ is to Him. The Father's thoughts about His Son revealed to the

church are the theme of her worship. Neither is the worship individual. It is family enjoyment. "By the church" the praises are offered.

Thus have we communion with God. Having the divine nature, we have tasted the love of His own beloved Son, and we can say, "To Him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

GOD'S KING.—No. II.

WALKING WITH GOD.—Psalm xvi.

(Continued from page 33.)

To turn now to the Psalm before us, which gives us the principles of His walk before God, it begins with declaring His dependence, and ends with expressing His confidence. "Preserve me, O God," is the first utterance. "Thou wilt show me the path of life," is the closing expression of confidence." How fully, then, He took the place of a creature, who should ever be dependent upon the Creator. To be as gods, was the bait held out but too successfully to Eve in the garden of Eden; the refusal to leave the path of dependence upon God, characterised the second man, when tempted by Satan in the wilderness. Yet all the while He was God. The stormy sea obeyed His behest, and was stilled; fishes were brought in abundance to Peter's net, and one fish brought him the exact sum demanded as tribute from the disciple and his Master; the winds, too, dropped at His word; the devils owned His authority; and death released its grasp, when He bade Lazarus to come forth. Power, then, He had; all nature obeyed His bidding, who took so dependent a place as to say, "Preserve me, O God, for in thee do I put my trust." Is it degrading for a man to own himself dependent on a superior being? Is independence of God what the creature may desire? These questions receive a complete answer from the acts of God's Son down here. He was as a creature dependent, and throughout He remained so.

His dependence affirmed, His associates are next described, "My goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in them (*not* "in whom") is all my delight." A position of isolation was not that designed by God for man. Separation from evil doers is to characterise His saints (Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Cor. v.; Titus

iii. 10 ; James iv. 4) ; but a misanthropic spirit was never the result of divine teaching, nor is a pharasaic standard of moral fitness one upon which God looks with approval. As man, the Lord owns a distance between Himself and God. "My goodness extendeth not to thee." And, though the only man, who, from His own holiness, might have withdrawn Himself from contact with sinners, He was found in their company, and tells us in the Psalm that in them was all His delight. Man in nature loves the company of the great, and those best known to fame. The Lord Jesus found His delight in the saints, that is, those separated to God, and in the excellent, those obedient to the Word. With others, just mentioned in verse 4, He could have no communion. On earth for God, with those who were on God's side, He could, and did consort. Publicans, as Levi and Zacchæus ; sinners, as the woman of John iv. ; those who had been demoniacally possessed, as Mary Magdalene, and the man of Gadara, found themselves at home in His presence. Those from whom a Pharisee would have studiously kept aloof, He allowed to approach. (Luke vii.) It was this which so puzzled Simon the Pharisee. He thought he knew much about that woman, but the Lord showed that He knew more, and allowed her to touch His feet, and accepted as personal service the expression of her heart's deep thankfulness. With publicans and sinners He would eat ; He abode in the house of Zacchæus, and passed two days with the Samaritans of Sychar. "The friend of publicans and sinners" men in derision called Him, who associated with the saints, and with the excellent. From John's disciples He chose some of His own ; those, who having been baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins, owned that a standing before God on the ground of their own righteousness was a hopeless thing. What, then, was the reason of this action on His part, so unaccountable to many about Him ? The excellent were those who confessed they had sinned ; the saints were such as turned from their former ways to follow the Shepherd of the flock. When God made a decree for the waters of the sea, when He appointed the foundations of the earth, the delights of Wisdom were with the sons of men as distinguished from the angelic creation. (Prov. viii. 31.) The fall of man came, and the Lord subsequently appeared upon earth. Then we find it was no longer simply a question between men and angels, but between two

different classes of men, the self-righteous and impenitent on the one hand, and the repentant sinners on the other. Unchanged was His delight in men, but manifested under new circumstances. "The saints that are in the earth and the excellent," were the classes that He singled out, and drew around Himself. What grace does this bring into notice! Holy, harmless, undefiled Himself, the poor penitents and the sin-burdened souls could find a ready welcome from Him. Men called them publicans and sinners; He calls them saints and excellent. The former expressed what they thought of them; see how God regarded them: so it was fitting that, when addressing God, by such terms should He describe them. What joy to souls, when drawn by grace to Christ, to know God thus regards them, and that He can thus describe them. How entirely their past sinfulness is put out of sight, and how clearly their present character in God's eyes is kept in view. Saints and excellent, such were His companions, such are those with whom for ever He will be associated. At the outset of His ministry such were found in His company; at the close of His life, one such was with Him, cheered by the dying words of the Saviour of sinners, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.'

His associates described, we next learn how He viewed His appointed path. And here we must surely feel, that great indeed is the distance between us and Him, though by grace partakers of the divine nature, and having Him for our life. The description of His associates tells of His grace; what follows speaks of His perfectness. Others had turned away from God to seek satisfaction from unhallowed sources (4); He owned that Jehovah was the portion of His inheritance and of His cup, and accepted what God provided. Circumstances, whatever they might be, He regarded as ordered by God, in whom He found His portion; which, therefore, was unfailing and unchanging. He, too, maintained His lot. Able by His presence to overawe souls, and by His word to control the course and actions of demons, He did not assert His rights, but left it to Jehovah to maintain His lot. How truly, how fully, He was the dependent one, though alone of men He could say, "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering" (Isaiah 1. 3). Thus, leaving all in Jehovah's hands to provide for Him—what Adam failed to do—He

could say, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." No garden of Eden, as Adam had, was His home upon earth, to delight Himself in the abounding fruits of the Creator's beneficence and power. Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, possessing not, as He ministered to others, what the foxes and birds could count upon as their own, a fixed resting-place for His head (Matt. viii. 20), and even indebted at times to godly women for the supply of His bodily wants (Luke viii. 3), His experience of Jehovah's providential care He has left on record for His people's instruction.

Meek, He was also lowly; for in nothing would He be independent of Jehovah, though He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. From His infancy it was noticed that He was filled with wisdom; as He grew up, we learn that He increased in wisdom (Luke ii. 40, 52); and when He appeared as a teacher amongst His countrymen, knowing Him as a carpenter, and believing Him to be the son of a carpenter, they inquired in astonishment, from whence did He derive it all? (Luke iv. 22; Mark vi. 2; John vi. 42). He tells us in this Psalm, that the source of strength for Him as a man was the fountain of knowledge for Him likewise (7). Thus He blessed the Lord who bestowed it; and His will being in full harmony with God's mind, when others were asleep His reins instructed Him.

Dependent, meek, lowly, teachable, upon that from which man shrinks He could look unmoved. To death, man's natural end since the fall, He who was sinless looks forward. Having set Jehovah always before Him, He would not be moved; for the One who had upheld Him in life, would bring Him through death; nay, more than that, would not leave Him for any time in it; for God's presence was the goal to which, as man, He was journeying. Elsewhere we find Him contemplating death as that which cuts short all connection with earth (Ps. cii.); here He views it as that which lay in His road to God's presence, the aspect in which God's saints can now regard it likewise. Earth is not the only stage on which men will move; so death does not terminate man's existence, nor cut short the saints' enjoyment. It is the portal to another sphere, and, for those who have a portion in heaven, a door to endless joy. Beyond death, then, He here looked. To be in God's presence was His desire; for the path of life for Him, as for millions of

God's saints, lay through the gates of death. Pleasures for evermore He desired, and He points out where they can be enjoyed. How truly He knew man's place upon earth, and shared in the hopes and joys of God's saints. Life beyond death, in the fullest joy, because in God's presence, and there to abide for ever, is the closing thought of the Psalm. Across the brief period of time, to that which has for us a beginning, but has no end, called eternity, are we here in thought conducted; from a scene ever changing to God's presence, where all is stable and abiding, our eyes are now turned; the portion, indeed, of God's heavenly saints, but the portion of His well-beloved Son likewise, who, born into this world, went through it as man, and passed out of it by death.

Had men according to their own wisdom undertaken to track out the Lord's path here below, how different would their accounts of it have been from what we have here! Each might have seen Him through the medium of their own thoughts, and at best have recorded their impressions about Him; but here we have His own thoughts and feelings laid bare by Himself. And surely, as we take in what He expresses in this Psalm, we get a better understanding of the value and character of the gift which He gave to His own just before departing out of this world to go to His Father—"My peace I give unto you" (John xiv. 27). Here, in a degree unequalled, we have that peace portrayed, and may learn how to share in it, as in Col. iii. 15 we are exhorted to let it rule in our hearts. For "the peace of God" we should, doubtless, there read, the "peace of Christ." Thus, we get mirrored in the word a walk of subjection to God, as exemplified in the Son of the Highest. Far, far, surely most will admit that they walk behind Him who is our life; and often have not the children of God had experience of just the opposite to that peace which He so fully enjoyed, from failing to learn of Him, in whom

"There only could God fully trace
A life divine below."

"The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead."—Prov. xxi. 16.

TWO NATURES.

ROMANS vii.

It is deeply important to have clear hold of the fact of two natures being in him who believes, and of the practical truth that the heart is captive to one of them. Seeing "another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members," that experience it is which makes a man cry out, "O! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The soul is thus at the point where it discovers that "to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." Thus it is forced to look away from self and to Christ for deliverance, and here comes in the question of souls under law as a principle of responsibility to God. There are many souls who have not really got clear of law. Christianity brings in *a new nature*, to which the law does not apply. When Christ comes, He *brings* life and *gives* righteousness. This is a different thing from requiring it as the law did. The grace of Christ had proved that "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (chapter viii. 7), and has taught us the hopeless evil of ourselves, and to give it all up. Law detects the condition of my heart, and raises the question of righteousness, of whether I can succeed in leaving it before God, and it only brings me to cry, "O! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It brings me into experiences, into the very depths of conflicts, because I have to do, not with simple faith in the Lord putting away my sin, but with the condition of my own heart, mind, conscience. Experience is really a very important thing, but I never can get peace by it. It is the very contrary of victory, "bringing me into *captivity*" (v. 23). We have to learn, like Israel, that our salvation is absolutely in God's hand. We have to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." (Ex. xiv. 13.) Then I find that this nature is not myself, and yet it is my master. I am a slave to it. Who is to deliver me?

It is a good test for a soul that needs this deliverance to put himself before the day of judgment. Many souls are not quite at ease *there*. The Cross is just what they want, but they shrink from the day of judgment; yet there is *no place where the Christian is so clear as to acceptance and deliverance*

as before the judgment-seat of Christ; there we have "*boldness*, because as he is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) Only think of it—boldness! If I know myself as a sinner, I can have no *hope*. Because if God judge me, it must be to condemn me; but if Christ is my righteousness and my judge, He cannot condemn His own righteousness.

You say, Could I pray more—be more in earnest? You must give up all that. What! give up rebelling against sin? I say you must give up the hope of making yourself what you *wish* to be, and *ought* to be—you must feel your need of a Deliverer. To hope to get a thing *from Christ* is not being delivered *by Him*. This lesson has to be learned, and learned by experience of what we *are*, what our *flesh* is. The fact of my having life is the very thing that makes me find out this sin in me, but I have to find that I am in Christ, and then I get deliverance. Here the Apostle argues, "The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth;" but I am dead—death has come in and severed the bond. Christ has died; He has put an end to all His associations with man; the marriage tie is broken; we are "married to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Then he begins to discuss, "When we were in the flesh." Now I do not speak of when I was in such and such a place when I am there. "The motions of sins which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death."

Look into your hearts and minds and see if there is anything of this. Are you captive still, or are you, as to your conscious condition, fruit of that accomplished redemption before God? It is astonishing that people do not see what a useful weapon law is, but a weapon to bring in death. No man who knew what law was as a matter of experience could talk of keeping it, because "sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." All the good you bring to this nature only brings out sin. Christ brought to it, brought out hatred. The only effect of envy dealing with it was to put God out, and when God comes He says you are "dead," "carnal, sold under sin." This is not a Christian state; it is the state of a man with a new nature, and an old nature, and the law applied to him as in it; but you get no Christ, no Holy Ghost here. It is a soul always desiring to do right and always doing wrong. This is the principle of it. The first lesson God is teaching

is to *distinguish* between what is of God and this evil nature. The heart learns that what leads me captive is not myself. But there is another thing that is exceedingly humbling—when I have learned to distinguish to find that *I have not power* to choose the good. It is a great thing to learn these two things, and it is a great deal easier to acknowledge that we sin than to acknowledge that we have no strength. Thus we learn to *want* a Deliverer; and here I get the point where Christ comes in.

I get a real acquaintance with myself, and with the path we have to walk in. I have the comfort of learning that it is not myself. I do hate it still; and if it be too strong for me, it only casts me upon Christ, upon my Deliverer. I have to contend with it to the end, but it is a suspected thing—a thief found out. If I know that I have a bad person in my house, I guard against him; I do not trust him. This is a great thing to learn. I delight in the law of God still; but I have got Christ. I delight in Him. I have got a Saviour. It is a total change. A delivered person has to do with divine grace—divine power for him. He has died away out of the captive state, and is connected with the One who has delivered him out of it. Chapter viii. is the description of the delivered man, as chapter vii. is a description of the captive man.

Do not rest merely in the thought of your sins being forgiven; only remember that until you are brought down to the consciousness (so to speak) that you are shut up to the Red Sea, there is no real and complete deliverance. The back of this *self* must be broken—there is no trusting in it. I see many a sincere person, who knows forgiveness of sins, trusting in himself. You find that he will get into some scrape by it, like Peter. You never can go on safely if flesh is not judged, for Satan has something to lay hold upon. Only judge yourself, and get Christ instead of yourself; then all is peace and blessed liberty and rest in your souls, and the enjoyment of that favour which is better than life.

“Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.”—Prov. xx. 22.

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

“W. S.”—1. Why does God require a person to act so as to gain possession of that which the person needs to possess first, so as to enable him so to act? See John v. 40, Isaiah xlii. 18. 2. In what sense is “hearing” by the word of God? See Romans x. 17, &c.

A.—Because of the twofold or duplex condition of the Christian at the present time. If you look on high he is seated in the heavenly places in Christ. If you look at him as on earth still, he has to run to obtain all, and has nothing as yet in actual possession which he has, of course, by faith. Thus he possesses everlasting life in Christ, as a present thing, by faith. Yet he is so to walk that he may have present “fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life,” if he looked onward. Paul exhorts Timothy to “lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called.” He has to lay hold on what he possessed already. Many passages of Scripture speak thus. Whenever the *responsibility* of a Christian is treated of, such exhortations are given. When *grace* is the subject, it shows that it flows from God.

So with sinners. God’s sovereign power in quickening a dead soul to life must never be set over against the sinner’s responsibility to receive the grace of God and obey His voice. Men often try to set the one against the other, in order to evade or reason away the responsibility. But you will generally find that they attach responsibility to *power*, or the want of it in man, not to that to which God attaches it—to man’s *will*. The Lord, addressing sinners, says—“Ye *will* not come unto me that ye might have life;” not, ye cannot. Yet, speaking abstractedly, He also says—“No one *can* come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” Ask a man who speaks of having no *power* to come to Christ, if he has the will—the desire—and you will soon test where he is.

This applies in such passages as, “Hear ye deaf, and look ye blind that ye may see.” Isaiah xlii. 18. Besides, the prophet is speaking in figurative language of moral blindness and deafness, not physical.

Hearing is by the word of God. God carries it into the conscience thus; as also He does by the channel of the sight of the eye in reading, and the like. I heard once of a deaf person blessing God that hearing was by the Word of God, who could only hear it, so to speak, by reading it. But God found an inlet for it into his conscience, which is the only door of entrance for the word of God into the soul in its quickening power.

“F. D.”—How was it that neither Jews nor Gentiles were baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the formulary in Matt. xxviii. 19? Compare Acts ii. 38; x. 48; and xix. 5, &c.

A.—When the commission of Matt. xxviii was given, the Lord Jesus Christ was *present on earth*. (He is not seen as ascended in Matthew). And the commission to baptize is founded on resurrection only, not ascension; which brings in the body of Christ, formed by the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven.

In Acts He was *absent in heaven*; and some, in finding the formulary of Matt. xxviii. not given in Acts, have supposed that the

formulary was then changed to the name of Jesus. This I believe to be a mistake. First, because Acts being, generally speaking, historical, and not doctrinal scripture (though equally inspired), doctrines could not be founded on it; while at the same time it confirms doctrines given elsewhere. Next, the formulary once given is not changed, nor intended to be changed, and is to the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the Trinity of the Persons in the Godhead, as we know the one true God in Christianity. For Christianity is the revelation of not only the unity of the Godhead, as in the Old Testament, but also the Trinity of the Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The point in Acts is the recognition of Jesus as Lord when *absent*; and hence this reference to His name where the cases are recorded—the persons baptized owning Him, being presented to Him thus.

It is striking, however, to notice how that in nearly every case recorded, the Holy Ghost has seen fit to change the words, and even the prepositions—I have no doubt to prevent (with other reasons) its being taken up as a formulary. In Acts ii. 38, it is, “In (ἐν) the name of Jesus Christ.” In chap. viii. 16, it is, “In (ἐῖς) the name of the Lord Jesus.” In chap. x. 48, it is, “In (ἐν) the name of the Lord.” In chap. xix. 5, it is, “In (ἐῖς) the name of the Lord Jesus.”

I believe the formulary of Matt. xxviii. 19 to be the correct and only true one which should be used; and when used, I should in addition recognise the Lordship of Christ, presenting the person to Him as such.

THE ARK OF THE LORD.

“THE dying grief of Eli, and the living transports of David, alike show what the Ark was in the eyes of the true-hearted. . . . Even the wise king did not adequately value the Ark of God. And this shows the superiority of David: for faith is always wiser than wisdom. If we had the largest human intelligence, and even the highest natural wisdom God can confer, it never rises to the height of simple faith. Solomon appears before the grand altar. It was a magnificent spectacle and he was an august king, and brought suited offerings. But, David showed his faith in this, that it was not the altar merely which he prized, but the Ark most of all.

God’s Ark was a hidden thing; not even the High Priest could see it save wrapped in clouds of incense. One had to walk by faith in order to appreciate the Ark of God. Therefore David could not rest until the Ark had its settled place in Israel; and he never had deeper joy than when it came back to Jerusalem.

It is true it brought judgment on all that despised it, and even David’s heart was afraid for a time, and the Ark rested in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. But David regained the spring of confidence in God, which so marked his career; for we find him afterwards rejoicing when the Ark was welcomed back, more than he ever did in all his victories put together.”

THE SECOND COMING AND REIGN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER. I.

“The unsearchable riches of Christ.”—Eph. iii. 8.

THERE is a passage in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians which we have not perhaps sufficiently weighed, and the meaning of which we have not consequently correctly apprehended. I read, “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; . . . which, in other ages, was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: whereof I am made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the *unsearchable riches of Christ*; and to make all men see what is the dispensation (*oikonomia*) of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by means of (*dia*) the church the manifold wisdom of God.” It is to the expression “the unsearchable riches of Christ” I wish to draw attention. I think it is generally taken as some vague, general way of expressing the preciousness and value of His work and person, and to show that this is past price to our souls. Now, while it is surely so, to everyone who loves the Lord, this is not the thought of the passage.

There were a great many things spoken of the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament, as we are aware, and if I might give them a name it would be “the searchable riches of Christ.” There we may find the promises which had Him for their object and fulfilment. We find His miraculous birth, as born of a virgin (Isaiah vii. 14); His life of suffering and rejection by His people (Isaiah l., &c.); His atoning death (Isaiah liii., Psalm xxii.); His burial with the rich (Isaiah liii.); His resurrection (Psalm xvi.); His ascension to the right hand of God (Psalm cx.); His receiving gifts for men, or “in the man” (Psalm lxviii. 18); His coming in the clouds of heaven (Daniel vii. 13, 14); the judgments that He executes (Isaiah lix. 16-20; lxiii. 1-6, &c.) There we

find His "glorious reign (Psalm lxxii. ; Isaiah xxxii., &c.) ; the principles of His kingdom (Psalm ci.) All these and many more might be searched out, and traced through the Old Testament Scriptures.

But there were the "unsearchable riches" as well. Those which were "hid in God:" His eternal purposes which were before the foundation of the world. The Lord had come in amongst His people, the "yea" and the "amen" of all the promises of God. The people to whom these promises were made reject these promises in the person of the Son in whom they were fulfilled. Rejected by them He accomplishes the work of redemption on the cross—dies, and rises again, and ascends on high to the Father's throne. From the glory of God He sends down the Holy Ghost, charged with pardon for His people Israel. God would send Him back again, says Peter (Acts iii.), and the "times of refreshing" spoken of by the prophets would come. But the only response to this fresh offer of His gracious heart was a more determined refusal on the part of His people than ever. Stephen stands—his face shining like that of an angel—telling the poor Jews of their awful resistance of the Spirit of God ; and, stoned as a blasphemer, bears on high to his rejected Master (as it were) the message from His citizens—"We will not have this man to reign over us," and all is over.

Saul of Tarsus—"one born out of due time," as he names himself—was then called, and to him were the "unsearchable riches of Christ" committed—to him who was "less than the least of all saints" was the grace given.

Those "unsearchable riches" embrace in their thought the mystery of Christ and the Church, and her rapture (as of *all* saints) to glory. They unfold themselves in the unnamed interval during which the Lord Jesus is sitting on the throne of God as man, rejected by His people and the world—an interval of which no account is taken in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The prophets then looked from hill-top to hill-top, as it were, and in their glowing strains (given to comfort the faithful to whom they spake, and to deal with and denounce the ruin around them) they pass over unnoticed the great valley lying between the mountain tops which caught their prophetic eye. They connected the coming of Messiah in his humiliation with its glorious results for His people Israel and the world at large, in His kingdom and glory, by and by. They spake of the "sufferings of Christ"

and "the glories that should follow," and stepped in prophetic language from one hill-top where His blessed feet stood in the day of humiliation, to the other hill-top where He would stand in the day of His power; but the valley which lay between, with its untold mines of wealth, was still unexplored and "unsearchable" to the ken of man. It lay unnoticed and unrevealed between.

A man sits on the throne of heaven—the Son of the Father. From that scene He receives of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, and sends Him from heaven—first, to say that Israel's sin had not alienated His heart of hearts, but that touching offer had no response from them but bitter scorn and rejection. Then, and not till then, that which lay in the secret of His heart from before the world was is made known. The valley is explored, its mines of wealth discovered, and we are led along its paths as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, but fellow-citizens with the saints in heaven, and, more still, brought into betrothal (as the Church of God) with this rejected Christ in heaven—members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. While He sleeps—this "last Adam"—God takes from His side a helpmeet for his glory—an Eve for the paradise of God.

This is the work of the Holy Ghost sent down at Pentecost. I do not here enter into the important fact of the difference between the Holy Ghost *acting* in power, and in all the good that God had done from the beginning on earth and in the hearts of men, as in the Old Testament, and His coming down to *dwell* on earth—the other "Comforter" who was to abide or dwell "for ever" with the Church. Nor do I seek to unfold the fact that when Christ comes again to dwell and reign in power, that the Holy Ghost's *dwelling* on earth will be a thing of the past, while doubtless in living power He will work divinely—yea, be "poured upon all flesh." Suffice it to say, that He *acted* of old, that now (since Pentecost) He *dwells*, and that, when Jesus comes again, the Holy Ghost will *act* again, while *Jesus Himself* will *dwell* amongst men.

During this interval, while He is hidden on high, another thing comes in. United to this glorified Head in heaven is His body, the Church. He loved it. He gave Himself for it. Nothing less than "Himself" could express that love. He followed His deceived and guilty Bride, whom the Father had purposed for Him before the foundation of the world.

He followed her into the depth of degradation into which she had fallen. Unlike the first Adam, He is not deceived as was Eve—nor, like him, in weakness following his Eve in her sin, and then charging her with his transgression before God. No; He follows her in the mighty strength of His love into the place of her shame, and takes her sins upon Himself; charges Himself with them before God; holds them up in the light of God's holiness and in the burning rays of His righteous wrath against sin; bears the wrath, and clears her from every stain.

How blessed to know this for our own souls, each one individually before God—to find the mighty debt discharged before we knew of its enormity—before it was contracted! Our sins are thus consumed to ashes, and removed for ever by the hand of Him against whom they were committed. Well may we say, then, "See what *God* hath wrought!" and wrought, too, for His own glory—yea, gained a glory surpassing all other glories—from the cross which put them away.

Then this heavenly Bridegroom ascended on high, and is seated on the Father's throne, in the glory that is "above the brightness of the sun." There He displays His person before the eyes and heart of the betrothed one (2 Cor. xi. 3), and "sanctifies" her affections to Himself, by shining down His image into her heart, having cleansed her by the washing of water through the word. The word speaks to her conscience, as He Himself appeals to her heart; and the traces of the scene through which she passes are thus morally and practically washed away; and then finally He presents her to Himself, glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but "holy and without blemish" ("blame") according to the eternal thoughts of God before the foundation of the world. (See Eph. v. 25-32, and the end of v. 27, with the end of v. 4, chap. i.)

Like Eliezer of old, the Holy Ghost has been sent on this wondrous errand by the Father of the true Isaac, to seek a bride for His Son. He has come to lead the affianced Church across the desert of the world to the home of Jesus on high. From the hill-top of Mount Moriah, where the son was under the knife of the father, as a sacrifice for sin, lies the betrothed one's pathway through the desert wastes of the world. And in the "even-tide" of her journey, in company with the Holy Ghost, Jesus will come forth, and

that wondrous meeting will take place with Him who has won her affections while unseen, and of whom it could be said to her on the pilgrimage, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. i. 8).

Jesus, then, is on high as Man—the mighty work accomplished which sets us before God in the light, without a stain. The Holy Ghost is here, and dwelling in His members on earth, constitutes them His body—His bride. From the hill-top of Olives, where, as His tread grew lighter, till He passed into the heavens (Acts ii.), to the same hill-top where His feet will stand again in the last days (Zech. xiv.), lies the long valley of His rejection by His people the Jews, and by the world, but in which His "unsearchable riches," never scanned by the prophetic eye, are found. That period is characterized by the absence of the Lord Jesus in heaven, rejected by the world, and the presence of the Holy Ghost personally on earth. It began on the day of Pentecost, and will end with the moment when Jesus will move into the air to take to Himself His bride, and to conduct her to the home on high He had prepared for her when He entered heaven by His own blood as a Man.

Meantime, while God prepares this Eve, "of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," He has left His "father and mother," His relations with Israel after the flesh; He is joined to His wife (Eph. v. 31); or, as Gen. ii. 24 still more beautifully expresses it, "shall cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh." How different from this are our poor human thoughts! How well we can understand the weaker cleaving to the stronger, unable to stand of herself alone. But here it is the divine thought from Him of whom are all things—and all things are of God—it is the strong one, Jesus, cleaving to His weaker bride, and thus perfecting His thoughts of grace.

I would now seek to draw your hearts and affections to the closing stage of the long valley—even to the moment when Jesus will come forth and translate His saints to the "place" He has prepared for them—to that house made fit to receive His bride. How short the time may be, till that blessed moment when she will come up out of the wilderness "leaning upon her beloved," we know not.

SOME THOUGHTS ON SECOND TIMOTHY AND THE CLOSING EPISTLES.

It is worthy of remark that the moment you get out of the Epistles to the Churches, you get catholic epistles and others which all treat the Church as in the "last days." In John, there were "many antichrists." In Peter, "Judgment must begin at the house of God." In 1 Tim., "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith," &c. 2 Tim., "In the last days perilous times shall come," &c. Jude, "Certain men are crept in unawares," &c. 2 Peter, "There shall be false teachers among you," &c.

It is at such a time that God specially commends us to His word; and He has taken care that we should have in Scripture what would guide us in the last days, when He commends us to it. After Paul's departure grievous wolves would come in, not sparing the flock. He commends us to God and the word of His grace. (Acts xx.) See also 2 Tim. iii. 14-17. We need the grace of endurance in such a day. And when one goes through the trial with God beforehand, he meets the enemy and the actual trial when it comes, and the distressing effect upon the heart is gone. God helps and sustains us in it and through it.

One is struck in reading the second epistle to Timothy, by the way in which Paul goes back from dispensational glory, and down to natural and Jewish relationships of private and personal character: "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers, with pure conscience," and, "When I call to mind the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice," &c.

There is nothing he insists on more, than not to lose personal courage in a time of ruin; no matter how great the ruin may be: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." It is always thus. "In nothing terrified by your adversaries." "Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord (*i.e.*, the gospel and the testimony generally), nor of me his prisoner," &c. Satan is to be met with confidence as a beaten enemy. This gives steady firmness to the soul. One has the truth, and knows one has it; and this gives quiet consciousness, and keeps one in the midst of the attacks of the enemy in an evil day. He is to be thoroughly

courageous when all the evil was coming in, and was there. To "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." To "endure hardness." It was when the power of evil *had* come in that he expects courage.

It is not the tide of blessing which carries on others; but when the ebb had come, and individuals were standing and stemming it, and carrying on the testimony of the truth. It was not like the tide of the gospel at the first—"a great door and effectual opened;" but, "be thou partaker of the *afflictions* of the gospel, according to the power of God." It is then we require the power of God and personal courage more than ever. All this is "truth for the times" in which we live. There is truth for eternity as well. Chap. i. 9, 10: "Not according to our works," *i.e.*, our responsibility. The history of the *responsible* man ended with the Cross. There atonement was made, and God's eternal purposes came out. The Cross maintained the responsibility of man and the authority of God. Through it, we get out by redemption, into the state where it was His purpose and grace to put us before the world began. The Church has nothing to do with this earth except to go through it.

The tide of the Gospel had gathered a crowd of people into this wonderful calling, but the tide began to ebb, and all were going back again (*v.* 15). Positive *power* is needed in such a time, as well as having the truth. There are two things that are worthy of notice. 1st, That we now have only the power of good in the midst of evil, but the evil is never set to rights till the Lord comes; and the instant the power of good is not there, you get away down the stream; and 2nd, How the good that God set up failed so fast. But this has always been so. The counsels of God as to what He set up were made known, and the power of evil came in at once to frustrate the counsels.

Verse 12. "For the which cause," &c. He was a prisoner for having carried the testimony to the Gentiles. But he had entrusted his happiness to Christ, and He would keep it for him against that day.

Verses 13, 14. He passes on the testimony to Timothy, who would commit "the truth" to faithful men, who could teach it to others. The Church had ceased to be a guarantee for "the truth," *i.e.*, the doctrines of Christianity and of Christ. It is never said that God is "the truth." He *tells* the truth. Christ is said to be "the truth." "The Spirit is the truth."

Verse 15. Defection was the order of the day; and in view of such, as of the general state of things, Timothy was to be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (c. ii). The Apostle now takes up the case of a soldier, an athlete, and a husbandman. He must not be entangled with the affairs of this life, but be entirely at the disposal of Him who had called him to be a soldier. Striving in the games, he must do so lawfully; and labouring, first be a partaker of the fruits of it.

Paul's gospel and Paul's doctrine are positive things for the last days. We are walking and labouring in the midst of an immense network of systems in which Paul's ministry is totally unknown. For it he suffered as an evildoer unto bonds.

How like to Christ's own words are those of the Apostle in v. 10!

We now get corruption of doctrine (v. ii. 16, &c). There had been falling away. Thus (v. 19) individual responsibility (coupled with God's faithful knowledge of His own) to depart from iniquity. In v. 20 we have ecclesiastical apprehension.

Supposing a person says, "I do not see that so and so is wrong when Scripture forbids it," this those walking in the truth cannot allow. You cannot take the conscience of the individual for the rule of the church. Scripture is its guide. Thus we have to walk with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. At the first we do not find this expression. It was more general, "all that call upon Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Now it was "all that call upon the Lord out of a *pure heart*." The Church should have been the witness for the glory of Christ on high, and is now mixed up with all that witnesses *against* Him here below.

Calling upon the name of the Lord is in itself only profession; of course, if true, it is salvation too.

In v. 24, "patient" should be "bearing evil." "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves," &c., that they might be recovered to God's will from the snares of the devil.

The profession of Christianity has become the reproduction, under the name of Christ, of all the horrors and wickedness of heathenism. (Compare *ch.* iii. 1-4 with Rom. i. 29-31.)

We are never able to judge rightly as to what we have to do and to meet in the last days, unless we are conscious that

we have to do with Satan's power actually, "as Jannes and Jambres," &c. But their folly will be shown up, perhaps now, perhaps by and by.

The expression "silly women" is applicable to men of effeminate mind as well as to women. It is the turn and bent of the mind of the persons who are thus beguiled.

We here get Paul's doctrine (v. 10) and the manner of life which flowed from it. "Thou hast fully known"—*i.e.*, had perfect understanding of it. It is a like expression to that in Luke i. 3: "Having had perfect understanding," &c. He had fully followed up his teaching, as having learned it thoroughly. The manner of life goes with it.

In v. 12 the emphasis is on "godly;" *they* will suffer. Things would get worse and worse. It was the old story with the world—either deceiving itself or being deceived.

He now casts us upon Scripture specially. In v. 15, it is the Old Testament Scriptures which Timothy had known. In 16 he embraces "all Scripture." *Scripture* is the point—that which was written. Peter stamps Paul's writings with the authority of the other Scriptures. He says they are Scripture (2 Peter iii. 16). The man who can do this was conscious he was writing Scripture himself. The Lord endorses the great division of the Old Testament Himself—"the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms" (Luke xxiv). Samuel and the Kings were amongst the prophetic books. There is a difference of character in the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament it was "Thus saith the Lord," &c. There was in the Old Testament Scriptures a distinction in the character of the inspiration—1st, as God spake to Moses "face to face;" 2d, to the prophets "in a dream," &c.; and 3d, the Holy Ghost spake in the circumstances and events through which the people were passing—as in the Psalms, &c.,—so that the personal experience of the speaker was brought in.

One may say, "How do you know that Scripture is the Word of God?" I reply, "How do you know that the sun shines?" If you say "It does not," you manifest the ground you are on, as denying it. If you say "It does," you admit it. God has spoken so as to make Himself known, and to make people know He is speaking.

In the New Testament the Holy Ghost comes down and vitalizes all the circumstances through which the new man has to pass. He takes up the little things of everyday

Christian life. It is a mistake to suppose the Holy Ghost only engages Himself with great ecclesiastical things. As there is nothing too great for God to give us, so there is nothing too little for God to take up and interest Himself in for us. There is nothing so common as eating and drinking and dress. These things are taken up most strongly. Even these things become an opportunity for the glory of God. God would never have us to act as a man; but always, by the power of the Holy Ghost, to act as a Christian. Thus the Holy Ghost enters upon the circumstances of daily Christian life, and vitalizes them. When the apostle writes of these things therefore, the words in which he wrote are the words of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. ii. 13), as much as when the prophet of old uttered his magnificent strains with "Thus saith the Lord," and then sat down to study his own prophecies, to see what they meant and of whom they spake. (See 1 Pet. i. ii.)

The man of God is prepared unto every good work, in his having departed from iniquity and purged himself from the vessels of dishonour. In *ch.* ii. he is equipped; in *ch.* iii. furnished unto every good work; in *ch.* iv he goes to war. He is to "reprove, rebuke," &c. This shows the signs of failure which the wisdom of the Spirit foresaw. It was not so much evangelizing as preaching "the word" amongst professing Christians who would not endure sound doctrine. All was to be done in view of His appearing and His kingdom. Then faithfulness would be manifested.

We should be more earnest than ever in living to Christ, as we are now in the shaking of all things, and the Lord may come at any time now. Worldliness amongst us is a sign and a source of weakness. It must be "with all long-suffering and doctrine." These are the elements that must give character to our service. If men were *left* to their own responsibility they would never *come* in.

"I am now being poured forth" (v. 6). In Phil. ii. it was "If I be," &c. Things have gone further here. "My release," is the thought, because he had been in the combat as an athlete. He can say, "I have fought the good fight," &c. It was the finishing of his race and wrestling of 1 Cor. ix. 24-27. The Lord would preserve him to His *heavenly* kingdom; if he was not to be preserved on *earth* (v. 18). His desire was that he *might* finish his course with joy (Acts xx.) Here he *had* done it: "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

GOD'S KING.—No. III.

MINISTERING AMONG MEN.—Psalm xl.

(Continued from page 55.)

WRITTEN, as the Psalms were, for the instruction of others, and not simply to record the experience of the one whose thoughts they express, we find at times in the construction of these sacred songs a methodical arrangement very different from what might have been expected. Of this the Psalm before us is a good example; for, historically speaking, the first four verses have their place at the conclusion instead of at the beginning of the Psalm, announcing as they do the answer to the cry of the poor and needy one, which we meet with in the closing verses. The purport of this arrangement seems plain; for to encourage God's saints in trial, and to afford suited expressions for the thoughts of their hearts, the Book of Psalms was written. Now, to know that others are in the furnace with the sufferer will show him that he is not alone, and may check the thoughts, so common under such circumstances, that he is singular in what he has to pass through; but the companionship of others in the trial offers no ground for expecting deliverance from it. Yet this is what the sufferer wants, and, thank God, it is what the Word provides. So, before reading of the trials which forced the cry of distress from his lips, we learn that he has been brought out of them, and the new song of praise and thanksgiving has taken the place of the prayer for deliverance. Hence, others may be encouraged to act like the delivered one, when placed in similar circumstances. For the comfort is this, that he has been brought out of all his trials by the goodness and power of his God. Had it been the might of his arm that had gotten him the victory, his example would only avail for those who possessed the like strength. Any wanting that would find no encouragement for them in the knowledge of his salvation. But that is not the aspect of things we have here. It is the full deliverance of the poor one—of the needy one—who, having felt the power of man's opposition, has been saved by the power of Jehovah's arm, and has thus learned what it was to be thrown upon God. This is what God's saints want, and what the godly remnant in Israel will find applicable to their condition upon earth.

Another remark as to the structure of the Psalm will not be without interest. We learn from Peter that the Spirit

of Christ was in the Prophets, and guided them in their writings (1 Peter i. 11); so that in language suited to express His thoughts and those of God's saints, the sacred writers, taught by the Holy Ghost, clothed the ideas which God intended should be in the Word. All that the Lord could say His saints cannot, for in some respects He stood alone. Certain things too were true of Him in one way (*v.* 12), and true of His people in another; but many things, to which He could give utterance, His people can take up as true of themselves likewise. On the cross, of course, when making atonement, He was alone. Suffering the consequences of sins He was but as the sinner's substitute—the thieves suffering justly, receiving the due reward of their deeds—He having done nothing amiss, yet bearing the sins of others. Sins then, as laid upon Him, He might call His own, but in a sense very different from that in which others must acknowledge them as theirs.

Besides suffering from God when making atonement, He suffered from men as God's faithful witness upon earth. In this in their measure His people can share; therefore the language He could use they can likewise, for He has been in circumstances similar to theirs. Now, as we read this Psalm, we must admit that there is One and the same speaker throughout. He who sings the song is the same One who uttered the cry; and He who looks for deliverance is the One who is the subject of prophecy. The Psalm, then, is clearly the utterance of Christ, and part of it (*e.g.* *v.v.* 6, 7) refers to Him exclusively. But we learn from Ps. lxx., which is the same nearly as Ps. xl. 13-17, how God's saints can take up, as divinely provided for them, the language He could use. What is peculiar to Christ in Ps. xl. is not reproduced in Ps. lxx.; but, what a saint under pressure from the opposition of men might express, is given us as His language in Ps. xl., and is put into the mouth of the saints in Ps. lxx. Had we only Ps. xl., we might not have been able to draw a line between language there peculiar to Him, and language common to Him and to others. With Ps. lxx. to compare with Ps. xl., we can, on the highest authority, do this; and, whilst marking what applies especially to Him, we can see how really and how fully He entered into circumstances, similar to those in which God's saints have been, and may be found; so not only in walking before God, but in His bearing as He suffered from

men, is the Lord Jesus Christ an example and an encouragement to God's saints.

Are we wrong in saying that this Psalm applies to Christ? The statement it contains makes the matter pretty plain, and the comment of the Holy Ghost by Paul on His own words by David dispels all doubt. "In the volume of the Book it is written of me," introduces us not to David, of whom we have no prediction before his birth, but to another, who is the subject of divine revelation. "I come," tells us that He had an existence before He appeared on this scene; for no mere child of man, speaking of his entrance into this world, could say, "I have come." Thus His pre-existence is implied, and the agreement of His will with the action is announced. For, though taking human form, the form of a servant, He speaks not as One obeying a command, but as One agreeing to take up a work, and delighting to do God's will. The conclusion, then, which must force itself on the mind from the words of the Psalm, is declared to be correct by the statement in Hebrews x. 5: "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice," &c. His presence on earth was to be the harbinger of a great change, as His presence here at a future day will inaugurate a new regime. What Israel had brought to God year after year, was not that which He came to offer. Burnt-offerings and sin-offerings of the herd and of the flock God would not require. The Speaker here was to be the sacrifice. He was God's lamb for both sin-offering and burnt-offering. Obedience to God's will in the offering up of Himself was to characterise Him. "Mine ears hast Thou opened" (or digged) expresses this; for "a body hast Thou prepared me," which we read in Hebrews, is the statement of the Greek translation—man's paraphrase of God's own thought.

Whilst, however, looking forward to His death, the great burden of the Psalm is the Lord's life of ministry upon earth, with its consequences, first of opposition from men, and then of deliverance by Jehovah out of all His trials, being brought up out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay. Verses 1-3 tell of this deliverance; 4 shows that others may experience a similar one; 5-10 recount the subjects of His ministry; 11-17 give His cry to Jehovah consequent on the opposition He met with from men.

He preached to the Jews righteousness, and set forth God's righteousness, faithfulness, salvation, loving kindness,

and truth, in the great congregation—*i.e.*, the general assembly of the nation, and not the elders and doctors simply. Before the flood there had been a preacher of righteousness. When the Lord appeared, He, too, preached righteousness, but under very different circumstances. Noah could show men what they ought to do, and warn them of the sure fulfilment of God's word, but the patriarch had nothing to point to as a witness that God was faithful, except previous actions in judgment. (Gen. iii., iv.) The flood's presence attested God's truth, but only when it was too late for men to prove God's loving-kindness and salvation. But the Lord's presence on earth told of God's faithfulness, for the Word had often predicted His advent; and as He moved about from place to place, He declared God's love, and announced His willingness to save.

A preacher of a different class Israel had formerly known. Solomon, the wisest of men, was charged with this duty amongst his countrymen. He preached of man's follies, and sought to impress on his subjects the vanities of the things of this life. John the Baptist, at a later epoch, was known as a preacher, proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. But differing from Noah, Solomon, and John, the Lord preached the glad tidings of the kingdom of God—a message never before delivered by any teacher or messenger from God; for it was not till He, the King, stood upon the earth, that the kingdom, as a present thing, could be preached. By and by, on the mountains of Judah, will voices be heard proclaiming the advent in power of Him, who Himself preached in lowliness the gospel of the kingdom. (Isa. lii. 7.) The Lord's ministry was, however, different in character from that which will be. In heaven, though on earth, the only-begotten Son, He declared the Father, and displayed in His actions, and taught by His word, what God was. To His disciples He insisted on the need of righteousness (Matthew v. 20) as necessary to enter the kingdom; to Nicodemus He spoke of God's love; before the Pharisees He justified God's ways in receiving sinners (Luke xv.); and to the woman of Sychar He made known for what the Father was now seeking (John iv. 23). In Galilee He told the multitude of life everlasting (John vi.); in Jerusalem He proclaimed the grace which God was offering (John v. 24, 25); and the full refreshment provided for sinners, whose only needful qualification was to thirst for it (vii. 37). Rest, too,

for the weary, He offered (Matt. xi.); and the door to abundance of pasture He pointed out (John x. 9). God's grace and man's need He freely and fully preached; but, what the results would be to Himself, the Psalm beforehand made known.

Ministering thus amongst men, declaring God, proclaiming His salvation, He has to turn to Jehovah, and on the ground of His own faithful service await His intervention for deliverance. Had it been the power of the enemy which thus openly assailed Him, none need have wondered; for He was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. (1 John iii. 8.) But the instruments used to kill Him were men on whose behalf He came—manifested, as John also tells us—to take away sins. (1 John iii. 5.) From these, for whom He so patiently and graciously laboured, He asks deliverance. They sought after His soul to destroy it; He sought to give them everlasting life. At Nazareth, and at Jerusalem men attempted to kill Him, who was God's faithful witness among them, once at the former place, and several times at the latter. At last they succeeded, and Jerusalem thus earned the unenviable title of Sodom and Egypt, and the place where our Lord was crucified. (Rev. xi. 8.)

What had He done to deserve this at their hands? He had preached God's faithfulness and God's salvation. He had declared God's righteousness and God's truth. His feelings under this hostility, the result of His ministry, He here lets us understand. He was not as one indifferent to their behaviour and insults, or, as one conscious of His own strength, looking down from a pinnacle of greatness on the rage and spite of puny creatures. He felt deeply what He passed through, and looked only to the Lord for deliverance. "Innumerable evils have compassed me about" He has to say, and Jehovah's active interference He asks for as really wanted: "Withhold not thou thy tender mercies, O Lord; let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me." "Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me; O Lord, make haste to help me." Such words prove what He felt and what He desired; and the opening of the Psalm acquaints us with that which He experienced from God, as the body of it tells us what He experienced from man. He cried, and was delivered. He was heard because of His piety. Impossible was it, that [a faithful witness should not be delivered, all must admit. But the depth of need, into

which the faithful and true witness descended, tells a tale of man's heart, and of His obedience. Heard, raised up, and so delivered, He exemplified in His own salvation the sure future of those, who bear witness faithfully for God in the world which has crucified His Son. And the new song, at a future time to be sung by myriads of the redeemed, the Lord Jesus was the first to pour forth, for the term "new song" has reference in Scripture to the celebration of full and final victory, and that in connection with the kingdom. Israel at the Red Sea (Ex. xv.) did not sing it, but their descendants will bear their part in it (Ps. xcvi., xcvi.), and joyful tones from creations' voice will form the accompaniment to that new song sung by God's ransomed and finally rescued people upon earth. Nor will earth only hear it, for in heaven, around God's throne, the heavenly saints will give expression to it. (Rev. v. 9.) No angels that we read of have part in this. Those only who have been delivered by God can join in it. The Captain of our salvation first, then all who share in deliverance will sing the new song, for in common with Him they will have proved God's power to help.

Delivered from His enemies, He looks for their destruction (14, 15), the righteous retribution which their conduct deserves. As delivered by God, He owns the godly as His associates, and this too after His resurrection. On earth He found His delight in them, on high He does not separate Himself from them. "Praise unto our God" shows that He is for ever a man; and, though Himself the only faithful witness who never once failed, He reminds all God's servants that He regards them as in connection with Himself. "Our God" witnesses of this, His voice to us from beyond the grave. By and by the whole universe will see that He is not ashamed to call us "brethren." But now "our God" and "usward" speaks to our hearts of this grace; for, having once identified Himself with God's saints, He will never separate Himself from them.

Nor is this all. The present effect on others of His deliverance He describes. His feet established, the new song put into His mouth, all that Jehovah has done for Him who waited God's time, and has proved His faithfulness and power, will tell on many hearts, and encourage suffering disciples (3). Results of everlasting importance flow from the Lord's atoning work; results, too, of great value accrue

to God and to the saints from His deliverance out of death. God's power to deliver is seen, therefore confidence in God must be engendered. How great that confidence should be the following verse sets forth, announcing the blessing of the man, **בִּי** (*lit.*, the strong man) who "makes Jehovah his confidence, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to falsehoods." Not the poor feeble one only, but the naturally strong man, should learn wherein his great strength lies.

Faithful in service, we learn what the true spirit of a minister should be. Drawing attention by His ministry to what God is and does, He desires all eyes to be turned to, and all hearts to be occupied with, the Lord Jehovah alone. God's salvation they should love. "The Lord be magnified," they should continually say. To rejoice in Jehovah, and be glad in His God, is what He desires for them, and trust in the Lord, encouraged in others, by the knowledge of His deliverance, is the wish of His heart. This should be the result of true ministry, and it is what He looks for. Differing from all other ministers who speak of a work done, and proclaim God as the righteous One and the Giver of all good likewise, He, who was in Himself God's gift, and did the work in which we rest, and because of which we give thanks to God, yet seeks not to draw attention to Himself, but turns all hearts to God. Thus the character of Christ's ministry, the consequences of it to Himself, and the spirit which actuated Him, are brought out by the instrumentality of the inspired penman.

A few remarks in conclusion. In Ps. xvi. we meet with an atmosphere unruffled. Here we read of opposition and hatred, which pursued Him to death; for the former Psalm gives us His walk in communion with God; this latter, His service for God amongst men. Thus both Psalms are needed to show us what the Lord Jesus Christ was when upon earth. The former acquaints us with that which was within Him, this with that which was around Him. Ps. xvi. shows us how to walk, this how to serve, our example in both being Him, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously (1 Peter ii. 23); and for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. xii. 2); receiving a title of which He is indeed worthy, "The Leader and the Perfecter of the Faith," a title descriptive of Him, and suggestive to us.

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

Q.—What is the thought in Rev. xvi. 16 as to the use of the name “Armageddon,” as the place of the gathering of the confederate kings in the last great battle of the age?

A.—It has been generally understood, and, doubtless, rightly so, that it referred to the “Megiddo” of Judges v., when Barak defeated the confederate kings of Canaan in that day of Israel’s weakness—(see also Zek. xii., &c.)—the Hebrew “Har” (הַר) being prefixed to denote the mountain of that name. But the following explanation seems still more to the point:—

The word is literally Hormah-Gideon (הֹרְמַח גִּדְיוֹן), *i.e.*, The destruction of Gideon, and would refer to the well-known total route of the hosts of Midian by Gideon the Judge, after Israel’s *seven* years captivity to the Midianites (Judges vi. 1).

This victory was characterised by the turning of every man’s sword against his fellow (Judges vii. 22), and furnished a grand and impressive type of this last great battle of this age, when Israel will be delivered, and the confederate powers of the world destroyed. That moment is referred to in Ezek. xxxviii. 21: “I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man’s sword shall be against his fellow.” And in Haggai ii. 22, “I will overthrow the throne of the kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen, . . . every one by the sword of his fellow.”

“The day of Midian” is also definitely named, and referred to by way of analogy, in Isaiah ix. 4, 5, as characterising this complete route of the enemy by the judgment of God. “For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian,” &c.

W. F. W., Rhode Island, U.S.A.—How did Jacob prevail over God? (Genesis xxxii. 24-28.)

A.—By earnest weeping and supplication. God suffered Himself, in mercy to be prevailed over, thus showing His acceptance of Jacob’s strong crying and tears; and when the wrestling had reduced Jacob to the sense of powerlessness in himself, he clings to the angel in his weakness, and God suffers him thus to prevail over Him.

This scene is referred to in Hosea xii. 4:—“Yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him.” Jacob’s history remarkably unfolds that of a saint who did not walk with God; yet he was a saint, and valued the promises of God, but sought to enjoy them by human means which were not upright. We need faith for the means as well as for the end which God has in view. He had halted morally for twenty-one years, and now the moment came when God brings His controversy to an issue with him. His dividing of the flocks and his present for Esau showed that he had no real faith in God’s care, though he prays earnestly enough at the same time. He was a froward man, and we read, “With the froward thou wilt wrestle.” (Psalm, xviii. 26, *margin*.) God meets Jacob alone and wrestles with him to bring him to the sense of weakness and nothingness, but does not prevail. At last he touched the hollow of his thigh, and it was dislocated.

Now he is reduced to the extremity of weakness and powerlessness, yet he clings to the Angel, conscious of who was there, and with weeping and earnest entreaty he seeks a blessing from Him whose strength is "made perfect in weakness," and he prevails. He is blessed, and for the name "Jacob," *i.e.*, "Supplanter," he receives that of "Israel," *i.e.*, a prince with God, who had power with Him and prevailed. God answers now with His blessing, having reduced His servant to the consciousness of entire weakness and inability to do without Him. But Jacob bears the marks of the controversy, and he halts upon his thigh for life.

How often we see this! God's controversy with the souls of His people slighted, and at last they are brought to a moment when all is gone but God! Then the blessing flows freely, but the mark of the discipline which was needed to reduce the soul to that point is seen for a lifelong after. Yet the day dawns and the sun rises on one who has had a deep and blessed lesson from a faithful God.

How all this puts us in mind of our perfect Lord and Saviour! His weeping and supplications—"strong crying and tears"—mark the perfection of One who felt in its verity the place He had undertaken in love; yet He must go through and drink the cup, and be forsaken of God. Yet here was perfection perfected. If it must be so, He will have the cup from no hand but His Father's. He goes on to the cross, and "*all my bones were out of joint*" was His cry at that solemn moment, when God was averting His face from His Son when made sin for us; and He bears the marks of His sufferings in glory, and for ever!

M. P.—Please, define a little between Priesthood and Advocacy.

A.—Priesthood is the divine provision of grace to sustain those who have been set in God's righteousness before Him in Christ. It reconciles the condition of a poor feeble creature on earth, liable to fall at any moment, with the glorious position which is his in Christ. I believe that Hebrews is the complement of the Epistle to the Romans—the one setting us, through redemption, before God in Christ, the other maintaining us there. In its prime aspect it is preventive and sustaining. "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." You find at the end of Hebrews iv. the provisions made in order that we may not fall in the wilderness—the detective power of the Word of God to deal with the will, the supporting priesthood of Christ to support us in our weakness. So we are to go boldly to the "throne of grace and find timely help" to sustain, that we may not fail. Priesthood, then, branches out in the other activities of Christ for us into two great divisions: Advocacy, and washing of water by the Word (1 John ii., and John xiii.) The former is for *absolute falls*. "If any *sin*, we have an advocate." He is engaged before and with the Father for us; and the result of His advocacy is to turn the Word, by the Spirit, in its convicting power, on the conscience; and then, when confession is produced, the soul having bowed under His action, restoration follows. A double action takes place—conviction for the failure, and, on confession, restored communion.

In Numbers xviii. you have priestly service in grace to maintain communion. In chapter xix. the provision, not of maintaining com-

munion by priestly grace, but for the restoration of communion individually when lost—the double application of the ashes and water on the third and seventh days answering to that of advocacy—the third day showing what sin is in respect of grace—the seventh what grace is in respect of sin. The ashes and water used here point, the first to the impossibility of the sin being imputed, as the victim on whom they were was wholly burnt—the latter to the Word of God in its convicting and restoring power by the Holy Ghost. This answers now to the thought of advocacy.

I do not like the word, *One-who-manages-your-affairs*—it is too long. Solicitor, though good, is not suitable, from its associations in common use—(Advocate is the same word in Greek as Comforter, in John xiv.)—but, *One who manages your affairs* is the thought.

GLEANINGS.

THE myriad worlds unceasingly
Revolve at Thy command,
And none desire to wander from
The leadings of Thy hand.
Obedient servants are they all;
They cost no thought from Thee,
But gaze upon their central sun,
And glide unswervingly.
But I—an atom of one world—
A speck of common dust—
Cost Thee more care than all the rest,
Yet fail in every trust.

PERFECT exercises within produce perfect quietness of walk without, for in both God is fully brought in. If we avoid the full dealing with the matter with God, the heart cannot act for Him as if all were disposed of: and that is peace in action.

God now gives a ray of light to His people as to their pathway, but He also charges Himself to carry them through every circumstance and every difficulty. If they but have confidence in God who does this, they will find how great a God He is with whom they have to do.

“The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.”—Prov. xiii. 4.

“THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY IS UNDERSTANDING.”

PROV. IX. 10.

THERE are few readers of Scripture but have observed with pleasure, the position enjoyed by “the servants” in the well-known marriage scene at Cana of Galilee; and perhaps some of us have connected the privilege enjoyed by them, with the deeper intelligence of the restful Mary as compared with the dulness of her more active sister Martha--and again have linked therewith the place that seemed so natural to “the beloved disciple,” in the 13th chapter of John, in contrast with that which the more energetic Peter occupied at the supper table.

It was their *nearness to the Lord* that gave these “servants” more intelligence than even the governor of the feast. It was the consciousness that she had a sister at home that lived *nearer to the Lord* than she did, that made Martha call Mary to explain the truth that was beyond her comprehension, saying, “The *teacher* is come and calleth for thee.” (John xi. 25-28.) And it was the fact that John *was* actually leaning *on the Lord’s bosom*, at the moment when He made known that the traitor was amongst them, that led Peter to beckon to him that he should ask who it was of whom He spake. The time will shortly come when we “shall know, even as also” we “are known,” and to the part of Scripture which speaks of that day I would briefly direct the reader’s attention. It is evident, as we open Rev. iv. 4, that the great time of separation to God has taken place, and the saints now on earth, with all their predecessors, are in glorified bodies in the presence of God and of the Lamb. Under the designation of the “four-and-twenty elders” do we see them. The number expresses their completeness—the name gives to them their representative character. Not one is missing of the thousands of saints that from Adam downwards have been born of God, and have been translated on the coming of the Lord. Their robes point to their priestly character—their crowns to their kingly position. The threatening character of the throne does not disturb them, but the moment the glory of the Creator God, or redeeming Lamb is celebrated, we find them in the fullest activity of praise.

But this is not their only portion of blessedness. **A**

challenge to the universe has sounded forth as to *who* is worthy to open the book of God's counsels and loose the seven seals thereof. And even John is at fault now, and in his weakness weeps. But there are those who are in the secret. Children of the light and of the day are they, and their conscious *nearness to the Lord* has resulted in the unfolding of His counsels to them, and these on a subject surely unspeakably precious above all others that the heart of God has to reveal. *They* can tell the sorrowing prophet to dry his tears, for that the King of the royal tribe, the very source of him who, in old time, had suffered and triumphed, had, by means of His mighty victory, not achieved without suffering even unto death, won the right to open and unfold the counsels of God, even though sealed up with sevenfold security. Their absolute and perfect separation to God had resulted in this intelligence, not merely for their own enjoyment, but with power to communicate it to others. And again do we find this wondrous privilege before us in the 7th chapter, and not less intelligent are they as to the identity of the white-robed multitude, than as to the person and achievements of the Lamb.

Thus far for *heaven*—but upon *earth* the same principle will prevail. To most of us the scene between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba is happily familiar, and to not a few, the typical as well as the actual force of the passage is discernible. On the former let me for a moment dwell. The application of 1 Chron. xvii. 13 to Christ in Heb. i. 5, leaves no doubt that *He* is in figure before us when King Solomon sits upon the throne of his glory; and a comparison of Ps. lxxii. with 2 Chron. ix. removes every difficulty as to the application of the Queen of Sheba in type, to the Gentiles that will come to yield their homage and devotion to the Son of Man, when “neither adversary nor evil occurred.” He reigns as King of Righteousness, and King of Peace. What, then, is the result of the nearness of approach to Him? “She communed with him of all that was in her heart; and Solomon told her all her questions, and there was nothing hid from Solomon that he told her not” (vv. 1, 2). Of course, the intelligence of those above is of a higher order than that of those below. But whilst we contemplate with joy, what will be our glory when, with the Lamb above, it is at least our privilege to understand the blessedness of those below, when from time to time they come to render homage

to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? With them, as with us, the principle holds good that intelligence will flow from *nearness* to the source of light and understanding.

The question then most naturally suggests itself:—If, in the scenes that are before us, there will be this gracious provision of our God for the blessing of His people, is there no means whereby we may *even now* anticipate that time, and enjoy, while here, what will be our eternal portion in the brighter days to come? And does the Scripture teach us nothing on this score, replete as it is with counsel on every subject that we need?

Beyond all question we have the fullest instruction on this head in all parts of the Word, and to some of this I would briefly call the reader's attention.

In Gen. xviii. 17-21, Jehovah says:—"Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." Whence this condescension, and whence this confidingness of the Lord?

The whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And they had said, "Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. . . . And the Lord said, "Go to, *let us* go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth, and they left off to build the city" (Gen. xi. 4-8). From this scene of confusion, God, obliged to show mercy on whom He would show mercy—for all deserved to perish—had called Abram apart. Each link with earth was broken. Country, kindred, and father's house had lost their claims in obedience to the word of Him who said, "I am the Almighty God, walk before *Me*, and be thou perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). Lot might choose the well-watered plains of Sodom, but the presence of the Almighty God had superior attractions to Abram, and he henceforward determined to look only for that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And well was he rewarded. While Lot was vexing his righteous soul from day to day with the unlawful deeds

of Sodom, Abram was holding sweet and blessed communion with the Lord. His separation from surrounding evil, in obedience to His call, had resulted in unclouded intimacy, and He draws aside the veil to unfold His counsels as to judgment. What a wondrous scene it is, and how precious to see that there was one, at all events, on earth to whom God could tell His mind, and thus provoke to intercession! He will have his place amongst the four-and-twenty elders, and thus on earth his walk corresponded to his position there.

But he is not alone in this path of special blessing. Moses equally shines out as the friend of God, as a glance at Exodus xxxii.-xxxiv. will prove. Abram had separated from civil disorders; from religious evil Moses turns away. His attitude is very fine. Before God he is zealous for the people; before man he thinks only of God's glory. And in the deepest sense of what was due to this, he takes the tabernacle and pitches it *without the camp*. The camp, he knew, was a scene of defilement. God and defilement, he was aware, could not combine, and therefore he took new ground for the dwelling place of God, and most precious did the Lord set His seal upon his faithfulness. "And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. . . . And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (vv. 9-11). What an instructive scene is this, and how full of encouragement! To hold communion with the Lord there must be absolute separation from what is contrary to His being, but when this is insisted on, there is no limit to the revelations of Himself.

But it is not only in the palmier days of Jewish history, that this important principle found its response among those to whom the Lord was everything, but even when the sun of Israel was set, and the times of the Gentiles had ensued, do we find it taking expression in the person of such an one as Daniel the prophet. Isa. xxxix. 7 had had its fulfilment, and Daniel and his companions were chosen to adorn the court of the king of Babylon. But change of circumstances and altered scenes do not, to the faithful, disturb the written principles of the word of God; and, mindful of the Nazarite vow of Numb. vi., these children set themselves apart for God, and refrained from Gentile luxuries and heathenish defilement. (Daniel i.) The grace that had given them

power thus to rise above the lusts of nature, now bestows upon them their suited reward, and we find, "As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams" (v. 17). Separate from natural evil, as Abraham had been separate from worldly, and Moses from religious defilement, most blessedly does God reward them for their faithfulness. We are all familiar with the next chapter—how the king dreamed a dream, and then forgot it; how none of the wise men of Babylon could in any measure aid the king's too treacherous memory; how death was pronounced on all; and then how God came in, in love, and in answer to the prayer of Daniel and his companions—revealed the secret in a night vision, and thus preserved their lives, and drew forth their heartfelt adoration. Surely we may say this revelation was the result of their *nearness to the Lord*, and this the consequence of the refusal of surrounding evil!

But not alone in the Old Testament do we find the illustrations of this deeply important principle, but also in the New. Christ had entered on the scene, and, as the Shepherd of His sheep, had passed through the lawful door within the precincts of the Jewish sheepfold. Born at the appointed place, coming at the very time that Daniel's prophecy foretold, of the proper stock—a rod of the stem of Jesse—He had fulfilled in every way what the Spirit of God had pointed out concerning Him, and, welcomed heartily by those who, like Simeon, occupied the porter's place, and were therefore on the watch, proceeds to gather the sheep around Himself and lead them forth. One by one they heard Him; one by one they followed His gracious leadings, and exchanged starvation, bondage, condemnation, for the blessings of salvation, liberty, and pasture. As sheep, they were the objects of His care; but He has a higher title for them:—"Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, but I have called you *friends*; for all things I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." What a place of blessedness was theirs! No doubt it had cost them something to follow Him. The fishermen had left their nets, their fathers; the man whose eyes were opened had forfeited his Jewish rights; but what they had received had more than enough repaid them for all they had left behind. *His* friends—the friends of the blessed

Son of God—and *His* secrets—the outflowings of the Father's heart towards Him—this was their portion, the portion of those who, through the knowledge of His excellency, had left the worldly, the religious, the domestic circle, for Him. (See John ix.)

But not only when the blessed Lord was here did the rule of which I speak find its example in His followers, but even now, while He is absent at His Father's right hand, do we find an illustration of the same. The Ephesians were not only "saints," but "faithful in Christ Jesus" (c. i. 1), or, as we may say, not only set apart, as all saints are, by the action of the Spirit of God quickening their souls, and thus attaching them to God, but they had faithfully maintained (through grace, of course) the position they had assumed. And this expression is the more striking if we contrast it with 1 Cor. i., where the Holy Ghost can only speak of the faithfulness of *God*. As we know from the Acts, these men of Ephesus had come apart from everything, through the presentation of God's Son; for, Judaism on the one hand, and heathenism on the other, were alike renounced for the superior claims of Christ in glory; and now, though apostolic energy was absent, they still retained their place as saints and faithful ones to Christ.

The sheep had been drawn around the person of a Shepherd present with them. These had been gathered to an absent Christ, but still to One who, true to His word, is ever the centre, and present in spirit to those who are gathered on divine principles. And what do we read about them? That God "had abounded towards them in all wisdom and prudence, having made known the mystery of His will, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in Him" (c. i. 8-10). What a blessed portion theirs, and ours, who are gathered now on similar principles! Our *nearness to the Lord collectively* (as was *individually* the case in John xv.) has resulted in His leading our hearts on to the time when all His counsels as to Christ will have their fullest completion and display. That is indeed and rightly called the dispensation of the fulness of times. Times there have been, no doubt, of varied interest and blessing. Adam had his time, and Noah his. Jew and Gentile times ran and are running out their course. The fulness of time

(Gal. iv.) was seen when Jesus trod the earth, and the Church's day exists at present. But in all of these there has been failure of more or less intensity; and therefore it is that God, who is ever careful of His own glory, has appointed a day, and named it "the fulness of times," wherein every single one of His former displays will be made good in the person of that Son, whose object now is, has been, and will ever be, to glorify the Father. He will reign as the second Adam, the Head of all creation; He will govern the world in righteousness, without the fear of failure, like His predecessor, Noah; He will write His laws in His people's hearts, and sit upon the throne of David; He will rise to reign over the Gentiles, and in Him shall the Gentiles trust; He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe. It is to these blessed counsels as to the future glory of the Son that the Holy Ghost would at present introduce those whose privilege it is to be not merely saints, but faithful in Christ Jesus. And surely this is a high and holy privilege; and we should see to it that neither worldly interests, nor religious contamination, nor the joys of nature, creep in to mar the sweet and happy intercourse that is ours, through fellowship with the Father and the Son. In glory, hindrance there will be none to our intelligence and consequent enjoyment. Here it is only through constant occupation with the Son, and watching lest the Spirit within be grieved, that our *nearness to the Lord* and consequent intimacy, can be maintained. The Lord give us to lean on His bosom, to sit at His feet—to identify ourselves so thoroughly with Him, that He may be free to tell us all He sees we need for comfort, joy and blessing!

D. T. G.

COMMUNION OF THE HEART WITH GOD.

EPH. iv.

WE have here a change of subject, or of the aspect of subjects of the former chapters. Let us first remark a few things on the previous chapters.

Turning to chapter i., you will find a subject distinct from the other chapters, and so with each following chapter.

In chapter i. the mind is instructed by the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation as to the eternal counsels of God concerning the Church, and how He has blest it in Christ with all

spiritual blessings ; then there is the revelation of His purpose in Christ, and the prayer for spiritual understanding to enter into the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

In chap. ii. we have quite another line of truth. It is not here the eternal counsels of God about His people, but the question is answered as to how the people are cleared from the sin and death in which they are practically found ; and the union between Christ and the people is found to be in His life from the grave, so that we are partakers of the positive blessing of life—not here re-echoing a doctrine true, as in Rom. vi. 11, but the blessing is life. And this is most important ; for unless I know the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards me through Christ Jesus—unless I can see myself cleared from every charge of sin, and say of myself, “ I am pure as He is pure, spotless as Christ, accepted as He is accepted ”—I shall not be able to enter into the counsels of God, as brought out in the 1st chapter. The 7th verse is the summing up of this His kindness to us in clearing us from sin, displayed for the present and eternal admiration of our hearts.

In chapter iii. there is the revelation of the mystery concerning Christ and the Church, which forms a parenthesis. The leading thought in the 10th verse is not the unfolding of counsels, as the first chapter, nor how our hearts are cleared and learn the riches of His grace in His kindness towards us, as in the 2d chapter ; but the mystery is for the admiration of angels, and principalities, and powers, that they may learn in us *now* the manifold wisdom of God ; and the prayer addresses itself to the heart, and not to the understanding.

In chapter iv. we see the Church in a different aspect. It is the Church down here in the full display of the Holy Ghost, as a witness to the glory of an ascended Christ at God's right hand. Paul, the prisoner of the Lord, thus declares that bonds in the body well accord with this position of freedom in spirit, of being a witness to the power of an earth-rejected and heaven-owned Christ. Verses 1-3 contain practical exhortations, which we will look at presently. Verse 7, we come to individual position. Verses 8-13 show the basis of these practical exhortations to believers, as part of the Church of God, even the work of Christ connected with His person as Son of God. 14-16 are warnings

which follow this truth about the foundation of the Church. You see how deep the instruction is in these verses. "He that ascended is the same also that descended." We begin here at the Incarnation, for it is of Christ as man that he thus speaks; and yet this Son of Man, who descended into death, even the death of the cross, and has gone up into glory, we know in verse 13 as the Son of God. He having descended as man into death, has laid the basis of the Church. It could not have existed before that He, who descended, ascended up on high, and received the Holy Ghost, to send Him down to earth to form a body here, as a witness that He, the Head, is in glory. In verse 4 we are seen as members of a body, of which the Head is in glory. We are not united into one body by the blood of Christ. This would not be true. The blood of Christ will not make Israel hereafter part of this body. Faith does not make me a member of the body. It is the Spirit which vitally unites believers to the Head in glory. It is because He sends the Spirit from the Father's throne that we are formed into the body. When He leaves that position, and comes to reign over the earth, and sends the Spirit to Israel, there will not be the same relationship. The Jews will not know what it is to be children as we do. In one sense the Queen's subjects are her children, but they are not united to her family. You will find the Word of God is very definite in speaking of the body. It is quite a distinct thing from the house. The union of members to a body is a vital union, and there could be no separation without maiming the body.

The name of God mentioned here is not the same as the name into which we have been baptised—the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Here it is the Spirit, the Lord, and one God and Father, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. What a vast system is the believer connected with! I am sure one cannot realise himself as part of that body of whom Christ in glory is the Head, or of being connected with Christ as Lord, and as having the God and Father of all in one, without walking in lowliness, and meekness, and forbearance. There is no lowliness and meekness found elsewhere, though there may be the semblance. But can I say of myself, "part of the body, the head of which is Christ at God's right hand, and upon which principalities and powers look down as the present witness for the ascended Christ," and not be meek and

lowly? Can I realise this without being long suffering? Put in the one scale your trials, and in the other the glories of Christ, and see which weighs the heavier. I have often been ashamed to speak to the Lord of my sufferings. I have asked Christians in times of affliction if they could say to the Lord, "Oh Lord, how heavy are my afflictions when I compare them with Thine! How deep are my sorrows! How great are my sufferings! What a miserable being I am, Lord! I have nothing but Thy love—no one but Thy God and Father and Spirit, who has made me a member of Thy body. I have nothing else save all I have in Thee." "Oh no," they say, "I should not like to take that strain at all." Well, then, if our hearts are filled with Christ, and thinking of all we possess in Him, the shoulder will not be easily fretted when the cross lies heavy upon it.

In verse 3 there is the effort, not to preserve the unity of the Spirit, for that cannot be destroyed, but to keep it in the bond of peace. The Corinthians were still one with Christ, united to Him, when they were divided among themselves, and saying, "I am of Paul," or, "I am of Apollos," but they evidently were not keeping it in the bond of peace. If I am walking in the Spirit, I must realize that I am one with all saints. I may try to do this by looking down into the actual condition of the Church; but then I see everything so confused and disordered, that I should soon be for casting the Church out of my lap. But if I look up and see Christ, the head of His body, I can be calm and look at Him who knows all that are His, and who is not going to cast any of His people out of His lap, but is soon coming to call us to meet Him in the air.

In verse 7 we are on individual ground as to Christ's blessing of the members of His body. Now we have not to look to one another; we have each something given us from the Lord. Christians want now to find out beforehand whether they are evangelists or pastors—to be owned as evangelists or pastors before they have been tried: but the answer to them is, "Do what you can, and the Lord will make it plain what you can do for Him." We want to be more like the poor woman who anointed the Lord with ointment, of whom He said, "She hath done what she could." Now, have you done what you could for Christ to-day in the little circle He placed you in? Will you do to-morrow what you can for Him in another circle of things, perhaps quite different; and

the third day He will place you in another circle; and are you going to do in each what you can? Thus He did with Stephen. He set him to serve tables, and he did it to the Lord. Soon from this He opened the way for him to do something else, and Stephen was found doing miracles and preaching the word with the power of the Holy Ghost. Again, He led him into other circumstances, and then it was no longer serving tables, or preaching, but martyrdom for Christ.

I was thinking the other day, suppose I had been born in the time of Roman Catholicism, I should have known nothing of a glorified Christ in heaven, working in the Church, giving His saints to see their heavenly calling, arousing many to know that He is coming, that the Church is to be caught up to meet Him. I should most probably have spent my days in a monastery, with very little intelligence. But what a proof have we in these days that Christ is still in *power as a glorified man in heaven*, by His working down here by His Spirit! This truth the Apostle now uses as a safeguard against danger. When it is held in the soul in power, there is no room for being deceived by error. Take it, for instance, to bear upon the Corinthians, could they have had divisions, or have given way to lusts, if they had been realizing that they were members of a body in which God was displaying by His Spirit, His thoughts about the Son of His love? There is an immense difference between seeing things in the light of His presence, and seeing them out of it. I might think, for instance, that the thought of circumcision looked well to secure salvation outside the presence of Christ, but could the Galatians have held to circumcision if they had sought to be an entirely clear witness of the perfections of the glorified Son of Man? Outside His presence I might think it well to do something by which I should make sure to be saved, but when in the light I should say, why, then, if this or that will make me safe, Christ is not the Saviour. So with the Hebrews. The apostle makes the Christ of God, glorified in heaven, to be the answer to everything that could weaken the confidence of the believer. And if an apostle were to come, how does Paul show the way by which we know him to be false? Just by saying, I, Paul, and those I have sent, are followers of Christ, such as could say, Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ. Can these false apostles, if you ask them, "Do you walk so, that in following you, I should follow Christ," say "Yes"?

It is just having a glorified Christ, the witness of His present glory, the witness that He is on the throne of God, the witness that you are a member of that body of which He is the Head, fresh in your soul, which will enable you to walk worthy of your high vocation with all lowliness, meekness, and longsuffering.

Praying for all saints ; for if Christ's heart is occupied with them, surely mine must be so too. If this is not the habitual thing with you, you are not realising what your calling is—called into union with a body, which is the present proof that He is still the Son of Man, glorified in heaven.

THE SECOND COMING AND REIGN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE TRANSLATION OF THE SAINTS.

CHAP. II.

IF Paul unfolds the “unsearchable riches of Christ” in the epistle to the Ephesians, he reveals the translation or rapture of the saints of God from this scene to the glory, in 1st Thessalonians.

We will look at it in detail, for it is a lovely presentation of the hope of the Christian, with the character of Christian life, and the effect of this hope on his pathway and service, his personal walk and ways. It has a characteristic freshness and brightness that no other epistle possesses. This is ever so when the person of Christ occupies the hearts and affections of His people. With this before the heart, and His return, that which bounds the horizon of each day, the soul is enabled to pass through a scene like this, and to rise above its sorrows and endure its trials, while sustained by His tender grace and love.

They were three fruitful Sabbath-days which Paul had spent in Thessalonica. He had gone into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews from their own Scriptures, “Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead ; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” (Acts xvii. 3). The unbelieving Jews then raised a tumult, and accused him of doing “contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there (was) another King, one Jesus.” Then Paul and Silas were driven away. But O what a blessed season were those three Sabbath-days ! How they were marked by the imprinting of Christ on those

beloved saints! The whole world was hearing the gospel of Christ through a handful of people at Thessalonica (1 Thess. i. 8). Not by the preaching of the word merely, but by the light lit up of God in their hearts, and shining out in their conduct and ways.

Trials and afflictions were only occasions for the light to shine more clearly. And so Paul could say, when Timothy brought him tidings of their faith and love, and the freshness of their desires to see him, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father" (1 Thess. i. 2, 3).

Here we find the threefold cord of Christian character in its freshness—"faith" and "love" and "hope." Let us put it to our own hearts, who know Christ as a Saviour, and know that we are a saved people going on to be with Him for ever: Does this little verse portray our character? It is precious to our souls to do aught for Christ. Every saint who reads this knows that, and there is no saint but has done somewhat for Him, and some things, perhaps, that no eye saw but His. Indeed, I believe those things which the heart has the deepest joy in doing, are those that none has seen but Himself. When a heart can say, "I am satisfied that Christ knows that," that heart is right with Him.

It is precious to work for Christ; we can all do that. But I ask your heart and my own, and I ask it with fear and trembling even to myself, lest it should not be thoroughly true: Is each word spoken—each action done, as a "work of faith"—living faith in Christ, in fellowship with His mind? It may be a simple every-day act of common life, such as that of a servant, of a master or a mistress, of a parent or a child. All can be a work of faith, in connection with Christ, as His will. If so, the words you speak have the savour of it, and you are enjoying the truth you may utter in living association with Him.

There are works which the law required, and justly, too; but were they what is here—a "labour of love"? Surely not. The more a man loves another, the harder he will work for the other; for love makes a man work the harder, not merely as a duty, though duty is rightly so, and something we have to perform. But when we labour in com-

munion with Christ, whatever we have to do is a "labour of love," but done in "patience of hope in our Lord Jesus." Mark, it is not that the heart has to go through its daily duties, and that it does them in faith in Christ, and from love to His name; but He is coming back again, and expectation is kept alive in looking for His return. What is the meaning of the "patience of hope"? Suppose a wife was looking in her mind across the seas, picturing the speck on the ocean, the vessel which was freighted with the loved one of her heart, bearing him home from a distant land—she waits in "hope;" but her hope must have another characteristic—she must have "patience" also. She knows her loved one must exercise this patience in his hope as well as she, and her patience is in communion with his mind.

But what about the children who need her care? What about the household duties? Will they be neglected, because he may be home to-morrow? Surely not. They will be done, if possible, better still than before. Her labour is a labour of love. She does what he likes to have done, and outdoes her doing if she can, in her labour of love! But in patience of hope she waits for him, her heart engaged with the returning one as the hope of her heart.

People think it would paralyze our work for the Lord, if His coming was thus to be before our souls in the suspense of expectancy. On the contrary, it gives zest and energy to the work and labour as nothing else can, while the patience of hope keeps the soul steady and the heart engaged with Christ.

But there is more. To have the *heart's* affections engaged is most blessed; but we are passing through a scene where sin abounds, and the *conscience* needs a test, and he adds—"In the sight of God and our Father." All must be done under His eye. This is an immense thing, and you will find that God's two characters—what He is said to be—"love" and "light," deal with "heart" and "conscience" in us. The light comes in and deals with the conscience, and the love attracts the heart. The heart and the conscience in us answer to love and light in God.

So you have it in this verse. The heart goes out after Him who is coming, and in patience it waits for Him, long or short as the time may be. But the conscience is kept right, doing what we have to do "in the sight of God and our Father."

To this Thessalonica Paul had come, and for three Sabbath-days he had preached. Some had been worshipping idols: all of a sudden they took their idols and destroyed them. They turned to God from them "to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

Thus Christian character and Christian hope shine out in power and practice, with the full assurance of faith, in the elect of God. I need hardly say that there is such a truth as God's electing love. You who are His saints know this for yourselves. Cannot you say, now that you are inside the house, Once I was afraid to think of that electing love as true; now I can go back in thought to that distant eternity, before the world was, and say, What a wondrous thing it is that such a worm as I was in the heart of God before the foundation of the world! And you see that Paul knew their election, just because the gospel "to every creature under heaven" was believed by them, and that it brought its "full assurance of faith," with its "joy in the Holy Ghost." The gospel ever brings this when your heart says, I believe that what God speaks is true! He says that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Then, I say, I am cleansed from all sin. He says, "The worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins." Then I have no more conscience of sins. He says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Then, I say, I have everlasting life. And so I might go on. It is thinking God's thoughts and giving up our own, which sets the soul at rest.

Paul did not know anything of the eternal counsels of God; but when he sees those saints bright and happy, and occupied with Christ, he says, "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God"! I do not need to see the book of life; but there is a person enjoying the full assurance of faith. He rests on the work of Christ—what He has offered to God, and not on his own experience; thus he is free in conscience, and at rest.

Mark the way he puts their waiting attitude, and for whom they looked. It was for the "Son" from heaven, If you let your heart rest on this expression for a moment, you will find that it draws out the affections more than if he had said to wait for "Christ" from heaven. It carries

a different thought to the heart. He had told them of the Son of the Father coming for His own, and there he left them, and they were passing through much tribulation and persecution, and the world could make nothing of this new thing that had appeared.

No wonder that they did not know what to call Christianity at the first. Several times it is called "the way." (See Acts ix. 2, *marg.*; xix. 9 and 23; xxii. 4; xxiv. 22.) If Stephen was stoned by the murderous multitude, what does he? Turn round in resentment? Nay, but kneel down and pray for his murderers. If they had no box of alabaster to break for their Lord, they could give their bodies to be broken for Him, and thus the ointment and savour of Christ was known! If with scourged backs Paul and Silas have their feet fast in the stocks, in the inner prison at Philippi, what will they do? Break their hearts? No; fill the prison with songs of praise at midnight! Shut a man up from his work, to whom it was dearer than his life, and whose great heart was reaching out to Spain: like a caged eagle he sits in his prison at Rome, and after four years' imprisonment he tells us how he has learned that Christ can do without him, and that he can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him. We might ask, What can you do now? He might answer, "Christ never served the Church better through me than now, and I can sit still here perfectly happy, because it is His will; and I can do His will in sitting still here, just as well as I could do His will, if His will for me were to preach in Spain!"

It was not Judaism, it was not heathenism, but it was heavenly Christianity, and the world called it "*the way*"! And these Thessalonians were in the mightiness and freshness of its power. Beloved friends, does not Christ's heart look for such a thing amongst His people now? Surely He does, and more than ever, because He has awaked us to our proper Christian place and hope in these days.

FRAGMENTS.

Conversion is the turning of the heart to God—a change of will. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Born again is the positive reception of a new life from God. The prodigal son was *converted* when he was turned round; he was *saved* when the best robe was on.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ON SINGING AT THE GRAVES OF OUR BRETHREN.

. . . I feel so thankful to know that there were no hymns sung at the graves of our dearly beloved. . . . I have long felt how much out of place they are on the sorrowful occasion of our committing the body of a beloved fellow-labourer or fellow-pilgrim to the tomb. If there is ever a moment in which hearts are torn asunder with grief, it is then; and I feel much that those who mourn for the departed one would rather weep and cry to our Father in prayer than sing. "Is any merry, let him sing psalms," is the thought of God (James v). How sacred are the sorrows of His people in the sight of the Lord! He "putteth their tears in his bottle," and He "knoweth their sorrows."

When I think of Him weeping, in going to the grave of His friend Lazarus, I feel that singing could not be there. It may be said that His was not the weeping of a sorrow-stricken heart as was that of those around Him; and I say, Be it so. Theirs was the cry of bereavement or of sympathy; but His were tears indeed, and I love that wondrous word of Scripture, "Jesus wept." He wept to see the power of death on the hearts and souls of those whom He dearly loved.

The Lord would have us feel the sorrows of the way, and when are they so keen as in a moment when one who has companied with us, and whom He has loved, has been called away? For them "to depart and to be with Christ is far better;" but what achings of heart for those who remain!

It has grated upon my spirit to hear hymns sung at such a time. If souls are filled with such joy that singing is its only expression, I can say nothing; but I doubt this. In no case in Scripture do I find a thought of doing so amongst God's elect. I need not cite the Old Testament, which in itself gives abundant proof of the contrary. The full joy of the departed one was not then made known as now we have it in New Testament Scriptures. It was seen in more or less measure, as were the hopes of those beyond the tomb at that day. The living, loving Saviour, whose perfect human heart of hearts is now in glory, had not then taken manhood into union with His Godhead glory as Eternal Son. God Himself was not revealed, and the bliss of the state beyond the tomb, as then known, did not embrace the wondrous thought of a departing to be "with Christ." It could not then be known. When the elect at that day left this scene, it was their happiness, most surely; and the lines of the hymn which speaks of "soaring to worlds unknown" was, doubtless, more *their* experience than *ours* now. It could not be an unknown world to those who know Christ; for He occupies the scene.

Yet, while it is the joy of the departed, and in measure we may be able to rejoice, because they have gone to be with Christ, what a blank they have left behind! Can we sing, then, at such a time? When the proto-martyr Stephen passed away, praying for his murderers, and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," we read that "Devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him" (Acts viii. 2). Singing could not have been at such scene. Yet here it may be objected that these "devout men"

were Jews, with their peculiar hopes and thoughts; that they may not, and very likely did not, know what has since been told us in Scripture. Yet I do not find Paul rebuking the dear Thessalonians for their sorrow for those who had fallen asleep from their midst. Nay, he owns the sorrow, but says that they should not sorrow as the rest, who had no hope beyond this scene. He would rather give the sorrow and mourning a divine character, as mingled with a hope by which they might "comfort one another." (See 1 Thess. iv. 13-18.)

I would add here, too, that if any saints were in the tone of soul in which singing would be possible at such a time, it was those fresh-hearted, loving children of God at Thessalonica. In no place in Scripture do we find such bright freshness of soul portrayed as there. Yet we read of sorrow and mourning rather than joy and merriment of soul. Doubtless they needed to have the sorrow corrected in its hopelessness, rather than its existence, and this Paul does so blessedly here.

I say not a word if the hearts of mourners are so full of praise that it can find no other vent than in song. Far be it from me to quench the Spirit in any. But I do say that such will not frequently be found, and for my part I would rather hear the quiet, earnest prayer of those who surround the tomb of a loved one, ascending and rising up to praise, if such were in unison with the hearts clustered around, than to hear what so grates on the ear of most—the hymn or song of praise.—Affectionately in the Lord,

F. G. P.

"Or, though their names appear not on the scroll
Of martyrologists, laid down their life,
No less a martyrdom in Jesus' eyes,
For His dear brethren's sake—watching the couch
Of loathsome sickness or of slow decay,
Or binding up the ravages which men,
Marring God's image, deal on fellow-men;
Or visiting the captive in his cell,
Or struggling with a burden not their own,
Until their very life-springs wore away—
These, too, are martyrs, brother."

As he spake,
The high supremacy of sacrifice,
The majesty of service, fill'd my soul
With thoughts too deep for words.

TO A SAINT AT MARAH.

BELoved IN THE LORD,—And so you have come to Marah, and found the waters thereof bitter. You had learnt already that the world was now but a wilderness—a dry and thirsty land, with a "mighty famine," and "no water." But it seemed as if the Lord was leading you beside some desert stream, and you longed more than ever to drink. As you followed the pillar of cloud, it glistened before you, and, I trust, awakened gratitude to Him who "turneth the wilderness into a standing water." But now you taste its waters,

and find them bitter; you cannot drink of them, and you cry unto the Lord. Moses did so in Ex. xv., and allow me to remind you how the Lord answered his cry. "The Lord *shewed* him a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet." He did not create some fresh thing for the occasion, meeting the new difficulty by some new interposition of miraculous power; but He directed the eye of Moses to something *there already*, on the banks of the very waters of Marah, which had the property of making the bitter sweet.

Now, my beloved fellow-pilgrim, what do *you* ask the Lord to do for you in this new trial? To create some new thing in the earth to meet your case? To bring back the darling object of which He has bereaved you, or remove at once, in some other way, the heavy trial that burdens your spirit and weighs you down? Is this *His way*? For "the Lord hath *His way* in the whirlwind and in the storm" (Nahum 1-4). No, I will ask the Lord for you, that if they be bitter waters to which He leads you (Ex. xiii. 21), He will "shew" you the Blessed One, whose presence in love and sympathy can sweeten every bitter cup and gild the bed of death with light. No new Saviour, but "Him that is from the beginning"—the "same" to-day as He was yesterday, and will be for ever. As no new thing came down from heaven, or grew up from earth, to sweeten Marah's waters for the poor thirsty wanderers, but a tree, there before the waters were tasted, which, in answer to his cry, the Lord *shewed* unto Moses, so may the Holy Ghost, who *is* with you and in you, magnify His blessed office, by taking of the things of the Lord Jesus and showing them to you (John xvi. 14, 15), leading you to see and enjoy what *He* is to you; so that, instead of Naomi becoming Marah (Ruth 1-20), Marah may become Naomi—that is, "pleasant."

Remember for your joy, "it is the Lord" who has led you beside the bitter waters—the same Shepherd who has led you, in the person of your Substitute, the Lord Jesus, clean through the *Red Sea* waters of death and judgment, now behind you for ever—the same One who, when He sees fit, will lead you beside the still, sweet waters of *Elim*—an oasis in the desert, and precious foretaste of the promised rest; and if He guides you now to *Marah*, He has gone before you there, and planted a sweetening tree within easy reach. The world may have tasted something of the bitterness of the water, and given it a name: no name is given to the healing tree—for its value *they* have not discovered—but the Spirit of the Lord is with *you*, to show you not only "things to come," but also the present sufficiency and preciousness of the Lord Jesus, more than equal to your deepest need. To bring to your remembrance all things whatsoever He has said unto you, how He foretold you of Marah—"In the world ye shall have tribulation," but is Himself ever near and available as the great soother of sorrow, saying, "That *in Me* ye might have peace." Do not, then, dear —, be looking for some new token or revelation from the Lord, but that He may, by His Spirit, "shew" you more of Him who is "*with* you alway, even unto the end."—Ever yours in Him,

W. T.

QUERIES.

Q.—Did Jephthah offer up his daughter as a positive burnt sacrifice by death? How could this be permitted when God had said, "Thou shalt not kill"? (See Judges xi. 30-40.)

A.—There is nothing in the passage, when rightly understood, to suppose he did. If you read the margin of verse 31, you will find that his vow was made in the alternative. It ran:—"Thus it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, . . . shall surely be Jehovah's, or (not "and") I will offer it up for a burnt offering." His only daughter met him, and hence her father's sorrow, knowing that his vow had doomed her to be a virgin for life. He had said, "I will offer," &c., in verse 31, in the alternative of his vow, taking for granted that the first thing which should meet him might be fit for a holocaust or burnt offering. If *this* word was repeated in verse 39, it might have been supposed that he had *offered* her up; but it only says, "who *did* with her according to his vow," &c.—not, who *offered* her, &c. The reading of the whole context will show that this is the true explanation; as also her own word, in verse 36, shows the same, "Do to me," &c.—not, Offer me, &c.—as the original language will show to those who can examine it. There is no thought of her death in the passage, but of her life-long virginity—the last thing desired in Israel.

Those who read the original will find an example of the copulative conjunction translated "or" in Exod. xxi. 15, as in the margin of verse 31, as perhaps in other places also.

FRAGMENTARY NOTES OF SCRIPTURE READINGS.

1 John ii. 2.—Up to this there was no provision for particular failures. Christ intercedes for us in virtue of righteousness and of propitiation. John xiii. is its *effect*; here its *source*. It is not only God in love, but there is a never-ceasing exercise of love on which I am dependent.

"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." That is, the enjoyment of the love is not hindered, so far as I am capable of it. I cannot measure it, as of God. Thinking of God, I can only think of what is perfect; yet it is in me—a poor, narrow cage, as far as my thoughts of it go.

In the Epistles of John, the Apostle is always occupied with one person; now God; now the Son; and us as associated with Him.

Dwelling in God goes a little further than communion, which is two beings having common thoughts. He dwells in us; but, as He is infinite, and I a very little thing, I dwell in Him as the result; lose myself in His fullness.

It does not say that it is eternal life to know God; but "Thee," the Father. That is, God revealed in all the grace of His manifestation in the Son.

THE SECOND COMING AND REIGN OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE TRANSLATION OF THE SAINTS.

CHAPTER III.

IN the close of 1 Thess. ii. you find the counterpart of the first chapter. There is a counterpart to all our history here. If we have to pass through the sorrows of the way here below, God keeps a register (as it were) of them on high. If the tears of God's people are shed here, God takes cognizance of them there. "Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?" (Psa. lvi. 8.) Again, if you find the saints crying to God in their sorrows and trials on earth in prayer, in heaven these prayers are gathered up and presented to Him as in "golden vials full of incense, which are the prayers of saints." (Rev. v. 8.) Every cup of cold water, every little self-denial, perhaps known to Him alone, is registered before Him, and will never be forgotten.

In chapter i. the saints were in the wilderness; in the close of chapter ii. Paul anticipates the other side of the picture, where he and those bright, loving Thessalonians, will be in heaven—"in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming." They would then be his glory and joy. What a lovely scene! Paul, the labourer, in the midst of those whom he had served while here—his children in the faith—whom he had cherished as a nurse her children—whom he had watched over with the solicitude of a father. There he would be in the midst of them all, and they would be his crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord at His coming—his glory and his joy.

And here let me say that the doctrine of rewards is very fully and constantly spoken of in the New Testament. You never find that God forgets these things. I feel sure, beloved, that He will remember things at that day which you and I have long forgotten—many a kind word, and many a thoughtful ministry of heart or hand of which we thought nothing at the time, it may be; yet He brings it forth from the memories of the past and stamps it with His approval, as the fruit of His own Spirit, and of the life of Christ in us. Yes, and actions which seemed fair and beautiful to our own eyes, or to the eyes of others, will be found only suited to the grave of the past, and to be forgotten. God will put

His own verdict on our actions, at the day when every man will have praise of God, when that for which he is praised has been appraised of Him.

Look at Moses. When he first assays to serve the Lord and his brethren, what a poor thing he makes of it! In his fleshly zeal he slays an Egyptian and then flees away for fear. I turn to the list of worthies in Hebrews xi., where God has put His verdict on their actions, and I find He has named it "the reproach of Christ!" What did Moses know of this reproach of Christ? Nothing whatever! But God looks at the work of His own grace and Spirit in the poor vessel, counts it to him in the same grace, gives it its true name in His sight, and registers it in His eternal Word as "the reproach of Christ!" Many a loved and devoted hidden one, whose actions and fruitfulness only meet *His* eye, will stand forth in the light of that day, far in the front ranks of God's saints, while many who seemed to stand in those front ranks while here, are there far behind. "Many"—not "all," nor "most," thank God, but "many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first."

In chapter iii. he thinks of that moment when all will be presented before God at the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints," and His earnest longing desire is that their hearts may then be established unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father. He longs that His children in the faith may be fully up to the mark in that scene. The Lord would come for them (how, we shall see), and He would take them to Himself; but the labourer's soul longs that his children in the faith—the sheep of the Lord's pasture, whom he had shepherd and fed—might be found without a spot in that day of presentation to the Father.

Now, in chapter iv., we come to what we may term the Enoch chapter. The first chapter gave the wilderness, the second its counterpart in glory, the third His thoughtful care of them by the way, that all might come brightly before Him who loved them. In the fourth we find the holy and separate place of the saints while here, and their translation to the presence of the Lord.

I have called it the Enoch chapter. In Genesis v. we read that "Enoch *walked* with God, and he was not, for God took him:" in Hebrews xi. we read of him, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his transla-

tion he had this testimony, that he *pleased* God." Now, in the first verse of our chapter, Paul beseeches them, that as they had "received of us how ye ought to *walk* and to *please* God, so ye would abound more and more;" then in the close of the chapter some (as Enoch) do not see death, but are translated to glory. He was taken out of this sad scene without seeing death ere the judgment fell upon the world of the ungodly. Three short words, pregnant with deep instruction for our souls, tell his history. Would not every heart I address desire that God might register its history with such like words? Would you not rest with deep satisfaction even with such a brief history, thus divinely penned?

Many a long history we find in God's Word—chapter after chapter taken up with such. What a number of pages are given us of poor, crooked Jacob's history in the Old Testament! How short a comment, too, we have of it all in the New! It was a poor story; and yet few histories teach us more. And when all is over, the overwhelming grace of the words, "Jacob have I loved," silences the thoughts of our hearts and the comments of our pens. Such is grace!

Jesus comes specially before us in our present chapter as the "Resurrection and the Life." There are three chapters where I find Him as the Resurrection and the Life in a marked way, and in each He communicates His own condition at the moment, to those whom He blesses. So is it ever. In whatever condition He is as a man at the moment when he blesses a soul, such is the condition He imparts to the blessed.

In John xi. we find dead Lazarus raised to his life in the flesh again, by the Lord when in incarnation. Martha's complaint brings out that wondrous word, "I am the resurrection and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." He had not yet passed through death Himself, and He raises him to his natural life again. But in chapter xx., which brings out all the wonderful fullness and preciousness of the work of Him who is standing in it in the glories of His resurrection, imparting the virtues of His risen life to His people, death and wrath are passed, redemption is accomplished, and the Second Man—Victor over all the powers of hell—stands dispensing His spoils. He has borne the wrath, put sin away, annulled the power of death, rifled the tomb of its contents, and brought light and incorruptibility to light. He stands in the midst of His gathered disciples preaching peace, and He breathes upon

them life from the dead—life more abundantly, in resurrection. In 1 Thess. iv. he looks for purity in the saints here below, and then he solves the difficulty which rested in the minds of the sorrowing saints at Thessalonica. It was natural, we may say, that those who had fallen asleep should have been their difficulty then; as perhaps ours now might rather be in the translation of the living. Their hope had been bright and fresh that Christ would come, and in the midst of this a breach came, and some of their number fell asleep. The question arises for the first time—"Have they lost their part in our blessed hope?" "Here we have been converted to wait for God's Son from heaven. But beloved ——— and ——— have gone. Will they lose the blessing?" And again the old saying becomes freshly true, "Out of the eater came forth meat." This new cause for mourning in the tribulations of this scene, gives occasion to a fresh unfolding in the pages of revelation of what was only known to God of the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which have fallen asleep through Jesus will God bring with him." Jesus—the Resurrection and the Life—the true David—has disarmed the foe, and has destroyed him that had the power of death, with his own weapons. He has taken death into His own hand now, and if those whom He loves should have to pass away before He comes—if, as our beloved ———, who sat with us here this evening week, and is now "present with the Lord," was taken to wait on high the day of glory, what is the fact for her—for all who have gone before? She—they, have fallen "asleep through (or, by means of) Jesus." Loving, touching, beautiful words! To all appearance His people may have to pass through death like those who know Him not, as far as the suffering and sorrow goes. But His hand is behind the scenes. He is laying that soul to sleep, as the mother hushes her child, taking the spirit to be with Himself till the morning of the resurrection, when the dust of His saints shall be gleaned up from the graves and both be united again. "God will bring them with him."

Jesus will then, as the Resurrection (for those who have slept), and the Life (for those who remain until He comes), impart to the full His present glorified condition as a Man

to them, and raise them in glory. Those who have gone have had the joy of His presence; if they have had to taste, to pass through death like Him, it is meet that they should have some advantage beyond those who are "alive and remain." And so you find the latter do not "anticipate," go before "them that sleep." The hand of the mighty Potter will have been stretched forth—the moment dear to the heart of Christ will have come—the last display of His mighty power on behalf of His beloved saints in this evil world will have supervened, and He who fitted them for His glory by His blood, will remove them to glory by His power! He will search the tombs, the "dens and caves of the earth," the depths of the sea—every corner of the earth where the dust of His saints lies hid. The mighty Potter will glean it up, and fashion it again into those beauteous vessels which will be fitted to adorn the courts of heaven.

"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout." If one you loved were expected to arrive at your house, you would not send your servant to meet him; you would go yourself. So even the Lord *Himself*. He would carry out the word of comfort to those He had parted from of old—"I will come again and receive you to myself." I must have that sweet moment of greeting with them Myself, before I present them in the glory. The voice of Christ, which His sheep have heard and have known—that same voice which cried from the cross when bearing their sins, and preached peace when He rose, will speak again, and its notes of joy and exultation to His people will reach them from the open heavens in their abodes on earth; it will call forth the dust again. As secretly and as silently as His own resurrection took place, so will theirs. The tombs still sealed—the sod still unturned and undisturbed—the world asleep to all that is passing, as were the sleeping watch the morning when He rose and left the still sealed tomb—the undisturbed grave-clothes as the chrysalis is left in the folded form of the lovely ephemera which it had contained—all told of His mighty power, to which angels called attention when they said, in wonder themselves, to other wonderers, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay!"

It is said of Him, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." His *satisfaction* is never complete till then. Those poor, fluttering hearts, which often were afraid to trust His perfect love, will be the satisfaction of Christ's

heart in the day of this last putting forth of power for them while here. Is it too much to say that His heart goes forth to that day, and waits for it?

You and I may be of those who are alive and remain when that hour comes. It may be ours to take up the song of the Church, responsive to His shout and voice—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The vanquished foe once prostrate at the feet of Christ, now lets go the prey to its Conqueror.

Now, beloved, do your hearts prize this part of the "unsearchable riches of Christ"? Has the "Day Star" arisen in your hearts? Has the *sweetness* of that hope been learned? He has left us here and gone into heaven; hidden there for a little, He will come forth, and when He has taken us to Himself, He will set the world to rights—what men have assayed for long to do, in vain. He will come forth as rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. But meanwhile He takes our hearts into communion with His own, in this hope that He has set before us. The world goes on its way on the one hand, saying, "Peace and safety;" on the other we see around us "men's hearts failing for fear," not knowing what may be to-morrow in a scene of overturning, overturning. In the midst of all, when that moment comes, His people "are not," for "God has taken them." Like Enoch of old, they may be "sought," but are "not found," for God has translated them; or like Elijah, when taken up in his fiery car, and the sons of the prophets sought for him and found him not. (2 Kings ii.) So with these children of the light and of the day.

In chapter v. you get one more practical word founded on this hope:—"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and (I pray God) your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 23). He sets us in the presence of the God of Peace—the special name He has taken to Himself since the resurrection of His Son. He leads us with *consciences* at rest into His presence thus known, and where our wills are silenced and unmoved. Then he turns the *heart* to look for Him who is coming. Thus He sanctifies, to present us unblameable in holiness—the spirit, or higher part of our being; the soul, or seat of our affections and individuality; and the body, the vessel which contains them. In short, the whole man is thus set apart to God and for His glory.

The Lord, then, give us to be Enochs in our way, knowing how to walk with God, and to please Him—to testify like him in the bosom of his family, by him whom he named Methuselah (“at his death he sends it”); shewing in the home circle the faith by which he preached to a world hastening to judgment in those words—“Behold, the Lord cometh . . . to execute judgment.” (Jude 14.) Let us watch for that day, let us listen for that shout which we alone shall hear. As Paul, the persecutor, alone knew the voice of Him who spake to him from the glory, of old, and, while others felt some great thing had taken place, fell to the earth, he who was addressed alone was blest. So with us at that day. Amen.

GOD'S KING.—No. IV.

CUT OFF, HAVING NOTHING.—Psalm cii.

“A PRAYER of the afflicted, when he is in trouble (*or exhausted*), and poureth out his complaint before the Lord,” is the title in the Hebrew prefixed to this Psalm. A peculiarity about this should be noticed. It is not uncommon to meet with a title affixed to a Psalm, recounting some special circumstances under which it was written. Psalms iii. vii. xviii. xxx. xxxiv. li. lii. liv. lvi. lvii. lix. lx. lxiii. cxlii. are examples of this, but in each case they refer to some incident in the life of David, which furnished an occasion for the utterance of his heart. And though there are in the book, Psalms of Asaph, of Heman, and of Ethan, and one by Moses, yet the only composer whose circumstances are stated as having called forth any of these inspired compositions, is David, the type of the Lord Jesus as God’s anointed, suffering from others before seated firmly on his throne. In the Psalm before us, however, whilst we have the circumstances stated under which it was composed, the name of the afflicted one, with whose trials we are hereby made acquainted, is withheld from us. The question then might be asked, was the name withheld by accident or by design? By design we must surely agree, for, not till the epistle to the Hebrews was written, was it, we may well believe, generally known to whom the Psalm referred. Then the elipsis could be filled up with the name of the suffering one, who is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, God over all, blessed for ever. Who penned the Psalm by the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost, or what were the peculiar trials

of the writer under which this divine effusion was poured forth, we shall never know whilst on earth. At what epoch too, or at what place the sacred penman put on record these wonderful words, are questions we must leave undetermined; and, though they are the expressions of an individual that we have not before our eyes, we can very intelligently peruse them by the light cast on the subject from the epistle to the Hebrews.

This brings out a very interesting point in connection with the structure of the Word of God, viz., the existence of latent truth, that is, truth not apparent on the surface, yet really in the text, which, when brought out, all can see was actually there. At times passages of scripture are applied to individuals and to events with which they have no direct connection. An instance we have in the application by Matthew (ii. 17, 18), of Jeremiah's words in xxxi. 15 of his prophecy. Then was fulfilled, *τότε ἐπληρώθη*, says the evangelist, the prophet's words with reference to the sorrow caused by the Babylonish captivity; not indeed that Jeremiah predicted what Matthew relates, but the evangelist could apply the language of the son of Hilkiah to the general sorrow caused by the massacre of the infants in Bethlehem. It is not, however, any accommodation of our Psalm to a purpose, foreign to its original intention, which its use in Hebrews suggests; but it is the true meaning of it, which its real author, the Holy Ghost, there brings out. It is God quoting His own word, to bring out the original thought contained in it. If we read the Psalm without the divine explanation, we should say that there was but one speaker throughout it; when we seize the bearing of the quotation in Heb. i., we learn that there are two. From vv. 1-23, is the utterance of the one, the afflicted one; from v. 24 to the end, is the response of the other; and from Hebrews we learn that both the one and the other are the Lord God of Hosts. Jehovah addresses Jehovah. "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days, thy years are throughout all generations," are the words of entreaty from Jehovah as man, addressing the Lord in heaven. "Of old thou hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hand," etc., are the words of Jehovah in heaven in response to Jehovah on earth, acknowledging that the afflicted One who cries, is indeed the creator of the universe. Without the quotation in the Hebrews we never should

have guessed this. With it, all is clear, and the amazing grace and real humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ is brought out to us. For, let us remark, He is not here called God's Son, but Jehovah Himself. God witnesses of it; God addresses Him as such. He who will not give His glory to another, here admits the eternal existence, and creative power, of the virgin's son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not turned to His works to see who He must be; we stand by and listen to Jehovah's own statement to Him, and hear the wonderful announcement, that the afflicted One upon earth is really Jehovah of Hosts. A mystery, which none can solve, we have here revealed; but though an insoluble mystery, a simple truth which we must accept. To explain it is beyond our power, to accept it is the duty of every creature. God owns Him to be God, who could say in truth, "O my God." Does it seem strange that Jehovah should address Jehovah? We have something analogous to this both in Gen. xix. 24, and 1 Samuel iii. 21. In the former passage, Jehovah, we read, rained down fire and brimstone from Jehovah out of heaven. In the latter, Jehovah, by the word of Jehovah, revealed Himself to Samuel. Does it appear strange that the Lord Jesus, if Jehovah, should be called the afflicted one? He thus styles Himself in Ps. xl. 17. That He is Jehovah God asserts, that He is in affliction He declares. Thus in this Psalm we have the divine and human natures of the Lord Jesus distinctly proclaimed. Distinct they are from one another, but united in one person; for the one who tells out His affliction, is declared on the highest authority to be the self-existing One. His divinity none but God could declare, for who beside God could reveal His eternal existence? His manhood, with death before Him, a portion peculiar to the human race, He sets forth. One sees the propriety of this, and it is just what we meet with in Hebrews. In chap. i. God affirms His divinity, and in chap. ii. Christ bears witness to His own humanity. In the former chapter God tells us about His Son, for God alone could pronounce as to His divine essence. In the latter, He speaks in the quotations to God, and thus gives evidence of the reality of His human nature.

He looks forward to death in this Psalm, as we have seen in others also. But here we must mark a great difference. In Psalm xvi. we see Him looking to be brought up out of death; in Psalm xl. we learn that He has been delivered,

raised up from the dead. But here, whilst we have Him contemplating death, we have nothing from Him about His future—nothing about resurrection. Viewed as a man we can see the reason of this. Man's proper portion is on earth; so the earthly hopes, the earthly blessings, are all that we have here depicted—those hopes and blessings of which death deprives all those over whom it has power. Viewed as Jehovah, we can see another reason for this. Jehovah abides, therefore resurrection would be quite out of place in a Psalm which sets forth Christ's divinity. As man, as Messiah, we have the Lord brought before us. "Thou hast lifted me up," refers to His Messiahship. "Thou hast cast me down," shows what He has to expect in accordance with Daniel's prediction, to be cut off, and to have nothing (Dan. ix. 26, *margin*).

What this was to Him we now get set forth. "My days are like a shadow that declineth (*lit.* stretched out to nearly its full length), and I am (or shall be) withered like grass." Yet He had not reached the full term allotted to man upon earth, for He adds, "He weakened my strength in the way, he shortened my days;" and, turning to Jehovah, cries, "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days. Thy years are throughout all generations." With His feelings as a man we are thus made acquainted; for, really a man, He could feel, and did feel all that man, as man, should feel under the circumstances in which He was placed in grace to us. A sinner dreads death because of the consequences to him after it. A saint may rejoice because of what is beyond it. But man, as man, can only view it, as the Lord here does—the cutting off of His days—akin to Hezekiah's feelings, who expressed himself in a similar manner (Is. xxxviii. 10).

We read in Phil. ii. 7, that the Lord Jesus made Himself of no reputation (*or*, emptied Himself), and humbled Himself; the former manifested in His becoming a man, as a servant subject to God; the latter displayed in His submitting to death—the death of the cross. Both these, but especially the first, are exemplified in this Psalm. He emptied Himself, how truly, how fully; for, though He is the Lord Jehovah, of whose creative and sustaining power the universe bears witness, He was found as a man upon earth, crying in His affliction to Jehovah. All man's feelings He could and did enter into; and the effect of intense mental suffering, the Word tells us, He learnt by experience (Luke xxii. 44). Here He describes how His affliction acted on

His bodily frame (3-5), a condition to which man may be subject—to be pitied, yet not to be wondered at; but when it is of the Lord Himself that we read it, we may wonder indeed. Added to all this, He was reproached by His enemies, who were banded together against Him (8). Nothing, then, is before Him but death, and that the death of the cross; for though atonement is not the subject of which the Psalm treats, the reason why He was to be cut off is stated (10). Thus He emptied Himself, and He humbled Himself. He stooped to be a man, and was to die the death of the meanest of men. To this He here looks forward, not as a contingency, but as a certainty.

Thus feeling about it as none but a man could feel, His perfection as man appears in a twofold way. He receives it all as from Jehovah, and is occupied with God's thoughts about the future, as regards the earth, Zion, and the world.

He must die, but it is God who takes Him away (24). He must pass off this scene by His enemies persecuting Him to death, but He regards this as Jehovah's doing (10). Facing death as He here does, He speaks, as has been observed, of nothing about Himself beyond it. Seen upon earth once, when He entered death He passed off it, and the world saw Him no more. "Withered like grass." Born into this world a king (Luke ii. 11), saluted as such in His infancy (Matt. ii.), proclaimed as such by the multitude on His public entry into Jerusalem, Himself too declaring it as He rode upon the ass's colt (Luke xix. 38, Matt. xxi. 5), death seems to have cut short all hopes founded on His Messiahship (Luke xxiv. 21), and effectually to have barred against Him the way to the throne. "Cut off, having nothing," fitly described Him.

Perfect as a man, He is not engrossed with this, but looks forward to what saints will witness and enjoy upon earth after His decease. Death, then, is not here contemplated for those who shall witness what He describes, and enjoy what He predicts. "I shall be withered like grass," He says of Himself. "But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance (or memorial) unto all generations," is His statement about the Lord God of Hosts. This at once introduces a sketch of God's plans about Zion, the earth, the destitute, the world, and all who belong to it.

What are those plans upon which He can dwell, to be carried out after His decease? They are far-reaching and

comprehensive. The heathen and all the kings of the earth will be concerned in them. Nations and kingdoms will find that they affect them. Zion must be rebuilt, her desolate condition must be reversed, and the Lord must appear in His glory. Then, too, will it be seen, that Jehovah regards the prayer of the destitute, and does not despise their prayer ; for the afflicted, persecuted remnant of His people shall rest again finally in their land and in Jerusalem.

But, how can this be secured if the enemies of the righteous can make war against them upon earth, and even Messiah Himself be cut off? Upon what ground can they hope, that objects and purposes, so opposed to this world's interests, can ever triumph and be made good? Can righteousness ever gain the ascendancy in a sphere where self-interest is the ruling passion, and hostility to God the prevailing feature? What answer does the Psalm make to this? It does give a complete answer ; and what an answer it surely is ! All the future rests upon Jehovah's nature and character :—"Thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever." Upon this is based by the afflicted one the certainty of the fulfilment of the word. Generations may pass, but Jehovah abides. Man goes away, but God never changes. To Him, then, He looks to fulfil all the prophecies about Zion and the world. He, as a man, would be cut off, but Zion's hopes would not fail, for Jehovah ever remains. Let the wicked, then, triumph as they may—let Satan seem all-powerful—Jehovah's nature assures the saints, that not one of His words shall fail of its accomplishment. Of men we may have to speak in the past ; as regards their connection with earth, "they have been." Of Jehovah we can always speak in the present, "He is ;" or, if we think of the future, "He will be," therefore He will fulfil His word. Upon this, His eternal existence, as a rock which time cannot disintegrate, nor the waves of man's opposition uproot, earth's future and Zion's sure blessing can, and do rest. What ground this is to take up ! He who has pledged His word will never pass away. So His purpose, who is ever-existing and almighty, shall assuredly be established. A consideration this is full of comfort for the godly, but most solemn for the ungodly. On Jehovah's immutability and nature His people can lean ; and, to point this out as equally true for future generations, these words were written (17-20). Solemn as this consideration surely is, it becomes intensely solemn, when we learn who that One is who cries

in His affliction, and speaks of the malice of His enemies. He is Jehovah Himself, as we have seen; and God answers His appeal, by declaring, that all may be acquainted with it, His eternal existence, and the mighty power of Him whom man despised and even abhorred. Heaven and earth may pass away, but He is, and His years have no end.

What, then, must those expect, who, having crucified Him, refused afterwards to believe on Him? What, too, must those have before them who persistently stand out against Him? Where He has been dishonoured, there will He act in power; and Jerusalem, which witnessed His crucifixion, will rejoice in the exercise of His goodness and avenging power. What will His enemies then receive? On this the Psalm is silent, being beyond its scope. The portion of the children of His servants, a portion to be enjoyed upon earth, it does relate:—"The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee." But of nothing beyond earth does it take cognisance. What a change will then take place? He died; His enemies survived. He will re-appear in power and great glory; the children of His servants will rejoice, and be blest, whilst His enemies will be—where? Other scriptures tell us their then condition, and their future portion. (Rev. xix. 21., xx. 5, 12—15.)

Balaam, looking forward to the future, exclaimed, "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this?" He asked a question which was not given to him to answer. To us the answer has been made known. None of those, who now believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, will be living upon the earth when He returns to reign; for, caught up previously to meet Him in the air, they will come with Him, and behold from above the afflicted One in heavenly glory and power. (1 Thess. iv. 17., Zech. xiv. 5., Rev. xix. 14.) Will those, then, left behind on earth, after the Church has been removed, behold these things of which the Psalm speaks? Some will, but none, we believe, will be among that number, who, once having had the offer of God's grace, have resisted it. For of all such, who shall be on earth when He returns to it in power, we read, they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thes. i. 9, 10; ii. 12). Will such have another chance?

Scripture is clear. Those who share not in the first resurrection at the commencement of His reign, will only be raised up for judgment at its close. There is a resurrection unto life, which will be a completed act when He begins to reign. There will be a resurrection unto judgment for the ungodly dead at the close of it. (Rev. xx. 4, 5, 12, 13.) All, who share not in the former, must have to do with the latter; and the lake of fire, the second death, must be their portion for ever and ever.

This solemn question answered so clearly from the Word, why should any, who have the opportunity of sharing in the portion of God's saints, exclude themselves from it? The number of the heavenly saints is still incomplete; the house furnished for the feast is not yet full; and the Lord, by His servants, is still beseeching souls to enter while there is room.

JOHN I.

THE first part of the first chapter of John gives a twofold character of the Lord—Son of God, and Son of the Father. Not only had He created all—not only does all the intelligence of God dwell in Him—but He had the competency of God to make sons. These glories—Son of God, Son of the Father—are brought out in connection with blessing to poor sinners. The light is too strong—that I shrink from; but when I hear that He came to make sons of poor sinners, and bring them to the bosom of the Father, in *love*, I say, Let me see that light. It is a glory surpassing creatorial glory; yet man does not see any beauty in that in which God sees everything. The poor sinner says, I see nothing!

In the second part of the chapter we see Him connected with God's own mind. God had a purpose, and He took the Son of His love to work it out. He brought His own name in where the power of sin only dwelt, and the work is committed to Him as the One competent to put everything to rights and take away the sin of the world. The new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness is the answer to this. He is on the road to turn all out of heaven above, and out of earth beneath, that Satan brought in. Where shall you be in that day? Spilt, as one turns over a cup and empties out of it all that displeases Him? He is the chosen One! Do we care for Him? Do we live for Him, or do we not?

The last part of the chapter does not take up the person of the Son, or His being intent on this work for God; but the person of the Lord in detail in His humiliation, which you and I must know each for ourselves. The accessibility of Christ—the approachability of His person is brought out. There is nothing there to scare, nothing to terrify, but ten thousand times ten thousand things to attract. There was that about Him altogether different from anyone else. The grace that was in Him was ready to meet every felt need of the soul.

In the second part of the chapter He is the doer of things which are needful in order to approach Him, and which man must have individually if He would meet God. He appropriates these things by faith. There is something very wonderful in faith. No sooner does faith come into the heart than the enquiry springs up as to the person of Christ and where He dwells. He had no abiding place on earth—He has an abiding place *now*. John sees Jesus pass, and says to his disciples, “Behold the Lamb of God.” He lets a little word out of his heart, which is everything. What should they do who hear such? Just what these did! The word had got hold of their hearts and they “*followed Him*.” They went blindly after Him, the Lamb—one like other men—nothing to frighten them. He goes on walking with His back towards them, still drawing them. Any drawing is of Him. Do they say, “Oh, that I could find Him—follow Him!” Who puts a barrier? The poor sinner needs drawing. These disciples, in following Him, were carrying out the mind of God as to His Son being a drawer of men. Faith led them to fulfil the thoughts of God.

He knew Peter (v. 42), and had the first word with him. He says, as it were, Not only do I know you, but you shall know me. I have absolute power over you, and can do just what I likewith you, and I will put my mark on you. (We know him as “Peter,” and not as a sinner, to this day.) I have got the key to your circumstances. I have perfect disposal of you.

What a thing it is that perfect power of Christ! He put it into the heart of Andrew to call Simon, and when He told Simon that He knew all about him, Simon had not a word to say, and the scene closes. Do not the children of God know this? O, the presence of a Heart Reader! Did He not know all your circumstances when He took you up? Did He not know what a poor breast-torn sheep you were, and all the dirt you were in? How He would have to put you on His

shoulders and carry you home! Did He not say, I know all, and will do all that is my pleasure with you? What is the stay of my heart? Is it any rest to know that I have followed the Lord for years, and that I shall go on to the end, and that my purpose will last? Not that! It is that the *Master* called me, and that I know His beauties are as a link in a gold chain, drawing me on (as He called Philip) and have led to the resurrection side of the cross. My Master in beauty here, and in beauty up there—shining on me—forming me—linked with me!

By whatever form of truth—by law or by grace—it was something in Christ which drew me after Him. The *call* of the Lord is power to bring on that soul—whether He says to John, “Come up hither,” or to Philip, “Follow me.” He has all power, that Blessed One. He comes to *draw* and *call*, leading on after His own walk and work—for I must have a share in that too.

The best preaching of the gospel is that telling of something about Christ that cannot be shut up in the heart, because of its greatness.

Philip has large thoughts about Christ. He says to Nathanael, “You know the *Book?*” It is all about one person, and *we have found Him!* Oh! there was a heart there to go on after Him. How he puts out things that would stumble many. If my bosom cannot rise to the highest glories of Christ, there are some glories with which I can be occupied. It was not Nazareth and Joseph’s son, but God’s side of Christ which was occupying Philip’s soul. Nathanael was a *thinker*—a student. (A poor stupid thing reason is!) Faith is simple, and Philip gives heartfelt utterance to his experience—“Come and see!” It was a beauty of Christ that could not be gainsaid, that he had seen—had tasted—and the Lord was drawing through him. And, though Nathanael speaks in a sort of taunt about Nazareth, *and the Lord heard it*, He does not turn His back, but declares him an “*Israelite indeed*, in whom is no guile.”

“*Before* that Philip called thee.” Nathanael is in the presence of One who knew him long before. He knew him as a man of prayer—(Nathanael could not deny that it was so)—a man who had got to his wits’ end, and had got to God’s resources. The *Lord* knew it, and calls him an “*Israelite indeed*.” David had tried to hold up his head, and keep up a good appearance, but it burst out at last, and he made a

clean breast of it; then there was "no guile." (Psalm xxxii.) "I saw thee." He can read the heart in its relationship with God. The eye of the Lord is on all His people before they know Him. He can read all, and do what He pleases. His eye passes up and down—sees all circumstances—knows everything about them. There is no title too magnificent for this wondrous Person—Son of God and King of Israel.

"Henceforth" (not "hereafter")—and mark, He brings in another title. The chapter begins with "Son of *God*"—His heart rejoices in that of "Son of *Man*." No title more precious to the Lord Jesus Christ—no title more sweet to the blessed One than this. All approachability—all competency for *man* is presented in it! He lets out what is dear to His own heart. You shall understand my heart as "Son of *Man*," if you are following me.

He had to do with a *heart*; so faith has. From the time the person of that Lord was known, it became clear that this Son of *Man* should be the centre of all God's plans, and all in heaven crown with honour that Man who is the key-stone of the arch of God's building. He came to draw poor sinners—to save the lost. Not only have we here the glories of His person as Son of God—Son of the Father—Vindicator of God, as Lamb of God, to put away sin—but there is something for the heart individually in His humiliation. Something has to pass between each sin-burdened heart and Himself; not merely what He is *to* God, and has to do *for* God, but what He and I have to do with each other—what He has to say to me, and I have to say to Him, as to all those things of darkness and wickedness in which He found me. I know He *can* read me—He *has* read me over and over again—never complimenting me, but showing me a grace that told me who He was, and drew me away from the things around me to Himself—the Son of *Man*—for whom I desire to leave all and follow.

If you have not had such interviews with the Son of *Man*, you cannot take your place with Nathanael and Philip.

Faithfully, O how faithfully, O Lord, Thou hast kept—Thou dost keep—Thou wilt keep us to the end, till the Father's house is gained and reached! Then we shall have all joy in Thee, and know fully the blessing of being connected with Thee!

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

W. G. H., Perth, Ont.—You ask for something of the difference between the expressions Sin, Sins, Transgression, Iniquity, Evil, etc. Also a “practical word concerning Infirmities in contrast with Sins.” As to the two first words, generally speaking “sin” is used for the evil nature from which “sins”—the actions—the fruit of that nature, spring, coming forth independently of any provocation by or resistance to the law. The latter may be divided into two classes, viz., devil sins and brute sins, if I may so say.

“Transgressions” are sins which become such because of the positive infringement of a known command or prohibition—a stepping over the line laid down.

There are two words in the Greek language which are frequently both translated “iniquity” in the English Bible (*ἀδικία* and *ἀνομος*); the one correctly so, and simply meaning injustice—a departure from what is righteous; the other “lawlessness,” of which more again.

“Evil” is used for what is malignant, mischievous, wicked. It comes from the same word as that “Evil One,” the author of all that is malignant and wicked—he whose temptation caused man at first to fall, and become the heir of labour and sorrow, pain and misery.

In 1 John iii. 4, we read, “Sin is the transgression of the law,” which is a totally false translation, and wrong doctrine. It should be, “Sin is lawlessness,” i.e., the casting off the authority of God. It is the more remarkable when we find that Adam’s failure is not termed “sin,” but “transgression.” See Romans v. 14: “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,” &c. Here the apostle is speaking of those who lived between Adam and Moses, and died—death proving that sin was there, of which it was its wages even in this world. He speaks of such as having “sinned,” i.e., come short of the mark, while God had not as yet given the law. Yet, when he speaks of Adam’s fall, he does not name it “sin,” but “transgression”—because Adam broke through a known prohibition which God had given, forbidding the eating of the fruit of the tree—and thus going beyond the mark which God had laid down.

“Infirmity,” or its plural, is frequently used with reference to the sickness of the body; but, when used in a moral and not a physical sense, it might more correctly be translated “weakness.” See such passages as Rom. viii. 26, “The Spirit also helpeth our weakness;” 1 Cor. ii. 3, “I was with you in weakness;” 2 Cor. xi. 30, “These things which concern my weaknesses;” ch. xii. 5-9, which read, “For my power is perfected in weakness; most gladly, therefore, will I rather boast in my weaknesses,” &c., “that the power of Christ may dwell upon me.” See also v. 10, xiii. 4; Gal. iv. 13; Heb. iv. 15, xi. 34.

It is something of which we can glory, as you may readily perceive. Sometimes persons use the word with respect to the failings of the Christian, and I think that this, coupled with the way it is translated frequently in the English version, leads to the making excuses for these things. Scripture uses it with regard to the weakness of the Christian as a man, and, as 2 Cor. xii. shows, that in this felt weakness (which God makes us feel consciously) He works, and thus the thing done is His work, through the weakness of the vessel.

If the vessel works, it only hinders and ceases to be a vessel. If I have a tumbler on my table to hold water, that is its work ; if it moves (supposing this possible), it ceases to be of use as a vessel, for the time. So with the Christian ; he is "not sufficient to *think* of himself," or to *act* of himself. Then comes in a power, which is not the life he possesses in Christ ; nor is it the vessel which contains the treasure, but God, holding the vessel in weakness by and through the sorrows of the way, and manifesting the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh.

It is the same word as applied to the Lord, as "crucified in weakness." (2 Cor. xiii. 4.)

Now, as to "sins," we know that these are forgiven us, thank God, through the precious blood of Christ, who died for them, and by faith in Him. God says He will remember them no more. A person learns this through a free gospel, and is happy in the truth of it. Another thing comes ; he finds, perhaps through some trip, that he has the same tendencies and the same nature as ever in him, albeit having learned forgiveness for what he had done. Then comes another thing ; he must know not only that Christ died for his *sins*, but that he has died with Christ, and has thus been delivered from *sin*—the nature, or state of the nature, for which there is no forgiveness. This becomes a question of experience, as that had been a question of faith, and hence more difficult to learn deliverance. I say to a person, "Christ died for your sins and put them away," and he is happy at having learned this. I continue—"And you've died with Christ—you're dead." "No, no," he says ; "I foolishly lost my temper this morning over such a trifle—that proves I am not dead." Thus you find the soul struggles and struggles to get free from the bondage of an evil nature, and really never gets deliverance till it ceases to struggle, and submits to be delivered by another—even Christ—and "reckons itself dead to sin." Then all is free. Yet the nature is unchanged ; but it is no more "I." There is an old "I" and a new "I" discovered, and no confidence in the old.

It has often been pointed out how that Rom. iii.—v. 1-11, deals with the question of "sins ;" and Rom. v. 12—viii., with "sin." The first is met by Christ dying for me ; the second, by my dying with Him. Adam brought in the state of sin, in which Cain was born ; but Cain murdered his brother, which was the fruit of an evil nature in this state. The one was sin—the nature ; the other, the sinful deed produced by it. We must have deliverance from the former, and forgiveness for the latter, before we can stand in God's presence in the light and at peace.

A sinner is not chargeable before God as a matter of judgment for what he *is*, but for what he has *done*. The son of an exile for high treason was not held guilty of what his father had done against the king. He was born in exile ; but he might have returned as a loyal subject. But *he* sins against the king too in the state in which his parent involved him, and becomes expatriated himself for his own sin as high treason as well.

So we, born in sin, have also sinned against God ; and thus our practice and our state are both a state of ruin. Take a common case to illustrate sin, sins, and transgressions. My child has had very evil habits ; he throws stones and breaks the windows. His conscience tells him that it is wrong. Where did he get the mischievous

nature that liked to do wrong? This is sin. But the actions are sins; known, too, by his natural conscience. I send him a message, forbidding this evil practice. Again he does it. This is transgression or trespass. This was like the law given to sinners. It added the authority of God to what the natural conscience knows of good and evil, in forbidding the evil. But the law always assumed sin in the nature, though it did not reveal the fact of its existence. You could not forbid a person to do a thing that he had no intention or nature capable of doing. Hence, "by the law is the knowledge of sin," *i.e.*, the nature, which it has discovered. If you tell the children when you go out, that there is something in that drawer, but that they are not to know what is there, every child in the house is at once, as the common expression goes, "dying to know." The command provoked the nature which is opposed to it. This is what the law did. "Therefore," says Paul, "it was added for the sake of (*χωρίς*) transgression;" and "sin by the commandment became exceedingly sinful," *i.e.*, it became transgression. Hence, too, in Rom. v. 13, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law."

E. E. W.—What do you take to be the credentials, what the power of an "ambassador for Christ?" (2 Cor. v. 20.)

A.—First of all, the Apostles are the "we" in the passage and context. God was in Christ reconciling; this was during His service on earth. Then He was rejected and crucified, man proving himself hostile to the fulness of His grace in Jesus. Then Christ's ambassadors are sent with the word of reconciliation. Their credentials were that He had sent them—their power the Holy Ghost, who was sent down to witness to the glorification of Christ, and to the completeness of redemption in Him. Still, while the Apostle had this ministry committed to him in a special manner, the principle goes on, and Christ sends those who can say as He, "We also believe, and therefore speak." (2 Cor. iv. 13.) This is ever the credentials of His ambassadors, their power the Holy Ghost, who speaks in and by them.

I believe, while there may arise a nice and delicate question as to the translation of v. 20, that it would be too familiar to say that God was the beseecher: it would be wanting in reverence to Him. Still, as done on His behalf by the ambassadors He sends, it amounted to its being done by Himself. Still, the Apostle would not say so formally, but softens it by the "as" (*ὡς*). The thought is conveyed tolerably in the authorised version of the Bible: God was in Christ; then they were Christ's ambassadors; He was as beseeching by them. This is the evident and lovely thought. I do not think the sense would warrant "considering that," &c.

W. T.—What do you take to be the exact force of the word in 2 Cor. iii. 18, translated, "Beholding as in a glass" (*κατοπτριζόμενοι τὴν δόξαν*)?

A.—The context, as the truth of the passage generally, seems to be best rendered by Liddell and Scott as "*reflecting* the glory." I have used "*mirroring* the glory," but it has been thought too poetical; while "*reflecting*" conveys the idea in a less poetical word. Contemplating the glory by faith, we become a reflection of it; we reflect it here, and are changed, &c. "Beholding" is scarcely adequate to convey the whole thought.

The passage is, I believe, one of acknowledged difficulty as to translation; but the sense of it is simple.

THE SECOND COMING AND REIGN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE RESURRECTION FROM AMONG THE DEAD.

CHAPTER IV.

I COME now, beloved, to speak on a subject bearing a close relation to that which has been before us, and one of the deepest importance; yet which is but little before the people of God. I allude to the resurrection from amongst the dead. You find this subject frequently treated as just the topmost branch in the great tree of God's revelation, instead of being one of those momentous truths connected with Christ and Christianity; the very sort of resurrection by which He rose from among the dead—the seal of the perfection of His person, and the declaration of His being the Son of God in power—as raised from amongst the dead by the glory of the Father; the sort of resurrection which will be ours, who believe in Him as the seal of the perfection of that work of Christ in which we stand.

What was it for Him then? The mark of God's love—of the glory of Christ's person—God's seal upon everything that He did.

What will it be for us? The mark that God delights in us—that we are accepted in the Beloved; that to which, "If by any means"—even if martyrdom were in the way of it, Paul says—"I may attain unto the resurrection from out of the dead." It is the mark of the condition of the child of God, before the rest of the dead are raised for the settlement by judgment of their state.

Those for whom Christ died—who are washed from their sins in His precious blood and saved—are to have a totally different resurrection in time, condition, everything, from the wicked.

But I shall have to go carefully through Scripture in order to carry home, through grace given me, the truth and the conviction of the truth to every heart as to the manner in which this special truth is unfolded. Many have accepted it on the faith of others, and for such, as for those to whom it is unknown, I desire that their faith may stand, not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.

We have seen how that He who left His people with uplifted hands, and passed to His glory—who still with uplifted hands watches over them to intercede and bless, will return. He is coming back at an hour we think not—

at a moment only known to the Father—to receive us to Himself; to put us by an act of His power into the place for which He has fitted us, and which He has prepared for us. Already “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,” “in the twinkling of an eye” we shall step from this scene of darkness to the light of the glory. We shall draw one breath for the last time in this scene, and, to use a figure, the next in the glory of God.

This is one side of the truth—the Lord’s side. The subject I now have before me is our’s—the response of the redeemed to the voice of Jesus, from on high.

First of all, then, let us begin by the great fact that in no place in Scripture do you find the common thought of a general resurrection. A general judgment has no place in Scripture, nor has a general resurrection. The mingling of the righteous and the wicked does not take place, whether in resurrection or in final judgment. In the scene of Matt. xxv., where the separating of the living nations takes place before the “Son of man,” it is but a small portion of the vast myriads who have peopled the earth whom you find; those found alive at the last moment of that interval during which the Lord has been causing the judgments of His hand to pass over the earth, precursory of the millennial kingdom and glory. They are separated, as is well known now to many, and sentenced according to their reception or rejection of the “brethren”—the third party in the scene, who, no doubt, are the godly Jews of that day who have testified of His coming kingdom and glory.

It is said that every well-taught Jew believed in a resurrection of the dead; at least, that all *Jews* would rise; the Gentiles he looked upon as dogs. Martha’s word to the Lord, in John xi., tells what a Jew believed. But it was not a resurrection *from* the dead at all. “I know,” she says, “that he shall rise again in the resurrection of the last day.” Now the Lord announces to her another thing; but, alas! which she could not then understand. “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou *this?*”

A resurrection of the dead would embrace all who have died in one common category. A resurrection *out of* or *from* the dead—not merely from death, but from the other dead, leaving them behind—is another thing.

If we turn to Mark ix. 9, 10, we shall see with what wonder the first announcement of it was received by the disciples of the Lord, as He spake it to them after coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration. They had seen the wondrous sight—Jesus transfigured before them, with His face shining as the sun, and His raiment “exceeding white,” as no earthly fuller could whiten it; men in this same glory, too, speaking familiarly to their master—knowing divinely all that was to come.

When they descended from the mountain, He “charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from among the dead” (*ἐκ νεκρῶν*). But mark their surprise as they questioned “one with another, what the rising from among the dead should mean.”

They did not question the rising from death, or the rising of the dead. They never doubted for a moment what all godly Jews believed. But the separating of the righteous and the wicked, and a class to be raised in this way, leaving others behind, was a totally new thing, which had not heretofore been seen. It was coming.

Read with me a passage in Luke xiv. 13, 14, also. It shows how the thought was spoken of by the Lord as one becoming known from the Transfiguration and onwards. “When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blest; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just:” a special thing for them only, when the rewards for faithfulness here would be awarded.

Pass on to chapter xx. 33-40, where we have the Lord dealing with the infidel Sadducees of that time. They refused the thought of a future state of rewards and punishments, and they came and put a case to entrap the Lord Jesus, as they supposed. They imagine a case of seven brethren, the first of whom had taken a wife, and dying childless, the second took her to raise up seed to his brother; and so on to the seventh. Who then of these brothers was to have her in the resurrection?

The Lord’s reply contains one remark of deep importance amongst its details—a remark which is the real root of all infidelity and ignorance at all times:—“Ye do err, not knowing the *Scriptures*, nor the *power of God*.” (Matt. xxi. 29.) Two things—ignorance of Scripture, and want of

faith in God's power—lead to a thousand mistakes and errors. You will find too, when we bow in faith to these things, that another thing hinders as well; we bring our own thoughts to Scripture, and seek to make it endorse them. We settle in our minds that such and such are true, and thus we come biased in our minds to read His word. Much of the teaching of this nature leaves no impression behind, and produces no fruit in the hearers, for it is not really the word of God sown in the heart, but the ideas of man. If you bring a thought to Scripture, you dim so far what God has to say; if you receive a thought from it, you have received it from God Himself.

Here the Lord shows that a special class, and they only, would partake in the blessings at this resurrection out of the other dead. In such a state too, human relationships here below would be a thing of the past. We do not rise as husbands and wives, parents and children; but as the angels of God, so would the elect be.

Now, when Christianity is introduced, Jesus having risen out of the dead, amongst whom He had entered in grace, and become the firstfruits of that sort of resurrection, the Holy Ghost was sent down from the Father by Jesus, and on this ground Peter addresses the Jews. Remark, too, how, in chapter i. of the Acts, Judas having gone to his own place, Matthias is chosen of the Lord, by the lot of the disciples, "to be a witness of his resurrection" (v. 22). This was the important point, the resurrection of Him who had walked amongst them here.

When Peter therefore preaches, in chapter iii., offering the Jews the return of the rejected One, and that the glory and kingdom would then "come from the presence of the Lord," if they would now repent. "As they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captains of the temple, and the Sadducees"—those instruments of evil in opposing the truth—"came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection—that which is from among the dead." (Acts iv. 1, 2.) The passage here is most emphatic, pointing out the kind of resurrection which the apostles announced. The Sadducees hated the thought in general; but they specially hated a resurrection which would leave others behind.

Paul too, preaching at Athens (Acts xvii.), announced "Jesus and the resurrection" (v. 18), and that God had

raised Him up from among the dead, in token that He would, at a day appointed, judge the world in righteousness by Him.

Thus far we see that the common thought of a general resurrection held by the Jew is corrected, and the revelation distinctly made of the resurrection of a class of persons to take place at a special time, leaving other dead behind.

There is a passage in Romans viii. 11 which also bears much on our present state, and that resurrection out of the dead, being the fruit of it:—"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus our Lord out of the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by (or 'on account of') his Spirit that dwelleth in you." The saint is raised because of this, for his body has been a temple of the Holy Ghost.

Thus we find three great reasons why the truth of resurrection should be before us. First, it was the witness of the glory and perfection of the person of the Son of God; second, it is the mark of God's delight in us who are thus saved through the perfection of His work in which we stand; and third, we are raised because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost.

Now we will turn to the fifteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians. Some at Corinth had been denying the truth of the resurrection. Satan had succeeded in bringing in wrong thoughts through the laxity in practical righteousness amongst the saints. They were asleep to righteousness. This is the way the enemy has ever succeeded. The loins are ungirded, the conscience is not good, and the enemy thus gains access for thoughts which are not of God.

Still, how true is the old adage—"Out of the eater came forth meat." God makes these very errors the occasion for fresh and fuller unfoldings of His truth and His ways.

The chapter I shall divide into seven distinct parts. It is a lengthy one, and some may understand it better thus.

1. The facts of the resurrection attested by the witnesses (*vv.* 1-11).

This section unfolds the blessed and simple story of the Gospel—the work of Christ dying for our sins, "according to the scriptures." The thoughts and counsels of God thus recorded must be carried out, for the salvation of the saints depended on this. It would not be enough to say, as Hezekiah, "Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back;" or like David, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed

our transgressions from us." No: it was Jesus taking up our sins in the full burning blaze of the holiness of God, and there that burning holiness burst with all its tremendous power and wrath upon the head of His Son, and all were borne and swept away with His own blessed righteous hand for ever. The Surety goes down to the grave, when thus "made sin for us, who knew no sin," and then He comes up from the grave in the majesty of a conqueror, by resurrection. God has set His seal upon the work and shown His acceptance of it by raising His Son. Then the witnesses proclaim the fact that "He is risen." Paul enumerates the manifold list of them, until he comes to the "last of all," himself also, "as of one born out of due time."

Remark, too, how this sweet story of grace touches his heart—how the moral power of his words finds an echo in his soul! "For I am the least of the apostles, that I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which (was bestowed) upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (*vv.* 9, 10).

Surely we can say too, "By the grace of God I am what I am." What am I? A child of God, without a spot upon me in His sight—as white as snow—meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. How is this? Is it by the efforts of my own heart? Nay, all "by the grace of God;" God's unasked, unmerited favour to me, when He had demonstrated and conscience owned, that I was lost.

2. Paul goes on to unfold the story of grace in the light of the resurrection of Jesus. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." Then I may add, if Christ be raised, my faith is not in vain, I am not in my sins (*vv.* 17-19).

3. When once he has reached the present result of the resurrection to us, his heart cannot remain there; it launches away to the distant future—the boundless ocean of eternity (*vv.* 20-28), where the glories of the age to come, and the state of fixed purity of the "new heavens and the new earth" flow from, and are founded on the precious work of Christ and His resurrection from among the dead. I may remark too that up to *v.* 19, it is the general thought of a resurrection which he reviews. But in the twentieth verse and following, it is a resurrection *from among* the dead which becomes the

defined thought. Christ was the firstfruits of *that* sort of resurrection to which the righteous would attain. And it was something to "attain," as Paul could testify: "If by any means I might attain to the resurrection from amongst the dead." (Philippians iii.)

If a general resurrection were the thought of Scripture, why does he thus labour and run to attain to that which even the most wicked man on earth would have as well as he? These results, reaching on to the eternal glory, flowing from the resurrection of Jesus, are found in these verses (20-28), commencing with the resurrection of Jesus from amongst the dead; then of those who are Christ's "at his coming;" and then he passes over the thousand years of glory in the world. "Then cometh the end," when the kingdom of glory is over; when "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." This sentence hints to us of His power put forth in emptying the graves of the wicked dead for judgment, after His earthly reign in the kingdom is past; but it is the only notice taken of the wicked in the whole chapter.

4. Now we come to exhortations to the Corinthians, or any who need such (vv. 29-38). And then to the heavenly and earthly glories, and how, when glorified, it will be the same bodies we shall have as to their identity; but different as to their state.

5. This he applies to the resurrection out of the dead (v. 42), but introduces the "second man"—the "last Adam" in His glories and victories in contrast to the first.

Enemy after enemy rises before his mind, under which the "first man" had succumbed and fallen: "*Sin*" had come in to Paradise at the first, and "*death*" came in by sin. The "*law*" was given which was "the strength of sin"—forbidding the lusts of the heart, which was prostrate as a slave under these lusts. "*Dishonour*" and "*weakness*" were but the portion of those who thus had fallen. The "*grave*" followed dishonour, weakness, and death. "*Corruption*" ensued as to the bodies of those held for a while in the graves till the "second death," "the lake of fire." Thus sin, the law, weakness, dishonour, death, the grave, corruption—all had done their work. The first man had succumbed and was prostrate, a captive to them all, awaiting the final judgment. But the "Second Man" had stepped into the scene of ruin. (The "first man," was but a name to characterize the myriads and myriads of his fallen race.) He had gone

down in the dishonour, the weakness, the death of His cross. Here He exhausted all the divine wrath of God as to sin, and He has borne our sins and put them away. From the cross He is taken and laid in the grave. Then God enters the scene. The Son of the Father had entered death to glorify God. By the glory of the Father He is raised from amongst the dead, and "saw no corruption." He thus breaks the bars of death asunder, and emerges from this phalanx of enemies, their Conqueror. He has brought "life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel." God then turns in the magnificence of His grace, and hands us over in divine love and goodness these spoils, so that we can say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. xv. 57.)"

Thus the sorrowful tale of the first man's history, from Eden to the cross, is told; the Second Man enters the scene when the first has failed under every trial. He was weighed in the balance and found wanting. But just as the first man is not *named* such until he had begun outside of Eden as the head of a fallen race, so the Second Man is not *named* such until He rises and ascends on high. The first man was that in title before he left the garden; the Second Man is the second in title, before He emerges from the ruin of the first in resurrection; but neither receive the name, until the one is driven out from earthly Eden, and until the other has been crowned with glory and honour in the Paradise of God!

Why, then, seek anything from that man from which "no good thing" can ever come? Why re-open the history of him whose history God has closed? Why not bow in faith to the demonstrated ruin of the first Adam, and pass to the place and standing of the last Adam by faith also? No more to be a child of Adam in anywise, but a child of God. Jesus then is that "Second Man" looking retrospectively to the "First." He is the "Last Adam" prospectively, for there is no advance beyond the Adam in whom is all the delight of God.

Doubtless we have in us plenty of the first man to contend with and subdue; but it is as belonging to and having the place of the Last in divine grace before God for ever. This is the secret of Christian responsibility. "As is the heavenly, so are they also which are heavenly," and this even now. "And as we have borne the image of the earthly, even so shall we bear the image of the heavenly"—this in time to come.

6. But with all this, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Not merely is it that sin cannot inherit it; but the natural life we now have cannot. How, then, do we reach the place where the last Adam unfolds His glory for ever? "Behold, we show you a mystery," says the apostle, and his glowing pen briefly touches the way in which it will come to pass. "We shall not all sleep," he says, "but we shall be changed," and more quickly than the eye-lid flashes upon the apple of the eye to reject the mote which, poised in the sunbeam, nears its tender surface. The trumpet shall sound, and the mighty army shall rise—the bodies of the saints who sleep shall come forth unheard, unseen by the sleeping world; "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Jesus' power put forth for His own will impart to them His own condition in glory—"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

Too late then to judge if they are fit for the scene, when they are already raised in glory. All our lives will come out then: we shall repass our history, and see it as God has seen it. But for us there is no judgment—the resurrection from among the dead was the result of our present state of acceptance "in the Beloved." The responsive song of the church is heard then, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Death was the door to judgment, now it is the path to glory.

7. The last section comes now:—"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (v. 58). The Corinthians thought but of the blessing and reward in this life; they were forgetting the truth of resurrection. No, says the apostle, we are going to have it in another life, beyond this passing scene; "therefore, be ye stedfast;" all that is of Christ in our pathway here will abide; all that is not will die down and perish with the scene we leave behind.

Meanwhile, let us seek to know Him, and the power of His resurrection. Let us seek to walk as men who have died and risen with Christ, learning the fellowship of His sufferings, and conformity to His death, if by any means we may attain to the resurrection which is from out of the dead. (See Philippians iii. *passim*.)

GOD'S KING.—No. V.

ON THE CROSS AND IN THE CONGREGATION.—Psalm xxii.

“BECAUSE of Thine indignation and Thy wrath” are words uttered by the Lord in Psalm cii. with reference to the reason of His death. How they can be reconciled with what He deserved, as His walk and His ministry show, Psalm xxii. clears up. On the cross He bore God’s wrath, but as the sinner’s substitute.

That this Psalm treats of Him, the sin-bearer, who died upon the cross to make atonement, the New Testament makes plain. The first words of it were uttered by Him on the cross, when for the first and last time they were used in all their fulness. The language of the 8th verse was the language of the chief priests to Him as He hung in agony on the tree, unconscious that, they only made themselves the mouthpiece to express, what David beforehand had declared the Lord’s enemies would say. The action described in verse 18, we are expressly told, was fulfilled at the foot of the cross, when the soldiers parted His garments among them, and for His vesture, woven without seam, they cast lots. The first part of verse 22 was accomplished by the Lord Himself on the day of His resurrection, the historical account of which John gives us, and the doctrinal teaching of which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews brings out to us. (John xx. 17, Heb. ii. 12.) None, therefore, with these facts before them, can doubt of whom the Psalm speaks—nay, more, who it is who speaks throughout it; for one person only, can we say, here speaks for the instruction of God’s saints. He, who cries out at the beginning, leads the praises of the redeemed in verses 22-25. He before whose eyes the soldiers divided the garments, and whom the chief priests derided with their taunts, describes the grand results for Jehovah which would accrue from His death upon the cross. It was proper, we must admit, that the Lord Jesus should Himself proclaim to men and the universe the glorious results of His agony and death.

What a condition was that to which Messiah, God’s well-beloved Son, stooped! God’s saints can find comfort in the remembrance, if called to suffer for the truth, that they have part in the sufferings of Christ. (2 Cor. i. 5, Col. i. 24, i. Pet. iv. 13); but He had to say that, in one respect, in suffering for God, He stood alone. “They trusted,” He says of saints at a former epoch, “and thou didst deliver

them. But I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people." It was indeed so when servants of the chief priests buffeted Him, and soldiers of the Roman Governor mocked Him. An object of contempt and ridicule too for the multitude was He made, every feeling of a man outraged, every right of a man violated. These were ingredients in that cup in which bodily suffering was added to mental trial. Beside all this, and far deeper than all these sufferings, He experienced what no human language can portray, for no human thought can conceive the agony which drew from His lips the cry with which the Psalm opens, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Here, and only here, in the whole Bible, have we any clue to what He must have passed through, when dealt with by God as the sinner's substitute; yet it is but a feeble clue after all, for the negative manner of expressing His greatest suffering cannot convey to our minds the positive agony that He then underwent. Just enough is conveyed by the words to teach us that those sufferings were inexpressible, and inconceivable by man, though real, and really borne. For it was not as anticipating something which lay in His path, that He uttered that cry on the cross; but, as having already experienced it, He thus cried out. The extent, intensity, and character of His sufferings men knew nothing about till just at their close.

Of both suffering from God, in making atonement, and suffering from man, the Psalm speaks, but in markedly different terms. Of the former the Lord has to say, "So far from helping me." Of the latter He cried, "Be not far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste Thee to help me." (19.) Sufferings, needful to be endured to make atonement, He sought no respite from; sufferings from men, who took advantage of His condition in grace, He asked deliverance from, and received it. The Lord heard Him, and delivered Him. From what formed no needful part of the momentous work He came to perform, He asked for help, and, we learn, received it; but from that which could not be averted, if God's will was to be done, and man's salvation to be secured, He shrunk not, nor received relief.

"That all was done, that all was borne,
Thine agony, Thy Cross, can tell."

The Psalm then divides itself into two parts in verse 21. Throughout the first part we meet with turmoil, discord,

rage, and enmity—men attempting and accomplishing all they desired, in putting Him out of the world who was the object of their unrelenting hatred. In the second part we meet with an atmosphere of peace and blessedness. Throughout the first part the Lord is passive, suffering from God and from His creatures; throughout the second He is active. Men's thoughts, motives, and desires are disclosed in what they did to Him; His thoughts and actions are told out in His own words. But, though in the second part all is peace and quietness, there is no silence. The din of this world's discord had been heard when He hung on the tree, beset by the bulls of Bashan, and taunted in His bodily agony by those who professed to be leaders and teachers in Israel. All that quieted down by the death of the object of their hatred, the noise of men's opposition giving way to the wailing of the women and others who lamented Him. Night set in, and the darkest day, which the world had ever seen, became a thing of the past. His enemies returned to their homes and to their families, to resume, when the Sabbath was past and the feast was ended, their wonted occupations. His body was laid in the tomb, the stone rolled to the door, and all seemed secure. The guard of soldiers kept watch over the grave of Israel's Messiah. Men had done all they could, pursued Him to the latest hour of His life on earth, and only stopped, because death effectually barred all further action against Him.

The silence which ensued on His death He first broke, and thereby showed what was in His heart. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." Not a word of judgment, not a thought of vengeance, only love, and a desire for God to be known, we learn, then occupied His thoughts. Love was manifested in thinking of others, and the desire to make God known was expressed in the resolution to praise Him openly. "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren," (Heb. ii. 11, 12), tells us, what the Psalm does not, something of the personal excellence of Him who hung upon that cross. "All of one," *i.e.*, one lot or company as men, He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Marvellous grace, that such a statement should be made in God's Word, connecting together those who were otherwise

wide as the poles asunder—the Sanctifier and the sanctified. He first declared it, and the Holy Ghost, by the Apostle, enlarged on it. It is not, however, universal brotherhood, embracing all the race, that we here read about. Such a tenet is foreign to Scripture, and only betrays gross ignorance as to God's nature and man's condition. This brotherhood is only predicated of the Sanctifier and the sanctified—terms suggestive of man's condition by nature, which needs that he should be sanctified, as well as of the nature of Him who sanctifies those otherwise unsanctified; for, what a mere man, however holy, could never effect, He does, and provides that they should know it at the earliest possible opportunity.

On earth, before the cross, He had proclaimed in what close relationship to Himself He would regard all those who heard and did God's will (Luke viii. 21). To His disciples He had said that He was their master, and all they were brethren (Matt. xxiii. 9). Now, after His resurrection, He first addresses them as His brethren, being not ashamed thus to describe them. To Mary first (John xx. 17), then to the company of women returning in haste from the sepulchre to announce the Lord's resurrection (Matt. xxviii. 10), He entrusted a message to His brethren. To whom were they to deliver it? What class of people could this be? They all knew without a doubt, and carried the message without hesitation to His disciples, who were His brethren. At that time, therefore, there were those on earth whom He thus owned, and the women recognised them as such. Are there any still? Thank God there are! For all who hearken to God's Word are born of God, and are of that class styled by the Lord as His brethren. Found on earth in the company of the saints (Psalm xvi), acknowledging a common position with them even after His resurrection (Psalm xl), He here announces that they stand in the closest relationship with Him, for His Father is their Father, His God is their God. As God's Son from all eternity, He might have said, "My Father and your Father," without any implication (doctrinally) of having taken human nature; but as a man born of the Virgin, He adds, "My God and your God." Between Him and the saints the difference is immense, and must ever remain so; but the relation to God is similar. His words tell of a distinction whilst declaring the relationship—My Father, my God, your Father, your God.

The relationship confessed, the saints declared to be His

brethren, we learn what He would make known. God's name He would tell to them. His public ministry ceased when the Jews finally determined to crucify Him. But death and resurrection could not separate Him from His brethren. On the very day that He rose, He was found in their company in Jerusalem. The doors shut, for fear of the Jews, could not hinder intercourse between Him and His own. He stood in their midst, and taught them the fulfilment by His death of the written Word of God. None but His disciples did He then, or afterwards, own as the saints of God, or the assembly of God. The Jews had cast Him out; but outside of Judaism, and apart from the temple ritual, in the room where His disciples assembled, He was found. A company, whom the Chief Priests and Scribes, with the Pharisees and Sadducees would disown, He acknowledged, and to them He declared God's name, *i.e.*, what He is, evidenced by what He says and does. The Jews thought they knew about God, His name, however, was to be declared by Christ, and that only to His own brethren. That company, to be afterwards known as the sect everywhere spoken against, had a special interest for Him, and has still. To those composing it He declared what God is, *i.e.*, His name; and besides this, in their midst, the only congregation which God could then, as now, own, He was to praise God. How contrary was all this to men's thoughts! Those who seemed but fit subjects for the executioner's weapon, unworthy to live, to proscribe whom and to persecute whom even unto strange cities was an act, it was thought, well pleasing to God, these were the only people after the Lord's resurrection amongst whom He would be found, and to whom He would declare or tell out God's name. "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live" (Acts xxii. 22), lets us into the thoughts of the Jews about the disciples of the Lord Jesus. And yet it was to this class alone that the Lord here says He would address Himself, and amongst them strike the keynote of praise. The songs of Zion might resound through the temple courts, but the keynote of praise, to which God could now hearken, was struck elsewhere. First struck by the risen Saviour, it has never yet died out. From age to age, from country to country, has this song of praise spread, and heaven itself will for ever ring with the full, rich melody flowing forth from each one, and the unbroken harmony of countless

voices uniting in praise to God and to the Lamb. In the church, an assembly gathered on new ground apart from Jewish ordinances, the true note of praise was first raised by Him, who came from God and went to God. Praise for the heavenly people was rightly started by Him who belongs to heaven. At the Red Sea, Moses and the children of Israel, with Miriam and the women with their timbrels, praised God for their deliverance. In this Psalm He who is Jehovah, as a man, leads the songs of the redeemed.

There is a reason for this. He has suffered, and has been delivered; therefore He can sing, leading His people in their songs of worship, because of God's mercy and God's delivering power. As having experienced it, He can sing of it, and thus teach His people the suited language to use before God. In Psalm xl. His deliverance He states would be an encouragement to others; in Psalm cii. God's answering the prayer of the destitute is to be instruction for a future generation; but in Psalm xxii. it is not encouragement for others, nor instruction for a future age, but the suited language for God's saints now, that He would illustrate by His own example.

The deliverer has been Himself delivered, their Saviour has known God's salvation for Himself (24). His song, therefore, His people can join in. But here we are taken beyond Judaism to the sheep outside the fold—the two flocks, as we know elsewhere, now made one, composed of believers from amongst the Jews and from amongst the Gentiles. Into depths greater than they have ever sunk, Christ has gone down, and from them has been brought up, the witness to them that God answers prayer; the witness, too, by His resurrection, of the perfect acceptance of that work because of which He had to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

But a time is coming when the praises, led by Him, of the congregation of God's saints, as at present owned by God, will cease to be heard upon earth. Caught up to be with the Lord in heaven, their place and their service will be found no more on this globe. Will praise on earth then for ever cease? No; Israel will again be brought forward as God's earthly people, and praise will ascend from the godly remnant of them, manifested as the people that Jehovah has formed for Himself. Who will lead

them in praise? The Psalm answers this question. Christ will do it. Again will He strike a keynote, and God's earthly people will respond to it:—"My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation. I will pay my vows before them that fear him" (25). He alone has been in circumstances similar to those they will pass through; but, having gone down into death for them, "died for that nation" (John xi. 51), their deliverance is secured, who will have experienced a trial similar to His, anticipating the outpouring of God's wrath—in their case deserved, in His case endured as the substitute and the sin-offering. That we are here on the ground of the earthly people is clear, for the next verse (the consequence of what is celebrated in verse 25) tells of the meek eating and being satisfied, which will only take place when the Lord appears to reign. Contrast verse 26 with verse 24. In the latter we have the consequences of the Lord's deliverance, which saints now can share in. In the former we have what will only be made good to those who shall inherit the earth. Then follows the full result as it affects the whole globe:—"All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds (families) of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall worship; all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him; and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this."

Thus the counsels of God about the kingdom will be made good; and in this Psalm, which shows us the depths into which the King in His grace descended, we have announced the certain and full accomplishment of all that God has purposed about this earth. Dying on the cross, all might appear lost; so here, where the former is set forth, the latter is also reaffirmed. Not one thing has failed, Joshua could say, "Not one thing shall fail," we can add. All will be done, the kingdom be Jehovah's, and His Son be the King, who is Jehovah; for "the word of our God shall stand for ever."

REMARKS ON INTERCESSION, ADVOCACY.

THE LORD'S PRAYER, &c.

THE intercession of Christ as Priest, in Hebrews, is not for the forgiveness of sins, nor for sins properly at all, but for mercy and help in time of need to succour them that are tempted, because all the sanctified are viewed as perfected by one offering.

In 1 John ii. the advocacy is exercised when one has sinned, because there fellowship or communion is spoken of, and that is interrupted by sin.

Forgiveness, in the sense of non-imputation, cannot be sought by one set free in Christ, because he does know that sins are not imputed to him. But he confesses his sins, and fatherly forgiveness is given him. Confession goes much deeper into the conscience than mere asking forgiveness.

There is a forgiveness which applies to Christians, and to Christians only—what I may call administrative forgiveness, which has nothing to do with non-imputation or righteousness. See James v. 15, compare 1 John v. 16, and 2 Cor. ii. 10.

In 1 John ii. the advocacy of Christ is founded on righteousness and the efficacy of propitiation being already there in Christ.

That pardon is plenary on coming to Christ is clear; and to refer to none else, (*i.e.*, Scriptures) in Heb. ix., x., it is largely reasoned out by the Holy Ghost. If not, such sins never could be cleared, as Christ cannot now die over again, and without *shedding* of blood is no remission. Christ must often have suffered.

To make a difference of time (as to all our sins being put away) is to confound the time of the Spirit's operation, in bringing our souls to faith in Christ and His work, with the work itself. All our sins were future when Christ bore them. The way in which "once for all," "for ever," and "no more" are used in Heb. ix. and x., is most distinct and characteristic.

As to the Lord's Prayer, it must be remembered that it was given before the Lord's work was accomplished, and, of course, has the characteristics of the time in which it was given, because it was perfect. Nevertheless, statements that accompany it shew that where the spirit of forgiveness does not exist forgiveness does not belong, though we are imperfect; and no one in his senses would ask for forgiveness from God in the measure in which our forgiveness is perfect, though

in spirit and purpose it is, according to the new nature. Christendom and Christians have forgotten that our place and standing is that of Christians, consequent on the accomplishment of the Lord's work and the gift of the Holy Ghost thereupon. The things belonging to the Father's kingdom may be possessed, or partly still desired; but when the Lord's Prayer was given it was not come, and the desires which Christ would teach His disciples are according to the position they were then in. Hence also the Lord's Prayer is not in His name, for the work and plan on which that was founded was not yet accomplished. J. N. D.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ON "SINGING AT THE GRAVES OF OUR BRETHREN."

DEAR —, I am glad you have written to me, as to my letter in "Words of Truth," of May (*Page 97*), on the above subject, for I wished to have added a thought or so more to what I had written.

The letter, you will doubtless have perceived, left the matter quite open in cases which sometimes arise when there were no sorrowing mourners laying their dead in the grave, for the singing of hymns, as the Lord might lead, in the happy expression of Christian fellowship amongst those who are there. I have not the least objection to this. But I believe that those who go to the graves of their brethren, ostensibly do so, to "Weep with those that weep." (Rom. xii. 15.) If there are no weepers there, I am sure it is most happy to "Rejoice with those that do rejoice;" as it is to seize any occasion when we meet our brethren for Christian communion and joy.

I doubt if Paul could have sung at the grave of Epaphroditus had he died when performing this service for Paul, in bringing up the tender care—the "odour of a sweet smell," of the beloved Philippians to his prison. "God had mercy on him," says the aged prisoner, "and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." (Phil. ii. 27.)

When the relatives, husbands of beloved wives, parents of beloved children, widows of beloved husbands, and the like, are surrounding the grave, the wrench has just come, and the deep wound of the heart is felt in all its keenness (though, doubtless, it may be more keen later still); I should doubt if it were spiritual power in their hearts to sing around the graves of those whom they had lost. I should (for myself at least), feel it were callousness and the want of "natural affection," which characterizes the "last days." (2 Tim. iii.) I am sure God would not have us think lightly of these dealings of His hand. I would feel that His hand was upon me at such a moment, and that He was looking for a chastened, lowly spirit, that was bowing under the blow. I have no doubt but that "afterwards" these things "yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness" to the exercised heart. But it is "afterward," and not at the moment. Then, in the calm and quiet of an exercised heart, when the bitterness of the blow has passed away, we may surely rise

above it all, and be able to praise Him, and be glad and rejoice for the joy of those who are "with Christ," and away from the sorrows of this scene.

I believe that in John xiv. 28, "If you loved me ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father," the Lord seeks such an interest in our hearts for *His* happiness, that He looks for our being happy in the thought of His happiness and joy, as gone on high, no more to be a "Man of sorrows" in this scene. I am sure none of them could have understood it at the moment. And besides, it is not rejoicing that they were then about to lose Him; but, as I have said, *present* rejoicing in the consciousness of the happiness of Jesus as exalted in the Father's glory. It may be in principle true of those who are His; but the application and meaning of the passage refers to what I have said. Thus when our sorrow *will have subsided* for a loved one, we do learn to rejoice no doubt, that they are with Him.

The substance of my letter was written to a brother, on the occasion of the funeral of a beloved co-labourer, who was snatched away in the midst of his field of usefulness. The brother to whom I wrote showed it to others, who approved much of it, and no hymns were sung. For this I was deeply thankful. Another wrote to me of the funeral, and said, None of us could have sung; there was not a dry eye there. This was as it should have been. The Lord's people should collectively feel that God's hand is upon them, when a valued labourer is taken away. They should do so individually, in like manner, when a loved one, closely linked by ties of flesh, or special ties, is removed.

I would hesitate to speak of what Scripture does not—"The joy of the blessed Lord at receiving that loved one," &c. I would rather speak of and enjoy His sympathy in the *sorrow* of the moment, when hearts are deeply feeling the death of one they loved.—Affectionately in the Lord,
F. G. P.

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"E. le P."—What authority is there for translating Romans iv. 25. "Was delivered *in consequence* of our offences, and raised again *in consequence* of our justification"?

A.—None whatever. Some have tried to render the *διὰ*, 'in consequence of'; others, 'because of,' but equally erroneously. This is because of the desire to connect the justification of the believer with the resurrection of Christ, instead of the time when faith operated in his soul. Scripture never separates those things. The first verse of chap. v. would thus be wrenched off from its true connection: "Therefore, being justified *by faith*, we have peace with God," &c.

I add the words of another:—"As regards *δικαίωσις*, *διὰ* is translated 'for,' as giving the sense, but in English. The point is not there, but in *δικαίωσις*. *Διὰ*, with an accusative is just 'on account of;' but *δικαίωσις* is not the thing done, but the doing of it, and it is this on which it turns. If it had been 'on account of our having been justified,' it would have been *διὰ τὸ δικαιοθῆναι ἡμᾶς*, and this is not the case till faith comes in. . . . The Greek rule is, that words derived from the perfect passive are the thing done, doing it, and the doer; *κρίμα*, the judgment; *κρίσις*, the judging; *κριτής*, the judge;

though all are not always there. We have δικαίωμα, δικαιοσύνη: I am not aware of δικαιώρησ."

"Q."—What is meant by "the likeness of his death," in Rom. vi. 5?

A.—"As to likeness (ὁμοιότητα), the reference is to baptism; but *ομ.* is not merely likeness as comparison. Christ was made in the likeness of man, according to this pattern. It is not the thing itself, but, in the case of Christ's humanity, clearly not the denial of it. If I have taken my place with Christ, I have taken it with Him as dead, and consequently, if it be *His* death, it involves, according to the same pattern, resurrection. He takes the reality of the thing, but takes it as expressed and patterned in baptism. In Romans we are not risen with Him in baptism."

"Q."—Montreal.—1. Is the thought of a general judgment of all, saved or unsaved, scriptural? 2. Is the believer ever brought into judgment? 3. Who are judged at the Great White Throne?

A.—1. The thought is not in Scripture. The giving up by the Church of the hope of the Lord's coming for His saints—raising those who had died and changing the living—was followed by the loss of the truth of a first resurrection out of the other dead, of those who are Christ's at that coming, a general resurrection being accepted. Then came wrong thoughts as to the present state of justification and acceptance in which the believer stood, and assurance of salvation was lost; a judgment to come was looked upon as the time and place to have that settled. This gave wrong thoughts as to the meaning of ordinances which came to be treated as a means to salvation; consequently power by superstition was put into the ecclesiastics, and this continued as a rule till the professing Church sunk into the world. Matt. xxv. 31, &c., is misused to favour the delusion of a general judgment of the dead—not seeing that it is the living, gathered before the Lord on earth—not the dead before the Great White Throne, and the earth and heaven fleeing away from His face who sat thereon.

2. The believer's state being settled here, for him there is no judgment. The resurrection out of the other dead, of which Christ was the firstfruits, is that kind of resurrection of which he will partake: its time, character, and the condition of those who partake of it, being the very opposite to the resurrection of the wicked; and the fruit and consequence of their acceptance, as it was of Christ's, and of God's seal on the perfection of His person.

He will be manifested before the βῆμα (judgment seat) of Christ (2 Cor. v. 12), and there repass his life; but he is already glorified before he arrives at it, so that it will be too late then to judge him and see if he is fit for heaven. Fancy the apostles being brought out of heaven to be judged, to ascertain if they were fit for the place they have been in for 1800 years, as well as other saints!

3. The dead in sins are raised for judgment at the Great White Throne. Those of the "first resurrection" have had their kingdom blessings for 1000 years with Christ, before this takes place. (See Rev. xx. 4-6.)

"WHERE I AM YE CANNOT COME."

JOHN VII.

THE whole of this chapter is founded on the fact of the entire separation of God from this world. It is a solemn truth that Christ has left this world for good, and His own words are, "Where I am ye cannot come." He has gone, and the world will never see Him again. He will come in judgment, when every eye shall see Him; but as He then was dealing in grace with man—looked at as coming into the world and associating Himself with men as Adam's children—that is entirely over. God had something better in store, which has come in for us who believe. The work of redemption was wrought out, but it is important for us to get hold of the fact that what saves us condemns the world.

God has tried man in every way. Adam sins, and the wickedness goes on increasing till God destroys the world, but saves Noah, who fails himself afterwards. After the flood God began to deal with man when he was separated from Him, having been driven out. He gives him the law, which man breaks.

When man was a sinner and a lawbreaker, then God comes in in Christ, as a last resource, so to speak. "I have yet one Son; surely they will reverence my Son." God comes down in Christ to reconcile the world unto Himself, and man says, "This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." So they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and it was all over. Christ leaves the world, and in His aspect of grace to it they never see Him again, and cannot go where He has gone—that is, the world as the world has lost Him for ever. It is, "God *was* in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," &c.—not "God *is*," &c. They would not be reconciled. They cast Him out.

At the commencement of the first three Gospels we find Christ presented to be received; but this Gospel begins with a rejected person. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not," we find in the very first chapter. It is not Christ presented to men to see if they would receive Him, but grace working when it was clear that they would not receive Him. In this gospel it is always the world, and not the Jews, that is spoken of. The Jews are put aside. "God so loved the *world*." "Light is come into the *world*."

There is a distinction between chapters viii. and ix. In chapter viii. His *word* is rejected ; in chapter ix. His *work* is rejected ; and in chapter x. He will have His sheep for all that. In chapter vii. the truth is settled, "Where I am ye cannot come." They were left, and could not follow where He was going. What I press upon you from that is, the total separation of the first man from God, judicially and morally. Before the law man gave up God, turned to idolatry, and God gave them up to such sins and vileness as could not even be named—God saying, as it were, "If you degrade God, you shall degrade man too." That is what "without law" came to. Law comes in, and brings out transgression. Christ comes in grace, and grace in its way of dealing man would not have. The *result* is manifested separation between God and man. Chapter vii. brings this out : "The world seeth me no more." His leaving the world was death and judgment to them. In that sense of grace, grace was rejected—it was all no use ; therefore the testimony of the apostle is—"The carnal mind is enmity against God." "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Either the tree must be good, and its fruit good ; or the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt. Man is now seeking to improve the tree, but poor fruit he makes of it. He may embellish it. Interesting things come out as regards the mind of man, but there is no return of heart towards God.

There was a kind of supplement consequent on the intercession of Christ, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," in Stephen's testifying to Him as seeing Him at the right hand of God. They would not have that either, and shut his mouth by stoning him. The history of the gospels is just our history. We cannot kill Him with our hands now ; but when He was presented to us, we preferred our own pleasure—we would not have Him. There is no *natural* connection with Christ, but a proved impossibility of it. How many there are who have a kind of hope of getting into the second Paradise in a far worse state than man was in when God turned him out of the first ! It is true of you naturally now that you have not got Christ, and where He has gone you cannot go ; but not *finally* true of you, I trust, for there is mercy, and grace, and salvation for the *vilest*—the very *vilest*. But this is true of the world, as the world, to which you belong. It is not true merely of wicked persons—for they are often more easily convinced—

but of respectably living, decent people. You have not got Christ where you are, and where He is you cannot go. The world is doing what Cain did when he *went out from the presence of the Lord*, built a city, and called it after his son's name. Then he had his artificers in brass and iron, and tried to make the world pleasant without God. Sin as sin was complete then (I do not mean the rejection of Christ now), but Adam sinned against God; Cain sinned against his neighbour, and gave up God entirely.

In that which is really salvation to us—the cross of Christ—we had no part but the hatred that rejected Him, and the sins that He had to bear. I am entirely separated from God in my Adam life, and I need a *new* life; but to be quickened in itself is not sufficient for me. Of course, every quickened person will be saved, and we *must* be quickened—must have a new life—be born again; but being quickened does not take away guilt and give me righteousness. It gives the sense of sin, desire for holiness, longing after God, and desire for His favour; but the soul cannot say, "I am *in* His favour," because it sees the sin. If, however, I have learnt that I am guilty, I am lost, then I see God doing a work all by Himself *for* me, and the question for the soul then is, *What is the worth of this work?*—what has God wrought? I say, the man who *has borne* my sins is in glory *without them*. If I am convinced that I am entirely *lost*, the question for me is, *Am I saved?* I see a work done entirely outside me and for me, and then the query is, Has God accepted that work? The answer to that is, The One who did the work is at the right hand of God. If Christ is *not* risen, I am yet in my sins. If He *is* risen, I am *not* in my sins. God puts His seal on the work by raising Him, and I am satisfied. I, as a believer, set my seal, not on the work, but on the truth of the testimony to the work—"set to my seal that God is true."

Suppose I have offended a person dreadfully, and a friend goes to try and make peace for me. He does make it all right, and comes and tells me so. I believe him, and it is all right and over. I had nothing to do with making the peace, but I believe the truth of the testimony that it is made, and thus what alone can give the troubled soul rest is the knowledge that God has accepted the work done, consequent on the glorifying of Christ. Christ, who was made sin for me, is now in the presence of God without my sin, the whole work

being finished. He is in the glory, having borne my sins ; but He could not carry my sins there. Aaron went inside the veil by virtue of the blood, but until he came out Israel could not tell whether he had been accepted or not, for he might have died there. I know that Christ has not come out yet, but the Holy Ghost has come out, while He remains there, and is given to those who believe, that they may know *now* that the work is accomplished and accepted, while Christ is hidden as Man up there—much more than Man, but still Man.

I am not only quickened, then, but I have received the Holy Ghost, and come to know that I am in Christ. That is much more than knowing that He died for me. If we are in Him, He is in us, and then comes the manifesting Him to the world. If He is in me, I am to let others see Him.

In this chapter, vii., it is the Feast of Tabernacles, that is, *after* the judgment. The harvest was past, and the vintage was past, both symbols of the judgment. "Thrust in thy sickle, for the corn is fully ripe"—"Trodden the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God." So, then, the Feast of Tabernacles has never been fulfilled yet. Christ was not going to fulfil it at that time. His time was not yet come. His brethren said, "Manifest thyself unto the world ;" but He could not do so, for His time was not come. He could go up to the Passover, for He was Himself the Passover, so that was fulfilled. Pentecost, too, was fulfilled when the Holy Ghost came down. The Feast of Tabernacles is yet to be fulfilled ; but Christ says, If you believe, you will get your time of glory before that Feast of Tabernacles comes.

The first effect of the Holy Ghost in me is connection with God. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ; but love, joy, and peace come first—that is, your place with God must be and ought to be the first thing. Then, of course, we should be seeking to testify of Him in our walk, and we shall get the meekness, temperance, &c.

Now, I ask, beloved friends, how is it with you ? Have you anticipated the day of judgment, and owned fully before God now that you are lost, and that to be judged must be to be condemned—for God's being full of love does not make Him pass by sin ? He sent His Son to put it away. Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree, is in glory with-

out them, and, all being settled, the believer is sealed by the Holy Ghost.

Then, I say, "If you live by the Spirit, walk in the Spirit." Let us see the fruits of the Spirit coming out in you. In chapter iii. we are quickened, born again; chapter iv., a well of water in him; chapter vii., rivers of living water flowing from him—that is, when he is sealed by the Holy Ghost.

The Lord give you to remember that your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, to be led by the Spirit, to walk by the Spirit—that whatever you do, in word or in deed, you are to show out the Lord Jesus—in buying or selling, in your dress, or in everyday duties of any kind, do *all* in the name of the Lord Jesus. What is not *that* is sin, because it is self-will, self-pleasing. The Lord give those who are His to glorify Him in all things.

GOD'S KING.—No. VI.

ON HIGH.—Psalm cx.

Two aspects of the Lord's death, as delineated in the Psalms, we have briefly looked at, viz.—Messiah cut off, and having nothing (cii); and the Lord making atonement, and its results (xxii). His resurrection, looked forward to in xvi., is regarded as an accomplished fact in xl., and His service consequent on it is predicted in xxii. Now we have a further step in God's revelation about His King, and we learn where He is at present. For, whilst xxii. takes us back in thought to the past and onward to the future—*i. e.*, what has happened on earth, and what will take place on this globe—cx. speaks only of the present and future, and so takes us upward in thought to the Lord's present place at Jehovah's right hand in heaven.

Accustomed, as many, perhaps, have been, to read the Psalms as isolated compositions, complete each one in itself, they may not have noticed, what every student of the Word should mark—that the book is not a collection of odes strung together at haphazard, without reason or method. Each Psalm has its place in relation to the whole collection, from which, if it were displaced, the symmetry of this divinely-ordered book would be marred, and the connecting thread perhaps broken. We may not be able in all cases to trace the connection, but attention to the order and subjects of the

different books of the volume (for the whole collection is divided in the original into five books: i.—xli., xlii.—lxxii., lxxiii.—lxxxix., xc.—cvi., cvii.—cl.), and to many of the Psalms in these different books, reveals a plan and an arrangement which has not, perhaps, been commonly suspected. By whom the collection was thus arranged we are not informed; nor do we know by whom each Psalm was composed. In places we meet with a series of Psalms taking up a certain line—*e. g.*, xlv.—xlviii., xciii.—c., cxx.—cxxxiv. At other times we have an arrangement inverting what would have seemed the natural order of the subjects, as where Psalms, celebrating the Lord's triumphs, precede those which make especial mention of His sufferings and death—*e. g.*, xxi. and xxii., lxviii. and lxix., xciii.—c., and cii. In the case of the Psalm before us, we have an example of a different class, its subject being the proper sequel to the thoughts brought out in cix. In the former we read of the Lord persecuted by Judas, whose punishment is then predicted. In cx. we meet with God's answer to man's opposition to His own well-beloved Son. Peter applies cix. 8 to Judas in Acts i., though others, beside him, are clearly spoken of as persecuting the Righteous One (*vv.* 20, 25). The same apostle quotes Psalm cx. in Acts ii. as prophetic of the Lord Jesus, to whom alone it can be applied.

On different occasions in the New Testament is this Psalm applied to the Lord. The Jews evidently owned that it did speak of the Messiah, for, when the Lord appealed to its language as pointing to the irresistible conclusion that the Christ must be greater than David, though descended from him after the flesh, His reference to it met with no disclaimer on their part. (Matt. xxii. 42-46.) On the day of Pentecost, Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, applied it to the Lord Jesus, lately crucified, and then risen and ascended. (Acts ii. 34-36.) Paul, when writing to the Hebrews, makes great use of it in reference to the Lord's person (i. 13), His work (x. 12, 13), and His present service (v. 6, vi. 20, vii. 17, 21, 28). Of Him then, and of Him alone, it speaks, for who, beside Him, could sit on Jehovah's throne?

Here should be noticed a feature different from any met with in the Psalms already taken up. In each of them the Lord is introduced as a speaker, and in two of them (xvi., xxi.) He is the only one. Here He is silent. Not a word, not a whisper, do we read of, that escapes His lips—in perfect

keeping with the character of the Psalm, and the place the Lord is here described as occupying. It was fitting, that, as Man, in humiliation, He should speak to God. It becomes man so to do. It is right that His exaltation should be proclaimed by Jehovah. So God addresses Him, gives Him His place, and by an oath confirms to Him an everlasting priesthood. But, though the Lord Jesus is silent throughout the Psalm, others are not. David, by the Spirit, speaks of Him and to Him. (5-7, 2-4.) The propriety of this we can all see. "God hath highly exalted him" (Phil. ii. 9), therefore He reveals it, and men should own it, learning from God, through His Word, what is the only suited place now in the whole universe for Him who hung on the cross.

What an answer this is to men's treatment of Christ ! They crucified the Lord of glory ; Jehovah has placed Him at His side. The One rejected by the world occupies the highest place in heavenly glory. His session there proclaims that He is not an angel (Heb. i. 13). He is, He must be, Jehovah, the Eternal One ; for of none but Him who is God could it be written, "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." A startling fact this is in more ways than one, for this tells us of His person, of His work, and of God's counsels.

(1) His person as divine is thus clearly announced, for no mere creature could ever fill such a place. God will not give His glory to another. No creature could ever sit there by divine appointment. On earth, as Psalm cix. depicts, He was poor and needy, the sport of men, the object on which they vented their rage, and one to whom they pointed with the finger of scorn. But no place is too high for Him to fill who was cradled in a manger, and whose body was laid in that rock-hewn tomb. As God, of course nothing could be added to Him ; He only returned to the glory He had "with the Father before the world was." (John xvii. 5.) As Man, He is where man never was before, and Peter quotes this Psalm when speaking of Him as Man. (Acts ii. 34-36.) God, therefore, and Man He is. Were He not God, He could not be there. But He who *is* Man is there—the Man Christ Jesus, made Lord and Christ. As Son of God from all eternity, He sits at the Father's right hand ; as man, He has been exalted by the right hand of God. (Acts ii. 33.)

(2) As to His atoning work, Paul shews us how this Psalm applies. The Lord has sat down, therefore all ministry at

the altar and before the mercy-seat with His blood has ended. His position, now seated, declares this, in contrast to the daily standing of the priests at their ministrations in the tabernacle, offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins. But Christ, "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for a continuance (*εἰς τὸ διηνεκές*) sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 11—14). God raised Him from the dead, in token that He accepted Him as the sacrifice; He has sat down, the proof that it has done all that was required. No man, indeed, has seen Him in this position; but Scripture reveals it to us, for the joy of our hearts and the establishment of our souls.

(3) His present place tells us also of God's counsels. They are unchangeable. The princes of this world in their ignorance crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor. ii. 8; Acts iii. 17). God has placed Him by His side, a testimony indeed, as we have seen, to His person and to His work; but a witness also of the sure accomplishment of the divine counsels. For seated there, until His enemies be made His footstool, tells us for what He waits, a fact needful for all to be acquainted with; for, though absent from earth for a time, He will yet be firmly established in the kingdom, and rule all nations with a rod of iron. Seated there by God's decree, it is clear that Jehovah has espoused His cause; and, as this verse tells us, will make good His dominion. God will one day make His enemies His footstool. Do men really believe this? Is the truth of the Lord's present place one to which men in their hearts subscribe? To be indifferent to Christ argues indifference to God and to His counsels; to be unconcerned about the Lord Jesus must be folly; to oppose Him must be madness. Jehovah has publicly declared that He will make His enemies His footstool. It is not, then, a kingdom simply that God promises to Him—a dominion, which none subject to it can overturn, but that those who have refused to acknowledge Him, and will for ever remain opposed to Him in heart, must one day be completely subject to His sway—made His footstool. How complete will be their subjection then! Divine power will make the knee to bend, when the heart has obstinately refused to bow under a sense of His grace. For if such is

His present place and future prospect, now at God's right hand, and by and by to be installed in His own kingdom by divine power, what must be His grace and love which moved Him, in obedience to His Father's wish, to become a Man, to die for sinners. It is, as we learn the excellency of His person, that we discover more of the greatness of His grace.

"From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool," is the comment of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as inspired by the Holy Ghost. From the Psalm we learn God's mind, from Hebrews the Lord's expectation. Thus at the earliest moment, as it were, after He, whom man had rejected, had been accepted by God on high, was the unchanging purpose of the divine mind with respect to the kingdom declared. His enemies will be made His footstool. Jehovah will do this for Him. With this stated at the outset, the Psalm proceeds to set forth some features characteristic of that time, showing that all on earth even will not be subject in heart, though all must outwardly acknowledge His sway. "Jehovah shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." Then Zion will be the seat of government, and in the midst of His enemies will the Lord rule. Observe, we read nothing of the extermination of all His enemies, for He will rule in their midst. Blessing there will be in that day—outward blessing for all—yet some will remain unchanged in heart, and be fitly described as His enemies. The millennium, though a time of peace, because the Prince of Peace will reign, will not be characterised by the absence of unconverted people. It is true, all acts of evil will summarily be dealt with, but an iron hand will be required to keep in check man's otherwise unruly will. "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies," gives us a clue to the condition of things that will then be in existence on earth. In conformity with this, we read elsewhere of the children of the stranger yielding feigned obedience (Psalms xviii. 44, lxvi. 3, margin), and are told of the great outbreak of evil after the thousand years should have run their course, when the devil will be let loose to deceive the nations. Man's heart, unless acted on by grace, will be just what it is now, when the Lord reigns, though it will lack the power, and in a great measure the opportunity, of doing as it pleases. To this, the dark side, there is,

however, a bright one. His people (for He will have one) will be willing in the day of His power, offering themselves willingly for His work, as some of the children of Israel did in the day of Sisera's defeat. These He will make use of, wherewith to chastise His and their enemies, (Zech. xii. 4-8, ix. 13, Micah v. 8, 9), endowed as they will then be with the energy of youth.

(To be continued.)

FRAGMENT.

At the Lord's table, the character of ministry will be neither *teaching* nor *preaching*, but that which feeds and nourishes, and leads the heart up to Christ: a bringing out of His blessedness to incite to praise.

"THE HEART OF A STRANGER."

Ex. XXXIII. 9.

"Also, ye shall not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." When no longer in the *place* of strangership, but in their own land, they would still know the *heart* of a stranger, having been such themselves in Egypt. And how sweet it is to know about our Lord Jesus, that although He is no longer a stranger here, but gone to the Father (John xvi. 28), yet, having been such when He was down here, He never forgets it, but knows by experience the heart of a stranger still! But how poorly it would express His tender love for "His own," to say that He does "not *oppress*" those who are "strangers" as following Him who was once a stranger here Himself, and having won their hearts, has carried them up to heaven where He is! Nay, "He is able to *succour* them," and He loves to do it; and He does it as One who has Himself "*suffered*, being tempted."

The strangers in Israel were objects of Jehovah's especial care, and were not to be "oppressed," even by His own people. How touching the recollection, that when "the Son of his love" was a stranger in this world, "*He* was oppressed and afflicted;" and though it is said (Ps. ciii. 6), "Jehovah executeth righteousness and judgment *for* all that are oppressed," yet in *His* case righteousness and judgment were executed against, and not for Him! "Awake, O sword,

against my shepherd, and *against* the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts : smite the shepherd" (Zec. xiii. 7). For "He was made sin for us," and righteousness must be *against* Him on the cross before it could be exercised *for* Him in resurrection and glory, and for us in Him, and through Him. But now He is crowned with that glory to which He has won new titles, and which He will shortly share with those whom the Father has "purchased" with the blood of His own, and has "given" to His dear Son (John xvii. 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24). And so the blessed Lord Jesus now is no more a stranger, but "in the Father," and with Him, yet He is "the same"—though "ascended up far above all heavens," as He was in weariness at Sychar's lonely well, or in weeping with the Bethany mourners. Nor does He forget in the glory of His present place, the pressure on His spirit of what He met with and witnessed in this world, that knew and owned Him not. And His heart of love has cherished interests down here among the "little flock" of His chosen and redeemed ones. Surely He *loves* them all. "His own which are in the world," He loves "unto the end." But are there not some among them who may especially enjoy the sweetness of reflecting that the Lord knows their path and their heart, *as having trod the same path Himself*? It was the heart of a "stranger" that Israel knew, for *such* they had been in Pharaoh's land, "*Seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.*" Was it not just this that Jesus was in the world?—His own world, yet unknown in it (John i. 10). Brought to an "inn," the place of strangers and sojourners to be born, but no room for Him even there! Not even a wayfarer's accommodation in a world full without Him. Rich and increased with goods, and having "need of nothing," as they thought, yet really the land of the "mighty famine," and He alone able to meet the need and fill the hungry with good things, yet for Him "no room"!

"O ever homeless Stranger,
Thus dearest Friend to me,
An outcast from the manger,
That Thou might'st with us be!"

And if a certain scribe thought it would be a fine thing to follow One possessed of such extraordinary power and resources as He, the Lord would let him know that it was a stranger whom he essayed to follow, not to a hole or a nest,

but to where He had no place "to lay his head." Such was the path of Jesus here; and hence He knows, by experience and recollection, "the heart of a stranger." Dear reader, does He know *your* heart and path in this way? If I am finding a nest and rest in this world where He never even sought one, making myself a *home* where He had not a place to lay His head, I cannot have the consciousness that He knows my heart in this sense. To be sure He knows all *about* me, for all things are naked and open to His eyes. He knows all *about* the persons He speaks of in Matt. vii. 22, who have prophesied in His name, but to the persons themselves He will say, "I never knew *you*." So also He knows what sin is—who knows or can know, as He who on the cross bore its judgment, what the enormity of sin is as against God? Yet it remains true that "He knew no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21). And no more does He *know* the heart of one of His professed followers, who would settle down and make himself at home, where *He* has called him to be "a stranger and a pilgrim."

But if, on the other hand—like Moses in the bosom of his family, in a land where he was for a while "content to dwell," yet confessing himself, in his son's name, to be a *stranger* there—you can look up to the Lord from the midst of whatever comforts His gracious hand has surrounded you with, and honestly say, "This is not my rest, Lord; a stranger confessed, Lord; I *wait* to be blessed at Thy coming again." If thus you can appeal to Him who knoweth all things, and tell Him you have not ceased to be a stranger in a strange land, but would, like Rebekah, gladly slide down from the camel's back at the first glimpse of Himself; then you can delight yourself in this, that He has been before you across this desert, Himself "a stranger here," and, hence, knows, not your circumstances only, but your heart in all its loneliness, "for He has felt the same." And He provides for us that, if subject to the leading and teaching of "the other Comforter," we may even here know that which is the very joy of the Father's house itself, even communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. He, once a stranger, enters into all the exercises of *our* hearts as strangers where *we* are, and He would have us to enter in faith, by His spirit, into all the tender love and sympathy of *His* heart where *He* is (John xvi. 13, 14).

W. T.

BETHANY.

GOD is the living God, and as such He is acting in this scene of death. He came into the midst of it as the living God. He could not have come otherwise. We may say He has not been here, if He has not been here as the living God; but His is resurrection.

If resurrection be denied, then, that the living God has been here, that God has interfered with the condition of this cursed heart-stricken world, is denied also.

It is blessed to see this, very sure and simple as a truth, and that has been the secret or principle of the divine way in this fallen creation from the beginning. Into Himself as the living God; into Himself or the resources which His own glory or nature provided, God has retreated, apart from a world that has involved itself in death.

Again, I say, this truth, this mystery, is sure and simple, full of blessedness, and that which, of necessity, has marked His way in this world. If His creatures have been untrue—His creatures of highest dignity, set by Him over the works of His hand—if Adam has disappointed Him, revolted and brought in death, surely God has to look to Himself, to draw from Himself, and then in His own resources in the provision which He Himself supplies, He finds the remedy, and this is in His victory as the living God, which victory is resurrection—His own resource of life in despite of the conquests of sin and death, let those conquests take what form they may.

I am looking only at one, but, I may judge, a very vivid sample of this.

Bethany in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem—a village on the other side of Mount Olivet, in the Scriptures of the Evangelists, shows itself to us as a happy, sacred, and mystic spot. It was happy, for there the Lord Jesus found, if anywhere, a home on the earth. It was sacred, for there He had some of the most intimate communion with His elect, which His spirit ever enjoyed. It was mystic, for there He exhibited this truth or mystery which I am speaking of—His victory as the living God.

Lazarus, His friend in Judea, Lazarus of Bethany, had died. They had buried him—all that they could do—the service of a fellow-creature. The dead can bury the dead—right it is in them to do so, but it is all they can do.

The Lord was then absent. But He comes in due season to awake His friend out of sleep, to raise him whom his friends had buried.

He reveals Himself in full, suited character, the character suited to that moment, and in which He had come into this world. "I am the resurrection and the life" He says.

Bethany at that moment afforded Him His proper material to work upon. Sin had there reigned unto death. Man had there just reaped the wages of sin. Lazarus had died. The sentence, "in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," had not been cancelled. That could not be. And now it had been afresh executed on this elect one of God in the land of Judea. But the Son of God, the living God Himself, comes to do His work, as sin and death had just done theirs.

Bethany thus became a mystic place. It had now exhibited God's great principle, the victory of the living God in this death-stricken world. This is the character it acquires under John's Gospel; and in this character the Lord brings it in the same Gospel. I mean in the next chapters. There the Lord sits as in the midst of the risen family. He is at Bethany after it has acquired its mystic character.

It has been constituted the expression of God's way in this world where sin is reigning, and now the Lord enjoys it. He is there as with the risen family. In spirit He is in the millennial world, and as the King sitteth at His table, the spikenard of His worshippers sendeth forth its goodly smell.

This was the first use to be made of Bethany, or of God's own great and ruling principle, His victory over death, or His glory as the living God. He enjoys it in the bosom of His elect. (See John xi. 12.) He has, however, more to do with Bethany than this. If He first enjoys it in the midst of His own, He must also resort to it as His relief from the disappointment which He was suffering from all He had been trusting, so that He may get an answer as from Himself, and find satisfaction there, let all beside disappoint Him as they may. (This is seen in Matt. xxi.)

Jerusalem had at that moment disappointed Him. He had sought her as the chosen seat of royalty on the earth, and had offered Himself quite solemnly to her as her King; but Israel would not, and He retires to Bethany—an action

simple in itself but full of significance, telling us that He has, in Himself, in His doings and victories as the living God, resources that will never fail Him and never disappoint Him.

This is full of meaning and of interest. But this is what He has been doing in this world from the beginning. Let death appear, let the judgment of sin be ready to be executed, whether in the garden of Eden, in the earth before the flood, in the lands of Egypt or of Canaan, in the midst of Israel, or, wider still, in the whole world itself, we can see Him acting as the living God ; providing atonement for sin by the principle of death, and bringing forth a living people from the midst of the scene of righteous doom and judgment of death. Bethany had already been constituted this to Him, the witness of this; and now when away, when fresh disappointments from the creature whom He had trusted come, He uses Bethany in this character. And I may say, when He retired to Bethany, He retreated to Himself and His own resources.

CHRIST IN EVERYTHING.

It is years now since I gave up letter-writing in the common sense of the word. Apart from Christ it is mere nature—in which, alas! we are too apt to live, and which must be bustling, because it has not Christ. The craving for letters is often like the craving for society, a substitute for the love of Christ. Ah! how few open the Bible with the same eager zest with which they open a letter! How few cannot live without daily correspondence with Jesus! I mean hearty, living, personal communion with Him, such as the Song of Solomon describes.

The Bible is like a veil on the face of Christ, and when the Spirit draws it aside, we see all His beauty, and that is what makes us strong and joyous and holy. It is gazing on the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Again, I like to think of the Word as a vessel which contains a precious wine. Now, there may be much to do with the outside, and the soul abide in death; but if there be but one small hole made in the side of this vessel, with what joy do we drink this new wine of the kingdom; or as it is in Isaiah xii., draw water out of these wells of salvation?

Now, it is to the heart that seeks Jesus that God ministers Jesus; for it is not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, any more than is salvation; though in another aspect it is only the diligent soul that is made fat. Read Proverbs ii., and also viii., for this; also 2 Peter i., where we are told to add to faith virtue, and all these other graces. But why? Not merely for the having *them* to God's praise and our blessing, but that we may be neither idle nor unfruitful in the *knowledge* of *Jesus*. Ah! that is everything, as Paul says—"That I may know him"—and again, "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." Other knowledge even about the Word puffs up, but this keeps the soul like a babe on the breast of its mother, and works into us the very grace and gentleness and love of Jesus Himself. Witness Mary, who sat at His feet. And the grace of Christ is an active thing. It is not the idle contemplation of a beautiful picture; it is the power of living for the comfort and good of *others*.

This is important, for many delight in the Word—honestly indeed—and yet, not connecting it with Jesus, it is like manna which stinks. Why do they delight in the Word? Because it gives *them* comfort. You see the heart is not on Christ, but on self. No wonder, then, though it is but as a very lovely song, which leaves only a remembrance of its having been heard. But when it is Jesus Himself we are after, He brings us into the banqueting-house, and there we hear the music and dancing, and for our life we cannot help joining in it. God would not have us to be invalids in His house all our life, feeding on our sorrows and our joys; but like loving children, who come in to a hearty breakfast in the morning, in all the gladness of His smile and the family joy; then who go out to work hard and heartily for Him all day, returning to dine, and to tell how we have sped in commending Christ, by our temper and our ways and words.

There is a verse in Micah, I think—"Do not my words do good to them that walk uprightly"—which contains much truth; and again in the Psalm, "To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." After all, the one thing needful is, to be near Jesus and to hear His words—everything else will follow.

I always find Christ with me in visiting *in His name*. Of course it is but death if He is not one's object in visiting. I find that when Jesus Himself came into the world, people

were taken up with ten thousand things in one way or another. But He came down not to be a party in their thoughts and to their views, but to get their ears open to the glorious news He had to tell of His Father in heaven. So I find that the current is so strong in most places, that if you do not go in with Christ you get weakened instead of being a help or helped. But it is unspeakably sweet when you can go to a house in the assurance that the current of the affections and thoughts is strong heavenward.

CORRESPONDENCE.

STATE OF THE SAINTS UNDER PROMISE, LAW, AND GRACE.

DEAR —,—You ask—"Can we say that Abraham and the patriarchs knew themselves to be eternally saved, when Heaven, Hades and Hell were unrevealed?" I do not cite all your question, but embody it in my reply.

Salvation, as now revealed by the gospel in the New Testament, was then unknown; in fact, the salvation of the soul was not then the subject of revelation. The first time it is definitely spoken of in Scripture is in Matt. i. 21, where the thought is that Jesus, *i.e.* Jehovah-the-Saviour, would save His people—not from their enemies, but from their sins. So also Peter speaks of the "salvation of your souls," in contradistinction to that from their enemies, for which a Jew looked.

The great truths of Heaven, Hades and Hell were not then the subjects of revelation. Until the gospel was known, after the Cross was past, these things were but darkly hinted at; still they were there, and in measure referred to and known. The wrath of God from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Rom. i. 18) comes out with the righteousness of God to all, in the gospel, which is His power to salvation. Exclusion from God's presence (Gen. i.) was seen in measure, as was the fact of the punishment of the wicked in a state beyond this life, but not in the clearness and distinctness which revelation has given it since then in the New Testament. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," shows that a punishment *beyond* this scene was known.

Before the Law was given, the saints walked with God, and Abraham, finding that he was to be a stranger and a pilgrim here, "looked for a city which had foundations;" something stable outside this shifting scene; but saw it dimly and vaguely, as far as we are told. Thus a state of blessing with God, and after death, was looked for by the faithful. Confidence in God was blessedly seen in them. He had as yet raised no question of righteousness between Himself and His people, as afterwards, by the Law. I do not therefore suppose they would have known the meaning of being "eternally saved." They did not know that they were "lost" to which "saved" would be the correlative term. They lived and died in faith, no questions having been raised between them and God to disturb

the blessed confidence of their hearts in Him, and their "faith was counted unto them for righteousness."

With the wicked, natural conscience condemned them; "their conscience the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another" (Rom. ii. 15). To this was added the responsibility of God's Spirit striving with man, at one period of his then history at least, if not in all (Gen. vi. 1); besides the recognition of "His eternal power and godhead" as displayed in creation, so that they were "without excuse" (Rom. i. 19, 20).

When the Law was given, another thing came in. God raised by it the question, Had fallen man, a sinner, any righteousness for Him? When this question came in, all was changed. The free intercourse of God in grace with His people before that time, was all stopped. Perhaps Moses' case, individually, may have differed to the others. But God retired and hid Himself in the thick darkness. He hung up a vail between Himself and His people. Before that He used to come in and eat and converse familiarly with them at the tent door. All was now changed, and free intercourse over. When conscience awaked under the Law, there was perfect misery, unless grace was known, and unless there was confidence in God; but that was outside of the Law altogether.

All this time God Himself was unrevealed. Much about Him doubtless was known, but as yet He had not come out and revealed Himself. Then came the Son of God, and here below He became a man. The unity of the Godhead was the great doctrine of the Old Testament, and this in contrast to the plurality of the gods of the heathen. There were hints constantly given, and seen to faith doubtless in measure, that more was coming, and behind all this. But the unity of the Godhead was the subject in hand. "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Elohim (God) is one Jehovah" (Deut. vi). "Unto thee it was shewn, that thou mightest know that Jehovah he is Elohim (there is) none beside him" (Deut. iv).

The Trinity of the Persons was never known in the soul until the Holy Ghost was given to dwell in us. Hence even the apostles knew not fully who it was who graciously walked with them on earth. If it had been possible for them to know that God was there—when the Son was revealing the Father on earth—it would have been possible to know God in duality; i.e., that He could be known in but two persons. This could not be. The Son reveals the Father on earth, the Father dwells in Him and does the works; but the Holy Ghost was the power by which the Son cast out devils—all was *presented* to man. But He must die and rise again, and go on high and give the Holy Ghost to those that obey Him; and now, by the power of the Holy Ghost, I know the Father, revealed in and by the Son. One God is thus known in the Trinity of the Persons, as a subjective truth in the consciousness of the soul. Peter might say, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and have a divinely-given revelation of this from the Father; but it was inoperative at the time, as many things are in ourselves, until known subjectively in our souls. A few verses on in the chapter (Matt. xvi.) he shows that flesh was not broken in him up to the height of the revelation, and indeed it never had its power until he afterwards received the Holy Ghost. The Spirit given when Jesus was glorified made all the difference.

In Jesus "all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily." There will never be, and there could not be, any further revelation of God, for all has been revealed, else the Son of God has not fulfilled His mission, which is simply impossible. The Trinity of the Persons is made known, and the Son has taken manhood into the Godhead—wrought redemption, and reconciled us to God by His death; and, risen with Him, we are sealed with the Spirit of God, and thus before Him in Christ Jesus, and He in us before men. The one settles our *place* before God, the other our *duties* before men. (*Cf.* Jno. xiv. 10.)

There is no confounding the Persons of the Trinity, yet there is no separating them. Each Person (as we speak) does different things, yet all work in concert and in the unity of the godhead. The Father sends the Son; the Son does not send the Father. The Son dies for me, not the Father. The Spirit sanctifies, quickens, yet so do the Father and the Son. All this is now *known* in Christianity, and under grace, and is quite different from what was *hoped for* by those under Promise, or *felt* by those under Law. Under the former, the Patriarchs knew Him as El Shaddai (God Almighty). See Genesis xvii. 1; and Exodus vi. 3. He was the all-powerful One, to watch over the pilgrim of faith. With Israel it was Jehovah—the self-existing One, who would bring to pass all He had promised. With us it is the Father, revealed by the Son and known by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us—one God in Trinity. Yet He who is such to us—the Father—tells us that He is the same who was Almighty to the Patriarchs, and Jehovah to Israel. Compare 2 Cor. vi. 18, and read Jehovah, for "Lord," where it has this significance.

You ask also, "Would the knowledge of the character of God alone give certainty?" In the abstract I would reply, Yes. But I would qualify my answer by saying, that you could not know His character fully until the Cross was past; so that the *work* of Christ must come in, as well as God having been revealed on earth. I may be attracted to Him as a Man on earth; but the conscience must be purged by His work which rends the veil, and all God's character known, perfect in grace, face to face with man at his worst. With the knowledge of such a revelation there must be certainty.

In Job's case, it was a deep confident trust that God would come in and deliver him somehow. (Chap. xix. 23, 27.) He desires that his hope and confidence may be graven upon a rock, to show how true and well-founded they are, as time would show. In the Spirit's speaking by him, there doubtless was a deeper thing implied than that to which Job's hope and confidence reached; just as the words, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," spoken to Moses (Ex. iii.), were used in unfolding a deeper truth in the lips of the Lord Jesus afterwards, in Luke xx., than the Jews saw. Job's hope rises up to God, and so he puts life in Him, in contrast with the corruption of skin and flesh, seeing that in Him was a power of deliverance from all this in God Himself, his spirit reaching onwards to a better resurrection.

Affectionately yours in the Lord,

F.G.P.

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

E. le'P.—1 John i. 7. "We have fellowship one with another," &c. Does not this mean the saints' fellowship one with another? Can it, by any possible means, be made to mean our fellowship with God?

A.—The simple meaning is, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship (*i.e.* Christians) one with another" (*μετ' ἀλλήλων*). The word is a plural one, but one which has no singular. If "with God" were the thought, it would have been said, "we have fellowship with Him." To say "one with another" would be irreverent and familiar to a degree, when talking of God.

"I reject entirely its being with God in 1 John i. 7; not merely think the other right. *Ἀλλήλων* is mere mutuality, and God would have as much communion with us as a companion, as we with Him, which is to be utterly rejected as irreverent and wrong. Scripture never speaks so of God; for God's having communion with us as between two equals, and *Ἀλλήλων* is thorough mutuality."

"Q."—1. What does Paul mean when he speaks of possessing the righteousness of God? Phil. iii. 9.

2. What is "being made the righteousness of God in him?"

A.—1. The expression is rather, "the righteousness from God." (Phil. iii. 9.) First of all, the sinner who believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, is reckoned righteous of God and by faith. It is not that so much righteousness is reckoned to him; but he himself is reckoned intrinsically righteous before God. (Rom. iv.) God acts righteously through the precious blood of Christ in so counting him. Christ, at God's right hand, is the proof that God's righteousness is manifested. His first act, when Christ met all His righteous claims as to sin and glorified Him, was to set Christ as Man in heaven. His next act is to count righteous all who believe in Jesus.

2. But this is not all. To the believer has been communicated a new life, even in Christ risen from the dead, the character of which is a justified life—(Rom. v. 18.)—a life on the other side of death and sin. Christ risen is this life; our life is "hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 5.) Christ has been "made sin for us," that we might become God's righteousness in Him, as gone on high. He is, in heaven, God's righteousness, and we become God's righteousness, *i.e.*, the expression of it, in Him.

Thus far as to what we now possess by faith. But we are journeying on to heaven to win Christ, and be found in Him, not having our own righteousness—even supposing we had all that Paul could boast of in Phil. iii. 4-6. He throws it aside, and counts it dross and dung, desiring and looking for another thing when he reaches the goal, even a righteousness which is from God by faith.

Thus you find that on the one hand he is already righteous; he is already "in Christ" by faith; while he is still, at the same time, running towards the goal, as in Phil. iii., to be "found" "in Christ" at the close, and to have the righteousness which is from God at that day.

The anomalous state of the Christian, "as having nothing" in himself, yet "possessing all things" in Christ, explains it.

THE SECOND COMING AND REIGN OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Chap. iv.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

MOST have taken it for granted on the faith of others, that there is a time of most solemn judgment coming on this earth, at a moment when they think not. It has been technically named the "Great Tribulation." Some have found the term in Scripture, and have received it thus as a revelation from God. They have discovered that they, as Christians, are not to be in that solemn hour; and having settled this, they have perhaps thought no more about it. Others have it is said settled that the Christian—the Church—has to pass through it, or at any rate, that only those who actually are looking for the Lord to come and take them to Himself will be exempted from that period of judgment.

It is a deep loss to the Christian that any part of God's revelation should be counted unworthy of his attention; and, although it may be one of those truths which belong to a time when he is not on earth, yet it may seem strange to some to know that we have more of the deep sympathies of Christ's heart unfolded to us in connection with the people who pass through that time of trouble, as also of that time itself, than of any other. I allude to what is found in the books of the Psalms, and also in the Lamentations of Jeremiah; and those plaintive strains which we find interspersed throughout the prophetic books of the Old Testament. The spirit of Christ has entered into the sorrows of that little remnant of His ancient people in the most surpassing way. It is in these very strains that we learn the deepest feelings of the heart of Jesus. So that while we are learning the events of that day, and the exercises of His people, we are learning more of Christ Himself. What more blessed theme can there be? None, surely, which will cause our hearts to grow in grace more than this. Precious as are our heavenly privileges in Him, as identified with Him on high, more precious still it is to trace His ways, His heart, His voice, when He identifies Himself with His people on earth, in whatever condition He finds them. I mean, of course, with what God has produced in their hearts.

These blessed thoughts and experiences are not my present theme, but rather the period itself, which is the

darkest which the world will ever see, before the Sun of Righteousness arises with healings in His wings for His oppressed people, and with the burning of judgment for their oppressors; thus, at last, He will free this earth of its groaning, and bring in the time of blessing so longed for by all who love Him!

It is distinctly stated in three passages of Scripture that the earth will one day be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. While the people of God have found on the one hand the commission of the Apostles to carry the glad tidings of the salvation of sinners to every creature under heaven, and joyfully marked the breadth of God's free grace to "whosoever will," on the other hand, while they noted the fact and result stated in these three passages (Num. xiv. 21; Isaiah xi. 9; and Hab., ii. 14)—they erred in concluding that it was the Gospel—the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, which was to be the instrument to accomplish this desired result. Hence this mistake of centuries has to be combated in pressing the truth of the subject now before us. The idea of the Gospel having such a mission has woven itself into the texture of almost all the religious systems and thoughts of men; so that, in seeking to present the truth, one feels that though it is no easy task, one is sustained by the blessed sense that there is in every Christian an aptitude for understanding divine things, which the Word of the living God contains, and a response to the truth, *i.e.*, the things that are, in the heart of every child of God, although the prejudices of religious thought have warped his truer sensibilities.

This earth shall be covered with the knowledge of Jehovah! All shall know Me, says He, from the greatest to the least: but not by the Gospel of His grace. "Let favour (*i.e.*, grace) be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness," says the same Prophet, who foretells of that time of blessing for the earth (Isaiah xxvi. 10). Let him speak again (*v.* 9), and he will tell us when and how this day of blessing will come. "For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." The Lord must first lay bare His mighty arm, and uplift His hand to accomplish His strange act—for judgment is not that in which His heart of goodness is at home. He does not strike until "the iniquity of the Amorites is full;" to allow it then, would be to deny Himself, which cannot be.

A "short work" He will then accomplish—sharp, decisive, and complete; and every refuge of lies will be swept away as the morning cloud, and the groans of the earth will be exchanged for praise; everything that has breath shall praise Him, and the very trees of the field will rejoice before Him.

I shall begin then by noting six distinct passages of Scripture which speak of this period, termed the "great tribulation." We shall see, I trust, on *whom* it is to fall; *who* are to be saved out of it; *when* it takes place, and *where*.

The first we will notice is in Jeremiah xxx. The prophet was to write in a book the words of the Lord against the time to come, when Jehovah would bring again the captivity of His people, Judah and Israel. The day of Jacob's trouble will arrive; the remnant of that race of whom the Supplanter, as his name signifies, was the representative and type; the wayward, bargain-driving, crooked race will be delivered, through a time of trouble such as never had been. Many had been the sorrows of His people, until wrath came upon them to the uttermost, and they were scattered amongst the nations of the earth, and remain without country, religion, or king. Out of these former troubles there was no deliverance. From this they will be saved. The fears of the guilty conscience of Jacob made his heart tremble of old, before his brother Esau, whose birthright he had taken away. Once one wrongs another, it is exceedingly hard to trust him again, even supposing he does not know of the evil done to him. "All faces are turned to paleness." But though "the day is great, so that none is like it, it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." And Isaiah adds, "Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face any more wax pale!" (xxix. 22).

In Daniel xii. you also find this same time of trouble referred to. The chief subject of his book is "The Times of the Gentiles;" the picture of the great empires of the world, since the Jew was set aside as the centre of God's government on earth. That nation was at first a pure theocracy. God was their king. But they grew tired of this, and desired a king, like the nations (1 Sam. viii). Then all was changed, and things went on from bad to worse, until they were sent to captivity for their sins. Then God gave the government of the earth into the hands of the Gentiles (while He secretly watched over all Himself); and that goes on, however shamefully abused by those to whom He has

committed it, until the Lord Jesus comes again and takes His great power and reigns; then "in him shall the Gentiles trust." Daniel was a great prime minister to one of these kings; indeed to more than one. He feels for his peoples' sin, and for the glory of the Lord, and the Lord gives him a revelation of the times and end of these Gentile monarchies, commencing with Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon. Their history runs on to the moment when the Lord Jesus, accompanied by His saints, will destroy all their power at the moment when He is about to take possession of all, and then reign for a thousand years. He has already taken His Church to His glory at that time, as our former chapters will have shown. And then this hour of tribulation intervenes, in which the Jew becomes the prominent feature, and as many as are of the election of that people will be delivered through the unexampled sorrows of that day. To this Daniel specially refers in chapter xii, in the words, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy (Daniel's) people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." All was to be "sealed up" (for the Jew) until the "time of the end," and so it remains for him. The Church knows the Lord's mind in the matter beforehand, and this is the use of prophecy. It gives the Christian a divine revelation of what is coming on the earth, as "a light that shineth in a dark place." Prophecy is good in its place, but it does not address the affections, nor draw him away from the world. His portion is the "Morning Star" coming to take him away before the "day." Prophecy *drives* him out of the world; the hope of the Morning Star, *i.e.* Christ in glory, *draws* him out of it. This distinction you will find in 2 Peter i. 19. We must not be persuaded as some would inculcate, to neglect prophecy altogether; but we must not allow our minds to be engrossed by it. It has to do with nations, the world, judgment, Antichrist, and the like. Jesus is the object for the heart. This alone sanctifies us truly.

The third Scripture in which we find this moment noticed specially is Matt. xxiv. 21, in which the Lord refers to Daniel's prophecy cited above. At the close of chap. xxiii.

in which He had pronounced the "woes" on Israel, as He had begun His ministry among them with the "beatitudes" of Matt. v. He had turned His face away from them, saying, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; for I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Jesus then goes out to the Mount of Olives, and there instructs His disciples as to the history of His people's sorrows, judgments, and future restoration. The history is general and undefined as to time, till you arrive at verse 15, where we are at once transported into the last days. The time, or rather interval, of the heavenly calling of the Church is passed over, as in all the prophetic teaching of Scripture. Prophecy treats of the earth and earthly things; never of heavenly. "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet (ch. xii. 11), stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee unto the mountains; let him that is upon the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. . . . For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world; no, nor ever shall be." He looks forward to the end of time, as He had looked back to the beginning of the world, and tells the disciples (as representing a godly remnant of their people in their hopes and fears of the last days), that none such time of trouble ever had, or ever would be. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus' armies was but a little rehearsal of what then would be. "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake shall those days be shortened."

False Christs would arise, who would work signs and wonders to deceive these godly Jews. My readers are *Christians*, not *Jews*, and therefore would not be distressed or perplexed at such a report as that. Thus, in the midst of all these terrors, the sign of the Son of Man in heaven appearing with the insignia of power and glory would be seen, soaring in triumphant might above the gathered nations, which, like the eagles gathering to the carrion, surround and prey upon this ancient people. His appearing discomfits every foe, and destroys with its brightness His enemies, and thus delivers the *Jews* in the Land of Promise

(v. 30), and thence gathering the elect of *Israel* from the four winds of heaven (v. 31).

How fully at that day will the solemn warning of Moses to the people be brought to pass, of Deut. xxviii. 26, "Thy carcase shall be meat unto all the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away." But Jehovah Himself—the once rejected Jesus—will do what man could not accomplish. To Him will be reserved the fraying of their enemies away. Sudden and tremendous will be that swoop of judgment, and then His people will praise Him in the peace and blessedness of the millennial earth.

Mark xiii. 19 mentions this tribulation also, but like Matthew in the general terms of the Scripture. "In those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be."

THE ROD OF DIVINE POWER, AND THE ROD OF PRIESTLY GRACE.

THE instruction given by Moses and Aaron through their respective rods, and the different characters and uses of these rods for the glory of God in the hands of these two illustrious men, is full of interest for us. It is true *we* are taught by this one living and true God to know Him in other ways, which the wondrous revelation of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" opens out to us under the unction of the Holy Ghost, come down into our midst as the glorifier of the Father and the Son. Still the earlier circles of His manifestation as the Almighty God—the Jehovah—are necessary, in order to make Him known to us, as He was of old in the various works and ways by which He declared Himself to Enoch before the flood; or to Noah and the patriarchs, or the nation of Israel, in the world that now is.

Moses and the rod of God's power date their origin, and stand in such close connection with the "burning bush," that it will be necessary to look at them there, as a starting point. The difference between them is nevertheless of equal importance, for the flame of fire and the voice of God out of the midst of the bush were the link of assurance given forth to the heart

of Moses, to establish his confidence in the God of Abraham and the fathers, come down to do greater things in Egypt than He had done in the land of Charran. The rod of Moses was, on the other hand, to instruct him that this same God would not only be a God to Moses, but as distinctly shew Himself in almighty power against Pharaoh, and all that refused to let Israel go. The rights of God to lead His people out were in question. He had heard their cry out of the house of bondage, when under the cruel hand of the oppressor, and was come down to deliver them; and this Moses was (in the mind of God) their appointed leader and commander. The shoes from off his feet were as much in keeping with the mountain of God and Horeb, in acknowledgment of the holy, holy Lord God, in token that *he* was placed upon another standing before Him, as were the lessons which infinite wisdom and divine power next gave forth by the rod, and from which Moses fled! This rod, which was to be the rod of God's power in the hand of Moses, was first to be proved as nothing less than *this*, to the eye and heart of the man who was to do wonders by its means, both in Egypt against the enemies of God and in the wilderness amongst His people. "Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice, for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared to thee. And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? and he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground," and it became a serpent. It was adequate for the maintenance of God's authority as the "I am," or for the destruction of the full power of the opposing foe. The faithfulness of God in holiness at the burning bush, where Moses was called by his own name, and whence he received his commission, was his resource and strength. But the adverse power of God (and, if needful, in complete destruction) had yet to be learnt by Moses, and when he saw it displayed in the forms of this serpent he fled from it. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: that they may believe that the God of their fathers hath appeared unto thee." The twofold nature of sovereign power was thus presented by the rod of deliverance in the hand of Moses on behalf of the people, or else by the rod of destroying power (which afterwards, in fact, swallowed up all the serpents of Pharaoh's magicians), and which

was able to go outside the whole order of nature, if occasion required it, to put down every opposing foe. But another and equally important lesson remained respecting the hand that held this rod, and to which it was to be committed. "And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand unto thy bosom," and it became leprous as snow. "And He said, Put now thine hand into thy bosom again," and behold it was turned again as his other flesh.

Solemn and deep but precious lessons are here taught this first servant of the Lord, as we all know who have learnt in the same school. The sinew of Jacob's thigh which shrank up, the leprous hand of Moses, or the thorn in Paul's flesh, the messenger of Satan lest he should be puffed up, are only the varying lessons of that one and the same great Teacher with His scholars ere they become the polished vessels fit for the Master's use. The mountain of God, even Horeb, the angel of the Lord in a flame of fire, the bush that burned and was not consumed, and the voice of God that called this one man out from the midst of his fellows, showed unmistakably to Moses who He was that thus passed all these secret counsels before this favoured servant of God, and then proclaimed Himself as the "I am that I am." Though the voice had spoken out of the fire upon this mountain, as another voice spoke afterwards upon the mount of transfiguration with Jesus, when Moses and Elias appeared upon it in glory, yet on this occasion Moses hid his face, and was afraid to look upon God. But all this distance and reserve was to be done away between the "I am" and His beloved people, whether as manifested at first by Adam, hidden under the trees of the garden, or Peter, who said to Jesus in the boat, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The Almighty God appeared thus at Horeb on His way to the mercy-seat in the Tabernacle, where He would gather all the tribes of Israel around Himself in the intimacies of His grace, and encamp in their midst and not consume them. If the "God of the whole earth" thus rises up out of His place to connect His Israel with the purposes of His glory, He must make a way for Himself and for them by putting down the resisting power of the enemy, and by doing marvels. "And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken to my voice, that thou shalt take of the waters of the river and pour it upon the dry land, and the water which thou takest out of

the river shall become blood upon the dry land." The antagonism of Pharaoh afterwards compelled this service of the rod. "And Moses lifted up the rod and smote the waters that were in the river in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the waters that were in the river were turned into blood," so that all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink.

Nevertheless, Moses, though clothed with this two-fold power of the rod (God for His people, and against all those who were against them), hesitated to go forth and prove the sufficiency of the "I am," so that Aaron the Levite was provided to supply what was lacking in the faith of Moses. The attentive reader of Scripture must have observed with interest these double types, and what God intends we should learn by their combination, as embodying some of the perfectness and fulness which dwells only in the Christ of God, to whom they all point. David and Solomon in their day, as well as Elijah and Elisha among the prophets, are instances of these. The "I am that I am" now brings forth Aaron into the wilderness to Moses, and he went and met him in the mount of God and kissed him, and Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord, who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him. These two men of God (or this double type of Him that was to come by words and works in the fulness of time) are now before us, and they went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel, and Aaron spake all the words of the Lord, "and did the signs in the sight of the people, and the people believed, and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped." The "I am" of Israel thus got a response from the hearts of His beloved people, reached by the sense of His sovereign goodness, and this is very precious, whether in those days or in these! The God of Abraham, the "I am" of Israel, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose delights are with the children of men, forms these relationships according to the varying revelations which He makes of Himself, and He becomes His people's boast. Furthermore, if needful, "the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." Finally, the rod of Moses and Aaron did its work of deliverance in Egypt, by judgment and destruction

upon Pharaoh and his captains, upon his chariots and upon his horses, for they sank as lead in the depths of the Red Sea. "It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations." Thus the Lord saved Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians that day, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore, and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses. Thus God and His people are brought together, and all the opposing power of the great enemy is broken in pieces and gone.

The "I am that I am" goes forth now before them in a far different way, to find out a place for them, and to lead them by His strength into His holy habitation. They enter upon this walk with God, by the triumphant acknowledgment of their full redemption at the Red Sea by the rod of His power. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." All who have had to do with themselves, and with the living God, know full well the difference between deliverance by the rod of His power in Egypt, and guidance under the rod in the wilderness. In the former it put a song into their mouths, but in the latter it brought out their complainings and their murmurings. Do any ask the cause of this, seeing it is the same God, the same rod, the same people, and the same Moses? The reason will be readily found when we see that we are no longer witnesses of the stubbornness and enmity of Pharaoh, but are called to prove ourselves, and learn what is in our own hearts. In truth, how impossible it is for fallen nature to walk with God, and be happy with Him where He leads and dwells. The various chapters in the wilderness journey open this trial out to us, and give in detail the contrariety between the people and their God, so that eventually the desert, bright with all that could mark the presence of God (the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night) became a "provocation." The rod of God's power in Exodus required the rod of Jehovah's grace in Numbers, in order to carry the people through! And what is this double type of these two rods to us but a further embodiment of Moses and Aaron; or, in other words, that the rod of God's power in the hand of Moses must connect itself with Aaron's rod

that was laid up, and on the morrow produced buds and bloomed blossoms, and brought forth almonds? How blessed for us to recognise in these two men, this Moses and Aaron, and their respective rods, in their varying character of power and grace, the foreshadowings of our "great High Priest passed through the heavens," Jesus the Son of God.

Power, which took its character from the bush and the flame of fire, and maintained *this* unalterably, could only destroy this people (so contrary to itself) in the wilderness. As it had overthrown the Egyptians and left them dead upon the sea shore, so these were all cut off except Caleb and Joshua. The flesh cannot get a title to cross over Jordan. Marah and the palm trees, Meribah and Massah, Sinai and the golden calf, on the part of the people, only serve to show their need of that rod of priestly intercession which should "take away the iniquity of the sanctuary," and set aside the murmurings of the people. The power of God (if alone) could never bring Israel into Canaan, because of what the people were in their rebellious complainings. But beyond this common expression "of sin in the flesh," when tested by the circumstances of the journey, lay the peculiar and especial outbreaks of envy among the elders themselves, as narrated in the Book of Numbers. Yea, even Moses broke down under the care of this six hundred thousand footmen when they loathed the manna, and he said, I am not able to bear all this people alone, and if Thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee out of hand, and let me not see my wretchedness. Miriam and Aaron envied Moses, and spake against him, saying, "Hath the Lord, indeed, spoken only by Moses? hath he not also spoken by us? and the Lord heard it," and the cloud departed from off the Tabernacle, and behold Miriam became leprous, white as snow. The power of God in the midst of the camp, which sent forth His wind to fetch up the quails from the sea when they lusted for flesh, had also smitten the people with a great plague, so that while the flesh was yet between their teeth they perished. Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days, and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again. The voice of God, in Exodus, when He talked with Moses at Sinai, had terrified the people, so that they said to Moses, Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die; and now the power of God, in Numbers, provoked by their murmurings and rebellion, led the children of Israel

to misjudge *Jehovah*, and say to Moses, "Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of the Lord shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?" The evil report of the spies, who were sent to search the land of Canaan, and who made the heart of the people to melt, had also to be avenged as slanderers of the Lord, and they died by the plague. The congregation, too, who believed this report, were condemned to perish in the wilderness, except Caleb and Joshua. "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise." Miriam and Aaron had envied Moses in his place between God and the camp,—and now Korah, Dathan, and Abiram envy Aaron in his place as the priest! "And Moses said unto Korah, Hear I pray you, ye sons of Levi, the God of Israel hath brought thee near to him, and all the sons of Levi with thee; and seek ye the priesthood also?" And it came to pass as he had made an end of speaking, that the ground clave asunder that was under them, and opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained to Korah, went down alive into the pit. "All Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them, for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." Sad as it is to witness this intrusion of the flesh into the presence of God in these new forms of rebellion against Moses the man of God, and Aaron the high priest, and the *Jehovah* of Israel turned against His own people; yet this is not all, for the end of the flesh seems to have come up before God again in this sacred enclosure. On the morrow all the people murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." And the cloud covered the tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord appeared. Upon this, Moses and Aaron were told to get up from among the congregation, that God may consume them as in a moment. Nothing but the fire from the altar and the incense and the censer can make an atonement, for wrath was gone out from the Lord, and the plague was begun. Aaron ran into the midst of the congregation, and he stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed.

(To be continued.)

G O D ' S K I N G—No. VI.

ON HIGH—Psalm cx.

(Concluded from page 150.)

(4) In connection with conquest to be effected by His people, something further is related, carrying us back in thought to the days of Abraham, the conqueror of the northern power of that day, which, with confederate kings, invaded the land of Canaan, and carried Lot captive. Returning from the smiting of the kings (for the term in Hebrew, as well as in Greek, does not of necessity mean slaughter), Melchisedek, King of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met him with bread and wine (*i. e.*, with what sustains and gives joy), and blessed him. (Gen. xiv. 18-20.) In this Psalm, in which we have Israel conquering under Christ, we meet for the first time again with a notice of such a priesthood, conferred, we read, on the Lord Jesus, by the oath of God, and which will be exercised in the day of His power after the example of Melchisedek in the days of Abraham, who blessed Abraham, and blessed also the Most High God, thus taking a middle place between them, as surely He who is both God and man can take between Jehovah and Israel, Abraham's offspring. After Abraham's victory, Melchisedek thus met him. After His people shall be willing in the day of His power will the Lord, priest on His throne, be seen in the exercise of the Melchisedek character of priesthood. The Aaronic character of priesthood has to do with the sanctuary, the Melchisedek character with the kingdom. The Psalm, however, speaks not of the Melchisedek *character*, but of the Melchisedek *order* of priesthood; nor does it speak of it as a future event, but as an established thing. "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek." So, whilst the history of Gen. xiv. throws light on the abrupt mention of the Melchisedek priesthood in this Psalm, the epistle to the Hebrews explains to us the force of the word *order* as used here in connection with it. The Lord's enemies subdued, His people victorious, He, priest on His throne, will bless them, the counsel of peace being between Jehovah and Himself. (Zech. vi. 13.) Now, God's people need the exercise of a priesthood Aaronic in character, but Melchisedek in order; then, resting under His protection, all wilderness troubles over, all conflicts ended, like Abraham returning with the spoil, Israel will be able to enjoy the Melchisedek character of His priesthood,

with which He will then manifest that He has been clothed by divine appointment. But will this condition of things endure? The word *order* suggests its continuance, for, as Melchisedek had no successor, neither will the Lord. "He abideth a priest continually" is the divine comment on Melchisedek. "He hath an unchangeable priesthood" is the divine statement about the Lord. Priest after that order implies no successor—a pledge of abiding blessing for Israel—a word of comfort, too, for God's people now, who, whilst needing a priesthood to be exercised on their behalf Aaronic in character, need also one that cannot fail—in other words, one after the order of Melchisedek. Whether, therefore, as in the sanctuary or on the throne, the little word *order* in connection with Melchisedek suggests a priesthood that does not terminate by the appointment of a successor, thus ensuring to those concerned in it all the blessing and comfort of a settled order, and of an intransmissible office.

His conquests having been declared, and His ruling among His enemies foretold, we read now of judgments to be meted out to the rebels in arms against God's authority. Of the wrath of Him who sits at God's right hand Psalm ii. has made mention; of the manifestation of that wrath this Psalm gives examples (5). And, since it forms part of the fifth book of the volume, and the setting up of the kingdom and power has been celebrated in the fourth (xciii.—c.), we can understand why the past tense is used when these judgments are spoken of. The Psalmist recounts what God did for His Son after His rejection by the world, and what Christ has done, to whom the kingdom has been given. "The Lord at thy right hand has crushed kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations. He has filled (places) with dead bodies. He has crushed the head over a great country," referring perhaps to Rev. xix. 19-21. With mighty power, according to the standpoint of this Psalm, He has been seen to be endowed; for this divine composition views God's counsels as in process of fulfilment. We, too, read it as partly fulfilled, and partly to be fulfilled. Its place, however, in the volume, as well as its language, contemplates a further development before the world of God's plan, than can be effected whilst the church is still down here. The conqueror, according to the terms used, has gone forth in power, and His people are willing in the day, which, they here own, has at last dawned upon earth, that of His

power. All has not yet been done which must be done to clear the earth of unruly rebels. But He has taken that work in hand, and is effecting it surely. So, as engaged in it, we learn of His continued dependence on God, who has given such proof of His invincible might. "He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head."

What a contrast the close of the Psalm presents to the beginning, only to be understood and the two ends to be harmonised, as we bow to the mystery of His person, perfect God and perfect man, Immanuel, by whom all God's purposes about the universe will yet be made good!

ON DISCIPLINE, UNITY OF ACTION, BUSINESS MEETINGS, &c.

I BEGIN by stating what is admitted as a general basis of action, that each assembly of Christians, gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the unity of His body, acts in its own responsibility to the Lord in all corporate action, such as in welcoming in the name of the Lord, those who come amongst them to the Lord's table; in deciding before the Lord all acts of discipline, and all such like things. Each such assembly acts in itself, and of itself, in carrying out those things which are purely local, but which bear upon the whole Church. *The spiritual who addict themselves to this work in detail, before each matter is brought before the gathered saints that the consciences of all may be in the action, may surely look into details with much profit and godly care; but were they to decide anything apart from the assembled saints, even of the commonest kind, their action ceases to be that of the assembly, and should be disowned.*

When such local affairs of each meeting are thus carried out by itself and as of itself, under the Lord, all other meetings of the Lord's people are bound to own the action, as in the unity of the body, taking it for granted (unless it be proved otherwise) that all has been done aright, in the fear of God and in the name of the Lord. Heaven, I am sure, ratifies and owns such godly action, as the Lord said it would (Matt. xviii. 18).

It has often been said, as well as felt, that discipline, in "putting out from among yourselves," should be the very last thing resorted to; and this when all patience and grace is exhausted, when to allow the evil to remain would be but to dishonour the name of the Lord, and practically to connect it with Him and the profession of His name. Besides all this, discipline in excision is ever and always done with a view to the restoration of the person so dealt with, not with a view to getting rid of him. So it is ever with God in His dealings with ourselves. Personally, He always has the soul's good and restoration to the fulness of joy and communion in view, and never withholds His hand until this is effected. Godly discipline, done in His fear, has the same end in view; otherwise, it is not of God.

But while each local assembly thus stands in its personal responsibility most truly, and its actions, if of God, are binding upon all

others, as in the unity of one body, this fact does not do away with another feature of the deepest importance, and which many seem to forget. That is, that the voices of brethren from other places have quite as much and as full a freedom as those locally there, to discuss the matters of a gathering of the Lord's people when amongst them, though these persons have no local connection with the meeting. To refuse this would be a most solemn and practical denial of the unity of the body of Christ. Nay, farther, the conscience and moral state of a local meeting may be ignorant (and the most spiritual are the first to admit that they only "know in part," and more fully distrust themselves), or it may be dull of apprehension of what is due to Christ and His glory and honour. All this would render its perception so low, that there would be no spiritual power there to discern the good or the evil. Or perhaps prejudice and haste might warp its judgment, or the bias of mind and influence of one or more persons, so that it might conclude falsely, to the deep injury of "a brother." When this is so, it would be a true blessing that the spiritual and wise from other meetings should come in and seek to set the conscience of the meeting right; to come, too, at the request of the meeting, or the request of those whose case might be uppermost at the time; and their interference, instead of being looked upon as intrusion, should be welcomed and owned in the name of the Lord. To do otherwise would be to set up mere independency, and to deny the unity of the body of Christ.

Still, those who came and acted thus should not act apart from the rest of the meeting, but with the consciences of all. When a meeting has refused all remonstrance, and declined to accept the help and judgment of other brethren there, and when all patience has been exhausted, another meeting, which had been in fellowship with it, may surely undo its wrong action and accept the rejected person, if wrongly dealt with. But when such is resorted to, it has come to be a matter of refusing fellowship with a meeting which has thus acted wrongly, and which has thus *itself* broken off its communion with the remainder who are acting in the unity of the body. Such should therefore be done carefully and patiently, so that the consciences of all may be carried with the action, as of God.

I note these matters because there might be a tendency of disowning the interference of others in fellowship who come from other places, and of setting up an independency of action in each local gathering. All action, as I have admitted, as to the *primary* case, devolves at first on the local meeting.

Now as to "business meetings," as they are termed. There is a danger, when there are several meetings in the same locality in fellowship, of setting up, for convenience, a central business meeting to transact the affairs of all around. It may be said—Brothers come from the other meetings, and we all meet here to interchange the results of our deliberations, that all may know them, so that there may be fellowship in what is done. Well, be it so. If a few brethren who addict themselves to this ministry from each local meeting, choose to assemble in one place, one has nothing to say. But, for what do they assemble? It may be said, To see to the reception of those coming in, and look into cases of discipline, and the like. All well. But suppose a case—which occurs most frequently; that but *one* brother comes to the appointed place.

Names are mentioned by him of those desiring to take their places at the Lord's table, or of a case which perhaps has to be dealt with by putting out where he comes from. The meeting, composed of other brethren, discuss the matter, one is quite willing to admit in a most sincere and godly way. They decide to put the person out, or to welcome him in, or refuse to do so, as the case may be. This one brother returns with the decision thus arrived at. Is this the decision of the united conscience of the meeting from which he came? Certainly not. It would be the setting up, as a Metropolitan, with power to decree and decide for other meetings, a business meeting, composed principally of brethren of another meeting, and the conscience of the other meeting not in the action. This would be very grave indeed.

Now, while such a meeting may be of the utmost value when carried out in God's way, it may also be misused sadly, and therefore I write with the desire that all should be done according to God; a wish in which I am sure I shall be joined by all who love the truth.

If brethren from other meetings come together with those who look after the business of a large local meeting, it is happy, and as it should be. But when they come, they may surely bring the notice of reception, of discipline, or the like, from their own meeting, *as a thing locally dealt with there*, and interchange this with those with whom they meet; so that a cluster of meetings in the same neighbourhood may be aware of what each *has already done, as acting in its own locality before the Lord*. It would be wrong to shut out the free discussion which may be needful in any case; or to refuse the importance of seeking the counsel of the others. But it is objectionable that the business of other gatherings should be decided, *apart from such*, by a business meeting, and the gathering which should act for itself thus accepting the actions of another meeting, done by proxy, and endorsing them, instead of acting itself before the Lord. This throws the whole onus of the working of assemblies into the hands of a few, and those not even locally connected with the meeting, and the conscience of the assembly elsewhere, which is thus legislated for, is not in the action at all.

Business meetings of this kind, in the ruined state of the Church of God, are most useful in their way. "The Church of God" is in such a state that not a single body of Christians on earth can claim that name. There has been a great deal made of the want of Elders and an Elderhood, by those whose appointment of them would be about as valid as mine would be. When asked, Where is the Church of God? they cannot tell. I reply, if you find the Church of God for me, I will promise faithfully to find for you God's Elders! So that all the talk about Elders is but "throwing dust in people's eyes," as the saying goes. But this, by the way.

There are still gifts for rule, most surely. There are those who addict themselves to the "ministry of the saints." It is happy to "submit oneself to such," as to all who are "joined in the work," and who "labour;" I trust it may always be so by grace. But they must seek to guide the *conscience* according to God's Word. Otherwise it is the blind leading the blind, and both would fall into the ditch. Christianity is characterized by the seeing leading the seeing!

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES, &c.

THE STATE OF THE GODLY REMNANT OF JEWS IN THE LAST DAYS, IN CONTRAST WITH ABRAHAM.

Dear —, As to Abraham having seen “my day,” as the Lord tells the Jews in John viii. 56; it seems to be a general expression. But I daresay that in the scene in the close of Gen. xiv., when he returned victoriously from the slaughter of the confederate kings, we find a definite presentation of the “day” of the Lord, which he then saw. Melchisedek met him with bread and wine, and blessed the most High God and Abraham His servant.

This scene presents a tableau of what the ushering in of the “day” of the Lord will be, *i.e.* the Kingdom. Israel (the seed of Abraham) return in weariness, but victoriously from their conflict with their enemies. Jesus comes forth as King of Righteousness from the heavens and from Jerusalem, the city of peace. He brings forth strength and joy (bread and wine) to refresh the weary remnant of His people, and He blesses the most High God—God’s millennial name; then *possessor* of heaven and earth. The former, long defiled by evil spirits and Satan’s power, being cleansed by the casting down of Satan (Rev. xii). While the earth, long in rebellion against God and His Christ (Ps. ii., Acts iv., &c.), are in peace, all conflicting powers being then overthrown (Rev. xix). He also blesses “Abraham of the Most High God,” and is thus as Melchisedek—a Priest upon His throne (Zech. vi.)—both King and Priest, the link between the then peaceful heavens, and the earth in blessing under His sway. The *night* has passed away; the *day* of the Lord has come.

The knowledge of the godly remnant of Israel differs from that of Abraham, in the first place by the fact of Exod. vi. 3. “I appeared unto Abraham, . . . by El Shaddai; but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them.” “God Almighty” (El Shaddai) was the patriarchal name of God; “Jehovah” the name by which “I AM” revealed Himself to Israel. Next, Jesus has been “in all their afflictions, afflicted” (Isai. lxiii. 9), and has given a divine character and voice to their cry in the Psalms.

When the time of the calling of the Church is over and she is taken to glory, the Lord will “turn his hand upon the little ones” of His ancient people, in the interval between His having come for His saints and His appearing in glory with them. This period is termed the “great tribulation” through which the godly remnant of the Jewish people have to pass. They are godly; under law; upright in heart, yet confessing their people’s blood-guiltiness; they are looking for Jehovah’s intervention against their enemies. They are persecuted under the beast; betrayed by their false brethren who have received the Antichrist. All these sorrows find expression in the Psalms. In using them they begin, as I understand it, but dimly at first, to perceive that some One has been in these trying circumstances before them. One, who when He cried to Jehovah, was heard. “This poor man cried and Jehovah heard him, and delivered him out of all his troubles.” This encourages them to cry that He may deliver them. Gradually the thought of His being more than man dawns and grows on their souls. Jeremiah may tell them “Cursed

is the man that trusteth in man" (xvii. 5), while Ps. ii. will say—"Blessed are all they which trust in him." This seems a contradiction; but the perception of His divine nature is gradually but effectually taking its place in their souls, until the moment comes when He appears to their deliverance, and they look on Him whom they pierced and mourn, and find Him to be Jehovah's fellow—nay, Jehovah Himself.

Another difference between Abraham and them is, that they look for the earthly blessings of the kingdom; not something outside this scene, as Abraham. Though if they are slain they find their reward in heaven itself.

"S." Will you give an outline of the Parable of the Talents (Matt. xxv. 14-30). There being an "evil servant" is a difficulty to some. May not an unrenewed soul get a *gift*?

A. This is one of three Parables in Matt. xxiv. 45-51; xxv. 1-30, which refer to the relations of those who would really or ostensibly follow the Lord Jesus during the period characterised by His absence and the calling out of the Church; from Pentecost until the Lord's second coming. During this time He has ceased to deal with the Jew. At its close He will judge the "quick," and thus bring in the kingdom (xxv. 30).

The Parable of the Talents is mainly a question of *power*, rather than of *gift*, if you mean by the latter such as the ascended Lord gives in Eph. iv. 8-11, as head of His body to His members.

He is represented as "travelling into a far country," Messiah rejected by His own people, goes on high. When He departed He called His own servants, and delivered unto them His goods, *i.e.*, spiritual things (in Judaism God had distributed earthly things), varying the power and measure according to the aptitude of the vessel. "Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one;" and then went away. Thus spiritual power is imparted. *Three* things are recognised. 1. The measure of spiritual power bestowed according to the sovereignty and wisdom of the giver. 2. The natural ability of the vessel. 3. Activity in trading with his Lord's goods.

Then, "after a long time" comes the reckoning, and some are found to have doubled their Lord's money, and are to enter into the joy of their Lord. The rewards are all the same here, because when the talents were varied it was His sovereignty to do so. Each did his best, and each doubled his capital, no matter what the amount. We have to be diligent, that we lose not spiritual power. This has been the case frequently with many who have not traded with that which the Lord has bestowed; their power is weakened from want of diligence in trading with it.

It being a question of *power*, the evil servant is judged according to what was at his disposal, and the place he had taken. The question is not that of salvation, but of the power of the Spirit. Hence he is judged as a servant, but an evil one. He is not treated for not being a servant, but for being one with whom spiritual power wrought, and which he abused. Balaam in the Old Testament, Judas in the New, and those who had said, "Lord, Lord," and cast out devils, and done many marvellous works in the Lord's name, are examples of this. A man might speak with the tongue of

men and of angels, and not have love—the divine nature, and be nothing (1 Cor. xiii). Hebrews vi. also speaks of those who were partakers of the Holy Ghost, and of the powers of the world to come, or coming age, and were unrenewed.

He is judged out of his own mouth, for “with the froward he will shew himself froward.”

“AS UNKNOWN, AND YET WELL KNOWN.”

Strangers here—

Not a link with earth unbroken,
Not a farewell to be spoken,
Waiting for their Lord to take them
To Himself, and like Him make them.

Strangers here—

With their hearts upon a treasure
That has dimmed for them earth's pleasure,
Lamps well trimmed and brightly burning,
Eyes for ever upward turning.

Strangers here—

Pilgrims through a hostile nation,
In a groaning old creation,
Journeying on through shame and scorn,
Gazing at the Star of Morning.

Strangers here—

Earthly rank and riches losing,
Worldly ties and claims refusing ;
On to Christ in glory pressing,
All things there in Him possessing.

Strangers here—

But in Him their hearts are resting,
Faith looks up in days of testing,
Follows Him with true allegiance,
Loves to walk in His obedience.

Strangers here—

Christ has told them His affection,
Giv'n them such a bright reception,
Not one word of condemnation,
Not one thought of separation.

Strangers here—

Soon to be at home together,
Going in with Christ for ever ;
He, who bore their deep dishonour,
Giving them His wealth and honour.

Well known there—

Oh what joy for Christ to take them
To the Father, who will make them
Welcome in His mansions yonder,
Strangers here—to be no longer.

"THE LORD *HIMSELF* SHALL DESCEND."

THE coming of the Lord, beloved brethren, is the subject of which I wish to speak to you a little.

Till the Lord came into the world there was very little about heaven in the Scripture. But when He came to earth, immediately there was a testimony from heaven to the shepherds, that now there was glory to God in heaven, and on earth good will to men. And the first word of testimony to Him was from heaven—God's voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then we find Him in the seventeenth of John conversing with His Father in heaven about His heavenly people, and pouring out His heart about them; and afterwards, when He had gone up again into heaven to sit at the right hand of His Father, the glory could shine down out of heaven, because God wanted the glory of His beloved Son to be seen. This glory it was which came out literally when Stephen was martyred: he saw the Son of Man occupied with himself, and got into conversation with Him. And in the epistle to the Hebrews we get wonderful things, because this Man is in heaven. All the different things in that epistle are put out by the Holy Ghost to feed our souls with heavenly things. If my citizenship is in heaven, what would you expect? That there would be more of the things of this earth in my mind—more of the things of this earth in my heart; or more of the things of *heaven* in my mind—more of the things of *heaven* in my heart? Oh! surely more of the things of *heaven* in my mind, and more of the things of *heaven* in my heart!

And I have, so to say, the best of my portion now. You and I have not come to the Father's *house* yet, but we have got the Father's *heart*. And which is best for us to have—the Father's house or the Father's heart? Surely the Father's *heart*! It will eventuate in our getting into the Father's house, and then we shall surely know the Father's heart better; but it will be the same subject, the same song, then as now.

But now as to this coming of the Lord. I would take the epistle to the Thessalonians which shows out this truth. There is there, so to say, a lamp shining down, putting all circumstances in the light of it—throwing its light on all things down here.

There are two verses I would refer to in the first chapter, and, on entering on it I would just say that the first epistle is the coming of the Lord for His own people ; the second is His coming to the world.

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers ; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." Those three words—faith, love, and hope, and those other words intensified by what is with them, *work* of faith, *labour* of love, and *patience* of hope, tell us pretty plainly where these Thessalonians were, and what characterizes the place where you and I ought to be.

It is the "work of faith." Knowing "the substance" that is there before God, our faith can work down here. When we get home it will be rest, but down here it *must* be work.

Then again it is "labour of love." Here in these Thessalonians there was labour connected with their love. They had much to go through. Times were hard.

But then again there was hope connected with it, and "patience of hope" too. It could not be worn out. It *had* to endure, and it *did* endure.

But there is another thing that you and I will do well to take notice of, and that is that all this was "in the sight of God and our Father." I have not only faith and hope and love, but I am wearing them *before* God. He looks down not only to see what is shining out from me, but looks to see that these three things are shining out in His presence. The poor Ephesians lost their first love. (Rev. ii.) There was plenty of labour, but when God looked in upon their hearts there was no *love* in them. This work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope must be all in the sight of God and our Father.

And then he says—"We need not to speak anything, for they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." Their faith bore witness to what Paul's work among them had been, and thus bearing witness, they were waiting for God's Son from heaven. If the heart does not get the assurance that He

who is coming is the Deliverer from the wrath to come, that coming could not be borne. But you know we are "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time," and, being thus kept by God for a certain salvation, we can patiently await it, and not only await it, but await a certain *Person*, even "Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

And that, beloved brethren, is the brightness of the hope to me. As to myself, I may not have everything as right as I could wish in my desires; I may not have everything set to right in my house. Ay, but there is another set of thoughts altogether! He says, "Surely *I* come quickly!" And He *must* come! He is the One, whose coming is the plan of God. The purpose of God is that He should come down, and that, so coming, He should put all God's enemies under His feet, and bring in a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and He will be true to His God and Father. He will accomplish all that God has given Him to do.

No wonder, if we look at our walk in the light of His coming, that we should judge it unworthy of Him, and I would not wish it otherwise. But I wish the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, rising up from the Father's right hand, were always before our minds. I believe it would soon make our walk consistent. I believe it would set both affections, heart, and thoughts in order.

But is it not a bright hope? He will come forth, and in His coming forth He will claim the Church, as He says in the fourteenth of John—"In my Father's house are many mansions if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He has not fulfilled this promise to Peter yet. Peter is with the Lord, but he has not yet been taken to the Father's house, and will not be until we all go to be with Him there. Now is there nothing lovely in that? Nothing in this thought of going to be in that Father's house? Nothing wonderful about the heart of that Son, who, though He has been sitting 1800 years at the right hand of God, is still thinking of coming for His people here? Is there nothing emphatically lovely in it?

He will come upon the cloud of glory. He will come to take His people home. There is *Himself* to see. We have

never seen Him yet. We *cannot* do without Him, and He *will not* do without us! We shall *see* Him for ourselves! We shall *hear* Him for ourselves! In all things we shall be like Him in the glory!

In the first chapter it was a difficult night *they* were passing through. Ay, but, says Paul, when you get out of the wood, then you will see it all! And now, in the second chapter, *he* takes up the difficulties through which *he* had to pass, and whilst he looks at them he does not see any of them apart from the Lord Himself.

He says—I have suffered torture in trying to get to you, and you have suffered dreadful things in my absence from you, but when we are once at home in the glory, there will be no difficulty in my getting at you then! All these difficulties, which have been permitted to keep me away from you, will be no more, and in that day you will be my glory and joy—the Lord's too. This is a truth, and a blessed truth, but we shall have it with Him. Not one portion of the glory or the grace but will have flowed through Him, and I shall say—Oh! I know the One who has done it all, the Effectuator of all this glory. One labours in one direction, and another in another; but, whatever the results, all that is really subordinate. It is Jehovah's Fellow who has done it. He is the worker of it all. And what a joy it will be to Him to see the little circles around each labourer. Here, in one corner, Paul surrounded with his dear Thessalonians, his joy and crown; and there, in another, some other labourer with his around him; and in them Christ will see all that His own grace had wrought.

I do not believe we think enough of that communion in the glory, which will be the counterpart of our communion here in the wilderness. All the details and difficulties of the wilderness journey will have their blessed counterpart in the glory. Our crown of rejoicing is Christ. Ay, but, says Paul, are not even *you* this to me? In the day when all these difficulties will be done away, my glory and joy will be what God has wrought in you by me!

What a heart has Christ! No heart so unselfish as His! He loves to give away all He *can* give away. He might have converted every one Himself, just as He called Saul of Tarsus from the glory, but He would not. He loves to work by others.

And is there no work to do? Are there no eyes to be

wiped? Are there no broken hearts to be bound up among the saints? Is there nothing of this sort to be done among His people? Well then, go in for it! Bring out this patience of Christ, for in that day that will be a blessed counterpart of all labour amongst the saints.

In the next chapter he brings out another thing. The Lord is here bringing *all* His people out from heaven with Him. "To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." "With *all* his saints." It is what we call the Epiphany—the manifestation of Christ. It is after the fourth of 2nd Corinthians—after the *bēma* of Christ. We have met Him, gone with Him to the Father's house, and now He brings us out again. He comes forth with all His saints.

I do not suppose that the apostle could have let out his heart more simply than he does in these words. Christ has His retired place to take the Church into—the Father's house; but divine love will bring us forth with Him in manifested glory; and the desire of the apostle is that there may not be a single thing in us now that may in any way mar the time when He will bring us out with Himself.

Is there nothing peculiar in the expression, "He shall come to be admired in all them that believe?" *He* will be admired *in His saints*! Is there then no separation—*no* separation between Christ and His saints? None! There is none as to His blood-shedding. He gave His life a ransom for them, and there will be none in His place in heaven. When He goes into His Father's house He comes to seek His people first. No separation between Him and the Church. He comes with all His saints! He comes with all His saints! Oh, what a heart Christ has!

And what a mind God has! He has chosen One around whom He can safely wind all His plans. If you want to wind anything round a thing, you must consider the weight of what you want to wind before you can decide whether you may safely do it. You would not wind a coil of rope round a feeble twig. And thus God could not, so to say, have any centre but His Son. All His saints are wound round Him, and He will bring them out with Him in the glory!

And what if I *am* suffering down here? Surely there is power in this part of the hope to encourage the heart now. What if I *am* borne down now by difficulties? I shall come

forth with Him, and shall be displayed as the one who is, with Him, to teach the world to rejoice, and who will keep evil in check. *I shall come forth with Him.*

Now, in the fourth chapter, there are some things that are very remarkable, brought up in connection with His coming.

The first thing is *covetousness*, or, as he calls it here, "the lust of concupiscence." It is the heart that is not satisfied with God and His portion—that is snatching at things round about it down here. It is just the power of the wicked spirit upon the heart that is separated to Christ, and that yet tries to satisfy itself with things down here; and that finds, like the young man in the parable, who tried to feed as the swine did, that he cannot satisfy himself in any way with the husks. He will only just find himself in the pitiable plight of trying what swine's food will do for him. He will find the husks are only fit for a swine's belly, and are no food for his.

And then he introduces *mourning*. What will be a satisfying portion? I have none down here. I have to wait, not only for happy association, but for the Person whose innate power will show itself forth in the midst of the difficulties in which He will find His Church when He comes. Paul says to them—God will bring with Him those very friends and relations of yours, you Thessalonians, who you think have lost their chance of being with Him in the glory. And these words tell upon every heart since, that is in like circumstances.

I have this thought, beloved friends, and I think it rather deepens upon me. It is, that that which shines forth from Christ is what gives the power of looking upward.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

There is everything to rouse the attention in the way that the subject is introduced. *Himself*, the Lord, shall descend from heaven. When? Does it say? No! It is not made known when. But oh! to think of that One without whom nothing that has been created was made—that One into whose hands everything has been committed by God—to think of *that* Man about to descend again from heaven!

It is a wonderful thing the stupidity of the mind of man! To think of people trying to make out that the death of saints is the coming of the Lord! If I die to-night I *go* to the Lord; the Lord does not *descend from heaven*. When Stephen was dying he looked up and saw the Lord waiting for him *in* heaven; he did not see the Lord descend *from* heaven.

But the Lord *will* descend. He will come off that throne at the appointed time. He will come down out of that glory upon the cloud. He will descend out of heaven.

There is everything to arrest the soul in the way it is put, and to cause it to inquire; and then, besides, it is so *guardedly* put—"The Lord *Himself*." There is only *one* Lord.

And then see the glory! Ay, and the grace too! It is with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.

I never read those clauses without certain thoughts waking up in my mind in one way or another. His voice was heard on earth before this. He was heard to pray by His disciples. In that hour when He asked them to watch with Him, His voice went up in prayer to His Father, and He was heard in that He feared. But He did not take upon Him then the regulating of anything. He let His Father do everything in His own way. What do you take your sword and smite the servant's ear off in that way for, Peter? He laid His hand on it at once and healed it. He would not be delivered, because He had to give His life for the sheep. Of course, on the other hand, He did regulate, in a *hidden* way, as when He let Saul of Tarsus be at the death of Stephen, and when He spoke to Saul out of the glory. In a quiet way He spoke and regulated then, but He will speak in quite a different way in the day that is coming. The "shout" spoken of here is a regulating sound, such as a call to men to present arms; and its tones will be heard as announcing that the time is come. Ay, and the tones of that voice will be *gladsome* too! *Himself* will leave the throne! *Himself* will call His people? *He* is the One who

regulates it all! He is the perfect servant. He does not leave the Father's throne a moment too soon; but when He does, it will be with a regulating shout.

And then there is "the voice of the archangel." The Lord takes it up. The time is come; and what angel in heaven would not gladly render up his place to that Lord?

And then there is "the trump of God." God takes it up. From the throne of His Father He is coming forth, the regulating introduction of blessing.

Then, besides this (no new thing to us here), there are two things that He brings in. He says, "I am the resurrection and the life." Now we are already associated with Him in resurrection-life in the heavenly places. He has given us to know that, but He is going to give us another exhibition of it.

Do you ever think how Christ is keeping the bodies of the dead? Do you never say—Oh! what a heart He has? How tenderly He is caring for them! How He knows that the dust of Stephen is there, and the dust of Paul here, and how He has His eye on every bit of it! And He is ready to bring it all forth when the moment comes. It is *Himself* that does it. He does not say—I will let any mighty power put the finishing stroke to it. No, it is Himself. He says—The dead in Christ shall rise first.

Oh! what a part of the hope is this to one who has had to battle with death—to one who has had to part with loved ones, and to lay them in the grave. It is "absent from the body, present with the Lord." Oh, death! I will be thy *plagues*, He says! He is coming to avenge the controversy, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. He is coming to make the display of His own glory as the resurrection. The Lord coming, and the dust giving up the dead that belong to Christ everywhere! Ah, yes! it is that which He is putting forward here!

Would you like to see the resurrection accomplished—every corner of this earth opening up to let out the dust that is sleeping in it? There is love supreme to the weakest and feeblest whose bodies are sleeping in the dust.

And then there is "the *life*"! There are you and I. If He appeared this very evening, He would so let the stream of life flow into us that there would be nothing but immortality left in us!

One often hears that text in Hebrews wrongly quoted. People say, "It is appointed unto *all* men once to die." It

is "*men*," not "*all men*." If the Lord were to come to-night we should not have to lay aside the body at all.

And then he shows what a comfort too it is. What is? The resurrection and the life? No! but the Lord who will *be* that!

Now, in the last chapter, he enters a little into the state of the world when Christ will do this. They have no idea of the Lord's coming. They are of the night; we are not of the night. His people are waiting for Him, but He shows us that the people of the world are not of that class.

And then He gives this as the desire of His own spirit and the desire of the Holy Ghost also. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here it is a very strong word, and a very simple word, and a very blessed word. The thoughts of the Spirit of God and the thoughts of the apostle were not that I should be brought to know the things of heaven, of God, and of Christ, and then mar my walk by intercourse with the things of Sodom and Gomorrah. But this was His thought—"May your spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and *faithful* is he that calleth you, who also *will* do it."

He does not speak of taking the law of sin and death out of my members. He does not say that He sets me in a place where I shall have no more conflict. He does not speak of taking me out of the wilderness. But He does speak of this grace which shall preserve me blameless. He does talk of God finding us *blameless* in that day.

As to his own walk he was fully persuaded that Christ would be magnified in his body whether by life or by death. And when he thus said that he was positive that Christ would be magnified he did not get the idea of being blame-worthy in his own particular walk. No! This word is to strengthen the hearts of the children of God. It is He who has called them, and He will do it.

Is God going to keep you blameless? Then mind, you are invincible! Mind, you are to overcome! Mind, you are not to flag! You will overcome because He will keep you blameless. I see God putting Himself forward saying, *I am the Person who will keep you blameless unto that day.*

THE ROD OF DIVINE POWER, AND THE ROD OF PRIESTLY GRACE.

(Concluded from page 172.)

GREAT principles of God's action come out thus wherever Satan and men are confederate against His holiness and His order in the midst of His people. So in this chap. xvi., the intercession of Moses and Aaron takes the first place. They fell upon their faces and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wrath with all the congregation?" And the judgment was limited to Korah and his house, upon whom the earth opened its mouth, and the fire of the Lord consumed the men who had offered incense. The censers of these sinners against their own souls were hallowed, so Eleazar was commanded to take them up out of the burning, and scatter the fire yonder. The broad plates made from these censers for a covering of the altar, were to be a sign and a memorial to the children of Israel, that no stranger which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the Lord. The murmurings of the congregation become now a further consideration for God, if so be that the people may be spared. This is met by the rods supplied by the princes according to the house of their fathers, twelve rods—laid up before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness; and on the morrow, behold the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds. "And the Lord said, bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony to be kept for a token against the rebels, and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me that they die not." It is precious to watch the reserves of God's grace abounding beyond His people's sin everywhere, and to see the introduction of Aaron's priestly rod of intercession and power lighten up this central part of the book of Numbers, so that Jehovah can still go on with His people. The ashes of the red heifer, and its establishment at that time as an ordinance for Israel as "a water of purification," is the fit companion for the rod that budded, and chap. xviii. falls in beautifully between the two—as proving how God Himself delights to take the lead, and have the first fruits of all His increase returned to Him, in the worship and praise of His beloved people. The timbrels of Miriam and the women who danced and sang at the Red

Sea were changed for the murmurings of the wilderness, and in chap. xx. Miriam dies—the time of song ceases. The people also chode with Moses and Aaron, and said, would God we had died when our brethren died before the Lord. Moses and Aaron likewise fail to sanctify the Lord at Meribah and perpetuate the use of the rod to smite, instead of superseding it by speaking to the rock—precious type to us of Him who said, “if ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it.” Christ has been smitten by the rod of divine power for His people, and is now become the rod that budded in the prevalence of His intercessions on high; we have but to speak, and it “shall be done.” Aaron is stripped of his garments, and they are put upon Eleazar his son—Moses also is warned that he shall not enter into the land, because they rebelled against the Lord at the waters of Meribah. In the next chapter the people sink yet lower, and speak against God and against Moses—and the Lord sent fiery serpents among them, and much people of Israel died. Like as before, when the Lord turned the valley of Achor into “a door of hope,” so now the fiery serpent becomes the door of everlasting deliverance from his bite, by “the lifted-up Son of Man” upon the cross. In beautiful correspondence with *this* follows the well of springing water, of which the Lord spake to Moses, saying, “Gather the people together and I will give them water to drink.” The provisional and typical rods are superseded, and the Lord Himself gives His people water. Like we read in the Apocalypse of such things as the temple, and the sun and moon being set aside because the “Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple, and the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Then Israel sang this new song, “Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it; the princes digged the well” by the direction of the law-giver with their staves.

Here we may observe that the ministry of Christ in the Gospel of John begins where the ministry of Moses may be said to end. The brazen serpent, in our Lord's intercourse with Nicodemus, was continued by the well of living water, when He talked with the woman of Samaria; for how could merely typical and provisional things be repeated by Him to whom they pointed? For their anti-type they must be fulfilled and superseded, and this is one great difference between the whole economy of Judaism and Christianity,

between law and grace, between flesh and spirit, and betwixt a worldly sanctuary and the true one, "which the Lord pitched and not man." So the rod in the hand of Moses had done its work, and gives place to the mighty power of God which He wrought in Christ, "Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." So the rod of Aaron that budded and bloomed, and brought forth almonds between the evening and the morning, has given place to the intercession of Christ, who has passed into the heavens, and "ever lives in the presence of God for us." The fiery serpent, and his bite too, is set aside by mediation and the lifted-up Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should never perish but have everlasting life. All this is very precious to us; for the whole provocation of the wilderness journey, and the people who made it, was typically provided for and met by the mediator Moses and the Aaronic priesthood and their respective rods; so that the brooks of Arnon, and the well of water at Beer (whereof the Lord spoke to Moses) become the place of their refreshment, where *He* gathers them together and gives them water. At the close of their journeyings, and just before they are all numbered for their inheritance in Canaan, the princes and the nobles make this new and last use of their staves, and dig the well in token of what the pathway led to, before they cast these staves away. After this, God takes a remarkable place for Himself and for His people against Balak and Balaam; not suffering any divination or enchantment or power of the enemy to prevail against them—"He reproved kings for their sakes, and said, touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," and turns Balaam's curse into a blessing. Looked at in the light of all Jehovah's promises, and the ways of their accomplishment in Christ, He only vindicates *Himself* when He says of the people, "I have not seen iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel." Looked at in themselves they were a stiff-necked generation, whose rebellion was judged in righteousness in the valley of Achor; or else provided for in grace, by the rod of priestly intercession.

Nevertheless, the murmurings which were thus met, like their sins which were forgiven on the great day of atonement, still left the fallen nature upon its seat of mastery over them. It is their second leadership under Joshua, and the onward journey which their "feet had not heretofore

trodden" across Jordan, as following the Ark of the Covenant into Canaan that typically puts aside flesh itself. Blessed be God, if the Red Sea affirms their justification from sins through a crucified and risen Christ—this river of Jordan declares that the further necessity of sin in the flesh is met by our *own* death and resurrection. The rod of Moses was for deliverance out of Egypt, and from under the enemy's power: "The horse and its rider were thrown into the Red Sea." The rod of Aaron was to remove from between God and the people all their own murmurings against Him on their journey; but these all give place (when the wilderness is trodden) to the Captain of the Lord's host, and to Joshua, and the priest's feet which bore the Ark, and before whom Jordan divided its waters and stood upon a heap. This is a great turning point in the history of God's ways with His people, whether then or now, for on the other side of Jordan the conflict is not with an evil nature merely and its murmurings within, but with the Canaanites, and the enemy's power without who is to be overcome. Over Jordan is the promised land, and the rights of Israel must be made good in actual combat against the enemy, just as *now* by Christian circumcision and separation from the flesh, as dead and risen with Christ, we "wrestle against wicked spirits in the heavenlies, the rulers of the darkness of this present world." Moses and Aaron with their services and rods, like Miriam and her timbrel, and the women and their dances, with all that generation, have recorded their histories and served the ends and purposes of God, and are passed away with the wilderness journey. Other objects of infinite wisdom and love have come out, and form another book in the chronicles of the heavens and the earth; Joshua and Caleb, the Captain of Lord's host, Gilgal, Rahab the harlot, and the spies commencing these new records. Our business has been to show the sufficiency of the two rods for making known the ways of God and His people on the first stage of their mysterious but wonderful journey; and yet to shew the insufficiency of the rods, for the full and ultimate objects of God's glory with His beloved people!

Abraham and Melchisedek, Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Eleazar, Samuel and the prophets, David and Solomon, are all necessary in Old Testament Scripture to unfold the ways and mind of God towards man on the earth, and to

reveal the coming glories and offices of the anointed Christ, through whom they have all been made yea and amen. We who by grace have another and different standing, as one with the risen and glorified Lord, at the right hand of God in heaven, study *our* calling and adoption under the anointing of the Spirit, as revealed by Christ in the four Evangelists, when Jesus was on earth; or as further made known, by the Holy Ghost and the Apostles in the Epistles to the Churches, now that our Lord has been received up into glory.

The two rods are but a section, and a very small one, of what nevertheless forms a part of that infinite whole which embraces Christ as the Christ of God; or goes to make up that fulness which dwells in Him, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Connected with the Church, He "is the fulness of him that filleth all in all," but this is not our subject in this paper.

THE SECOND COMING AND REIGN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

CHAPTER V.

THE fifth mention of this time of sorrow is found in Rev. iii. 10. It comes in the midst of the Lord's addresses to the Seven Churches in Asia. In them the Lord is looking at the general external Church, in its place of responsibility on earth—not as the true body of Christ, in heaven. Here in his exhortations and promises to the overcomer in such a solemn scene, He says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Here the breadth and extent of the time of sorrow takes in a wider scope than the passages we have mentioned, which had the Jews for their sphere. "All the world" is here embraced in the solemn "hour" as the extent of its outpouring; "those that dwell on the earth," are the class to whom its judgment applies, those who have sunk from the true profession of Christianity into the place of Cain, whose religious "way" denied his ruin, and whose "world" denied God's sentence of "vagabond." It is the place where he "built a city," and became a respectable

man of the world, with commerce, arts and manufactures to occupy and entertain him, and to embellish the scene in which he was, and God was not! Thus began the "world"—the moral scene of man's departure from God. Its end is described in its religious phase, at that moment when "Babylon" like a "millstone," will be crushed by God's hand for ever, and the "artificers" and "craftsmen" of Cain's city, and his "harpers" and "pipers," are found in her at the end; coupled not only with "the blood of righteous Abel," but all the righteous blood that has been shed on the earth! See Rev. xviii. 21-24. Well may God say, "Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain" (Jude 2).

The Lord here (Rev. iii. 10) speaks to His own, who have kept the word of His patience, while evil was in power. "Thou hast a little strength; thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Then He adds this precious promise to the faithful, that He would keep them from the hour of temptation or trial, which should not only embrace Israel as the former passages show us, but which would sweep like a mighty torrent over all the world, to try them that have their portion here. Thus the time of sorrow and judgment, kept in store for this world when God's long-suffering is exhausted and the day of salvation is past, will embrace in its extent the whole world.

Woe to them who have added field to field, and house to house, at that day! Woe to those who have settled here on their lees, and yet professed to be "strangers and pilgrims" here! Woe to those who have found their rest where Jesus had not where to lay His head, and yet who profess to follow Him; who call themselves by His worthy name!

How blessed for those who have followed Him, will be the moment that ushers in that overflowing scourge. To such He says, "Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Even with such the tendency is to let slip the truth in power; not to hold it with God in the face of all. He marks this tendency, and hence the exhortation.

Thus we have, 1st, The Church exempted from the tribulation. 2nd, The tribulation going to sweep the whole world over. 3rd, The exhortation to the faithful in view of His speedy return.

The last passage, the sixth, is found in Rev. [vii.—"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these

which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, sir, thou knowest. And he said, unto me, These are they which came out of the great tribulation (ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης), and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (*vv.* 13, 14).

This chapter is a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seals, as if God had drawn aside the curtain, in the course of His judgment, to let us see that "in the midst of judgment he remembers mercy." We find three distinct companies before us in this Scripture. A complete number (144,000) out of the tribes of Israel, marked with the seal of God on their foreheads for preservation for the millennial earth when the wave of judgment shall have passed; then we have an innumerable company of Gentiles who are also seen (anticipatively) as having come out of this time of great tribulation for their place around Israel in the kingdom; then the heavenly saints looking down from on high on all, and explaining to the weeping prophet (as conversant with the mind of our Lord while judgments are passing, and prophetically knowing "things to come") who these great multitudes are. Thus the "Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God" are before us.

Remark too, that the prophet had been caught up to *heaven* (*ch.* iv. 1), and all these panoramas pass before him while there. Also notice that this chapter treats of those seen on *earth*. (See *vv.* 1, 2, &c.) Verse 9 might at a glance lead us to suppose that the great multitude is seen in heaven; but a closer examination shows that such is not the case. We find that they are seen as "before the throne." The throne had been set in heaven (*ch.* iv.) to judge the earth. The earth is *before* it, and all therein. Angels and elders and living creatures are "round about the throne," in heaven, (*v.* 11) as they were seen in *ch.* iv. 4, and *ch.* v. 11, and still remain there. By noting the difference of the "round about," with the "before," when marking the place of those spoken of, the difference will be seen as most striking and conclusive.

What a comfort it is to think that, when the pall of judgment winds its mighty folds around and over once enlightened Christendom, the veil of idolatry is withdrawn at the same moment of judgment, and by it, from the face of the nations hitherto sunk in idolatry. Thus the bringing in this "great multitude which no man could number, of

all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, is accomplished." Those thus preserved are saved for the blessings of the kingdom under Christ, to serve Him day and night in His temple (*v.* 15), of which there is none in heaven. How clearly, then, does the chapter point to an earthly scene. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst; nor shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. But the Lamb, from His place "in the midst of the throne," shall lead them unto fountains of waters, and the days of their sorrow are ended.

We have, then, the great tribulation mentioned in six distinct passages, while it is referred to, in general, in Scripture at large. The first four, *viz.*, Jer. xxx. 7; Dan. xii. 1; Matt. xxiv. 21; and Mark xiii. 19, all referring only to the Jews. The fifth, Rev. iii. 10, widening in extent to "all the world," and having in view those who have professed Christianity, and have "gone in the way of Cain." The sixth, Rev. vii. 13, 14, embracing the Jew and Gentile (the Church of God being in heavenly glory, and cognisant of the mind of God) the saved out of it being brought before us in the thousands of Israel preserved for the earth in the midst of judgment, and the innumerable multitude of Gentiles. But not one who had professed His name as a Christian is found among them. For such there is nothing left but "strong delusion, that all might be damned"! And this because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (2 Thess., ii., 10, 12.)

How such a consideration should urge us to seek for souls as long as the day of grace remains, especially amongst those who profess that they know Him, but in works deny Him—even the professing Christian. (See Titus i. 16.)

WALKING ON THE SEA.

MATT. xiv. 28-31.

"COULD Peter have walked on a smooth sea better than on a rough one? Our wisdom is to know that we can do *nothing* without Jesus; with Him, *everything* that is according to His will"—as a dear servant of Christ has written somewhere. And how much there is in the reflection, for if Peter was any more afraid when the wind became "boisterous" than he was before, is it not clear that, at least for the moment, he forgot by whose power it was that he had been enabled to walk on the water at all? Had he remembered

how completely dependent he was on the Lord for the taking a single step there, he would not have dreaded a rough wave being too much for *Peter*. He would have said, never mind how rough it is, it shall be as a solid rock under my feet, while my Master walks upon it, and calls me to meet Him. He rules the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise He stilleth them; and if He now sees fit to let them toss and roar without stilling them, *He* can as easily hold up my goings on a rough sea as on a smooth one, therefore will I not fear!

Dear fellow-pilgrim, have not you and I often felt as if we were "beginning to sink," as some great billow of trouble threatened us, and *might* break over our head? And if, when crying out with fear, we have found the Lord who loves us close at hand; and He has graciously and "immediately stretched forth His hand and caught" us, yet, has He not seen our "little faith," and been grieved by our doubting His sufficiency, or His love? And did not our dread of the *rough* sea betray our having forgotten on the *smooth* one, whose power alone it was that sustained us there? When all seems calm and bright we "think we stand." We have forgotten the word about going "from strength to strength," and imagine we have got a start, some stock of strength that will carry us through. Alas, for the slowness of our hearts in learning the lessons of true and simple dependence upon God, whose "right hand upholdeth" us! (Compare Ps. lxiii. 8, and lxxxix 13.) But the Lord, who loves to possess all the confidence of our souls, will have us to realise our constant dependence on Him. "Without me, ye can do nothing," whether in fruit-bearing, or trial-bearing, or prosperity-bearing. If I know, in a divine way, either "how to be abased," or "how to abound," it is only because I have learnt *His* sufficiency "who strengtheneth me," and *in Him* I have "strength for all things." (Phil. iv. 13.) Not a single step could we take aright without Him, be the path rough or smooth. Our natural life is sustained only by Him, for "in him we live and move and have our being." And surely it is not less true that it is of His grace only that our spiritual life is sustained. If, according to His abundant *mercy*, He has begotten us again, as according to *His foreknowledge* He has chosen us, it is by the *power* of God that we are kept, through faith, unto the salvation about to be revealed. Without this power, what

little difficulty could we overcome? But for His armour used in dependence on Him, as expressed by "praying always with all prayer," how could we stand for even a moment in conflict with our wily foe? But if the strength of the Lord is made perfect in weakness, and it is "in the power of *his* might" that we are strong, is not that invincible? What adversary dare measure swords with one wielding the "sword of the Spirit," in the Spirit's power; or what boisterous wind of trouble can disturb the "perfect peace" of one whose mind is simply "stayed on thee." If it is Himself who has said, "Come," setting us *in* the path of going forth to meet the Bridegroom, and Himself who comes to meet and welcome us at the *end* of this walking by faith, not by sight; is He not worthy to be trusted for each particular step of the way? He may let us pass "through the waters," but they will not overflow us, as they did Him. (Is. lxix. 1, 2). Moreover, in passing through them He will be *with us*, and when we have passed through then we shall be *with Him*. Then let us neither forget our dependence on Him, to be upheld on a *smooth* sea; nor distrust His power and grace, for us and with us on a *rough* one!

W. T.

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"H. A. C."—1. Does "the hope of his calling" embrace all the blessedness into which we are brought in Christianity, at this present time? Or does the word "hope" refer to the glory for which we wait, or both? (Eph. i. 18.)

2. What is the meaning of the "riches of the glory of *his* inheritance in the saints?" Does this refer to God's portion and joy in His redeemed?

A.—1. The verses from which you quote embrace the two parts previously unfolded in the chapter. 1st, The "calling" of God, *vv.* 3-6; and 2nd, the "inheritance," in *vv.* 8-11. Here (*v.* 18) the apostle desires that the eyes of their heart (which is the correct reading) may be enlightened to know three things. 1st, What is the hope of their calling. 2nd, What is the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. 3rd, What is the power which puts us into what the calling and inheritance confer, and which He had wrought in Christ, looked on as man actually, and which He had wrought in the believer spiritually.

The "hope of his calling" embraces both; what we have at present in Christ, as well as all we shall enter upon in glory, by and by. In this chapter no *time* comes into the thoughts, but it gives rather the thoughts and intentions of God which He has made good for us in Christ. It embraces, therefore, present possession of all by faith, as well as actual enjoyment of all in fruition by and by.

2. The "riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," is a peculiar expression. First, let us remark that the saints are never said to be God's inheritance or portion; nor is it here His joy in His redeemed. In the Old Testament, Israel as a nation, is said to be His inheritance. "Jehovah's portion is his people; Jacob (is) the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. xxxii. 9). This is never said of the Church of God, or of His saints in Christianity.

But the created universe, "all things, . . . both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (v. 10), are to be brought into ordered subjection under Christ, in the dispensation of the fulness of time. That is at the time, or age, when the perfection of God's ways in government are seen in result, in the Millennium under His Son. In, and with Him, we have obtained an inheritance as joint heirs individually—as His body, or Bride, looking upon the Church as a whole. We only have it now by faith.

"We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour," on high (Heb. ii); yet "we see not yet all things put under him." He sits on high, in the title of all, in four ways. 1. As creator of them (Col. i. 16). 2. As heir of all (Heb. i. 2). 3. As man of God's counsel (Ps. viii). 4. As Redeemer of all (Heb. ii). There He awaits His glory. We await it here below—a reconciled people in an unreconciled creation. (Col. i. 20-22).

The day will come for "the redemption of the purchased possession"—when that which has been purchased by *blood* will be redeemed from the hands of the enemy by *power*. God will take possession of "His inheritance" in and by Christ and the Church.

It is, therefore, God's inheritance of all created things, taken into His own hands by Christ and the saints under Him. He desires that we may know the "riches of its glory."

If you take an analogous thought in the Old Testament. As the land of Israel was Jehovah's (Lev. xxv. 23); and He took it into His hands and possessed it in His people Israel; so "all things" belong to Him, and He takes them into His own hands, and possesses them in and by His saints under Christ, and thus they become "His inheritance."

FRAGMENTS.

WHAT makes the Christian in his nature and mind is the revelation of what God is in His nature and mind.

I cannot trace the relationship between spirit, soul, and body in a *man*; how then can I trace the relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in God? All I can do is simply to believe it, and this I do.

God's presence is power, whether to break down, or to build up.

“HE THAT HATH SEEN ME HATH SEEN THE FATHER.”

JOHN XIV.

THERE is a remarkable connection between the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of John, and a remarkable separation too between them and what goes before. In chapter xiii., we find the blessed Lord with the doors shut, and about to keep that last passover, in which He was to take the place Himself, in His amazing grace and love, of being the true Pascal lamb. But if you study this chapter attentively, you will find that He takes the place there of being the Man that knew everything in principle that would befall His people, all through the wilderness; and He gives a most graphic sketch of all the principles of evil found in the company, and describes it all in the most searching way. He not only knew what man was, what Peter was, what John was, and what Judas was, but He puts Himself forward in contrast as the Man who could not fall, and, having loved His own who were in the world, would love them unto the end. Remarkably brought out, because Peter, in warm-heartedness, will not condescend to have his feet washed, and the Lord insists upon it—He cannot give up what was put on Him by the Father in heaven. “Why cannot I follow thee now?” says Peter. Ah! says Christ, I have no confidence—no faith in *you* at all. “The cock shall not crow, till you shall deny me thrice.” You must have faith in *Me*, “believe also in me.” And then the promise about His coming again, included Peter as much as any of us, and has not been fulfilled to Peter nor to us yet. It was a promise put forth to confirm the heart of Peter to have confidence in Him as the object of faith.

In chap. xiv. I find another thing—not putting Himself forward and saying, everything and everybody will break down but Myself, and I shall certainly come and pick you up and take you to the Father’s house; but I find Him as the Man—O! it is a wonderful thing to me—who knew all about the Father. The only-begotten Son of the Father, the only one who could declare Him. I see Him hiding Himself all along, I am nobody, I *present* the Father. In My words do you not hear My Father’s voice? In My works do you see Me merely and not My Father? All through He is presenting how He was the exegesis of the Father; the one thought of His heart was that they should read the Father in Him.

I want to look with you at the fourteenth chapter—the other picture and the other side is in the thirteenth. There is a great deal more in the fourteenth to confirm and establish the heart in connection with the Father, and our connection with Him, than most of us abidingly carry in our minds. It is very remarkable the way in which He introduces it. Do not be troubled—I have told you man will fail—ye believe in God, believe in Me. You must be satisfied to have Me as the object of faith. If you do not see Me, you must believe in Me. He introduces in a pitiful way, “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” *My* mind is on Him, but I speak of His house *first* to *you*. I go to prepare a place for you—I will come again. The house was always *His* place, but would have been no home to them, nor to any intelligent Christian, if not able to connect it with Him as the Head of the new creation. He makes the place a home scene, enables the heart to follow out the glory of the Father and of Him the Son, become Head of the new creation—a house that all His redeemed, when they come to consider, find prepared for themselves.

I have been struck by the way persons turn from passages connected with glory. If you ask them they say, I cannot look forward and rejoice in it. Nay, it is redemption-glory that is spoken of in Romans, v. 2. Does not the thought of redemption-glory make your heart at home, as His redeemed ones? Oh yes, if that is the thought I can rejoice—so with the Father’s house. Then in the fourth verse He takes a step onward—goes from *place* to *person*. He will try their faith, how far they will recognise the union between Him and the Father. “Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.” Three disciples were not up to the mark. Thomas, Philip, and afterwards Judas, cannot travel with him at all. “Whither I go ye know.” How can we? We know not where you are going, and how can we know the way? Then the Lord puts out the thought in His mind, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me;” not Himself, as the expression of the Father—that comes afterwards—but the way *to* the Father. Think of his having come into the world, knowing there was no separation between Him and the Father, that He was dwelling in Him; every word He spoke the expression of His Father’s heart, and every work He wrought, He wrought it by power committed to Him as the servant by the Father. He was continually calling attention to the fact that He

was not working out His own will, but that through grace He had taken the place of dependence. In the eleventh chapter, at the tomb of Lazarus when giving thanks, in all He brings His Father in, and asks His Father to display Himself through Him. He just takes completely the place of being the exponent of the Father, whose work was to show by words and deeds, as well as by person, the Father whom He had come to declare. Philip says, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." I often think, in reading these portions in connection with the seventeenth chapter, where the blessed Lord gives His servants such a character for having received the words, how could they be on one side and He on the other? They spoke according to their intelligence, He according to the Spirit; their understandings were unprofitable. There is *such* a difference whether I can bow to the word. Take any word you please, can you bow to it in simplicity? Take such a word as, "He that heareth my word, and believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." What does faith say simply? He knows all about eternal life, and He says, I have it. What a blessed person I am! Sense and unbelief say, I do not *feel* it. How can these things be? Faith says, He is master of the subject; every word He speaks is sure and stedfast. He says, "Is passed from death unto life." What would faith have done here on the part of Thomas and Philip? Not have bandied words with Him surely—something deeper than intelligence could lay hold of—but have found a fund of blessedness, in that he who saw Him saw the Father. They would have said, Well, I have more to learn on that than I apprehended. I should not have shut the Lord up in a corner as I did. The Lord answers in gentle patience, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father"?

What was it to the heart of the Lord to see the blindness and unbelief of their hearts, and their unwillingness to take a word unless they could gauge and measure it? What did He not feel at their calling in question the wonderful union between Himself and His Father that was so dear to His heart, and of such value to the work He had come to do? He seemed as it were *hurt* at their touching upon a thought on which His heart was so sensitive.

Could they trace the hypostatic union between Him and the Father and the Holy Ghost? Why, *I* cannot trace the relationship between body, soul, and spirit, in myself; am I surprised, then, that I cannot understand the union of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? I am no judge of Godhead surely. I am a creature. I cannot rise in judgment as to the relationship between them. Do I disbelieve it? Most certainly not. I receive it in all simplicity of heart, not understanding it, not able to measure it, but it gives such rest to the heart, making room for understanding redemption and all the plans of the Father.

Just where the creature failed He sent in the Son of His love, as "seed of the woman," to take up conflict with the power of darkness, till He had brought in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

With regard to every question which touches our own souls, it is that relationship which I cannot trace, which gives full rest to the heart. In connection with adoption, righteousness, &c.; and it is just this perfect, unhindered fellowship with His thoughts that gives my heart full and simple rest, when I receive that on the testimony of God. Unless I could rise higher than God I cannot form a judgment as to God's being. What do I think of a Being who never had a beginning? It is beyond the human mind. It is because I have lived so many years that I can understand living for ever; but He never had a beginning. I am a creature, and my capacity as a creature is checked to what a creature can know.

Let me call attention to what is so beautiful in the way the character comes out. How did the Lord reveal the Father? He became the One that drew forth all that He wanted your hearts to know about the Father; all that enables you to feel that when the door of the Father's house is shut behind you, you will be no stranger to His presence—no stranger to Himself—*no stranger to Himself!* You must study the Lord Jesus Christ in His character if you are to have scriptural warrant for saying that you know the Father.

People that do not know about the Father, their knowledge does not go beyond "As an (earthly) father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." To be sure He does. He follows every child through all the predicaments through which he may pass. Any of us would

pick up a child who had fallen into the gutter and put it on its feet again. Is *that* all we knew about the Father? What is the word that answers to the Father of the only-begotten Son? A perfect transcript of Himself. In the seventeenth of John I have a great deal about it. There I have the skilled way in which the Son knew all His Father's thoughts. I learn there something about the Father. When I turn to Him here I find the same thing. He hears my prayer, sends the loaf to the poor and needy; but *that* is not the expression of the heart of the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and our Father. Just turn to the fourth chapter of this Gospel with me. He finds a poor, lonely, sinful woman, and sits down beside her to talk to her, and shows how He hungered after the souls of sinners, and how He thirsted—not for a draught of water—He was thirsty to get the soul under the power of the grace He had brought. He knew He could succeed in bringing to her heart this grace, so that she should become a worshipper in Spirit and in truth. He is able to tell her, “My Father seeks these worshippers.” He was showing her that He had one mind with the Father. He goes on patiently, letting her show out her stupidity, folly, and darkness, until we find her as it were saying, You may go away, for Messiah cometh. He said, “I that speak with thee am he.” Then her heart gets open, and she goes away with one thought in harmony with the Father in heaven about His Son. I see what you are after, you are looking after poor Samaritans; now I can serve you. “Come see a man that told me all that ever I did.” Her whole heart has gone after Him who wants poor Samaritans to know the Father. Grace does its work with them, and they correct her. She had said, “A man that told me all that ever I did.” No, they say, it is the “Saviour of the world.”

Thus we see all the ways of His character; we see Him and learn of Him, and can say, Like Father like Son. If He that sat on the well revealed the Father in heaven, when I come to the house of the Father I shall find I know His character thoroughly from studying the character of the Son down here. O how the grace and mercy of the Father's heart are presented in the words that dropped from Him in His course down here! Whether breaking the bread, or healing the sick—any of these things that commend the message. He does them as the servant connected with the Father, not to be seen in the abundance of bread that He gives for

their perishing bodies, but what the Father sent from heaven to them.

Just two things in connection with the place He has now. He says, Whatsoever ye ask in My name I will do, when I am gone on high. Bring all your wants, and bring them with boldness, you will find I am there, ready to give the answer, and give it in order that the Father may be glorified in Me.

"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete." It was quite an understood thing, that instead of being on earth trying to reconcile the world to God, He had taken the place of sin-bearer on the cross, to reconcile the heart estranged from God—gathering to Him not twelve or seventy disciples, but all His people, to the right hand of the Father on high. Change the word Comforter to Paraclete; the former is much too narrow. When He was here He charged Himself with all the responsibilities of His company, and really was their guardian. He rebuked them, fed them, watched over them. He charged Himself with all the responsibility that He had taken. Now He takes the place of Paraclete. "If any man sin, we have the Paraclete on high"—Advocate, I am sure; but more—He bears the responsibilities of those who are here. He is there as bearing our responsibilities before God. He is in absolute power for the people, able to meet every exigence. Christ *there*, the Holy Ghost is *here*. He says, I will send another Paraclete. The world would not know Me; it cannot recognize Him. You recognize Him. He is *in* you. If that is true of the person of the Lord, what is my connection with Him? It is of that character that should make me search how far I am intimate with it. The Lord Himself is in heaven; the Holy Ghost dwelling as the Spirit of truth in you, and connecting you with that Son, so that we are able to joy and rejoice in the unceasing love He is ever pouring down on Him. It ought to be a searching thing at the present time the character of our relationship with the Lord in heaven, and we one with Him.

Then He goes on in connection with life—just the same thing, a character of intimacy which could not be higher. "Because I live, ye shall live also." The world cannot understand that about the child of God. The run-a-gate sheep could not escape the Good Shepherd, when He went after it. The child who has the Spirit, and knows himself vitally one with Christ, how *can* you avoid it? Friends

down here we know, when faithful to us in distress. How often does the Lord speak to you words not addressed to sense? I am bold to say *speak*. Sometimes words of Scripture are ready to start out from the page in substantive reality, so that you say—*That*, in the verse, I never saw it before! It is by the Holy-Ghost that the word is made effectual. "Because I live ye shall live also." In what sense? I remember the time—many of you do too—when one single thought that was correct about God you cannot recall as having had. You thought Him one that would catch you some day at unawares, and then it would be all up with you! Not one correct thought about Him whom you now know as One who looks in mercy on a world that had turned its back on Him—One who said, My son will go down, and I will bless the sinner in fellowship with Him. Such a thought never crossed your mind, until spiritual sight was given you. Oh, think of the moment with Israel dancing at the bottom of the hill round a calf, and God saying, "I will have mercy," at the top! Now I know He is altogether another to what I thought.

"At that day ye shall know," &c., (v. 20). We often say, you will never get peace till you see Christ *where He is*—the One that was crucified, and was buried. The Lord says, "Ye shall know that I am in my Father," on the throne, in the bosom of the Father, in His divine glory more than divine glory—His relationship stands confessed. We have often to learn the relationship by the place. He tried how far the Father's house would make us familiar with Him. Many a heart never got a thought as to the identity between the Father and the Son. He has taken His seat on the Father's throne.

It is more than a blessing put into one's hand. He is in the Father. "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Ye in me! Ah, let me ask, Do you abide in Him? Do you know the thoughts of the Father to you resting on that Son, and on you in Him? He has graced us in the Beloved. What manner of love is that? Do you know it? As the expression of the unhindered love came down on Him in the world, so surely does His unhindered love come down on us, seen by the Father in Him. It reaches you as that which the Son is worthy of. I want, not knowledge, but the practical abiding in Him, to say, I do not know myself save as being in Him! If you and I see how far we are

skilled in the enjoyment of it, we shall find how little of what is heavenly is practically ours. It must be ours really, for *He is there*, in the Father, and we in Him; and we must know it is ours, because His Spirit is in us.

Pick out the most remarkable Christian you can find, do not blind your eyes, and you will see in them weakness and poverty; not as to finding fault with it, but you will see it, and see how grace triumphs over all. All the love of the Father to the Son of His love comes down on that man who is in the Son and the Spirit of the Son in Him. Is not that Abba's love? Is not that different from—If we want bread He will give it to us? All providences show His gracious love, to be sure; but we want to know Abba's love.

You and I never saw Abba's *house*—but we know Abba's *heart*. I have Abba's heart, and I enjoy it. Am I walking worthy of it—passing through this evil world, on the road to Abba's house, because the Spirit of His son dwells in me?

O that we may be wholly and undividedly devoted to Him that made us thus His own!

GOD'S KING.—No. VII.

HIS RETURN TO EARTH.—Psalm xlv.

FROM Psalms which speak in part of the past and present, we turn next to two which speak wholly of the future. The Lord's present place we learn from Psalm cx., and the deductions to be drawn from such a position, the New Testament opens out to us. There we are directed to a different subject, the re-appearance in person of the Lord Jesus on the theatre of these events, connected with His humiliation and death.

A peculiarity there is about Him in this respect, predicated of no one else. In common with thousands, nay, myriads of God's saints, He passed away from this scene by death. But of Him alone is it revealed, that, having gone out of the world by that door, He shall stand again in person upon this globe. When He returns to reign, His heavenly people will come with Him (Zech. xiv. 5, 1 Thess. iii. 13), for, seated, as John saw Him in the vision, on a white horse, the armies of heaven will follow in His train, (Rev. xix. 11-14), and the saints of the high, or heavenly places, shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. (Daniel vii. 18.) But of

none of the heavenly saints, who have gone down into death, is it predicted, that they shall tread again on this earth. The Lord Jesus, however, will. On the Mount of Olives, from which, in the presence of His disciples, He went up to Heaven, will He again stand; and, in keeping with the circumstances of that day, creation shall acknowledge, by commotion, the presence of her Creator and Lord. (Zech. xiv. 4, 5.) Man's place, after he has died, knows him no more. Not so with the Lord Jesus Christ. At Jerusalem He died, at Jerusalem shall He re-appear, and the City of the Great King shall welcome with acclamations His return in power, moved with a more real and deeper emotion than when the populace, on the occasion of His triumphal entry on the ass's colt, asked of the multitude, "Who is this?" Their question betrayed ignorance of what they ought to have known, and unconcern about Him, without whom their blessings can never be enjoyed. "Ye shall not see me henceforth," said the Lord, apostrophising Jerusalem, "till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Concerned she will be then on His return, and welcome it with gladness will she (Matt. xxiii. 39), herself to be known henceforth by a new name, Jehovah Shammah, *i.e.*, Jehovah is there. Of the associations of the Lord Jesus with Jerusalem this Psalm treats.

How different were the feelings of the Psalmist, as he sung by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost about the return in power to Jerusalem of David's Son and Lord, from that manifested by its inhabitants when the Lord entered it in accordance with the terms of Zechariah's prediction. Great, indeed, was his emotion, as looking through the vista of ages, he described the personal appearance of One whom he had never seen, but with whose person he will be made acquainted, and whose triumphal progress he will with his eyes behold. "My heart is inditing (*or* has bubbled up) a good matter." What interest this had for him! Evidently he was full of it. The things he had made about the King stirred his soul to its very depths; and, like one whose thoughts are engrossed with his subject, he mentions not the Lord by name, but at first only tells us of one of His titles, as if all must know equally with himself to whom the appellation of the "King" rightly belongs. To the writer, all was plain as, under the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost, he penned the words which clothed, by divine appointment, the thoughts of the

Spirit of God. His tongue was the pen of a ready writer. Thus the words we read are the words he uttered, written down probably by himself, that the inspired prophet and the reader might rejoice together. Two leading thoughts form the subject of this song—the personal description of the Lord Jesus returned from heaven to earth, and the beauty and adornment of the Queen, Jerusalem, in the days of her restoration to Jehovah's favour. Now she is as the wife put away for her transgressions (Is. i. 1); then she will be the wife publicly acknowledged, having Jehovah for her husband (Is. liv. 4, 5), and clad in her beautiful garments (Is. lii. 1). On Zion the King had been firmly set by God's decree (Ps. ii. 6); from Jerusalem the word is to go forth (Is. ii. 3); and here we have a description of the metropolis of the whole earth, as the Queen at the Lord's right hand, clad in gold of Ophir (Is. ii. 4.) When facing death as man and Messiah, in Ps. cii., He looked forward to Zion being rebuilt, and to Jehovah's praise being declared in Jerusalem. Now we see how fully that will be accomplished, and how the words of Isaiah will be fulfilled—"Thou shalt be called, Sought out, a city not forsaken" (Is. lxii. 12). In the day of her distress she was called an "outcast; Zion, whom no man seeketh after" (Jer. xxx. 17). Here she is described as sought out indeed, for the rich among the people are to entreat her favour (12), and the daughter of Tyre, that city, the synonym for commercial greatness and wealth, will be there with a gift, the substance of the world being then placed at Jerusalem's disposal.

But not only will earthly wealth flow to her, and temporal possessions be her portion, but what is far more valuable, she will possess an attraction for the King, who is here said to desire her beauty. All glorious within the house, her clothing of wrought gold, brought unto the King in raiment of needlework, surrounded by the virgins her companions, how changed will her appearance and condition then be from what it was when Isaiah first described her (ch. i. 21-23). God's purposes are unchangeable, therefore He will fulfil His mind about her. But how can such a change be brought about so that the polluted one, divorced for her transgressions, should become an object of beauty for the King? The close connection between Isaiah liii. and liv. suggests the answer. In liii. we have the Lord's atoning work mentioned, in liv. the future glory of Jerusalem

described, and in *lv.* the grace which can be available for Jews and Gentiles is set forth, for what concerns Jerusalem and men is dependent on that mighty work treated of in *liii.* Hence we can understand how truly she will be an object of delight to Him whose death has availed for her. For though her filth will be washed away by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning (*Isaiah iv. 4*), she will owe all dealings with her for blessing, to the atoning sacrifice of Christ. To deepen the sense of God's grace in the heart of the daughter of Zion, and surely in ours too, we read nothing in the Psalm about Jerusalem, but of her beauty and change of condition. His joy in her who is her Lord (not hers in Him) is that of which the Psalmist makes mention.

An analogy may here be traced between Jerusalem, the Wife, and the Church, the Bride, the Pearl of great price. Both owe their position and relation to the Lord, to His death for them. To possess the Church He died, and to present her to Himself an object of beauty and of delight for ever He still labours. To be to Jerusalem a husband, after all her sins and idolatry, He died; but with her Jehovah had relation before the Cross, whereas the Church had no existence till after His death. Thus, though there is an analogy, there is also a great difference. Of Jerusalem it is written—"For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies have I gathered thee" (*Isaiah liv. 7*). Divorced once, she will be publicly owned as the wife when the Lord returns in glory. The Church is now only the Bride; her marriage has yet to take place. Restoring grace Jerusalem will know, and forgiveness of all her past iniquities. Jehovah's wrath she has experienced, of which the Church, the Bride, has known, and will know, nothing. On earth, as the wife, she will be enriched with the world's substance, and have the place of pre-eminence above all other cities on the face of the globe, being the joy of the whole earth; yet she will only be the footstool of Jehovah. The Church, however, then above, will be the centre of government for the universe, and not merely for the earth—giving light even to Jerusalem below her—for through her crystal walls the light of the glory of God will illumine continually the city on earth (*Rev. xxi, Isaiah lx. 20*).

Jerusalem thus described as the Queen, telling of the complete putting away of her defilement, and the full favour

of Jehovah again, and that to be enjoyed for ever, we have also in this Psalm the personal description of the King as He will appear to men on earth. How He will appear when He comes into the air for His saints, we read not, for that has to do with heaven ; but how He will look when earth again beholds Him, the Word of God does reveal to us. His coming out of heaven, Rev. xix. 11-16 describes ; His personal appearance as King at Jerusalem, this Psalm depicts. There is, of course, a reason for this. Called here " the King," and rightly so, Scriptures tells us that another will arrogate to himself that title, and by that name be known. The prophets Isaiah (xxx. 33, lvii. 9) and Daniel (xi. 36) so speak of him, the Antichrist of the future for Israel, the false prophet, who will support the blasphemous pretensions of the Beast, for apostate Christendom (Rev. xiii. 11-17). Claiming to be the Messiah, and received by the apostate part of the remnant of the Jews, assails (John v. 43, Zech. xi. 16-17) " the idol shepherd," we can understand the importance of description, personal and moral, of Him who is God's king, that the faithful may be on their guard, and be kept away from following the ways of the returned remnant. On Christians who know what their hope is, and whence they are to look for its fulfilment (1 Thess. i. 10, Phil. iii., 20), the presence of a man upon earth, claiming to be the Messiah, would have no effect. For from heaven He will come for whom we wait, and into the air, not to the earth, will the Lord descend when He comes to take us up to be for ever with Himself (1 Thess. iv. 17). But to the faithful remnant, who rightly will expect the appearance of Messiah upon earth, the importance of a personal description of Him, whom another will have been personating, all must admit. The current will run so strong in that day of abounding apostacy, that, without grace to stem it, the godly will be unable to keep their feet. The feelings of a saint, and his difficulties at that time, we have told us in Psalm lxxiii. " My feet," he confesses, " were almost gone ; my steps had well nigh slipped."

With the usual features of the Antichrist or false prophet we are made familiar by the New Testament in 2 Thess. ii. and Rev. xiii. Self-exaltation or desire to be looked upon as God, and working miracles in support of his claim, will be characteristics of the false king. Power to put forth in connection with, and under the protecting hand of the first

beast, the imperial ruler or head of the Roman earth, will Antichrist wield to make all apostatise, and to worship the image of that which Scripture, to show its moral character in God's eyes, calls a wild beast, *θηρίον*, whose only object and aim is the gratification of itself at the expense and injury of others. At that time there will be two beasts so-called—the one the head of the Roman earth, the other the pretended Messiah (Rev. xiv). How different are the features of this horrid beast from those to be displayed in Him whom he will dare to personate! Though lamblike in outward appearance, yet his voice will betray his origin and his acts. Deceiving the world will indicate to God's saints his parentage.

Of the true Messiah we have, in Isaiah lii. 14, a description as He once appeared upon earth,—“His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.” How true that was we know. His sufferings, too, when in humiliation, Isaiah and other writers predicted; and we can point to Him alone as one in whom they were all fulfilled. How correct will this description of Him which we have in the Psalm prove to be, time will show. “Thou art fairer,” we read, “than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.” When manifested to the world all will see who is the King of God's choice. His personal appearance will mark Him out as the Head to whom all creation is to be subject. Grace, truth, meekness and righteousness, are characteristics of the King. Oppression, deceit, arrogance and persecution of God's saints, even unto death, will be features by which Antichrist will be known. Comparing the ways of the latter when in the zenith of his power, with the picture given us in this Psalm by the Spirit of the true Messiah, the saints of that day will see that they have still to wait for the One who will correspond to the Psalmist's description. The world may be captivated by false prophets and miracles, and many of the returned remnant may be ensnared or—as Daniel tells us, “the many,” *i.e.*, mass of them—so great will be his influence and apparently convincing his claims; but the true conqueror and hope of Israel, the godly among them will still desiderate. What their trials will be, Psalms lii-lix. in some measure recount. What the deliverance will be, Psalms xlv.-xlviii. in some degree depict; the answer to the cry of the afflicted saints is found in Psalm xlv. The

King is described in xlv. ; God's presence in Jerusalem is announced in xlv. ; the conquest and subjection of the nations to Israel is declared in xlvii. ; and the security of Zion from all attacks of her foe is celebrated in xlviii.

Who then is "the King?" He is a man, the Virgin's son, David's heir, Abraham's seed ; but He is mine, He is God also, as *v. 6* proves. To Him it can be said "Thy God," speaking of His humanity, and "O God" speaking of His divinity. Antichrist has never yet been seen on earth ; but the Christ has been on this globe. "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity," *v. 7*, speaks of His character and ways when here in humiliation. Here, then, we see the end of a life in dependance upon God. Meek, He was faithful at all cost to Jehovah ; so dominion and might are to be His, nay, are His now, and the world will become part of His inheritance. What a thought for those in trial in all ages, as they read in the Word what the Lord was, and what He will be some day. He was meek and righteous, He will be King, and execute judgment. As in the history of Joseph, so it will be exemplified in that of the Lord, that waiting for God, time ends in deliverance by God's power, salvation by God's good pleasure.

As might, conquest, dominion will be His in that day (3—5), so a throne, too, which endures for ever He will have, and the right, as Father of His people (Isaiah ix. 6), to make them princes over all the earth ; for of Him, the King, not of Jerusalem, does *v. 16* speak. So great, so glorious will be His kingdom on earth, that not as with sovereigns now will His ancestors be spoken of. David and Solomon will reflect no lustre on His reign, for men will perceive that He is the fountain of power in Himself. The glory that has been will not be remembered, for the unsurpassing glory which will then be first and only seen in Him. With glory will be fame. His "name will be remembered in all generations, therefore shall nations praise him for ever and ever." A sun we read of here which rises and never sets. None before Him have attained to that pre-eminence, nor will any after Him, for He will have no successor. In the last occupant of David's throne the glory will culminate, but never decline.

The marked difference between Antichrist and the Lord we have briefly noticed. The portion of each, when God shall stop the reign of lawlessness and cut short the trials of

His elect, the word also foretells. Cast alive into the lake of fire will be the doom of Antichrist (Rev. xix. 20); anointed by God with the oil of gladness above His fellows will be the portion of the Christ (7).

But what part have we in all this? some may ask. Christ's glory, Christ's kingdom, do concern us. The heavenly portion the Psalm, it is true, does not touch on; but the existence of heavenly saints it does just intimate. The King's fellows it speaks of, and we know from Heb. iii. 14 who these are. In Ps. xvi. the Lord calls them saints, in xxii. He speaks of them as His brethren, here they are styled His fellows; in each place the proper term for the subject in hand. If He speaks of the class with which He would associate on earth, He calls them saints, separated unto God from the evil around them. When about to leave earth for heaven, He surnames them His brethren, that, though deprived of His presence outwardly, they might know the relationship which He acknowledges to exist between God Himself and them. And here, when the day of trial is looked at as over, and the day of His glory is about to dawn, we learn that those will not be forgotten in the time of His greatness who confessed Him in the days of His rejection. Saints, describes the class morally; brethren, the relationship between Him and them; and fellows, declares the association that will for ever exist between them and Him. As His brethren, God, who is His Father, is theirs also; as His fellows, the kingdom, which belongs to Christ, they will share with Him.

THE SECOND COMING AND REIGN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

CHAPTER VI.

WE have already seen that the fruition of our hope as saints, is that the Lord will take up His people to meet Him in the air. He will then present them in His Father's house. We have also seen the response of His saints, whether of those who are laid in the tombs, or of the living, being raised or changed at the time of the resurrection from among the dead. Then follows the sweeping scourge of judgment, which will search "the four corners of the earth," and cleanse it of every refuge of lies, at that time named the "Great Tribulation," which will fall upon

the Jews especially, and embrace the world also in its breadth.

If we examine the twelfth chapter of the book of Revelation, we shall find a very comprehensive picture, which, in an allegory, shows the two chief companions of the saints—the heavenly and the earthly : the one taken into the glory and set in safety on high ; the other left to pass through the troubles of the day which then follows, yet preserved.

These features are presented allegorically in this chapter, but they are the well-known order of events in Scripture, whether seen in doctrine, in illustration, or in type. Thus Enoch (as the Church) is taken away to heaven, “translated” from this earth ; while Noah (as the Jew) is left to pass through the waters of judgment, and is reinstated on the renewed earth, after judgment has cleared the scene. Abraham (as the Church) walks in communion with God on the mountain top. He knows prophetically of the judgments which are about to fall on Sodom. He intercedes for others, and does not come into the judgment himself. Lot, on the other hand (as the Jew), becomes involved in the sensual world’s judgment—Sodom. He testifies of its destruction, and escapes, “so as by fire.” He gets into a little “Zoar,” and hides there until the “indignation is overpast.” He is like the saved Jew of the last days, to whom the prophetic voice speaks, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain” (Isaiah xxvi. 20-21).

So in this chapter, the “man child”—figure of Christ and the Church, as we shall see—is caught up to God and His throne. Satan is then cast out of the heavens, and the woman which brought forth the man child flees, and is sustained of God in her time of trouble. She is a figure of the Jew, “of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.”

First then, we have the woman, the Jew, clothed with supreme glory—the sun ; her old reflected glory—the moon—under her feet. The twelve stars—complete earthly subordinate power—on her head. Then, in verse second, we find the yearning of the nation for Messiah : “She cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.”

Then, again (*v.* 3), Satan's power, as seen in the seven heads, and administered through ten horns, or kingdoms, of the Beast. He stood before the woman, ready to devour the child as soon as it was born. This we see in part in the efforts of Herod to cut off the infant Jesus. (*Matt.* ii.) Still the child is preserved, and caught up into the place of power—the throne of God.

We have not in this His atoning work, but His birth and ascension; as the kingdom and rule are the subjects, not redemption and the church.

Now, like all the prophetic language of Scripture in the Old Testament where the kingdom is treated of, you invariably find the present period omitted, from the sending down of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost till the Lord's coming for His saints. If we do not see this, we shall never understand the prophetic Scriptures. Time ceases to be counted, and earthly things are dropped (God always secretly watching over all), from the moment that the Lord enters the heavens. Then the Holy Ghost is sent down from heaven, to form His body—the Church. When this is done, He will begin to deal with earthly things and the Jew again; time, meanwhile, is not counted. When the Lord comes it will be taken up again at the same point where He dropped it here before. This present period is not, properly speaking, time at all; it is a heavenly parenthesis in time—an interval.

In Psalm ii. we find this effort of the kings of the earth, and the apostate rulers of the Jews, to frustrate the thoughts and counsels of Jehovah about His Messiah. He that sitteth in the heavens laughs at their impotency. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." His purposes will not change. But He will take possession of this throne, and have the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth, possessing them with a rod of iron. He will break them in pieces by judgment, and so inherit them. Meanwhile He waits in the heavens, for God is gathering His Church, the Bride of the Lamb, by His Spirit sent down from heaven. The Church formed at Pentecost lapses into ruins, departs from her first love, and sinks into the world, and into corruption. Then the Lord encourages the faithful to overcome, and promises, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule

them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers ; even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star.”—(Rev. ii. 26-28. See chapters ii. iii., *passim*.)
(*To be continued.*)

THE LESSONS LEARNED UNDER THE ROD OF AFFLICTION.

BELoved BROTHER,—I hear that your——, is in a very precarious state, and I seize a moment to write to you, to express what I trust you are assured of, dear brother, my unfeigned sympathy with you, and I would add, dear Mrs.——, though I have not seen her. If the soul walks with God, it is not hard, but it is submissive, and there is no softer spirit, nor one which is more susceptible of every feeling than submission ; but then it takes the will out of the affections without destroying them, and that is very precious. So was it with Christ. He felt everything. His tenderness was perfect, and yet how perfect his submissiveness.

How God exercises the heart by these things ! It is not simply that the heart is tried by the sorrow itself, in which we can reckon on the most tender sympathy of Christ ; but when the heart is thus brought into the presence of a God who is dealing with us, all our ways—all the interior of our heart—all His ways with, and His appeals to us, often in such cases rise up within. If the will is unbroken, and no clearness as to grace be known, a perplexed and anxious judgment ensues. If not this—often a humble and lowly judgment of self ensues ; for the knowledge of grace makes us lowly, when it is real.

It is astonishing how much often remains as a sediment at the bottom of the heart, in a man gracious in the main of his life, which the rod of God stirs up when He thrusts it in ; often underlying all the contents of the heart, yet always to be carried off by the living stream of the waters of His grace : not merely faults, but a mass of unjudged materials of everyday life, a living under the influence of what is seen, or unjudged affections of every kind.

All that is not up to the measure of our spiritual height is then judged in its true character, as connected with flesh before God.

But it is not always so, nor wholly so; but it is always if there is a "need be." God may visit us to bring out the sweet odour of His grace; not indeed even so without need, as the soul itself will own, for in such case it will feel the need of realising all the communion, which in its closer character was hindered by that for which God is dealing with us. But grace being fully known, and submission being there, the practical result is only in fact, and before others, a sweet odour of willing bowing before God, and even thankfulness, in the midst of sorrow; when this is real it is very sweet.

He too is very present in it, and it is thus we make real progress in such exercises. It is astonishing what progress a soul sometimes makes in a time of sorrow. It has been much more with God, for indeed that alone makes us make progress.

There is much more confidence, quietness, absence of the moving of the will; much more walking with, and dependence on Him, more intimacy with Him, and independence of circumstances, a great deal less between us and Him, and then all the blessedness that is in Him comes to act upon the soul and reflect in it, and oh how sweet that is! What a difference it does make in the Christian, who, perhaps, was blameless in his walk in general previously.

I trust the Lord may spare you your —, dear brother. A first trial of this kind is always very painful. The heart has not been in it before. God comes and claims His right on our tenderest affections. This is strange work when they have just been drawn out, but it is well—it is good. I am sure you are in His hands, and that I am sure is all a way of love, and the best that the wisdom of His love can send.

If the needed work can be done without the sorrow, He will not send the sorrow. We might even dread if it be needed. His love is far better than our will. Trust Him. He may well be trusted. He has given His Son for us, and proved His love. Present your requests to Him. I do fully for you. He would have us do it, and then lean fully on His love and wisdom.

If He strikes, be assured He will give more than He takes away.

Peace be with you, dear brother.

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"A.C."—Could you give me the meaning of Gal. vi. 17? "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

A. Paul uses these words in writing with reference to his ministry, which the false teachers were slighting. They had come down and imposed the law in the harvest fields of Galatia, where Paul had been gathering in golden sheaves by the Gospel. He finds the work of the Gospel subverted by these Judaisers—the bane of the Gospel of Christ ever since. They had not faith to do a work for Christ themselves, and could only subvert and destroy his. "Henceforth let no man trouble me," says Paul, as these false teachers were doing. And he then alludes, in the most touching manner, to the marks of the scourge and lash of the enemy which he bore in his flesh, proof of the reality of his ministry from and for the Lord.

As the slave or soldier of that day was branded with a hot iron in his flesh with the initials of his owner or master, so Paul could point to the marks he bore in his, living proofs of the reality of his truly being the slave or soldier of his Master. These beautiful initials of Jesus were what these false teachers could not show or appeal to, in proof of their service and ownership to his true Master and Lord. They could come and subvert the glories of His Gospel and the liberty of His people in grace, as well as His bondsman's work, but where in the flesh had they such marks of reproach, such stigmas engraved for Him?

"Q."—What is the difference between being "dead in sins" (Col. ii. 13) and being "dead with Christ" (Col. ii. 20)?

A.—The state of a sinner as "dead in sins" is that there is no spring in the soul to God-ward, but all the whole being going out in the will of the flesh in sin. In the Epistle to the Romans (chaps. i.-iii.) the sinner is described as what we might term "alive in sins;" i.e., every movement of his heart active in the energies of sin. "Dead in sins" would be the aspect of the soul to God-ward, because there is no movement of the heart towards Him.

Christ goes in divine grace into the sinner's place, bearing our sins. He dies, having borne them, and rises again; we are quickened together with Him and forgiven all trespasses. God thus having cleared us, counts to us in His grace all that His Son passed through. If He dies, we are "dead with Christ;" if He is buried, we are buried with Him (as in the first initiatory ordinance of baptism); if He is quickened out of death (as Man), we are quickened together with Him; if He is risen, so are we; if seated in heavenly places, we are seated there in Him (Eph. ii. 6); if He appears in glory, so do we (Col. iii. 4). Thus there is complete identity.

"Dead in sins" would describe the state of the *sinner* with regard to God. "Dead with Christ" would describe what God counts the *believer* in grace, Christ having identified Himself with his state when a sinner only.

CAN YOU SPEAK IN PARABLES?

2 SAMUEL XII.

I THINK we learn a very valuable lesson in reading 2 Samuel xii. in connection with helping those who have failed, or who have become backsliders. It requires much spirituality in the one who takes the restorer's place. The Lord must be the sender in such a case; for it is quite a mistake to suppose that any brother, whether he have the gift for it or not, can wash his brother's feet. It is often the most unspiritual who are most ready to proffer themselves for such service.

We read that "the *Lord* sent Nathan unto David." If it is I myself who go, be assured I shall do my brother more injury than good. "I" must be nowhere: the Lord must act through me. If ever an empty vessel is needed, it is when a brother's feet need washing, lest anything save the water of the word be used. And it is not easy to obtain such a vessel, inasmuch as he who carries it is actually full of the filth he is coming in contact with. If I forget, I may let out the very sin about which I am a messenger to my brother—ay, let it out ere I leave his presence, if not kept by the power of God. I am utterly unfit to send, if I go saying to myself—"Nobody can accuse me of doing this: nobody can lay his hand on me about my walk," &c., it would be my wisest course to stay at home and allow a more suitable vessel, because more empty of self, to go.

In Gal. v. 26, Paul says:—"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." The gifted ones were apt to despise those who had less manifestation of power; whereas the latter were apt to envy those who possessed more knowledge than themselves. But the question in hand was—not power from gift or knowledge, but spirituality:—"If we live in spirit, let us also walk in spirit." Hence he adds (ch. vi. 1)—"Brethren, if even a man be taken (caught in the act—*προληφθῇ*) in some trespass, ye that are *spiritual* restore* (fit up again into his

* This word is very beautiful here. The proper meaning of it is to compact or knit together, either members in a body, or parts in a building. The erring brother must be so restored that he is fully brought into his place as to his own soul, and as one who has a place as a member of the body of Christ, as part of its articulation. Half restoration is a miserable thing, and a second fall will probably follow when we are satisfied with such as to ourselves or others. The word "perfecting" in Eph. iv. 12 is from the same root.

proper place—*καταπλιγέρε*) such in a spirit of meekness, considering (viewing as a marksman would—*σκοπῶν*) thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

It is not merely that I am to restore my brother in meekness, but I must be "in a *spirit* of meekness" myself. I might do the work in a meek way, and yet not be inwardly moved by a spirit suitable to what I outwardly appear. "*Ye* that are spiritual" is collective: "considering *thyself*" is individual. It is made intensely personal. It was not two or three who came to David to correct him: Nathan came alone. An assembly may know of a brother's delinquency: one goes to him—the most spiritual and most suitable. The task is not left to anybody, which often means nobody. It is an important one, and treated accordingly. The erring one to whom I am speaking will often have a clearer consciousness of my state of mind than I may have myself. If I am saying in my heart—"I think I am a suitable person to be speaking to him, because I am sure I would not commit the particular sin he has fallen into," I may be certain he will feel I am thus thinking, and aroused flesh in him may at once be my recompense. He has the consciousness that I have a nature as bad as he; and it will not do for me to appear to act as if I am in no danger of falling.

Now, notice how Nathan came to David. He did not pounce down on him in reproof. He did not begin with the words—"Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight?" Oh, no! The suitable *person* comes, and he proves he is such by the way he speaks. Nathan was the one who *knew* David's love to the Lord. Nathan had not to *come* to David in chap. vii. We read there—"And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies: *that the king said unto Nathan the prophet*, See, now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is *in thine heart*; for *the Lord is with thee*." The one who came to restore a sinning David was well aware that he was, in God's sight, a whole-hearted saint. None other would do to send. The One who restored Peter had known his love—"Lord, Thou knowest* all things; Thou knowest

* The word for "knowest" (*οἶδας*) in this passage implies that Peter appeals to his Lord's *conscious* knowledge of the fact. The word for "knowest" which follows is not the same word.

that I love thee." So, in David's case, the Sender and the sent one knew what David's heart was towards God before he fell.

Remember, dear reader, when you are going to restore a brother, if you are conscious that that brother is doubtful about your thoughts concerning him—if he feels *you* never had any evidence to your own soul that his heart was, at one time, true to his Lord and yours—you are the most unsuitable person that could possibly help him. Let some Nathan go who has previously been sent to the sinning one with some message similar to what we have in 2 Sam. vii. 4-17.

Is it not lovely to look at the first verse of ch. xii. and read—"And the Lord sent *Nathan* to David," and turn back to read of a former message through the same hands—"Go and tell to *my servant*, to David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? . . . *I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest*, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. . . . Also the Lord telleth thee, that he will make thee an house. . . . And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David. Then went King David in, and sat before the Lord." This was the messenger suited to restore; and he so did his work that he was not satisfied until David entered again "into the house of the Lord and worshipped." (Chap. xii. 20.) On both occasions Nathan was the means of sending him into God's presence. Truly Paul's words can aptly apply—"Ye that are spiritual perfectly fit into his place again such an one in a spirit of meekness."

So much for the *person* who was sent. Now let us see how fitly spoken were his words.

"And he came unto him, *and* said unto him." The coming and the speaking are made two distinct things. One is as important as the other—our attention is fixed on both separately. A look is as important as a word: our very *manner* in entering the room where we are seeking the offender is of importance—the way we greet him will sometimes ruin the result if we do not *feel* as we ought in such a case. The smallest appearance of *self* is sure to make the same unpleasant companion appear at once in him to whom we come in sup-

posed grace and nothingness. An *appearance* of humility and meekness when such are not really present in our souls is positive hypocrisy, and is sure to meet a due reward.

But we proceed. "And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him." Why this parable? Ah! it answers a question often put by fancied helpers of failing saints. "We must be honest and straightforward, must we not, and at once tell a brother his fault?" Or—"We do not think it right to be 'beating round the bush' in such matters. Is it not truth we have to tell to him; and, if he takes it unkindly, surely we cannot help it?" Indeed! I would ask such to study, word for word, the beautiful incident we are considering. Had not Nathan truth to tell? Could not *he* be honest and straightforward, and yet act with exquisite tenderness also? Perhaps not a few of our so-called "honest" reprovers would be half inclined to consider Nathan's parable rather a roundabout way of bringing home what was true—and what must be true, for *God* sent him with his message. It was no accusation on "hearsay." Nathan knew his ground, as led of the Lord.

I wish we had a little more of parabolic reproof in our dealings with one another. It would save immense pain, and have blessed results in multitudes of cases, where the doubtfully honest course of some very well-meaning persons would only succeed in arousing "the carnal mind" of the offending one in such a way that he has more self-judgment to exercise—perhaps for a long period—when he thinks of the would-be restorer, than he had in connection with the trespass in question. This is an exceedingly common thing. Ill-will is raised against the ill-timed, ill-managed mode of action carried on by him who professes to be the helper; so that his very presence afterwards is the occasion of fresh cause of evil. Are such restorers (?) aware that they are accountable for this,

amid all their complaining—"Oh! he took it so badly: he will not speak to me ever since I spoke to him on the subject!" I ask, in answer to such complaints—Are you an adept at parable-speaking, like Nathan? Or are you one of those blunt persons who cannot understand a parable at all? Well, if so, I would strongly advise you to read 2 Sam. xii. carefully and prayerfully, and in the meantime leave the restoring to other hands. You may be one of the "*Ye* which are spiritual;" but the individual part has yet to be studied by your own heart—"consider *thyself*."

It is clear to me that Nathan's course tended to open David's heart to his sin *without naming it to him*. Thus he might have saved the fearfulness of the result—"The sword shall never depart from thine house." "If we judged (*discerned* ourselves by our own investigation*—*διεκρίνομεν*) ourselves, we should not have been judged" (1 Cor. xi. 31), says Paul. Could Nathan have succeeded, by any possibility, in making David remember his own sin, he would have saved him much misery. Had there been anything to act on in the conscience, surely the parable must have awakened self-judgment. I believe that a brother's feet may be washed by us in this way without his ever knowing that we are doing it at all. Suppose that David said in his heart, while Nathan was speaking of the ewe lamb,—“Well, this is a case very like my own. Although Nathan may not know anything of my sin, yet I cannot but see I have sinned far more deeply than this rich man he tells me of. What a sinner I have been! How can I dare to condemn the man whose sin is as nothing to mine!” But no such discerning of self and its actings seemed to be the result of Nathan's gentle and helpful course. He is ready enough to condemn another, just because he has so little sense of his own terrible fall. Nathan's parable fails to make him judge himself.

How dreadful a thing it is to neglect confession of sin! The very moment we have sinned, we should at once honestly, unreservedly, and fully confess our sins. The result is—"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, *and cleanse us from all unrighteousness*." Confession first, cleansing afterwards. What! am I to go right into the presence of a holy God

* It is the same word translated "discerning" in verse 29. It is not the same word rendered "judged" in the end of verse 31 and in 32. The word "should be condemned" is a third, rightly thus translated.

fresh from my fall, and in the wretched consciousness I have wilfully done that which brings His wrath upon "the sons of disobedience"? No, I do not say you are to come into the presence of God; but I *do* say you are to come to your *Father*. The difference is immense. If I am trying to come before a God of holiness as a guilty sinner, I will surely keep back *as long as possible*; and fearful backsliding may be—and perhaps is sure to be—the consequence. But the words are—"We have an Advocate with the *Father*, Jesus Christ the righteous." The Judge pardons guilty sinners, the *Father* forgives sinning saints as His own beloved children.

Poor David had not thus confessed his sins. Hence the fearful results—backsliding, deadness to any moral sense of his state, and an unreserved and faithful statement of his crimes from the lips of him who would have fain retired in the background. "And David's anger was greatly kindled against the *man*." Alas! it does not say that his anger was kindled against the man's *sin*. There is a vast difference between being angry with the person who sins, and our being angry against the offence committed. I think we often confound the two. Let us note well the difference. If love is to have full exercise towards my brother at all times, especially is it to be so when I, a poor thing full of sin myself, and moment by moment dependent on grace, am sent to bring my brother's conscience and heart to the word. Let us take heed lest we may mistake our irritated spirit to be a desire to wash our brother's feet. Our eyes will soon be opened by the terrible discovery—unless we are blind to it all—that we have succeeded in soiling the very feet we imagined we were so anxious to clean. Let us examine of what sort our anxiety is, especially if we happen to be an *offended* one in the matter ourselves. It may be our object is rather to justify self than aid our brother. The very one who may think he has done a duty by saying at once to some offender, "Thou art the man," and be astonished at his want of success, is often ready to defend himself at all cost when another comes to him to tell him of something in himself painfully inconsistent, which he neither can nor will see, though ever so apparent to others—ay, and will run about from one to another, till he lights on some one as blind as himself, who will agree to the fact that he is blameless. It is quite time enough to say, "Thou art the man," when all efforts have failed to make my brother judge himself, and

when I hear him angry at the one he ought to pity—condemning him for that which is as nothing to his own offence.

And such a case is by no means uncommon. I have seen a Christian speak quite bitterly of one who was doing something he had just been doing himself, in a way that plainly showed there was no self-judgment. He was blind to his own sin; but his eyes were fully open to the same in others. To such an one—when we are in a position to bring home that charge—the words, “Thou art the man,” are most suitable. How fearfully exact are the charges which Nathan brings up before the amazed monarch, when he *must* send home the arrow! One would suppose Nathan had been by the side of David all through his plotting, and accomplishing his dark deeds. Did Nathan wish to speak so when he entered the king’s presence? No. And his course of procedure proved this. And in it all we see the long-suffering of God. “Shall I suffer like David if I fail—if I fall into some sin?” asks some dear one, as he longs to be like Christ, and feels his sad deficiencies. I answer, No, most emphatically. It was because David fell, *and continued in sin without self-judgment—without confession*. Such is the maddest course we can possibly pursue. Everything that brings in faith, we are apt to treat lightly. Confession of sin is a real act of faith. In it I acknowledge at once my failure and my complete dependence on grace.

We sometimes think because we feel we may repeat the sin, perhaps immediately, that we may then say—“What is the use of confessing it?” I really want to overcome some sinful habit, we will suppose. I fail daily in my attempts to get over it. Am I to confess my failure honestly every time I fail? Why, my doing so will only remind me of my constant delinquency. Yes, just so. Ah! pride makes the confession a painful thing in such a case. And if there was real, honest self-judgment and confession, there would not be the painful repetition of the offence. The repetition proves the lack of straightforward acknowledgment before our God and Father. If I see a believer continually falling, I am sure he is neglecting self-judgment. David neglected it, and tremendous were the consequences. Nathan had to tell him *all he did*, before the words were extracted from the hardened backslider—“I have sinned.” “The sword of the Spirit” had to act with its living and powerful piercings, ere a word of confession dropped from the wretched king’s mouth. The silent actings of the

Spirit were discarded for many months; the clear tones of Nathan's fitting parable were unheard by conscience; and now every word must be dropped like molten fire into David's soul. One by one do the arrows stick fast in him. But God will, in grace, have His child brought back—as much His child when backsliding as ever—cost what it may. The acknowledgment must come—"I have sinned."

I would draw attention to what Nathan said *after David's condemnation* of the supposed injurer of the poor man, and the words he uttered *after the confession*—"I have sinned against the Lord." When his crimes are fully brought home, and before any acknowledgment comes from the lips of the king, we have the judgment that God must send upon him declared—"Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." I believe these judgments followed because David continued in sin without confession. Had he fully acknowledged what he had done at the time of his fall—had he humbled himself before the Lord at once, I do not think the words—"Now, therefore," would have been uttered by Nathan. "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, in order that we should not be condemned with the world." This is the result when we do not judge ourselves.

I ask my readers to examine the language of Nathan. He does not say—"Because thou hast fallen and hast given way to a sudden temptation." Nor does he even say—"Because thou hast slain Uriah." He accuses him of *despising* the Lord. Instead of immediate return to Him against whom he had sinned, David hardened his neck and despised that grace on which he should have at once thrown himself. David's life was forfeited by his sin: acknowledgment would have brought on tremendous consequences. Again, the prophet adds—"and hast taken the wife of Uriah to be thy wife." According to chap. xi. 27, this did not take place until *some time after Uriah's death*. Nathan virtually tells the king that most of the sufferings he must now undergo were brought on himself because he hardened his heart, "as in the provocation,

and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness." The proof of David's "finished" sin (James i. 15) is laid before his eyes. Had he confessed his sin, and cast himself on the full and boundless grace of Him who had said to him before his fall, "I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest," the words could not have been uttered in the terrible fulness in which Nathan must put them. Little the headstrong despiser of a Father's grace knows what he is bringing on himself by continuance in sin because confession is neglected.

It is a truly humbling thing—is it not?—to have to come to our Father time after time and honestly make "a clean breast" of the matter before Him. How it reminds us of our own powerlessness to do, or give up, anything; and at the same time it proves that we know we are wrong, and want to give up all that is contrary to our—God's, "high calling." How unspeakably precious are the words to him who sees what *sin* is and what a *Father* is—"If any sin, we have an Advocate (One beside our Father and in His presence for us—*παράκλητος*) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins"!*

* I cannot help inserting here the words of a brother, read to me just as I concluded the above sentence. The letter is from India, and the thoughts follow on as though given to be added by my pen, after the sweet interruption while listening to words which prove that the same Spirit teaches the same truth about Him of whose things He takes to show them to His own.

"If failure and grievous failure," writes this brother, "comes in through unwatchfulness, still don't mistrust Him: He will never leave nor forsake you. When 'Satan' brings in guilt upon the soul, and we feel we have dishonoured the Lord, we feel it difficult *then* to come. But that is the time to come—remembering that it is to us a throne of 'grace'—that we have an Advocate with the Father. When we are walking in communion, then it is easy to come; but when we fail, then it is difficult—and of course Satan, who has dragged us into the snare, seeks to drive us away the farther.

"The case must be fully laid before the Lord. Oh, what comfort when we could not tell man—perhaps even our brethren! We have such a One as 'Jesus' is, to whom we can unburden our whole hearts, and keep back nothing. What a sympathising heart, what an attentive ear listens to us! Oh, that we could but realize this more—His care, His watchfulness, His tenderness, His sympathy in all our afflictions and trials, His unchanging love for us, even when we grow cold and forget Him!

"I suppose these exercises we are sometimes allowed to pass through, are needful. We have to learn the evil that is in our hearts—the love, the grace that is in His. We prize Him the more our hearts are the more drawn towards Him; we see we owe our

How marvellously the grace of the Lord shines out when David really makes confession of his sin. Nathan seems to have been longing to hear it come from his lips. Not a thought—not a word does he put in between the confession and the forgiveness:—"And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die." A doubt upon the mind after confession as to whether forgiveness is vouchsafed, like all unbelief, is often the cause of indifference in walk; and *experience* has to come in to prove what should have been simply received by faith, namely, that *when* I have confessed my sin, I have my Father's forgiveness. Self-judgment—real and deep—will give my Father the joy of lessening the pain which judgment upon me must incur. We must not dictate to the Lord as to what way He may chasten us. It may be to draw us to Himself and whisper—"I am not going to chastise you this time: Keep close to my heart and voice in future." Get in between His rod and His heart, and He will not smite you, unless it seems better to Him for your good.

Perhaps we have not a deeper or blacker instance of backsliding than David's; but the moment he acknowledged his sin, God's faithfulness is proved in the words—"The Lord also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die."

salvation to Him from first to last, and that we cannot live or move without Him.

"If you be still in distress, you must ask Him to 'undertake' for you entirely. When you find you can do nothing, that is the time. Lean over ENTIRELY upon Him: He won't complain: He wants you to prove His love—His strength—the sufficiency of His grace.

"I hope — still continues learning of Him. If we *begin* to decline, there is no knowing where we shall stop; and there is often a great falling away INWARDLY when there is little or no noticeable change outwardly. We have a subtle enemy to deal with.

"It is *going on* with the Lord—learning His love, His faithfulness—that my heart is drawn out towards Him in love. The *union* is more and more realized, while I am, at the same time, kept faithful.

"I grieve to say that most of the Lord's people I have met with here do not appear ever to have known what it is to be brought out of the world. It is not that they have fallen back; but they have never got *up* (to the place) to fall down."

Surely this quotation is not out of place. May the gracious Lord give us to know what it means to have the heart "established with grace." Such is truly "a good thing." Heb. xiii.

But God's ways must be vindicated before others. Hence, after David's sin is put away, we read—"Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." Others could not understand how God could work in David's conscience, how His Spirit could pierce him through and through with remorse and anguish on account of his sin. Oh! have we not felt, when we have dishonoured God before others, with painful reality, that all our explanations and honest confessions *to them* that we are deserving of their rebukes and scorn, will not remove the indelible marks we have fixed in their minds. They may never again credit the profession we make, but ever look upon us with suspicion. *As far as we are concerned*, we have proved to them that we have been but a huge lie. They are often more ready to believe this, than that we are liars. David's child must die: God's governmental dealings must take their course.

But let us follow the mercy remembered in the midst of judgment. It is true of the believer in everything that "*all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*" The child dies, and David arises from the earth, and washes, and anoints himself, and changes his apparel, *and comes into the house of the Lord, and worships.* The hand of judgment must fall; but the blow sends the now really humbled saint into the presence of the Lord. The last time we read of the king coming thither was in chapter vii. Can it be, as he now sits before the Lord once more, that he remembers that scene—the hour when he burst forth in thanksgiving for the intelligence Nathan then brought him—"Also, the Lord telleth thee he will make thee an house?"

Blessing comes, *not from an attempt to recover that which God has pronounced irrecoverable, but by beginning with God himself.* Had not God said—"The child also that is born unto thee shall surely die?" David seemed to suppose the way of blessing was by repentance, in order to restore what God cannot give back. How often we hear of souls praying to have sin eradicated in them—to have "the old man" made better. Such prayers cannot be answered; for God has already pronounced the doom of "the old man:" he must return unto the ground whence he was taken. He is judicially crucified as regards the believer. He cannot be restored

or improved. David had to learn God's way of blessing. Through death he learns resurrection. He returns from the house of the Lord with the consciousness that he is a *heavenly* man. What mean the words—"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me?" Ah! David, your eye is resting on "the sure mercies"—a Messiah after the flesh, rejected, and exalted in the heavens as "a Prince (Leader) and Saviour"—One declared to be the Son of God in power, out from resurrection of the dead. The child you have been mourning over is a type of Him who must die for sin; and you shall go to Him. Your body of humiliation shall be changed with our's, David; you shall assuredly find your place in the heavenly city. "*The Lord* will build you a house" above, for you are to have no rest below. You will be partaker not only of Jehovah's rest, but also of the Father's rest.

Your Solomon, no doubt, in the person of an exalted Lord, shall reign over the house of Jacob; but as Jedidiah* he shall, in the same Lord, have a higher place still. Connect the words, "I shall go to him," with the words, "Then David arose from the earth . . . and came into the house of the Lord and worshipped," and we get, it seems to me, the earthly man passing into the heavenly in his own consciousness. As he arose and anointed himself and changed his apparel, he, no doubt, could utter the language of Ps. xvi.—"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." What a coming into God's house that was! "But as for me," he could say, "I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear will I

* I think Solomon is a type of a heavenly Christ over the earthly family in the millennium; Jedidiah, a type of a heavenly Christ among the heavenly sons. Whenever a person is given us as a type of the former, we shall generally find something is added, by another name, &c., to show us the higher position. Benoni (the man of sorrows) and Benjamin (the one on the right hand) is an illustration of this. And then Benjamin and Joseph. Joseph and Solomon are similar types. Benjamin and Jedidiah. It was the Lord who gave both names to Solomon. But notice, it is Jedidiah in 2 Sam. xii.; whereas, in 1 Chron. xxii. 9, it is Solomon, in connection with the earthly house. God's (or rather the Father's) *Beloved* has His kingdom in light (Col. i.); on earth it will be *peace*. Compare the two parts of the kingdom of God in Matt. xiii.—the kingdom of the Father and that of the Son of man. I pass no judgment on the subject, but raise the question—Is the house of 2 Sam. vii. 11 identical with the house of verse 13? Compare also verse 16 with 1 Chron. xvii. 14.

worship toward thy holy temple." Did he learn there that, although the heir "according to the flesh" was passed away, he could gaze on the heir in the glory (as in Pss. ii., cx.) and say, not—"I shall remain on earth in millennial blessedness, and look up towards an exalted Lord in heaven," but—"I shall go to him?" And David *will* be amid the heavenly sons whom God is bringing into glory—having called them "by glory and virtue."

There is something magnificent in all this. Judgment *must* fall on the beloved one for his sin, and ere he feels the blow he receives blessing in his own soul that he probably never received before. The same Nathan is again sent to him. He had fulfilled the "washing" so admirably that the repentant and restored one can happily meet him. How beautiful is this! When we have gone to restore our brother, have we done it in such "a spirit of meekness" that he will gladly receive us again, as we run, with willing feet, to bring some news to gladden his heart? If we find him unwilling to meet us, let us take heed lest our own feet may not need to be washed (Num. xix. 21, 22) because of the uncleanness incurred by active flesh in ourselves. David needed support to be able to bear the afflictions he brings on himself because of his sin and hardness of heart in despising the Lord.

What! will God send judgment and enable us to bear it? Does such not seem a contradiction? All our Father's ways are manifest contradictions to the world. The father's child must suffer. He is in a scene where all is under judgment. He must pass his time of sojourning here in fear, though he knows he is redeemed. If he falls before the world, and has caused enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, judgment—perhaps very heavy—may have to follow him. He bows under *it*, and can be filled with love, consolation, and his Father's heart, all the way as he passes through it. It was so with David. The heart of man—the heart of the legal believer—cannot understand this. Man will stand amazed at the words that follow David's confession—"I have sinned against the Lord." What! was there immediate and unconditional forgiveness? Yes. "I should have thought he should have said, 'I have sinned against Uriah—against man,'" says man. Nay, listen—"Against thee, *thee only*, have I sinned and done this evil *in thy sight*." It was because David could *thus* confess his sin that the words followed—"The *Lord* also hath put away thy sin." He had

sinned before man too, and deeply injured his neighbour. That must not be forgotten either; and the believer who has really found out he has sinned against the Lord (against his Father now) is the very one who cannot have an easy conscience until the injury he has caused to others is—if possible—*fully and straightforwardly* made good. He must maintain a conscience void of offence toward God *and toward men*. But God first, man afterwards. And that Father, to whom he has honestly confessed, will bear him up in his—often—painful work of restoring “fourfold.”

Such is grace. The blow must be given, and then grace comes in to support us under it—yes, and make all “work together” for our good. “Leave him to suffer as he richly deserves,” says law, and man the boaster of law. “I will take him in my arms,” says grace, “while the rod falls.”

And so it is, my reader. If so, how are *we* acting towards others? Are we not to act towards them as those who are under grace ourselves? Are we claiming our rights down here? A dead and buried man has no rights in the scene to which he is buried. “But I am alive,” says the believing reader. Yes, but it is a life belonging to another scene you have; and *that* life has no right to be asserted down here *now*. Our Life is sitting on a throne of grace.

It was this grace that David cast himself on:—“I have sinned against the Lord.” It was not—“I have transgressed against the law,” however true the latter acknowledgment might have been. His confession rose far above law, and went deeper than *it* could lead the soul. He cast himself on grace, and found it fully. The law claimed his life as a man; then “after this the judgment.” All is settled by grace. “The Lord also (what a contrast between ‘law and grace!’) hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.” When a believer puts himself consciously under law when confessing sin, *he adds to his misery*, and wonders why. Has he not obeyed the words—“If we confess our sins”? Wherefore his wretchedness? Ought he not to feel relieved of his burden? Nay. “The law is not of faith:” it is “the strength of sin.” Resting on law may lead to attempted self-justification—“Neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment.” But faith believes what God says. *As my Father*, I—His child—confess my sins to Him. I must know I am coming to my Father, or—even if I confess them—I shall not be relieved, and the deeper the self-judgment, the greater the fear.

Two things, then, are needful in confession—honest, full, and unreserved acknowledgment of failure, and the consciousness that I am coming to my Father, from whose love nothing can sever me. This will lead to deeper views of sin: we shall not be afraid to estimate it fully.

Blessed Jesus! give us to know what that grace is into which Thou hast brought us, as highly-favoured in Thyself—the Beloved.

S. O'M. C.

NOTE.—The word "*burdens*" in Gal. vi. 2 must not be confounded with that rendered "*burden*" in verse 5. They are different words in the Greek. The first implies *oppression* from some grievance—such as being weighed down by reason of affliction. We have it used in Matt. xx. 12 in the complaint of the workmen wearied with work in the vineyard: they had "borne the *burden* and heat of the day." The use of this word βαρος, seems very suitable in Acts xv. 28. It is not φορτιον, as in Gal. vi. 5, which gives the thought of *responsibility*, but the word is used which would imply a burden from inductive authority. Βαρος is the word rendered *weight* in 2 Cor. iv. 17: it is not some burden I am carrying from a sense of bearing my responsibility before God. It is the *oppression*—if I might use such a word in connection with such a theme—from a sense of the fulness and depth of glory. The word is again used in Rev. ii. 24, and in one other place—1 Thess. ii. 6. The adjective βαρυσ is used in 1 John v. 3—"His commandments are not *grievous*; there is no oppression in them. The verb is used for *being* "*heavy with sleep*" in the Gospels; and in 2 Cor. i. 8 it is rendered "*were pressed*," and in v. 4, "*being burdened*;" in 1 Tim v. 16, "*be charged*."

In Gal. vi. 5, the word is from the same root as that rendered *tribute*, φορος, in Luke xx. 22; Rom. xiii. 6, 7. In Matt. xi. 30 it appears in connection with the blessed *responsibility* we bear with Jesus, the Son of the Father. Man may bind "*heavy burdens*" φορτια βαρεα; notice—both words are here, oppression and responsibilities; his burdens are *many*; ours is *one*, as in Christ—"My *burden* is light," and "each shall bear his own *burden*." The grievances may be various, and we are, each one, to help one another in them—to "weep with those that weep," and "lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees." It is the verb φορτιζειν which is used in Matt. xi. 28, translated "*heavy laden*." Most suitable word! The poor repenting one cannot meet his responsibilities as one in the first Adam's race, and such will ever be the consciousness of those repenting till peace is found.

"And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." (Gal. vi. 16.)

THE CONFEDERACY—THE CHILD.

ISAIAH VII.—IX. 7.

IN this magnificent strain of the prophet, do we not see the *significancy* of the two elements, so to speak, which form the *basis* of the prophecy ; I mean the *confederacy* of the Syrian and Samaria, and the *child* of the prophet ?

I take it that we do, and that there is great moral value in this.

It was a time of confederacy against Judah, but the sign of Judah's help was a *child*.

As the strain rolls on to its issue, we find these two elements dealt with—hostile confederacies are broken up, and Judah's strength is laid in the child, and the child *alone*. Judah is *warned* against forming counter-confederacies—instructed to hold to the word of God during the interval, or the patience ; and to know that her help in due season would come, but come in the *child*, and in the child *alone*.

Such are the materials for Judah's instruction and Judah's final deliverance.

We are interested in the same materials for our instruction.

There are now confederacies to be recognized by us, and they are to be known by us as in nowise carrying our help. And therefore I ask, do we not see the *significancy* of the two elements which form the basis or the material of that fine prophecy ?

And then, in what form does this child come forth ? What is the manhood of this child, this only help of Israel ? How finely that is assured in the account the prophet gives us (at the close of this strain) of the millennial name of Christ. The child is unfolded in the "Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

With us the same child is unfolded in another personal glory. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." A divine name is now revealed in this same child. We have now the blessed publication of the name, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," as we shall have, in millennial days, another name unfolded. From the beginning to the end, God disclosing Himself in His doings for us, from the creation to the kingdom.

The confederacy issues in a terrific breach and rupture—the child in His new and wondrous glory and strength.

And this child diffuses glory and joy. It is as *light dawning*, and as the *gathering of harvest*.

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